



Feeling the cold: How an Antarctica expedition can warm your soul

What you need to know about Homeward Bound, an all-female expedition heightening the role of women in policy and decision making as it shapes our planet.

Homeward Bound is a global leadership initiative that aims to, over 10-years, empower 1000 women in science to develop their leadership and strategic capabilities, enhance their individual and combined visibility and expand their knowledge on climate change and sustainability, while fostering and forging national and international collaborations. On February 15th, to capstone the year long programme, 80 international women, who form the 2017 cohort, will embark on a month-long expedition to Antarctica.

The training that the participants have received have already produced powerful results spearheaded by the 10 participants living in the UK. For example:

- Cambridge participants Hannah Laeverenz Schlogelhofer and Cathy Sorbara met with local politicians to discuss gender diversity and the impact of Homeward Bound on women in science in the region.
- Beth Christie delivered a talk to a Scottish Regional Economic Summit and has a series of blogs, workshops and public talks lined up post-expedition with Royal Scottish Geographical Society, University of Edinburgh, Outdoor Women's Alliance and businesses.
- Paola Tello Guerrero has given 17 workshops to more than 2000 children and teenagers in remote localities in Colombia about the impacts of climate change in Antarctica.
- Purvi Gupta has delivered leadership talks at engineering and MBA schools across India and Europe. She also blogs actively about topics of sustainability and gender equity.
- Sandra Guzman has participated in key policy-shaping forums such as the One Planet Summit in France, Women's Forum in Mexico and many others as a young scientist and climate activist; she is also leading the campaign "Defensoras" to protect the human rights of women defenders of the planet.
- Adriana empowered a local community in a remote archipelago in Venezuela to demand authorities clean the beaches affected by an oil spill last May.
- Daniela started a collaboration with other Peruvian scientists, to study the epidemiology of the mosquito-borne disease that followed the floods that affected Peru during the coastal El Niño event in 2017.

But, Homeward Bound is not only changing the lives of the women involved, there is a clear and intended ripple effect, which is reaching across their professional networks, local communities and global societies, stimulating and inspiring others, from young children to policy and decision makers.

Homeward Bound is a new approach for tackling climate change by including more women at the leadership table, which will improve our agenda for a more sustainable future.

Here is what the UK participants had to say about how Homeward Bound has affected them:

Maddie Brasier - *University of Liverpool and Natural History Museum.*

"I have always been passionate about science outreach and communication. During my PhD I have worked with the UK Polar Network, Education Through Expeditions, Merseyside STEM and several educational charities. Since joining Homeward Bound I have visited many schools as an individual, hoping to inspire young people to consider science careers by sharing my experiences in research and my fieldwork in Antarctica. My Homeward Bound training coincides with the completion of my PhD and I believe the experience will increase my confidence, communication and networking abilities as I enter the post-doctoral research world."

Beth Christie - *University of Edinburgh, Scotland*

"I am passionate about re-imagining and transforming education I've embraced the leadership opportunity and visibility afforded through Homeward Bound and drawn the ethos and heart of the project - sustainability, leadership, gender equity - into my ongoing teaching, research and outreach work. So far I've been able to share the story of our Antarctic expedition and the wider outdoor environmental and sustainability education message with a range of audiences - policy makers, academics, governmental bodies, primary and secondary schools and charities."

The whole process has been incredibly rewarding, in short it has given me an opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration and a network of support that I might otherwise have struggled to find. I'm truly grateful for this opportunity and excited about what the future holds for myself, the amazing band of women I'm working with and our collective research into the current state and future of our planet!

Purvi Gupta – *McKinsey & Co, London*

"I have always been a strong believer of human potential and the innate desire to make the world a better place for ourselves, our families, communities and the future generations. We all need to over-invest in young minds training to be future doctors, engineers and scientists – especially the women. And, this is what Homeward Bound provided me a platform to do. To share and expose, students in engineering and vocational schools in India, to the ethos of future leadership and diverse world. I myself studied engineering at IIT Madras, India where less than 10% were women. Even today I remember how I never 'felt invited to the party'. I am keen to change that experience for men and women who chose to pursue STEM degrees!"

Sandra Leticia Guzman Luna - *University of York, UK*

"During my participation in the program, I have been attending several high-level meetings and sharing spaces with incredible women that I admire such as Christiana Figueres, ex UNFCCC Secretary, Patricia Espinosa current Secretariat of UNFCCC, as well as many Mexican and global leaders. My story has been covered in radio, TV, newspapers and magazines in Mexico my home country. Having this visibility is an opportunity to raise the awareness about climate change and call for urgent action."

For me Homeward Bound has been an amazing opportunity to increase the awareness of the important role that women have in science, particularly on climate change sciences. As a mother of a two years old baby, my responsibility is to do all that is in my power to leave to my son a more sustainable world, and I truly believe that Homeward Bound is a project that will allow an important collaboration between many women that are committed to have a better world".

Adriana Humanes - Newcastle University, Newcastle

“When I accepted to take part of Homeward Bound I was based in Venezuela, my home country which has had a terrible economic and humanitarian crisis for several years, and as a consequence news in the media are incredibly sad. Venezuelan society is in the need of good news, which explains the great success of my media visibility back home (30 interviews in 6 weeks). Two weeks after the last interview, a massive oil spill occurred in the sea and arrived at Los Roques Archipelago, place where I conducted research for 5 years, and a touristic paradise. Locals were desperate since the most popular beach started to be covered in black oil, and no actions were done by the government to clean the spill. Thanks to my exposure to the media I was able to organize a team of biologist to visit the Archipelago, empowered local people to speak to the authorities and organise the cleaning of the spill. After this experience, I understood the importance of what scientist do and the power of visibility. When institutions stop working and the government does not do the work they are supposed to do, academics are the only support that people count with.”

Hannah Laeverenz Schlogelhofer - University of Cambridge, Cambridge

“Becoming part of Homeward Bound has given me the courage to step up and become more visible within the networks I am a part of. Beyond my academic work, I am a member of Cambridge Contemporary Dance. I am fascinated by dance and love exploring ideas through physical expression. We developed and performed a dance piece taking inspiration from Homeward Bound and the imagery of Antarctica. The piece explores how the themes of ice, water and waves can encourage us to consider leadership as a fluid and flexible quality.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my Homeward Bound journey so far has been reconnecting with my old school. I have given talks, ran workshops and organised an image competition about what nature means to them. I have realised that I can be a role model and that I want to do more outreach to use my experience in science to inspire girls to explore where their curiosity can take them.”

Daniela Lainez del Pozo - University College London.

‘For my PhD I immersed in 2-year ethnographic fieldwork in northern Peru, exploring the challenges to effectively and equitably manage marine protected areas. During fieldwork, my site was hit by an unexpected coastal El Niño event. Floods and landslides were widespread causing losses to hundreds of thousands of people and affecting over a million. This dramatic experience unveiled our incapacity to respond to the complexities of climate change and convinced me of the importance of joining Homeward Bound to work towards building a more resilient society. I applied for the scholarship by Kathmandu Gear for women from countries affected by climate change and was lucky to get it. This further encouraged me to start an epidemiological study with two colleagues to understand the outbreaks of mosquito-borne disease that followed the floods. We’re currently working on the study aiming to propose future prevention measures to the government’.

Cathy Sorbara - Cheeky Scientist Association, Cambridge.

“Since joining, I have been motivated to spread the ethos of Homeward Bound through public engagement in the Cambridge community. This culminated in a joint event with fellow UK participants Hannah and Maddie called ‘An Evening of Empowering Women’, which brought future and current women leaders together to discuss, encourage and inspire. I also had the honor of being the keynote speaker at the London Stock Exchange to discuss gender diversity in the workplace.

Through the support of the Homeward Bound community and the strategic planning and leadership skills I have obtained, I am looking forward to building new collaborations and taking bold steps in my own career to focus on climate change and sustainability.”

Paola Tello Guerrero - ALS Petrophysics, Guildford (Surrey)

“With the purpose to make the most of this opportunity and integrate it with my passions, children and education, I developed a workshop called Antarctica for Braves about the role of women in science and the importance of protecting the most fascinating place on earth: Antarctica. Colombian people and media engaged with my project immediately and I ended up giving 17 workshops over 1 month all around my native country. Visiting remote and poor areas, I had the pleasure to interact with more than 2000 people, mostly children, who wrote letters dedicated to penguins on how they will take care to protect the planet.

To my surprise, I was named one of the most influential personalities of 2017 in Bucaramanga, my city, for my creative approach to education and making people talk about relevant topics like climate change and the role of the women in our society. For a physicist that studies rock properties this has been a life-changing experience and, without having set foot on Antarctica yet, my adventure has already begun,”

The results from Homeward Bound’s first program have shown an immediate impact, with women from all around the world receiving prestigious awards and grants, participating in TEDTalks, being appointed in leadership positions, starting PhDs and being recognised by the United Nations for academic impact. On a personal level, participants have been able to break down gendered career barriers, become better leaders, form constructive working relationships and build greater local and global collaboration.

For more information about the Homeward Bound program, please visit www.homewardboundprojects.com.au.