

The Recalibrating Our “Moral Compasses” (ROMC) Survey Project Prospectus

Appendix C

“Example Solution Guide”
(17 pages)

by Stefan Pasti,

Resource Coordinator--The “Recalibrating Our “Moral Compasses” (ROMC) Survey Project
Founder and Resource Coordinator—The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative

Field(s) of Activity Focused on in Solution Guide (to aid in key word searches)

critical challenge assessments
questionnaires which assist with building caring communities
collaborative problem solving which maximizes citizen participation
low cost lifelong learning at neighborhood and community level
citizen peacebuilding/interfaith peacebuilding
spiritual/moral dimensions of all critical challenges identified
permaculture/local and regional ecologically sustainable economies
local currencies for building local and regional economies
community service opportunities for local newspapers

Note about source references: almost all source references for the quoted passages in this solution guide can be found by key word searches in the CPCS Initiative document “Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors” (589 pages, Nov. 2013)(see <http://www.cpcs.co/invitation-package-for-possible-board-of-advisors.html> [with an additional caution that quoted passages on p. 316-348 have source references compiled together in a footnote section which goes from p. 349-367]

The Ten Solution Categories:

- 1) Community Visioning Initiatives
- 2) Neighborhood Learning Centers
- 3) Surveys and Questionnaires
- 4) Interfaith Peacebuilding
- 5) Permaculture/Ecologically Sustainable Economies/Zero Waste
- 6) Sister Community Relationships
- 7) Employment Initiatives Specific to Unprecedented Culture Change
- 8) Local Currencies
- 9) Locally Owned Newspapers Primarily Focused on Community Service
- 10) Local Volunteer Centers

1) Community Visioning Initiatives

Community Visioning Initiatives can be described as a series of community meetings designed to maximize citizen involvement and citizen input in a collaborative problem solving process.

This writer advocates for time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives which focus on five particular areas: identifying challenges, prioritizing challenges, identifying solutions, prioritizing solutions, and creating action plans—and which may last 4-6 months. These more comprehensive 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.

This writer's interest in Community Visioning Initiatives was inspired instantly when, in 1994, he watched a video documentary titled "Chattanooga: A Community With A Vision" (13 minutes)(see <http://vimeo.com/9653090>). The video includes many interviews and how-to details, and documents two very successful Community Visioning Initiatives organized by the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture (Chattanooga, Tennessee USA)—one in 1984, and a follow-up in 1993. The 1984 Chattanooga Community Visioning Project ("Vision 2000") 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. What this writer saw in the documentary was a way of revitalizing the sense of working together with our neighbors for the greater good, so that there would be an electrifying feeling about what going to happen next—a collective revitalization of the belief that many good things would be happening in the community, and that many people who lived in the same community would have a part in it.

As a way of maximizing the potential for multiplier effects from a Community Visioning Initiative, this writer advocates for a "constellation of initiatives", which includes: preliminary surveys to 150 key leaders in local communities; time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives; Neighborhood Learning Centers (offering workshops suggested by the preliminary surveys); special emphasis on interfaith peacebuilding and building ecologically sustainable economies; sister community relationships for communities needing assistance with basic human needs; job fairs; local currencies; and community service (multi-faceted and ongoing coverage of local visioning initiatives) from local newspapers.

This "constellation of initiatives" approach to collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding emphasizes "asking for ideas"; personal and civic responsibility; maximizing citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity; giving people an opportunity to become actively involved in a solution-charged environment, and minimizing the risk of "transformation unemployment"; —and provides local residents with many new ways to encourage and support each other in the everyday circumstances of community life.

This "constellation of initiatives" approach to collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding can assist with creating affordable education systems with numerous associated local learning networks; assist with outreach, partnership formation, project development, and service capacity for both existing (and forming) organizations and businesses; and will inevitably create increasing numbers of solution-oriented and sustainable jobs.

This “constellation of initiatives” approach to collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding can make significant contributions to the process of building “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.

One very important advantage of the collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding (Community Visioning Initiative) model advocated by this writer is that it does not set out a preexisting set of goals. Organizers who believe the unprecedented culture change which needs to happen will eventually happen, and the urgency and awareness that needs to come will come, would (thus) be focusing more on building a collaborative problem solving approach which people with many different backgrounds and agendas can believe in... a process which they believe will make best use of the knowledge and skills each person has to contribute.

One of the keys to appreciating the value of Community Visioning Initiatives: such collaborative problem solving processes can help people “become stakeholders”, with the faith that as they do so, and become involved in the education at the level of Neighborhood Learning Centers (and “voting” on priority challenges and priority solutions), they will discover for themselves just how much we all need to be learning to so that we can be part of the solutions... and how much we really need to be on the same side, helping each other.

2) Neighborhood Learning Centers

Creating the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to resolve the challenges of our times will require encouraging as much formal and informal meetings as possible between neighbors—and people living in the same local community.

Neighborhood Learning Centers can be:

- 1) a multi-purpose support center for implementing Community Visioning Initiatives
- 2) a neighborhood meeting place and workshop center
- 3) a critical part of a low cost lifelong learning education system (which would include questionnaires and surveys, Community Visioning Initiatives, Neighborhood Learning Centers and neighborhood learning networks, locally owned newspaper primarily focused on community service, etc)
- 4) a critical part of making best use of the knowledge and abilities each of us has to exponentially accelerate solution-oriented activity at this time of unprecedented challenges

Currently, we are creating more and more “urban agglomerations”(cities with a population of more than 1 million people—more than 400), which require more and more complex and energy intensive infrastructures, where it is more and more difficult to trace the consequences of our individual investments of time, energy, and money—and which are the least appropriate models when it comes to achieving carbon neutral economies.

What if there was to be a reversal of the urbanization trend, and a demographic shift from megacities to more ecologically sustainable villages, towns, and small cities(with much more potential to achieve carbon neutral economies)? What kind of curriculum and experiential learning (apprenticeships,

training, volunteering, etc) would be most appropriate to create the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to make such a transition?

Educational institutions, and other organizations, could increase their existing efforts, or take up the call, to develop related curriculum and offer classes, workshops, and training. If many colleges and universities assisted with organizing local Community Visioning Initiatives—with many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers—the positive multiplier effects would be visible around the world.

What we need more of now are collaborative problem solving processes which help citizens understand that the investments of time, energy, and money (the “votes”) each of us make in our everyday circumstances become the larger economy. And that wisely directed, such “votes” can result in countless ways of earning a living which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to drastically reduce GGE (Greenhouse Gas Emissions), and minimize other related challenges. Citizens from every variety of circumstances can learn how to wisely cast such “votes”—through workshops and meetings at Neighborhood Learning Centers during a Community Visioning Initiative, and through other local learning experiences.

Creating many Neighborhood Learning Centers can provide places—in local neighborhoods—for discussion, information sharing, mutual support and encouragement, fellowship and friendship, so that the exchanging of information and resources can make significant contributions to the process of building “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.

If the goal is to resolve the unprecedented challenges ahead, then it would seem necessary to exponentially increase the number of actively engaged citizens—citizens who (thus) have a much more comprehensive sense of civic duty. It’s not like mobilizing for war, where there will be drill sergeants and basic training, but people should begin to realize: problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before means there is a lot of work to do.

3) Surveys and Questionnaires

Organizations and communities of people often use questionnaires and surveys to build consensus for collective action.

---The ROMCEbook Survey Project

The ROMCEbook Survey Project proposes a survey of 300 people well known in fields of activity associated with creating a peaceful and sustainable world. The surveys would include asking for 10-20 page Critical Challenge Assessment, and 10-20 page summary (with as much detail as possible) of solutions specific to their field(s) of activity. One format for the Critical Challenges list would be to have quoted passages from key sources, and links to a compilation of quotes document (which includes the quoted passages and provides source references) (see example in Appendix B). This section is part of the example format for a Solutions Guide.

The 300 people surveyed would also be asked to describe the kind of collaborative problem solving

which they believe will be most effective at creating positive tipping points and positive multiplier effects at the local community level.

And there would be questions seeking input for creating more consensus on the meanings of “right livelihood” and “moral compasses”:

(some examples)

- a) what local institutions would be most appropriate to commission a “right livelihood” resource guide
- b) the nature and composition of our “moral compasses”
- c) what percentage of people have a “moral compass” which is relevant to the challenges of our times, and which they use regularly to make wise choices regarding the investments of time, energy, and money they make in the everyday circumstances of their lives?
- d) and how a “moral compass” might be created and maintained, so that it remains relevant even during times of unprecedented change.

[Note: This writer has already creating a starting point for identifying 300 people for such a survey. Section III (166 pages) in the key CPCS Initiative document “Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors” is titled “Descriptions of People Being Formally Invited to Join CPCS Initiative Board of Advisors”. The section includes biographical information and notes on 272 people in 13 broad categories of activity related to creating a peaceful and sustainable world.]

Some of the responses to this ROMC Survey Project will be selected for inclusion in a free Ebook, which would be accessible at the ROMC website (Note: all of the 300 responses would be included in another, longer document—also accessible from the ROMC website).

The Ebook would be a way of raising awareness about the unprecedented nature of the challenges of our times, and the urgent need for solutions. Such an Ebook has the potential to become:

- a) one (of many needed) indicators/indexes which describe where we are on the path of resolving the challenges of our times
- b) a clearinghouse for solutions which can be applied at the local community level
- c) a clearinghouse of recommended collaborative problem solving processes
- d) a key educational resource for workshops at local community Neighborhood Learning Centers
- e) one way of highlighting the urgent need for collaborative problem solving processes at the local community level

The ROMC Survey Project is designed to contribute significant input towards determining, with a high degree of certainty, whether or not we are at a critical point in the history of life of Planet Earth—and how we can best use field specific solutions, collaborative problem solving processes, and working definitions of “right livelihood” and “moral compasses” to maximize citizen participation, accelerate solution-oriented activity, and—as quickly as possible—reach positive tipping points on many of the challenges of our times.

---Preliminary Surveys (as preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives)

In the preparation stages for a Community Visioning Initiative, well thought out preliminary surveys (offered to at least 150 key leaders from a significant variety of fields of activity in the Larger Community) can provide further evidence (as a supplement to the ROMC Ebook Survey) of the need for a visioning initiative, create interest in the project, set a tone that the project is seeking as much input from residents as possible, and provide a key starting point for topics to cover in workshops at Neighborhood Learning Centers.

Here is one example of a question a preliminary survey might ask:

Identifying Experienced Practitioners, Stakeholders, and People Needing Assistance

Consider the “List of Ten Critical Challenges” offered as a part of this ROMCEbook Project proposal (see the short version (6 pages) in Appendix __, or the backgrounder version (20 pages) in Appendix __).

i) Who are the Experienced Practitioners—in your city, town, or local community—who are most qualified to be educating people on how to successfully overcome each of the ten critical challenges identified?

(Special Notes: Please be specific, as in times of emergency, it will be most important for leaders to understand which people are perceived as most qualified by the majority of the residents in a particular community. Also, please be straightforward and honest: if you do not know who would be most qualified to respond, please respond accordingly.)

ii) Who are the Stakeholders (the people who will be affected by the education provided and guidance given by the Experienced Practitioners)—in your city, town, or local community—?

iii) Who are the People Needing Assistance (the people who do not know how to respond to those ten challenges)—in your city, town, or local community—?

4) Interfaith Peacebuilding

This writer feels that many assessments of the critical challenges of our times have either dismissed, or given very little attention, to the spiritual/moral dimensions of the challenges we face—and that an oversight of that nature could become a crippling obstacle which may undermine many positive and constructive solution-oriented initiatives. And yet... profound advances in interfaith peacebuilding may be necessary to create positive tipping points and positive multiplier effects in the many fields of activity influenced by such spiritual/moral dimensions. With these considerations in mind, this writer feels justified in offering a brief overview of such spiritual/moral challenges, as a way of providing a context for his solution recommendations.

What follows is a series of 5 points (some with questions), which are offered as examples of what is meant by the spiritual/moral dimensions of the challenges of our times.

As you read through these points, consider the following ways of evaluating “plans”, “confidence of success” and “levels of collaborative problem solving needed”. Question: Where do you believe we—collectively—stand on “plans” and “confidence of success” relating to the spiritual/morals dimensions described below... and what level of collaborative problem solving will be necessary to reach the top answer in each category?

Plans

- I believe we have a relevant, practical, and doable action plan for resolving this challenge.
- I believe we are taking the steps necessary to develop a relevant, practical, and doable action plans for resolving this challenge.
- I am not sure if we know how to resolve this challenge.
- I do not believe we know how to resolve this challenge.

Confidence of Success

- I am confident we can resolve this challenge
- I believe we are moving in the right direction to resolve this challenge.
- I am not sure if we will be able to resolve this challenge.
- I have no confidence in our ability to resolve this challenge.

"It would be foolish to underestimate the challenge of checking the consumption juggernaut..."

- a) "Worldwide advertising spending grew by 3.2% year-over-year in 2012 to reach \$557 billion, per data from Nielsen's latest quarterly Global AdView Pulse report."
- b) "It would be foolish to underestimate the challenge of checking the consumption juggernaut..."
- c) "What is basic is that advertising, as such, with all its vast power to influence values and conduct, cannot ever lose sight of the fact that it ultimately regards man as a consumer and defines its own mission as one of stimulating him to consume or to desire to consume."
- d) "The modern worldview is that the more material goods you have, the better your life will be. But Gandhi said, 'A certain degree of physical comfort is necessary but above a certain level it becomes a hindrance instead of a help; therefore the ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them, seems to be a delusion and a trap. The satisfaction of one's physical needs must come at a certain point to a dead stop before it degenerates into physical decadence.'"

Question: How can the “reduce” piece (of the *reduce, reuse, recycle* triplet) be incorporated into the dominant values, social norms, and attitudes of communities around the world without somehow coming to terms with the fundamental inconsistencies between cultures which encourage indiscriminant consumption and the treasured wisdom of most religious, spiritual, and moral traditions, which emphasize--

- a) sacrificing personal desires for the greater good of the whole
- b) finding contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services
- c) using resources carefully, so that there is surplus available for emergency assistance

“... no solutions seem to be in sight for these problems.”

- a) “Total world military expenditure in 2012 was \$1.75 trillion. This is equivalent to 2.5 per cent of global GDP.”
- b) “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.”
- c) “Unfortunately, there are many people in our communities who—regardless of the difficulties and urgencies associated with resolving multiple crises—choose to focus their attention on trying to make money by preying on people’s fears, manipulating people’s trust, and/or encouraging people to abandon hope in higher aspirations, and indulge in unhealthy, or immoral behavior. Such behavior is clearly counterproductive to the building of caring communities; it can be very dangerous for community morale; and it can become a crippling obstacle in times of crises.”
- d) “It is a little surprising that there has been no controversy over economics education, because economics is, in our culture, deeply controversial, often on moral and religious grounds..... A part of the problem is what the texts and the new national standards leave out. They say little about poverty, especially as a moral or spiritual problem. They are usually silent about the moral relation of the First and Third Worlds. They typically ignore the effects of economics and technology on the environment. They are oblivious to the moral and spiritual problems of consumer culture. They ask no questions about dehumanizing work. They emphasize the importance of the profit motive and competition, but say nothing about the possibility of excess profits or the possible costs of competition....”
- e) “Because systems of meaning and ways of thinking differ from one culture to another, people from different cultures typically develop different ideas about morality and the best way to live. They often have different conceptions of moral authority, truth, and the nature of community.... These cultural differences become even more problematic when groups have radically different expectations about what is virtuous, what is right, and how to deal with moral conflicts.”

One of the problems:

“They may form negative stereotypes and attribute moral depravity or other negative characteristics to those who violate their cultural expectations, while they ignore their own vices and foibles, perceiving their own group to be entirely virtuous.”

- f) “Most people would consider it unusual for a person to request to be excused from military service based on their religious, spiritual, or moral convictions.”

“Hunger and malnutrition are in fact the number one risk to health worldwide....”

- a) “22,000 children die each day due to conditions of poverty.”
“Undernutrition contributes to 2.6 million deaths of children under five each year - one third of the global total.”

“More than 11 million children die each year from preventable health issues such as malaria, diarrhea and pneumonia.”

“Hunger and malnutrition are in fact the number one risk to health worldwide — greater than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.”

b) “Where virtually all water has been claimed, cities can typically get more water only by taking it from irrigation. Countries then import grain to offset the loss of irrigated grain production. Since it takes 1,000 tons of water to produce one ton of grain, importing grain is the most efficient way to import water.”

“Fearing they might not be able to buy needed grain from the market, some of the more affluent countries, led by Saudi Arabia, China, and South Korea, then took the unusual step of buying or leasing land long term in other countries on which to grow food for themselves. These land acquisitions have since grown rapidly in number. Most of them are in Africa. Among the principal destinations for land hunters are Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan, each of them countries where millions of people are being sustained with food donations from the U.N. World Food Programme.

“As of mid-2012, hundreds of land acquisition deals had been negotiated or were under negotiation, some of them exceeding a million acres. A 2011 World Bank analysis of these “land grabs” reported that at least 140 million acres were involved—an area that exceeds the cropland devoted to corn and wheat combined in the United States. This onslaught of land acquisitions has become a land rush as governments, agribusiness firms, and private investors seek control of land wherever they can find it.”

“A more equitable distribution of resources is in our best interest for a peaceful future. “

a) “Taken together, the bottom half of the global population own less than 1 percent of total wealth. In sharp contrast, the richest 10 percent hold 86 percent of the world’s wealth, and the top 1 percent alone account for 46 percent of global assets.”

b) “The United States currently has 5 percent of the world’s population, but uses 25 percent of the world’s annual energy production. This disproportionate consumption of energy relative to global consumption causes loss of the world’s good will and provides a context for potential military conflicts, at the cost of lives, money, and political capital. A more equitable distribution of resources is in our best interest for a peaceful future. “

c) “People in industrialized countries comprise only about 20% of the global population, yet they consume 81% of the world’s paper and 76% of its timber.”

d) “12 percent of the world's population uses 85 percent of its water.”

e) “By 2001 the rainforest areas of Brazil were reduced by a fifth (respect of 1970), to around 4,000,000 km²; the ground cleared was mainly destined for cattle pasture - Brazil is the world's largest exporter of beef with almost 200,000,000 head of cattle.”

“We have spent a lot of time going through all these documents, and let me just explain, in very simple terms, what synthetic CDOs are... It’s gambling.”

a) “GBGC’s provisional figures show that gambling activities generated US\$ 419 billion in revenues across the world in 2011.”

b) State Lotteries in the United States—“11 states collecting more revenue from their state lottery than from their state corporate income tax during FY2009.”

c) “Tailor-made derivatives, not traded on a futures exchange are traded on over-the-counter markets,

also known as the OTC market. These consist of investment banks who have traders who make markets in these derivatives, and clients such as hedge funds, commercial banks, government sponsored enterprises, etc. Products that are always traded over-the-counter are swaps, forward rate agreements, forward contracts, credit derivatives, accumulators etc. The total notional amount of all the outstanding positions at the end of June 2004 stood at \$220 trillion. By the end of 2007 this figure had risen to \$596 trillion and in 2009 it stood at \$615 trillion.” [Note: the size of the world economy is estimated to be around \$85 trillion]

d) “Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, in the good old days of investment banking, (it was--), they were considered very honorable and proud institutions—our investment bankers of Wall Street—they provided financial services: investment of capital in good businesses, helping government with assistance to issue bonds to build the great infrastructures of our nation. Then you fast forward through the public offerings of all these companies (to the date) when the risk of these companies shifted from the main partners to the nameless faceless shareholders. And you fast forward a little bit further, and you land right at the feet of synthetic CDOs.

“Now, I got to be honest, I think that if we had to put the odds on this hearing today you guys would probably have odds in your favor, because the jargon is complicated, the transactions are complicated—you’ve relied on that complicated situation to avoid a lot of scrutiny.

“We have spent a lot of time going through all these documents, and let me just explain, in very simple terms, what synthetic CDOs are. They are instruments that are created so that people can bet on them. It’s the “la-la land” of ledger entries. It’s not investment in a business that has a good idea; it’s not assisting local government in building infrastructure. It’s gambling. Pure and simple—raw gambling.”

Every society has a value system of some kind.... But what is the use of such a bank balance of values if it is not useful in solving our current social problems?”

a) “The new reality,” says Brown, “is that the world is only one poor harvest away from chaos. It is time to redefine security. The principal threats to our future are no longer armed aggression but instead climate change, population growth, water shortages, spreading hunger, and failing states. What we now need is a mobilization to reverse these trends on the scale and urgency of the U.S. mobilization for World War II.”

b) “... it cannot be ruled out that the people’s confidence in state institutions as well as politics would be considerably shaken. This confidence is likely to dwindle even more in societies in which it is already weak – in particular if it is becoming obvious in crisis regions that governments have in the past failed to develop suitable solution strategies and provide orientation for society during this period of transition (this writer’s italics). This personalised loss of confidence, which can express itself, for example, in ‘dressing down’ politicians, could – depending on intensity and duration-- consolidate into a general and lasting crisis of confidence towards central national institutions and their ability to solve problems. A society, however, cannot survive without confidence. Sullenness with politics can give rise to lethargy or fatalism and can increase the likelihood of growing political instability and extremism. Via indirect legitimisation chains, this national loss of confidence could also have a negative impact on the legitimisation, functionality and actionability of supranational organisations and institutions as well.”

b) “We want our teachers to be value-oriented because we want them to be rightly equipped as vehicles of values for the benefit of our children and youth. By his/her very nature, the teacher is a

transmitter, a messenger, a carrier. Our determination of what he has to transmit will depend on what we determine to be valuable for our children and youth. Every society has a value system of some kind. Indian society is rich in it. But what is the use of such a bank balance of values if it is not useful in solving our current social problems?"

Further comments—Interfaith Peacebuilding

This writer believes the spiritual/moral dimensions of the challenges of our times could be the weakest link of all the complex and intertwined links needed to forge solutions to the challenges of our times. Thus, he believes that the challenges of our times are such that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions.

And "faith helps move from 'it hardly seems possible' to 'it must be possible' (since faith believes love will prevail)."

So... here are some ideas which may help us in our efforts to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience....

a) Community Good News Networks:

One way to begin creating "Community Good News Networks" is as follows: ongoing intergenerational programs—programs that bring together elders of the community with young people (ages 5-18) of the community—are created at appropriate meeting places such as local places of worship. Such intergenerational programs would include the following activities: 1) collecting and sharing good news articles, stories, etc., and making contributions to "Good News Reference Resources," specific to local communities and regions 2) sending notecards of gratitude and encouragement—and invitations to visit—to people who are making good news in the local community or region 3) inspirational sharing meetings featuring "good news makers" from the local community or region.

b) Spiritual Friendships

Within a particular faith community—or among people from different religious, spiritual, or moral traditions—small groups are formed which would include the following three elements: 1) Participants (at least most participants) declare an intention to take a specific step towards achieving a goal associated with their personal spiritual growth (By making such a declaration, participants will thereby be motivated to "do their homework" before the next meeting... that is, they will, by their desire to be true to their word—and by their desire to encourage the integrity of the process as a whole—feel some sense of urgency and responsibility about making an honest effort related to their declaration.) 2) All participants are provided with an opportunity, in a respectful and considerate small group environment, to speak about their efforts they made in the interval between meetings

c) Spiritually Responsible Investing

The first proposition is: 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.

The second proposition is: The ways we “invest” our time, energy, and money have a direct impact on the “ways of earning a living” that are available.

The third proposition is: The most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.

And the one definition: Spiritually Responsible Investing can be defined as investments of time, energy, and money which increase our capacity to integrate spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.”

d) 24/7 Peace Vigils

One possible goal for an Interfaith Peace Vigil would be for representatives from each of the participating traditions to have one member participating in the Peace Vigil at all times (24/7)(in such time intervals as they choose).

Interfaith Peace Vigils can have many positive benefits, including

- i) the discipline required for each tradition to maintain a presence would sharpen the spiritual (and other) practices of many participants
- ii) the Interfaith Nature of the Prayer Vigil would bring people from many different traditions together, with an emphasis on silent and respectful cooperation on a most sacred and meaningful project
- iii) it would seem likely that, besides the immediate participants, there would be many other people, from various traditions and backgrounds, who would recognize these Prayer Vigil sites as inspiring places to reinforce their own silent spiritual (or other) practices
- iv) much good fellowship and friendship could be created by such a project—fellowship and friendship which could result in many more common service-oriented projects, and much improved interfaith relations.

Closing Comments for this Interfaith Peacebuilding section:

It has taken a lot of being confused about the cardinal directions on our “moral compasses” to get where we are (global warming can be understood as the cumulative result of many other unresolved issues which have, in themselves become critical challenges)—and many of the unresolved issues contributing to global warming have been around since the dawn of civilization (Ex: cultures of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence).

The challenges of our times are such that it is now critical for us to access the storehouses of wisdom which have accumulated over the many centuries of human experience, and which have been confirmed again and again as essential to individual well-being and social harmony by the saints, sages, spiritual leaders, and sincere practitioners of all religious, spiritual, and moral traditions.

If members of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions cannot work together to accomplish the level of collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding needed at this critical time, widespread cynicism that many of the critical challenges of our times will not be resolved may undermine many projects

which would have otherwise led to positive tipping points.

Thus it is that there is a great responsibility on those people who are in any way representatives of religious, spiritual, and/or moral traditions—to demonstrate what is possible along the lines of wisdom and compassion, to provide genuine instruction when sincere efforts are being made, to contribute to the greater good of the whole, and to help restore confidence in the higher values of life.

5) Permaculture/Ecologically Sustainable Economies/Zero Waste

“It should be possible to design land use systems which approach the solar energy harvesting capacities of natural systems while providing humanity with its needs. This was the original premise of the permaculture concept.”

“The Mission of the Permaculture Research Institute is to work with individuals and communities worldwide, to expand the knowledge and practice of integrated, sustainable agriculture and culture using the whole-systems approach of permaculture design.”

The primary goal of the Worldwide Permaculture Network is to create a “worldwide network of interdependent communities who can cooperate to vision and rebuild economic harmony that is not dependent on perpetual growth or resource depletion and which reinvests all surpluses into their people and the land.”

“Gaia Education promotes a holistic approach to education for sustainable development by developing curricula for sustainable community design. While drawing upon best practices within ecovillages and transition settings worldwide, Gaia Education works in partnership with universities, ecovillages, government and non-government agencies and the United Nations.”

“Ecovillage Design Education programmes, commonly referred to as 'EDEs', are a 125 hour courses which have been carried out over 190 times in more than {snippet num_countries} countries on six continents since 2006. More than 5,000 people have participated in these sustainable design programmes worldwide!”

Ecovillage Design Education programmes include the following two (of four sections):

Economic Design

Module 1: Shifting the Global Economy to Sustainability: How does it work?

Module 2: Right Livelihood: Can we do well by doing good?

Module 3: Local Economies: What can we find within a low carbon reach

Module 4: Community Banks and Currencies: What are our means of exchange?

Module 5: Legal and Financial Issues: What are the ethical issues, tools and instruments?

Ecologic Design

Module 1: Green Building and Retrofitting: Building with the Earth in mind

Module 2: Local Food and Nutrient Cycles: Creating security for all

Module 3: Water, Energy and Infrastructure: Regenerative thinking and design
Module 4: Nature and Urban Regeneration, and Disaster Recovery: Making it better
Module 5: Whole Systems Approach to Design: Everything is connected to everything else

Some notes about embodied energy:

- i) "The energy invested in a particular thing, during its life from cradle to grave, is called the 'embodied energy' of that object. The amount of embodied energy that an item contains depends on the technology used to create it (the origin of materials inputs, how they were created and transported, etc.), the nature of the production system, and the distance the item travels from inception to purchase."
- ii) "... every article in the bazaar has moral and spiritual values attached to it... hence it behooves us to enquire into the antecedents of every article we buy.... (Yet this) is an arduous task, and it becomes almost impossible for ordinary persons to undertake it when the article comes from far off countries."
- iii) "If we feel it is beyond us to guarantee the concomitant results of all our transactions, it necessarily follows that we must limit our transactions to a circle well within our control. This is the bed rock of swadeshi. The smaller the circumference, the more accurately can we gauge the results of our actions, and (the) more conscientiously shall we be able to fulfill our obligations as trustees."
- iv) "By supporting items and processes that have lower embodied energy, as well as the companies that produce them, consumers can significantly reduce society's energy use."

Through workshops and other informal education (and associated local learning networks), citizens can gain greater awareness of how all the "little events" in everyday community life have a positive and cumulative effect on the challenges-solutions-investment-training-employment sequence... and thus how all the investments of time, energy, and money (the "votes") each of us make in our everyday circumstances become the larger economy. Citizens from every variety of circumstances can learn how to wisely cast such "votes". Wisely directed, such "votes" can result in countless ways of earning a living which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and minimize other related challenges. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: "Many hands make much work light."

"The transition from an unsustainable fossil fuel-based economy back to a solar-based (agriculture and forestry) economy will involve the application of the embodied energy that we inherit from industrial culture. This embodied energy is contained within a vast array of things, infrastructure, cultural processes and ideas, mostly inappropriately configured for the "solar" economy. It is the task of our age to take this great wealth, reconfigure it, and apply it to the development of sustainable systems."

Again:

"The smaller the circumference, the more accurately can we gauge the results of our actions, and (the) more conscientiously shall we be able to fulfill our obligations as trustees."

6) Sister Community Relationships

This writer advocates for a specific form of sister community relationships; that is, for communities (with the resources to do so) to enter into "sister community" relationships with communities in other

countries where there has been well documented calls for assistance with basic human needs. Such community-to-community relationships can provide critical assistance with capacity building—especially if communities make best use of already established humanitarian aid organizations specializing in capacity building.

Some examples of already established humanitarian aid organizations specializing in capacity building (or related areas of activity):

Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
World Food Programme
Doctors Without Borders
TeachersWithout Borders
S3IDF (Small-Scale Sustainable Infrastructure Development Fund)
IDE (International Development Enterprises)
Heifer International
Peace Corps
Foreign Student Exchange
Adopt a Child

This kind of service work—communities of people assisting communities of people—can create a variety of opportunities for person-to-person peacebuilding (working in both directions)—and can (thus) “... 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”.

There are many communities in the world who already have sister community relationships with communities in other parts of the world. The organization most responsible for developing the idea of sister communities, and the organization most experienced in facilitating and monitoring such relationships, is Sister Cities International.

“Sister Cities International represents more than 2,500 communities in 134 countries around the world.”

“Sister Cities International shares best practices, provides grants and funding opportunities, assists with protocols and procedures related to sister cities, advocates for sister city organizations and international exchange, organizes conferences and meetings, publishes a printed and online directory of sister cities, networks among its membership, and provides other resources including certificates, discounted travel insurance, visa consultations, webinars, and toolkits, among other benefits.”

7) Employment Initiatives Specific to Unprecedented Culture Change

“...it is not possible to rule out considerable frictions on the labour market. New economic sectors, jobs and market opportunities can indeed develop in the wake of post-fossil transformation. This economic upheaval could, however, initially result in significant *transformation unemployment*. It is regarded as a special form of structural unemployment that can evolve as a result of profound changes in transformation countries. Most importantly, a devaluation of employees’ human capital may occur because the change in structure causes thus far fully adequate qualifications to be replaced by other qualification requirements. Depending on its scope and duration, transformation unemployment

could develop into a major economic problem.”

Preliminary surveys in preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives, the actual implementation of Community Visioning Initiatives, and affordable and accessible education in support of Community Visioning Initiatives (at “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”) can result in apprenticeships, internships, volunteer opportunities, and training in key fields of activity—all of which would minimize “transitional unemployment”. Administrators at universities and community colleges can recognize the urgent need for restructuring educational systems, and mobilize extraordinary levels of human effort in the above fields of activity.

“By the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process, 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. One possible element 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.*”

All of the above described activities—job fairs, facilitating new employment opportunities, residents volunteering time, energy, and money towards solution-oriented activity, receiving local currency, and spending local currency, etc—can benefit from resources and meetings at Neighborhood Learning Centers.

Maximizing citizen participation in identifying challenges and solution-oriented activity (the main focus of Community Visioning Initiatives) would generate investment, create training, and result in higher levels of employment—a virtuous cycle—and close the gaps on the challenges-solutions-training-employment sequence.

8) Local Currencies

“The purpose of a local currency is to function on a local scale the same way that national currencies have functioned on a national scale—building the local economy by maximizing circulation of trade within a defined region.”

“Echoing the local currencies widely used throughout the early 1900s, BerkShares serve as a tool for community economic empowerment, and development toward regional self-reliance. BerkShares are meant to maximize the circulation of goods, services, and capital within a defined region, thus strengthening the local economy.... The currency distinguishes the local businesses that accept the currency from those that do not, fostering stronger relationships between the responsible business community and the citizens of the region. The people who choose to use the currency make a conscious

commitment to buy local, and in doing so take a personal interest in the health and well-being of their community by laying the foundation for a truly vibrant, thriving economy.”

“Launched in the fall of 2006, BerkShares had a robust initiation, with over one million BerkShares circulated in the first nine months and over 4.3 million to date. Currently, more than four hundred businesses have signed up to accept the currency. Five different banks have partnered with BerkShares, with a total of thirteen branch offices now serving as exchange stations.”

Through workshops and other informal education (and associated local learning networks), citizens can gain greater awareness of how all the “little events” in everyday community life have a positive and cumulative effect on the challenges-solutions-investment-training-employment sequence... and thus how all the investments of time, energy, and money (the “votes”) each of us make in our everyday circumstances become the larger economy. Citizens from every variety of circumstances can learn how to wisely cast such “votes”. Wisely directed, such “votes” can result in countless ways of earning a living which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and minimize other related challenges. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

“The introduction of local currency (especially as payment to those who are unemployed)—for assisting with the implementing of a Community Visioning Initiative, and for assisting with workshops in Neighborhood Learning Centers supporting the Community Visioning Initiative—can begin a cycle of volunteer assistance, workshops, solution-oriented action plans, careful and deliberate investment by local residents, and new employment opportunities which can minimize upfront and overhead educational expenses, and maximize citizen employment in solution-oriented activity.”

9) Locally Owned Newspapers Primarily Focused on Community Service

There are many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute very valuable community services in the planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow up stages associated with Community Visioning Initiatives. Here is a list of some of the community services local newspapers could contribute:

- a) provide information about the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives
- b) advocate for the implementation of Community Visioning Initiatives
- c) be directly involved in making Preliminary Surveys accessible, provide in-depth coverage of the response compilation process to assure credibility, and provide a variety of summary and analysis of the responses
- d) provide ongoing public access to details of each stage of the Community Visioning process
- e) provide ongoing public access to details of workshops and other educational experiences at “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”
- f) report on inspirational role models and organizations in key fields of activity, which will assist the process of creating apprenticeships, internships, volunteer opportunities, and training.
- g) provide in-depth coverage of the all “voting” (input provided by residents as a response to the different phases of the Community Visioning Initiative)
- h) provide a variety of summary and analysis of the “voting” input at each stage of the process
- i) provide follow-up coverage of the projects and initiatives which spin-off from the action plans receiving significant community support

j) encourage citizen input as a way of further evaluating the successes and failures of the process

A collective effort by even a small community, to apply the different elements of this “Constellation of Initiatives” approach to collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding would easily identify, develop, and create enough—

a) “good news makers;” descriptions of inspirational sharing meetings featuring “good news makers;” examples of questionnaires that help build caring communities; results at various stages of community visioning initiatives; examples of carefully channeling our “investments” of time, energy, and money; examples of how we determine the markets that supply the “ways of earning a living”; statistics associated with ecological footprint analysis; successful practices associated with building ecovillages; practical ways of applying the principles of permaculture;

b) examples and descriptions associated with: energy descent pathways, relocalization projects; village support centers; village industries, cottage industries, and home industries; community supported agriculture and community supported manufacturing; community land trusts and co-housing projects; community revolving loans; ecological tipping points; fair trade practices; extended producer responsibility; barter networks and local currencies; energy farms; achieving zero waste; building civic skills and building community; inspiring role models; service-oriented initiatives; right livelihood employment listings; accountability indicators and statistics; model project case studies; apprenticeship programs; workshop and conference information; volunteer work; commentary; essays; letters to the editor; “community journal entries”; resource reviews; and, in general, “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives....”

-- and links to other service-oriented organizations, initiatives, and projects...

... and thus be a critical part of a low cost lifelong learning education system (which would include questionnaires and surveys, Community Visioning Initiatives, Neighborhood Learning Centers and neighborhood learning networks, etc)

10) Local Volunteer Centers

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. One possible element 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.*”

“The introduction of local currency (especially as payment to those who are unemployed)—for assisting with a Community Visioning Initiative, and workshops in Community Teaching and Learning Center supporting the Community Visioning Initiative—can begin a cycle of volunteer assistance, workshops,

solution-oriented action plans, careful and deliberate investment by local residents, and new employment opportunities that can minimize upfront and overhead educational expenses, and maximize citizen employment in solution-oriented activity.”

In addition, through workshops and other informal education (and associated local learning networks), citizens can gain greater awareness of how all the “little events” in everyday community life have a positive and cumulative effect on the challenges-solutions-investment-training-employment sequence... and thus how all the investments of time, energy, and money (the “votes”) each of us make in our everyday circumstances become the larger economy. Citizens from every variety of circumstances can learn how to wisely cast such “votes”. Wisely directed, such “votes” can result in countless ways of earning a living which contribute to the peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts necessary to drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and minimize other related challenges. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

Local volunteer centers can provide a central location where people seeking volunteer opportunities can find all such opportunities gathered together in one place [through a searchable database—for an example, see the search process at the website for the Montgomery County (MD) Volunteer Center, at <http://www.montgomeryserves.org/>], and can find assistance with matching their interests to appropriate volunteer experiences.

Volunteer Centers can be a part of Neighborhood Learning Centers, and can provide key assistance to:

- a) People who are seeking community service opportunities
- b) People who need to fulfill community service requirements
- c) People seeking volunteer opportunities as a way of exploring possible employment opportunities