



Women who participate in Annie's Project are empowered to become better business owners and partners by managing agricultural risks and bringing greater financial security and wellbeing to their families. Farms, ranches and communities are sustained through more vibrant rural economies, improved natural resource conservation and enhanced food security.

-Annie's Project
Public Value
Statement (Draft)

Helping New York Women Gain Confidence

by Lani McKinney



New York's Annie's Project Co-Coordinator, Bonnie Collins and David Cox, first became interested in Annie's Project independent of each other. It was a colleague in county social services (and small farmer) who brought the program to David's attention via e-mail requesting "Can we have this here?". Meanwhile, Bonnie already had a Women in Agriculture discussion group in place. After looking through the Annie's Project website, says David, he quickly recognized such a program should be in New York state. David introduced himself to Bonnie at the annual Empire Farm Days tradeshow in 2010 after seeing her "Women in

Ag" signage, asked if she knew about Annie's Project, and formed a collaboration with her to bring it to New York.

Confidence in Action

After teaching classes for a couple of years in their state, the biggest impact is demonstrated, says David, "from the feedback from the women participants". They've taken different avenues moving forward from their Annie's Project experience - some forming discussion groups while others have made management decisions to install financial systems for their business, develop estate plans or develop value added products - but overall "the majority of the women have stated they gained confidence from the project". This new found confidence is what has inspired women to take action.

Bonnie and David were happy to share two success stories from their state. A participant in the 2012 Annie's Project class, purchased a computer and financial software and began to develop timely financial management reports not previously available. The owners of the farm were overwhelmed when they saw the timeliness, efficiency and quality of the information presented. "If not for Annie's Project and the help of an Extension educator, I would never have done this," says the participant.

Another participant from the previous year, jumped right into her agritourism idea following Annie's Project because the program and a follow-up two-hour meeting with David gave her the confidence to move forward. She had long ago married into a prestigious dairy farm family internationally known for their Jersey breeding and was searching for her place in the business. After taking Annie's Project, she started a wonderful on-farm educational program for youth and adults. She and her husband now are participating in Lead New York, a two-year agricultural focused educational outreach program (by application only) for potential leaders in New York state farm business and community development.

Success In and Out of the Classroom

Overall, "We were just pleased, David shares, "to find our state's women in agriculture are individuals motivated to participate, learn from their peers, and willing to engage the experts in areas of interest and/or areas one needs to address to run a farm business." Bonnie and David



hope to develop statewide interest in participation in Annie's Project over the next few years as they look to the future sustainability of the program in their state.

The Public Value of Annie's Project

by Madeline Schultz

"In outreach education, we understand the value of our programs to participants. But, 'public value' is the value of a program to those who do not directly benefit from the program," stated Dr. Laura Kalambokidis during her keynote address at the Women in Agriculture Educators National Conference, March 29, 2012. Dr. Kalambokidis discussed

Annie's Project in her blog after the conference (<http://blog.lib.umn.edu/kalam002/publicvalue>), and this prompted us to choose "public value" as the topic of the June 15, 2012 Annie's Project Educator call.

In her April 3rd blog, Dr. Kalambokidis noted Annie's Project is "...an example of a program that achieves its impact by targeting a carefully selected audience: women who are motivated to be involved in a farm or ranch business." She also noted unique educational approaches can influence the level of public value created by a program. The Annie's Project educators on the call discussed the effectiveness of our educational approach.

While we can document what differentiates this approach (Annie's Project key principals and core values), and while we have anecdotal evidence our approach works, we do lack research describing why or how this works. During the educator call, Dr. Mandi Anderson, ISU Research Center for Studies in Education, noted that in her recent Annie's Project focus group work, "Women say they can speak-up in front of men, but the men would not be comfortable in this setting." Other educators on the call observed that after participating in an Annie's Project course, many women become more comfortable asking questions in mixed gender groups.

Willie Huot, Annie's Project North Dakota State Coordinator, added, "The continuum of the program is beneficial; when all five areas of risk are assembled together, the sum is greater than the parts." Some of the reasons for this were suggested on the call: (a) discussions create networks which are useful to both participants and local service providers - these networks can be considered part of the public value, (b) resources are of direct value to participants - local bankers have noticed women coming in with balance sheets and other information organized in their Annie's Project portfolio, (c) instructors with good credentials and who are well prepared are trusted by participants - women are willing to implement new strategies, and (d) Annie's Project participants often form a personal network - they are helped through difficult situations by others during or after the course.

The question "Who is the community and who receives public value?" was addressed during the Annie's Project Educator call. One of the beneficiaries may well be the guest instructors - the local service providers we invite into the classroom. Suggestions were made that in the future, Annie's Project could study how these guest instructors apply what they learn with an Annie's Project course to other programs, and how integration (of local farm and ranch women with service providers) and understanding of one another's roles might lead to greater community resilience.

Another public value contribution may well be in the form of women coming back to or staying on the farm. The educators on the call shared ideas for capturing this impact. Bob Wells, Iowa educator and Annie's Project National Leadership Team member, suggested one possible area for future study relates to increased public value resulting from women land owners who choose to stay in the state to live and to actively manage their land versus those who choose to live outside of the state while still owning the land. Going forward, Dr. Anderson recommended it will be important for Annie's Project educators to capture the best information possible from current program participants and then pair this information with other related data sets (such as Iowa's land tenure studies) to help us draw conclusions that demonstrate public value.

An April 2012 article in the Journal of Extension Article provides some recommendations for educators on measuring public value. (See Evidence of Impact: Examination of Evaluation Studies Published in the Journal of Extension, <http://>

www.joe.org/joe/2012april/a1.php .) The suggestions are as follows:

1. Collect reaction data at the end of each session or program.
2. Collect KASA (knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations) change data with a pretest at the beginning and posttest at the end of each session or program.
3. Collect practice change data 6 months to 2 years following program completion.
4. Collect data regarding the end results 3 to 5 years following program completion. Time frame may vary depending on program content and context.

As Annie's Project continues to improve program evaluation methods, it's important to be mindful of capturing short and long term public value as well as capturing participant benefit. This may be difficult, but working together, Annie's Project educators can document the public value we know we are creating.

To help us communicate our public value to stakeholders, ANNIES has drafted a public value statement. Please let us know how we did (drop a note to Madeline Schultz at schultz@iastate.edu.) We would like to hear your suggestions for improvement. We also encourage you and your state to draft your own public value statement (or adapt and use ours) and find ways to communicate the public value of Annie's Project to your stakeholders.

DRAFT Annie's Project Public Value Statement:

Women who participate in Annie's Project are empowered to become better business owners and partners by managing agricultural risks and bringing greater financial security and well-being to their families. Farms, ranches and communities are sustained through more vibrant rural economies, improved natural resource conservation and enhanced food security.

We plan to discuss this and other things on the upcoming educator topic call and we welcome you to join us. See details:

Annie's Project Monthly Educator Topic Call

All educators are welcome to join us for topic calls held the third Friday of each month at 1:00 pm Central time.

Dial toll free: 888-757-2790, and enter participant passcode: 956927. The next topic call is July 20, 2012.

Annie's Project Professional Development Program in Nebraska

by Cheryl Griffith (NE) and Marsha Laux (IA)
Photo by Ruth Hambleton (IL)

Annie's Project educators from around the midwest gathered in Grand Island, Nebraska in early June for a professional development program. The training, sponsored by USDA North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE, <http://www.northcentralsare.org/>), brought together 21 Annie's Project educators from eight states, including Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Professional development activities included an overview of the foundational aspects of Annie's Project, (history, mission, key principles and core values) as well as discussion surrounding risk management, impacts, and evaluation and planning an Annie's Project course. The roles of state coordinators and local facilitators were discussed, as well as ways educators can support one another in reaching farm and ranch women. Course preparation, marketing and facilitation were also covered. The training included newly-developed written methodology documentation for optimizing and delivering Annie's Project courses.

This training was conducted by the Annie's Project National Leadership Team. Annie's Project was the recipient of a three-year SARE grant, "Building the Capacity of ANNIES Educators to Help Women Farmers and Ranchers Improve Agricultural Sustainability". Next June, a similar professional development program will take place in Indiana, followed by Minnesota in 2014.

Educators shared what has worked for them in their own states and offered suggestions for further development. Ann Finkner, Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for Farm Credit Services of America (FCSA) spoke to the group about her organization's commitment to the Annie's Project mission. The partnership between FCSA (IA, NE, SD, and

WY) and Annie's Project will certainly enhance the program. We are very appreciative of their local support! Gary Lesoing, SARE State Coordinator for Nebraska, encouraged educators to incorporate broad sustainability concepts into local courses and noted Annie's Project is particularly good at helping farm families achieve financial sustainability. SARE has many good resources Annie's Project educators can utilize.



The networking was very enjoyable and educators left with many tools and potential collaborators to help them achieve success with Annie's Project in their respective regions. Everyone went home full of information and excitement about Annie's Project and with lots of ideas of how to use this information to reinvigorate current programs or even start a new program in their area.

A special thanks goes out to members of the Annie's Project National Leadership Team (Ruth Hambleton, Tim Eggers, Madeline Schultz, and Bob Wells) for making the trip to Nebraska. Nebraska educators and facilitators are already moving ahead and making plans for future local workshops. Look for other great things to come out of this workshop, as well as networking opportunities in the future.

Helpful Information

ANNIES E-News is provided by the Annie's National Network Initiative for Educational Success (ANNIES) National Leadership Management Team:

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The team welcomes comments on the newsletter and article submissions.

You can find past newsletters and other information about Annie's on our website:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/annie/index.html>

Save the Date

July 6-8 Davis, CA
Aug. 21-23 Biloxi, MS

Empowering Women Veterans: Business, Agriculture & Well-Being, in collaboration with ANNIES
ANNIES Southern SARE Professional Development Event
(Register: <http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/annienational/home.html>)

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