

Evaluation of the immediate impact of the GSF2011 National Sixth Form Conference (London, 28th June 2011)



Global Student Forum
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Executive summary

1. Introduction

This study analyses the impacts of the GSF2011 National Sixth Form Conference on the 483 students who attended the event on 28th June 2011. It is based on the analysis of 451 completed pre-conference survey forms, 423 completed post-conference forms and further feedback written by students on their badges at the close of the event.

2. Key findings

The results demonstrate that the conference was effective in giving students a good command of authoritative data. A large majority of students were able to cite correct figures in response to all but one of a range of questions presented by the post-conference questionnaire. On average 14% of students correctly answered these questions before the conference, whereas by the end of the event 68% of students were able to do so. Furthermore, 72% of students reported a positive step-change in their understanding of the reasons for high maternal mortality rates by the end of the event (students were asked before and after the conference to indicate the level at which they agreed that they understood the reasons), and feedback from many students reflected a deepened understanding of the scale, complexity, inequity, causes and effects of the maternal health crisis:

'I learned about the devastating effects that death during childbirth can cause for not only the woman and baby, but the family and community.'

'I learned incredible amounts in the subject area that it has a lot more depth than it may first appear.'

'I learned that there is a great deal of inequality between a developed country ... and an LEDC in terms of maternal care.'

Students generally came to the conference with a concern for maternal health issues, as evidenced by the 90% of respondents agreeing with the statement, *'The health of mothers throughout the world is an important issue for me'*, in the pre-conference questionnaire. The majority also came believing they had a role to play, with 77% beforehand believing they could make a difference. Notwithstanding these high baselines, it is clear that these attitudes were strongly reinforced by students' experiences of the conference. Many students left comments on their badges and post-conference questionnaires to the effect the conference had 'opened their eyes' to the scale of an issue to which they had previously given little thought, and to how they could make a difference. This tallies with the extensive quantitative evidence gathered, which demonstrated that by the close of the conference:

- 99% of students agreed that maternal health was an important issue for them
- 96% of students agreed that there are things that they could do to make a difference
- 94% of students agreed that they felt confident to educate others about global maternal health issues with 68% indicating a positive step-change in the extent of their agreement with this (students were asked before and after the conference to indicate the level at which they agreed that they felt confident in doing this)
- 77% of students agreed that they had confidence to talk to politicians about global issues, with 68% indicating a positive step-change
- 87% of students agreed that they had confidence to use the media to engage a wider audience with global maternal health matters, with 60% indicating a positive step-change

3. Conclusions

The GSF2011 National Conference was effective in equipping students with a command of authoritative facts and figures and in deepening students' understanding of the causes, effects and scale of maternal mortality. Furthermore, nearly all students left the conference confident in their ability to share their learning with others, and a very large majority of students also left feeling confident in engaging politicians and sharing their learning with a wider audience through the media. The event also cemented students' belief that they could make a difference and inspired hundreds of pledges, like those cited below, to take action on maternal health issues through the various GSF challenges and opportunities presented by GSF partners.

'I will be holding workshops in schools and creating a video. I will also write an article to spread the message.'

'I will campaign for the rights of women to have access to maternal care - via education and fundraising.'

'I will aim to fulfil each of GSF's five challenges so that I individually can make an impact.'