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 the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Reference</th>
<th>RES-062-23-1549</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Title</td>
<td>New Urbanisms, New Citizens: Children and Young People’s Everyday Life and Participation in Sustainable Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Start Date</td>
<td>01/05/09</td>
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<td>Grant End Date</td>
<td>30/04/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Amount Expended:</td>
<td>£647,681.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grantholding Institution</td>
<td>University of Warwick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Holder</td>
<td>Professor Pia Christensen</td>
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<tr>
<th>Grant Holder's Contact Details</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Email</th>
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Co-Investigators (as per project application): Institution

- Dr Peter Kraftl, Reader  
  University of Leicester, UK
- Dr John Horton, Associate Professor  
  University of Northampton, UK
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 project explored what it is like to be a child/young person growing up in the new ‘sustainable’ communities that have emerged around England over the last decade or so. The project focussed on their experiences and use of local spaces, and their sense of belonging and participation in their community. Children in four new communities (as well as diverse adult stakeholders) were interviewed, led guided community walks, and drew maps. They carried GPS tracking devices recording their everyday mobility patterns and took part in a mobile phone survey. The project explored what it is like for residents to move into a newly created community and how their experiences could be drawn upon in the planning and design of such places. In particular how the engagement of ‘young citizens’ in forming vital communities could be drawn upon and encouraged. The findings have been taken up by regional planners and introduced to policymakers and planners across England. There were also some surprises: contrary to the popular image, the children walked and cycled a lot around their communities (and were not likely to spend most time indoors or travel by car); it showed how new street designs such as ‘shared surfaces’ were popular but also considered dangerous by the children; and it showed that ‘sustainability design’ (in drainage schemes and in energy efficient houses) were not always understood or popular with either children or parents. Finally, it revealed how traditional social tensions (including social class and housing tenure) re-emerged in new communities.

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 overarching aim of the NUNC project was to investigate the relationship between sustainable community regeneration, children’s experiences and mobility in new urban environments, and their participation and citizenship in planning and design. The significant societal question underlying the project was: if children and young people participate as citizens in the development of their communities will this contribute to achieving sustainable ‘liveable’ communities for all?

The project had five specific aims:

a) to provide theoretically informed and empirically rich understanding and analysis of children's lived experiences in new, sustainable urban environments;
b) to investigate children and young people's use of public and private space through the study of their mobility patterns;

c) to explore children's sense of belonging to their community and the implications of this for their participation and citizenship;

d) to inform the planning and design of sustainable communities for all with children and young people's needs, participation and citizenship in mind;

e) to develop systematic mixed methods designs for the study of children, sustainability and mobility including ethical standards for the use of mobile and GPS technologies in participatory work with children.

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]

There were no changes made to the original aims and objectives of the project. Principal Investigator Professor Pia Christensen took up a new position at the University of Leeds the 1st January 2013. The project remained at Warwick during January, as she has an ongoing formal affiliation there. Her move therefore has had no influence on the completion of the project at 31st January. During January Dr Peter Kraftl (Co-I) remained a Visiting Scholar at Warwick.

A twelve month extension was awarded due to fieldwork taking longer than was anticipated. This was due to it being more difficult than anticipated to both recruit and retain suitably experienced researchers. Over the extended time the PI and Co-I put in extra time and the opportunity was taken to gather more fieldwork data and produce deeper and wider dissemination and additional publications.

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 was carried out in four new communities located in the (former) Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area. It employed a mixed-methods design with ethnography at its core:

1) 30 weeks of field observations in each community (local schools, youth groups, community events and public spaces) recorded in field notes, various maps, and photo diaries.
2) 175 young people (9 to 16 year-olds) participated in interviews: ‘My Week’ - everyday routines and use of space; ‘mobility and risk’; ‘citizenship and participation’; ‘sustainability’. Each interview lasted 20-90 minutes. The vast majority of young people took part in all four interviews.

3) 51 young people led a guided-tour to key spaces in their community. The data were recorded via a dicta-phone, children’s own photos and a GPS device.

4) 122 young people took part in the GPS study. Participants were given a GPS device to wear (when outdoors) recording their everyday mobility patterns during one week; kmz files of ‘tracks’ were downloaded and mapped using ARCGIS. Subsequent interviews using individual Google Earth maps visualising their tracks augmented detailed contextual data about their mobilities.

5) YP in two communities took part in a mobile phone rolling survey during the same week. Participants were sent a small five items questionnaire via text messaging three times a day (see Christensen et al. 2011 for the detail of design and methodology).

6) 50 semi-structured interviews (lasting 40-84 min.) were carried out with: five 3-generational families (children, parents and grandparents), police officers, teachers and school leaders, representatives from Local Authorities, planning units, developers, Parish Councils, and members of Residents, Community and Housing Associations. Themes included: their role and engagement in a) planning and management of sustainable communities, b) community life and c) the needs and participation of children and young people.

7. ‘Energy Week’ with six families – monitoring home energy usage and participating in a family based interview.

8) A project-linked PhD studentship undertook research with young people aged 16-25 years old exploring their experiences and agency in one new sustainable community. The research involved twelve months of participant observation, in-depth interviews with 18 key participants, informal conversations with young people and participant-led guided tours. The student took part in team meetings and team training events including practising interview techniques in research conducted by the project team.

There are currently no ethical guidelines for the use of new technologies such as GPS in research with children and young people. The team developed a robust and detailed ethical protocol, which was tested, refined and adhered to.

Partly unanticipated ethical issues of disclosures made by children related to the Child Protection Orders. The possible risks to the young person’s well-being were discussed with the PI, and wider research team and a course of action agreed upon. Where appropriate, a suitable, responsible adult (usually a teacher) was informed. Actions were conducted in close partnership with the young person. In no cases did these disclosures have any bearing on the research process.
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]

Living in a ‘new’ community. Our research has uncovered – for the first time - young people’s experiences of living in newly-built communities. Pertinent to the financial crisis and subsequent slow-down of construction in 2008, the communities were still undergoing construction at the time of project completion. A large body of evidence has been produced about YP’s experiences of living and playing with building work.

‘Moving in’ to a new community was a transitional event for the young people and families. Our research foregrounds the emotions, everyday interactions and forms of neighbourliness, friendship, tensions and sense of community that emerge.

Children’s mobilities. Contrary to public debates and academic assumptions, our findings show that children living in the new communities engaged in high levels of sustainable transport forms such as walking and cycling.

Citizenship and participation. Young people engaged in diverse forms of formal and informal citizenship, and ‘micro-political’ practices. They took an active part in building community relationships, although often overlooked. Project workshops enabled young people to convince (some) ‘cynical’ adults that they had valuable contributions to make. However, our findings also raise important questions about whether all forms of young people’s citizenship should be formalised and co-opted into adult decision-making structures.

*Sustainable urban design. Our findings revealed strikingly negative attitudes to the visual aspects of ecological design – especially unconventional eco-housing and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems suggesting that appearance is important in public acceptance of, and ‘buy-in’ to, sustainable urban design. Families struggled with practical ‘eco’ features of their homes – such as complex heating systems. We identified a significant opportunity for Education for Sustainability initiatives focused on eco-homes and family living to develop YP’s pro-environmental experiences and agency in ‘real life situations’.

Shared surfaces. Children were ambiguous about playing on ‘shared surfaces’ (a key feature of street design in some new communities), although designed to give priority to pedestrians. A key finding was that young people felt ‘at risk’ in these spaces. The expectation that car drivers change their behaviour as a result of new street designs was not confirmed – due to the ‘newness’ of travel and traffic flow; a lack of signage and unclear street layouts; excessive car parking compromised an overview of the ‘open’ street space for both drivers and young people.

*Community tensions. Features of urban designs (and their subsequent uptake) may literally ‘build-in’ community tensions: ambiguous ownership of green-spaces has led to on-going tensions between adults and young people; the lack of sufficient thoroughfares between a pre-existing neighbourhood and a new community generated resentment amongst residents; despite attempts to ‘pepper-pot’ Local-Authority housing with owner-occupied
housing, significant stereotyping of particular residents and areas takes place, leading to a variety of social tensions.

*Outputs recorded on the ESRC website, but see also publications below.

Future research plans include:
- the constitution of an international virtual centre (see below);
- ESRC Knowledge transfer scheme to work with Developers;
- Research into how the contributions of young people to the building of a civil society can be supported and made sustainable.

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]

Not applicable for this research project.

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]

**Scientific impacts**

Over, 3000 views on the project website (http://newcitizens.wordpress.com/) including UK, Ireland, Germany, USA, Argentina and Indonesia.

Ten international and national key note presentations and public lectures.

International Conference Papers at e.g. RGS-IBG Annual Conference, 2010; AAG Annual Conference, 2012.

Society.

Forthcoming peer-reviewed articles: *Children’s Geographies; Mobilities* (under review); *Social and Cultural Geography* (under review).

Networking: new international collaborations within the fields of children’s mobility and sustainable urban environments with researchers in nine countries.

Research grants: Kraftl and Horton invited to act as Co-Investigators on a related HEIF/EMDA project – SHINE: TRUE (user experiences of sustainable homes).

Researcher career development: two Research Associates have secured permanent positions in universities. PhD student submitted her thesis and has a part-time research appointment.

**Economic and societal impacts**

See project website and ROS for details.

Four community workshops provided discussion of preliminary results and data collection. Workshops were co-organised by the research team and young people. In each 40 children participated together with adult residents, community leaders and other local partners. A Village Association Chair stated that the project challenged adults’ perceptions of young people and their capabilities: “it gives you more confidence to [...] talk to children [...] if you think in terms of the longer term benefits of this work, it would be that it facilitates that meaningful dialogue and action”. Young people expressed positive benefits of being involved in the research gaining new knowledge (e.g. sustainable design) and emotional well-being associated with taking part (Hadfield-Hill and Horton, 2013).

The project provided evidence for community applications for funding – in two communities, for play equipment for older children. In one community, the Village Association Chair stated that “we were able to use the quantitative evidence [...] from NUNC to strengthen the bid”.

North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (NNJPU) stated “data from the project informed the evidence base of the Core Strategy” (a major, medium-term regional development strategy). Collaboration will be continued throughout the planning of regional policies during 2013-14.

Project consulted by the Department for Communities and Local Government on the UK Government’s emergent large-scale housing strategy (see Briefing Paper, November 2012).

Project workshop for 25 policy-makers from around England (September 2012) was highly successful, leading to a Briefing Paper sent to local and national policy-makers and a LSE policy blog entry.
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]

A book proposal entitled ‘New Urbanisms, New Citizens’ has been submitted for consideration by Sage, April 2013. A proposal for a Special Issue of *Childhood* is in progress. Together with *Articles in progress* (Living on Building-sites; The bio-politics of being young; Ethical practice in GPS studies) these outputs are expected to create significant and original academic impact.

The team intend to establish an international virtual research centre of excellence in the field of Childhood, Mobility and Urban Space in 2013/2014.

The project will make significant contribution to year 9 and 10 Science and Geography teaching resources (and to the field of alternative learning spaces) through RCUK funding (£3K, Kraftl).

The collaboration with NNJPU will create a platform for impact into design and policies relating to new and urban regeneration projects. This work will be communicated to local and national authorities and planners. The team will pursue funding to undertake work with developers, a key group for creating impact on the building of new urban communities.

International impact is anticipated in relation to understanding residential life and building work; and the development of the human, social and cultural aspects of new sustainable communities with a focus on children and young people.

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.
### 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.

**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.

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<td>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.</td>
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**iii) Submission of Data**

Data arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the UK Data Service.

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<td>Data that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the UK Data Service has been notified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.</td>
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