



Executive summary

1. Introduction

This report evaluates the immediate impact of the GSF2010 National Sixth Form Conference on students' engagement with the theme, *Education Beats Poverty*, and on their confidence to act on their learning. It is based on the analysis of 471 completed 'pre-conference' survey forms and 493 completed 'end-of-conference' evaluation forms. With a total registration count of 543 students, these response rates provide an excellent basis for drawing conclusions about the impact on all GSF students.

2. Key findings

(a) Impact on knowledge and understanding

At the end of the conference, more than 85% of delegates (compared with fewer than 22% beforehand) could cite authoritative statistics for the number of children worldwide missing out on primary education, the proportion of these children living in Africa, and the impact that education would have on the earning power of these children. Furthermore, 98% of students left the conference feeling that they understood the complex reasons why many young people miss out on education. Their written feedback also reflected advances in their understanding of the links between poverty and education. For example:

"I learned that poverty and education are intertwined and that we can do something to tackle both to give others freedom and hope – the two things we most take for granted in our lives."

"This was definitely a life-changing day. I don't think I ever fully realised how much of a difference education can make."

(b) Impact on attitudes, perceptions and confidence to engage others

The majority of GSF students came to the GSF2010 national conference already concerned about global poverty but lacking confidence in their ability to engage others in relation to global issues.

By the end of the conference, 96% of students agreed that global poverty is important issue to them, that their daily actions can have a global impact and that their actions can make a positive difference.

At the close of proceedings, 79% felt more confident to educate other people about the importance of education in beating poverty than they did before the event. By this point, 96% were able to agree that they had confidence to do this (compared with only 41% beforehand).

Furthermore, 82% returned to school or college confident about using the media to highlight global issues (compared with only 28% beforehand). And 76% returned confident about engaging politicians on global issues (compared with only 28% beforehand).

The following quotes provide a taster of many students' pledges to act on their learning:

"I will no longer sit back and read about what is happening and how poverty affects people, but I shall make sure, in everything I do, that I do my part in combating poverty."

"I will educate peers at school and try again to set up a branch of a Global Youth Network called 'Hand in Hand' – I have been re-inspired!"

3. Conclusions

A remarkable 96% of students returned to their school or college confident in launching exciting programmes of peer education, and feeling that global poverty is an important issue to them.

Most students left the conference with a greater awareness and understanding of a wide range of issues relating to the achievement of the second Millennium Development Goal. The most significant impact, however, was the real boost given to the confidence of most students to share their learning with others, including their peers and their political representatives, and to use the media in order to engage an even wider audience.