## IRELAND - UGANDA

# Linking Communities for Shared Learning and Mutual Gain



Partners in Learning (PiL): a development approach that links localities actively involved in community development to share experiences and learning towards mutual gain.

To Create a World of Equals though Personal Relationships.

### Pil Mission

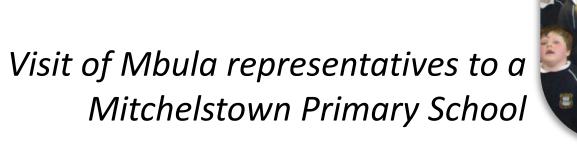
To improve our lives economically and socially by learning from partner communities in the Global North and the Global South.

## Pil Objectives

- 1. Empowerment to build relationships that empower individuals and communities.
- 2. Reciprocity to engage in projects that benefit both communities.
- 3. Participation to create relationships across as many strands of each community as possible.
- 4. Responsibility to focus on projects that each community identifies for itself and then work on solutions together.

## Challenges to PiL Approach

- Monitoring & Evaluation of tangible & intangible outcomes
- Altering the traditional view of cultural supremacy
- Consistency in bottom-up approach
- Corruption
- Cultural issues
- Distance
- Funding





## PiL Background

Ballyhoura Development LAG (Ireland), Plan International (Child-focused Development Organisation) and University College Dublin (UCD) initiated a progressive development approach aiming to create partnerships through links between communities from the Global North and Global South; thus providing an excellent opportunity to share experiences and learning for mutual gain.

#### **LAG Role**

- Project concept & pre-development
- Support communities to participate
- Facilitate PiL financially & technically





## Pil Uganda (Mbula) Projects

## Pil Mitchelstown Projects

## **Projects**

- Reciprocal visits
- Breakfast mornings
- Schools
- Crafts
- Mental health
- Community forum
- Host two students at UCD

## Challenges

- Maintaining an ongoing engagement with the community
- Maintaining support of development agencies as the link progresses – effective exit strategies
- Promoting the difference of the PiL approach
- Recognising and embracing the cultural differences
- Overcoming idealistic expectations from volunteers

## Outcomes

- Increased social capital
- Intergenerational integration
- Grassroots development giving ownership
- Identifying loneliness/social issues/ 'busyness'
- Increased knowledge & skills



Ballyhoura Development, Plan Ireland, PiL Mitchelstown and Mbula representatives signing the PiL Charter., witnessed by John Hume, Nobel Peace Prize Winner.

## Projects

- 1. Reciprocal visits
- 2. Community-driven initiatives:
- MAFA: Mari\* Agro Farmers' Association Cooperative
- Art & Crafts Women's Assoc
- Education Club
- Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)
- Reimochandi\*\* Savings And Credit Cooperative
- Full Shilling Club a mental health support and awareness group
- 3. Engaged with public and NGO stakeholders
- 4. Capacity building
- \*Mari means 'friendly' in the Japhadhola language
- \*\*Reimochandi means 'Chasing Poverty' in the Japhadhola language

#### **Outcomes**

- Increased capacity
- Improved livelihoods
- Improved educational status
- Improved infrastructure
- Savings culture initiated
- Reducing stigma of mental health
- Mobilising community for community development
- Empowerment to realise quality of life is not all linked to affluence

#### Challenges in Uganda

- Donor dependency handouts mainly from NGOs affecting commitments
- Untrained personnel
- Realistic expectations
- Maintaining community involvement

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"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality; tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." – Martin Luther King Jr