

Linking Communities for Shared Learning and Mutual Gain



PiL Vision

To Create a World of Equals through 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



Visit of Mbula representatives to a Mitchelstown Primary School

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

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



Sharing Cultures in Uganda



PiL Mitchelstown Projects

Projects

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

Outcomes

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

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



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

"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

PiL Uganda (Mbula) Projects

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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