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Global Health and Innovation Conference Attendance 2012  
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This past weekend, I attended the 2012 Global Health and Innovation Conference. Over 2,200 people from 50 countries attended the conference and the weekend included a myriad of speakers from the healthcare and social innovation sectors. The biggest take-away from the panelists was the emphasis that was placed on the power of innovation and the empowerment of local communities. I loved to hear public health professionals, businessmen, non-government organizations and doctors working to come up with unique ideas that help communities to help themselves. There were two specific panels in which this was especially highlighted. First, one on Surgery and Medical Ethics discussed the importance of respecting the integrity of a community and developing cultural competency. The second was one on Philanthropy and Generosity for NGOs. This panel discussed moving donors more towards an impact-driven model for donating. Moreover, the conference also included two keynote speakers, Jeffrey Sachs (author, professor and UN representative) and Sasha Dichter (CEO of the Acumen Fund) who were dynamic and informative. Overall, I would suggest this conference to anyone who is interested in the global health field to gain more ideas for undergraduate research, learn from professionals and network with others interested in global health.

From this conference, I learned that I want to focus most specifically on West Africa, issues of child and maternal mortality rates (women's health) and the relationship between donors and recipients of foreign aid (especially between developed and developing countries). These topics are subjects that I want to continue researching and studying during my time at Notre Dame and in my career.

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I was most surprised by the diversity of people I met. Representatives from a number of countries, backgrounds and levels of experience provided me with interactions I would not otherwise have had the chance to have. This was certainly one of the best benefits of the conference: the number of people I met from a variety of backgrounds and the opportunity to hear about their research and knowledge in the field of global health. This invaluable wisdom was an amazing chance for me to see what global health can do and what it can look like in a specific career.