

The Contributions The IPCR Initiative Hopes To Make

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

- 1) 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.”
- 2) much more multifaceted and participation-friendly in our approaches to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability
- 3) much more resourceful in the use of the storehouses of accumulated wisdom and “embodied energy” which are now accessible to us.

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

- 1) 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
- 2) introduce The Eight IPCR Concepts through workshops offered at the local community level
- 3) 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)
- 4) 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
- 5) 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....)

6) and combine the resources created by “clearinghouses,” and “community newsletters” to link many associated efforts—such as those in “A List of Related Fields of Activity” (see Appendix 2 of this document)—and thus assist with outreach, partnership formation, consensus building and development of service capacity associated with a significant number of peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts, all at the same time.

The IPCR Initiative is providing this assistance as a result of believing that any community of people, however small in numbers, who follow through on most or all of the practical assistance described in the seven steps mentioned above, will contribute a “multiplier effect” of a positive nature on *whatever goals are decided on at the local community and regional levels.*

Appendix 1

A ten point assessment of
“the most difficult challenges of our times”

Introduction

The following ten point assessment is excerpted from a 29 page document titled “An Assessment of the Most Difficult Challenges of Our Times” (see p. 4-6), which is accessible at the website of The Interfaith Peacebuilding and Community Revitalization (IPCR) Initiative (see <http://ipcri.net/images/3-Assessment-of-Most-Difficult-Challenges.pdf>). The 29 page document includes (as evidence in support of the “ten point” list) 26 items of commentary and analysis and 17 statistics (from various sources).

Hopefully, the urgency suggested by the content of this “Assessment” will be considered sufficient to encourage readers (if they have not done so already) to explore the assessments of many people working in many different fields of activity—and to actively develop their own assessment of the most difficult challenges of our times. The more people make an effort to arrive at a clear understanding of the challenges before us, the more likely it is that we will be able build consensus for the collective action necessary to overcome those challenges.

A ten point assessment of
“the most difficult challenges of our times”

1) Community building associated with energy descent (see Challenges #4, 5, and 6) (as a result of either wise decisions, key supply shortages, or lack of other options) may or may not be accompanied by an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings. *Without such an exponential increase*, an increase in the need for emergency assistance to people with basic human needs [as a result of migrations from areas where carrying capacity has been exceeded (areas such as mega-cities), for example (see Challenge #8)] may coincide with a decrease in our capacity to respond to such emergencies

2) “Cultures” of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence which have become so common that many of us accept such as inevitable²

3) The source of threats—whether perceived or real—to the identities and/or cherished meanings of many communities of people is too often linked to religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions; and such threats too often result in conflicts which cast a shadow of negative associations onto such traditions. These negative associations have caused many people to disassociate from the religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions linked to such threats; and have accumulated to such a degree that the real treasured wisdom of

many such traditions now seems as if it is hidden—or remains undiscovered. This is unfortunate—as such treasured wisdom contains teachings which inspire and encourage people to

- a) appreciate truth, virtue, love, and peace—and live disciplined lives for the purpose of adhering to truth, cultivating virtue and love, and maintaining the pathways to enduring peace
- b) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- c) find contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- d) prefer peacebuilding which supports and actualizes mutually beneficial understandings, forgiveness, and reconciliation—and which abstains from violent conflict resolution—as a way of bringing cycles of violence to an end
- e) use resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance
- f) support community life and cultural traditions which “... bring 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.”

4), 5) and 6) Planet-wide climate chaos and global warming, the end of the era of cheap oil (“peak oil”), and widespread resource depletion and extinction (the “Triple Crises”)

Consider the following references (with additional corroborating quotes) to pre-conference (September, 2007) information for a “Teach In: Confronting the Global Triple Crises—Climate Change, Peak Oil (The End of Cheap Energy), and Global Resource Depletion and Extinction” (September 14-17, 2007 at The George Washington University Lisner Auditorium in Washington D.C.) Sponsored by The International Forum on Globalization (www.ifg.org) and The Institute on Policy Studies

“The planet’s ecological systems are on the verge of catastrophic change for which few societies are prepared. So far, responses by governments to this emergency are inadequate, or counterproductive. We call it the “Triple Crisis,” the convergence of three advancing conditions:

- a) Planet-wide climate chaos and global warming (“There is a serious risk of widespread, catastrophic climate change if we do not begin dramatically reducing global carbon emissions”³)
- b) The end of the era of cheap energy (“peak oil”) (“The peaking of world oil production presents the U.S. and the world with an unprecedented risk management problem.... The world has never faced a problem like this....”⁴)
- c) The depletion of many of the world’s key resources: water, timber, fish, fertile soil, coral reefs; and the expected extinction of 50% of the world’s species.

“All are rooted in the same systemic problem—massive overuse of fossil fuels and the Earth’s resources; all driven by an economic ideology of hyper growth and consumption that’s beyond the limits of the planet to sustain.”⁵

7) The increasing world population and its implications relating to widespread resource depletion (with special focus on *the increasing number of people* who are consuming material goods and ecological resources *indiscriminately*)

8) Current trends indicate that we are creating more and more “urban agglomerations” (cities with a population of more than 1 million people), which require more and more complex and energy intensive infrastructures, where it is more and more difficult to trace the consequences of our individuals investments of time, energy, and money—and which are the least appropriate models when it comes to implementing resolutions to many of the other challenges included in this list.⁶ (Note: “Response nodes” for emergency assistance, and centers for regional and international exchange of “weak link” materials do not require a mega-city infrastructure base)

9) Any shortages of goodwill in times of unprecedented transition could tilt already precarious systems into further disarray—and thus erode established systems in even the most stable communities and regions

10) Sorting out what are real challenges and what are sound and practical solutions is becoming more and more difficult, as there is now, in many parts of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time.

Notes and Source References (Appendix 1)

1. Here is one example of evidence which leads to the conclusion stated in “Challenge #2”:

“The global drugs trade and the global arms trade are integral to violence in both developing and industrialized countries. Even modest progress on either front will contribute to reducing the amount and degree of violence suffered by millions of people. To date, however—and despite their high profile in the world arena—no solutions seem to be in sight for these problems.”

From the “World Report on Violence and Health” (World Health Organization Geneva 2002) in Chapter 9 “The Way Forward: Recommendations for Action” p. 254 (at <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/9241545615.pdf>) (Confirmed June 11, 2008)

2. Daniel Lerch from *Post Carbon Cities: Planning for Energy and Climate Uncertainty (A Guidebook on Peak Oil and Global Warming for Local Governments)* (Free Abridged Version) <http://postcarboncities.net/guidebook> (see “Executive Summary” paragraph 4) Post Carbon Institute 2007 (Accessed August 24, 2007).

3. From the “Hirsch Report” [“The Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation and Risk Management”]—Project Leader: Robert L. Hirsch (SAIC) Commissioned by the Department of Energy, and dated February, 2005] [Accessible at the website of Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD)(USA) at www.bartlett.house.gov/EnergyUpdates/ (Accessed August 24, 2007)] Note: The first sentence quoted is from the section “Executive Summary” (see paragraph 1 on p. 4) The second sentence quoted is from the section “Summary and Concluding Remarks” (see Point #3: “Oil Peaking Presents a Unique Challenge”; on p. 64).

Consider also the following quote from Richard Heinberg:

“The human community’s central task for the coming decades must be the undoing of its dependence on oil, coal, and natural gas in order to deal with the twin crises of resource depletion and climate chaos. It is surely fair to say that fossil fuel dependency constitutes a systemic problem of a kind and scale that no society has ever had to address before. If we are to deal with this challenge successfully, we must engage in systemic thinking that leads to sustained, bold action.”

From Richard Heinberg’s Museletter #184 titled “A View from Oil’s Peak” (at <http://www.richardheinberg.com/museletter/184>) (from closing paragraph) (Accessed September 6, 2007) (from Richard Heinberg’s website at <http://www.richardheinberg.com/>) [Note: Richard Heinberg is widely acknowledged as one of the world’s foremost Peak Oil educators. He is a journalist, educator, editor, lecturer, and a Core Faculty member of New College of California, where collaborative efforts between faculty, students, and a variety of other “stakeholders” are creating models for “Powerdown” efforts at the regional and community level. Some of the books he has written: *The Party’s Over: Oil, War, and the Fate of Industrial Societies*; *Powerdown*; *The Oil Depletion Protocol: A Plan to Avert Wars, Terrorism, and Economic Collapse*; and *Peak Everything: Waking Up to a Century of Declines*”]

[Additional Note: Less and less availability of cheap oil will directly impact much more of the infrastructure of modern industrial society than most of us can easily imagine. (For some examples, see “The Oil Crash and You” by Bruce Thomson at www.oilcrash.com/roe.htm Note: Bruce Thomson is a technical writer in New Zealand, and moderator of the RunningonEmpty2 Internet Discussion Forum, which assisted in creating the document.)]

4. From pre-conference information for “Teach In: Confronting the Global Triple Crises—Climate Change, Peak Oil (The End of Cheap Energy), and Global Resource Depletion and Extinction” (September 14-17, 2007 at The George Washington University Lisner Auditorium in Washington D.C.) Sponsored by The International Forum on Globalization (www.ifg.org) and The Institute on Policy Studies (with other co-sponsors) From Teach-In Flyer and Draft Program at http://www.ifg.org/events/Triple_Crisis_Speakers.pdf (see p. 2)

5. Consider the following statistics and observations:

“In 1800, only 3% of the world’s population lived in urban areas.”

“In 1900, almost 14% of the world’s population lived in urban areas.”

“In 1950, 30% of the world’s population lived in urban areas. 83 cities had 1 million or more inhabitants.”

“In 2000, about 47% of the world’s population lived in urban areas. 411 cities had 1 million or more inhabitants.”

(from website of Population Reference Bureau-- see <http://www.prb.org/Educators/TeachersGuides/HumanPopulation/Urbanization.aspx>) (see paragraphs one and two) (Accessed June 9, 2007)

From “Revisiting Carrying Capacity: Area Based Indicators of Sustainability”, by William E. Rees, 1996, (at www.dieoff.org/page110.htm) (Accessed June 9, 2007) (Especially in light of the activity necessary to overcome the challenges of global warming and “peak oil”....)

“Cities necessarily appropriate the ecological output and life support functions of distant regions all over the world through commercial trade and the natural biogeochemical cycles of energy and material.

Indeed, the annual flows of natural income required by any defined population can be called its 'appropriated carrying capacity.' Since for every material flow there must be a corresponding land/ecosystem source or sink, the total area of land/water required to sustain these flows on a continuous basis is the true 'ecological footprint' of the referent population on the Earth." [see section "Appropriating Carrying Capacity and Ecological Footprints" (paragraph 5)]

"... as a result of high population densities, the enormous increase in per capita energy and material consumption made possible by (and required by) technology, and universally increasing dependencies on trade, the ecological locations of human settlements no longer coincide with their geographic locations. Twentieth century cities and industrial regions are dependent for survival and growth on a vast and increasingly global hinterland of ecologically productive landscapes." [see section "Appropriating Carrying Capacity and Ecological Footprints" (paragraph 4)]

and the following statistics--

From Press Release (August 13, 2002) "Londoners Running Up Massive Debt on Earth's Resources" at www.citylimitslondon.com/city_limits_press_release.htm
(Accessed June 10, 2007)

"Forty one per cent of the Ecological Footprint (2.80 gha) is accounted for by the food Londoners eat.... In total, London consumes 6.9 million tones of food (per year), more than three quarters of which is imported. London throws away 560,000 tonnes of food (per year) as waste."

Appendix 2

105 Fields of Activity Related to Peacebuilding, Community Revitalization, and Ecological Sustainability

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

(continued)

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

(continued)

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.

1) Special Note: The excerpt below is from the Spring 2007 issue of The IPCR Journal/Newsletter (at <http://ipcri.net/images/4-The-IPCR-JN-Spring-07.pdf> see p. 32)

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—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, 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 “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)