

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Sheffield</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 19 - Business and Management Studies</p>
<p>Title of case study: 'CLEAR IDEAS': Increasing innovation skills to improve the delivery of public services</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The public sector is facing unprecedented demands to improve the quality of services with reduced budgets. The 'CLEAR IDEAS' (CI) innovation development model has been used by public sector organisations since October 2010 to enhance their innovativeness in dealing with these challenges. Evidence shows significant improvements in the innovation skill resources of CI training workshop participants, leading to notable organisational impacts including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of more cost-effective and efficient adult social care services in Sheffield City Council, leading to an estimated saving of £1.7m; • adoption of CI methodology for driving continuous improvement strategy in South Yorkshire Police; • more cost-effective fitting of smoke alarms and development of new services aimed at improving safety and citizenship of young people by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue; • improved health care practice in an NHS Foundation Trust; and • creation of a more business-inclusive Local Nature Partnership by South Yorkshire Forest.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The CLEAR IDEAS innovation development methodology translates research findings on effective innovation into improved organisational practice by systematically developing the skills of employees and managers to both better generate (I.D.E.A.S. steps) and implement (C.L.E.A.R. steps) new ideas in the workplace. Its core components are based on findings and insights from a series of research projects undertaken by Dr Kamal Birdi, whilst Research Fellow and Lecturer at Sheffield University's ESRC Centre for Organisation and Innovation (COI) and Sheffield University Management School between 1999 and the present. His initial research questions involved: a) investigating the major barriers and facilitators of organisational innovation; b) identifying the knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes required by managers and employees to deal with these challenges in order to be a successful innovator; and c) evaluating the effectiveness of training/development activities in this area. The need for the research at the time was driven by the increasing Government emphasis at the start of the 21st Century on enhancing innovation as a means of driving economic growth. Dr Birdi therefore led or contributed to a number of research activities which highlighted major factors contributing to innovation success.</p> <p>Between 2000 and 2002 (ESRC-funded) he contributed to the design, data collection and write up of a University of Sheffield study of 500 UK organisations outlining the consequences and content of major innovations [R1]. This study highlighted the multidimensional nature of innovation and influenced the choice of IDEAS and CLEAR factors. During 2003 and 2004 (AIM/DTI-funded) Birdi contributed to two literature reviews for the Department of Trade and Industry's 2003 UK Innovation Review. He co-authored the first narrative review [R2] on factors influencing organisational innovation, writing the chapter on intra-organisational factors such as employee motivation, skills, creativity training and the role of leadership due to his work psychology expertise (other co-authors were Dr David Denyer, Cranfield Institute of Management; Prof Andy Neely, London Business School; Dr Kamal Munir and Dr Jaideep Prabhu, both University of Cambridge). He then contributed to the analysis and writing up of a systematic literature review [R3] focused on the factors influencing the uptake of new practices in organisations (led by Dr Michel Leseure, Aston Business School; other contributors were Dr Joachim Bauer, Leeds University Business School and the aforementioned Denyer and Neely). These reviews showed that whilst innovative ideas can be plentiful, internal influences within organisations can prevent these being implemented successfully and hence directly influenced the choice of the CLEAR implementation factors in the model.</p> <p>Over the last eleven years (ESRC COI funded) Birdi also led Sheffield colleagues in conducting multiple studies evaluating the impact of creativity training in organisations [R4, R5]. These showed</p>

that multiple factors influence the implementation of skills from their generation, that different types of courses have different impact and there is a need to combine the strength of several approaches. These findings influenced the choice of IDEAS and CLEAR factors. Linked to this research, between 2002 and 2006 (University of Sheffield funded) Birdi supervised a PhD student evaluating the impact of FutureFocus, a laboratory facility designed to promote innovative thinking. An empirical paper was subsequently developed and published on this research [R6]. This research further supported the choice of both IDEAS and CLEAR factors.

The above research strongly suggested there was a need to invent a new *innovation* training model which developed the skills of employees and managers to tackle both the creative and implementation aspects involved. At the time, creativity training provision focused predominantly on idea generation only. Birdi felt that the new model needed to be a simple and systematic vehicle in order to make it memorable, easily applicable and to keep its accessibility as wide as possible. Thus, he created in 2005 the CLEAR IDEAS model, an acronym where each letter stands for an important aspect that needs to be considered during the innovation process. The IDEAS (Illuminate, Detail, Erupt, Assess, Select) part involves the idea generation phase and builds on creative problem-solving research [R4]. On the other hand, the CLEAR aspect (Commit, Lead, Engage, Align, Review) is unique to the literature as it encourages participants to develop a plan for the implementation of their ideas and is based on key lessons evidenced from his own and others' research.

3. References to the research

- R1. Totterdell, P., Leach, D., Birdi, K., Clegg, C., & Wall, T. (2002). An investigation of the contents and consequences of major organizational innovations. International Journal of Innovation Management, 6, 343-368. doi: [10.1142/S1363919602000641](https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919602000641)
- R2. Birdi, K., Denyer, D., Munir, K., Neely, A. & Prabhu, J. (2003). Post Porter: Where Does The UK Go From Here? Summary report from AIM Management Research Forum. London: AIM.
- R3. Leseure, M.J., Bauer, J., Birdi, K., Neely, A.D. & Denyer, D. (2004). Adoption of Promising Practices: A Systematic Review of the Evidence. International Journal of Management Reviews, Vol. 5-6, pp. 169-190, September 2004. doi: [10.1111/j.1460-8545.2004.00102.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-8545.2004.00102.x)
- R4. Birdi, K. (2007). A lighthouse in the desert? Evaluating the effectiveness of creativity training on employee innovation. Journal of Creative Behavior, 41(4), 249-270 doi: [10.1002/j.2162-6057.2007.tb01073.x](https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2162-6057.2007.tb01073.x)
- R5. Birdi, K., Leach, D. & Magadley, W. (2012). Evaluating the impact of TRIZ creativity training: an organizational field study. R&D Management, 42(4), 315-326. doi: [10.1111/j.1467-9310.2012.00686.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9310.2012.00686.x)
- R6. Magadley, W. & Birdi, K. (2012). Two sides of the innovation coin? An empirical investigation of the relative correlates of idea generation and idea implementation. International Journal of Innovation Management, 16(1), 1-28. doi: [10.1142/S1363919611003386](https://doi.org/10.1142/S1363919611003386)

4. Details of the impact

Development of a training resource for the public sector: Sheffield University Management School's impact strategy seeks to develop routes to impact by working with regional and national government agencies and umbrella organisations to maximise the dissemination of its research. To this end, since 2010 Birdi et al have focused on enhancing the leadership and innovation skills, attitudes and behaviours of public sector managers in the local South Yorkshire area through the Sheffield City Region Leaders Programme (SCRLP). This programme was developed collaboratively by the University of Sheffield (UoS) and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) with the aim of improving public service delivery in the Sheffield City Region. The programme comprises five modules, two led by academics at SHU and three led by academics at the UoS. Birdi designed and conducts a two-day, 10-credit UoS module on innovation built around the Clear Ideas (CI) model, where participants apply the model to real-life problems facing them. The evaluation data collected from the workshops as well as new research has been used to continuously refine and improve the CI methodology. The CI model has also been used with members of national bodies such as the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (2012), the Scottish Government (2011, 2013) and the British Psychological Society (2010-2013).

Since September 2010, participants in the CLEAR IDEAS workshops have included 216 public

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sector managers and employees from: seven Councils (Sheffield, Barnsley, Rotherham, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire, Doncaster and Chesterfield); NHS institutions (e.g. Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Blood and Transplant service and Sheffield Care Trust); South Yorkshire Police; South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue; three educational institutions (Sheffield College, University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University); South Yorkshire Forest; and Sheffield Homes. CLEAR IDEAS has therefore reached many of the major significant public sector bodies in the Sheffield City Region.

Evidence of impact on enhancing innovation resources and skills of employees: Analysis of questionnaire data from 181 workshop participants has shown statistically significant improvements in all targeted innovation-related competencies (e.g. generation of new ideas, planning for implementation). The SCRLP evaluation reports also showed that 98% agreed/strongly agreed that the CLEAR IDEAS model was a useful way of dealing with problems and 99% agreed/strongly agreed that the workshop was relevant for their job need. Therefore, managers have used new innovation resources to improve their professional practice [S1]. The SCRLP itself was Highly Commended in the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) Awards 2011, with the impact part of the application focused on the CI module [S1].

Downstream impacts of the CLEAR IDEAS training framework

The examples below demonstrate how significant organisational impacts have been achieved by application of the CLEAR IDEAS principles to a work-related problem in either workshop/group activity formats with colleagues or individually, using them to structure their development of a new initiative.

Organisational efficiency and economic impact in adult social care: Based on the principles learned whilst attending CI workshops in 2010 and 2011, Sheffield City Council (SCC) managers in the Communities Portfolio used monthly 'Thinking Aloud' sessions in 2011 to embed regular time for innovative thinking and application of CLEAR IDEAS approaches. The monthly sessions contributed to the development of a new and more efficient Community Access and Reablement Service (CARS) for Sheffield aimed at providing support for older people and those with physical or sensory impairment. The basis for CARS arose from application of CI to the challenge of saving costs by reducing demand for adult social care services. In the twelve months after its implementation in July 2012, adult referrals requiring formal assessment for social care needs fell from 80% to 31%, due to improved efficiency of the new system. The new system is also estimated by management to have saved SCC £1.7M in the first year [S2]. The Head of Improvement and Development, Communities Portfolio, Sheffield City Council stated: *"It is really clear that there is a direct link between the ideas that were generated in the CLEAR IDEAS session and the significant reablement programme that is now in full swing and making a very significant impact on reducing assessment costs and waiting times and diverting people effectively from adult social care."* [S2]

Influence on planning and management of services and on continuous improvement training in the police service: Following positive experiences from their SCRLP participants, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) have written into their continuous improvement strategy document that the CLEAR IDEAS model has been adopted as a supporting toolkit from 2013 onwards [S3]. This involves training officers, staff and service improvement groups in all four of the SYP districts in the use of the CI methodology so that this can be used throughout the organisation. To date, 30 employees of differing ranks in Rotherham district have taken part in workshops with the aim of developing innovative methods of reducing burglaries, vehicle crime and promoting more efficient working. The progress of the ensuing initiatives is being monitored. For example, one group is now working on implementing the 'Pawn Shop Partnership', a new strategy for reducing the second-hand market for stolen goods.

Development of more cost-effective smoke alarm fitting: South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) used creative thinking techniques introduced on the CI workshop to improve their smoke alarm fitting by adopting a simple and effective solution (Velcro pads) to solve the problem of dust and alarms falling off ceilings in 2010. This solution overcame an organisational health and safety issue surrounding the fixing of alarms to ceilings containing asbestos and reduced the need for trained individuals to re-fit alarms that had been previously poorly fitted. SYFR has fitted approximately 19,000 smoke alarms in the last three years and the reduction in materials alone was estimated to save 3p per alarm fitting [S4].

New resources to improve road safety and citizenship of young people: SYFR participants realised that by using the CI techniques in a workshop the efficiency of road safety communication to schoolchildren could be improved by pooling cross-agency resources. The resulting initial 'One Message' project was piloted in Sheffield primary schools in 2011 and indicated the viability of the approach. This then led to them being given a budget of £98k from South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership to commission a new integrated road safety education package. The education package centres on an interactive and hard-hitting video presentation entitled 'Collision' which was launched on 30th Jan 2013. SYFR are now working with local schools to ensure that as many young people in the county as possible can see the film, with the aim of improving road safety in the future [S4]. Furthermore, another new educational package called 'Routes 4 U' aimed at 14-16 year olds has been developed by SYFR with the Open College Network. This arose from an initial CI workshop on how to deal better with the anti-social behaviour of NEETs (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training). This initiative is designed to help young people learn teambuilding, citizenship and employability skills and was launched in South Yorkshire in February 2013 and to date has been delivered in four locations with more lined up [S4].

Improved health care practice: A Medicine Information Pharmacist in Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust noticed problems with poor patient compliance and drug administration with a gastro-oesophageal reflux medication. Using the CI workshop techniques he was able to influence the choice and adoption of a different drug in 2012, reportedly leading to more accurate administration, dosage and patient compliance. As he says "... by and large it is has been a success... the implementation of the change went a lot better than I thought with over 90% of patients changed over to the new medicine within 2 months... There was a predicted financial saving for the Trust (c. £10k per annum), and these savings seemed to have been realised despite a 15% increase in prescribing of the new medicine. Other hospitals around the country asked for a copy of our guidelines with a view to implementing the same innovation..."[S5].

Changed strategic approach to environmental planning: South Yorkshire Forest (SYF) is responsible for managing over 200 square miles of rural and urban landscapes and a million people live within its boundary. It was tasked with developing a Local Nature Partnership to bring about improvements in the local natural environment. The SYF Director used the CI approach from 2011 onwards in a series of meetings with partners in order to expand membership to include the private sector and therefore provide a more widely inclusive and effective partnership than originally envisioned. He says "*The CLEAR IDEAS model gave us a framework to look carefully at strategic development and business development opportunities, and not just to think in terms of usual projects. The Commit, Lead and Engage aspects were extremely valuable tools in helping to identify the economic benefits of our (collective) work and to develop productive new partnerships, particularly with the private sector. This has proved invaluable because the firmer focus on jobs and growth has placed a much clearer emphasis on working with business sector partners. The LNP is quite a long strategic development process...but has already delivered more efficient working through service integration.*" [S6].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1. Sheffield City Region Leadership Programme Evaluation Report: The Story So Far, July 2012. This shows evidence of application of the CLEAR IDEAS module within participants' organisations (p. 44, 48, 54; 75; 79) and helps corroborates the SCRLP workshop statistics provided in section 4.
- S2. Notes from Interviews and emails with Head of Improvement and Development, Communities Portfolio, Sheffield City Council. This corroborates the impact in Sheffield City Council.
- S3. Statement from District Commander, which corroborates the impact in South Yorkshire Police.
- S4. Notes from Interview with Head of Operational Support Services, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue. This corroborates the impact in South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue.
- S5. Statement from Medicine Information Pharmacist, Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust. This corroborates the impact in Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust.
- S6. Statement from Director, South Yorkshire Forest. This corroborates the impact in Sheffield South Yorkshire Forest.