REGIONAL Report

FINANCIAL YEAR 2017-18
COMMUNITIES: LOGAN & BEENLEIGH

OUR SISTERS

A continued trend of Sisters who have experienced domestic violence has been accompanied by an increase in cultural diversity and women over 40 engaging. We also welcomed our first group of predominantly single mums with complex histories of domestic violence, sexual violence and extensive mental health histories.

OUR PARTNERS

We continued our work with Logan Women’s Health and Wellbeing and Common Ground Queensland as we introduced Global Sisters to smaller organisations including ZigZag Women and Multicultural Development Australia. We worked alongside Mercy International’s Romero Centre to deliver our biggest Sister School to a predominantly ESL group of women and our final Sister School with ParentsNext Accoras in Beenleigh.

WHAT’S WORKED?

Our work with ParentsNext was an absolute standout. Seeing how Global Sisters works best when combined with a supportive community partner and community ecosystem to support the sisters after Sister School.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Sister School with an ESL group requiring numerous translators in the room was tricky to manage and maintain a connected learning experience – but we did it!

HIGHLIGHT

Our end of Sister School pitch by Sisters in Beenleigh was incredible! We had an impressive panel providing supportive feedback to our emerging entrepreneurs and they were genuinely in awe of the quality of the pitches by our new graduates. The room was absolutely buzzing and the momentum has continued post Sister School.
Vikki James came to our ParentsNext Accoras Sister School in Beenleigh with an idea she had touched upon when her son was born 9 years earlier. Her simple ribbon hairclips have grown in concept as Vicky applied herself with dedication and commitment every week. Initially thinking individual sales to young girls, her idea has progressed into selling to team based associations such as netball, dance troupes and gymnastics. She is currently talking with P&C associations in her area to produce school specific bows. Her determination and steadfast approach inspire us and our Sister Tribe.

PROUD SISTER SNIPPET

WHAT ARE WE MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE NEXT YEAR?

We are so excited to build on the momentum within our Sister Tribe and with the aid of immersive experiences, pop up events, workshops and low risk sales opportunities to create higher numbers of sales consistently. We are on a mission to build confidence, sales skills and business nous to support these young businesses to fly!

SISTERS ENGAGED

(IN BUSINESS EDUCATION OR INCUBATE): 60

ACTIVE BUSINESSES: 26
Sydney

COMMUNITIES: LIVERPOOL, FAIRFIELD, PARAMATTA

OUR SISTERS

We have worked with a diverse range of women in culture and age in Sydney as well as Nowra where we worked with young Aboriginal women. The women we have supported in Liverpool, Fairfield, Minto and Parramatta have been all ages including young mums and older women. We are working with many women of migrant or refugee backgrounds and intersecting barriers including mental health and disability.

OUR PARTNERS

Our wonderful partnerships continue with Liverpool Neighbourhood Centre, ICE and Life Without Barriers in Parramatta, Woodville Alliance in Carramar, Community Support Services in Bankstown, Auburn Diversity Services and Waminda in Nowra.

HIGHLIGHT

GLO with our fantastic partner Woodville Alliance was an inspiring and awesome event! Kirsty Chong, the founder of Modibodi kicked it off speaking about both the environmental and women’s empowerment impact of her products. The impact of raising entrepreneurial aspirations among the young women participating was highly visible and the room was buzzing with excited energy by the end!

We were also super excited when Cindy was our first Sister to set up her Airbnb experience with AMOK!

WHAT’S WORKED?

The increased focus on a ‘soft business launch’ in the incubate phase where we support women to take steps to launch their business in a safe, supported environment. This coupled with a focus on ‘brave business’ and entrepreneurial mindset skills to push through fear and barriers, has been very important in Sisters moving their businesses forward. We also brought on our first Arabic speaking Sister School facilitator from among our Sisters which is increasing accessibility to the Arabic speaking community in South West Sydney.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Consistency with our Accelerator Leads. We tried bringing on two short term roles to cover a maternity leave gap as Sydney was escalating- with one looking after the early stages of business education and the other working with Sisters once they graduated from Sister School in the Incubate phase. This hasn’t worked and we’ve realised we need the one Accelerator Lead to support the same group of Sisters for their whole journey along our roadmap, so they are now allocated a specific geographic area to look after for the whole journey.

COMMUNITIES:

LIVERPOOL, FAIRFIELD, PARAMATTA
PROUD SISTER SNIPPET

Houda is an inspirational 65 year old of Algerian descent. An artist, passionate about the environment, as well as single mother to two and permanent carer to one son living with autism, Her My Big Idea experience had her close to tears of excitement at taking her business idea forward to Sister School where she launched into creating her business to make a difference in our world and hers. She conquered her fear of technology to start her Instagram account for Leave Eco Prints and at the Sharing Circle on completion of Sister School she made her first $100 in sales. She has started working with her coach Anne the fabulous founder of gorgeous eco textiles brand Elkie & Ark and has also started kids art classes from her local Marrickville market!

WHAT ARE WE MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE NEXT YEAR?

Re-launching Sydney with Jess on board full time and focussing on 3 main hubs of Liverpool, Fairfield and Paramatta.

SISTERS ENGAGED (IN BUSINESS EDUCATION OR INCUBATE): 70
ACTIVE BUSINESSES: 31
OUR SISTERS

Our Canberra Sisters are currently primarily a CALD group of women with migrant and refugees backgrounds which includes single mothers and women living with mental illness and disability.

OUR PARTNERS

We have been delighted to be working with the Canberra Institute of Technology and in particular the English Language section over the previous year. We have also enjoyed continuing working alongside Companion House as well as with Libraries ACT and Northside Community Service.

WHAT’S WORKED?

Our Sisters are thriving as a part of our Sister Tribe being together in safe and supported environments as they learn about and grow their businesses.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

We have a number of Sisters with food based businesses and these are providing to be relatively time consuming to set up. Access to computers and printers has been one particular challenge for some of our Sisters and it is always challenging when we see some Sisters who join us for a while but are then unable to continue their journey due to their life circumstances despite their desire to do so.

HIGHLIGHT

The first official catering event by White Nile Women for 35 which was made possible by three Global Sisters business coaches;

1. Observation was necessary in order to complete their Basic food Safety and Food supervisor Certificate by Lucie Lucie from Trader and Co.

2. Access to a commercial kitchen by HomeGrownMe and Canberra City Farm Community Kitchen with coaching from Georgina Prasad and

3. Ethical Fashion Table catering event opportunity from Kelli Donovan from Puer Pod.
Lauraline K’hsėr changed her original food based business idea post Sister School after taking it through a series of business fitness tests. Deciding to follow her passion for crocheting she took part in her first market experience within weeks of setting her business up and has had a series of sales and wins since as she continues to apply learnings, grow in confidence and meet new challenges head on. Lauraline is selling a number of beautiful products through Global Sisters on The Market and is driven not only to support her family in Canberra but also to support refugee students on the Thai Burma border which was once her home.

WHAT ARE WE MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE NEXT YEAR?

Expanding our work to an additional day of Accelerator lead time in Canberra to work with more Sisters and a more diverse cohort. There is so much potential to create great change in Canberra!
Our Sisters
We are working with incredibly diverse groups of women in the Hume region of Victoria. There is a growing population of skilled migrants and refugees, particularly in Albury Wodonga from Horn of Africa communities. An increasing number of women 50+ are joining us after facing substantial barriers to employment following retrenchment, caring responsibilities for aging parents or having moved for a more affordable cost of living. We are also working with single mums, women with disabilities and Indigenous women. There is a growing cohort of ‘working poor’ in the Hume – women with low job security, limited education, poor pay and little prospect of advancement. Social isolation and lack of self-confidence are significant issues.

Our Partners
Our wonderful partners are many and in Albury Wodonga include Albury City Council, Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau, Gateway Health, MAMA, Murray Arts and Wodonga Council.

In Benalla we are working with North East Artisans and Benalla Rural City Council.

Wangaratta we are working alongside Gateway Health and Rural City of Wangaratta.

What’s Worked?
As our first regional location, operations in the Hume are thriving with a strong network or relationships with councils, health agencies and community organisations – all of which share a vision of economic and social inclusion for women. This collaborative approach is yielding opportunities for women supported by Global Sisters as they gain access to new networks, technical advice, market testing opportunities and social inclusion via an emerging innovation and entrepreneurship business ecosystem in the region.
BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Transport challenges are real in regional Victoria and lack of accessible transport options are an ongoing barrier for women in the Hume region with limited financial means. This impacts on their ability to attend business education as well as ongoing opportunities on offer. Digital access is regional Victoria can be erratic or poor with numerous recognised blackspots. This is a barrier for women seeking to use technology for anything from education to market research to social media for marketing and basic business communication. Despite widespread support for Global Sisters the pool of available coaches is limited, largely due to competing programs such as via the Chamber of Commerce for emerging business people not in our cohort.

HIGHLIGHT

I have loved watching Sister Tribe support in action! One example was five Sisters who graduated from Sister School in 2017 attending the final Sister School pitch session at Benalla. They offered moral support, encouragement and feedback to the women who were presenting their business concepts to the panel. Another example was having Dot Browne, owner of Café Xenia and Dot’s Kitchen hosted a networking and know-how event at her business. Fifteen women attended this event where Global Sisters coach Deb Culhane presented a session focused on ‘legal basics for business’.

WHAT ARE WE MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE NEXT YEAR?

Expanding and market testing and sales pop up opportunities in our regional centres with both Benalla and Wangaratta councils interested in developing the concepts.

PROUD SISTER SNIPPET

Nikki Hind is a single mother of two boys and possibly Australia’s first legally blind fashion designer. Nikki has brought together a lifetime love of fitness, fashion design and social justice to create Blind Grit. It is a name which reflects her spirit and courage. She was determined find a new way of expressing the best of herself through her work, after being left permanently legally blind by a stroke, at the same time as becoming a mother for the first time. A graduate of a 2017 Sister School, Nikki was this year invited to be part of a discussion panel and showcase some designs from her first collection on the runway at a 2018 Melbourne Fashion Week event - Access To Fashion.
Melbourne

COMMUNITIES: HOPPERS CROSSING, RESERVOIR/PRESTON

OUR SISTERS

We are working with many women of refugee and migrant backgrounds in the Wyndham region predominantly from Myanmar, Somalia and South Sudan with a strong interest in textile, interiors and food based businesses. Our sisters in the Darebin region are generally Australian born with mental health challenges, chronic illness, unstable employment and older women as well as highly skilled refugees and migrants creating business to business products and services.

OUR PARTNERS

Our many wonderful partners include the Australian Multicultural Education Services, Brotherhood St Laurence, Fitted For Work, Horn of African Communities Network, Darebin City Council, Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education and Mumtaza Network. We have also had the fabulous support of so many in everything from expertise to space including Happy Hubbub, The Difference Incubator, Myer and Aconex.

WHAT’S WORKED?

The emergence of the Sister Tribe in the Darebin area. It’s so exciting to see Sisters connecting with each other and the local community to start, build and grow their businesses.
BIGGEST CHALLENGE?
Navigating food business registration processes and getting access to suitable commercial kitchens. It’s expensive and time consuming.

HIGHLIGHT
Luul Aligas selling out her Zuhaire Somali Chilli Sauce at the Global Sisters Market Day at Happy Hubbub in May. Luul loves Sister School so much she has taken it not once, but twice (first for a catering business, and second for sauces). She has worked hard with her business coach, Judy, to refine her recipe, develop her labelling and produce the sauces. Luul looks forward to growing her business to the scale of her business hero, a Somali entrepreneur based in the US that sells across the country.

PROUD SISTER SNIPPET
Lina Qasem joined Sister School in February 2018 and concluded Sister School with an outstanding business pitch and she is a finalist in the AMP Tomorrow Maker Awards. Lina was an award-winning software engineer in Jordan and has volunteered at coding clubs and workshops since arriving in Australia and having a baby. In May 2018 Linda founded Robofun Robotics and Coding Academy. Robofun is a robotics and coding academy based in Melbourne, for all kids from diverse backgrounds, genders, economic situations and abilities. Lina is also aiming to create flexible employment opportunities for women like herself with technology backgrounds.

WHAT ARE WE MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE NEXT YEAR?
Working with women in the Greater Dandenong region to build businesses that create local employment opportunities.

SISTERS ENGAGED
(IN BUSINESS EDUCATION OR INCUBATE): 74
ACTIVE BUSINESSES: 37
INTERESTED?

Join us

Say hello@globalsisters.org

Visit us online at
www.globalsisters.org

Global Sisters Regional Report 2017-18

GLOBAL SISTERS