



The SISTER2sister Project

Evaluation Report 2006

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For and on behalf of Life Changing Experiences Foundation

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Introduction

The SISTER2sister Project has been in operation since 2003. The aim of The SISTER2sister Project is to alleviate the cycle of poverty, destitution, and suffering for at risk teenage youth. An initiative of Life Changing Experiences Foundation, it is a unique 12 month mentoring and personal development program empowering 'at risk' teenage girls to reverse the detrimental effects of low self esteem due to circumstances beyond their control.

As part of the program, each girl is assigned a 'Big Sister Mentor', herself a successful woman who has undergone a four day comprehensive mentor training program. Where possible, girls are matched with a Big Sister Mentor who is successful in a particular career field that the girls have an interest or skill in. Big Sister Mentors are volunteers who give up their time to help these young girls reach their full potential. These volunteers may then be called upon by email or telephone for the next twelve months for advice, support and guidance.

The program starts with an intense five day 'Butterfly Bootcamp', involving a number of workshops, seminars and team building activities. Each month after this, outings are held where all Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors get together for risk management workshops and seminars followed by "life changing experiences". Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors also have the opportunity to meet up on a one on one basis should they choose to do so.

The SISTER2sister Project targets girls who are 'at risk' due to extreme suffering as a direct result of trauma, bereavement, poverty, sexual abuse, mental abuse, physical abuse, neglect, homelessness, sickness/disability, and destitution. This includes girls from all nationalities, religions and socio economic groups. Girls are identified and nominated by, school welfare systems, women's refuges, 'at risk' youth programs such as 'On Track' and 'Don Bosco House', rape crisis centres, and the general public (including parents). All candidates nominated are accepted, including those in foster care, in the ministers care, women's refuges, the juvenile justice system, and young women who are in specific housing programs that accommodate mentally ill and drug addicted youth.

The benefits of The SISTER2sister Project for the community include:

An Increase in further education/ school attendance

- An increase in further education/school attendance
- Community 'wellness' through happiness, fulfilment, and recognition of self worth
- Purposeful use of talents to enable a better life for themselves and their community, assisting them to break the cycle of suffering
- The transformation of life through mastering life's challenges
- Reduced crime
- Decline in anti-social behaviour
- Decline in domestic violence
- Substantial increase in part time employment and decline in girls living on benefits (with the exception of living away from home rental assistance)
- Management of mental illness
- Decrease in substance abuse



This report aims to evaluate The SISTER2sister Project 2006. This Project commenced in September 2005 with its inaugural Butterfly Bootcamp, and completed in August 2006 with the Graduation Celebration. This report provides a snapshot of the participants in the Project. Following this, the report addresses the key performance indicators of the Project for the year ending August 2006, specifically addressing the areas of:

- Intake/ Retention
- Attendance
- Behaviour and Relationships
- Education and Employment
- Goals and Ambition
- Levels of Learning

Finally, areas of improvement have been identified for implementation in future programs, as well as suggesting refinements to the evaluation model. Concluding comments aims to summarise the key points raised in the report.

1 The SISTER2sister Project Master Evaluation Plan

What Outcome are we going to measure?	What outcome indicators will we use?	How will we collect the data?	When will we collect the data?	Who will perform the data collection?
Description		Method	Timing	Responsibility
Key Performance Indicator Intake/ Retention				
10% increased intake of big/Little Sisters per program		Recruitment	Annual	Program Director
20% retainment of Big Sister Mentors for 2007 program		Recruitment	Annual	Program Director
No more than 10% natural attrition of Big and Little Sisters		Recruitment	Annual	Program Director
Key Performance Indicator Attendance				
90% Little Sisters attending over 75% of outings		Attendance Roll	Monthly	Program Coordinator
90% Big Sisters attending over 75% outings and meetings		Attendance Roll	Monthly	Program Coordinator
Key Performance Indicator Behaviour and Relationships				
90% decrease in 10% of LS's with anti social behaviour		Big Sister Mentor survey	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
50% increase in LS's self perception and self esteem		Little and Big Sister survey	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
Progressive increase in rating of relationship with BS		Little and Big Sister surveys	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
Progressive increase in rating of relationship with family		Little Sister surveys	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
Progressive increase in rating of relationship with friends		Little and Big Sister surveys	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
Key Performance Indicator Education and Employment				
Progressive increase in rating of attendance at school		Little Sister/School Survey	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
50% employment in part time work for girls over 15		Little Sister Survey	End Program	Evaluation Team
Key Performance Indicator Goals and Ambitions				
90% of LS's achieve up to 80% of goals over 12 months		Program/Little Sister Survey	End Program	Program Director
Key Performance Indicator Levels of Learning				
100% girls stepping up one level		Exit Interview	End Program	Evaluation Team
80% girls stepping up two levels		Exit Interview	End Program	Evaluation Team
50% girls stepping up three levels		Exit Interview	End Program	Evaluation Team
20% girls stepping up four levels		Exit Interview	End Program	Evaluation Team
5% girls stepping up five levels		Exit Interview	End Program	Evaluation Team

The SISTER2sister Project 2006 Participants

401 females between the age of 12 to 19 years participated in the program, with the average age of participants being 15 years. Participants all attended Public High Schools in NSW, including:

Greystanes High School

Bass High School

Glenmore Park High School

Blacktown Girls High School

St Marys Senior High School

Chifley College Bidwill Campus

Cambridge Park High School

Ambarvale High School

Bankstown Girls High School

Strathfield Girls High School

Mackellar Girls High School

Brisbane Waters Secondary College –
Umina

Canterbury Girls High School

Chifley Senior Campus

Forest High School

Elizabeth Macarthur High School

Lurnea High School

Burwood Girls High School

Fort St High School

It is noted that for the 2007 SISTER2sister Project, the recruitment pool of possible schools has widened, thereby demonstrating the success of the marketing campaign that has occurred in raising the awareness of the Project.

Assessment of Key Performance Indicators

Intake/ Retention

The matters for these three key performance indicators for Intake/ Retention have been assessed on an annual basis via the recruitment of participants and mentors into The SISTER2sister Project.

1. 10 per-cent increase of Big Sister Mentors and Little Sisters per program

For The 2006 SISTER2sister Project, 40 Little Sisters and 40 Big Sister Mentors were recruited to participate. For the 2007 Project, commencing in January 2007, 46 Little Sisters and 46 Big Sister Mentors have been recruited.

As such, in comparing the two years, there has been a 15 per-cent increase in the recruitment of Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors to participate, hence exceeding expectations for this performance indicator. This increase in recruitment of Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors can be attributed to a number of factors, including:

- Additional Funding: Specifically, through the successful application for Federal Government funding from FACSIA's Mentor Marketplace program, coupled with hosting a Fundraising Ball, which attracted and exceeded expectations for the financial support of Corporates, and philanthropic grants. Overall, the financial position at the end of the first financial year (namely 2005) has been increased by 1010%.
- Increased Applications: Specifically, there has been an overwhelming number of Big Sister Mentors applications for the 2007 Project, whereby a multimedia marketing campaign as well as the provision of information evenings resulted in 100 prospective Big Sister Mentors applying to participate. After a thorough screening and interviewing process, this was short listed to 40 Big Sister Mentors. In addition, 10 Big Sister Mentors have returned to participate from the 2006 Project. In turn, there has been a higher number of nominations from School Counsellors. For 2007, School Counsellors are nominating up to five students from their school to participate. In addition, the number of schools nominating students to participate has increased.

Overall, an increase in community exposure to The SISTER2sister Project has resulted in an increase in interest and willingness to be part of the 2007 program.

For the longer term, there are plans to increase the program intake each year, so as to reach a wider audience. Specifically, in the year that the pilot program commenced, (2004-2005), 16 Little Sisters participated; increasing to 40 Little Sisters in 2005-2006; 46 Little Sisters in 2007; and following this, it is planned that two SISTER2sister programs comprising of 50 Little Sisters each will be in operation in 2008.

In order to make the program national, the intention is to operate consecutive programs, each comprising of 50 Little Sisters and 50 Big Sister Mentors. Increasing the Little Sister intake each year is part of The SISTER2sister Project strategic vision to reach many disadvantaged teenage girls across the country.

20 per-cent retention of Big Sister Mentors for the 2007 program

10 Big Sister Mentors from the 2006 SISTER2sister Project are returning to participate in 2007. Of these 10 Big Sister Mentors, three have agreed to return as Big Sister Mentors, five have agreed to volunteer in the capacity of Team Leaders, and two are assisting by working with the pro bono Administration Team.

Overall, this is a retention rate of 25 per-cent, thereby exceeding expectations for this performance indicator. It has been identified that a key feature of this retention rate has been the multi-skilling volunteers into other areas of The SISTER2sister Project, thereby leveraging their strengths and areas of interest to ensure the continued growth and commitment from the volunteers with The SISTER2sister Project.

It is also important to note that the 2007 program has retained both Ambassadors from the 2006 program, and an attracted an additional third Ambassador from the 2006 Big Sister Mentor group, again demonstrating the continued commitment of volunteers upon commencing their association with The SISTER2sister Project.

No more than 10 per-cent natural attrition rate of Big and Little Sisters

For The 2006 SISTER2sister Project, 40 Little Sisters and 40 Big Sister Mentors agreed to participate at the start of the program in September 2005. At the end of the program, in August 2006, 36 Little Sisters and 37 Big Sister Mentors remained. This is a 10 per-cent natural attrition rate for Little Sisters, and 7.5 per-cent natural attrition rate for Big Sister Mentors.

Reasons for natural attrition included geographical relocation, as well as facing concurrent life stressors, often making it difficult for Little Sisters to remain in the program. Whilst efforts were made to find the Big Sister Mentor another Little Sister to work with, this was not possible as the program continued to progress. As such, it appears that these reasons for attrition are outside of the realms of The SISTER2sister Project.

To address the issue of attrition for future SISTER2sister programs, the following mechanisms have been implemented:

- The selection criteria for the inclusion of Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors into the program is based on 100% commitment in attending all outings
- An Information Day has been included to target Little Sisters. This has been done to establish those potential Little Sisters who “want” to participate in the program, thereby addressing the issue of motivation, and not simply selecting Little Sisters who “need” to participate, however have no motivation to do so.
- A “capture strategy” has been implemented for retaining Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors whose mentee/mentor decides not to have any future participation in the program. Specifically, if a Little Sister needs to leave the program, the Big Sister Mentor will be invited to remain with the program and become a “floating” Big Sister Mentor at the outings. She will work with any Little Sisters whose Big Sister Mentors are unable to attend for personal or work commitments, and will take on any Little Sister whose Big Sister Mentor has to leave the program, if that situation arises.

In the 2006 Project, this did happen whereby one Big Sister Mentor worked with two Little Sisters separately over the course of the year. A similar



arrangement will occur for Little Sisters whose Big Sister Mentor leaves the program, however this happened less often as Big Sisters are generally very committed to the program. Finally, for the 2007 program, Team Leaders are no longer allocated a Little Sister, and as such they are able to then accommodate any “floating” Little Sisters where required.

In 2005-2006, the effectiveness of this strategy was observed in the retention of a highly skilled Big Sister Mentor, who for the 2007 program will operate in the role of a Team Leader. In addition, in 2005-2006, a Little Sister was able to remain in the program upon the departure of her Big Sister Mentor, receiving positive benefits from continued participation in the program through to completion.

Attendance

The two key performance indicators for Attendance have been assessed by the monthly attendance rolls.

90 per-cent of Little Sisters with attendance rate at outings over 75 per-cent

On average, each Little Sister attended 7 out of 12 workshops over the year, and overall the group of Little Sisters attended 61 per-cent of the program. However, on assessing only the top 90 per-cent of participant Little Sisters, the results show that the attendance rate increases to 75.5 per-cent of the program, thereby meeting this key performance indicator.

Regardless, upon assessing the details regarding this key performance indicator, it appears that three of the monthly workshops were poorly attended. Reasons for this may be attributed to:

- The perceived questionable relevance of the workshop to the Little Sisters
- The timing of these workshops occurring in school holidays which may conflict with prior family arrangements, particularly given that the Little Sisters originate from broken homes/non nuclear families; and
- A noticeable drop in attendance at workshops mid program, which was after the long Christmas break, and may have challenged momentum.

To address these issues, the workshops have been repackaged and assessed for relevance to the Little Sisters, workshops will now occur outside of school holidays, and the order of workshop topics has been rearranged to maintain interest over the course of the program. In this regard, activities and workshops have been incorporated into one day long event, with a life changing experience occurring at the end of the day. The program now occurs from January until November, which precludes the Christmas holiday break for the Little Sisters. In addition, this time frame also allows for rejuvenation of the volunteer and management team, and effective evaluation of the program to occur.

90 per-cent of Big Sister Mentors with attendance rate at outings and meetings over 75 per-cent

Analysis of this key performance indicator is based on Big Sister Mentor attendance to training, meetings, outings, and overall. The results are observed in Table 1.

Table 1: Big Sister Mentor Attendance

	Total Participants	Top 90 per-cent Participants
Training	80%	85%
Meetings	50%	56%
Workshops	64%	70%
TOTAL	65%	70%

Whilst these results are not ideal, and fall short of the key performance indicator, a number of strategies have been developed and implemented to ensure that the Big Sister Mentors recruited for the 2007 SISTER2sister Project are able to attend as close to 100 per-cent of all required events. Specifically, the following modifications for the 2007 program have been made:

- Established a clear expectation from the outset that attendance to the four day Mentoring Excellence Training Program is mandatory, and used this as a key selection criteria to choose the 40 new Big Sister Mentors from the 100 new applicants;
- All Big Sister Mentor Job Descriptions have been modified to include 100% attendance at all meetings and workshops with one “red card” to use in an emergency. The notion of the red card helps the Big Sister Mentor to understand that she must meet every commitment, preferring to have 100% attendance at all workshops, although recognizing that there are extenuating circumstances which may prevail throughout the year. As such, a red card is offered to use in those circumstances, thereby not placing unreasonable limitations on volunteer Big Sister Mentors.
- Big Sister Mentor Meetings will now be held in a city location (The Grace Hotel) and to occur at an earlier time (6pm to 8pm). In addition, light refreshments will be served at Big Sister Mentor Meetings;
- The twelve month program will be outlined to the Big Sisters and Little Sisters at the Information Days and Training Program, with the dates already determined, so as to give ample notice to all participants.
- The full twelve month program, and how it fits into the Levels of Learning, will be explained to the Big Sister Mentors at the Training Program to ensure

their complete awareness, and the importance of their steady and continued commitment throughout the whole year.

- Clear meeting agendas will be set and disseminated to all Big Sister Mentors one week prior to the meeting being held (instead of one day prior);
- Clear workshop agendas will be set and disseminated to all Big Sister Mentors two weeks prior to the workshop being held (instead of one week prior), with the provision of a short reminder for all workshops one week prior;
- Provide a “handbook” with all relevant dates and details to all Big Sister Mentors on commencement of The 2007 SISTER2sister Project;
- Incorporate case studies into Training Program to illustrate how Big Sister Mentor attendance impacts on the well being and learnings of the Little Sisters.

In addition to this, Exit Interview feedback noted that the provision of a human resource, Ms Katie O’Farrell, to oversee the overall co-ordination and operation of the 2005-2006 program, had resulted in an observable and significant improvement in the information made available to Big Sister Mentors to improve their attendance to the workshops. This will be continued for 2007.

Behaviour and Relationships

These five key performance indicators for Behaviour and Relationships have been assessed via surveys completed by Big Sister Mentors and Little Sisters at three months and six months into the program, as well as on program completion, 12 months after commencement.

90 per-cent decrease in the 10 per-cent of Little Sisters who display extreme anti-social behaviour

Overall, this key performance indicator has been difficult to assess given the information made available by the Little Sisters at the time of assessment. Nevertheless, valuable information has been offered by Little Sisters at different evaluation points of the program.

At Boot Camp, the Little Sisters were asked to comment on things that they intended to change. The following statements were made, based on a sample of 33 respondents:

- “I will not fight with people”
- “I will overcome my fears”
- “I will not treat my family like crap”
- “I will not be rude”

At the mid-program evaluation, Big Sister Mentors provided comments on observations with their Little Sisters, based on a sample of 11 respondents:

- 18% “issues with attendance at school”
- 18% “issues with a lack of support at home”

Similarly, Table 2 shows the change in school attendance for Little Sisters mid program.

Table 2: Little Sister Attendance at School

Change in School Attendance	Percentage (N=11)
Attending School less	18 %
Attending School the same amount	55 %
Attending School more	27 %

In commenting on school attendance, one comment mentioned was “I attend school the same amount, however I like it more”.

On completion of the program, whilst quantitative data was not able to be obtained, through the Exit Interviews, some common themes emerged in relation to the behaviour of Little Sisters. Specifically, Little Sisters made general statements regarding the need to be “nicer to people”, “not so moody”, “be less negative”, “be less judgmental”, and “treat others better”. In addition to this, at Exit Interview, Little Sisters commented on their coping strategies in the face of adversity, making statements such as “I don’t have do face obstacles on my own”, “I now know that people do care about me”, “I believe in myself”, “I can talk problems through with others”, and “I don’t need depression to take over my life”.

Overall, even though specific comment cannot be passed as to the extent that this key performance indicator was met, the emergence of these themes suggest that behaviour of the Little Sisters had changed from being anti-social, to a somewhat more pro-social orientation, with the emergence of positive problem focused coping skills.

For the 2007 program, more detailed investigation as to the existence and extent of anti social behaviour will be undertaken throughout the program. In doing so, Little Sisters and parents will be surveyed in relation to the extent to which these behaviours have changed over time.

50 per-cent increase in Little Sisters self-perception and self-esteem

Again, given the information provided, this has been difficult to assess within the scope of the present evaluation. Notwithstanding, key themes consistently emerged at the evaluation points of the program, which will be outlined below.

At Bootcamp in September 2005, the Little Sisters were asked to comment on their self perception and self esteem. Thirty-three Little Sisters completed the survey; whereby statements made in relation to self perception and self esteem are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Little Sister Comments on Self Perception and Self Esteem

Statement Made	Percentage (N = 33)
“I can achieve anything that I set my mind to”	21 %
“I believe in myself”	18 %
“I accept myself as I am”	12 %
“I respect myself”	9 %
“Changes are good”	6 %
“I am beautiful as I am”	6 %
“I have more confidence”	6 %
“Everyone is different”	3 %
“Set new challenges”	3 %
“I can try”	3 %
“I am important”	3 %
“I can overcome obstacles”	3 %

Only one participant made the comment “My life is more miserable and pointless than I first thought”. On closer analysis, it is believed that this respondent completed the program, receiving positive benefits.

Sixteen Little Sisters completed the three month evaluation survey where they were asked about how they felt about themselves compared to Bootcamp. The results showed:

- 50 % felt “a lot better”
- 18.75% felt “a bit better”
- 25% felt “okay”
- 6% felt “no different”.

Additional comments were made in relation to this, whereby statements were made such as “I don’t feel alone anymore”, “I feel more confident”, and “I have a positive attitude”.

In addition to this, 11 Little Sisters reported how they were feeling in terms of their self esteem since Bootcamp. Table 4 shows comments made by Little Sisters in comparing themselves three months into the program, from Boot Camp.

Table 4: Little Sister Comparisons of Self Esteem from Bootcamp to Three Months into Program

Feeling Since Boot Camp	Percentage (N=11)
Much Better	36 %
A Bit Better	64 %
OKAY	NIL
Not Much Different	NIL

An additional comment was provided whereby one Little Sister stated “I learned how to keep up my self esteem”.

32 Little Sisters responded to the end of program evaluation. Little Sisters were asked to rate skills that they have developed in relation to their self esteem and well being. Table 5 shows the Little Sisters reported skills developed on completion the program.

Table 5: Little Sister Skills Developed on Completion of Program

Skills Developed About Self	Percentage (N=32)
Overcoming Obstacles	50 %
Facing Fears	56 %
Overcoming Fears	38 %
Being Happy	69 %
Building Confidence	56%
Accepting Body Image	41 %
Setting and Achieving Goals	59 %
Personal Relationships	56 %
Thinking Positively About Yourself	47 %
Knowing Yourself	53 %
Having Power to Change Things	63 %

The emergence of these themes were supported by information gained from Little Sisters during the Exit Interviews, whereby notions of being confident, overcoming fears, and being able to set and achieve goals were most prevalently reported at interview.

Concomitantly, 23 Big Sister Mentors reported on observations of changes in the Little Sisters over the course of the program. The results are reported in Table 6.

Table 6: Little Sister Changes as Observed by Big Sister Mentors on Completion of Program

	At Boot Camp (Beginning of Program)			Now (End of Program)		
	Good	OKAY	Bad	Good	OKAY	Bad
Self Esteem	17 %	48 %	30 %	48 %	43 %	4 %
Behaviour with Big Sister Mentor	43 %	52 %	4 %	65 %	22 %	NIL
Behaviour at Outings	52 %	39 %	4 %	65 %	17 %	NIL

Together, the results shown from the Big Sister Mentor and Little Sister reports show an improvement in the Little Sisters self esteem, behaviour with Big Sister Mentor, and behaviour at outings over the course of the program. Of note, the results show that there has been a self reported increase of Little Sister self esteem from the beginning of the program (17 percent) when compared to the end of the program (43 per-cent), a finding which is supported by the progressive ratings of self esteem throughout the program.

For the 2007 program, in addition to revising and administering the Big Sister Mentor and Little Sister surveys throughout the program, a formal Self Esteem Inventory will be administered at the commencement and completion of the program, thereby monitoring changes in self esteem in a quantitative manner.

Progressive increase in rating of relationship with Big Sister Mentor

This key performance indicator was assessed at multiple points throughout the program, whereby the results show a progressive increase of the rating of the relationship between the Little Sister and Big Sister Mentor. Specifically, Table 7 shows the progressive increase in the Little Sister's rating of their relationship with their Big Sister Mentor, thereby meeting the key performance indicator.

Table 7: Little Sister Reported Relationship with their Big Sister Mentor

Relationship with Big Sister Mentor	Three Months (N=16)	Six Months (N=11)	End of Program (N=32)	Whole Year (N=32)
Excellent	69 %	82 %	81 %	81 %
Good	12.5 %	9 %	9 %	13 %
OKAY	12.5 %	9 %	6 %	6 %
Not so good	6 %	NIL	3 %	NIL

Concomitantly, Table 8 shows the progressive increase in the Big Sister Mentor’s rating of their relationship with their Little Sister, adding further support to this key performance indicator.

Table 8: Big Sister Mentor Reported Relationship with their Little Sister

Relationship with Little Sister	Three Months (N=23)	End of program (N=23)	Whole Year (N=23)
Excellent	Not rated	43%	26%
Very Good	Not rated	30%	43%
Good	26 %	Not rated	Not rated
OKAY	48 %	17%	22%
Could Be Better	22 %	Not rated	Not rated
Not so good	9 %	9%	4%

Overall, these results suggest that Little Sisters reported a more favourable relationship than their Big Sister Mentor. Possible reasons for this could include different Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors completing the questionnaires, thereby not being able to match closely the perceived quality of the relationship. An alternative notion is that Big Sister Mentors may have higher expectations of wanting to make a difference, and are therefore harsher on themselves in relation to the manner in which they relate to their Little Sister. Indeed, informal feedback in exit interviews and Big Sister Meetings from the Big Sister Mentors suggests that this may be the case.

Nevertheless, it appears that overall, a positive relationship is perceived between the Big Sister Mentor and Little Sister, whereby an improvement in the relationship seemed to



emerge over the course of the year long program. Indeed, upon reflection at the exit interview, both Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors consistently reported a positive relationship with one another. Both Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors made positive and affirming comments about one another, supporting the upward statistical trend of a positive relationship between the two observed over the course of The SISTER2sister Project.

Overall, it was also observed that those Little Sisters and Big Sister Mentors who shared a positive and strong relationship, and attended the majority of the program, have flourished more in terms of their development, when compared with those who did not participate as much, or form as strong a relationship between the Little Sister and Big Sister Mentor. It is interesting to note that the questionnaires were completed by the Big Sister Mentors prior to the exit interviews, and it emerged as a consistent theme that the Big Sister Mentors were relatively surprised at how positive their Little Sisters were towards them. As such, it seems to be a natural instinct for the Big Sister Mentors to be hard on themselves in terms of their “achievements” with the Little Sisters.

Moreover, for the 2007 program, a heavier emphasis on role expectations will be made for the Big Sister Mentor, from the initial training through to program completion. Specifically, it will be reinforced that Big Sister Mentors are not responsible for “rescuing” or “saving” the Little Sisters, whereby the main goal over the twelve month program is to “plant the seed”. Specifically, the level of growth from that seed will differ for each girl, and as such the role of the Big Sister Mentor is to remain committed and stable for the Little Sister for one year, and listen well to their needs. Whether the Little Sister chooses to embrace the life changing initiatives is ultimately up to her, whereby it is anticipated that Big Sister Mentors can gain a more realistic level of satisfaction with the outcome.

For 2007, the return of Big Sister Mentors from the 2006 program will also help manage Little Sister expectations, whereby the more experienced Big Sister Mentors are able to share their experiences and regulate expectations of the new Big Sister Mentors.

Progressive increase in rating of relationship with family

Whilst this performance indicator was not specifically evaluated in the 2005-2006 SISTER2sister Project, it is noted that a number of Little Sisters made comment at the Exit Interview that they have built a stronger relationship with their family upon participating in the program, and feel that they are able to turn to their family for help if need be. Such comments suggest improvement in family functioning upon completion of The SISTER2sister Project, thereby lending some support for meeting this key performance indicator.

Over the course of the 2006 program, it has been noted that family relationships are very challenging to evaluate because the relationship between the family and the program can be extremely delicate. To this end, some families are looking to the program for all the answers and solutions to change the girls, whilst other families see the program as a threat or criticism to their own capabilities. The SISTER2sister Project is now more aware of this situation.

To address this issue for the 2007 program, a more formal system of Goal Setting for the Little Sisters will be established, whereby one of the areas for setting goals will be around their relationships in their family. These goals will be managed similar to a more formal performance management process as seen in business, in which Bootcamp will allow a forum for the Little Sisters to set the goals, which will be reviewed and reassessed on a quarterly basis. This will provide more valuable information in terms of the Little Sisters being more achievement oriented. A further initiative for 2007 will be to conduct a survey with the family or primary carer of each Little Sister at the commencement of the program, and again at the conclusion of the twelve month program, to further gauge progress in this regard.

More regular communication with the parents and carers will also be facilitated to regulate expectations in this area.

Progressive increase in rating of relationship with friends and other Little Sisters

Again, this key performance indicator was only indirectly assessed in The 2006 SISTER2sister Project. Nevertheless, comments made by Little Sisters during the Exit Interview suggest that they are able to turn to close friends and other Little Sisters for support. Indeed, many Little Sisters made the comment that they do not feel “so alone” upon participating in the program, and realise that they have many other people to turn to for support and help with coping. Statements such as these suggest some improvement in the rating of the Little Sister’s relationship with friends and other Little Sisters, again lending some support for meeting this key performance indicator.

The majority of the Little Sisters came to realise throughout the 12 month program that they made 40 new friends of a similar age group to themselves over the course of the year, as well as 40 new older friends. This is a result of the innovative Support Network Structure within The SISTER2sister Project, where a close bond and foundation of support is formed through the program.

For the 2007 program, whilst friends of the Little Sisters will not be surveyed, additional feedback will be sought from the Little Sisters directly on a regular basis for this area.

Education and Employment

These two key performance indicators for Education and Employment have been assessed via surveys completed by Big and Little Sisters at three months and six months into the program, as well as on program completion, 12 months after commencement.

Progressive increase in rating of attendance at school during the course of the program

For the 2006 program, this key performance indicator was not closely analysed. Nevertheless, self report from Little Sisters suggest that their commitment to their studies had improved, and as such, so too did their attendance. Indeed, observational data suggests that one Little Sister intends to return to school in 2007 after an absence in 2006, as well a small number of examples of Little Sisters choosing to continue with their schooling in subsequent years, rather than being satisfied with only their current education level.

In addition to this, Nominators of the Little Sisters (be it a representative from school, a parent, or counsellor) were surveyed in relation to changes in truanting behaviour of the Little Sisters. Of the eight surveys returned, 37.5 per-cent suggested an improvement in anti-social behaviour, including truanting; whilst an additional 37.5 per-cent noted that there were no issues in this regard in the first instance. Finally, 25 per-cent suggested that there had not been an improvement in this behaviour. It is acknowledged that these results should be reviewed with caution, particularly given the low response rate of surveys returned.

Future reporting of this key-performance indicator will be much more stringent, with a monitoring of this, and other, anti-social behaviour to be assessed over time. In addition, it is acknowledged that future programs will ensure that a stronger relationship will be formed between the SISTER2sister Project and the Nominator, particularly given the strong relationship between the Little Sister with the Nominator. As such, it is suggested that the Nominator may also provide a key role in supporting the development of the Little Sister, and will be utilised accordingly.

50 per-cent employment in part time work for girls over the age of 14 years and 9 months

In the 2006 program, about two thirds of the Little Sisters were of the age of being able to work if they so choose, namely 24. Of those Little Sisters, 11 have been or are currently in part time work as at the end of the 2006 program. This is a result of 46 per-cent, which is slightly under target for this indicator.

However, throughout the program, considerable workshop time was spent addressing careers as an issue, covering such topics as identifying talents, selecting subjects for school, determining strengths, resume writing, dressing for success, being interviewed, and applying for jobs. Presentations were also made by various Big Sister Mentors from different industries, who spoke on the education they completed, the turns their career paths took, and the roles they had worked in, with a particularly beneficial question and answer session for the Little Sisters to ask the Big Sister Mentors specific questions.

There are a couple of examples where jobs were specifically found for several Little Sisters. Specifically, one of the Little Sisters identified that she would like to be a Chef. She was working at KFC at the time, and after some career counselling with her, she enrolled in the appropriate TAFE course, and found an apprenticeship with Wagamama, where she remains at present.

For the 2007 program, the careers workshop with the Little Sisters will be continued, as well as incorporating the notion of jobs and careers into the Little Sister goal setting process, such that Little Sisters identify what they might like to do, list some goals associated with it, and then measure their progress on a quarterly basis against those goals. Community support for Little Sister vocations continues to grow in terms of apprenticeships, study grants, and employment offers, which will continue to be embraced and be passed on to the Little Sisters.

Goals and Ambitions

There is one key performance indicator for goals and ambitions, which has been assessed via surveys completed by Little Sisters at three months and six months into the program, as well as on program completion at 12 months. In addition, observations have also been made over the course of the program.

90 per-cent of Little Sisters achieve at least 80 per-cent of goals set over 12 months

Of all key performance indicators, goals and ambitions received the least focus in terms of tangible measurement and reporting. This was primarily due to a lack of people resources to manage and maintain the process, as well as a lack of time within the program to incorporate follow up.

During the 2006 program, a whole workshop was held on the topic of goal setting and ambitions. During this workshop, the Little Sisters were taught the principles of how to set a goal and the key characteristics of a goal, using the “smart” goal setting process, being Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed. In conjunction with their Big Sisters, the Little Sisters were facilitated within the workshop to identify their “balloons” in life, the bright, happy things that keep them up. They were also asked to identify their “balls and chains” in life, being the things that drag them down. As the Little Sisters progressed through this, they then identified achievable and measurable goals for three of each of those things in their lives, and documenting them onto a specially designed form. All of the Little Sisters at this workshop completed this task, whereby over 90 per-cent of Little Sisters identified goals to work on. Unfortunately, time was not allocated within the program to revisit these goals and measure the Little Sisters’ progress against them later in the program.

In addition, the Little Sisters wanted to keep the form on which their goals were written so they could put them in a prominent place in their room or diary, and as such, a group account of the goals was not provided. Nevertheless, given the positive experience subsequently reported by the Little Sister on completion of this exercise shows the importance of keeping this exercise the future, referring back to it throughout the program.

As such, there is little tangible evidence for this indicator. However, it was observed that many Little Sisters in the program achieved extraordinary goals over the past year, regardless of whether they formally documented their goals at the commencement of the program. These include some of the following:

- Completed the HSC
- Gained pre-entry into nursing at Newcastle University
- Presented to a group of over 500 people at the St George Foundation Dinner
- Presented to the House of Representatives at Parliament House in Canberra
- Moved out of an abusive home into independent living
- Obtained an apprenticeship with the restaurant, Wagamama
- Decided to return to High School to complete Year 11 and 12
- Took part in a professional photo shoot and put together a portfolio
- Wrote an article that was published in *Cosmopolitan* magazine



- Presented on the topic of self harm to the new group of Big Sisters during training
- Attended all SISTER2sister outings
- Compiled resume and obtained their first job
- Completed the Year 10 School Certificate

For the 2007 program, goal setting will be incorporated in much greater detail into the program, commencing with the Bootcamp. A full and complete workshop will be conducted at the beginning of the program, and then incorporated into all the ensuing workshops on a quarterly basis, such that the Little Sisters learn to set and achieve goals through a formal performance management style of goal setting. Goal setting and achievement will be an integral part of Little Sister learning for the future of The SISTER2sister Project.

Levels of Learning

The SISTER2sister Project is based on seven levels of learning which attempt to develop life skills in the Little Sister. Figure 1 shows the Levels of Learning diagram.

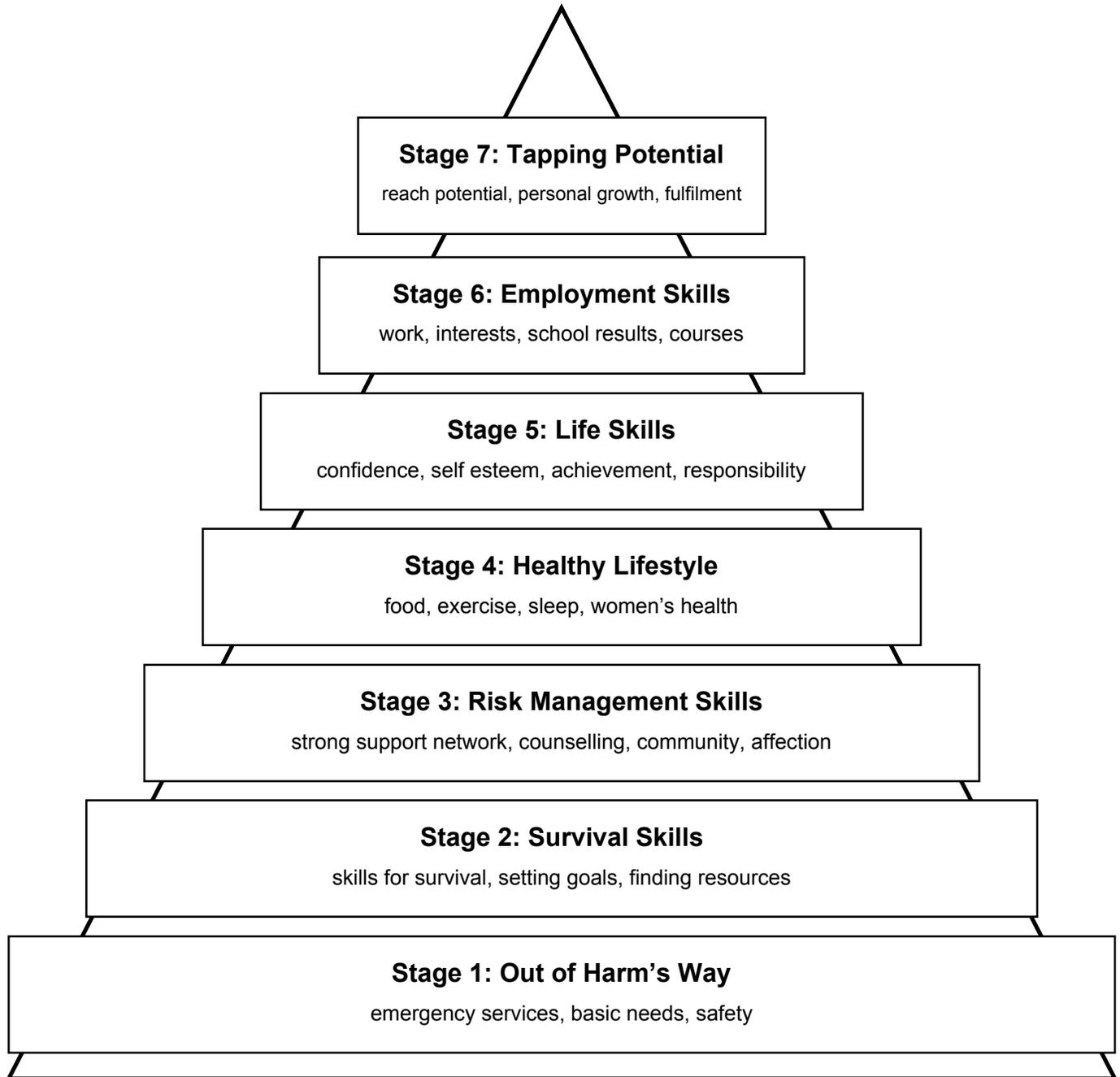


Figure 1: Levels of Learning within The SISTER2sister Project

The following key-performance indicators were assessed via observational means by the Big Sister Mentors and the Executive team in the 2005-2006 SISTER2sister Program. On reviewing Figure 1, it was intuitively anticipated that any increase in a level of learning would occur in a consecutive manner, namely, first achieving being Out of Harms Way, followed by Survival Skills, and so on. As will be shown, whilst achievements of levels of learning occurred, they did not proceed in an incremental manner. Potential reasons for this will also be explored below.

100 per-cent girls stepping up one level

Of the 32 Little Sisters who completed the program, all had stepped up one level of learning, thereby meeting this key performance indicator.

80 per-cent girls stepping up two levels

Of the 32 Little Sisters who completed the program, 30 had stepped up two levels of learning, namely 94 per-cent, thereby meeting this key performance indicator. Of course, the observational nature of data analysis for this key performance indicator may have impacted on the result, and as such future analyses will include reporting measures to confirm this for future assessments.

50 per-cent girls stepping up three levels

Of the 32 Little Sisters who completed the program, 25 had stepped up two levels of learning, namely 78 per-cent, thereby meeting this key performance indicator. Again, future analyses will incorporate a structured reporting mechanism to verify such data.

20 per-cent girls stepping up four levels

Of the 32 Little Sisters who completed the program, 23 had stepped up two levels of learning, namely 72 per-cent, thereby meeting this key performance indicator. Again, future analyses will incorporate a structured reporting mechanism to verify such data.

5 per-cent girls stepping up five levels

Of the 32 Little Sisters who completed the program, 16 had stepped up two levels of learning, namely 50 per-cent, thereby meeting this key performance indicator. Again, future analyses will incorporate a structured reporting mechanism to verify such data.

Overall analysis of levels of learning

Whilst this had not been included as a key performance indicator from the outset, it is interesting to explore the Levels of Learning achieved by the Little Sisters, and the reasons for this (or otherwise). This is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Levels of Learning

Level of Learning	% attained (N=32)	Comments
Out of Harms Way	87.5	<p>This level of learning was targeted through a specific workshop, as well as being referenced more generally throughout the program at other workshops, such as Bootcamp. The Out of Harms Way workshop included Little Sisters participating in a Self Defence class by a professional expert; a presentation by a female Senior Constable in the NSW Police about topics such as street safety, drink spiking, protecting your belongings while out at night, and how the NSW Police can help.</p> <p>Finally, the Out of Harms Way workshop also involved a “game” where the girls had to use street directories and yellow pages to find quiz answers such as “the phone number for Lifeline”, or “the address for the Police Station in Blacktown”.</p> <p>Throughout the program, several Little Sisters were also given assistance to be relocated out of abusive home environments to safe places via DoCS and housing assistance. Such actions also attributed to the measurement of this Level of Learning.</p> <p>The specific behaviours we have observed in the Little Sisters to demonstrate that they understood this level of learning included an observable decrease in risk taking behaviour by Little Sisters, and demonstrated knowledge of community resources.</p>
Survival Skills	81	<p>This Level of Learning was targeted and incorporated into a number workshops throughout the program, including those on goal setting, finding community resources, finance and budgeting, presentations and dressing for success.</p> <p>Given the importance and multi-faceted nature of this issue, this Level of Learning was incorporated throughout the majority of the twelve months and was a frequent topic of conversation between Big Sister Mentors and Little Sisters.</p> <p>The specific behaviours observed in the Little Sisters to demonstrate that they understood this level of learning included the list of goals they each wrote for themselves in</p>

Level of Learning	% attained (N=32)	Comments
		<p>conjunction with their Big Sister Mentors, writing out a budget in the finance workshop, and a noticeable improvement in the general appearance of many of the girls as the year progressed.</p>
Risk Management Skills	81	<p>This Level of involves ensuring that each Little Sister had a strong support network around her, which she was able to call upon when needed.</p> <p>The SISTER2sister Project is considered to be merely one link in a chain of support for each Little Sister, whereby the aim of the program has been to surround her with other people and sources of help and support through the year. For example, there was the provision of a professional Counsellor or Psychologist for the Little Sister to access when needed; as well as family, school, and peer support networks being identified. As such, it is intended that the program ensures the Little Sister has a list of people she can access in a crisis, as well as being taught risk management skills throughout the entire program.</p> <p>The specific behaviours observed in the Little Sisters to demonstrate they understood this level of learning included the Little Sister's ability and willingness to speak to other Big Sisters at workshops, the number of Little Sisters who were put in contact with Counsellors, and the increase in the support network available to Little Sisters over the course of the year.</p>
Healthy Lifestyle	66	<p>This Level of Learning was targeted via a Healthy Lifestyle workshop, as well as being reiterated throughout the whole year. In addition, the program endeavoured to consistently model healthy eating and exercise habits to Little Sisters.</p> <p>The specific Healthy Lifestyle workshop involved a Nutritionist who spoke to the Little Sisters about the five food groups; as well as a presentation to the Little Sisters by two media experts, Ms Jacinta Tynan, SkyNews, and Ms Sarah Wilson, Cosmopolitan Magazine, about body image and the media.</p> <p>More generally, during the workshops, the Little Sisters were physically involved in preparing healthy lunches for each other. In addition to this, physical and energetic activities were emphasised throughout the workshops for</p>

Level of Learning	% attained (N=32)	Comments
		<p>the Little Sisters, such as surfing, trapezing, bushwalking, and ice skating.</p> <p>The specific behaviours observed in the Little Sisters to demonstrate that they understood this Level of Learning included the number of Little Sisters who started eating salads and sandwiches voluntarily at the workshops, the improvement in the Little Sister's skin and hair, and the number of Little Sisters who engaged in regular exercise more often.</p>
Life Skills	87.5	<p>This Level of Learning emphasised instilling confidence and higher self esteem in the Little Sisters throughout the 12 month program by allocating them with a positive role model who had a genuine interest in their life and progress.</p> <p>As a result of these interventions, the Little Sisters gradually started to feel better about themselves as they progressed through the 12 month program. They made new friends, learned an array of new topics, participated in activities that they may never have experienced before (like BridgeClimb, ropes courses, trapezing, & catwalk routines), whereby often these were very challenging experiences, taking a lot of courage to try.</p> <p>The Little Sisters built their self esteem through a sense of belonging to the group, as well as through achieving goals on a step by step basis. Having the stable and consistent input from a Big Sister who believed in her, gave the Little Sister very valuable life skills for her future.</p> <p>Indeed, as noted throughout other aspects of this report, self report as well as observational data suggests that this outcome was a particular strength of the SISTER2sister Project.</p>
Employment Skills	31	<p>This Level of Learning was specifically targeted with the inclusion of an Employment Skills workshop within the program. Specifically, at the Employment Skills workshop, the Little Sisters were divided into a younger group (Year 9 and under) and an older group (Year 10 and over), whereby specific workshop activities were provided.</p> <p>The younger Little Sisters were required to make a dream journal where they identified what they might like to do as</p>

Level of Learning	% attained (N=32)	Comments
		<p>a career in the future, their talents, and which subjects they might like to look at choosing for the next couple of years at school.</p> <p>The older Little Sisters were required to complete their resume, wrote application letters, learned to present themselves at interviews, as well as observing presentations by several Big Sisters who currently work in different industries and how their career paths eventuated.</p> <p>As mentioned earlier in the report, it is noted that as a result of participating in the SISTER2sister Project, several employment opportunities were created for Little Sisters, as well as some other Little Sisters renewing their commitment to their studies and their future careers.</p>
Tapping Potential	0 (3 Little Sisters made progress toward this)	<p>It is acknowledged that this Level of Learning was realistically reserved for those Little Sisters who were observed to be truly embracing the majority of the concepts that were introduced to them via the program.</p> <p>These are therefore the Little Sisters who have great potential to participate fully in a rewarding and successful life, and achieving their dreams. Examples of where three Little Sisters have made progress toward this are described below.</p> <p>One Little Sister had experienced major health issues through her early teens and then was diagnosed with depression. At the beginning of the program she had a tendency to be withdrawn and judgemental. By the end of the program, she was herself a positive role model for all the other Little Sisters in the program. Other Little Sisters all looked up to her as she was more positive, open and she was an inspiring speaker. She made the decision to complete her HSC, which she has done, and has subsequently chosen a career in journalism and has taken many steps toward achieving that goal. As such, at one time this Little Sister suffered from depression, she now appears to have learned how to manage this better, and as a result is showing great potential in making a big impact on the greater community in the future. Indeed, she has already spoken on behalf of the SISTER2sister Project at Parliament House.</p>

Level of Learning	% attained (N=32)	Comments
		<p>Another of the Little Sisters commenced the program being a shy and reserved girl, who seemed to have lost all hope. Her father had been physically abusive, and her mother then became involved with another man who was also physically abusive. When this Little Sister made her mother aware that she was being physically abused by her new boyfriend, the mother asked her to leave the house. The Little Sister went to live with her grandmother and joined the SISTER2sister Project on recommendation from her School Counsellor. With the help of her dedicated Big Sister Mentor, this Little Sister came to realise that she could leave her past behind and make a life for herself. Over the course of the program, she has completed her HSC, and now gained pre-entry to nursing at Newcastle University. Her confidence and ability to believe in herself has increased ten-fold, and she has blossomed into a healthy young woman with high aspirations which she genuinely believes she can achieve.</p> <p>The third Little Sister who appears to be making progress towards this Level of Learning is an indigenous girl who was recommended to participate in the program by her Caseworker. Her parents both drug addicts, she chose to move out of home and into a refuge for Aboriginal women in suburban Sydney, a long way from her family. With the help of the program and her Big Sister Mentor, she has embraced many levels of Learning and continued to attend school, now completing Year 11. She was elected Prefect and was chosen to run for School Captain. She made a presentation with us the St George Foundation Ball towards the end of the program, where she held over 500 people spellbound with her story, and then proceeded to network with others, including the guest of honour, Julie Anthony.</p> <p>These three examples are Little Sisters who have chosen to embrace the SISTER2sister Project message of “the past does not have to equal the future”, and they are making concerted and tangible efforts towards making their own dreams happen. They have it inside them already, but with the help of The SISTER2sister Project, they have come even further.</p>



It should be noted that these figures for the percentage attainment for the Level of Learning may be optimistic, given the observational nature of the data analysis.

Overall, it has since been considered that the Levels of Learning is not an incremental progression through sequential stages, but rather a variety of experiences that can be achieved in their own right, without meeting prior levels.

In addition to this, the issue of attendance needs to be considered in relation to Little Sisters achieving the Levels of Learning. Specifically, given the 60 per-cent attendance of Little Sisters, on average, to workshops, this suggests that the Little Sisters non-achievement of a Level may be representative, to some extent, of their lack of participation in the workshop, rather than not grasping the concept presented to this. As such, the above results should be reviewed with these issues in mind.

Nevertheless, for 2007, a more structured approach to assessing this indicator will be implemented, with the provision of specific survey questions addressing this area. In addition to this, experiences at workshops will also be more explicitly linked to the Levels of Learning, for transparency purposes.

Concluding Comments

In summary, it is considered that the SISTER2sister Project for 2006 has been very successful, with credit and acknowledgement being levelled at the achievements of the Little Sisters, Big Sister Mentors, Team Leaders, and the Management Team.

On reflection of the key performance indicators, it is suggested that 2006 was a pioneering year for the SISTER2sister Project. Specifically:

- More than double the amount of vacancies for Big Sister Mentors applied as volunteers, allowing more Little Sisters to access and participate in the program.
- An inaugural SISTER2sister Training Program was launched to train and support the Big Sister Mentors.
- The first full 12 month program was devised with the inclusion of Butterfly Bootcamp.
- A Support Network Structure of teams was introduced.
- The Levels of Learning for Little Sisters to achieve was identified and linked to the curriculum.
- The Executive Advisory Board was created, with the inclusion of Psychologists to support and advise on the efficacy of the program.
- A Graduation Ceremony was introduced to celebrate the successful completion of the program for the Little Sisters.

The 12 workshops conducted which comprised the SISTER2sister Project addressed the identified needs of the Little Sisters by incorporating the Levels of Learning across the year. As such, the Little Sisters were exposed to issues such as overcoming obstacles, healthy lifestyle, the power of choice, employment and careers, relationships and friendships, community resources, presenting yourself, getting out of harm's way, celebrating success, goal setting, and self esteem building. As part of this learning, at each workshop Little Sisters were given the opportunity to participate in life changing experiences, such as going on a Bootcamp, visiting Luna Park, learning how to surf, visiting the top of Sydney Tower, visiting the Blue Mountains, doing trapezing, balancing on a ropes course, and climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Overall, the SISTER2sister Project for 2006 has achieved very positive results, which can be summarised through the Key Performance Indicators indicated below.

Intake and Retention

40 Little Sisters were accepted into the 2005-2006 program, at an average age of 15 years, whereby 32 of those Little Sisters graduated at the end of the program. For the 2007 program, the intake of Little Sisters and Big Sisters has increased by 15 per-cent, against an intended 10 per-cent increase, which is very pleasing. In addition, there has been a 25 per-cent retention of Big Sister Mentors from the 2006 program into the 2007 program, against an intended 20 per-cent, again exceeding expectations. The women are rejoining the program not only as Big Sister Mentors, but also as Team Leaders, or as part of the pro bono team.

Of significance for the 2007 intake was having almost 100 applications for Big Sister Mentors, and although frustrating not to be in a position to accept them all, the response from the community is recognised as being overwhelming.

Attendance

For 2006, 90 per-cent of Little Sisters attended 75 per-cent of the program. Some challenges were noted in attracting attendance by the Little Sisters for various reasons, whereby this is endeavoured to be resolved for 2007. Examples of this include the impact that school holidays have on Little Sisters, given visitation commitments to non-custodial parents. It was also identified that the pattern of attendance fluctuated between (“boring”) workshops and (“exciting”) activities, hence these have been combined to occur for each outing, which greatly increased attendance rates. Big Sister Mentors achieved a high attendance rate for training and for the workshops and activities, although a decline in attendance for our Big Sister Meetings was noticed as the program progressed. This has been addressed in 2007 in various ways, including scheduling all dates prior to commencement of the program, highlighting the great importance of attendance at an early stage with the Big Sister Mentors, changing the venue and timing of our meetings, and offering refreshments.

Behaviour and Relationships

This is a very important indicator for the effectiveness of the program, but it is quite challenging to measure. Nevertheless, a number of measures have been implemented for 2007, such as more detailed questionnaires, and strict measurement time frames.

Notwithstanding, from the 2005-2006 program, it was identified that there was an increase in awareness of pro-social behaviour across Little Sisters. In terms of self esteem, 50 per-cent of Little Sisters surveyed said that they felt better about themselves after being in the program for only three months. When Big Sister Mentors were asked to rate their Little Sisters’ self esteem, 17 per-cent of them rated their Little Sister’s self esteem as “good” at Bootcamp, compared with an increase to a rating of 48 per-cent rating their Little Sister’s self esteem as “good” at the end of the program.

Moreover, at the conclusion of the program, 69 per-cent of Little Sisters said that they developed the skill of “being happy”, 59 per-cent said that they developed the skill of “setting and achieving goals”, and 63 per-cent said that they developed the skill of “having power to change things”.

As well as this, 81 per-cent of Little Sisters rated their relationship with their Big Sister Mentor as “Excellent”. It was also observed that whilst Big Sister Mentors reported having a positive relationship with their Little Sister, they tended to be harsher on themselves in terms of identifying results in their Little Sisters. To address this in the 2007 program, efforts will be made to better manage the expectations of Big Sister Mentors in the SISTER2sister Training Program. Additionally, the SISTER2sister Project will endeavour to work more closely with the family of the Little Sister in 2007 in terms of communication and expectations.

Education and Employment

This was difficult to assess in the 2005-2006 program due to limited survey responding. Nevertheless, it was observed that Little Sisters were attending school more regularly as a result of the program. Having said that, throughout the program there were many positive reports from the Little Sisters and from the Big Sister Mentors about school attendance, suggesting that truancy was an issue for the Little Sister. The importance of being committed to school is constantly reinforced throughout the program.

In terms of employment, almost 50 per-cent of Little Sisters who were of the appropriate age to gain part time work, were actually engaged in part time work. The Careers workshop for the Little Sisters was a great success, whereby the older Little Sisters were provided with skills to use in embarking on the pursuit of their careers, while the younger Little Sisters were able to identify their talents and interests ready to choose the appropriate subjects for the coming school years.

Goals and Ambitions

As part of the 2005-2006 program, a Goal Setting workshop was conducted with the Little Sisters. Facilitation and follow-up of these goals was not formally included in the remaining program, which is an area for improvement for the 2007 program. Specifically, it was identified that it would be of greater benefit if the performance of the Little Sisters was measured against the goals they set in a more formal manner over the course of the program, whereby this will be included in the 2007 program.

Notwithstanding, many Little Sisters in the 2006 program achieved outstanding goals throughout the year including completing their HSC, obtaining a Chef apprenticeship, becoming School Prefect, gaining pre-entry to University for Nursing, ceasing to self harm, deciding to return to school on a full time basis, obtaining independent living, and presenting to Parliament House.

Levels of Learning

The targets for achievement in the Levels of Learning in The SISTER2sister Project are quite high, yet it is considered that a very positive result has been achieved in this area. Whilst this was analysed in an ad-hoc manner in 2006, it is intended that this will be more formally assessed for 2007.

Nevertheless, the principle idea underpinning the Levels of Learning, and of the whole program in fact, is to “plant a seed” of the practical use of these concepts for the Little Sisters. It is hoped that all key messages for the Little Sisters to utilise in their lives are incorporated across all the workshops. As such, it is hoped that at some moment in time, the seed will germinate, and the strength of the concept will flourish within the Little Sister. It is acknowledged that whilst this may happen during the course of the program, it may not happen until some later time, however eventually, the key message will be learned. In other words, as the SISTER2sister Project continues, it is anticipated that the Little Sisters who have been part of the program will be flourishing as a result of the seeds that were planted when they participated in the program.



As part of the SISTER2sister project's commitment to the well-being of at-risk youth, it is intended that the program continues to leverage off the strengths that it holds, as well as continuously finding areas to improve. Together, it is hoped that the continued development of the program will result in increasing positive benefits for those who have been fortunate enough to participate as Little Sisters.