

## “The IPCR Workshop Primer” An Introduction to the Potential of The IPCR Initiative

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This message is an introduction to a new document from The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative titled “The IPCR Workshop Primer” (425 pages).

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” is meant to be a resource guide for facilitators of IPCR Workshops, and a resource guide for participants in IPCR Workshops. The word “Primer” is used to indicate that this resource is meant to be an energizer—it is meant to cause workshops to happen; and it is a storehouse of ideas for making workshops useful and inspiring. “The IPCR Workshop Primer” is also an introduction to the potential of The IPCR Initiative. “The IPCR Workshop Primer” is accessible for free (as a pdf file) from the IPCR website homepage ([www.ipcri.net](http://www.ipcri.net)). [Note: All IPCR documents are accessible for free.]

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” was written and compiled by this writer (Stefan Pasti), who is the founder and outreach coordinator for The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative.

### One Way of Describing The IPCR Initiative

[Note: There is a section in “The IPCR Workshop Primer” titled “48 Different Ways of Describing The IPCR Initiative.”]

The IPCR Initiative is aware of an urgent need to build bridges and increase collaboration between diverse communities of people; both as a response to the implications of global warming, ecological footprint analysis, and the “peaking” of our finite supplies of oil—and to be proactive about individual spiritual formation, interfaith peacebuilding, and the creation of ecologically sustainable communities.

The IPCR Initiative understands that the complexity associated with building bridges and increasing collaboration between diverse communities of people, the urgent need for resolutions to a significant number of critical issues in the near future—and *the seemingly chronic nature of many of the challenges of our times*—suggests a need for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

In one of the “Keynote Documents” of The IPCR Initiative (“1000Communities<sup>2</sup>”), this writer advocates for Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” with ongoing workshops, and “sister community” relationships as a way of generating an exponential increase in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times.

Community Visioning Initiatives can be described as a series of community meetings designed to facilitate the process of brainstorming ideas, organizing the ideas into goals, prioritizing the goals, and

identifying doable steps. Many Community Visioning Initiatives require steering committees, preliminary surveys or assessments, workshops, task forces, and collaboration between many organizations, government agencies, businesses, and educational institutions—and seek to build up consensus in the community for specific goals and action plans by encouraging a high level of participation by all residents.

One of the main goals of Community Visioning Initiatives is to maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity. In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative that attracted more than 1,700 participants, and produced 40 community goals—which resulted in the implementation of 223 projects and programs, the creation of 1,300 permanent jobs, and a total financial investment of 793 million dollars.

### Countless Numbers of Things People Can Do

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets which supply the “ways of earning a living”. All of us have important responsibilities associated with resolving a significant number of very serious challenges in the months and years ahead.

There are countless numbers of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives” which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, in their own communities and regions—and in other parts of the world. [See Appendix 1 (of “The IPCR Workshop Primer”) Parts B and C on “117 Related Fields of Activity”, for some examples of the countless number of things people can do.]

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.

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.

[Special Note: 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.*]

Helping to make community building processes most effective, and relevant to the greater good of the whole.

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” encourages the creation of a “constellation” of initiatives, which can bring to light the many truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill in your community and region, and contribute much to the building of “close-knit” communities of people... communities with a healthy

appreciation for each others strengths, communities with a well-developed capacity to resolve even the most difficult challenges— and communities which demonstrate a high level of compassion for their fellow human beings.

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” is an effort to provide many pieces of a “big picture” view in one place, so that there is both understanding of why there is a need for Community Visioning Initiatives, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”, “sister community” relationships, and a variety of affordable workshops at the local community and neighborhood level—and understanding of the kind of tools and resources which can help make such community building processes most effective, and relevant to the greater good of the whole.

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” has 21 sections and 3 Appendices. The 21 sections include: “An Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times”, “Brief Descriptions of The Eight IPCR Concepts”, “A 15 Step Outline for a Community Visioning Initiative”, “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”, “39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions”, and “36 Problems That May Arise”. The 3 Appendices include “Starting Point Links for Learning More About ‘117 Related Fields of Activity’”, “48 Different Ways of Describing the IPCR Initiative”, and “The Twilight of One Era, and the Dawning of Another” (a 21 page summary paper, with a 14 page “Notes and Source References” section).

“The IPCR Workshop Primer” also includes a short story by this writer titled “The Spirit of the Sacred Hoop”. The first version of this 9 page short story was written in 1984. The story was revised to its current form in 2006. The story is about a tribe of people who are experiencing great challenges, a young woman’s vision of a bird who conveys a message of great importance to the tribe, and a great journey undertaken by the tribe to find the tree at the center of the sacred hoop. The story has influenced this writer’s thinking in many ways over the years. In particular, this writer believes that it (the story) contains one line—one sentence—which encapsulates the advantages of having many different paths by which we, as humans, can access the wisdom associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions (the wisdom associated with love, virtue, sacrifice, forgiveness, peace, etc.). Here this writer offers readers the opportunity to see if they can find that one line.

This writer encourages readers who explore this new resource to offer any comments, suggestions, recommendations, etc. Also, if readers have any questions, he encourages them to ask the questions. We need our public discourse to be as honest, responsible, and transparent as possible, so we can identify, nurture, support, and sustain ways to build a collective force greater than the challenges we are now facing. There is much which leaders *could be* asking from the people who respect their leadership, both as a matter of civic duty, and as a matter of necessity; and there are many people who will be very appreciative when they find that they have an important role to play in the work ahead. Leaders should guide citizens so that they can discover how they can do their part to contribute to the greater good of the whole.

With Kind Regards,

Stefan Pasti, Founder and Outreach Coordinator  
The IPCR Initiative