

Attention: News Editor

For immediate release

**UNIQUE PEER EDUCATION PROJECT RECEIVES FUNDING
FROM UKAID FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

(SOUTHAMPTON -- 25.2.10) -- A UNIQUE education initiative which inspires and equips Year 12 students to introduce development issues to their peers, will be rolled out to hundreds more UK schools after receiving additional funding from UKaid from the Department for International Development (DFID).

The Global Student Forum, founded in 2005 by social entrepreneurs Nick and Carol Pollard, has already inspired more than 3,500 students at an annual event in London. Participating students return to their schools with a package of educational resources enabling them to lead lessons, assemblies, workshops and other activities on themes ranging from AIDS to child soldiers. Using these resources, peer educators have reached more than 75,000 pupils.

'The best way to reach young people is through young people themselves,' explains Pollard, who initiated GSF as part of Make Poverty History. 'We are delighted to have seen so many young people become passionate about the developing world. Now, with additional funding from DFID as well as loyal sponsors like World Vision and Christian Aid, we aim to inspire many more UK sixth formers.'

The scheme runs a Media Partnership Challenge, presented by Channel 4 News' Jon Snow. Last year's winners, 10 sixth formers from Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School, have produced a three-minute film that will inform their peers about child mortality. Hollie Anderson, whose attitude towards child mortality was changed at the London forum, plays the part of Sarah in the winning film. It contrasts the lifestyle of 'typical teens' in the developed and developing world.

'I'm really excited about the film,' said Hollie. 'I was like Sarah - not really aware of the issues but I've been through a real transformation which has helped me understand her. It is possible to change.'

In an independent evaluation submitted to 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 and/or school assemblies, and/or peer-led activities had on them.'

As a DFID-supported project, GSF was also covered favourably in a PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) Report published in July 2009. The report reviewed DFID's work to build support for development throughout the education system.

Post-event evaluations from the students are an inspiration to the event's organisers. One wrote: 'It has had a huge impact. I have always wanted to do something towards these situations that are so dire. Now I have the inspiration and the knowledge to know exactly how to go about it.'

'Over the next three years we aim to reach 250,000 students through an unfolding national and regional programme,' said GSF founder Nick Pollard. 'Best of all, most of these students will be reached by students themselves who care passionately about the issues they are addressing. And the impact will be all the more profound because of it.'

This year's GSF will be held on Tue 29 June in Westminster, London. The theme is 'Education Beats Poverty'.

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

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