

General Outreach Letter to Organizations Working in Related Fields of Activity

Subject Line:

Unprecedented Challenges Ahead—Sharing Resources, Seeking Collaboration (from cpcsc.info)

To:

Greetings _____,

We are at a critical point in the evolution of life on Planet Earth. Unfortunately, much of the evidence is not “coming through the mist” as much as it should be.

In the space of this email message, I hope to bring to your attention challenges which seemed to be “off the radar screen” for most people these days, and advocate for a kind of culture change which would represent problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

I am the campaign coordinator for “Tipping Point Action: Citizen Participation in Times of Unprecedented Challenges”.

The primary goal of the Tipping Point Action Campaign is to encourage citizens from every variety of circumstances to help create, become involved, contribute to, and participate in one or more of the thousands of Community Visioning Initiatives (or similar stakeholder engagement/collaborative problem solving processes designed to maximize citizen participation) which will be needed to exponentially accelerate solution-oriented activity at this critical time.

Why is there a need for such a campaign?

Here are some of the challenges from [“A List of Ten Critical Challenges”](#) (which is a “Quick Reference Document” in the “Press Kit for the Tipping Point Action Campaign” (accessible at <http://cpcsc.info/press-kit/>):

- a) Global warming and reducing carbon emissions
- b) “Cultures” of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence
- c) The end of the era of “cheap energy
- d) The increasing world population and its implications relating to widespread resource depletion
- e) Current trends indicate that we are creating more and more “urban agglomerations” (cities with a population over of over 1 million people—there are more than 400)
- f) Global inequities and the tragic cycles of malnutrition, disease, and death
- g) A marginalization of the treasured wisdom associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions
- h) Mitigating the other challenges cited in this list will almost certainly make it impossible for the U.S., and many other countries, to resolve unprecedented public debt

What about all the efforts now underway? Why are new initiatives needed?

Unfortunately, many of the efforts to resolve the above challenges fail to recognize the spiritual/moral dimensions of the problems. Here are two examples of what I mean:

1) “The satisfaction of one's physical needs must come at a certain point to a dead stop before it degenerates into physical decadence.” (Mahatma Gandhi)]. *There are many people in the world today who do not understand the wisdom in Gandhi's statement—and their help will be needed to avoid disastrous global warming outcomes.*

2) Unfortunately, there are many people in communities around the world who—regardless of the difficulties and urgencies associated with resolving multiple crises—choose to focus their attention of trying to make money by preying of people's fears, manipulating people's trust, and/or encouraging people to abandon hope in higher aspirations, and indulge in unhealthy, or immoral behavior. Widespread cynicism about our collective capacity to overcome the critical challenges of our times may undermine many projects which would have otherwise led to positive tipping points.

Sharing Resources to Facilitate Discussion About Collaboration

This message is one way for me to share what I have which is most relevant to the kind of culture change needed at this time. The documents I am sharing with you (listed below) can be found by their respective numbers at <http://cpcsc.info/collected-writings/> . I am hoping that what I am sharing will inspire some ideas about how our organizations might collaborate.

#23) “Ten Steps for Long Term Culture Change” (27 pages) (2005; 2009; 2014)

A “foundation” document which describes a long term approach to culture change. The “Ten Steps” are: “Community Good News Networks”; “Community Faith Mentoring Networks”; “Spiritual Friendships”; “Interfaith Peace Vigils”; “Questionnaires That Can Help Build Caring Communities”; “Community Visioning Initiatives for Peace”; “Neighborhood Learning Centers”; “Spiritually Responsible Investing”; “Ecological Sustainability”; and “Community Journal/Newsletters”. Many of these “steps” could be building blocks which would help make an effective Community Visioning Initiative—by way of being ideas for workshops in Neighborhood Learning Centers, and then becoming separate but complementary projects. This document provides an outline for a “trellis” by which a careful transformation could “grow”, over a long period of time, and be carefully monitored and evaluated as it proceeded.

#34) “Press Kit for the Tipping Point Action Campaign” (9 pages) (2014)

This Press Kit for the campaign “Tipping Point Action: Citizen Participation in Times of Unprecedented Challenges” includes a Press Release (3/10/14), and links to many supporting documents, such as “Quick Reference Documents” [Exs. “A List of Ten Critical Challenges” (1 page), “The Potential of Community Visioning Initiatives in 500 words (1 page)]; “Primary Outreach Documents” (Ex. “The Tipping Point Action Campaign: Maximizing Citizen Participation and Accelerating Solution-Oriented Activity”; 6 pages); and “Fact Sheets/Executive Summaries” (Ex. “Resources, Statistics, and Observations”; 20 pages)

[Note: The collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding approach I advocate for—to maximize citizen participation and accelerate solution-oriented activity—gives much attention to the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives. My interest in Community Visioning Initiatives was inspired

instantly when, in 1994, I watched a video documentary titled [“Chattanooga: A Community With A Vision”](#) (13 minutes). 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 I 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.

Many New Opportunities for Collaborations and Partnerships

I believe the unprecedented challenges ahead will require problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before—and thus collaboration on a scale most of us have never known before. I am sending this message to organizations and initiatives in many different sectors, including climate change organizations, offices of sustainability in colleges and universities, contacts in the organization Religions for Peace, the tribal councils of many indigenous communities, tribes and nations, etc. There is much that can be done to overcome the challenges of our times that has not yet been done.

Here are two questions which will help you see how the Tipping Point Action Campaign could be scaled up, and why it might need to be scaled up soon:

- 1) What would an educational curriculum look like—for preparing survey specialists, resource coordinators for Neighborhood Learning Centers, and organizers/facilitators for Community Visioning Initiatives (and other stakeholder engagement/collaborative problem solving approaches)—if it was to be delivered in training modules similar to the kind used when the Peace Corps was scaled up?
- 2) What if there needed to be a reversal of the urbanization trend, and a demographic shift from megacities to more ecologically sustainable and villages, towns, and small cities (with much more potential to achieve carbon neutral economies)? What kind of curriculum (in colleges, other learning institutions, and in Neighborhood Learning Centers) would be most appropriate to create the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to make such a transition?

And here is my commentary on the opportunities for collaboration implied by the above questions.

- a) The potential of Community Visioning Initiatives, and the need for a reversal of the urbanization trend, suggest many opportunities for new partnerships, many new employment opportunities for students and other lifelong learners, and much related curriculum which needs to be developed.
- b) Through workshops at Neighborhood Learning Centers, and other associated local learning networks, citizens can gain greater awareness of how the investments of time, energy, and money (the “votes”) each of us make in our everyday circumstances become the larger economy. 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. Citizens from every variety of circumstances can learn how to wisely cast such “votes”.

c) Although I'm not as energetic as I used to be, since I have moderate COPD/Asthma, I could be willing to travel to a variety of settings to facilitate workshops. I could offer workshops on the need and the potential for collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding as a foundation for long term culture change.

d) 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, the positive multiplier effects would be visible around the world.

e) 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 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.

Concluding Comments

I hope you will excuse me for sending an introductory letter of this length. The subject matter is complex, and there are no established paths for exponentially accelerating solution-oriented activity at this critical time. Such paths will have to be created—and need to be created. There is much potential for good which can be brought into being through persistent efforts in a consistent direction, maintained over a long period of time.

If you have interest in collaboration of some kind, and would like to have further discussion, you are welcome to call me on my cell phone, or send an email to me, using the contact information below. If you would like me to visit, I may be able to do that.

I hope we can find some way to collaborate—to assist with resolving the challenges of our times, and to assist with growth towards the greater good.

For a Peaceful and Sustainable Future,

Stefan Pasti, Campaign Coordinator
Tipping Point Action: Citizen Peacebuilding in Times of Unprecedented Challenges
Email: stefanpasti@gmx.com
Cellphone: (703) 209-2093