

Much Unrealized Potential for Community Service

The enclosed documents associated with “IPCR Outreach 2012” can be summarized by the following two points:

- 1) There are many critical challenges ahead—and most ordinary citizens have little understanding of the depth of the challenges, or the urgency needed to resolve them.
- 2) There is much that Community Visioning Initiatives and “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” can do to encourage maximum citizen participation in identifying challenges, and in solution-oriented activity.

While television and cable news programs—and Internet websites and social media websites—have become major sources of information in most modernized cultural environments, there is a need for key local institutions to become common points of reference at the local community and regional levels. One way of appreciating this need is to consider the following two questions (which are two from among many suggested—by The IPCR Initiative—for preliminary surveys in preparation for Community Visioning Initiative)....

1) Identifying Experienced Practitioners, Stakeholders, and People Needing Assistance

Consider the ten point assessment of the most critical challenges of our times which is offered on one of the enclosures of this outreach package.

(Note: For this question, readers may wish to construct their own list of the most critical challenges of our times—but it is not necessary to do that to understand the point of the question.)

a) Who are the Experienced Practitioners, who are most qualified to be educating people on how to successfully overcome each of the challenges identified? (Additional 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)?

2) 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....

Questions:

- 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?

If most ordinary citizens are going to have meaningful roles in an ongoing transition from dysfunctional systems which are very complex to functioning systems which are much less complex—there will need to be local institutions which they can trust to provide common points of reference... to provide some kind of “moral compasses” which people can rely on through a time of constantly changing cultural landscapes. There is now a need for those local institutions which can provide such leadership to do so. Some suggestions:

1) Universities and Community Colleges—Preliminary surveys in preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives, the actual implementation of Community Visioning Initiatives, and affordable and accessible education in support of Community Visioning Initiatives (at “Community Teaching and Learning Centers”) can result in apprenticeships, internships, volunteer opportunities, and training in key fields of activity—all of which would minimize “transitional unemployment”. Administrators at universities and community colleges can recognize the urgent need for restructuring educational systems, and mobilize extraordinary levels of human effort in the above fields of activity.

2) Local and Regional Newspapers—There are many opportunities for local newspapers to contribute very valuable community services. Some examples: a) advocate for the implementation of Community Visioning Initiatives b) be directly involved in making Preliminary Surveys accessible, provide in-depth coverage of the response compilation process to assure credibility, and provide a variety of summary and analysis of the responses c) provide ongoing public information of each stage of the Community Visioning process d) provide ongoing public information about workshops and other educational experiences at “Community Teaching and Learning Centers” e) report on inspirational role models and organizations in key fields of activity, which will assist the process of creating apprenticeships, internships, volunteer opportunities, and training.

3) Local Places of Worship—At a time when there is a urgent need for an exponential increase in compassion for our fellow human beings, people associated with religious, spiritual, and moral traditions have critical decisions to make. Such people can demonstrate what is possible along the lines of wisdom and compassion, provide genuine instruction when sincere efforts to learn are being made, illustrate what is meant by “contributing to the greater good of the whole”, and help restore confidence in the higher values of life. In addition, “Community Faith Mentoring Networks” can create ongoing opportunities for people of one particular faith community or cultural tradition to experience the highest ideals of all local community specific and regional specific faith communities and cultural traditions, as representatives of such ideals are better appreciated, more easily recognized—and more numerous— in the everyday circumstances of community life.

When preliminary surveys are sent to 150 key leaders in a variety of fields of activity in local communities—as preparation for Community Visioning Initiatives—ordinary citizens are going to look very carefully at the responses such leaders make to questions like the two referenced above.

Whether we will have extreme difficulties managing the challenges ahead, or whether we will be a part of an unprecedented effort of international collaboration and solution-oriented momentum may—to a significant degree—depend on how the leaders of local institutions which people have relied upon for centuries decide to act at this critical time.