Shawnee State University

Scioto County and Shawnee State University
Community Asset Mapping

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(ATP project date)
February 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

May 30, 2012

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Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: Community Asset Mapping
Grant Period: February 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012
Grantee Name: Shawnee State University
Project Director: Brenda Haas & Chris Shaffer

Description of Project:

Using community and professional speakers, the students engaged in discussions of resource assets and the use of mapping to reveal networking possibilities in order to create and/or expand on the various skill and resource services available to the Scioto county residents. The project built on the necessary network connections through their research to promote continued dialogue and action to make a difference in the next 25 years. The students interviewed various community members across sectors, hosted statewide presenters, and researched available databases on-line. Students and instructors have identified forums of community leaders and others as identified in their action research project to be important contributors in the past and current educational and economic growth of Scioto County. The course final project used the information gleaned from community resource mapping and their interviews to develop a map of current realities (sectors: people, non-profits, manmade infrastructure, natural infrastructure, investment) to share with the community members. These early findings leveraged the information to encourage further analysis of the area.

As stated previously, the community partners represented the economic, education, civic, faith based and charitable organizations already a part of Scioto County. The Shawnee State ATP engaged the following groups as major project partners: the city government of Portsmouth (mayor and council), the Ed Burghardt Group (Economic Development & marketing think tank) and the Scioto Foundation (community non-profit focused on educational support and attainment). The ATP students identified the key stakeholders and planned their project with major involvement of the three major partners with collaboration of a wide variety of other community partners. Partners served in a variety of roles. All provided invaluable insight into their perceptions of the true assets of the region and their thoughts on how the project should and could impact their work. Many of the partners were presenters and/or panelists for class discussions and participated with the students in open presentations as guest speakers. Other community members provided students with background information for their resource asset to the community (through personal and phone interviews).

The final course deliverable, a community resource map with presentation at a community forum, identified the current strengths of Scioto County and promoted networking possibilities among and between the sectors. The work directly addressed the Appalachian Regional Commission’s strategic plan goals of increasing job opportunities and per capita income as well as strengthening the capacity of Appalachian people to compete in the global economy. Additional research (through other special
topic courses) will enable the SSU students to use action research projects to help serve the region. Additional counties in the SSU service areas could be researched and other Appalachian higher education institutions could replicate the process.

**Activities:**

Goal 1: Students developed leadership skills and awareness of community assets that can foster sustainability

The following *conferences and/or presentations* were part of the ATP project:

December 1-3, 2011
ATP project presentation and participation at the Washington, DC conference

January 2012
Brenda Haas and Chris Shaffer presented the project to the SSU Board of Trustees meeting.

March 23-25, 2012
Appalachian Studies Conference in Indiana, Pa. Project leaders participated in a discussion of the concluded program and ideas for 2012-13

March 29, 2012
ATP presented at the Shawnee State University, Undergraduate Conference on their findings. Invited academic, community and economic personnel attended their presentation.

April 18, 2012
ATP and director presented two sessions at the “Raising Tuscarawas” conference in Tuscarawas County. “Raising Tuscarawas” is an education and business/manufacturing group organizing various community sectors to work together in producing a more trained and educated workforce. The group was very interested in the “Community Asset” approach and is exploring ways to replicate the SSU student work in their rural county.

April 19, 2012
The ATP project was the showcase presentation at the “Portsmouth, Ohio: Current Assets and Opportunities for the Future” The ATP students presented their findings with a follow-up panel discussion with the Portsmouth Mayor David Malone, Ed Burghardt Group, Mr. Ed Burghardt, SSU President Rita Rice Morris and the Economic professor, Dr. Chip Poirot with participation from community and invited guests.
**Activities** that met these Goals and Objectives include:

- Students engaged in leadership expanded outside the classroom walls. The course addressed leadership strategies, roles and ethics.
- Students trained in and completed a community asset map for Scioto County
- Students researched and presented on sectors and recommendations for future study.

Sectors included:

- People (demographics)
- Organizational capacity
- Manmade infrastructure
- Natural infrastructure
- Investment strategy
- Case study (linking the findings with another similar demographic college town in Appalachia)

Goal 2: Students engaged as active learners and participants in community projects

- Students were active participants in panel discussions with cross sector of community members and educators
- Students were trained in interviewing, software programs (mapping), and protocol for networking with course speakers, private and public leaders within the community
- Students engaged in action research developing a community asset mapping project to be used in economic revitalization of the area
- Students presented their final research project findings in a variety of venues: local campus discussions/meetings, SSU Celebration of Scholarship, presentation at an Appalachian regional forum of education and economics of Tuscarawas County.
- ATP students were the highlighted presentation at the 25th Shawnee State University Anniversary. Their presentation was featured with the SSU faculty, Portsmouth City mayor and economic development personnel.

**Project Outcomes:**

- College students researched and completed a community asset map for Scioto County
- Findings presented to various constituents of the region and state
- Public forums with students and invited guests designed and completed by May 2012
- Students presented their action research for inclusion into the Shawnee State University Celebration of Scholarship in spring of 2012
- Students present their findings to local and regional organizations (i.e. Tuscarawas County Economic-Education Summit)
- A representative group of students presented a poster of the course and their findings at a Dec 1-3, 2011 conference with ARC staff and others in Washington, DC
• Students co-presented with local political representatives (Portsmouth mayor), economic development personnel, Portsmouth City council members and SSU faculty in assets of the region and “next steps”
• Local news coverage of the project presented to the Shawnee State University Trustees, campus members, local and regional newspapers, President Morris Friday letter to the campus, etc.
• The variety of presentations of the ATP students and instructors has helped develop a more robust college and community partnership using student led research.
• The ATP presentations have sparked interest in further discussion within the region. A direct project outcome has SSU organizing and convening a regional discussion on Intermodal possibilities in late August 2012. Invited guests from private and public sectors to review the ATP research findings and provide an open discussion of possible “next steps” will be the main focus of the agenda.

Problems Encountered

• Students did not have the necessary technical skill set to assist in their research---Project leader spent considerable time individually scaling up technological knowledge of the group
• Time was a constraint as the course began late in the process (SSU was new to the ATP project and we had some growing pains in the beginning of the work)
• Limited funding to provide the students more opportunities to present regional (transportation, meals, etc.) were challenges. Shawnee State University and the University College provided additional funding but made it difficult to maneuver in a timely manner to request for presentations.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

• On-going discussion on how to build on the community asset work and expand with a new group of students
• Planning for an additional course to be added to the 2012-13 schedule
• Working to develop the project with incoming SSU students within the community of an Appalachian County served by SSU. ATP students will mentor and assist a leadership group (county level commissioners) of the adjoining county to the university. Students will support and complete a localized asset mapping and presentation within the designated County.
• Establishing the program as part of the SSU course offerings as a Special Topics (interdisciplinary course)
Conclusions and Recommendations:

The ATP project allowed the Shawnee State University students the opportunity to participate in a truly student research project with impact on the area. The mission of the ATP provides the Appalachian region a vehicle to promote the region and the students we serve with invaluable learning opportunities that will extend beyond their college coursework. We certainly hope the ATP project continues. Shawnee State University remains supportive of the Appalachian Regional Commission mission.

Attachments:
PDFs attached:
SSU Celebration of Scholarship
Raising Tuscarawas
SSU 25th Anniversary Symposium