



St Swithun's School

Community Leaders' Forum

Students from St Swithun's School, Winchester organised a community leaders' forum on 7th December 2011, based on the GSF2011 *Dying for Life* theme, to raise awareness of maternal mortality in the developing world.

Inspired by their visit to the Global Student Forum National Sixth Form Conference in June 2011, the girls gave a number of presentations to prominent community leaders who attended the event at St Swithun's.



St Swithun's GSF2011 students

The event was endorsed by Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber, Steve Brine MP, John Micklethwait (Editor of *The Economist*), Jon Sopel (host of the BBC's Politics Show) and Baroness Celia Thomas. Messages were also received from a number of high profile individuals including Dame Judi Dench who said: "I applaud the initiative of the students at St Swithun's and wish them great success with the forum in raising the profile of maternal mortality rates in developing countries."

Among the 80 delegates attending were Lady Joan Appleyard (representing the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire), Anna McNair Scott (Chair of Hampshire County Council), Professor Joy Carter (Vice Chancellor of the University of Winchester) and Peter Bowen-Simpkins, Medical Director of the London Women's Clinic.

Following the event there was widespread support from delegates to support the St Swithun's students in their programme of community engagement around the GSF2011 *Dying for Life* theme. The vision of those assembled is to make Mothers' Day in 2012 a focal point for both awareness-raising and action in Hampshire, with a series of events planned for the weekend of Mothers' Day, including a community forum, a vigil and a special evensong service in Winchester Cathedral on Mothers' Day.

Head girl at St Swithun's, Ali Bentall, reflected on the impact of GSF on the students, observing: "The entire student team has felt a sense of empowerment from this GSF initiative and from having the opportunity to raise awareness amongst key community leaders about the extremely alarming statistics surrounding maternal mortality."

Nick Pollard, co-founder of the Global Student Forum said: "This was an historic event for GSF. It is the first time that students have taken responsibility for organising a campaign to raise awareness amongst community leaders and further promote the *Dying for Life* cause."