



# The SISTER2sister Program

## Evaluation Report 2007

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*For and on behalf of Life Changing Experiences Foundation*

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## 1 Introduction

The SISTER2sister Program has been in operation since 2003. The aim of The SISTER2sister Program 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, herself a successful woman who has undergone a three day comprehensive mentor training program. Where possible, we match girls who have a particular passion/skill with a Big Sister who is successful in that field. Big Sisters are volunteer mentors 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 Little Sisters and Big Sisters get together for risk management workshops, motivational and team building activities. Little Sisters and Big Sisters also have the opportunity to meet up on a one on one basis should they choose to do so.

The SISTER2sister Program 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 DOCS, 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). We accept all candidates nominated, including those in foster care, in the ministers care, women's refuges, the juvenile justice system, young women who are in specific housing programs that accommodate mentally ill and drug addicted youth.

The benefits of The SISTER2sister Program for the community include:

- 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 of girls living on benefits (with the exception of living away from home rental assistance)



- Management of mental illness
- Decrease in substance abuse
- Reduction of unplanned teenage pregnancy.

This report aims to evaluate The SISTER2sister Program 2007. This Program commenced in January 2007 with a four day Butterfly Bootcamp, and completed in November 2007 with the Graduation Celebration. This report provides a snapshot of the participants in the Program. Following this, the report addresses the key performance indicators of the Program for the year ending November 2007, specifically addressing the areas of:

1. Intake/ Retention
2. Attendance
3. Behaviour
4. Relationships
5. Education and Employment
6. Goals, Ambition, and 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.

## 2 The SISTER2sister Program Master Evaluation Plan

What Outcome are we going to measure and what outcome indicators will we use	How will we collect the data	When will we collect the data	Who will perform the data collection
<b>Intake/Retention</b>			
100% retention within the course of the program for Big Sisters	Attendance Roll	Monthly	Program Coordinator
90% retention within the course of the program for Little Sisters	Attendance Roll	Monthly	Program Coordinator
10% increased intake of big/little sisters per program up to maximum capacity (50 matches per program)	Recruitment	Annual	Program Director
<b>Attendance</b>			
90% of Little Sisters with 80% attendance rate at outings	Attendance Roll	Monthly	Program Coordinator
100% of Big Sisters with a 90% attendance rate at outings	Attendance Roll	Monthly	Program Coordinator
100% of Big Sisters with a 80% attendance rate at Big Sister meetings	Attendance Roll	Monthly	Program Coordinator
<b>Behaviour</b>			
Demonstrated reduction of anti social behaviour in 80% of Little Sisters over the program	Evaluation	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
Demonstrated improvement in pro social behaviour in 90% of Little Sisters over the program	Evaluation	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
90% demonstrated improvement in self confidence and self esteem in Little Sisters	Big Sister survey	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
<b>Relationships</b>			
95% develop a positive relationship with Big Sisters by the end of the Program	Little and Big Sister surveys	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
50% develop a positive relationship with a parent, guardian, carer and/or sibling by the end of the program	Little and Big Sister surveys	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
50% develop a positive relationship and/or are able to manage their relationships with their peers	Little Sister surveys	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
<b>Education and Employment</b>			
75% improve in educational outcomes including attendance, grades, participation levels	Little Sister Survey	Mid and End Program	Evaluation Team
80% employment in part time work for girls who are eligible and capable of being employed	Little Sister Survey	End Program	Evaluation Team
<b>Goals and Ambitions &amp; Levels of Learning</b>			
100% achievement of a goal in relationship to at least 3 levels of learning as identified within the Program	Program, Little Sister Surveys	End Program	Program Director



### 3 The SISTER2sister Program 2007 Participants

Overall, 43 females between the age of 13 to 18 years participated in the program, with the average age of participants being approximately 16 years. Participants all attended 18 Public High Schools in NSW, whereby the Schools providing students included:

Bass Hill High School	Ambarvale High School
Jamison High School	Ashcroft High School
Blacktown Girls High School	JJ Cahill High School
Graystanes High School	Sarah Redfern High School
Matraville Sports High School	Mitchell High School
Bulli High School	Cambridge Park High School
Colyton High School	Picton High School
Erskine Park High School	Kanahooka High School
Sir Joseph Banks High School	Tomaree High School

It is noted that for the 2008 SISTER2sister Program, the recruitment pool of possible schools has again widened, thereby demonstrating the success of the marketing campaign that has occurred in raising the awareness of the Program. In particular, it is noted that the development of a positive relationship with School Counsellors has meant that referrals to the Program occur based more on initiative rather than by request.

## 4 Assessment of Key Performance Indicators

### 1. 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 Program.

#### 1. 100 per-cent retention within the course of the Program for Big Sisters

For the 2007 Program, 43 Big Sisters commenced the program (from a pool of 49 applications), with 15 returning to participate as Big Sisters from the 2006 Program. One Big Sister was not able to complete the Program, for reasons of natural attrition.

Additionally, it is noted that the core team of volunteers increased, with the introduction of five team Leaders and other core support people to ensure the success of the Program. Additionally, it is noted that late into the 2007 program, there was turnover with respect to the Program Co-ordinator role.

Overall, this is a retention rate of 98 per-cent, which is pleasing, suggesting that the selection of Big Sisters was appropriate. However, it is noted that given the target is for 50 Big and Little Sister matches, modifications need to occur for future programs. Specifically, it is recommended that a broader marketing approach be adopted, in order to obtain a higher application rate of Big Sisters, over 50. This would also account for any natural attrition that may occur as well as ensuring that standards for selection benchmarks are met.

#### 2. 90% retention within the course of the program for Little Sisters

Forty three Little Sisters were accepted into the 2007 Program, from a pool of 57 applications. Approximately eight Little Sisters withdrew their interest pre Program commencement, and four applied too late, namely that the program had already commenced.

At the end of the Program in November 2007, 42 Little Sisters remained, with only one Little Sister leaving the program during the course of the year to move interstate.

Overall, this is a retention rate of 97 per-cent, thereby exceeding expectations for this performance indicator. It has been identified that key feature of this retention rate has been:

- The selection criteria for the inclusion of Little Sisters into the program, is based on making an up front commitment to 100% attendance to all outings.
- An Information Day has been included that has targeted Little Sisters.
- A “capture strategy” for retaining Little Sisters

The aim is to constantly refine our intake and retention strategies in order to maximise intake and retention outcomes for Little Sisters.

### **3. 10% increased intake of Big and Little Sisters per program up to a maximum capacity (50 matches per program)**

Forty Big and Little Sisters participated in the 2006 Program, compared with 43 for 2007, resulting in a 7.5% increase, thereby not meeting this key performance indicator. It is suggested that the reasons for this relate to a lower than expected Big Sister pool of applications, thereby directly impacting on the number of Little Sisters that were able to be selected for the Program.

It however should be acknowledged that this lower application pool for Big Sisters was in response to issues identified in the 2005-2006 program. Specifically, for the 2005-2006 program, there were 100 Big Sister applicants, with only half being selected to participate in the program. As a result, many applicants were disappointed in not being selected to be part of the program. For 2007 therefore, the marketing for Big Sister applicants was reduced, to reduce the amount of applicants.

It is acknowledged that the issue of intake and retention for Big and Little Sisters requires ongoing attention. The aim is to constantly refine our intake and retention strategies in order to maximise intake and retention outcomes for Big and Little Sisters. It is recommended that for future programs, a continuous PR program be adopted in order to maintain visibility and interest for potential Big and Little Sisters to become part of the Program

## **2. Attendance**

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

### **1. 90 per-cent of Little Sisters with 80 per-cent attendance at outings**

On average, each Little Sister attended nine out of 11 workshops over the year. Overall the 68 per-cent of Little Sisters attended 80 per-cent or more of the workshops, thereby falling short of this indicator.

It is noted that some workshops were more poorly attended than others. This may be due to a number of factors, such as travel limitations, personal issues impacting on their ability to attend, and a lack of motivation to participate (whereby this is particularly noticeable mid-program). Outing that were poorly attended included Artescape, Trapezing, CD Recording, and Training with a Sporting Team.

To address future issues with attendance and participation, stronger support for Big Sisters will be provided to ensure that their Little Sister has the appropriate motivation and willingness to attend. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the provision of a Butterfly Bus will assist in transporting Little Sisters to the workshops. It is therefore suggested that the issue of Little Sister attendance is likely to be addressed by assisting the Little Sisters with transportation to the outings.

Finally, it is noted that at present, there is no consequence for non-attendance/ non-participation, something which may need to be considered to ensure that the Little Sisters get the maximum benefit from their participation in the program. Such a consideration may need to be made for future programs.

## **2. 100 per-cent of Big Sisters with a 90% attendance rate at outings**

Big Sister overall attendance at workshops was 80 per-cent, with 50 per-cent attending a minimum of 90 per-cent of the workshops. It is suggested that the reason for this may be due to the poor attendance by the Little Sisters. However, it is acknowledged that the Big Sister role modelling behaviour is an important element in Little Sister attendance and participation, and as such it is important to pay closer attention to this issue.

A number of changes were made to the 2007 program to address Big Sister attendance:

- Established a clear expectation from the outset that attendance to the three day Training Program is mandatory, and used as a key selection criteria to choose the new Big Sisters;
- Big Sister meetings held in a city location. In addition, light refreshments were served;
- The twelve month program was 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.
- Clear meeting agendas will be set and disseminated to all Big Sisters one week prior to the meeting being held;
- Clear workshop agendas were set and disseminated to all Big Sisters two weeks prior to the workshop being held;
- An outline with all relevant dates and details was provided to all Big Sisters on commencement of the program;

For the 2008 Program, attendance will be an issue for close attention.

## **3. 100 per-cent of Big Sisters with a 80% attendance rate at Big Sister Meetings**

For Big Sister monthly meetings, an average attendance rate of 63 per-cent was observed, with 18 per-cent attending 80 per-cent or more of meetings (this somewhat improves with 45 per-cent of Big Sisters attending 75 percent or more of meetings. This may be due to the competing commitments at work and at home. Additionally, it is noted that given the lower Little Sister attendance at monthly outings, this may have had a corollary on Big Sister attendance at monthly meetings, particularly if the Big Sister was aware that their Little Sister would not be attending.

It is acknowledged that closer scrutiny needs to be adopted to ensure Big Sister attendance is maintained. For 2008, a roll will be taken for Big Sister attendance at meetings, with the Team Leader being responsible to ensure that attendance at monthly meetings occurs. In addition to this, it is suggested that keeping the meeting to time, as well as making the meeting more meaningful for the Big Sister will address the issue of Big Sister commitment and participation.

### **3. Behaviour**

These three key performance indicators for Behaviour have been assessed via surveys completed by Big Sisters and Little Sisters at the start and finish of the program.

#### **1. Demonstrated reduction of anti-social behaviour in 80% of Little Sisters over the program**

The 2007 addressed the issue of consequences of anti-social conduct via a presentation from an Officer from the NSW Police Force. During this workshop, the Police Officer discussed options and consequences of conduct, thereby stimulation thought and discussion for the Little Sisters. The workshop was positively received.

An assessment of anti-social behaviour was compared both qualitatively and statistically at the beginning and end of the program, to note any changes over time.

In relation to specific reporting of anti-social behaviour, 81 per-cent of Little Sisters responding (N=33) noted a reduction of some form. In particular, the most frequent endorsed reduction in anti-social conduct were items “I lie and/or cheat”; “I swear and use dirty language”; “I argue a lot”; “I disobey my parents at home”; and “I get into many fights”.

It is acknowledged that these reported changes are only slight in frequency, however it is also recognised that many of the Little Sisters did not report an increase in anti-social conduct, which is also a promising sign. To this end, self reports from the Little Sisters show that approximately 60 per-cent acknowledged that their rate of behaviour had remained the same. Therefore, on consideration, it is suggested that the given that there had not been an increase in anti-social behaviour is a promising outcome. It is acknowledged that some time is required for behaviour change to occur. As such, it is hoped that over time, we are able to assess continued reduction in anti-social behaviour.

In addition to this statistical result, qualitatively, there was an overall improvement in Little Sisters attitude and self perception which has resulted in a reduction of anti-social behaviour, such as smoking, drinking, self harming behaviours, or being mean to others.

Overall, these results demonstrate that Little Sisters have changed the manner in which they behave around others in a variety of ways, which is promising.

#### **2. Demonstrated improvement in pro-social behaviour in 90% of Little Sisters over the program**

Pro-social behaviour is defined as being helpful, sharing, and kind to others. These messages were delivered to the Little Sisters over the course of the 2007 Program via the role modelling and relationship building that regularly occurred for the entire SISTER2sister team, as well as through workshop via discussions about positive relationships with others, and assertively addressing negative relationships with others.

An evaluation of pro-social behaviour occurred by comparing responses qualitatively and statistically at the beginning and end of the program, to note any changes over time.

In relation to the specific reporting of pro-social behaviour, 90 per-cent of Little Sisters responding (N=31), noted an increase in some form. In particular, the most frequently endorsed items to increase pro-social conduct were items “I try to make sad people happier”; “I spend time with my friends”; “I

help others with their homework”; “I like to hang out with others”; “I trust others”; “I stand up for others when they need help”; “I help others to develop skills that they need help with”; and “I avoid having fights with others”. Almost one third of Little Sisters reported improvements across these items, with 50 per-cent reporting that they had remained the same with their conduct in this area. Furthermore, it is also recognised that almost all Little Sisters reported between “sometimes” and “always” demonstrating these behaviours, which is a promising indicator.

In addition to this statistical result, qualitatively, the Little Sisters reported changes such as caring more for others, being true to themselves, treating others with respect, and having a solution focus to problems. To this end, it appears that the Little Sisters have changed the manner in which they behave around others in a more positive manner.

Overall, these results demonstrate that the Little Sisters have improved the way they relate and behave toward others

### **3. 90% demonstrated improvement in self confidence and self esteem in Little Sisters**

The issue of developing self confidence and self esteem is constantly reinforced throughout the SISTER2sister program. For 2007, the Little Sisters were consistently encouraged to try new activities, break out of their comfort zone, as well as being made aware that the past does not necessarily equal the future.

Self confidence and esteem was compared both qualitatively and statistically at the beginning and end of the program, to note any changes over time. Self confidence, otherwise known as efficacy beliefs, were assessed in several core domains of functioning: resisting peer group pressure, being self assertive, enlisting support, enlisting social resources, meeting others expectations, and achievement orientation. Workshop activities specifically addressed some of these domains of functioning, such as strategies to be self assertive and resist peer group pressure, setting and achieving goals, and also recognising and utilising avenues for support.

In relation to resisting peer group pressure, 30 per-cent of Little Sisters responding (N=30) reported improvement within this domain of functioning (with 37% reporting no change). It is suggested that whilst this may be lower than expected, it is acknowledged that this is likely to be the most difficult domain of functioning to change, given their peer group is the strongest area of support outside of the SISTER2sister Program. It is therefore hoped that the SISTER2sister program provides these Little Sisters over time to make better choices with respect to their friendship groups, thereby possibly improving this domain of functioning over time.

With reference to being self assertive, 61 per-cent of Little Sisters who responded (N=33) reported some improvement within this domain of functioning (with 27% reporting no change). This is a promising result, particularly given that it is likely to influence other domains of functioning over time, such as resisting peer group pressure.

In relation to enlisting support, 52 per-cent of Little Sisters who responded (N=31) reported some improvement within this domain of functioning (with 26% reporting no change). This is a positive indicator, suggesting that increasingly, the Little Sisters have become increasingly aware of how and where to enlist support.

With regard to enlisting social resources, 44 per-cent of Little Sisters responding (N=34) reported some improvement within this domain of functioning (with 38% reporting no change). This is a positive result, providing an indication that Little Sisters are able to create positive social resources for them to create desired outcomes.

In relation to meeting the expectations of others, 32 per-cent of Little Sisters who responded (N=30) reported some improvement within this domain of functioning (with 32% reporting no change). Such a result indicates that as a result of the program, the Little Sisters become increasingly aware of the potential impact that they have on others and mindful of how they behave as a result.

With reference to achievement orientation, namely being able to set and achieve goals, 70 per-cent of Little Sisters responding (N=30) reported improving within this domain of functioning (with 17% reporting no change). This result is very encouraging, and somewhat unsurprising. To this end, it is acknowledged that goal setting is something that the Little Sisters are unfamiliar with at the commencement of the program, and as such is heavily emphasised and reinforced throughout the program content.

Overall, it is noted that 93 per-cent of Little Sisters who responded (N=30) reported some demonstrated improvement within one or more of the abovementioned domains of functioning, with 37 per-cent of these respondents noting an improvement within four or more of the six domains of functioning. This is a very encouraging result, suggesting that the Little Sisters who participate in the SISTER2sister Program increase in their levels of self efficacy and confidence, providing them with a positive outlook for their futures.

## **4 Relationships**

### **1. 95% develop a positive relationship with Big Sisters by the end of the program**

The Little Sister/ Big Sister relationship is constantly referenced and reinforced throughout the SISTER2sister program. Bootcamp and the workshops are all geared to ensure that the relationship between the two parties is developed and supported.

This key performance indicator was assessed at the beginning and end of the program statistically. It is assessed via levels of communication, mutual support, as well as overall. Overall, 91 per-cent of Little Sisters reported a positive relationship with their Big Sister (N=34). Similarly, 85 per-cent of Little Sisters reported a positive collective relationship with their Big Sister (N=33) with 48 per-cent reporting an improvement in their relationship with their Big Sister over the course of the program. Whilst not meeting the key performance indicator, this is still considered to be a promising result. To this end, it is acknowledged that some of the Little Sister/ Big Sister matches were not ideal, however this was more the result of the Little Sister having preconceived expectations of their Big Sister which were difficult to address (for example, young, fun, trendy), rather than there being inadequacies of the Big Sister. It is suggested that this perceptual issue is therefore tapping into an issue of the Little Sisters self concept which is difficult to shift.

Nevertheless, on closer analysis of the data, when assessing specific aspects of communication between the Big Sister and Little Sister, some positive trends have emerged. In particular, 85 per-cent of Little Sisters felt that they could discuss their thoughts with their Big Sister without feeling embarrassed, 97 per-cent of Little Sisters felt that their Big Sisters were good listeners, 82 per-cent of Little Sisters felt

that they could tell their Big Sister if they were in trouble, 94 per-cent reported that their Big Sister tried to understand their point of view, 91 per-cent of Little Sisters said that they could discuss their problems with their Big Sister, and 85 per-cent of Little Sister advised that they could express their true feelings to their Big Sister. Also of note is the finding that there was an improvement in the nature of this communication over the course of the Program. These are very positive results, suggesting that the nature of communication between the Big Sister/ Little Sister is positive, and develops over the course of the program.

Two areas which had lower levels of positive responding were that 52 per-cent of Little Sisters said that they were not afraid to ask their Big Sister for what they wanted, and 62 per-cent of Little Sisters noted that their Big Sister were able to tell how they were feeling without asking. These results are somewhat understandable, given that Little Sisters have generally come from a life whereby it is not safe to ask for what they ask. Coupled with this, given that the mentor relationship generally occurs outside of the home environment, it is understandable that some Little Sisters may want to suppress their true feelings to their Big Sister until they feel comfortable to do so.

Overall, it is suggested that the nature of the relationship between the Big Sister/ Little Sister over the course of the program is positive, and the nature and levels of communication between the two parties is developed to become positive, open, and based on respect and understanding.

For future programs, it is suggested that an improvement of the selection criteria for Big Sister and Little Sister applications, with more knowledge about each person, will provide a better match between the two parties.

## **2. 50% develop a positive relationship with a parent/ guardian/ carer and or sibling by the end of the program**

The relationship between Little Sisters and their key home relationships, namely parent/ guardian/ carer (care givers) and siblings, were assessed over the course of the program.

In relation to care giver relationships, overall, 53 per-cent of Little Sisters reported a positive collective relationship with their care givers (N=30), with 50 per-cent reporting an improvement in their relationship with their care givers over the course of the program. Similarly, 35 per-cent of Little Sisters reported a positive communication with their care givers (N=34) with 35 per-cent reporting an improvement in their relationship with their care givers over the course of the program. Overall, this is a positive result, and for the most part meeting the key performance indicator. To this end, it is acknowledged that some of the Little Sisters experience difficult home lives with their care givers, however it appears likely that in instances where change can occur, it has done so.

On closer analysis of the data, when assessing specific aspects of communication between the Little Sister and care giver, some generally positive trends have emerged. In particular, 47 per-cent of Little Sisters felt that they could discuss their thoughts with their care givers without feeling embarrassed, 59 per-cent were able to ask their care givers what they wanted, 41 per-cent of care givers were able to tell how the Little Sisters without asking, and 41 per-cent of Little Sisters felt that they could tell their care givers if they were in trouble. Also of note is the finding that there was an improvement in the nature of this communication over the course of the Program, which is promising.



On comparison with the Big Sister/ Little Sister relationship, it is noted that the levels of communication with care givers/ Little Sister is lower. It is suggested that this may be the case for a number of reasons, including consideration of the complex personal lives that the Little Sisters have, as well as acknowledging that the goal of the Big Sister is to be entirely present and attentive to the Little Sister, whereby this is not the case with the Little Sister's home life. Notwithstanding, it is noted that qualitatively, comments made by the Little Sisters explained that they were more patient with their parents, less argumentative, and listened more.

Overall, the Little Sister acknowledged that their participation in the program has helped improve their relationships with their parents.

With regard to sibling relationships, whilst not directly assessed, it is noted that Little Sisters had become more aware of the impact that they have on others as a result of the program. As a result, Little Sisters reported listening more, respecting others, and caring about the lives of others. It is posited that this may also include relationships with siblings.

It is suggested that future programs pay closer attention to assisting the improvement of the Little Sister's relationship on the home front in order to ensure more longstanding changes to the Little Sister and their environment after the completion of the program is observed.

### **3. 50% develop a positive relationship and/ or are able to manage their relationship with their peers**

Sixty eight per-cent of Little Sisters responding to the survey at the end of the program stated that they had improved their relationship with their peers over the course of the year. Comments made by the Little Sisters indicated that they were more understanding of their friends as a result of the program, as well as making better choices in relation to who they became friends with. In addition to this, Little Sisters also reported that they were able to better able to manage their relationship with their peers, not succumbing to bullying, being able to resist peer group pressure, and being less likely to engage in fights.

The majority of the Little Sisters came to realise throughout the twelve month program that they made 41 new friends of a similar age group to themselves over the course of the year, as well as 41 new older friends. This is a result of the innovative Support Network Structure within The SISTER2sister Program, where a close bond and foundation of support is formed through the program.

The aim for future programs is to pay closer attention to improving the Little Sister relationships with their peers in order to provide a more protective wider community network for the Little Sister after she formally completes the SISTER2sister program.

## 5. Education and Employment

These two key performance indicators for Education and Employment have been assessed via surveys completed by Big and Little Sisters at the beginning and end of the program.

### 1. 75% improve in educational outcomes including, attendance, grades, and participation levels

For the 2007 program, educational outcomes assessed included attendance, grades, participation in school events, school interaction, reports from teachers, and homework being done. Overall, a 57 per-cent improvement in educational outcomes of those attending school and participating (N=34) was observed.

On closer analysis of these educational outcomes, 53 per-cent of Little Sisters reported attending school more. It is noted that this result may be somewhat skewed as there is a representation of Little Sisters who did not report any difficulty in attending school in the first instance. This characteristic should be taken into consideration when reviewing this result.

Additionally, 62 per-cent of Little Sisters reported an improvement in their grades over the course of the year, with 62 per-cent of Little Sisters also reporting that they experienced more positive reports from Teachers. Moreover, 41 per-cent reported an improvement in getting their homework done. On the whole, these academic outcomes are a positive result, indicating some positive behaviour change over the course of the year.

With respect to participation levels, 63 per-cent of Little Sisters reported an improvement in participating within class, with 44 per-cent of Little Sisters reporting that they have also improved their participation in School events. Finally, 77 per-cent of Little Sisters reported an improvement with their interactions with others within the School environment.

Qualitatively, Little Sisters reported that since completing the program, they felt more comfortable within the School environment, were more likely to ask for help when needed, listened more, were less aggressive towards others, showed more respect toward others, and attended class on time.

Overall, these results are promising in that the commitment to educational outcomes has improved over the course of the year that the Little Sister has participated in the program.

### 2. 80% employment in part time work for Little Sisters who are eligible and capable of being employed

In the 2007 program, 15 Little Sisters were of the age of being able to work both in terms of age as well as consideration being paid to other factors. In particular, it is noted that there was a group of Little Sisters who were of the age to find employment, they were unable to do so for other reasons, such as mental health issues, family issues, general health issues, and a stable living environment.

Of those 15 Little Sisters who were of the age of being able to work, 10 have been or are currently in part time work as at the end of the 2007 program. This is a result of 67 per-cent, which is slightly under target for this indicator.

Throughout the program, considerable workshop time was spent on addressing careers as an issue, covering such topics as identifying talents, selecting subjects for school, determining strengths, resume

writing, dressing for success, having interviews, 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 have worked in, with a particularly beneficial question and answer session for the Little Sisters to ask the Big Sister Mentors specific questions.

For the 2008 program, the workshop on careers 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 embrace and be passed on to the Little Sisters.

## **6. Goals, Ambitions, and Levels of Learning**

There is one key performance indicator for Goals and Ambitions, where this has been assessed via surveys completed by Little Sisters at 3 months and six months into the program, as well as on program completion, 12 months after commencement. In addition, observations have been made over the course of the program.

### **1. 100% achievement of a goal in relationship to at least three levels of learning as identified within the program**

For the 2007 program, goal setting has been a stronger feature in the program, commencing with Boot Camp. A full and complete workshop was 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 style of goal setting. The goal setting and achievement process reflects the levels of learning, which are incorporated into monthly workshops for the program. The Levels of Learning are diagrammatically represented in the figure over the page.

With respect to the Little Sisters achieving outcomes pertaining to the Levels of Learning, 86 per-cent of Little Sisters responding (N=28) reported achieving three or more levels of learning identified within the program. Whilst this falls short of meeting this key performance indicator, it is suggested that this may be a function of the reporting requirement of the level of learning, rather than falling short of expectations.

With specific reference to each level, 82 per-cent of Little Sisters responding noted that they achieved a goal around getting out of harm's way. Examples of this included leaving an unsafe home environment, moving out and living independently, and ensuring that the Little Sister can feel safe.

Seventy five per-cent of Little Sisters responding had achieved a goal in the area of survival skills. Examples for this included utilising services such as Centrelink, calling someone when needing help, and being able to live independently.

In terms of risk management skills, 82 per-cent of Little Sisters reported achieving a goal within this domain. Examples included being honest and telling a loved one of a Little Sister's whereabouts, calling for help if in trouble, and asking for advice.



The area of healthy lifestyle observed the highest achievement of goals for Little Sisters, 86 per-cent. Goals achieved in this area included better food choices, healthier eating, and incorporating exercise into the daily routine.

Sixty one per-cent of Little Sisters reported achieving a goal in relation to life skills. Examples of their goals achieved include admitting to when help is needed, taking responsibility for one's future and completing school or getting a job, and perceiving self in a more positive light/

For employment skills, 75 per-cent of Little Sisters achieved a goal in this area. Goals achieved were around completing school and finding suitable work.

Finally, goals around tapping potential was achieved by 64 per-cent of Little Sisters, with examples including being more open, realising that goals can be achieved, and thinking more about consequences.

## Levels of Learning

The SISTER2sister Program 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.

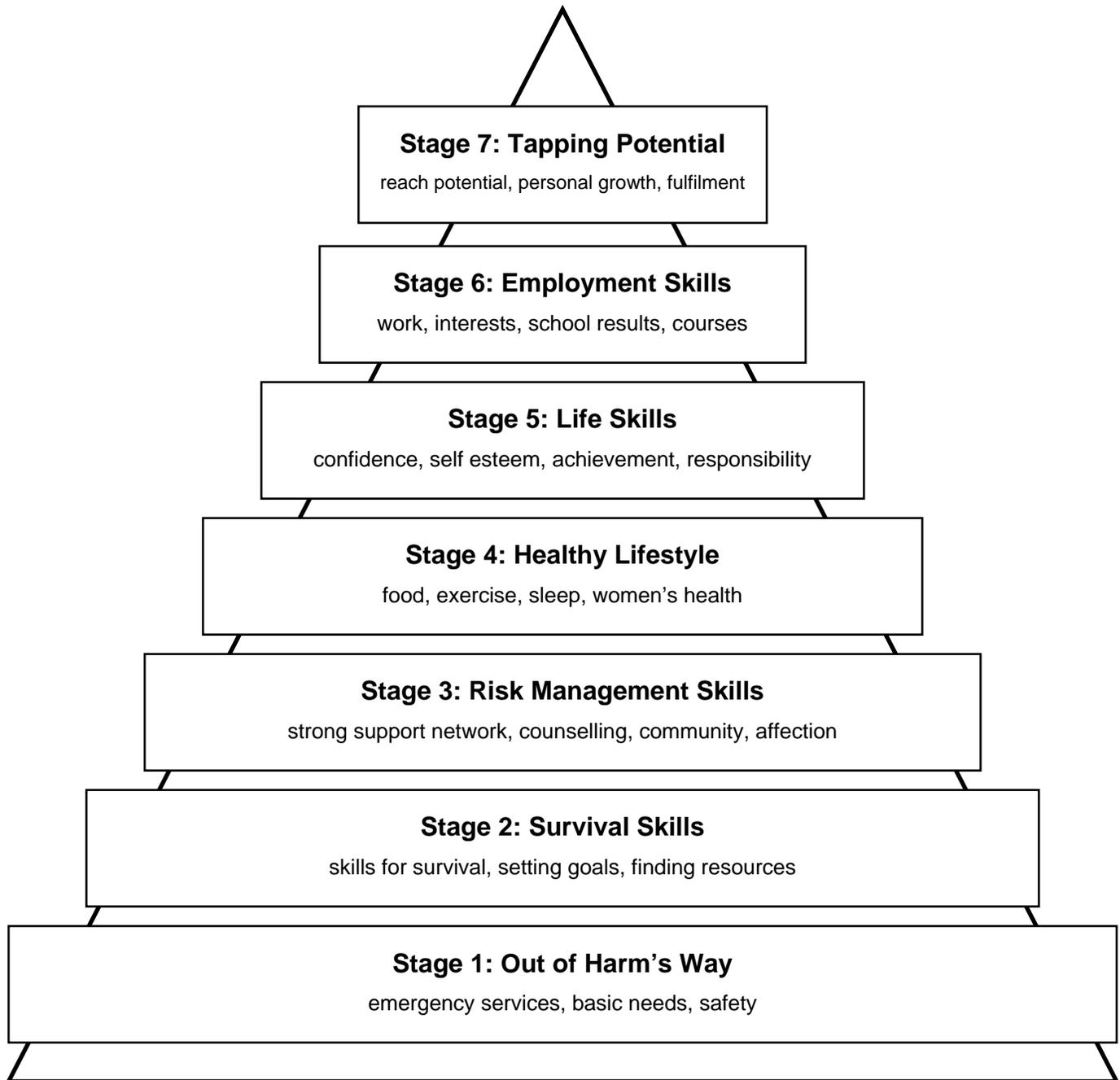


Figure 1: Levels of Learning within The SISTER2sister Program

## 5 Concluding Comments

In sum, it is considered that the SISTER2sister program for 2007 has been very successful, with credit and acknowledgement being levelled at the achievements of the Little Sisters, Big Sisters, Team Leaders, and the Management Team.

The twelve workshops conducted which comprised the SISTER2sister program 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 these 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, and climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Overall, the SISTER2sister Program for 2007 has achieved very positive results, which can be summarised by through the Key Performance Indicators indicated below.

### *Intake and Retention*

Forty three Little Sisters were accepted into the 2007 Program, with 42 Little Sisters completing the program. This is a retention rate of 97 per-cent, thereby exceeding expectations for this performance indicator. The retention rate of Big Sisters for the 2007 program was 98 per-cent. This retention rate is pleasing.

However, it is noted that given the target is for 50 Big and Little Sister matches, modifications need to occur for future programs to broaden the application and intake of Big Sisters and Little Sisters in order to meet the requisite 50 matches.

### *Attendance*

For 2007, on average, each Little Sister attended nine out of 11 workshops over the year. Overall the 68 per-cent of Little Sisters attended 80 per-cent or more of the workshops, thereby falling short of this indicator. Some challenges were noted in attracting attendance by the Little Sisters for various reasons. For example, it was also identified that the pattern of attendance fluctuated as a result of interest and motivation for outings. Big Sister attendance at workshops was 80 per-cent, with 50 per-cent attending a minimum of 90 per-cent of the workshops. For Big Sister monthly meetings, an average attendance rate of 63 per-cent was observed.

It is suggested that the reason for poor Big Sister attendance may be due to the poor attendance by the Little Sisters. However, it is acknowledged that the Big Sister role modelling behaviour is an important element in Little Sister attendance and participation, and as such it is important to pay closer attention to this issue for future programs.

### *Behaviour*

In relation to specific reporting of anti-social behaviour, 81 per-cent of Little Sisters noted a reduction of some form. For the specific reporting of pro-social behaviour, 90 per-cent of Little Sisters noted an increase in some form.

93 per-cent of Little Sisters reported some demonstrated improvement within one or more domain of functioning, with 37 per-cent of these respondents noting an improvement within four or more of the six domains of functioning. This is a very encouraging result, suggesting that the Little Sisters who participate in the SISTER2sister Program increase in their levels of self efficacy and confidence, providing them with a positive outlook for their futures.

This result is pleasing and points towards changes made to the Little Sisters self concept and behaviour as a result of their participation in the program.

### *Relationships*

Ninety one per-cent of Little Sisters reported a positive relationship with their Big Sister. Similarly, 85 per-cent of Little Sisters reported a positive collective relationship with their Big Sister with 48 per-cent reporting an improvement in their relationship with their Big Sister over the course of the program.

Fifty three per-cent of Little Sisters reported a positive collective relationship with their care givers, with 50 per-cent reporting an improvement in their relationship with their care givers over the course of the program. Similarly, 35 per-cent of Little Sisters reported a positive communication with their care givers with 35 per-cent reporting an improvement in their relationship with their care givers over the course of the program.

Finally, 68 per-cent of Little Sisters responding to the survey at the end of the program stated that they had improved their relationship with their peers over the course of the year.

Whilst these results are pleasing, closer attention will be paid to developing and improving core relationships for the Little Sisters in future programs in an effort to help change the Little Sister's community that they live in, thereby providing an additional support for the Little Sister upon their completion of the program.

### *Education and Employment*

There was a 57 per-cent improvement in educational outcomes of those attending school and participating.

In terms of employment, almost 67 per-cent of Little Sisters who were of the appropriate age to gain part time work, were actually engaged in part time work.

Future programs will continue to pay closer attention to addressing these issues for the Little Sisters in an effort to improve these key outcomes.

### *Goals, Ambitions, and Levels of Learning*

Goal setting was a more prevalent feature of the SISTER2sister program in 2007. As such, 86 per-cent of Little Sisters achieved goals in at least three levels of learning throughout the program, which is a



promising result. Of note, the most prominent changes made were in the areas of developing a healthy lifestyle, getting out of harms way, and developing risk management skills.

Nevertheless, the principle idea underpinning the Levels of Learning 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 Program continues, it is anticipated that the Little Sisters who have been part of the program will be flourishing as a result of the seeds we have planted when they participated in the program.

As part of the SISTER2sister Program’s commitment to the well-being of at-risk youth, it is intended that the program continues to leverage off it’s strengths that 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.