

## NEWS RELEASE:

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# Heard about Third? 'Question Time' – the third sector and our future generations

**On Wednesday 17 March over 100 young people will gather at the University of Birmingham to learn about, and voice their opinions, on the third sector. This event is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council as part of their Festival of Social Science.**

'Heard about Third?' is an event being hosted by the Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) and Envision – a national youth empowerment charity. The young people will take part in a 'Question Time' debate and master classes with a wide range of third sector organisations including Oxfam, the Learning Curve, Continental Stars FC, and St. Basils. The young people will increase their understanding of the third sector and its unique and important role in society.

Peter Alcock, Director of TSRC, said, *'We want to help young people increase their understanding of the Third Sector and the role it plays in society. Young people have an important part to play in the shaping of our social world. Events like these help them to develop a broader awareness of civil society, and give them greater opportunity to have their voices heard, now and in the future.'*

England National Football Team Manager, Fabio Capello has expressed his support for the event, he stated *'It is important that charities like Envision and the TSRC are recognised for the hard work they put into ensuring young people's lives change for the better. The skills you aim to develop in young people are ones that can be taken into all walks of life'* he hopes that the event will *'generate a number of positive talking points for the panel which can be used to ensure more people engage with your positive messages in the future.'*

The young people attending are currently being supported by Envision on a weekly basis to design and implement their own youth-led community projects and campaigns around social and environmental issues. The young people will use the knowledge gained through their own Envision projects and during the workshops to question a panel of experts about the third sector. The third sector organisations will also share their expertise and skills giving advice on areas ranging from campaigning and marketing to disaster management and media.

Information gathered throughout the project will also be used to inform research at TSRC, helping them to learn about young people's opinions and knowledge of the sector.

The 'Question Time' panel has an impressive line up of practitioners, policy makers and academics that work in and around the third sector: academic Nicholas Deakin who is

currently Vice-Chair of the Baring Foundation and also chairs the ESRC Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy; Sara Llewelin, Chief Executive of the Barrow Cadbury Trust; Birmingham's Chief Fire Officer, Vijith Randeniya; SMK Young Activist of the Year 2009 Barbara Soetan, the founding member and Director of Programmes and Strategy for Elevation Networks; and Michael Fairclough Head of Community and Campaigns for the Cooperative Group.

Programme Manager for Envision Birmingham, Andrew Ridge said, '*The young people we work with are passionate about a range of environmental and social issues, it is great that they are getting the opportunity to interact with organisations and key players that work in these areas.*'

**-Ends-**

**Notes to editors:**

**For more information, photographs or to arrange an interview please contact:**

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The event will run from 9.00 to 15.30 on March 17th at the Guild of Students; University of Birmingham

**Envision**

- Envision provides young people with the opportunity to make a difference. The charity was established in 2000 by four young people who wanted to challenge the stereotype that young people are apathetic and disengaged.
- Today Envision supports 16-19 year olds from 100 schools and colleges in Greater London, Birmingham and Leeds, helping over 3000 young people every year to design their own local community projects tackling issues ranging from street crime to climate change.

**Third Sector Research Centre**

- TSRC is a national research centre, dedicated to advancing knowledge of the third sector. The Centre engages with policy makers, practitioners, and other academics to ensure its research is relevant and creates impact. TSRC is hosted by the Universities of Birmingham and Southampton. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Office of the Third Sector, and the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

**ESRC Festival of Social Sciences**

- The ESRC Festival of Social Science takes place from 12 to 21 March 2010. Events across the UK showcase some of the country's leading social science research and how it influences our social economic and political lives.