

Irish Girl Guides press release

10 February 2019

New climate action badge will see thousands of girls strive to combat climate change

- Irish Girl Guides team up with Trócaire to tackle climate change -

Thousands of girls throughout Ireland are set to take steps to combat climate change following the launch yesterday [9 February] of a Climate Action badge at Irish Girl Guides' national conference in Galway Bay Hotel, Salthill, Co Galway.

The result of an ongoing partnership between Irish Girl Guides (IGG) and Trócaire, the badge was inspired by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 13 – 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.'

Ladybirds (age 5-7) and Brownies (age 7-10) will learn through a series of activities how important it is to care for the environment and how they can take steps to combat climate change.

Guides (age 10-14) and Senior Branch members (age 14-30) will learn how climate change has resulted from human activities and will discover how climate change is affecting communities in Trócaire's partner countries e.g. drought and food insecurity in Ethiopia, migration in Kenya and extreme flooding and sea level rise in Honduras.

They will be encouraged to make the link between human rights and climate justice and consider how Ireland overall, and their own actions, are contributing to climate change. Through a series of activities, they will then be supported to consider what actions they can take to address climate change.

Sinéad Crilly, Chair of IGG's Membership, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and a Guide Leader in Drogheda, said IGG was delighted to partner with Trócaire to launch the Climate Action badge and she looked forward to seeing many girls earning the badge.

"We all need clean food, water and air," she said. "There is enough for everyone but some of us are using more than our fair share by wasting resources. We cannot continue as we are and we encourage our members to play their part in helping look after the environment.

"We already have an Environmental Awareness badge, which encourages girls to recycle, conserve water and save electricity. Working on the new Climate Action badge will reinforce this message and, rather than feeling helpless in the face of climate change, girls will discover how they can play their part to protect the world."

Aine O'Driscoll, Trócaire's Development Education Officer Youth, said climate change was the greatest injustice of our time. "Those who are contributing least to climate change are suffering the most, while those with the most power are failing to address the issue," she said.

“Families that depend on rainfall to grow crops are particularly vulnerable, as an increase in drought and floods makes it more difficult to produce enough food to feed themselves. Out of necessity, people may resort to activities such as deforestation, sand harvesting and charcoal-making, which further impacts on the environment. Individuals and whole families are migrating from rural areas to urban areas in search of work.

“Trócaire is supporting communities affected by climate change in different parts of the world. It is also raising awareness of the urgent need to address climate justice and is calling for action by our government at national and international levels.”

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Notes for editors:

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, Aviation and Global Traveller.