Denver Sister Cities has been building a unique, innovative partnership with Metropolitan State University of Denver (“Metro”)

Key Characteristics:

Metro has built a core foundation of their International Studies department around Denver Sister City relationships. Through Denver Sister Cities support and relationships, Metro has been able to:

- Establish visiting professorships in Kunming, China and Axum, Ethiopia
- Implement exchange programs: currently 15 students from Metro are studying history and Amharic at a university in Axum
- Conduct Research projects with Denver Sister City members and in several sister cities
- The president of Metro, Dr. Jordan, was invited to give the commencement address at the university in Axum in June 2011

Denver Sister Cities supported Metro in successful application for grants from the state department as well as local charities that benefit Metro students in the international studies program as well as community support in sister cities.

Metro and Denver Sister Cities have collaborated on fund raising for community support in two sister cities.
Innovative Results

• The results achieved in Axum, Ethiopia demonstrate how we were able to leverage the innovative relationship with Metro:
  • Building Gessoso elementary school
  • Filled the university library with books
  • Delivered two water pumps for the city of Axum
  • Supplies for Hawelti elementary school
Axum University Library - The Need

- While on a research trip to Axum supported by Denver Sister Cities, a Metro delegation visited at the university in Axum in 2010.
- They found a brand new library ... but it was empty.
Metro and Denver Sister Cities collaborated on a book drive to collect university level books to send to the university in Axum.
Challenge: How to deliver to Axum?

Challenge

• Delivery of supplies and donations to Axum from Denver has always been a challenge:
  • Denver Sister Cities secured two water pumps donated by Denver Waste Water Management approximately four years ago, but did not have a way to transport these to Axum
  • Denver Sister Cities also had school supplies to donate to Hawelti elementary school (site of a latrine project sponsored Denver Sister Cities in 2010) but the cost of sending these was too high.

Solution

• Metro acquired a grant to use a shipping container on military transport that allowed us to ship the books, water pumps and school supplies at no cost
Loading The Shipping Container

Water pumps - finally on their way

Books and supplies
Arrival in Axum
Arrival in Axum
Arrival in Axum
Gessoso School- The Need

• While visiting Gessoso, the Metro delegation saw two structures fashioned out of sticks and brush.
• They thought these were livestock enclosures, but ... it was the local elementary school for 60 children.
Denver Sister Cities and Metro collaborated to raise over $40,000 to address these need and build a new school

- Anchored by a major donation from the Western Union Foundation, other donors included the Cunningham Foundation, and Denver Funders
- Denver Sister Cities served as the 501(3)c through which donations were processed
Gessoso School - Construction

- Denver Sister Cities team members in Axum, along with the Metro visiting professor at the university in Axum, collaborated to manage the building of the school, including approving construction plans, managing the budget, and dispersal of the funds. They also collaborated with Gessoso villagers throughout the process, including with students and teachers who were onsite to review construction and provide education leadership.
Gessoso School - Construction Completed!

- The four room school was completed in July of 2011, and is now able to serve over 200 students and additional teachers.
Gessoso School - Opening Ceremony

- In April 2012 Metro faculty visited the school and witnessed first hand the impact on the local community.
Innovative Partnerships, Innovative Results

• By combining the College’s resources, and Denver Sister Cities relationships and supports, and community support in Ethiopia, change was created.

• Together as collaborators, a new school was built, books and water pumps were delivered, and students and teachers were provided with education and support.

• Denver Sister Cities, Metro and Ethiopians in Denver and in Axum have created a long term sustainable relationship where real needs are assessed and opportunities provided for partnership.
Innovation through creative partnerships, educational collaboration and community support between Denver, Metro and cities in Ethiopia, created outstanding community programs to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation!