



Community News and Views

FALL 2013

Crossing Borders: CCED's International Outreach

by Jennifer Bruen

During the spring of 2013, the MSU CCED participated in a six month Women's Economic Empowerment program funded by the US Department of State and led by the MSU Center for Advanced Study of International Development (CASID); the MSU Gender Center; the University of KwaZulu Natal School of Social Work & Community Development (UKZN) and the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Institute of Development Studies. The goal of the program was to pair South African and Tanzanian women professional fellows with U.S. host organizations to provide opportunities to establish new partnerships in the three countries and strengthen their leadership skills. MSU CCED, serving as one of the host organizations, warmly welcomed Luana Malan, Rehema Mginah and Vuyo Ncwaiba and included them in CCED activities. Each fellow also spent some time learning about the [REI University Center](#) and its [co-learning plan research](#) on innovative economic development tools, models, policies, programs and practices.

In September I traveled to Africa, as a representative of the MSU CCED, I joined five of my colleagues from the Lansing area and embarked on an extensive tour of South Africa and Tanzania.

Our trip included a visit to parliament in Cape Town; the University of Cape Town Graduate School Of Business; several gender based violence support centers/shelters and a few local artisan markets. While in Johannesburg we visited the [TAKA TAP](#) project, a youth animation skills building program and met with staff from [Avantu Sustainable Solutions](#), an environmentally-friendly sewerage treatment company, working with families living in settlement housing to improve their sewerage, sanitation and effluent control systems. One of our last visits was to the infamous Soweto Township; the Mapetla Nursery and B-Kwa Hlabedi Farming cooperatives. We also spent time in a rural township outside Pretoria... (Continued on next page)

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where we reunited with Luana Malan and met the women of the [Siyabhabha trust's Life's Beads Project](#). After a week in South Africa our group flew to Dar es Salaam Tanzania. Again we had a long itinerary of site visits and meetings. One of the highlights was meeting faculty at the University of Dar es Salaam and with several Tanzanian dignitaries, including the Honorable Ms. [Sophia M. Simba](#), Minister from the Ministry of Women, Children, and Development. Our trip ended on the beautiful island of Zanzibar, where we enjoyed authentic cuisine in historic Stone Town.

During my travels I observed several obstacles in both countries from a community and economic development efforts perspective. It appeared to me that internet based communications are severely lacking. Many of the smaller business owners are not familiar with email let alone websites. The basic infrastructure of roads, mass transportation, water-sewer and electricity is fragile and certainly not reliable and simple ordinance type problems exist everywhere, such as littering and building/construction codes. In addition, the vernacular spoken appears to not include relatively common economic development, business and technology lingo. At least it appears to lag in comparison to many of the more developed countries of the globe. Considering these issues and the monumental tasks that are before many Tanzanian and South African communities I believe tackling these many other issues would require a significant amount of money and time. Instead I would think that encouraging smaller projects that gradually build upon themselves conducted by smaller NGOs leading the way would be the most effective way to see sustainable and meaningful improvements in the competitiveness of their economies.

In October we welcomed our final fellow: Vuyo Ncwaiba, a South African woman leading a corporate consultancy firm, [Vumali Empowerment Advisors](#), striving to assist large corporates in leveraging the new [Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment \(BBBEE\) Codes of Good Practise](#). Together, Vuyo and I examined social entrepreneurship efforts in Michigan and the "triple bottom line" concept, which might be useful to her [clients as they embark on strategies](#) to include [blacks in the future of their companies](#). We also learned about the emerging phenomenon of makerspaces; the different types of business incubator practices and the relevancy of the fair trade industry. We discussed the implications of [3D printing](#) to the field of engineering and the manufacturing sector.

In summary, I'm excited for the Women's Economic Empowerment Program participants as they continue to strengthen their leadership skills and strive to improve their communities in Tanzania and South Africa.

For more information contact Jennifer Bruen at CCED.



The photo above shows some of the Professional Fellows Alumni while in Dar es Salaam. Fall 2013

GET INVOLVED:

University Center for Regional Economic Innovation ([REI](#))

Are you interested in joining a [digital community](#) seeking to generate innovative ideas, tools, policies, and practices that can strengthen Michigan's Economy? [Join the REI Networks!](#)

Do you have what it takes to be a Co-Learning Plan Author? We are calling for authors to write on a variety of topics including youth entrepreneurship, community benefit corporations, and much more! This is a great opportunity for experts working in entrepreneurship and business development, K-20 education, exporting, IT, policymaking, venture capitalism, scholarly research, civic leadership, urban and regional planning and economic development. Please consider sharing your expertise to help strengthen Michigan's economy. The findings and recommendations in these co-learning plans, funded through this request, will serve as a source for current and practical information for regions and communities across Michigan.

To apply and learn more about the timeline, deliverables, and eligibility, please [click here to review the application and requirements.](#)

Connecting the Red Cedar Corridor

by Nick Najor

In mid-September, CCED, with support from the Tri-Country Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) began work on a research project to explore the possibilities of a regional plan for [greenways and non-motorized transportation](#) in the mid-Michigan area. The Lansing River Trail provides an excellent example of a non-motorized transportation system, and it serves as a template for how trails and greenways (i.e. trails in natural settings) can benefit the recreational infrastructure of a community. Student intern Nick Najor, a senior in the MSU Urban & Regional Planning program, has been working with CCED Director Rex LaMore, Williamstown Township planning assistant Wanda Bloomquist, and TCRPC Senior Land Planner Harmony Gmazel to develop a vision and construct a steering committee to provide a foundation for the plan. This first phase of the project mainly involves research on existing conditions and exploration of possibilities for improvement and expansion. Participants in this research and discussion include Michigan State University, the City of East Lansing, Meridian Charter Township, Williamstown Township, and Ingham County, among others.

Each of these municipalities already possess some kind of [plan or framework](#) for the future of their trails or greenways, therefore the focus in this research has been identifying potential gaps in regional trail routes and exploring opportunities for connections between municipalities. The project will seek to connect the non-motorized greenway systems for the communities along the Red Cedar River between Lansing and Webberville. The plan will be utilized as a reference by local municipalities when making land use decisions in order to facilitate the transition to a regional trail and greenway infrastructure throughout the region.

The Red Cedar River serves as an ideal natural connection between the communities encompassed in this planning area, and this research hopes to encourage future transportation development to prioritize access to this resource. Beginning in the west, the Lansing River Trail provides an incredible foundation of uninterrupted pathway, and it is our hope that we can continue that community artery to the east.

Connecting these pathways throughout the region would offer safer, more enjoyable routes for runners and bikers while also increasing access to nature and recreation facilities.

Beginning in 2014, a team of MSU Urban & Regional Planning students will initiate the second phase of this project, which would include working with the steering committee on the vision and the formal formulation of a plan that would allow future mid-Michigan residents to walk, run, or bike through uninterrupted pathways and nature trails from the Capitol Area all the way to Webberville.

For more information contact Nick Najor or Rex LaMore at CCED.

Great Lakes Regional Training Initiative

by John Melcher

The CCED in cooperation with three other universities has been awarded a grant by the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) to develop a regional economic development training strategy for leaders across the Great Lakes Region. The EDA University Centers (UC) at Purdue University, University of Wisconsin, University of Minnesota and Michigan State University joined in the development of the proposal which is intended to bring all of the EDA University Centers in the six-state Chicago EDA

Region together to form an EDA University Center Collaborative to assist in the design and delivery of the Great Lakes Regional Training Initiative. An Advisory Board will be developed to guide the work to develop a training and technical assistance plan that will be submitted to the Chicago EDA Regional Office for future funding.

Two valuable communication activities will be launched as part of this initiative. First, the Purdue University EDA University Center will develop and launch a Great Lakes Regions EDA University Centers website – a one-stop site that showcases the work of all EDA University Centers in the region. The website will:

- Highlight upcoming workshops and webinars being organized by each EDA UC in its respective state.

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Great Lakes Regional Training Initiative (Continued)

- Offer users access to archived versions of presentations, program, papers, PowerPoint files and other products developed by the EDA UCs in the Great Lakes region.
- Offer timely information on meetings, workshops, reports and grant opportunities released by relevant federal agencies (i.e., EDA, HUD, EPA, USDA RD), think tanks, foundations, and other public/private entities.

Second, the EDA UC Collaborative will release a quarterly e-Blast newsletter that keeps important stakeholders apprised of the activities of the Great Lakes RTI Advisory Board, the programs/workshops of the EDA UCs in the six-state region, and important reports and research articles produced by the EDA UCs or by other relevant entities

For more information contact John Melcher at CCED

IN OTHER NEWS.... In November, CCED Director Dr. Rex LaMore traveled with 20 MSU honors college students to Detroit as part of their future study abroad experience to Cuba this December. While in Detroit, students visited an urban farm, ate at an authentic Mexican restaurant, explored the Eastern Market, and took a bus tour. Students will compare their experiences in Detroit to those they will have in Cuba as they focus on historic preservation and food abroad.

Recognizing a Successful, Artistic, Entrepreneur

by Larissa Federoff

In 2011, an MSU project team of professors and students came together to explore how, and if, arts and crafts affected economic development and whether innovators and entrepreneurs use skills from these activities for problem solving. The team looked at STEM Honors College graduates who have had arts and crafts involvement during their lifetime. It was found that 80% of STEM professionals felt that arts and crafts experience was important for developing intuitive and imaginative styles of innovative thinking. After successfully exploring how ongoing participation in arts and crafts affects innovation, several members from the

“ArtsSmarts Among Innovators” team are currently working on their second project: “Arts and the Innovative Workplace.” The research project focuses on interviewing Michigan based entrepreneurs in order to learn more about how their arts

and crafts experiences have influenced their business practices and economic inventiveness. In addition, the team hopes to gain insight into the arts and crafts opportunities that workplaces provide employees to foster a creative environment and contribute to community level prosperity.

The team has successfully completed 31 interviews with various companies located in Michigan. These companies were pulled from the 21st Century Jobs Fund Award, which was supervised by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and awarded by the Granholm administration. Companies received awards based on criteria that defined them as innovative, highly-skilled, and high-wage companies within the manufacturing, life sciences, alternative energy, and homeland security and defense spheres.

After completing interviews, the team has been analyzing the data and drawing conclusions and recommendations for future consideration, by innovative companies in Michigan and the community in which these companies are located, for the final report. The team is focused on providing in-depth answers to our three original research questions; “How do innovators and entrepreneurs apply skills learned through arts and crafts training and practice to their own professional work?”, “How and to what extent do innovators and entrepreneurs engage and participate in community development and community arts endeavors?”, and “How do innovators design and organize their work environments in ways that might facilitate and encourage creative productivity?”. The research team has also held a focus group with participants, who were interviewed in the study, gaining insight on current findings. The team has found that those who participated had been positively affected by the study thus far, stating that they were going to explore using the anticipated recommendations in ways that are realistic for their companies.

The team is currently moving forward with completing the report for submission to the Michigan Council of Arts and Cultural Affairs. The research team also plans on presenting to the Council in December, as well as moving forward with publishing in several journals related to the study.

For more information contact Rex LaMore at CCED

Momentum of Two Binational Collaboration Conferences Propelling Development of Targeted Binational Regional Strategies

by J.D. Snyder

Two highly-successful conferences on binational regional collaboration were co-sponsored in October by the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development. The [Blue Water Conference](#) was held in Port Huron on October 2, and the [Twin Saults Conference](#) was held Oct 30-31 at Lake Superior State University. Each Conference focused on each region's economic assets and sectors with the greatest potential to benefit from increased binational collaboration and also highlighted current binational collaboration.

The Binational Blue Water Regional Collaboration Conference was held in cooperation with the St. Clair County Economic Development Alliance, I-69 International Trade Corridor, East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG), Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, and other Ontario organizations. Potential collaboration areas include Agri-Food Production,

Logistics, Green Chemistry, and Immigrant Attraction. Canadian Consul General Roy Norton delivered the keynote and emphasized the extensive trade relationship already existing between Michigan and Ontario to underscore the importance of binational collaboration. This robust trade relationship demonstrates the interconnectedness of the Michigan and Ontario economies and points toward a broad range of opportunities for greater binational collaboration.

The Second Annual Binational Twin Sault's Regional Collaboration Conference was held in cooperation with the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance (UPEDA), Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission (EUPRPDC), Lake Superior State University, the Sault, Michigan and Sault, Ontario EDCs, respectively, and other Ontario organizations. Potential collaborative areas include regional tourism opportunities; the state of the Twin Saults' international border crossing; the value of trails and natural resources in the Upper Peninsula and in Ontario; and strategic initiatives in the bi-national transportation corridor. Plans are already underway for the Third Annual Binational

Twin Sault's Regional Collaboration Conference that will be held next November in 2014.

Based on the positive tenor of discussions at each recent Binational Regional Collaboration Conference, MSU CCED will work with Michigan and Ontario partners to develop strategic elements for binational collaboration in agri-food production, green chemistry, regional marketing, tourism/trails and, logistics/transportation. These strategic elements will be used as a framework for the development of Binational Regional Strategies that will enhance economic prosperity in both the state of Michigan and the province of Ontario while developing innovative initiatives at the substate/subprovincial regional level.

Binational regional collaboration can occur at two principal levels: one, binational transportation corridors connected by land crossings (bridges, tunnels, or interconnected highway systems) as is the case with the Blue Water Region connected by the Blue Water Bridge and St. Clair River rail tunnel and the Twin Saults Region connected by the International Bridge and rail bridge; and two, the broader level of regional collaboration between two sub-national jurisdictions like states and provinces. Binational collaborations at either level can leverage a wider range of economic, institutional, and social assets to achieve higher levels of economic success in the binational region.

CCED and the Southwest (Ontario) Economic Alliance (SWEA) will hold an International Webinar in January to discuss the value of binational collaboration and identify the next steps and best practices that can take binational Michigan-Ontario regional collaboration to the next level.

The two October conferences were a major part of a U.S. Economic Development Administration-funded project, the **Binational Regional Collaboration and Innovative Regional Export Strategies for the Global Knowledge Economy**.

Learn more about the project at knowledgeplanning.org or contact J.D. Snyder or Kelly Christopherson at CCED