

Global Student Forum (GSF)

The first Global Student Conference took place in 2005 and the focus was MakePovertyHistory. Miss Blewett (Curriculum Leader for EPR) was one of 10 sixth form students who represented Wadebridge School at this conference. Students explored three themes:

- **Aid:** *What is the role and value of aid?*
- **Trade:** *What is the impact of international trade rules?*
- **Debt:** *What could be done about the indebtedness of poor countries?*

Students returned to school as peer educators and delivered assemblies to all year groups to raise awareness. Students continued to attend these conferences and each year focused on a different theme within the overall theme of global injustices:

2006 – HIV/Aids

2007 – Climate Change

2008 – Everybody Wants a Peace

2009 – Child Mortality

2010 – Education

2011 – Maternal Health

2012 – Global Food System

Wadebridge School achieved GSF “Unplugged” Beacon status in 2011-12 and students delivered their own conference in February 2012. Students from Liskeard School and Community College, Launceston College, Helston Community College, Budehaven Community School, Redruth School, Treviglas Community College and Callington Community College were in attendance.

“I had not realised how much I have and how much I take for granted” (student delegate)





GSF is:

- Driven by the belief that poverty is a condition created by an unjust society, denying people access to, and control over, the resources they need to live a full life.
- Motivated by a commitment to supporting poor and marginalised people as they struggle to realise their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.
- A forum which engages multiple perspectives on international development issues ensuring they are heard and reckoned with.
- "Critical thinking at its best" (Tom Franklin, CEO, Think Global)
- Action-oriented, with an emphasis on promoting reasoned engagement with political and business leaders.
- A platform for its partners to support schools and young people in deepening their engagement with international development issues and active global citizenship through their education and campaigning programmes.

Although the conferences in London are no longer running, as a school we decided to focus on Fairtrade and work towards being a Fairtrade School.

Review of Wadebridge School Conference 10th February, 2012 by Alan J Perry

1. The conference was a great success with just under one hundred delegates from eight schools from the region. Planning and organisation were extremely good, and the location in the school hall ensured that all delegates were easily accommodated. Delegates and teachers were warmly welcomed by the Wadebridge 6th Form Team, who were all very smartly attired. Registration was most efficient. Around the hall were tables displaying items of African craft which were being offered for sale. Proceeds are going toward one of the School's charities, the Gideon Anti Aids Foundation (GAAF). GAAF also provided a small gift for each delegate.

2. The conference theme was Dying for Life, and it was organised around the School's three major charities; the Front Line Emergency Equipment Trust – FLEET, the Gideon Anti Aids Foundation – GAAF (Uganda), and support for the School's international school link with the Boulmiougou Evangelical College in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The programme was structured around the work of each.

3. Of significance is that Dying for Life was approached from a local Cornish perspective, locating maternal mortality in the work of the local midwifery service, as well as within an international perspective. The presentation by the senior midwife ensured that a relevant and pertinent local reference point was provided to delegates. It tied in extremely well with the entertaining and informative presentation on the work of FLEET, whilst the two African presenters were able to provide strong well illustrated Ugandan and Burkinian perspectives. The GSF 6th Form Team provided an on-going narrative based on a selection from the GSF materials library.

4. In spite of initial nervousness, the 6th Form Team displayed a confidence and sure-footedness that reflected a mature understanding of the issues involved and the material being presented. Initially comperes tended to be a little 'stiff' but once they realised that messages were getting across; that their audience was engaging with them, they relaxed. Particularly impressive was the way feed-back was handled. Two of the team moved freely between the tables, encouraging delegates to share their findings and comments on the activities. Once presenters realised that delegates were engaging positively with them and were raising issues of their own, the conference took on a dynamic of its own.

5. Retention of the material handled was good as presentations later in the conference revealed. Overall the programme reflected and gave delegates a strong sense of agency.

6. At various points during the conference music was effectively used. Gideon was especially adept at engaging the conference in music making, whilst the song written, played and sung by one of the GSF Team, Tom, was especially lovely. Its refrain: let's show that we love, let's show that we care, let's show that we share raised the roof.

Given that the purpose of the conference was to raise awareness, it can be said that this was achieved very successfully. Discussions with delegates during and after the conference revealed that they were 'charged up' and keen to pass on their learning to peers in their respective schools.

The students were gracious hosts and effective peer educators. Significant is that the team palpably 'owned' the conference. This was evidenced in the way the GSF National Conference was customised by them.

The **customising of the GSF materials was the outstanding feature of the conference**. Locating the message locally, and working out from it, as well as introducing the international perspective, as they did through the two African visitors, was a smart strategy. It **engendered ownership and agency**.

GSF provides an opportunity for 'new' learning and the development of transferable skills; awareness of local community needs; the need for team work; how to work with other people; attending to detail and following up decisions; delegating responsibility and authority; accepting the responsibility of being held to account in a wider context than in the classroom and, more generally, being encouraged to move out of their comfort zone.

Nothing summed up the impact of today's conference than the following, said to the conference by a young male delegate:

"I had not realised how much I have and how much I take for granted"

