

“15 Sample Preliminary Survey Questions”

(as preparation for a Community Visioning Initiative)

Introduction

This writer advocates for a combination of preliminary surveys to 150 local leaders (as preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives), time-intensive Community Visioning Initiatives supported by many “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” (offering workshops suggested by the preliminary surveys), and “sister community” relationships as a way of creating local community specific and regional specific “constellations of initiatives” responses to the challenges of our times.

The questions included in this section have been selected from the IPCR document “39 Suggestions for Preliminary Survey Questions (as Preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives)” (with subtitle: and a beginning database for “Questionnaires That Help Build Caring Communities”) (not currently accessible on the Internet) Subsection C in Section VII (“Constellations of Initiatives” Approach...) In the document “Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors (at www.cpcsc.info)” (accessible at the cpcsc.info website) can provide background information on how such Preliminary Surveys could be a key support for Community Visioning Initiatives, and a most helpful educational resource for residents of a community carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative.

As emphasized in many locations in this document, a Preliminary Survey sent out to 150 key leaders from a variety of fields of activity in a community can do much to identify urgent issues previously under the radar for most residents, suggest key topics to explore in Community Teaching and Learning Center workshops, and build up awareness of the need for both the Community Visioning Initiative, and resident participation in many of the activities related to the visioning process.

The 15 Questions:

1. Home Territory

Please name one—or two—communities/towns/cities/regional areas which you would identify as your “home territory” [i.e. where you have the most significant personal reasons for making your home, and living many years of your life... (even if you are not currently living there)]. Please list your 5 most significant personal reasons for identifying your “home territory”—and rank them as most significant, next most significant, etc., using 1 as most significant, 2 as next most significant, and so on.

2. Definition of “the good life”

What is your definition of “the good life?” Please describe your definition of “the good life”—including both those parts of “the good life” which you already have, and those parts of “the good life” which you still hope to attain. (Note: Please clearly indicate which parts of “the good life” you already have, and which parts you still hope to attain.)

3. An Initial Assessment

For the questions below, please check the box which best corresponds to the way you view the following statements:

a) “As a result of the unprecedented opportunities created by the expansion of the Internet, we have now arrived at a very auspicious moment in time... for at no other time in the course of history has so many people had access to so much in the way of time-tested guidelines, inspiring role models, and service-oriented initiatives relevant to peace, prosperity, and happiness for all humanity.”

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe it-- and there is much evidence to support it | I believe it-- and there is sufficient evidence to support it | I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it | It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now | I don't believe it— there is no evidence to support it |

b) “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.”

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe it-- and there is much evidence to support it | I believe it-- and there is sufficient evidence to support it | I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it | It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now | I don't believe it— there is no evidence to support it |

c) “Even now, as you are reading this, truly inspiring contributions of genuine goodwill are being generated in a variety of ways—and in a variety of circumstances—by countless numbers of people in communities around the world.”

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe it-- and there is much evidence to support it | I believe it-- and there is sufficient evidence to support it | I would like to believe it, but there isn't enough evidence to support it | It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now | I don't believe it— there is no evidence to support it |

d) Who would you identify as your “preferred provider” in the following areas of life in your community? [Note: To realize the benefits of this question, it will be sufficient to answer with what first comes to mind for as many categories as you can.]

Building Construction
Building Supplies

Health Care
Home Furnishings

Clothes Manufacturer
Communication Services
Disaster Relief
Education System Development
Emergency Health Care
Energy Production and Distribution
Food Distribution
Food Processing
Food Production
Government

Home Repair
Information Services
Recycling
Religious, Spiritual, and Moral Instruction
Road Building, Maintenance, and Repair
Shoemaker
Teachers/Educators
Transportation
Waste Treatment and Disposal
Water Purification and Distribution

i) Considering this group of people as a whole, how well do you know the people who you think of as your “preferred providers” in these areas of your community life? (Please check the appropriate box below to indicate your answer).

closely connected-- many personal relationships
 closely connected in some ways
 only slightly connected-- very few personal relationships
 solely as service providers

ii) Is the way your “preferred providers” (as a whole) carry out their responsibilities consistent with your idea of “things people can do in the everyday circumstances of their lives’ which will contribute to peacebuilding, community revitalization, and ecological sustainability efforts in your community and region—and in other parts of the world?” (Please check the appropriate box below to indicate your answer).

most of the time
 in some ways
 almost never
 I don’t know

4. Most Difficult Challenges, Most Valuable Resources

Included in Appendix 4 (of this “Invitation” document) is a list of challenges which this writer feels are most important to make significant progress on in the months and years ahead. Consider that “Ten Point...” list provided as one example of a response to part a) of this question. Then, following your own independent thinking on this important subject, please respond as best you can to the following questions.

a) From your point of view, what are the most difficult challenges of our times?

b) Do you believe that we—collectively—have the resources necessary to overcome the challenges you have identified as the most difficult challenges of our times?

c) If your answer to Question #2 is yes, please describe the resources you believe will contribute the most to helping us—collectively—overcome the challenges you identified.

d) If your answer to Question #2 is no, please offer any and all sincere, constructive, relevant, and practical suggestions for what we— collectively—can do to inspire, encourage, and/or create the resources you believe *would be necessary* to overcome the challenges you identified.

5. Engines of Economic Stability

Many people seem to be worried that “the economy” will collapse if there is widespread movement from “consuming material goods and ecological resources indiscriminately” to “discriminating carefully about use of material goods and ecological resources”... and yet many of the challenges of our times are very deeply rooted in cultural traditions, which suggest that it may require decades, generations, or even centuries to resolve such challenges. Surely, there will be work to do...

Please carefully consider the above introduction to this question, and then respond to the following questions.

a) Please name as many engines of economic stability and methods of economic conversion as you can which you believe would result in communities that

minimize resource requirements
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.

b) Please check the box below which best corresponds to your view of the following statement:

“It is possible to create, support, and sustain communities which can minimize resource requirements, 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.”

I believe it-- and
there is much evidence
to support it

I believe it-- and
there is sufficient
evidence to
support it

I would like to
believe it, but there
isn't enough evidence
to support it

It is difficult to
believe it, with the
way things are
going now

I don't believe it—
there is no evidence
to support it

6. Seeking Information about Our Moral Compasses

For the question below, please check the box (or boxes) which best correspond(s) to the way you view the following statements:

a) “Cultures” of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence:

- i) have become so common that many of us accept such as inevitable
- ii) are a significant part of the current crises of confidence in financial markets
- and iii) are in many ways slowing the restructuring of investment priorities needed to respond to an increasing number of other critical challenges.

- agree
- agree in some ways
- have different view—or different way of understanding our present circumstances
- disagree in some ways
- disagree

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances:

b) “The most advanced societies are the ones which are successful at integrating spiritual wisdom into the everyday circumstances of community life.”

- I believe it—and there is much evidence to support it
- I believe it—and there is sufficient evidence to support it
- I would like to believe it, but there isn’t enough evidence to support it
- It is difficult to believe it, with the way things are going now
- I don’t believe it—there is no evidence to support it

- agree
- agree in some ways
- have different view—or different way of understanding our present circumstances
- disagree in some ways
- disagree

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances:

7. Global Drugs Trade, Global Arms Trade—and Solutions?

Consider the following excerpt from the “World Report of Violence and Health: Summary (Recommendations for Action)” (by the World Health Organization, 2002):

“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.”

a) Do you believe there are “solutions in sight” for the above mentioned problems, or do you agree with the authors at the World Health Organization? If you believe there are “solutions in sight”, please be specific and describe such solutions. Or, if you agree that “no solutions seem to be in sight”, offer your view on as to why we seem to be at a point where “no solutions seem to be in sight” for those problems.

b) Please check the box (or boxes) which best corresponds to the way you view of the following statement.

How much daily contact with the treasured wisdom of religious, spiritual, and moral traditions do you feel people in general would need before we would see noticeable progress on the above mentioned problems (the global drugs trade and the global arms trade)?

				X	Y
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
more than is likely to happen	a profound increase from current levels	a lot more	a little more	additional solutions will be essential to make noticeable progress	have different view—or different understanding of our present circumstances

c) If you checked boxes X and/or Y, please describe below any solutions to the above two problems (drugs trade and arms trade) which you feel would be helpful contributions to making noticeable progress on resolving these problems.

8. Difficult World Conflicts, Difficult Personal Conflicts, and Living Harmoniously

Consider what you believe are the 5 most difficult conflicts in the world today... and then consider the 5 most difficult personal relationships you have (relationships which are ongoing, relationships which somehow require your involvement on a regular basis, etc.)....

The question: How could the parties associated with the conflicts ultimately be helped so that they could live harmoniously with each other?

Please offer any and all responses to this question which you believe might be helpful to other people who might read what you have written.

9. Arriving at Working Definitions of “Right Livelihood”

Consider what ways of earning a living you would identify as “right livelihood.”

Now imagine a local community resource guide relating to employment, apprenticeships, training, and volunteer opportunities associated with “right livelihood.”

And further: imagine a committee commissioned to produce such a “right livelihood” resource guide.... And the individuals who make up the committee commissioned to produce such a resource guide....

a) What background (qualifications, experiences, etc.) would you like such individuals to have?

b) What local institutions would you consider most appropriate to commission such a resource guide, and oversee its production?

10. Identifying Experienced Practitioners, Stakeholders, and People Needing Assistance

Consider the assessment of the most difficult challenges of our times which you created as a response to question #6 part a).

a) Who are the Experienced Practitioners, who are most qualified to be educating people on how to successfully overcome each of the ten challenges you 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.)

b) Who are the Stakeholders (the people who will be affected by the education provided and guidance given by the Experienced Practitioners)?

c) Who are the People Needing Assistance (the people who do not know how to respond to the challenges you identified)?

11. Curriculum Changes in Local Educational Institutions?

Consider again the assessment of the most difficult challenges of our times which you created as a response to question #4, part a), and also any other responses you have made to any of the 15 questions in this list. With these considerations in mind, please respond to parts a) and b) below.

a) Please check the appropriate box—and also offer comments if you wish—to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement:

The curriculum in our local and regional educational institutions will _____ for our community to build the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to overcome the challenges of our times.

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| need to
be transformed | need to
be modified often | have a different view
or different way of
understanding our
present circumstances | need to
be modified some | be sufficient
as it is |

Your different view, or different way of understanding our present circumstances:

b) Please use the scale below and, for each section below, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Scale:

- (3) = high level of agreement
- (2) = moderate level of agreement
- (1) = low level of agreement
- (0) = do not agree with the statement

Creating the knowledge base, skill sets, and the compassion for our fellow human beings necessary to resolve the challenges of our times will require

- ___ i) recognizing deficiencies in the knowledge base and skill sets of our communities as they are now
- ___ ii) recognizing deficiencies in compassion for our fellow human beings
- ___ iii) curriculum development “on the fly”
- ___ iv) teacher training “on the fly”
- ___ v) community centers which are neighborhood-friendly, and which provide ongoing workshops which are deliberately affordable

___ vi) encouraging as much formal and informal meetings with other people in the local neighborhoods for discussion, information sharing, mutual support and encouragement, fellowship and friendship—so that the result will include the building of a close-knit community of people with a healthy appreciation for each others strengths, and a well-developed capacity to resolve even the most difficult challenges.

Please use the space below for ways of completing the above statement “Creating the knowledge base....” which are not listed above, and which you would have the highest level of agreement with.

12. A Visioning Exercise on the Subject of Educational Institutions

For this question, please consider the difficult challenges you identified in question #6 (see above).

a) Please describe the kind of educational institution which you believe is most appropriate for creating the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to overcome the difficult challenges you identified. (Note: You may describe an educational institution similar to one in your community or region, or create a description of an educational institution which does not currently exist. Either way, please try to include, in your description, answers to the following questions.... What would it look like? What would it be called? Where might it be located? What would be essential as “structures” and “departments” of such an educational institution? What would be an appropriate “land use layout” for such an institution?)

b) What kind of certification or experience would be required to become an instructor at such an educational institution?

c) What kind of appropriate technology would be in use to reduce the ecological footprint and the carbon footprint of building construction, food production, and special materials acquisition?

d) How would such an institution be funded?

13. Making a Community Visioning Initiative Happen in Your Community

For this question, please consider the list A (below) , which offers a brief description of Community Visioning Initiatives, and Appendix 1, which offers a more specific description of a Community Visioning Initiative, by providing a 15 Step Outline for a comprehensive 18 month long Community Visioning Initiative.

List A

1. Well organized efforts to identify problems and brainstorm solutions are a universally recognized approach to problem solving which is commonly used in family, community, business, and government settings in every part of the world.
2. In its most basic format, a Community Visioning Initiative (CVI) is simply a more comprehensive variation of the above mentioned approach to problem solving.
3. Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) 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.
4. Community Visioning Initiatives (CVIs) are especially useful as a means of increasing or maximizing citizen participation in the planning phase of community revitalization efforts.
5. In 1984, the non-profit organization Chattanooga Venture [Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA)] organized a Community Visioning Initiative that 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.

This question—question #13—is about how to make a Community Visioning Initiative happen in your community.

Here is the two part question:

Consider the elements of preparation, education, funding, and organization necessary for a successful Community Visioning Initiative in your local community or region.

- a) Describe 3 steps which are practical and doable and which would help make a Community Visioning Initiative more likely to happen in your local community or region.
- b) Describe 3 obstacles or difficulties which would make a Community Visioning Initiative less likely to happen in your local community or region.

14. Proactive Measures to Encourage Constructive Activity during Community Visioning Initiatives

Consider the following commentary on preparation for carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative....

People who are doing preliminary planning for carrying out a Community Visioning Initiative should be aware that there may be people in the community 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. 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. Responsible people will take sufficient preventative measures to proactively encourage a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action in their community.

The question: please list at least 5 preventative measures which you believe would proactively encourage a high percentage of constructive thinking and constructive action during the carrying out of a Community Visioning Initiative in your community.

15. Identifying the Most Important Elements of Community Life and Cultural Traditions

In the best of times, even the most profound challenges can be overcome; for in the best of times, _____ is/are nurtured, supported, and sustained by family, teachers, mentors, elders, and the everyday influences of community life and cultural traditions.

Please “brainstorm” on the subject of what would best fill in the blank in the above statement. Then choose 5-10 items from the “brainstormed list”, and rank them according to most important, and next most important, using 1 as most important, 2 as next most important, and so on.