



Girl Guides Making a Difference

Making a better future across the World | Myanmar

It's a story not often told, the range of work that Girl Guides across the world do to make our world a better place.

Recently, Girl Guides in Australia were invited to participate in a delegation to assist our friends in Myanmar build their future Girl Guide Program and to again, become a member of the Girl Guiding community internationally. It's one of many international stories of Australian Girl Guides, and a story that exemplifies the opportunities to make a contribution and expand horizons across the world.

In August this year, two of our experienced Australian Girl Guide Leaders – Rochelle Reed and Karen Chatto - went to Myanmar for two weeks to deliver training and support to 100 new Leaders. The goal was to empower these Leaders and educators so that they, in turn, could roll out the Girl Guide program to the school age girls in Myanmar.

Our mission statement is about empowering Girls and Young Women and our work is international in this respect." said Karen.

Rochelle says, "It is important that we achieve this mission statement and support those countries that want to be a part of our great organisation. Our work in Myanmar also contributed to developing the local school system for girls because in Myanmar the Girl Guide program will be delivered through schools."

Rochelle adds, "We were also able to train them to the point where the new Leaders felt confident enough to train other Leaders and implement the program earlier than they had originally planned! It was nice to see that they embraced it so fully"



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Asked what was achieved, Rochelle says delightedly, “We achieved enormous things! We trained 100 Leaders! It was spine tingling listening to the new Leaders say their promise in the local language.”

“What made it ‘Wow’ for me”, she adds “was the look of gratification and satisfaction when they achieved something. The other big ‘Wow’ was working with other trainers from across the Asia Pacific Region and being able to work collaboratively and constructively to bring everything together. It encapsulated the world wide spirit of Guiding”.

Karen takes time to describe the context of the work. “A lot of the teachers came with no true understanding of what was happening and what was going to be delivered and it was a priority to build this understanding first.”

“By the end they were into the spirit of Girl Guiding and understanding its benefits. The Volunteers who were there to support the team chose to make their promise as well!” said Karen.

Joan Bunker, International Manager who oversees all the international events and programs undertaken by Girl Guides Australia says “to hear and see through the reports coming through the website, the joy and acceptance of Girl Guiding by the Myanmar Leaders, to have so many people turn up, who didn’t previously know anything about it... that is the reason why we are there.”

“This is what Guiding does – you can go somewhere in the world that you haven’t been before and with Guiding you can make friends for life”

Joan continues. “The opportunity to be mentored and supported through such a journey is amazing.”

When asked if she would recommend international experiences to other Guides in Australia, Rochelle is unequivocal - “Go for it! Don’t think that you can’t do it! You can do it because at the end of the day you are part of the most amazing organisation with the most incredible support - and with this you can do anything.”

“The opportunity to do this sort of work is significant – to see an organisation grow and be a part of that is important,” says Karen. Karen identifies the pathway available to all Girl Guides to make this level of contribution “Start with a local event and build from there. There are opportunities with something for everyone.”



“It is so much more fun than travelling privately! You make friendships and build your understanding of the world through Guiding” agree Rochelle and Karen.

Karen and Rochelle would “go back tomorrow” if they could and would be keen to see Australia get more involved in supporting the growth of Guiding in the Asia Pacific Region. Rochelle said “we should be doing all that we can to help!”

Karen says that “even if we are not there physically we can still make a personal commitment to be there to support them – to be available to provide feedback. We can be a sounding board, support session plans being developed, and provide training resources to support the growth of girls. It is important that we can support the work to see it through.”

Joan highlights that international opportunities are open and available to members of Girl Guides of all ages. “We really need to get to the word out there – these opportunities come up regularly and they are the perfect opportunity for our members to grow their skills, expand their horizons and take their Guiding experience to another level.”

In summary, Joan Bunker says “See where you can go as Girl Guide. The opportunities that open up for you are just amazing”

Karen concludes “We can make a difference.”



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