

# Irish Girl Guides Outreach Pack



# Foreword

---

Dear Leader,

I am delighted to introduce our new Outreach Pack, which is an exciting resource tool for you to use with the girls in your unit and which will also enable you to reach out to potential members from minority ethnic communities.

The Irish Girl Guides would like our membership to be reflective of the population in our country today so that the various minority groups in each local community are reflected in the membership of the nearest IGG Units. We recognise that efforts to attract and integrate girls from different national, ethnic and religious backgrounds must be tailored to meet local needs and conditions and should be carried out in collaboration with local communities.

This Outreach Pack was created to help you to welcome girls and women from minority ethnic communities into your unit. As well as being a resource pack containing educational activities on a wide variety of topics to use with the girls in your unit, it also provides useful information and advice on how to make your unit more inclusive.

The pack challenges you and the other leaders in your unit to reflect on your perceptions and practices in relation to working with girls and young women around identity and minority issues. It informs you about other cultures, gives advice on cross-cultural communication, and raises awareness of issues that may arise. Using this pack will ensure that you are better equipped to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the community in which you are now living and working.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Education, Youth Affairs Section for allocating funding to enable us to produce this Outreach Pack. I would also like to congratulate Mary Emmett, Chairman of the IGG Outreach Committee and her committee members and to thank them for all their hard work in putting this pack together. Thanks also to the members of the national Ladybird, Brownie, Guide and Senior Branch committees for their input and advice regarding the compilation of activities in section two. The Outreach Committee worked in collaboration with the Outreach Development Officer in National Office to produce the pack, as a result of which we have a resource that is informative, useful and exciting.

The Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship (March 2007) recommended 'that all forms of community and voluntary organisations should be encouraged to undertake proactive initiatives to reach out and engage with newcomers in Irish society'. I am delighted that the Irish Girl Guides are doing so. It is particularly appropriate that we are launching our Outreach Pack in 2008, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

I look forward to seeing how our organisation will reap the rewards of integration and inclusion to the benefit of all our members.

Yours in Guiding,



Emer O'Sullivan,  
Chief Commissioner

# Table of Contents

---

Foreword by the Chief Commissioner .....	2
--	---

Guiding Glossary .....	5
------------------------	---

## **Section One**

<b>The Irish Girl Guides Outreach programme .....</b>	<b>8</b>
---	----------

The Outreach Committee .....	9
------------------------------	---

Outreach Development Officer .....	9
------------------------------------	---

Pilot Outreach Project, Corduff, 2006.....	9
--	---

Outreach Pack .....	10
---------------------	----

Use of the pack .....	11
-----------------------	----

<b>Recruiting girls and young women from minority ethnic communities into IGG.....</b>	<b>12</b>
--	-----------

Points to remember when recruiting girls and women from minority ethnic backgrounds .....	13
---	----

Communication and cultural differences.....	13
---	----

<b>Benefits of Guiding .....</b>	<b>14</b>
----------------------------------	-----------

<b>Aspects of Guiding that may unintentionally exclude potential members.....</b>	<b>14</b>
---	-----------

Cost of membership.....	14
-------------------------	----

Uniform .....	14
---------------	----

Religion .....	15
----------------	----

Religious observances.....	15
----------------------------	----

IGG Promise .....	15
-------------------	----

Alternative Promise for non-Irish nationals.....	15
--	----

<b>Guidelines to facilitate the integration of minority ethnic girls into your Unit .....</b>	<b>16</b>
---	-----------

<b>Guidelines for a more effective cross cultural communication.....</b>	<b>17</b>
--	-----------

<b>Examples of cultural and communication diversity .....</b>	<b>18</b>
---	-----------

<b>Definitions of frequently used terms.....</b>	<b>19</b>
--	-----------

Perceptions .....	19
-------------------	----

Prejudice.....	19
----------------	----

Racism.....	19
-------------	----

Stereotyping .....	19
--------------------	----

Discrimination .....	20
----------------------	----

## Section Two

<b>Notes to Leaders on Section Two</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Key things to remember when using the activities from the pack.....	22
Debriefing and evaluation .....	23
<b>Activities Index</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Energisers</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Part 1: Identity and belonging</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Part 2: Diversity and respect</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>Part 3: Cross cultural communication</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<b>Part 4: Inclusion and exclusion</b> .....	<b>62</b>
<b>Part 5: Celebrating Cultural Diversity</b> .....	<b>71</b>
Crafts.....	71
Games.....	81
Music.....	87
Food .....	90
<b>References for activities</b> .....	<b>96</b>

## Section Three

<b>Some useful information for Leaders</b> .....	<b>100</b>
Travellers: History and traditions .....	100
Nationalities living in Ireland .....	102
Refugees living in Ireland .....	103
Some religions practised in Ireland.....	104
Practical tips and notes for Leaders on religions .....	114
Contact details for major religions in Ireland .....	117
Contact details for relevant organisations .....	119

# Guiding Glossary

---

**Area** – a division of one of the seven administrative regions that IGG is divided into. Each Area is further sub-divided into a number of Districts.

**Branches** – the different age groups that the Irish Girl Guides work with.

**Brown Owl** – a name used for a Brownie Guide Leader.

**Brownie Guide** – a member of IGG aged 6½ - 11 years.

**Commissioner** – a warranted Leader with a specific responsibility e.g. District, Area.

**Compulsory Challenges** – the compulsory sections of the Guide programme

**Core Challenges** – the compulsory sections of the Brownie Guide programmes

**Distribution Centre** – place where uniforms, badges and resources for leaders may be purchased.

**District** - a sub-division of a Guiding Area which is made up of a number of local Units.

**Enrolment** – when a member makes her Promise and is presented with the appropriate Branch Trefoil pin.

**Executive Committee** – the national committee responsible for the management of the Irish Girl Guides.

**Guide** – a member of IGG aged 10½ - 15 years.

**I.G.G.** - abbreviation for the Irish Girl Guides

**Ladybird** – a member of IGG aged 5 - 7 years.

**Law** – one of the fundamental principles of Guiding, a simple code that its members live by.

**Leader** – an adult volunteer who works with a Unit.

**Leadership Team** – the voluntary leaders responsible for the running of a local IGG Unit.

**Logo** – the IGG emblem adapted for each Branch.

**National Office** – the headquarters of IGG, situated in Dublin.

**Neckerchief** – a triangular scarf worn around the neck.

**Numbered Challenges** – the 'pick and choose' section of the Brownie programme.

**Optional Challenges** - the 'pick and choose' section of the Guide programme.

# Guiding Glossary

---

**Outreach Committee** – the voluntary committee responsible for IGG’s outreach pro

**Outreach Development Officer** – the staff member responsible for supporting the Outreach Committee to carry out IGG’s outreach programme.

**Outreach Project** – a pilot outreach project run by IGG in Corduff, Dublin in 2006

**Outreach Programme** – the totality of the outreach initiatives undertaken by the Outreach Committee.

**Patrol** – a group of 6-8 Guides who work under the leadership of one of their peers, the Patrol Leader.

**Programme** – the totality of informal educational activities and experiences provided for members.

**Promise** – the three-part commitment that girls and adults make when they are enrolled as members of IGG.

**Ranger** – a member of IGG aged 14½ - 21 years.

**Regional Development Officer** – an employee of IGG whose responsibility is to support local leaders and to help develop Guiding in her Region.

**Safety Guidelines** – a booklet containing important information on insurance, safety and activities.

**Senior Branch** – members of IGG from 14½ years to 26 years of age.

**Six** – a group of 6-8 Brownies who work under the leadership of one of their peers, the Sixer.

**Trefoil** – a three-part emblem, representing the three parts of the Promise.

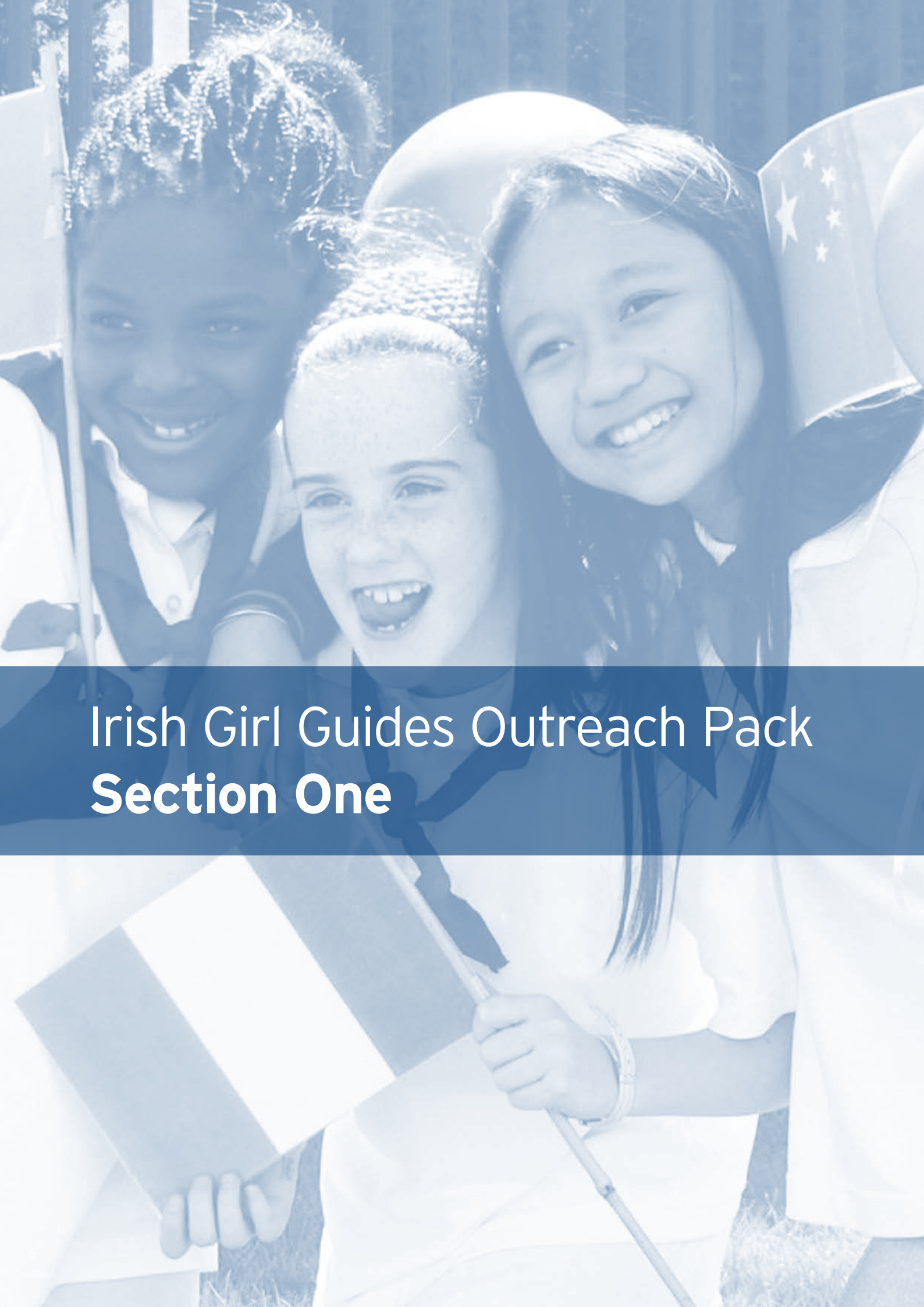
**Uniform** – worn by members of IGG and differentiated according to the age group – Ladybird, Brownie, Guide, Senior Branch or adult Leaders.

**Unit** – a local group of girls with leaders, who meet on a weekly basis.

**Unit Leader** - the leader who is responsible for the running of a local Unit with the help of assistant leaders.

**Woggle** - a leather woven band worn around the neckerchief.





Irish Girl Guides Outreach Pack  
**Section One**

# The Irish Girl Guides' Outreach Programme

---

The Irish Girl Guides (IGG) is a national organisation for girls and young women which operates in local units throughout the Republic of Ireland. Membership of IGG is open to all who accept the Guiding ethos which includes the Promise and Law.

Irish society has changed rapidly in recent years and there are now people from over 100 countries living and working in Ireland. The 2006 census revealed that 1 in 10 people living in Ireland was born outside the country.

In 2005 the IGG Executive Committee decided that every effort should be made to broaden the perspective of our organisation and our members. An application was made to the Department of Education, Youth Affairs Section for funding that would enable us to carry out a service project on the theme of diversity targeted towards girls who would traditionally not have the opportunity to avail of Guiding. We also applied to the Department for funding to employ an Outreach Development Officer who would initiate and support the project, and would build up the capacity of our members to branch out into the new communities in Irish society.

This funding application was successful and we are very grateful to the Department for enabling us to work towards our aim for the membership of IGG to be a true reflection of those living in communities throughout Ireland today.





## The Outreach Committee

An outreach committee was set up whose aims are to:

- organise service projects for the target group
- develop promotional material to be directed at parents and guardians of potential project participants explaining why Guiding would benefit their child
- develop resources to enable IGG leaders to adapt our programme to the needs of targeted communities
- train our volunteer leaders to be able to meet the challenges of integrating and working with our target group
- train women from within the target group communities to be IGG leaders
- raise awareness of our members to the challenges faced by the target group in today's Ireland
- identify the management qualities an organisation requires in order to cope with the challenges of its interculturalisation

## Outreach Development Officer

An Outreach Development Officer was employed to support the volunteer members of the Outreach Committee in their work. The duties of the Outreach Development Officer are to:

- help to develop and implement IGG's integration strategy
- promote IGG's outreach programme in the community
- provide a comprehensive outreach training and support scheme for IGG Leaders
- liaise with other organisations to inform them about IGG's outreach programme
- raise IGG members' awareness of girls and young women from minority ethnic communities
- train IGG leaders and trainers and raise their awareness of the benefits and challenges of integration
- help IGG leaders to target girls and young women from minority ethnic communities, to promote Guiding to their parents and to integrate the girls and young women into their units

The Outreach Development Officer is based in IGG National Office and is available for support and advice on any aspect of outreach work. Email [outreach@irishgirlguides.ie](mailto:outreach@irishgirlguides.ie)

She is available to travel to different parts of Ireland to promote the contents of this pack, and to provide trainings for leaders on the integration of girls and young women from minority ethnic communities into their units. Leaders wishing to avail of this support should contact their District or Area Commissioners to ask them to coordinate the visit of the Outreach Development Officer to their District or Area in order to maximise the benefit of her visit to that locality.

## Pilot Outreach Project, Corduff, 2006

A pilot outreach project entitled "One World, Diverse Cultures" was held in Corduff, Dublin in the summer of 2006. This project included three fun days and a five-day long non-residential summer camp for an average of 50 participants, of whom one third were from minority ethnic communities. The other participants were Irish girls, some of whom were members of the local IGG Brownie Unit.

A full report on the planning and organisation of this project is held on file in IGG National Office and is available on request from the Outreach Development Officer by telephoning 01-668 3898 or emailing [outreach@irishgirlguides.ie](mailto:outreach@irishgirlguides.ie).



## Outreach Pack

The experience of running the pilot outreach project clearly demonstrated the necessity for IGG to develop materials and resources which would demonstrate the positive benefits of the integration of girls and women from minority ethnic communities into IGG Units and would equip our leaders with the information, skills and tools necessary to reach out to the wider community.

This Outreach Pack was created and developed in order to:

- give advice on the integration of immigrant and minority ethnic women and children into IGG
- enable leaders to adapt their educational programmes to the needs of these new members
- provide practical activities to raise awareness about issues such as diversity and interculturalism for use in IGG units

The Outreach Pack is subdivided into three sections for ease of use.

### Section One

gives an introduction to IGG'S Outreach Programme. It includes considerations leaders should make when recruiting and integrating girls and women from minority ethnic communities into their local units. Definitions on prejudice, racism, stereotyping and discrimination are provided. This section also provides leaders with help points for more effective cross cultural communication and examples of cultural and communication diversity. Aspects of Guiding that may unintentionally exclude potential members are also pointed out.

### Section Two

provides many examples of awareness-raising activities that can be carried out by leaders with the girls in their local units. These activities are an exciting and fun way of exploring different cultures around the world, our own identity and how people from different backgrounds interact. By taking part in the activities, girls will start to appreciate the similarities and differences between their way of life and the way of life of other cultures.

Logos for the appropriate IGG Branch (Ladybird, Brownie, Guide and Senior Branch) are printed beside each activity so that leaders can see at a glance if the activity is suitable for the age range of girls they are working with.

"Notes to leaders" are provided and give practical advice on best practice in briefing and debriefing the girls before and after carrying out the activities with them.

The activities are subdivided into the following categories – identity and belonging, diversity and respect, cross cultural communication, inclusion and exclusion, celebrating cultural diversity. The latter category includes samples of crafts, recipes, songs and games from other countries. References are listed at the back of the pack should leaders wish to source further activities on any of these topics.w

### Section Three

includes useful background information for leaders regarding various nationalities living in Ireland and the major religions practised in Ireland.

For each of these religions, practical information is provided regarding diet, dress and religious observances so that leaders with a member(s) from a minority ethnic community will know what adaptations, if any, they may have to make to their weekly programme or when going on an outing or to a residential event.

Contact information for the major religions in Ireland is also provided should leaders require further information, help or advice. Useful contact details for appropriate organisations in Ireland are also listed.



## Use of the pack

It is envisaged that leaders will use sections one and three as reference information to be accessed as appropriate, and will use the activities in section two with the girls in the units on a regular, on-going basis.

These activities have been cross-referenced with the programme material for the appropriate IGG Branch – Ladybird, Brownie, Guide and Senior Branch - so that leaders will know when the girls in their units have completed a section of the educational Guiding programme by carrying out an outreach activity.

For further questions or information about any aspect of this pack, please telephone the Irish Girl Guides National Office at 668 3898 or 668 9035 and ask to speak to the Outreach Development Officer or email [outreach@irishgirlguides.ie](mailto:outreach@irishgirlguides.ie).



# Recruiting girls and young women from minority ethnic communities into IGG

Feel free to contact the Outreach Development Officer in the Irish Girl Guides National Office with any queries you may have or for any information you may require by telephoning 01-668 3898 or emailing [outreach@irishgirlguides.ie](mailto:outreach@irishgirlguides.ie)

Many people have little or no experience of interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds, and this may result in feelings of nervousness, anxiety and apprehension. These feelings are overcome by simply becoming more informed about other cultures and having a set of commonsense guidelines to follow when meeting and communicating with people from different cultures.

Initially, leaders should ask themselves the following questions:

- How do I react to difference?
- Would I welcome a girl from a different country/ culture into my unit?
- Do I have space in my unit currently to take in a girl(s) from a minority ethnic community?
- Am I willing to use this Outreach Pack to address the various issues with the girls who are currently in my unit?

Leaders should reflect on the diversity in the community in which they live, and think about the positive value this diversity can have in their community. Ways in which communities are diverse include: demographical, social, cultural, educational, rural, urban, ethnic, etc. Positive values of diversity include: awareness and understanding of other cultures and faiths.

The Unit leader should discuss the possibility of welcoming a girl(s) from minority ethnic communities into the unit in advance with the other members of her leadership team. She should ensure that all of the leaders in the unit are open to this possibility and have a positive attitude to outreach and integration.

In an area with a larger population from minority ethnic communities, prior to recruiting girls and young women it is advisable to:

- develop links with local immigrant communities to inform them about IGG and to seek advice about how Guiding can be more open to their members.
- cooperate with ethnic, cultural or religious organisations in the area. Contact the chairperson to ask their permission to inform adults about Guiding – what it means and what opportunities there are locally for girls to join IGG.
- network in the locality, meeting with key people in the local community e.g. community development officers, local charities, the youth services.
- arrange to have a contact person in the locality where you want to find new members. Inform this person about Guiding and try to have him or her with you in the actual recruitment situation.
- have a special meeting with parents in an area where Guiding is not well known in order to make them feel that they can trust IGG to be a good organisation for their daughters to join.
- organise a “Try Guiding” meeting when participants can take part in “taster” sessions of different aspects of the Guiding programme in order for the girls and their parents to get an idea of what it is about.



## Points to remember when recruiting girls and women from minority ethnic backgrounds

- Parents of potential members may not know which youth organisations are available in the locality that their daughter could join. Leaders should advertise their unit as widely as possible in the local community, clearly promoting the benefits and advantages of membership. Promotional leaflets and posters for this purpose are available on request from Regional Development Officers or from IGG National Office. Leaders can put their own contact details on this material so that parents of potential members can contact them directly.
- Leaders should promote the fact that IGG has credibility as a reputable organisation which has been in existence for almost 100 years in Ireland.
- Guiding is an extremely well recognised international organisation with over 10 million members worldwide. Leaders should be aware that the people they are talking to may have had experience of Guiding in their own country.
- If a girl/adult was a member of Guiding in her own country, leaders should be aware that a transfer system exists and should contact National Office for the procedure to be followed.
- Children of immigrant parents may have been born in Ireland and may be Irish citizens. This may be a key aspect of their identity.
- Leaders may not know if potential members are refugees or economic migrants. It is not appropriate to enquire about this. A young girl may not even be aware of her status in the country. Leaders should let the parent or child volunteer the information if they feel comfortable enough to do so. In the case of refugees, the person may have suffered an ordeal or experienced very difficult circumstances which forced them to leave their home country and leaders must be sensitive to this.

## Communication and cultural differences

Once a girl from a minority ethnic community becomes a member of IGG, the leader should make an effort to ensure that the girl and her parents understand the notices regarding unit meetings, events, outings etc. that the girl receives. If possible, leaders should try to send notes home to the parents in their own language. Leaders should be aware that the girls' level of English is often much better than their parents.

Leaders should be aware of using phrases that only IGG members would understand e.g. Patrol, Brown Owl, neckerchief, woggle. If these words or phrases must be used, they should be explained so that everybody understand them.

It is possible that cultural differences may mean that meeting times or activities may be inappropriate for some potential members e.g. Jews may not be able to take part in activities on the Sabbath. Leaders may have to consider changing the day and/or time to accommodate potential members.





# Benefits Of Guiding

The main purpose of Guiding is to promote the development of girls and young women in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potential as individuals, responsible citizens and members of their local, national and international communities.

Guiding offers girls and young women opportunities to:

- develop self-awareness, self-respect and self-confidence
- participate in a structured, exciting and challenging leisure time activity
- make friends and share experiences
- learn and develop a wide variety of practical life-skills
- learn leadership and decision-making skills
- develop a sense of responsibility for their local and wider communities
- value the natural environment
- develop their personal values and respect for others
- foster cultural understanding and knowledge of the global community

## Aspects of Guiding that may unintentionally exclude potential members

Unfortunately certain aspects of Guiding may, unintentionally, exclude potential members, particularly from minority ethnic communities. It is important to be aware of them. These may include:

### Cost of membership

The cost of membership e.g. affiliation fees, uniform, subscription may be off-putting to a potential member and her parents. However leaders should bear in mind that Special Needs grants to help pay such expenses may be available on application through the Regions. It may also be possible for the Unit to subsidise the girl's membership costs.

Leaders should also bear in mind that there are certain times of the year when families will be under a financial strain e.g. September when children return to school or in January when spending for Christmas may have overstretched the family's budget. If possible, they should try to avoid such times of the year when asking families to pay substantial amounts to the Unit.

### Uniform

The uniform, as your Unit wears it, may not be suitable for girls from other cultural backgrounds, particularly those with cultural traditions regarding dress e.g. in some cultures girls should not wear trousers. Leaders should be aware that skirts are a uniform option and should contact the IGG Distribution Centre.

Adaptations may be necessary and flexibility should be exercised where possible. For example, leaders should be aware that a hijab is available for sale in the IGG Distribution Centre.



## Religion

There may be a perception that Guiding is just for Christians. It is important to make it clear that Guiding is open to girls and young women from all faiths.

Leaders should consider the religious symbols and ceremonies used in their unit (e.g. prayer time at opening and closing of meetings, grace at mealtimes, church parades). These should be adapted to be as inclusive as possible.

In addition to encouraging the girls to attend their own form of religion, leaders can include a Guides' Own in the programme for Unit events. All of the girls can be included in the production and delivery of the Guides' Own, which is a good way of inclusively expressing spiritual moments within a Unit.

## Religious observances

In accordance with the Constitution of the Irish Girl Guides, the religious beliefs of all members should be respected. The religious policy of IGG is that:

- if a unit is composed of members of various forms of religion, they should be encouraged to attend the services of their own form of religion
- in camp or on holiday any form of daily prayer should be of the simplest character, attendance being voluntary
- where it is not permissible under a rule of the religion of any member to attend religious observances other than her own form of religion, the leaders of the unit must see that such a rule is strictly observed while the girl is under their care

## IGG Promise

The IGG Guide Promise is:

I promise on my honour to do my best  
to do my duty to God and my country,  
to help other people at all times  
and to obey the Guide Law.

### Alternative Promise for non-Irish nationals

Leaders should be aware that the following alternative forms of the Promise are provided for non-Irish nationals wishing to become members of the Irish Girl Guides:

#### Alternative Brownie Guide Promise for non-Irish nationals

I promise to do my best  
to do my duty to God, my country and to the country in which I am living,  
to help those at home every day and  
to obey the Brownie Guide Law.

#### Alternative Guide/Ranger/Young Leader Promise for non-Irish nationals

I promise on my honour to do my best  
to do my duty to God, my country and to the country in which I am living,  
to help other people at all times  
and to obey the Guide Law.

Please note that a member previously enrolled in her own country does not need to be enrolled again as a member of the Irish Girl Guides.



# Guidelines to facilitate the integration of minority ethnic girls into your Unit

- Our culture shapes the way we perceive the world and how we make sense of it. It affects the way we interact with others and with our environment. How we dress, what we believe and fear; what we assume, and what we consider right or wrong is determined by our culture as well as by our personality and human nature.
- Remember you have not been born with your culture, you have learned it as everybody else has. There are different cultures; no culture is better or worse than another.
- Creating a Guiding culture that welcomes diversity means creating an open, tolerant atmosphere within your Unit.
- Do not assume that you know a person just because you have a bit of information about their country of origin or about their culture.
- When facing people who are not acting as you would expect, try to distance yourself and not to take it as a personal affront.
- Some of the people who have immigrated to Ireland in the last few years come from countries with more than 150 million people. If you have a bad experience with a particular person, try not to take it out on the rest of their national group.
- Think of the young girls/women you are going to meet. Learn about their culture and identify their language. Meeting people from different backgrounds is an enriching experience; do not be afraid to ask them questions in a respectful way.
- Challenge stereotypes and counter prejudice towards other groups among the girls in your Unit.
- Think about the situation in terms of intervention and prevention.
- Agree to some ground rules with your Unit, such as the use of appropriate language and respecting diverse opinions. You should encourage the girls not to tolerate offensive jokes.
- Avoid presenting young people from different cultural backgrounds as exotic or the majority group as 'normal'. Try to imagine yourself in their situation away from the familiarity of your home.
- Recognise that girls in Ireland may have different cultural or religious needs and plan to accommodate these where possible. Be sensitive to and respectful of their concerns and needs.
- Make sure that the new girls are actively engaged. While this may be difficult in the early stages, it is very important for the new girls to feel that they are participating and included during meetings. Make a point of making direct contact with the new girls regularly.
- Avoid cultural misunderstandings, e.g. cultural attitudes of privacy. Don't be afraid to say if you don't know. Don't pretend to understand if you don't.
- Do not assume that because two or more people share a common nationality they will get on.
- Pronouncing names properly is very important. Leaders may have difficulty pronouncing foreign names. Ask the girl, or if the girl is very young, ask her mother or father to tell you how to pronounce it.
- Emphasise the common identities and interests of young people, while recognising that young people are individuals and therefore unique
- Good communication is very important. Make sure you speak as clearly as possible especially with girls who might belong to other linguistic backgrounds (see guidelines overleaf)
- Initially you may need to explain everything individually to the girl who might have difficulties with the English language. After a while, you may find a buddy for her among the other girls in the Unit who can assist, e.g. pair her up with one of the girls she is getting on well with and this girl can fill her in on anything she doesn't fully understand.



# Guidelines for a more effective cross cultural communication

Young girls whose parents have immigrated to Ireland generally have a very good level of English. Learning a foreign language is a much more difficult task for older people and the girl's parents might have more difficulties interacting in English with leaders. Occasionally, leaders can be assisted by the girls to communicate with their parents. Be aware though that it might not always be appropriate for some girls to be present at these conversations.

Communicating with people with whom we share a cultural background can often be difficult; we face misunderstandings on a daily basis. Communicating across cultures can be challenging. Our cultural background influences how we communicate, the way we speak as well as listen, how we structure and articulate our thoughts and how we use body language and express emotion. Several styles of communication exist. If we interact with people with a different style to ours, it might be puzzling. Try to take this into consideration when interacting with people from other cultures.

When interacting with people who speak English as their native language or as one of their native languages, remember that even though you share a common language with them, their style of communication might be different to yours. As a general rule, it is important that leaders are very aware of their use of language and the way they communicate.

Below are some guidelines that might help you to interact with people from linguistic backgrounds other than English:

- Girls from linguistic backgrounds other than English might have problems communicating in English but they might speak four or five other languages. Try not to display patronizing attitudes towards them.
- Learning another language takes time, some girls have more difficulties than others. Think about your own experience of learning a different language.
- Make sure you speak clearly and slowly. Don't use idioms, sayings, acronyms or technical words.
- Paraphrase your message using different words to help communication. Don't repeat the same phrase again and again. It might be intimidating. If the message was not understood, you need to say the same thing in a different way.
- When conveying instructions, do not raise your voice. It is offensive and does not contribute to better understanding.
- Remember, nodding and repeating "yes" and "ok" does not imply that the girls understand what you are saying or asking them to do.
- We not only communicate through verbal language, we also use body language. Some cultures rely heavily on facial gestures and body movements. Be aware of your body language, you might be conveying messages that you do not wish to.
- Encourage the girl to share a few words and phrases from her language, and make the effort to learn and use some expressions in the girl's language.
- Use different methods to communicate including drama, visual material and art work. Use pictorial and multilingual signs (as opposed to those written in only one language).
- When interacting with people with a different style of communication to yours, try to observe their gestures and listen as attentively as possible. Suspend judgement and do not adopt a defensive attitude.
- Action based activities can be best for children with little English.



# Examples of cultural and communication diversity

---

**(The content of this section is a very small sample and by no means intended to be a comprehensive description of cultures and communication styles. Moreover, many people belonging to some of the groups mentioned below might not adhere to these descriptions. Cultures and human beings are never static, they constantly evolve, change and adapt to different environments)**

For many people from Eastern Africa keeping eye contact can be disrespectful, especially speaking with older people. For Americans (US) or British, eye contact is a requirement but they would be uncomfortable if they are stared at, while Mediterranean (Southern European) people would be more at ease with that.

The meaning of the volume in which we speak can also change between cultures. Speaking loud might appear to some, including Irish, as if the person speaking is angry. In other cultures such as Nigerian, this could convey that the person is excited and happy.

Regarding gestures and body movements, Mediterranean people are very expressive. Italians, for example, often communicate messages only through gestures.

Placing oneself in close proximity to others, as Brazilians would freely do, is perfectly acceptable in many cultures. It would however make Americans (North), British and Irish people feel ill at ease.

In the professional world in Ireland it is not appropriate to display emotions - it is deemed to be unprofessional. However, in other cultures is not only acceptable, but those who don't are viewed as cold.

Many Asian people are uncomfortable disagreeing and tend to avoid confrontation. They hardly ever say "no" in order not to offend the other person. They would however, express their views and wishes in a different way, indirectly. These messages are confusing for many Europeans and for Americans who are more accustomed to receiving messages in a very direct manner and accept confrontation as a necessary part of life.

Politeness is another example of cultural conventions. What might be regarded as polite by Irish people might be rude to other cultures. For example, for Irish people being polite involves saying "thank you" and "please" at particular situations, whereas for Spanish people, saying "thank you" at some of those same situations could be viewed with suspicion and considered rude. Moreover, many Europeans would never consider expressing gratitude to people for doing their job.

In a similar way, there exist a multitude of greetings around the world including shaking hands, kissing, bowing, embracing, nodding etc.

While some of the differences between cultures are being stressed, there are many more similarities among human beings than differences. However, it is important for leaders to be aware of these differences in order to be more open and understanding towards all the girls and young women they might work with.





# Definitions of Frequently Used Terms

## Perceptions

Since potential members may fear discrimination or isolation from established members, leaders should make every effort to ensure that these fears are allayed. By carrying out many of the activities contained in this pack with her unit before a potential member joins, the leader will ensure that the girls and the other leaders are open to integration.

Leaders should be aware that prejudices, racism, and stereotypes about particular groups, fear of the unknown and a desire to maintain the status quo may be barriers to diversity and integration.

## Prejudice

Prejudice means prejudging somebody or a situation before we are aware of or know the facts. Based on insufficient information about others, we often tend to pre-judge them on what we believe we know about them. The word prejudice widely refers to the hostile attitudes that we frequently have towards people who come from a different ethnic background without really knowing them.

Everybody has prejudices. We need to understand them and try to find out where they originate. We all need to be aware of these feelings in order to counteract them.

## Racism

According to the National Action Plan Against Racism, "Racism is a specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by minority ethnic groups. It is based on the false belief that some "races" are inherently superior to others because of different skin colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural background".

The word "race" is an old term used more than a century ago; it suggests that different species of human beings exist. However, "all human beings belong to a single species and are descended from a common stock. They are born equal in dignity and rights and all form an integral part of humanity." **(Article 1.1, Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice Adopted and proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its twentieth session, on 27 November 1978)**

Leaders should be aware of racism among the girls. Ladybirds (5-7 years) don't realise what they are saying, Brownies (7-11 years) have more awareness and Guides (11-15 years) know when they are saying or doing something inappropriate. Leaders should also be aware of racism among parents. For example, parents might not want their child to join IGG because there are "foreign" children there.

## Stereotyping

Stereotypes refer to generalisations about people based on limited or inaccurate information. These misrepresentations might originate from sensationalist media, or from what other people might say. Sometimes these false impressions are reinforced by our own experiences. When this happens, try to be open-minded and not to generalise a whole group of people based on a negative encounter with a member of that group.

Stereotypes can be positive or negative. We need to see beyond them, especially the negative ones.



## Discrimination

In this context, discrimination refers to the less favourable and prejudicial treatment of certain people due to their ethnic background and/or national origins. There are different types of discrimination:

**Direct discrimination** suggests an explicit detrimental treatment of minority ethnic population. Direct discrimination would include expressing offensive verbal remarks, ignoring the needs of minority ethnic girls, avoiding them or rejecting their membership.

**Indirect discrimination** is more difficult to detect as it is not explicit. It refers to the policies and practices that, while appearing fair as they are applied to everybody, discriminate a sector of that population as those policies impact them in a disadvantageous way. For example when services are being provided to everybody equally but do not account for the linguistic needs of some of the population.

