

# Hannah Grimes- Sustainability Education Project

## *Executive Summary*

### **Organizational Background:**

Hannah Grimes is a non-profit organization located in Keene, NH whose mission is to help local entrepreneurs become successful. There are three distinct elements in their business model—The Marketplace, a retail shop located in downtown Keene that provides shelf space for the local entrepreneur to sell their goods, The Center which teaches the entrepreneur how to become successful and provides inexpensive office space and resources, and The Localvore Project which helps support local farms and agribusinesses.

### **Project Overview:**

Antioch University of New England and Hannah Grimes created a partnership to provide MBA students with a project that could potentially be implemented within the organization. The goal of this project is to develop an innovative, creative, and focused educational program and/or tool that Hannah Grimes small business clients can use to learn about the earth systems/organizational interface, and apply that knowledge to their businesses.

### **Project Needs Assessment:**

- ***Inventory of Existing Hannah Grimes Programs***

The main educational component of Hannah Grimes is The Entrepreneur Project. This is a year-long program that includes classes in finance, sales, marketing, getting organized, and implementing a business vision. The Hannah Grimes Center also offers monthly workshops in graphic design, job coaching sessions, and special workshops on topics such as “Intellectual Property Basics for Entrepreneurs”.

- ***Inventory and Analysis of External Programs and Educational Tools***

Essential to this program development process is the research, inventory and analysis of programs that are already in existence. Our goal was to identify programs that may serve as a model or provide components that can be utilized in our program development process. The following are some of the organizations/programs reviewed in this analysis:

- Northwest Earth Institute Discussion Course Series ([www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org))
- Salt Lake City E2 Business Program ([www.slccgreen.com](http://www.slccgreen.com))
- The Natural Step ([www.thenaturalstep.org](http://www.thenaturalstep.org))
- Net Impact ([www.netimpact.org](http://www.netimpact.org))

- ***Input from Community and Potential Audience:***

The project team developed a survey that was disseminated electronically through Hannah Grimes to their clients, to gain knowledge and perspective on what might be the best implementation strategy for a sustainability education program.

- 85% of respondents were interested in incorporating environmentally friendly practices into their business.
- Almost 95% of those surveyed would recommend Hannah Grimes to others.
- More than half of the respondents felt that environmental considerations were extremely important for their business.

### **Assessment of Organizational Needs and Capacities:**

Hannah Grimes' goal is to establish a supportive atmosphere for entrepreneurs to flourish, creating a prosperous local economy and a vibrant community. By educating and encouraging local businesses to address environmental challenges, the community and economy of the region will benefit from businesses environmental stewardship and product differentiation. The sustainability education program is designed to supplement Hannah Grimes' existing curriculum with tools and resources that concentrate on incorporating sustainable practices into business. Constraints that our project team needed to adhere to were: limited financial resources, a staff with demanding schedules, and the ability to attract an audience for the program.

### **Program Scope and Structure:**

The goal of the Hannah Grimes Sustainability Program is to help their entrepreneur clients develop the knowledge and skills necessary to implement sustainability practices in their own businesses, and recognize and promote businesses that are taking steps towards a commitment to sustainability. The following objectives were identified to achieve this goal:

- Integrate sustainability education within The Entrepreneur Project's 12-month curriculum.
- Inventory existing state and national sustainability recognition programs and develop an internal mechanism for recognition.
- Provide online resources and links

In an effort to address these objectives, the project team developed a manual of sustainability tools and resources to be utilized both within The Entrepreneur Project's curriculum and as an online resource for additional Hannah Grimes clients. The second component is the promotion of the *Aspiring Leaders* and *Green Dot Awards*, and the development of an internal recognition program, *Hannah Grimes Businesses for Sustainability*. The program will be promoted online and will require participants to conduct a self-assessment and outline their goals for working toward sustainability.

### **Program Delivery Resource:**

The program is designed for ease of use, but in order for it to be effective it will require time commitments from Hannah Grimes' staff and educators. We have consolidated critical information from a variety of sources into one location. Hannah Grimes' educators and staff will need to read through the material provided and select the components that they wish to incorporate into their program. We have also included sections detailing where additional resources can be found for various topics, in the event that an instructor or client would like to obtain supplementary information. In addition, most if not all of the tools are in a format that can easily be uploaded to the website for increased accessibility.

### **Program Evaluation:**

Hannah Grimes can utilize the following qualitative and quantitative measures to determine the success of these initiatives:

- Pre and post assessments of Entrepreneur Project participants
- Number of hits on the HG website
- Number of participants in the recognition program
- Number of business goals achieved in the recognition program