



Jury Statement on the Runner Up and Honorable Mentions of the 2009 Buckminster Fuller Challenge

Runner Up

Dreaming New Mexico (DNM), a Bioneers project, submitted by Kenny Ausubel and Peter Warshall, has been selected as the Runner Up of the 2009 Buckminster Fuller Challenge. In the opinion of this jury, Dreaming New Mexico brings together the tools of grassroots organizing and community leadership with scientific know-how and political savvy to both create a vision for the future and lay the groundwork for getting there. This is a fundamental leverage point for creating systemic change.

The core concept of this work is the power of transformative visioning, of imagining the world we want to see and then putting the steps in place to get us there, a process which Bucky often called designing the 'preferred state.'

The solution tackles an issue often overlooked by problem-solvers – the political dynamic and the political barriers that often slow or stop large-scale change. The 'dreaming' phase of DNM brings key political decision makers to the table with the community from the beginning to work collaboratively to envision a sustainable future, in turn creating social connections and a partnership of trust that can carry the project forward. In many ways, DNM is a process for creating a new political landscape that ties together earth stewardship values with core community needs – from fresh water, to clean energy, to abundant and locally-grown food.

Imagining a better future is the first step towards creating that future and DNM provides a rich community process that can be replicated across the globe to give voice to the grassroots and help us build strong local economies and sustainable, resilient communities.

Dreaming New Mexico: http://challenge.bfi.org/runnerup_2009

Honorable Mentions

In addition to the selection of the Winner and Runner Up, we have named two Honorable Mentions that are well-deserving of attention and support and have the potential to effect real change in less developed parts of the world.

Cycle for Health, submitted by Joseph Agoada, Dr. John Baptist Niwagaba, and Patrick Kayemba, ties together existing resources into an elegant solution for African villages underserved by transportation infrastructure. The team works with Canadian and U.S. NGOs to obtain used bicycles, ships the bikes to East Africa in shipping containers, converts the shipping containers into bike repair shops, and distributes the bikes to local community groups and hospitals that repurpose them for use as ambulances and delivery vehicles for medical supplies, food, and water. The solution not only provides much-needed transportation alternatives, it brings economic opportunity and jobs in bicycle repair and courier service.

Cycle for Health: http://challenge.bfi.org/application_summary/418

Mukuru BioCentres, submitted by Umande Trust and GOAL Ireland, offers a comprehensive solution to some of the most egregious problems of urban slums, from poor sanitation to lack of clean water to unpredictable or nonexistent energy infrastructure. The BioCentres, of which there are already 12 in operation in Kenya, are public toilets housed above a biogas digester that produces affordable fuel from human waste, which is then made available to the local community. The facilities also provide clean water, public space, and workspace which serves as an incubator for local businesses.

Mukuru BioCentres: http://challenge.bfi.org/application_summary/439

Both of these projects prove that systemic change doesn't require the development of new technology or radical social disruption, sometimes rearranging the pieces of existing systems and finding a new way to insert them where they are most needed makes all the difference. We applaud the outstanding work being done by these teams and wish them great success in the future.

The 2009 Buckminster Fuller Challenge Jury

Adam Bly
Edie Farwell
Greg Watson

Bill Browning
Helena Norberg-Hodge

Jamais Cascio
John and Nancy Jack Todd