Partnerships between universities and the Third Sector

Conference Item

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Partnerships between Universities and the Third Sector

International week at Laurea Tikkurila
7th March 2011
Dr Mary Larkin
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Leicester
1. What is the third sector?
2. Benefits of working together for third sector organisations and universities
3. Benefits for the third sector
4. Benefits for universities
5. Research partnerships between the third sector and universities
6. Where next for partnerships between universities and the third sector?
WHAT IS THE THIRD SECTOR?

• composed of charities, the voluntary sector, not for profit organisations and social enterprise organisations
• increasingly central to the health and well-being of UK society
• gained recognition in most western countries
• currently enjoys widespread public and political support

“is absolutely central to the life of the nation, with a character and contribution all of its own” David Cameron. Prime Minister

• Office for Civil Society
BENEFITS OF WORKING TOGETHER FOR THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS AND UNIVERSITIES
BENEFITS FOR THE THIRD SECTOR

★ ensures they are up to date with developments in professional training
★ opportunities to influence professional practice
★ develop good relationships with future professionals
★ enhances credibility
★ raises external profile
★ participation in joint promotional events/activities
★ access to academic evidence bases and expertise
BENEFITS FOR UNIVERSITIES

★ source of expertise
★ source of information about policy developments
★ source of contacts
★ help with the development and design of courses
★ contribute to teaching on courses
★ employment information
★ source of student placements as a research partner
RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE THIRD SECTOR AND UNIVERSITIES

★ longest standing are the partnerships between medical research charities and universities
★ take different forms
★ formal recognition with establishment of the Third Sector Research Centre and secondments between the two sectors
RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE THIRD SECTOR AND UNIVERSITIES - BENEFITS

- policy developments
- access to research participants
- research expertise
- sources of funding
- dissemination of findings
- access to resources within each partner organisation
RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE THIRD SECTOR AND UNIVERSITIES - OUTCOMES

- unique sharing of individual and organisational expertise, skills, knowledge, information, resources and networks
- production of rigorous research that makes the best use of available research funds and has the best possible impact
- partner organisations can meet other demands on them
- accords with the ongoing drive to involve the third sector and making the best use of limited resources in an era of public spending cuts
WHERE NEXT FOR PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND THE THIRD SECTOR?

• partnerships do not always work and do not solve all problems!
• cuts in public spending could undermine these partnerships
• the challenge now is to ensure that public spending cuts are not a barrier to, but an incentive to maintain and develop partnerships between universities and the third sector
CONTACT ME!

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