

“How Green is My Town?”

A Grassroots Approach to Global Environmental Problem-Solving.

The issues of climate change, sustainability and environmental health are international in their impact, threatening the very survival of our species on this planet. And yet the solutions to these problems are inextricably linked to choices we make as individuals, as consumers and as residents of our villages, towns and cities. The adage “Think globally, act locally” has its roots in the realization that our collective actions on the local level have global implications.

“How Green is My Town?” represents the antithesis of the Kyoto Protocol – a bottom-up, grassroots effort to place an organizational structure around the needs of local communities, and empower both citizens and local decision makers to take matters into their own hands. By acting locally and in harmony, we believe this group can engender the changes in human behavior required to successfully address what is arguably the greatest challenge in human history.

The premise of HGIMT is simple: devise and promote a set of model criteria detailing the key attributes characteristic of a sustainable and environmentally-aware community. Develop a comprehensive “greenweb” to link visitors with reliable information and detailed, achievable solutions to help jump-start and guide their efforts to improve their villages, towns and cities. Then use the criteria to measure the effectiveness of currently available programs from governments, government agencies and non-profits across the country.

HGIMT leverages the power of the internet against the traditional difficulties of grassroots organization, focuses on community needs and abilities rather than top-down agendas, enables emerging markets and delivers a cohesive and coherent solution by linking individuals and decision makers with all the pieces of the puzzle.

Driving Forces / Market Realities

Two fundamental concepts drive this program forward. The first is that within any community, school system or business organization, **change comes from a handful of motivated individuals**. We don’t need to reach a majority of the people in any community. We simply need to reach the decision makers, and those who may be feeling frustrated with the slow pace of national and international efforts. The goal is to empower them with the information and tools they need to take action within their own local sphere of influence.

The second concept is the **instinct of parents to protect their children**. Several recent studies have concluded that while people may be naturally resistant to behavioral change, they are much more likely to embrace change for the sake of their children. Add to this the fact that we have included the issue of **environmental health** as an integral component of the program and we have a powerful human instinct working in our favor.

“The parents of young children has always been a key demographic for the work of Grassroots,” says Executive Director Patti Wood. “We know that if we can connect the dots for this group, they will take the initiative and do whatever is necessary to protect the health and future of their kids.”

How it Works

“How Green is My Town?” is consonant with thousands of local and national initiatives (indeed, the website links to hundreds of government and non-profit organizations and programs from all over the country), and yet it takes a broader view of our current environmental problems and offers a menu of achievable solutions.

We’ve divided each town into three sectors:

- My Local Government
- My School System
- My Business Community.

Within each major category are **topics** of concern, ranging from energy to transportation, from procurement to recycling, from green building to green cleaning. On the web site, iconic graphics and hundreds of photographs punctuate the pages, and straightforward site navigation tools keep visitors oriented. Where necessary, we provide scientific data, key statistics or other environmental or health information for context, and then it’s on to the best policies, practices and programs, all within a mouse click.

The site also includes a gallery of professionally-produced **advocacy posters** that can be used by local groups to promote their own efforts. These graphic, issue-oriented posters are designed to get the conversation started, and to help local organizations put a professional look on their local efforts.

As the integrity of the greenweb is predicated on its non-commercial nature, our recommended solutions are culled exclusively from government or non-profit sources. However, most of these issues also have commercial solutions, and our unique “**Green Links**” sidebars allow carefully screened advertisers to have links

to their products placed on relevant pages on the site. Local governments and school systems represent a multi-billion dollar market for goods and services, and we believe that Green Links will offer an unparalleled opportunity for green businesses to reach key decision makers at the local level within the context of a positive, innovative approach to global environmental problem-solving.