

Craig Owen, Wales Africa Community Links

Wales Africa Community Links aim to increase the quantity, quality and development impact of partnerships, of which there are 139 .

One of 60 such links supported closely by the WACL team, the Dolen Ffermio partnership between Llanfyllin in the rural hills of Montgomeryshire and Kumi District in Uganda grew out of the common interests of farmers. Example livelihoods projects have brought about the immunisation of 100,000 chickens; delivered 800 goats for an income generation scheme supporting 800 orphans; and they have trained 400 youth workers. These initiatives have made a considerable local contribution towards MDG1, Reducing Poverty and Hunger.



Last year Dolen Ffermio went through the UN Gold Star Award assessment process. What especially impressed the panel was the work done with young people, getting schools from both communities to link as clusters, working together on rural education and sustainability issues. As well as contributing towards MDG2 on Education, as part of this work, Dolen Ffermio have run annual conferences entitled “the Cost of Food” focussing on linking local to global agriculture issues , to which 200 people turned up (in a community of 1200).

Students were recently involved in exchange programmes, 20 from Wales to Uganda and 2 smaller reciprocal visit groups from Uganda to Wales. A long-term exchange programme is planned, although visa issues can make south to north visits challenging. Two of the Welsh students have been stimulated to go on to university to study international development as a direct consequence of their experiences.

Welsh Assembly Government Council General , John Griffiths AM (chair of the Welsh All Party Parliamentary Group for International Development), has just returned in November 2010 from a visit to Uganda, and was especially impressed with Dolen Ffermio’s environmental projects. Focused on community based tree planting, this is one of several link-led initiatives which are part of the recently launched “Size of Wales” project,

Beyond Llanfyllin and Kumi, under the Dolen Ffermio / Wales Africa Community Links umbrella, link projects are now developing between other towns in E Uganda and Mid / NE Wales, including Newtown, Llanbrynmair, Welshpool and Oswestry. Through involving wider parts of the community (such as health professionals), they are diversifying into new project areas contributing towards the Health MDGs. With support and small amounts of development funding, this entirely voluntary organisation have been able to increase their supporter base and income tenfold since 2006, building a sustainable organisational future with increasing impact on the MDGs.