

Irish Girl Guides press release

17 June 2018

Irish Girl Guides invent sustainable water solutions with Lego!

- Irish Girl Guides partners with Dublin City University, Learnit Lego Education and Science Foundation Ireland to encourage girls to pursue STEM –

Two hundred members of Irish Girl Guides have come up with a selection of innovative water solutions using Lego, which they showcased at an expo in Dublin City University yesterday [Saturday 16 June 2018].

The Brownies (Brownies is the branch of Irish Girl Guides for 7-10 year olds), who worked in teams of four, spent five weeks researching the issue of water sustainability and exploring innovative ways to preserve water.

Each team designed, built and programmed an autonomous motorised Lego model incorporating a range of sensors and motors. Each team also designed a poster with diagrams of the solution(s) they had come up with, the feasibility of executing the project and details of the programme used. Each group of four girls also underwent an interview about their solution(s).

Their work culminated in yesterday's expo – similar to the BT Young Scientist Exhibition - where the girls displayed their projects and were on hand to explain to families, friends and visitors the creative solutions they had come up with.

The project, Irish Girl Guides Innovatively Engaging with STEM (IGGIES), is a partnership with Dublin City University's Learnit Lego Education and is sponsored by Science Foundation Ireland.

Irish Girl Guides Chief Commissioner Helen Concannon said the organisation was delighted to undertake the project with Brownies from Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare and that they looked forward to rolling out the programme to members in other counties in the coming months.

"To kick off the project, 20 of our volunteer female leaders attended a one day training where they up-skilled and learned the technology themselves so they could impart it to the girls," she said. "Already we have another 20 Leaders and 200 girls signed up to do a similar project in the autumn.

"Irish Girl Guides believes in challenging stereotypes and we have undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years to encourage our members to pursue STEM subjects in school and to consider pursuing careers in STEM.

"We are also committed to encouraging our girls to dream big and to take action to make a difference in their local communities and in the wider world. The IGGIES project is just one

of a number of activities we are using to help our members learn about the Sustainable Development Goals and to explore ways in which they can help make the world a better place.”

Elianna Clancy (10) of Celbridge Brownies, said: “This was so much fun and we learnt loads from doing the IGGIES project. I am now thinking I might change what I want to do when I grow up and am looking at being a technology engineer.”

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Irish Girl Guides has approximately 12,000 members. Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,800 volunteer leaders providing an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Online Surfer, Science Investigator, Engineering and Global Traveller.