

Sailing the LeaderSHIP Girls Retreat – Reflections from the Facilitator

Now that I am back in Sydney, I often find myself reflecting on my time in Darwin and am sincerely grateful for the experiences I had with the fantastic young women I met on my journey there.

On the Base Camp Wallaroo website the first thing it says is that base camp is a place where travellers can reflect on their journey and prepare for the future and that wallaroo, part wallaby and part kangaroo, is the result of evolutionary change.

I was confident that the program set for the girls retreat was going to deliver positive outcomes however I could never prepare myself for how positive those outcomes were and for the amazing and unforgettable journey that we all took and that I took with the girls. Base camp was a meeting place for a new generation full of new ideas and hope for the future to come. It was a meeting place for new people to come together and not assimilate but rather to unite in a shared process of learning and discovery of new religions, cultures, languages ... girls who learnt that they shared the same vision for a better future and on their journey they confronted the same fears together. They built greater respect and belief in themselves and towards others. They shared hopes and desires and in laughter and tears they grew as young women and I truly believe became even better human beings. Doug and his incredible staff provided us with an opportunity to reflect and grow on our journey and to dream up a future for ourselves and the world beyond the retreat. The result was wallaroo we were all part wallaby and part kangaroo and the result was evolutionary change. The girls redefined change and they redefined positive social change and I will always be eternally grateful for the trust those girls and project and camp staff placed in me. I will always be eternally grateful for the opportunity to be part of this journey and I have never been so proud of a group of people in my life more than the girls.

Working with Sharin especially was fantastic. I felt I have a new sister in Australia and am thankful to her for her kindness and willingness to travel the journey with me. Her vision and willingness to dream big for the project with her staff was truly exceptional as it is not often you get someone who is so hands on in ensuring an honest and genuine positive outcome that doesn't just look good on paper but translates into tangible and visible results that are sustainable. The entire project I am certain would not have been possible without her fabulous supportive family and the friends at the Mosque who were so welcoming to me and my colleagues from Sydney. The graduation was just a glimpse of how open and great the community is to providing the opportunities for their young people to grow and their support and kindness should be applauded. I want to thank Sharin and her staff and the parents and community for also trusting me with their children and the project and I am looking forward to continuing my relationship with them in the future on this project and others.

Finally, I would importantly like to thank my colleagues from Sydney, Omar and Natic, the TV Crew from UBI TV who also shared our journey and vision and made the girls and everyone at the retreat feel comfortable around the camera and in their presence. Their sensitivity to the issues and the needs of all present was particularly appreciated as this was no easy undertaking. I am excited about the documentary that their hard work will produce and it was a pleasure to be working with them.

Until our next journey together ...

Omeima Sukkarieh
Facilitator - Sailing the LeaderSHIP Girls Retreat