



Shaftesbury School

Learning from Rwanda

Fiona Cheng grew up wanting to make a difference in global issues - but it took a life-changing day at the Global Student Forum's National Sixth Form Conference in London in 2009 to spur the then sixth form student at Shaftesbury School into action.

"As a young person, I knew about poverty and thought I might make a difference in my own way," said Fiona. "However, the Global Student Forum (GSF) transformed me. Rather than relying on my own power, I was inspired to return to school and tell other students about issues on child poverty."

Fiona and her fellow GSF students led a global citizenship day at the school, becoming teachers for the day and organising a *Ramble for Rwanda* sponsored walk that raised more than £10,000 for Msaada (www.msaada.org), a charity supporting community development projects in Rwanda. Fiona reflected: "I believe GSF is the perfect step forward for young people to realise they have a responsibility to act on world issues and that they can make a difference."

This programme of peer education and peer leadership has become embedded in the life of the school. Within three weeks of attending the GSF2010 National Sixth Form Conference, students had organised another global citizenship day when the Sixth Form became teachers for the day. This involved pupils in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 exploring the barriers to education across the developing world and focusing particularly on how people in Rwanda have rebuilt lives and communities following the genocide of 1994 and the role of education in this. The Sixth Form students also led workshops in local primary schools and a further workshop in which messages were recorded and sent to students in Rwanda. They also met their MP and raised a further £12,000 for Msaada along the way.

Following the GSF2011 National Sixth Form Conference, the school's GSF students planned a similar programme of activities and workshops to explore issues of maternal health.

Each year Shaftesbury students visit Msaada projects in Rwanda, learning more about the challenges facing local communities and how they are overcoming them. A short BBC news report of such a visit in 2011 can be viewed on the BBC website (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-12621483>).