The Tipping Point Action Campaign
A Catalyst for Exponentially Accelerating Solution-Oriented Activity at this Critical Time

An Interview with Campaign Coordinator, Stefan Pasti
(10 pages)

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Lead-in/Introduction

Widespread awareness that we are at a critical point in the evolution of life on Planet Earth has been slow in coming, partly because the challenges are complex.   But more and more organizations have seen enough evidence, and are taking steps to prepare for problem solving on a scale most of us have never known before.

One such organization is The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative (at www.cpcsc.info). The CPCS Initiative provides research for critical challenge alerts, and support for collaborative problem solving initiatives which seek to maximize citizen participation.

Beginning in December, 2013, The CPCS Initiative launched a new and comprehensive campaign called "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.

This article is an about why there is a need for a Tipping Point Action Campaign. This article also provides an introduction to how such a campaign can help exponentially accelerate solution-oriented activity at this critical time.

The article is presented as an interview of Tipping Point Action Campaign Coordinator, Stefan Pasti for two reasons:

1) so that people working at newspapers, and other forms of news media, can see an example of the interview format making it possible to present complex critical challenges assessments, and describe unprecedented forms of collaborative problem solving, in ways which can reach people from many different backgrounds
2) because the interview format might help more and more people understand how increasing their level of participation in local community based problem solving could benefit both their own individual circumstances—and the greater good of the whole.

The Interview:

First, if we are at such a critical point, why aren't more people saying that?

In fact, many people are saying just that. Here's some evidence:

1) Note: the following are tweets by Stefan Pasti, Tipping Point Action Campaign Coordinator, at the Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative (www.cpcsc.info) @StefanPasti [source references in the CPCS Initiative document "Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors" (589 pages; Nov., 2013)]:

"Scientists agree current United Nations Framework/Climate Change pledges and commitments most likely result in 3.5 to 4^OC (7.2^O F) warming"

Dr. Fatih Birol (IEA) (6/10/13): "on track for temp increase up to 5.3^O C (9.5^O F) (9:30—15:45 IEA criteria for 2 deg C) http://bit.ly/15Tu04I

"Only a very small portion of the global public is aware that global coal consumption has advanced by over 50% in the past decade."

Al Gore: "world is on brink of 'carbon bubble'" from undisclosed high-carbon assets 10/31/13 article at http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/01/gore-warns-carbon-bubble

Bond markets shielded from effects of climatechange, ecosystem degradation, water scarcity?/$40 trillion of sovereign debt in global markets

Bond markets shielded from climate change?/from 10/27/13"Sovereign Environmental Risk" Achim Steiner (UNEP),Susan Burns http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/natural-resources-and-sovereign-credit-ratings-by-achim-steiner-and-susan-burns

"Most fossil fuel reserves we have worldwide will have to stay in ground" to avoid warming over 2C, Figueres (UN) http://bit.ly/1fzjLcl

"realities will eventually erode value of oil, coal holdings"/"study after study saying beware" Figueres(UN) 1/14/14 http://bit.ly/1fzjLcl

2) From Books and articles by Lester R. Brown (Earth Policy Institute)

 a) "…A strategy for eradicating poverty will not succeed if an economy's environmental support systems are collapsing." ("Plan B 2.0: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble"; 2006)

b) "Plan B…involves cutting carbon dioxide emissions 80% by 2020…We must move at wartime speed…." ("Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization"; 2008)

c) "Half the world's people live in countries where water tables are falling as aquifers are being depleted." ("World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse"; 2011)

3) From "An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development: Report for the UN Secretary-General" (October, 2013) (p. 20)

(re: mitigating global warming)…"Achieving such a deep transformation of the energy, industrial, and agricultural systems over the next few decades will represent one of the greatest technical, organizational, and financing challenges that humanity has faced."

4) From "A List of Ten Critical Challenges" (by Stefan Pasti)

#1 Challenge: "Global warming and reducing carbon emissions--a) '…the energy industry's ability to boost production of oil, coal, and natural gas in North America is feeding a global surge in demand for these commodities, ensuring ever higher levels of carbon emissions…..'
#7 Challenge: "A marginalization of the treasured wisdom associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions—treasured wisdom which includes many teachings relating to sacrificing personal desires for the greater good of the whole, and finding contentment and quality of life while consuming less material goods and ecological services"

One of the problems people may have in coming into contact with observations about critical challenges like those cited above is described as Challenge #10 in "A List of Ten Critical Challenges":

Challenge #10: "Sorting out what are real challenges and what are sound and practical solutions is becoming more and more difficult, as there are now, in most communities of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time. Thus, even analysis supported by much credible evidence—that there are many danger signs flashing now (involving significant threats to ecological stability and social cohesion)—can be easily lost amidst a swirl of misinformation, other more trivial information, and the "siren song" of multiple entertainment venues. "

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

Here are four reasons why new initiatives are needed:

1) Too often mitigation strategies have limited definitions of "stakeholders"—as if the challenges of our times can be resolved by the experts while the rest of us are doing something else. Whereas we can see—for example, by the section heading in the key document "Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors" from the CPCS Initiative ("Exponentially Increasing World Population at a time when it is culturally acceptable to encourage indiscriminant consumption")—that all of us have important responsibilities associated with the challenges of our times.

Further evidence that all of us have important responsibilities [source references in the CPCS Initiative document "Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors" (589 pages; Nov., 2013)]:

"For almost 3 billion people, wood is the main energy source for heating and cooking"/"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/ "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"/Worldwide Advertising Spending (2012)--$557 billion/"Hunger and malnutrition are in fact the number one risk to health worldwide — greater than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined"/ "12 percent of the world's

3

population uses 85 percent of its water"/"Every year tobacco kills more Americans than did World War II —and every year tobacco kills more Americans than AIDS, cocaine, heroin, alcohol, vehicular accidents, homicide and suicide combined"/"Nearly a quarter of total of the global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions can be attributed to the transport sector. Globally, carbon dioxide emissions from transport have increased 85 per cent between 1973 and 2007"/"Earlier this year, the OECD's International Transport Forum forecast that the number of cars worldwide would reach 2.5 billion by 2050"/ "By 2030, China and India will have more than 221 cities and 68 cities, respectively, with populations of more than one million people each"/U.S. Infrastructure Funding Gap (2013) (calculated by ASCE)-- $1.611 trillion/Total world military expenditure in 2012 was $1.75 trillion/ "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."

2) Unfortunately, many of the efforts now underway give little attention to the spiritual/moral dimensions of cultural worldviews [Ex: "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)]. How important is a deeper understanding of the spiritual/moral dimensions of global warming, and other related challenges? Consider the following: a) *there are many people who do not understand the wisdom in Gandhi's statement* b) *their help will be needed* to avoid disastrous global warming outcomes.

3) 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 that many of the critical challenges of our times will not be resolved could be a crippling factor affecting many projects. What we need are efforts comprehensive enough to keep momentum on the side of "We can do it".

4) If the initiatives were in place to exponentially accelerate solution-oriented activity at this critical time—which is what is really needed—it would be a significant change from "business-as-usual" (in communities around the world), and public discourse in even the most "mainstream" media outlets would be contributing to the efforts. The fact that unprecedented solution-oriented activity has not reached such visibility (the kind of visibility that means a majority of people in the world are aware of it) can be seen as another "danger sign flashing red".

<u>Could you provide a brief overview of the Tipping Point Action Campaign? What are the goals? And how might those goals be accomplished?</u>

The goal of the "Tipping Point Action: Citizen Participation in Times of Unprecedented Challenges" Campaign is 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.

Community Visioning Initiatives can be described as a series of community meetings designed to facilitate the process of brainstorming ideas, organizing the ideas into goals, prioritizing the goals, and identifying doable steps towards those goals. A primary focus of Community Visioning Initiatives is to

maximize citizen participation in identifying challenges, and maximize citizen participation in solution-oriented activity.

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 documentary provides many personal interviews and how-to details associated with two very successful Community Visioning Initiatives. 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. [Note: For a detailed look at the kind of Community Visioning Initiatives I advocate for, see "The Potential of Community Visioning Initiatives (in 500 words)" (1 page) and "A 15 Step Outline for a Community Visioning Initiative" (28 pages).]

I believe that to be most effective, Community Visioning initiatives need to be supported by many Neighborhood Learning Centers. 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 will also include the building of a close-knit community of people with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths.

I also believe that Community Visioning initiatives need to be initiated by preliminary surveys sent to at least 150 key leaders in a given community. Responses from the preliminary surveys will help identify workshop topics for Neighborhood Learning Centers, and help residents appreciate the need for a Community Visioning Initiative, and for many supporting Neighborhood Learning Centers.

There are two key pieces the Tipping Point Action Campaign is contributing to efforts to overcome the challenges of our times: a) evidence that a profound level of problem solving is needed   b) starting points for discussion on how such a level of problem solving can be achieved.

Here are two questions which may help readers see how this Tipping Point Action Campaign might 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 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?

Educational institutions, and other organizations, could increase their existing efforts, or take up the call, to develop educational curriculum and training in response to such questions.

One important step towards realizing the potential of the Tipping Point Action Campaign would be collaboration among organizations to train organizers and facilitators in 1) how to describe the potential of Community Visioning Initiatives to key local community leaders and   2) how to guide a

community of residents through the process (from preparation through implementation to evaluation). Lead organizations providing such training programs would be providing the following services to local communities: affordable workshops; neighborhood learning centers; collaborative problem solving which will turn polarizing circumstances into "how does our community want to respond to what 150 local leaders have identified (in preliminary surveys) as challenges and solution options at this critical time?";--and a means of continually raising awareness about the outcomes of the "votes" people cast (every day) with their investments of time, energy, and money.

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. Organizations and initiatives providing trustworthy guidance for collaborative problem solving and citizen peacebuilding efforts—especially at this critical time—should be valued for serving the greater good, and setting a good example.

And here are four points describing basic building blocks which seem to me like necessary prerequisites for a Tipping Point Action Campaign to scale up--

1) Less people who are worried that "the economy" will collapse if there is widespread movement from using material goods and ecological resources indiscriminately to discriminating carefully about the use of material goods and ecological resources.

2) More people who believe it is possible to create, support, and sustain communities which require much less materials goods and ecological services, drastically reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG emissions), maintain ecological sustainability, maintain a high level of compassion for fellow human beings—and which represent what a significant majority of community residents surveyed would describe as a high quality of life.

3) 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 GHG 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.

4) More people who believe that it is possible to create stakeholder engagement/collaborative problem solving processes which are designed to maximize citizen participation—and which citizens from every variety of circumstances (every variety of differences in language, cultural background, economic circumstances, and belief systems) can trust, and believe in… (i.e. trust and believe that such processes will make best use of the knowledge and skills each person has to contribute).

<u>Have you tried submitting an overview of the Tipping Point Action Campaign to a crowdsourcing platform?</u>

Thank you for that question. The Tipping Point Action Campaign is now entering a new phase, as there is a Tipping Point Action Proposal up at the MIT Climate CoLab Crowdsourcing Platform.

The primary question posed by the MIT Climate CoLab is: "What actions should be taken to address climate change?" The goal of the Tipping Point Action Proposal: "Assist with creating 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives to maximize citizen participation and accelerate solution-oriented activity". [It is worth noting here that, at the present time, there are no contests active at the MIT Climate CoLab Crowdsourcing Platform. Currently, the 2014 Proposal Workspace is a place for input, comments, revision, and networking.]

People who would like to review the proposal and comment can find the Tipping Point Action Proposal at http://climatecolab.org/web/guest/plans/-/plans/contestId/1300103 . There is also a pdf file of the 10 page proposal at the Community Peacebuildng and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative website (see http://cpcsc.info/tipping-point-action/).

Dialogue associated with crowdsourcing the Tipping Point Action Campaign can touch on a wide range of topic areas, and can be a most rewarding "learn and share" experience—for all participants.

I hope many readers of this interview will consider reviewing the proposal and offering some input at the MIT Climate CoLab page for the Tipping Point Action Proposal.

How is the current Tipping Point Action Campaign funded?

Currently, I am the sole organizational person for the Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative. Over the many years of research and writing that has lead up to launching the Tipping Point Action Campaign, I have done other kinds of work to earn the time and money to create resources, and provide websites. I have not yet been able to find an organization which would take the Tipping Point Action Campaign, and possibly the CPCS Initiative, under its wing.

Do you have any thoughts about why you have not been successful in finding an organization to support the work of the CPCS Initiative—that is, the work of providing research for critical challenge alerts, and support for collaborative problem solving initiatives which seek to maximize citizen participation?

Well…it's true that I have had an untraditional career path—and have no traditional credentials or professional experience in the field of critical challenges assessments/risk analysis. It is also true that I have no traditional credentials or professional experience in the field of stakeholder engagement and facilitation for collaborative problem solving processes.

Furthermore, the subject matter is complex. Without examples to point to (of critical challenges assessments which also take into account the spiritual/moral dimensions, and comprehensive collaborative problem solving which takes into account the profound and unprecedented nature of the challenges), it is difficult to describe the work of the CPCS Initiative briefly, and in simple sentences.

A most difficult obstacle is that *the need for such an unprecedented degree of problem solving has not yet become a well known fact.* So what I am trying to do is provide evidence that there is a need for such problem solving, and that there is a way to do it—without having traditional credentials, professional experience, or examples to point to.

It may be that since I have no traditional credentials, and no professional experience, it is in fact my role to offer critical challenge assessments which go far beyond most assessments in calling the challenges

unprecedented—and it is my role to therefore advocate for unprecedented forms of problem solving—as others in more established organizations may have constraints which prevent them from doing so. And it may also be that I will only be successful in providing some resources for work in the future which will be successful. However it is, since I do believe that we are going to need all the resources, knowledge, and skills each one of us has, I accept that it is a call upon me to contribute what I have.

My best hope is that I can present my advocacy in a way that shows the common sense/practical foundation for Community Visioning Initiatives. I am hoping it will be self-evident to more and more people—as it has been to me—that we will need the best efforts we can make at working together, if we are to be successful at overcoming the unprecedented challenges ahead.

Have you tried crowdfunding to support your initiative and the Tipping Point Action Campaign?

With very little in the way of a network of colleagues and friends, I hesitate to submit a proposal. And yet I have done research into what would make a good crowdfunding campaign, and I feel I am close to having all the necessary pieces for a good crowdfunding campaign. So I may try that sometime in the next two months. My first hope is that I can find an organization which would take the Tipping Point Action Campaign, and possibly the CPCS Initiative, under its wing.

Can you provide an example of your approach to summarizing the potential of the Tipping Point Action Campaign—an example of a summary which you might present in a crowdfunding campaign?

I do not have the funds for the kind of visual aids and video production which would make the kind of presentation people expect these days. But what I do have is a feeling that "We can do it." Such a feeling, supported by much evidence, should not be underestimated. As I said above, widespread cynicism that many of the critical challenges of our times will not be resolved could be a crippling factor affecting many projects. What we need are efforts comprehensive enough to keep momentum on the side of "We can do it".

So I would try to offer a presentation which clearly demonstrates that—even with challenges as profound as what we have in our times—there are practical steps, which can be taken by communities around the world, and which can provide a high degree of confidence that a peaceful and sustainable future is possible... that in fact, it is possible for most, if not all communities, to achieve a peaceful and sustainable future.

Here is one example of that kind of presentation—

The "Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors" (key CPCS Initiative document) has a section titled "Descriptions of People Being Formally Invited to Join CPCS Initiative Board of Advisors (272)". And in the "Who will take these actions?" section of the Tipping Point Action Proposal at the MIT Climate CoLab Platform, I list 35 organizations and initiatives I believe will be most helpful to the start up phase of a Tipping Point Action Campaign:

Pew Research Center; Dialogue by Design; D3Associates; Participatory Local Democracy Program; TckTckTck; Stakeholders Forum; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Teachers Without Borders; International Development Training; Doctors Without Borders; The Hunger Project; ICLEI; Heifer International; Oxfam; Habitat for Humanity;

Rotary International; Mercy Corps; CARE International; Religions for Peace; Peace Corps; Sister Cities International; Skoll Foundation; Gates Foundation; Tides Foundation; Women's Funding Network; Save the Children International; Fairtrade International; Ashoka; Katerva; Gaia Education; La Via Campesina; Global Ecovillage Network; Permaculture Research Institute; International Biochar Initiative

The Tipping Point Action Campaign could gain momentum with even a tiny fraction of the above advisors and organizations.

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

The challenges of our times are not something the experts will resolve while the rest of us are doing something else.

Everyone is involved when it comes to determining the markets which supply the "ways of earning a living".

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.

We are going to need all the resources, knowledge, and skills each one of us has, and we are going to need the best efforts we can make at working together, if we are going to succeed at resolving the challenges ahead of us.

There are two key pieces the Tipping Point Action Campaign is contributing to efforts to overcome the challenges of our times: a) evidence that a profound level of problem solving is needed   b) starting points for discussion on how such a level of problem solving can be achieved.

A rough estimate by this writer for a time-intensive (year or more) Community Visioning Initiative (introduced by Preliminary Surveys, and supported by many Neighborhood Learning Centers) is $10 million (10 million in U.S. dollars).

Thus, 1000 Community Visioning Initiatives, in communities around the world, would cost $10 billion. Here are some selected observations (source references in the "Invitation Package" document). These observations will illustrate that wisely directed, the way each of us "votes" with our time, energy, and money 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 to also (at the same time) mitigate many other related challenges.

1) $10 billion is only .005% of the $207 trillion in personal wealth held by the richest 10 percent.

2) $10 billion is only .57% (a little more than half of 1%) of $1,750 billion in military expenditures in 2012.

3) $10 billion is 1.8% of (est.) $557 billion in worldwide advertising spending in 2012.

4) Many hands make much work light. Confidence will be dimmed by a lack of clarity until there is truthful public discourse on the full dimensions of 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

Any thoughts you would like to close this interview with?

Yes. I would like to help readers get a picture in their mind of a revitalized sense of working together with our neighbors for the greater good, and so I will say this:

One of the most persistent ironies in life is that with so many opportunities to provide real assistance to fellow human beings—and with the potential for such assistance to result in happiness "to those who extend help as well as to those who receive it"—there are still many, many people in this world who cannot find a "way to earn a living" providing such assistance.   We have the need—and the resources—to necessary remedy this irony.

Again, we are going to need all the resources, knowledge, and skills each one of us has, and we are going to need to make the best efforts we can at working together, if we are going to succeed at resolving the challenges ahead of us.

If there are readers who have not yet been invited to become a part of the unprecedented efforts that will be needed to overcome the challenges of our times, such readers are in every way encouraged to consider this message as their invitation.

(end of interview)

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The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative (at www.cpcsc.info). The CPCS Initiative provides research for critical challenge alerts, and support for collaborative problem solving initiatives which seek to maximize citizen participation.

Stefan Pasti is the Campaign Coordinator for Tipping Point Action: Citizen Participation in Times of Unprecedented Challenges. He is good at analyzing complex information regarding challenges of our times, identifying pathways for solution-oriented activity to flow, synthesizing such information into understandable parts, and organizing those parts into well organized documents (much like the work which would need to be done to sort through participant input during a Community Visioning Initiative).