An Introduction to the "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign

by Stefan Pasti, Founder and Resource Coordinator
The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative
(www.cpcsi.org)

This "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign proposes to streamline to the frontlines of public discourse the best 5-10 page overviews of how we can get to a 50% reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030--and thereby catalyze local Community Visioning Initiatives, and contribute significantly to maximizing citizen participation in solution-oriented activity.

Why is this "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign is being proposed? (Needs Assessment)

1) There are many well developed approaches to achieving a 50% reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030--by many very qualified coalitions of organizations--which are now accessible to be read and discussed in public discourse [five examples: "The IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C"; "Project Drawdown: 100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming"; Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation's "One Earth Climate Model"; Zero Carbon Britain's "Raising Ambition: Zero Carbon Scenarios From Across the Globe" (a Centre for Alternative Technology project); and "The Solutions Project" (see also p. 50-52 of "Harvest Song" (next link below))].
However--
a) there are numerous unprecedented challenges which are also a part of the unprecedented cultural transformation which we need at this time (Examples: Cultures of Violence, Greed, Corruption, Cynicism, and Overindulgence; Global Inequities and the Cycle of Malnutrition, Disease, and Death; 6th Extinction Event; Gender Equality; More Health Care and Education Accessibility; Assimilating Accelerating Migration and Displacement; Improving Water Access and Sanitation; More Equitable and Circular Food Systems (including Significantly Reducing Food Waste); Protection Against Floods at Chemical Sites; Significantly Improved Solid Waste Management (especially efforts approaching Zero Waste); Ocean Health Management; Reducing Plastic Pollution; Reducing Deforestation; Reducing Cyber Threats; Increasing Media Literacy)—which mean that the cultural transformation we need cannot be primarily about achieving 100% renewable energy… or primarily about achieving a 100% carbon neutral economy. [The above examples are supported by substantial evidence in the Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative (which this writer is building) Summary Paper "Harvest Song" (78 pages; 3.9 MB; November-December, 2018).]
b) while some of the Green New Deals proposed (detailed overview of proposed U.S. Green New Deal provided by Wikipedia) for government interventions focus on some of the other unprecedented challenges besides achieving 100% renewable energy (or achieving a 100% carbon neutral economy), there is now so much information to assimilate that it is difficult to sort out what are the most important

pathways for citizens everywhere to invest their time, energy, and money (their "votes").

In other words, which--from among the numerous unprecedented challenges listed above; the 100 Solutions described by Project Drawdown; the direct action approaches of Divest Invest, Climate Mobilization, Fridays for Future school striking, Extinction Rebellion; political campaigns to change the people who are in control of governance platforms; etc. and etc.

--represent where and how citizens, in the everyday circumstances of local community life, can concentrate their "votes" of time, energy, and money to significantly diffuse and mitigate unprecedented challenges on the scale of a planetary emergency? (True… all of the above is clearly a valid answer, but still… we are behind the curve, and we need more focus than that! This writer believes we need anyone anywhere to be able to examine, learn, and then *know* what their own personal best action plan efforts will look like.)

c) We are only at the beginning of understanding how much the implementation of already known solutions--to all of the unprecedented challenges ahead--depends on understanding, and responding respectfully to, "a mix of economic, cultural and psychological barriers."

--"Whether the roadmaps are implemented rapidly, however, depends on social and political factors." [from "100% Clean and Renewable Wind, Water, and Sunlight All-Sector Energy Roadmaps for 139 Countries of the World" Mark Z. Jacobson (Stanford University, CA) et al. in Joule 1 (energy journal) (p. 108-121) September 6, 2017 (The Solutions Project)]

--*"Changing how billions of people live on Planet Earth is a very special kind of problem, as the forces that shape our lives exist on many different levels. Rather than an unresolved technical challenge, it is increasingly accepted that we face a mix of economic, cultural and psychological barriers."* [from the Executive Summary of Zero Carbon Britain's "Raising Ambition: Zero Carbon Scenarios from Around the World" (see p. 9)]

2) Unfortunately, one of the difficulties of achieving 1.5C (or less) is that there is a long list of institutions and organizations [news sources, governments (international, national, local), think tanks, NGOs, etc.] who have civic responsibility and community service obligations to be responders to this climate emergency (and also to all other unprecedented challenges), but who are not giving sufficient attention what is, in fact, one of the most critical crossroads in the history of life on Planet Earth. Lack of sufficient attention to such global emergencies creates a lack of confidence in such institutions--and cynicism is a very tragic and particularly deadly (at this time) outcome of a lack of confidence in such institutions. The Fridays for Future protests (involving mostly students whose future is seriously in doubt), and the Extinction Rebellion protests, have been a most sincere appeal to people in governments, and international institutions, to "get moving". This "Brainstorming 50% by 2030 Campaign" recognizes the limitations of asking people who are not serious about guiding public discourse during global emergencies to "get moving".

3) There are billions of people who could be investing their time, energy, and money (their "votes") in the everyday circumstances of their community life--and such "votes" could lead to countless ways of earning a living which are carbon-neutral, sustainable, socially responsible, and spiritually meaningful--if they only knew how… and further: it will be helpful to remember that such cultural transformation at the grassroots level (billions of people, and their "votes") is exactly how the "100 companies responsible for 71% of global emissions" (Guardian) (CDP's "Carbon Major Report 2017") found their way to the positions they now hold in the "status quo".

This writer believes such "carbon major" companies (and associated governments, and institutions) will be encouraged to change their ways just as much by people not wanting carbon-intensive products anymore, as by government decrees about how we will live (as black markets for products which are still wanted illustrate). So while both pathways are needed in this crises, this writer believes not wanting the products is the way which will create the least resentment (and yet… it is much more difficult than we think--in our advanced civilizations--for individuals to adopt a carbon-neutral way of life. [Consider also: if many people can learn to find contentment and quality of life while consuming much less material goods and ecological services, this limiting of desires at the "root" will save much trouble trying to respond to the symptoms (of unrestrained, or unexamined desires) as they materialize worldwide. This is one of the benefits of spiritual teachings which often gets overlooked.] We must keep in mind that there are many unprecedented challenges at work at this crossroads in the history of life on Planet Earth--and we ourselves (collectively, around the world) have not (yet) learned how to live peacefully with our fellow citizens, and our global neighbors--and have not (yet) learned how to live in harmony with the diversity of nature on which our lives depend. There is much that can go wrong with policies which either place the burden of transition on the poor and disadvantaged, on people who did little to contribute to Greenhouse Gas Emissions--or with policies which place the burden of transition on people who have had no opportunity to contribute to the decision making process.

4) We need collaborative problem solving and community education approaches which help us to understand how much we need to be learning to be a part of the solutions, and how much we need to be on the same side helping each other.

5) And even further: we need to maximize citizen participation in solution-oriented activity.

Confidence will be dimmed by a lack of clarity until there is truthful public discourse on the full dimensions of the unprecedented challenges ahead.

Confidence will be built up when people believe that the efforts of everyone working together is a greater force than the challenges they are facing.

How Does the "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign Work?

The "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign is based on brainstorming, "casting back", community visioning, crowdsourcing, and other collaborative problem solving approaches involving a community of stakeholders, some known or unknown set of challenges--and either preconceived, or organically developed, goals.

And it cannot be said often enough that the community of stakeholders involved in decisions which could irreversibly damage the prospects of life on Planet Earth need to include as many of the billions of people living now as possible--and need to also consider the prospects of people who have not yet been born.

The "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign identifies institutions and organizations which are already contributing in trustworthy, verifiable, visible, and peer-evaluated ways to guiding public discourse towards achieving 1.5C. The Campaign then asks them to provide a 5-10 page overview of how we will decrease emissions by 50% by 2030 (this writer has created a brief example with "A Look Back from 2030—How Did We Do It").

The "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign also makes an open call for papers to people from all varieties of educational backgrounds, economic circumstances, occupations, cultural backgrounds, and cultural world views--and asks them to submit a 5-10 page overview of how we will decrease emissions by 50% by 2030. (And the campaign will accept submissions even if they are written by crayon on a piece of a paper bag… though the preferable form would be Word file/Pdf file by email, as translations can be more easily managed.)

We are at one of the most critical crossroads in the history of life on Planet Earth. We need to encourage as many people as possible to be thinking—and thinking to the point of brainstorming--about how we will decrease emissions by 50% by 2030. Anyone who has been a part of a Community Visioning exercise will understand that there are many ways and means which will help us achieve our goals which have not yet been brought up to the fore of public discussion. And even further: we--collectively--are far from having had significant public discussion on the full dimensions of the unprecedented challenges ahead (and solutions suggested) using the projections and analysis we already have. We need to discuss this matter thoroughly, even to the point of workshops and informal discussions--in Neighborhood Learning Centers--in communities around the world. Then we will be coming closer to understanding how much we need to be learning to be a part of the solutions, and how much we need to be on the same side helping each other.

If this "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign is sufficiently supported (especially by universities and colleges--higher education), it will be a matter of recognized social responsibility—(as in the global disclosure system CDP has developed for investors, companies, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts)—for organizations and institutions to provide their 5-10 page overview. And those who do not participate will be so noted, in a way similar to having a showing, or not having a showing, in the Princeton Review's "Top 50 Green Colleges" (press release for the 2018 listings). Thus, news sources will have definite public statements to compare with others. Additionally, since this necessary cultural transformation needs to happen very quickly, news sources--and "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign clearinghouse websites--will be able to provide timely updates of such overviews.

When 100-150 of these kinds of 5-10 page overviews have been accumulated, and vetted for factual accuracy, social responsibility, practicality and replicability, cost effectiveness, and etc., such a collection of overviews can function as a "needs assessment"--of the kind which precedes local Community Visioning Initiatives.

Having such a "needs assessment" will help leaders and organizers at the local community level illustrate the need for Community Visioning Initiatives, and for many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers.

Community Visioning Initiatives: Critical for a Just and Peaceful (and Successful) Transition

Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) are series of community meetings designed to maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in identifying solution-oriented activity. The more comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives require steering committees; preliminary surveys or needs 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.

For the purposes of this introduction to the "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign, the kind of Community Visioning this writer is referring to can be summarized by the second half (after the note below) of this writer's "A Look Back from 2030—How Did We Do It?" …

[Note: Keep in mind that the outline of the Community Visioning process provided below is brief, compared to the six tweet Community Visioning series (with each tweet having an accompanying text, or photo, box), and p. 64-70 in the Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative Summary Paper "Harvest Song".]

To continue (with the second half of "A Look Back from 2030….")

There were breakdowns in logistics and communication (re our collective efforts to achieve a 50% reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030), and much initial frustration and resentment; however, violent conflict was kept to a minimum by the following combination of practices (which anticipated the need for peacebuilding, and did much to make the most of everyone's skill and knowledge at the local level):

1) Universities and colleges assisting with Community Visioning--and providing related curriculum, workshops, and teacher training, to support many Neighborhood Learning Centers (Example: Community Visioning--the 13 min documentary "Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision"). [Note: The "Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision" 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, and a total financial investment of 793 million dollars.]

2) Many Neighborhood Learning Centers providing support for Community Visioning Initiatives; and providing places, in local neighborhoods, for discussion, information sharing, mutual support and encouragement, fellowship and friendship--so that the exchanging of information and resources also includes the building of close-knit communities of people with a healthy appreciation for each other's strengths

3) Local Newspapers reporting on--
a) preliminary surveys of 150 key local leaders from a variety of fields of activity—(identifying challenges and solutions)[surveys initiated with the support of the 100-150 overviews (above) by organizations and institutions guiding public discourse towards achieving 1.5C (and possibly other submitters)]—the results of which would inform priorities for Neighborhood Learning Centers workshops)
b) the different stages of the Community Visioning process [preliminary surveys; assembling a steering committee; planning and coordination with a variety of local leaders; brainstorming meetings identifying challenges; workshops prioritizing the challenges; brainstorming meetings identifying solutions; workshops prioritizing the solutions; providing access to priority solutions and action plans in a large meeting center (so that citizens can mark preferences and decide where they will participate); job fairs]
c) the countless workshops, and other informal learning, at Neighborhood Learning Centers
d) the job fairs at the end of the Community Visioning process

4) Residents (especially those who unemployed) who volunteer time and energy to assist with Community Visioning and Neighborhood Learning Centers--and to advance resulting action plans--receiving, as compensation, local currency (which, because it can only be spent in local community business, helps support the local economy)

5) Local leaders of religious/spiritual traditions, who stepped up on every frontline possible to help people understand the urgent need to--
a) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good
b) choose forgiveness, and reconciliation--*and abstaining from violent conflict resolution*--as a way of bringing cycles of violence to an end and
c) create community life and cultural traditions which "… bring to the fore 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".

To Summarize: Why do we need this "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign?

Again, why do we need this "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign?
1) There are numerous unprecedented challenges which are also a part of unprecedented cultural transformation which we need at this time--besides achieving 100% renewable energy, and achieving a 100% carbon neutral economy, by 2050… AND we are only at the beginning of understanding how much the implementation of already known solutions (and other yet to come solutions)--to all of the unprecedented challenges ahead--depends on understanding, and responding respectfully to, "a mix of economic, cultural and psychological barriers."
2) This "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign recognizes the limitations of asking people who are not serious about guiding public discourse during a global emergency to "get moving".
3) There are billions of people who could be investing their time, energy, and money (their "votes") in the everyday circumstances of community life--and such "votes" could lead to countless ways of earning a living that are carbon-neutral, sustainable, socially responsible, and spiritually meaningful, if they only knew how…. (and yet… it is much more difficult than we think--in our advanced civilizations--for individuals to adopt a carbon-neutral way of life). Further, there is much that can go wrong with policies which either place the burden of transition on the poor and disadvantaged, on people who did little to contribute to Greenhouse Gas Emissions--or with policies which place the burden of transition on people who have had no opportunity to contribute to the decision making process.
4) We need collaborative problem solving and community education approaches which help us to understand how much we need to be learning to be a part of the solutions, and how much we need to be on the same side helping each other.

5) And even further: we need to maximize citizen participation in solution-oriented activity.

Confidence will be dimmed by a lack of clarity until there is truthful public discourse on the full dimensions of the critical challenges ahead.

Confidence will be built up when people believe that the efforts of everyone working together is a greater force than the challenges they are facing.

Concluding Notes

As a concluding note, this writer repeats, for emphasis, a paragraph from the section How Does the "Brainstorming 50% by 2030" Campaign Work?, here divided up into single sentences:

We are at one of the most critical crossroads in the history of life on Planet Earth.

We need to encourage as many people as possible to be thinking--and thinking to the point of brainstorming--about how we will decrease emissions by 50% by 2030.

Anyone who has been a part of a Community Visioning exercise will understand that there are many ways and means which will help us achieve our goals which have not yet been brought up to the fore of public discussion.

And even further: we--collectively--are far from having had significant public discussion on the full dimensions of the unprecedented challenges ahead (and solutions suggested) using the projections and analysis we already have.

We need to discuss this matter thoroughly, even to the point of workshops and informal discussions--in Neighborhood Learning Centers--in communities around the world.

Then we will be coming closer to understanding how much we need to be learning to be a part of the solutions, and how much we need to be on the same side helping each other.