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Butler, MJR, Brookes, N, (2013) The Transformation Project: Transferring Knowledge to Transform Project Management Practice

ESRC End of Award Report, RES-189-25-0025. Swindon: ESRC.



ESRC End of Award Report

For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject, to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. We reserve the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

Grant Reference	RES- 189-25- 0025		
Grant Title	The TRANSFORMATION Project: Transferring knowledge to transform project management practice		
Grant Start Date	1 September 2009	Total Amount Expended:	£124, 731-14
Grant End Date	31 July 2011, with an exceptional extension to 29 February 2012 to complete ongoing collaboration		
Grant holding Institution	Aston University		
Grant Holder	Dr. Michael JR Butler		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
	Aston Business School	m.j.r.butler@aston.ac.uk	
		Telephone	
		07919 926362	
Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	
Professor Naomi Brookes		Faculty of Engineering, Leeds University	

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1. Non-technical summary

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by us to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. *[Max 250 words]*

The practice of project management has a big impact on performance and the lives of customers and service users – the cost of project failure can be immense, whether measured by money, inconvenience or personal injury. The TRANSFORMATION Project took new knowledge created by Aston Business School (ABS) in the fields of change management, actor networks and social networks, and transformed the knowledge into two new and innovative toolsets: The Receptivity for Change and Actor Analysis Toolsets.

The Project worked with a core group of eight organisations from all sectors to co-produce the toolsets, supported by a workbook and case studies: Birmingham Local Education Partnership, NHS Warwickshire, Playgroup (London advertising agency), South Staffordshire plc, Warwickshire Police, Associated British Foods plc, DHL Supply Chain and the Association for Project Management. The outputs have reached 59,817 individuals. The receptivity toolset has currently been completed by 200 people, from a variety of organisations, including Birmingham Futures, the European Industrial Research Management Association (EIRMA) and L’Oreal. The toolset is part of ABS’ Centre for Executive Development Masterclass Series (a 60 second video, a 60 minute Masterclass and a book chapter). Warwickshire Police measurably and dramatically improved community safety. International presentations included a TEDx talk (Great Wall, China).

The Project has a dedicated web site (www.thetransformationproject.co.uk) with 6752 global hits (this is **in addition** to the 59,817, total reach **66,569**). It is thriving. Having used action research (by trialling the products in organisations), the Project is contributing to underlying theories on which the toolsets are based.

2. Project overview

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to us. *[Max 200 words]*

The aim of The TRANSFORMATION Project is to create a suite of management tools using knowledge generated by previous research council funded investigations and to use these toolsets to transform project management practice. The toolsets focused on receptivity for change, actor network theory and social network analysis in a project management context.

The Project pursued a series of linked objectives. The original objectives outlined in the proposal to the ESRC were:

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1. To create a suite of management tools based on social network analysis, actor network theory and receptivity that can be used in a cross-sectoral project management milieu in the public sector and the voluntary sector using the expertise of other participating project partners.
2. Using an 'action research' approach, to make interventions using these tools in three exemplar public and voluntary sector organisations (Warwickshire Police, Network Rail and the ss Great Britain Trust) in a series of linked investigations.
3. To learn from the action research interventions in order to make the suite of tools more effective knowledge transfer mechanisms and to contribute to the tools' underlying theoretic provenance.
4. To disseminate these tools and promulgate their use to impact on the general population of project practitioners.

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with us. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder's institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. *[Max 200 words]*

No changes were made to the funding, though, after agreement with the ESRC, The TRANSFORMATION Project was extended to collect more impact data, due to the relevance of the toolsets to new project partner organisations. The grant ended on **31 July 2011** (having stated on **1 September 2009**), with an exceptional extension to **29 February 2012** to complete ongoing collaboration with key project partners.

The project staffing did change. Dr. Naomi Brookes moved to Loughborough University, then Leeds University, to take up Chair positions, which meant she could only take part minimally at the start of the Project for three months.

The original project partners were: Warwickshire Police, Network Rail and the ss Great Britain Trust. Due to changing organisational need, Network Rail and ss Great Britain Trust withdrew, but still receive the research findings through the Project e-zine and other forms of communication. They were replaced by new fully participating partners, which include: Birmingham Local Education Partnership, NHS Warwickshire, Playgroup and South Staffordshire plc.

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c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. [*Max 500 words*]

The research strategy is founded on a co-production approach, underpinned by a commitment to collaborative working between The TRANSFORMATION Team and the project partners.

The TRANSFORMATION Project also adopted action research. This involves researchers stimulating interventions in a client's 'real life' situation and using the results to change client practices and their understanding. The interventions result in performance improvements and develop theory that will be of use to practice.

The Team implemented the Project in the following way:

Phase 1 (September 2009): initial set up activities including finding replacement project partners, appointing staff and hosting a launch event (1 October 2009) so that all stakeholders could familiarise themselves with the Project's aims and objectives. An external designer was commissioned to build the web site and provide training for the core team to maintain it. Contacts database established.

Phase 2 (October 2009-December 2010): in order to create a suite of management tools, a series of five workshops were held at Aston Business School with the core project partners. Workshop 1 (28/29 October 2009) briefed participants about the knowledge generated by previous research, related the theory to their project management contexts and the remit for the toolsets was agreed. Web site launched. The first version of The Actor Analysis Toolset was presented in Workshop 2 (10 December 2009), leading to feedback for product development. Workshop 3 (17 February 2010) gave the project partners the opportunity to share their experiences of toolset implementation and discuss ideas from the previous Workshops. The first version of The Receptivity for Change Toolset was evaluated in Workshop 4 (11 May 2010). Workshop 5 (17 November 2010) captured all the project findings achieved so far. A bound hard-copy of the materials was given to participants, which was uploaded prior to the Workshop on the web site. A copy was sent to the ESRC. The two toolsets were demonstrated and linked to a workbook and case studies depicting project partner experiences of toolset implementation.

In parallel, site visits were made to the project partners to collect documentary data and resolve any issues with toolset implementation, leading to further development. Three national conferences were held at Aston University to build awareness of the initial findings. Feedback on participant experiences was sought at all stages.

Phase 3 (January 2011-February 2012): national and international dissemination of the products and services began. This facilitated further testing of the toolsets as a mechanism of delivering project and change management. More data was collected and analysed to understand the practice and theory of how to co-produce knowledge. Grant applications made to sustain the Project.

Phase 4 (March 2012-Ongoing): further funding has been found to maintain the momentum

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of the Project. Conference papers will be converted into journal articles.

Ethical issues included seeking permission to either film or voice record all the sessions and internal meetings so that the innovation process was captured and is a learning resource for new project partners. Permissions were also sought for published material (eg case studies).

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on the ESRC website. Any future research plans should also be identified. *[Max 500 words]*

1. The TRANSFORMATION Pathway integrates with existing project management practices. Its innovation is that it prioritises the concept and definition phases so that project managers do not rush to implementation.
2. Two toolsets have been co-created, The Receptivity for Change and Actor Analysis Toolsets, through:
 - 5 workshops: core group of 8 organisations involving about 20 project managers at each workshop (100 participants)
 - 1 practice group: 3 practitioners and 3 academics
 - Site visits to core group of organisations
3. The Pathway and Toolsets have reached 59,817 individuals:
 - 13 YouTube videos in The TRANSFORMATION Film Channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/TRANSFORMATIONFilm>): 3958 global views
 - 6 keynote sessions: 200 participants
 - 4 practitioner articles: 27,000 readership of Project Manager (appeared twice, 54,000 readers in total)
 - 3 conferences (project and general managers): 90 participants
 - 3 e-zines: 275 on distribution list (1275 individuals in total)
 - 2 project managers from core group gave guest undergraduate lectures: 140 undergraduates in total
 - 1 LinkedIn Group (http://www.linkedin.com/groups/TRANSFORMATION-Project-2625272?gid=2625272&trk=hb_side_g): 152 members
 - 2 reports (Deputy Chief Constable, Warwickshire Police, 8 March 2011, and CeDo, manufacturer, 2 May 2012)
4. International dissemination of learning captured in presentations:
 - Osaka Prefecture University, Osaka, Japan, 15 June 2011
 - Sofia University, Tokyo, Japan, 13 June 2011
 - TEDx, Great Wall, China, 3 June 2011 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjtInmJXkQY>) – 955 global views
 - L’Oreal Development Programme, Paris, France, 2 May 2011

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- European Industrial Research Management Association (EIRMA), Innovation Sub-Section, Paris, France, 17 February 2011. Subsequently invited to be a member and work with Research and Development Managers (7-8 June 2012)
5. Marketability of products and services being tested via Aston Business School's Centre for Executive Development and in the Principal Investigator's business engagement.
6. Consulted by Central Office of Information, a government agency bringing together learning from across public services. The Government Communication Network has taken over its activities (1 April 2012).
7. All materials and products branded. Uniform style templates routinely used. Contacts database created.
8. New web site www.thetransformationproject.co.uk acts as hub for the exchange of information and ideas, linking organisational and university networks. A total of 6752 hits received September 2009-November 2012. Repository of transformation materials created: a transformation pathway, two management toolsets, a supporting workbook and three case studies (one in preparation).
9. Team expanded from one to fourteen:
 - 5 product researchers (PhD students)
 - 5 applied researchers (MSc dissertation students)
 - 4 members of Project Advisory Board (senior managers)
10. Academic dissemination of learning captured in:
 - Book chapter (highlighted in): Butler, M.J.R., Bezant-Niblett, K. and Caine, K. (2011). Decision-Making, in Butler, M.J.R. and Rose, E. (eds) *Introduction to Organisational Behaviour*, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), London, pp 237-267
 - Book chapter: Butler, M.J.R. (2012). Complexity and Receptivity, in Rathbone, C.L.H. (ed.) *Ready for change? Through turbulence to reformation and transformation*, Palgrave Macmillan
 - 3 international conference presentations: one at European Group of Public Management, Bucharest, Romania, September 2011; two at International Research Symposium on Public Management, Dublin, Ireland, April 2011

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e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative's objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. *[Max. 200 words]*

1. The TRANSFORMATION Project contributed to two ESRC Capacity-Building Workshops, led by Professors Richard Thorpe (Leeds University Business School) and Mike Wallace (Research Development Initiative):
 - Butler, M.J.R. (2011). Exchanging Knowledge to Transform Project Management Practice, Engaged Business Research for Impact, ESRC/EPSRC, Advanced Institute of Management Research (AIM) and British Academy of Management (BAM), London, UK, 23 May.
 - Butler, M.J.R. (2012). The Practical Challenges of Connecting with Research Users, Developing Institutional Capacity for Engaged Research, ESRC/EPSRC AIM and BAM, Cardiff University, UK, 10 September.

These high profile events disseminate learning within UK higher education.

2. The Project successfully applied for additional funding from the West Midlands' ESRC EREBUS Cluster, giving it financial sustainability and the capacity to attract high quality researchers and project partners:
 - Case Award: 'Evaluating Top Project Team Formation and Development for Business Transformation and Profitability at British Sugar'. The research will develop a toolset for top project teams, linking transformation to the emerging organisational cognitive neuroscience agenda
 - Research Voucher: 'Improving Customer Care in South Staffordshire plc Group Services IT – Using The Receptivity for Change Toolset to Drive and Track Change'. The voucher will embed a new service culture

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3. Early and anticipated impacts

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on the Research Outcomes System (ROS). This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. [*Max. 400 words*]

The TRANSFORMATION Project has influenced the practices of project managers and their teams, especially with the West Midlands cluster of core project partners, with evidence of increasing national and international diffusion. Feedback from the second conference captures the Project's wider impact: 'They translated into real life innovative ideas about change management – a practical approach. Excellent.'

To evidence this comment, within the West Midlands, the Project works with the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Department, Warwickshire Police (WP). The ANPR Manager was instrumental in the co-production of two toolsets and used them to overcome internal funding blockages, so that ANPR implementation could take place. During 2011, the Nuneaton scheme identified 289,573 vehicles of interest to the police and the Coventry Airport scheme 342,625. These alerts led to arrests, prosecutions and vehicle seizures, contributing towards achieving WP's vision, 'Protect our communities from harm'. The schemes have provided vital evidence for high profile cases including a murder, a rape, a section 18 wounding, a major fraud, a million pound theft and armed robberies.

Personally, the ANPR Manager was inspired by the Project to start a degree. Professionally, he promoted the Project success within WP, leading to a presentation to the Deputy Chief Constable and roll out to evaluate the Core Leadership Development Programme and the Business Intelligence Development Department using The Receptivity for Change Toolset.

The success led to the diffusion of the receptivity toolset across the West Midlands cluster eg it has been used longitudinally three times to help South Staffordshire plc's Group IT Services Department to improve customer service – it was faced with outsourcing. The results monitored the impact of the change initiative ie resistance to change decreased significantly, due to senior managers reflecting on the communication of their vision and how they led change. The managers were re-assured that they were on the right path.

This impact evidence led to the receptivity toolset being used in companies beyond our core project partners, which manufacture in the West Midlands and Europe eg CeDo. It also uses the toolset longitudinally to assess their readiness for and progress with change. Harrow Schools International (Asia) adopted learning from the Project in their schools.

An underpinning philosophy of the Project is to enhance student employability by aligning their interest in problem-based learning with the needs of project partners eg an MSc student was recruited by NPower because of working with the Project (interview feedback).

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b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. *[Max. 200 words]*

As we work with more organisations across sectors and countries, we realise many do not have objective performance improvement indicators – this is a surprise. The Receptivity for Change Toolset is used with project teams to measure change readiness and implementation success eg longitudinal data is being collected from South Staffordshire plc to monitor how continuous improvement can be sustained. We have so far collected data for eighteen months. Toolset data is supported by interview data with twenty key actors. In the public sector, we are working with The Arden Cluster to analyse key ‘working life’ data and the results from twenty interviews, to ensure their Transformation Programme is effective during sustained NHS reorganisation and budgetary restraint.

The Project was asked by the Central Office of Information to contribute to their review of the behavioural considerations of managing change to improve policy formulation and implementation. The review still has to be published.

Five PhD students are associated with the Project and their research will improve products and services. The research will theoretically contribute to understanding the process and practice of transformational change (including project management).

Funding applications are planned to sustain the development of evidence-based management tools for performance improvement.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.

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4. Declarations

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed.

Please note hard copies are **not** required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick **one** statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section (this should be an image of your actual signature).

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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ii) Submissions to the Research Outcomes System (ROS)

Output and impact information has been submitted to the Research Outcomes System. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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or

This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to the Research Outcomes System as soon as they become available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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iii) Submission of Datasets

Datasets arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the Economic and Social Data Service.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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or

Datasets that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the Economic and Social Data Service has been notified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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or

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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