

A Greater Force than the Challenges We Are Now Facing Introducing the “1000Communities²” Proposal

--On November, 17, 2007 the United Nations Development Programme released the “UN Human Development Report 2007/2008 Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World”, which included, in the summary, the following statement:

“Avoiding the unprecedented threats posed by dangerous climate change will require an unparalleled collective exercise in international cooperation.”¹

--On January 17, 2008, the website of the Post Carbon Institute’s “Relocalization Network” featured a “News Posting” which was a press release for a new book by Lester Brown titled “Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization”. The “Introduction” to that book includes the following passage:

“Implementing Plan B means undertaking several actions simultaneously, including... cutting carbon dioxide emissions 80% by 2020, largely through a mobilization to raise energy efficiency and harness renewable sources of energy. Not only is the scale of this save-our-civilization plan ambitious, so is the speed with which it must be implemented. We must move at wartime speed, restructuring the world energy economy at a pace reminiscent of the restructuring of the U.S. industrial economy in 1942 following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.”²

--On April 10, 2008, an editorial titled “The World Food Crises” in the “Opinion” section of The New York Times (online) included the following statement:

“Last week, the president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, warned that 33 nations are at risk of social unrest because of the rising prices of food. ‘For countries where food comprises from half to three-quarters of consumption, there is no margin for survival,’ he said.”³

--On October 24, 2008, an article titled “Global Recession Fears Intensify” on the website of Reuters News Service, began as follows:

“Signs of a sharp slowdown in Europe and a barrage of profit warnings and job cut announcements from companies around the world intensified fears of deep global recession on Friday. Stock Markets slid across the globe, currencies experienced almost unprecedented volatility, and oil and other commodities tumbled on fears of plummeting demand that would accompany a global economic slowdown. ‘I sense we’ve moved beyond the credit crisis. There’s a recognition of the damage inflicted on the global economy, that is, the recession, by the credit crisis’ said Mike Lenhoff, chief strategist a Brewin Dolphin Securities in London.”⁴

--On October 20, 2008, the Energy Bulletin website published an article titled “The Green New Deal” by Richard Heinberg, which included the following passage:

“Peak Oil and Climate Change present threats and imperatives of a scale unprecedented in human history. By taking up these imperatives through a de-carbonized retrofit of the nation’s (and ultimately the world’s) transport, food, and manufacturing systems, policy makers can address a number of crises simultaneously—environmental decline, resource depletion, geopolitical competition for control of energy, unemployment, balance of trade deficits, malnutrition and food related health problems, and more.”⁵

[For “Notes and Source References” related to the above quotations, see p. 32)

Letter From the Editor

More and more people, in more and more parts of the world, are coming to the conclusion that we—collectively—have a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never seen before. This writer is the founder and outreach coordinator for The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative. The Mission Statement for The IPCR Initiative is included in this issue on p. 32. This particular issue of The IPCR Journal/Newsletter (Fall, 2008) introduces a recently completed proposal (by this writer) titled “1000Communities²” [accessible for free at The IPCR Initiative website (at www.ipcri.net)]. This issue includes:

- 1) three different outreach messages currently being used to share the “1000Communities²” proposal with people who might be able to make good use of it
- 2) Appendix 6 from the “1000Communities²” proposal. Appendix 6 is titled “Integrating Spiritual Wisdom into the Everyday Circumstances of Community Life”. [This writer believes that there is a profound and critical need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. *And yet... an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings is, currently, not widely recognized as an essential and critical element of most comprehensive responses to the challenges of our times.* This writer hopes that he can contribute something to bringing this need to the forefront of more and more responses to the challenges of our times.]
- 4) a reprint of the contents of the “Workshops” section of The IPCR website (at www.ipcri.net).

There is much that can be done to generate goodwill and promote peace that has not yet been done. There is much that needs to be done.

Stefan Pasti, Editor
The IPCR Journal/Newsletter
October 4, 2008

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“... bringing to the fore what is often hidden....”

b) People can, one by one, decide to deliberately focus the way they spend their time, energy, and money so that their actions have positive repercussions on many or all of the action plans which emerge from Community Visioning Initiatives.

c) The result can be that there are countless ‘ways to earn a living’ which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

Furthermore, Community Visioning Initiatives can include “Job Fairs” in the final phases of the process, which summarize the knowledge accumulated during the Visioning process.

Here are some excerpts from “Step 12: Summary Presentations and Job Fairs” of the “15 Step” outline (see p. 22-42) provided in the “1000Communities²” proposal:

“Job Fairs will provide a forum for organizations and businesses working in solution oriented fields of activity to describe employment opportunities and future prospects, to discover local talent, to hire qualified prospects, and to build knowledge bases and skill sets for the future.” (from p. 39)

“Special Commentary: By now, there will have been sufficient public discourse for those people with understanding about high level shifts in investment portfolios to have learned something about what directions future shifts will be leaning towards. The job fairs which come at the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process provide opportunities for all key stakeholders in the community (businesses, organizations, institutions, government, etc.) to demonstrate their upgraded awareness—and their interest in the welfare of the community—by offering and facilitating new employment opportunities... and thus helping with a just transition from patterns of investment which in only limited ways represent solutions to prioritized challenges to patterns of investment which *in many ways* represent solutions to prioritized challenges.” (from p. 39)

“[Note: As mentioned on p. 125, one aspect of this just transition can be that people who do deliberately focus their investments of time, energy, and money towards solutions identified by the Community Visioning Initiative being carried out in their community may receive, as encouragement, local currency. *And then such local currency can, in its turn, be redeemed in ways which will be particularly helpful to people transitioning from less solution-oriented employment to more solution-oriented employment.*]” (from p. 39)

1. which are time-intensive, lasting even as much as 1½ years (18 months), so as to give as much importance to developing a close-knit community as it does to
 - a) accumulating and integrating the knowledge and skill sets necessary for the highest percentage of people to act wisely in response to challenges identified as priority challenges
 - b) helping people to deliberately channel their time, energy, and money into the creation of “ways of earning a living” which are directly related to resolving high priority challenges
 - c) assisting with outreach, partnership formation, and development of service capacity for a significant number of already existing (or forming) organizations, businesses, institutions, and government agencies
 - d) helping to build a high level of consensus for specific action plans, which will help inspire additional support from people, businesses, organizations, institutions, and government agencies with significant resources

2. which expand on the concept of “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (created by the “Teachers Without Borders” organization) so that such local community points of entry function as information clearinghouses, meeting locations, educational centers for ongoing workshops (on a broad range of topics related to the Community Visioning Process, and to building the local knowledge base), practice sites for developing “teacher-leaders”, a location for an ongoing “informal” “Community Journal”, a location for listing employment opportunities—and provide a means of responding quickly (by changing the emphasis of workshop content) to new urgencies as they arise

3. and which suggest—as a way of emphasizing the need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings—that communities (with the resources to do so) enter into “sister community” relationships with communities in other countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs.

What are Community Visioning Initiatives?

Here it may be necessary to pause for a moment... for there is good reason to imagine that there are many people who do not know what a Community Visioning Initiative is. Unfortunately, at this particular point in time, there seems to be *many* important initiatives which are critical to overcoming the challenges of our times, but which are not quite “coming through the mist as much as they should be.” Thus, this writer believes it may be very helpful, as a supplement to the above proposal description, to offer in this place a brief “primer” on Community Visioning Initiatives. This “primer” is an excerpt from the “1000Communities²” proposal, mentioned above. It is worth noting that although there are at least 100 cities and towns in the United States

5. Assessments of the challenges of our times such as the one offered in Appendix 1 provide evidence that there is a profound and critical need for human beings—collectively—to be

- a) much more organized and deliberate about “... bringing to the fore what is often hidden: how many good people there are, how many ways there are to do good, and how much happiness comes to those who extend help, as well as to those who receive it.”
- b) much more multifaceted and participation-friendly in our approaches to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability
- c) much more resourceful in the use of the storehouses of accumulated wisdom and “embodied energy” which are now accessible to us.

6. Specifically, the contributions The IPCR Initiative hopes to make along the lines described by the three goals listed above are as follows:

- a) inspire, encourage, and support the creation of many local community specific and regional specific variations of this “1000Communities²” proposal—so that the Community Visioning Initiatives take place in as many ways and in as many communities as possible
- b) introduce The Eight IPCR Concepts through workshops offered at the local community level
- c) actively develop the concept of “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”, administer such questionnaires at the community and/or regional level, and then share compilations of the responses (with summary and conclusions)
- d) help to establish, and contribute to, local community points of entry acting as “clearinghouses”, where residents can discover more about the countless number of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world
- e) identify, develop, and create enough descriptions and examples of the 105 fields of activity

and generate enough regular feature material in categories such as local community and regional good news, workshop and conference listings, committee reports, resource reviews, letters to the editor, “community journal” postings, and links to other useful information and organizations

to justify monthly local community specific publications of an IPCR Journal/Newsletter (or a similar publication with a different name....)

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A List of Related Fields of Activity

[which are in some way—or which are in many ways—
related to the goals of The IPCR Mission Statement (see p. 32)]

accountability indicators, alleviating hunger, alleviating poverty, alternative gifts, appropriate technology, barter networks, biodynamic agriculture, building civic skills, building community, car-free zones, character education, citizen participation, citizen peacebuilding, co-housing, community banks, community development, community economics, community gardens, community good news networks, community journals, community land trusts, community membership agreements, community revitalization, community revolving loans, community self-awareness, community service work, community supported agriculture, community supported manufacturing, community visioning initiatives, consensus decision making, cottage industries, creative commons, cultural diversity, development assistance, disease control, eco-classifieds, ecological architecture, ecological footprint analysis, ecological tipping points, economic conversion, edible schoolyards, emergency humanitarian aid, emergency medical assistance, energy conservation, energy descent pathways, energy farms, fair trade, faith-based educational institutions, faith mentoring, farmers markets, food co-ops, green living, green politics, green purchasing, green retrofitting, holistic health care, homesteading, identifying problems and solutions, inclusive decision-making processes, individual spiritual formation, inspiring role models, interfaith dialogue, interfaith peacebuilding, intergenerational projects, local community points of entry, local currency, locally based food processing, locally grown organic food, low impact transport systems, medical assistance, meditation, mentoring, neighborhood revitalization, non-profit human service organizations, non-violent conflict resolution, oil depletion protocol, peace studies programs, peak oil, permaculture, positive news, powerdown projects, preventative health care, questionnaire construction, recycling, relocalization, renewable resources, right livelihood, right livelihood employment listings, rural renaissance, socially engaged spirituality, socially responsible investing, solutions journalism, spiritual discipline, spiritual diversity, spiritual friendships, spiritually responsible investing, sustainable health care, vegetarian nutrition, village design, village industries, violence prevention, voluntary simplicity, water conservation, win-win conflict resolution, world population awareness, yoga, zero waste, etc.

The Potential for a Wide Range of Workshop Offerings

The IPCR Initiative is currently offering workshops with the goal of introducing The IPCR Initiative, and The Eight IPCR Concepts—and the goal of making the resources of The IPCR Initiative as accessible as possible, so people can make use of them. There does exist, however—and it is worth emphasizing here in this issue—both the need and the potential for people (including myself) to provide workshops at the local community level on all of the 105 fields of activity listed above, so people can make best use of *resources associated with those concepts*. Such a wide range of workshop offerings would, I believe, be most accessible as workshop offerings from some kind of community center. If there are any readers of this IPCR Journal/Newsletter who would be interested in developing the idea of a community center for such a “wide range of workshop offerings,” please contact me—Stefan Pasti—at stefanpasti@ipcri.net. Thank you.

“The more we realize the repercussions of our actions on our neighbours and strive to act according to the highest we are capable of, the more shall we advance in our spiritual development.” [J.C. Kumarappa in “Why The Village Movement?” Rajchat, Kashi (India) 1960 p. 73]

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets
that supply the “ways of earning a living.” (SP)

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