

# Dream of a Nation Overview

## An Innovative Project

The purpose of the Dream of a Nation project is to build awareness of critical environmental and social issues, support collaboration and capacity building, and enlist citizens in strengthening Democracy. The development of effective public education tools and the implementation of a sustained citizen engagement initiative are the primary vehicles for this work. The first phase of the project is a book near-to-completion that is designed for a popular audience with compelling photos, illustrations, and graphics. This first phase also includes the completion of a robust web platform and arts-based collaborations. The second phase includes the completion of a national contest, curricular materials, a documentary film, and international expansion.

## Meeting a Need Through Partnerships and Creativity

Despite cognitive learning research that proves that individuals absorb better through thematic learning, few public awareness efforts have integrated the diverse messages of organizations working on a range of civic and environmental issues under one theme. The Dream of a Nation project takes this innovative approach. It spans twelve chapters and explores problems, new ideas, and success models associated with a range of topics including: Environmental Stewardship, Waging Peace, Creating an Equitable Economy, Strengthening Communities, Improving Health, Media Innovation, New Priorities in Education, Waging Peace, and much more. Thought-provoking and visually appealing essay contributions are presented by 64 leading icons and organization (view complete list of partners [here](#)) including:

Center for a New American Dream	Vice President Al Gore	Education Trust
National Priorities Project	Alice Walker	United for a Fair Economy
Common Cause	Geoffrey Canada	Environmental Defense Fund
International Labor Rights Forum	Paul Hawken	Free Press
Union of Concerned Scientists	Amy Goodman	Peace Alliance <i>and 50+ others</i>

## Capacity Building Through Project-Generated Revenue

All author royalties will support the civil society movement – with 50% returning equally to project partners and 50% earmarked for SEE Innovation to continue developing expanded public awareness initiatives. With a finished manuscript in place, we are able to negotiate more favorable contract terms and it is possible to earn up to \$4.00/book and depending on distribution success could mean millions in support for the civil society movement.

## Progress

**Financing:** Approximately \$120,000 in grant funding has already been raised and utilized to support the project to date and program staff are continuing to seek support for phase I and phase II program elements.

**Book:** Dream of a Nation has progressed in earnest since 2008 and the book is approximately 95% finished with a September 2011 publication date. At present, the work is slated to be published by Lantern Books. However, a four color 378 page galley has been completed and is being presented to larger prospective publishers. To download digital galley, click [here](#). (*Download takes approximately 2 minutes.*)

**Web:** The web community [www.dreamofanation.org] is currently being constructed and is expected to be completed in June and expanded upon thereafter. A portal for citizen engagement, online community building, idea exchange, and resources, dreamofanation.org is developing well through the dedicated work of web firm CreativeSlice. A provisional wireframe for the site can be viewed at: <http://creativeoven.com/don.html> For more details on the project or organization as a whole, visit the SEE Innovation site [here](#).

## Desired Outcomes

- (1) Sustained integration of key civic and environmental themes and success models as central to American progress in the mainstream media and public discourse
- (2) Effective engagement of partner organizations, spoken word and musical artists, and citizens in amplifying the message of *Dream of a Nation*
- (3) Increased revenue for innovative organizations and future media efforts through project-generated revenue
- (4) Use as an educational resource in at least 200 colleges and universities and 1000 secondary (formal and informal) education settings

## Other Multimedia Elements

**Music and Spoken Word:** The message and visibility of *Dream of a Nation* will be augmented through the creation of online playlists with a range of popular artists including Bruce Springsteen, Brandi Carlile, Feist, Jack Johnson and over 55 popular and emerging musicians. Four online albums are being created and outreach is being conducted to further engage musical artists in being a part of the project. Additionally, staff are working with poetry and spoken-word organizations to incorporate poetry throughout the book and to encourage participation in the web community in development.

**Video-Short:** In an effort to broaden the reach of *Dream of a Nation*, project staff will work in collaboration to complete a video-short of key concepts of the book and project to correspond with publication. The video short will feature spoken word and musical artist collaborators and partner organizations and will be a precursor to a documentary film version of the *Dream of a Nation*.

**Bigger Plans:** The book component is the first phase of *Dream of a Nation*. Grants and 50% of author and Amazon.com music royalties will be utilized to complete a documentary film version of the book, curricular materials, a national contest, and will support international expansion efforts and potentially future editions.

## Background and Capabilities

Tyson Miller is the project creator/editor and is leading the efforts of SEE Innovation staff in this endeavor. He is a social entrepreneur and leader in the environmental movement who has been developing new organizations and initiatives for nearly 20 years. Over this timeframe, he has completed a documentary (adopted by the state of California and seen by over 2 million students), and founded or co-founded five organizations and/or national initiatives. He has been awarded by the U.S. EPA, and has been featured on NPR, ABC News, BBC Radio, the NY Times, and over 100 other media outlets. *Publisher's Weekly* named Tyson one of the 50 Most Influential People Under 40 in the U.S. book industry. Tyson is currently the Director of SEE Innovation and the Green Press Initiative. For more visit [here](#).

## Organization, Fiscal Sponsor, and Publisher

SEE (Social, Environmental, Economic) Innovation is a small but effective organization whose mission is to build awareness, capacity, and structures for social and environmental transformation. SEE Innovation staff have been developing new programs and initiatives since 1993 and currently the organization maintains multiple active national programs. *Dream of a Nation* is a third-year initiative designed to build awareness and engage citizens in critical civic issues. SEE Innovation's additional programs include: *the Green Press Initiative*; a national effort that is significantly reducing the environmental impacts of the publishing industry on forests and biodiversity, and *Greening the Media*, which is designed to improve the quantity and quality of environmental coverage in the news media landscape. SEE Innovation's previous and partner programs include the Environmental Paper Network, and the Recycled Products Cooperative. Additionally, SEE Innovation has completed *Generation Earth*, an award-winning documentary, seen by nearly 2 million students, that chronicles success models in environmental education from around the country. SEE Innovation staff and programs have been awarded by the U.S. EPA, California Governor's Office, and the Sierra Club.

Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs (SEE) is the project's non-profit fiscal sponsor for SEE Innovation and will administer the distribution of project generated revenue. In operation since 1994, SEE serves as a 501[c]3 administrative and fiscal sponsor for over 75 projects worldwide. Lantern Books is slated to be the publisher. Based in New York and specializing in social and environmental topics, Lantern and its subsidiaries have over 500 books in print and is best known as the publisher of Nobel laureate, Wangari Maathai.

### **Translating Public Awareness into Action**

Dream of a Nation will inspire and drive people to learn more, become members of featured organizations, and take action in their home, workplace, or place of worship. The simple act of purchasing the book will financially support leading organizations in the civil society movement. Beyond this, however, individuals will be encouraged to learn more and get involved through an interactive web community under development. The interactive site will contain additional resources and media from participating organizations and enable individuals to take simple online actions and post content about issues and solutions in their region.

**In-School Integration:** The program will develop curricular materials with online resources such as context-establishing videos and lesson modules which engage students in learning about their issue of choice and in working collaboratively to develop solutions to the civic problems identified.

**Citizen and Youth Engagement:** In an effort to engage citizens and young people in civic issues that affect their future, the program will sponsor Dream of a Nation contests in schools and community organizations. Winning candidates who have submitted an essay, poem, photo installation, or media project will receive recognition and modest funding (pending resources) to support expanded work on their issue.

“The most important thing humanity can do is **believe in itself**. That we can grow, we can change, we can rouse ourselves in time to make big changes happen. **Dream of a Nation encourages movement in this direction**. It offers hundreds of ideas and examples of how smart, committed and daring we can be.”

— Alice Walker, Support for *Dream of a Nation*

*To download the entire list of project participants click here.*

*To download the Dream of a Nation design sample, featuring chapter 2 and 6 click here.*

*To download the entire 378 page digital galley click here. (takes approximately 2 minutes to download)*

*To see the provisional Dream of a Nation web wire frame click here.*

*To find out more about the project click here.*