

**Attention: News Editor**

**For immediate release**

**FIONA AND HER SCHOOL FRIENDS RAISE £10,000 TO HELP STOP POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**(SHAFTESBURY, DORSET – 27.1.10)**

When it comes to global issues, 18-year-old Fiona Cheng grew up wanting to make a difference - but it took a life-changing day in London last summer to spur her into action.

“As a young person, I knew about poverty and thought I might make a difference in my own way,” said Fiona, from Shaftesbury School in Dorset. “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”.

As a result Fiona and her friends have already raised more than £10,000 for charities working in the developing world.

“After the conference, we ran an assembly at the school,” said Fiona. “Students and staff were very positive. We then led a charity event - all sixth formers becoming teachers for the day! We arranged a fund-raising walk and held workshop activities.

“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. Hopefully, more and more students will do what I did and come along where they can learn first hand from people working on the ground.

Held in Westminster in June each year and featuring multi-media presentations, debates, workshops and live music, GSF regularly attracts more than 500 sixth formers from dozens of schools across England.

It will be rolled out to hundreds more UK schools after additional funding for the next three years was given from Ukaid from the Department for International Development (DFID).

Post-event evaluations from the students are a constant inspiration to founder Nick Pollard.

“Since GSF began in 2005 we have seen enthusiastic young people like Fiona return to their schools and communities and encourage thousands of their peers to get involved in positive action for global change,” said Pollard. “Young people are motivated by their peers.

And in an independent evaluation commissioned by DFID, Professor Alan Penny described GSF as “cost-effective, extremely well conceived and intelligently delivered. Without exception students spoke of the impact that the ideas and information presented at the conference had on them.”

Other schools who are involved in GSF are also involved in fundraising activities.

Students at Shaftesbury School have raised more than £30,000 and now sponsor a school in Rwanda - with students going out and working there.”

This years theme is ‘Education Beats Poverty’ and will be held on Tue 29 June in Westminster, London.

In addition to the national London forum in June, for the first time two regional events are scheduled for October 2010. In 2011, five more regional events are planned along with the first GSF in either Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales.

ENDS

*Release issued for Global Student Forum by Stephen Goddard Associates. More info: 01744 733898 or 07930 198209. GSF website: [www.globalstudentforum.org](http://www.globalstudentforum.org).*

**Notes for editors**

- GSF exists to enable school students of all faiths and none, to think carefully about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues underlying global citizenship, and to help others to do the same.
- GSF was started by educational charity Damaris Trust and is principally funded by UKaid from the Department for International Development. GSF is also sponsored by Christian Aid, The Damaris Trust and World Vision.