

Multi-Dimensional Community Visioning

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

Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) are series of local community meetings designed to maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in identifying solution-oriented activity. The more comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives (6 months to 18 months) require steering committees; preliminary surveys or needs assessments; task forces; workshops; 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.

(Example Community Visioning--the 13 minute documentary [“Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision”](#)) (*highly recommended*)

[The “Chattanooga: A Community with a Vision” video, while carried out as a more general community revitalization project, 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.]

Keeping in mind that---

initial efforts to implement the Community Visioning phase of this Brainstorming 100% ASAP Campaign should focus on small regional areas, which have many universities and communities that are already advancing quickly towards being models of positive tipping point action--and municipalities which have

already declared a Climate Emergency [“over 955 local governments in 18 countries” (as of 8/21/19)(see <https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/climate-emergency-campaign>)--

so that the initial case study reports on results from the Community Visioning process will illustrate the most significantly positive action plans--

--the kind of Community Visioning this writer is advocating for is summarized by the list below.

A. Preliminary surveys of 150 key local leaders from a significant variety of fields of activity.

Such preliminary surveys would be accompanied by a link to the best 100-150 5-10 page overviews--
--by organizations and institutions guiding public discourse towards achieving 1.5°C (2.7°F)
--by organizations and institutions in a variety of fields of activity which are critical to Global Heating and Climate Breakdown mitigation, education, ecological sustainability, communication, access to basic needs, emergency assistance, social cohesion, preserving and applying wisdom and compassion, etc.
--and by some of the countless other individuals who have responded to the call for 5-10 p. overviews

—and such preliminary surveys would ask local leaders to assess challenges and solutions for their community based on

- a) the solutions suggested by the 100-150 overviews they have been directed to review
- b) the resources and challenges which represent the context of their local community or region
- c) and, if they wish, the thousands of 5-10 page overviews accumulated by the “Brainstorming” Campaign (accessible at a Campaign clearinghouse website).

The results of these key local leader preliminary surveys would be published in local newspapers, thus helping with the process of raising awareness in public discourse--and would inform priorities for the local Community Visioning Initiative, and workshops in Neighborhood Learning Centers.

B. Universities and colleges assisting with Community Visioning

1) Universities and colleges--which have already advanced to the point of recognizing and implementing Climate Breakdown mitigation solutions--will be natural lead organizations for building the partnerships necessary to carry out Community Visioning Initiatives in their local community (or, at least, for the first “wave” of Community Visioning Initiatives).

2) Local governments which have already declared a Climate Emergency (“over 650 local governments” (as of 6/26/19)(see <https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/climate-emergency-campaign>) are also natural lead organizations for building the partnerships necessary to carry out Community Visioning Initiatives.

C. 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

1) Universities, colleges, education organizations, and other organizations, could increase their existing efforts, or take up the call, to develop related curriculum and offer classes, workshops, and teacher training, to support the development of Neighborhood Learning Centers

2) “In 1912, Rosenwald provided funds for a pilot program involving six new small schools in rural Alabama, which were designed, constructed and opened in 1913 and 1914 and overseen by Tuskegee; the model proved successful. Rosenwald (then) established The Rosenwald Fund. The school building program was one of its largest programs. Using state-of-the-art architectural plans initially drawn by professors at Tuskegee Institute, the Rosenwald Fund spent over four million dollars to help build 4,977 schools, 217 teachers' homes, and 163 shop buildings in 883 counties in 15 states, from Maryland to Texas. The Rosenwald Fund used a system of matching grants, and black communities raised more than \$4.7 million to aid the construction. These schools became known as Rosenwald Schools. The local schools were a source of much community pride and were of priceless value to African-American families when poverty and segregation limited their children's chances. By 1932, the facilities could accommodate one third of all African American children in Southern U.S. schools.”

[From the Wikipedia webpage for “Booker T. Washington” in the sections “Wealthy Friends and Benefactors” and “Julius Rosenwald” (at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booker_T._Washington) (note: current text at the Wikipedia webpage has been revised, in a good way, to provide more detailed information. However, because the following text is concise, this writer retains the older version.)]

3) People from every variety of economic circumstances, and every variety of educational and cultural backgrounds, can learn much through participation in Community Visioning Initiatives, and involvement in Neighborhood Learning Centers.

a) How all the “little events” in everyday community life have a positive and cumulative effect

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.

This point refers to the following “cause-effect” relationships:

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

--The investments of time, energy, and money that each of us make in our everyday circumstances becomes the larger economy.

Thus, through workshops and other informal education (and associated local learning networks), people everywhere need to 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 resilience, and ecological regeneration efforts necessary to resolve the Climate Emergency--and other unprecedented challenges--at the same time. As the ancient Chinese proverb says: “Many hands make much work light.”

b) Selective buying--for the carbon neutral and circular local economies

To be even more specific: this writer believes that education during the process of a comprehensive Community Visioning Initiatives, and especially in Neighborhood Learning Centers, can result in residents everywhere knowing

i) if they are in an area of surplus (in which case their surplus may help others with emergency needs)

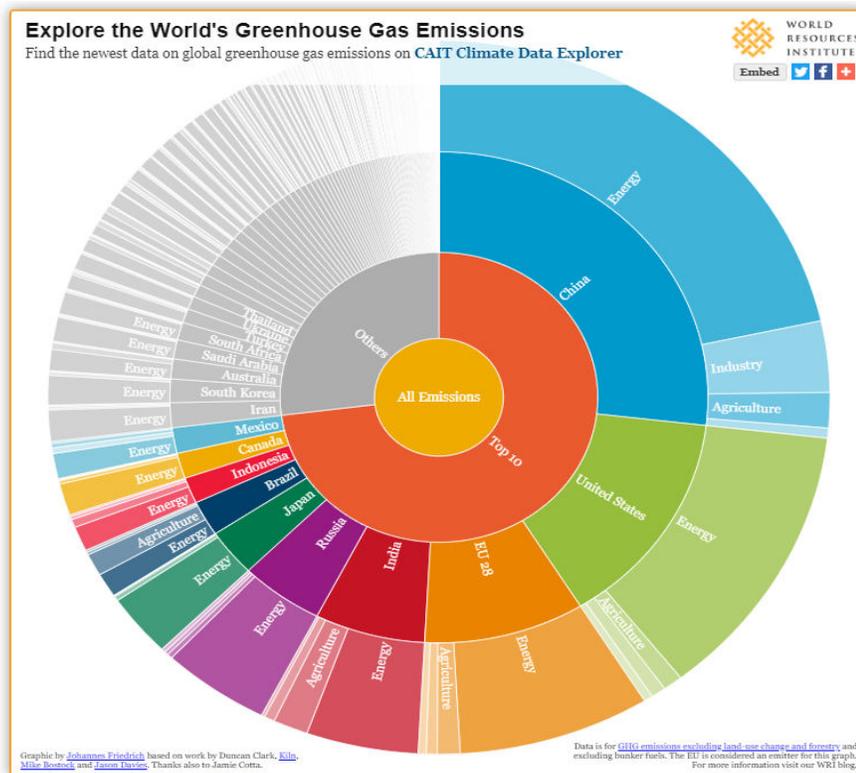
ii) where to buy what material purchases they absolutely needed to make--so that they contribute the most possible to carbon-neutral supply chains

iii) what kind of businesses to boycott so that the most carbon neutral and circular local economies can be established in the shortest amount of time; etc.

If this kind of selective buying is done in cooperation with Brainstorming 100% ASAP Campaigns, and thousands of Community Visioning Initiatives with supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers, it may be manageable... and it may be enough of a downsizing of the Total World Energy Demand to match

up with the efforts at powering electric grids from 100% renewable energy sources. And once it becomes clear that local residents are “getting together” on purchasing, and that many local communities are going to “drive” economies from global to local-and- regional, changes may come more quickly in the upper echelons of governments, international corporations, international banks, etc., which have been slow to respond to this Climate Emergency.

The graph below is a key case in point of the potential of selective buying--i.e. there are *countless numbers of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of community life”* which can have a significant cumulative effect on reducing Total World Energy Demand--which is the greatest contributor to Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions.



[Pie Chart above is from article “This Interactive Chart Explains World’s Top 10 Emitters...” (2013 data) by Johannes Friedrich Johannes Friedrich, Mengpin Ge and Andrew Pickens (April 11, 2017) at the World Resources Institute (WRI) website (see <https://www.wri.org/blog/2017/04/interactive-chart-explains-worlds-top-10-emitters-and-how-theyve-changed>)][Note: the 2013 data still seems relevant in 2019 with regard to which countries emit the most Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and the relative size of the energy related emissions.]

In this context, 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”. [i.e. No amount of money-power or political power can force people to accept a way of life which requires buying extremely harmful products--if those people are determined enough, and if they are well-organized.]

If the goal is to resolve Climate Breakdown, and many other related challenges ahead--in a very short window of time--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

Special Summary Note Regarding the Potential of Individuals Working Together
(with repetition, for emphasis)

Responsible actions by national governments, international corporations, international banks, international investment entities, international NGOs, etc. (of key components of the global economy and global policy making) are essential, to avoid irreversible and catastrophic Global Heating and Climate Breakdown--and helping such entities fully realize their responsibilities and obligations is critical work. However, it is possible for enough individuals to recognize the kind of decisions we need to make about what kind of economies and lifestyles we carry into the future, and decide that we must downsize Total World Energy Demand drastically to be realistic about reining in irreversible and catastrophic Global Heating and Climate Breakdown [and to help resolve many other challenges (see p. 19)]. And if we downsize drastically, through careful *just transition* work during thousands of Community Visioning Initiatives, we (individuals) can cause the same unprecedented positive change we are now seeking without being dependent on what governments and international entities do. And once they (the governments and international entities) see this, and understand that, in the long run, their influence is going to be undermined if they continue to lag behind about their responsibilities, there will surely be more and more people working together, on the same side, helping each other.

D. Local Newspapers reporting on--

- 1) preliminary surveys of 150 key local leaders from a variety of fields of activity involving identifying challenges and solutions [surveys initiated with the support of the 100-150 best overviews (above) by the 616 organizations and institutions (and other submitters)]—the results of which would inform priorities for Community Visioning, and the many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers workshops
- 2) 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); etc]

3) the countless workshops, and other informal learning, at Neighborhood Learning Centers

4) the job fairs at the end of the Community Visioning process

5) And, in addition, local newspapers establishing a new section in the paper, which might be called “Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education”. This new section would be used to highlight and accumulate stories, personal experiences, and other forms of reader contributions which identify helpful people and valuable resources, and reinforce important community goals. (Step 13 in the CPCS Initiative document [“Growing Wisdom and Compassion in Small Communities \(13 Steps\)”](#) is a longer overview of this idea)

E. Residents (especially those who are 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)

1) Example: “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.” [From the “Local Currency” webpage at the website for the Schumacher Center for a New Economics (at <http://www.centerforneweconomics.org/content/local-currencies>)]

2) Resources: The only collection of its kind in North America, the Local Currency Archives contain a wide variety of materials gathered from over fifty different alternative currency projects around the globe. The collection represents the work of hundreds of community activists and leaders in the field such as Paul Glover of Ithaca HOURS and Thomas Greco of Tucson Traders. An invaluable tool for both researchers and citizen activists, the LC Archives make possible the comparative study of various currency models such as TimeBanking, barter systems, and HOURS.” [from the “Local Currencies Project” webpage at the website for the Schumacher Center for New Economics (at <https://centerforneweconomics.org/apply/local-currencies-program/>)]

F. The job fairs at the end of the Community Visioning Initiative process, which 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.

G. Local leaders of religious/spiritual traditions stepping up on every frontline possible to help people understand the urgent need to—

- 1) sacrifice personal desires for the greater good
- 2) choose forgiveness, and reconciliation--*and abstaining from violent conflict resolution*--as a way of bringing cycles of violence to an end and
- 3) 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".

Thus--

Many Colleges and Universities assisting with carrying out local Community Visioning Initiatives
+ many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers
= an exponential acceleration in solution-oriented activity.

1000 time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives, in communities around the world, would create—
--an exponential acceleration in solution-oriented investment
--an exponential acceleration in solution-oriented employment and
--an exponential acceleration in our collective capacity to overcome the challenges of our times.

"... there are truths which none can be free to ignore, if one is to have that wisdom through which life can become useful. These are the truths concerning the structures of the good life and concerning the factual conditions by which it may be achieved..."

[from "General Education in a Free Society" (The Harvard Committee, 1945)]

There is much that can be done

--to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions
--limit Global Heating
--and limit the destructive consequences of the Climate Emergency and the Extinction Emergency

that has not yet been done.