

Institution: DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY
Unit of Assessment: 19 Business and Management Studies
Title of case study: New Migrant Minority Entrepreneurship and Business Support
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Businesses owned by new migrants are a notable feature of the urban landscape across the UK. Yet there is little academic or policy knowledge of such enterprises and the role that they play in local communities. Research by Ram, Jones and Theodorakopoulos has led to substantial knowledge generation and practitioner engagement with such businesses in the East Midlands. Impacts include: changes to the approach of business support agencies to new migrants; locating a range of new migrant intermediary networks; boosting business support to new migrants; and facilitating collaborative partnerships between new migrant networks and business support agencies.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The research described in this case study was undertaken by M Ram, Director CREME/Professor of Small Business, De Montfort University (Sept 1999–); Dr Nicholas Theodorakopoulos, Research Fellow (Dec 2000–Dec 2009); and Professor Trevor Jones, Visiting Professor at CREME throughout the period.</p> <p>The research comprised a qualitative investigation into the experiences of Somali business owners and workers in Leicester. Leicester has seen a significant increase in Somalis over the last decade. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are some 17,000 Somalis living in Leicester, many of whom are aged between 25 and 40. Their arrival is sometimes called new migration, in contrast to established patterns from countries in the Caribbean and South Asia. Many new migrants establish their own businesses, a process of great importance for their economic integration. But little is known about this, in part because the phenomenon is so recent and in part because many businesses are small and operate in ways not readily accessible to standard forms of inquiry.</p> <p>In January 2007, Ram, Jones and Theodorokapolous were commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council to improve knowledge of, and engagement with, the local Somali business community. The researchers have a substantial research and policy track record of working with ethnic minority businesses.</p> <p>The key findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An alarming dearth of information on the scale and nature of Somali (and other new migrant) business activity ➤ Considerable interest in entrepreneurship as a career option amongst Somalis ➤ Involvement of Somalis in a diverse range of business activities ➤ A lack of awareness of the existence and role of ‘mainstream’ business support agencies ➤ Active interest in pursuing appropriate support to develop their businesses <p>The key implications arising from the research were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self-employment is reputed to be an important economic activity for new migrants in the region. Its scale and dynamics need to be understood if appropriate policy interventions are to be devised. ➤ ‘Mainstream’ business support agencies do not appear to be widely utilised by such groups. This is a concern since the boosting of enterprise in disadvantaged areas (where new migrants are often located) is a key objective of such agencies. Further, such agencies’ knowledge of Somali business activities appears limited.

- Consideration should be given to new and innovative ways of engaging new migrant business owners.
- Further research and engagement activity needs to be undertaken with other new migrant groups; this needs to be understood and reflected in policy interventions.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Ram, M., Theodorakopoulos, N. and Jones, T. (2008) 'Forms of Capital, Mixed Embeddedness and Somali Enterprise', *Work, Employment and Society*, 22, 3: 427–446

Jones, T., Ram, M., Edwards, P., Kiselincev, A., and Muchenje, L. (2012) 'New migrant enterprise: novelty or historical continuity?', *Urban Studies*, 49,1–18

Ram, M., Jones, T., Edwards, P., Kiselincev, A., Muchenje, L., and Woldesenbet, K. Forthcoming 'Engaging with Super-Diversity: New Migrant Businesses and the Research Policy Nexus', *International Small Business Journal*

Economic Social and Research Council
Facilitating Entrepreneurship in New Migrant Communities October 2008–September 2009

Award Value: £35,000

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All Peer Reviewed. NB Edwards and Woldesenbet are other researchers at DMU who contributed to the project.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

EMB Ltd. Currently describes itself as 'a vibrant business development and improvement company'. According to the company's website, they 'have an impressive record of delivering programmes and initiatives that improve the prospects and performance of businesses and individuals – helping to create and safeguard jobs and driving innovation and growth (...) We encourage growth and development by helping people and businesses to think differently.'

The findings and implications arising from the research described above led to a successful joint bid to the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) from Ram and Jones and East Midlands Business Ltd (EMB Ltd) in 2008. The funding allowed two research assistants to be recruited A. Kiselincev (DMU Oct. 2008–Sept 2011) and L. Muchenje (DMU Oct 2008–Nov. 2010) and facilitated secondments from EMB Ltd to Creme. The project, which ran from 2008 to 2009, aimed to extend the previous research to other new migrant communities and improve engagement between such groups and business support intermediaries.

The findings (see Jones et al, 2012; Ram et al., 2012) confirmed the earlier research and recommended that:

- The evidence base on new migrant businesses should be substantially improved.
- New migrant intermediaries should be engaged with 'mainstream' providers like EMB Ltd.
- EMB Ltd should ensure that its business support services are available to new migrant entrepreneurs.

A number of impacts arose from the research, which led directly to the following benefits for East Midlands Business Ltd (EMB Ltd):

1. Production of a detailed analysis of new migrant business activity in the East Midlands

The research for EMB Ltd was used to promote awareness of new migrant businesses amongst its advisers, identify new intermediaries with which it could develop partnerships, and generate new initiatives. In respect of the latter, EMB Ltd's major 'community-based' adviser programme was directly informed by the experiences of the project.

2. Facilitating business support for new migrant entrepreneurs

New migrant entrepreneurs were introduced to sources of business support during their interactions with the researchers (which included 165 face-to-face interviews, focus groups, networking events, radio shows, workshops and conference presentations). Eighty-eight new migrant entrepreneurs were signposted to, and received one-to-one business support from, EMB Ltd as a consequence of introductions made by the research team. Other benefits that accrued from these interactions include:

- Facilitation of better understanding and working together between Business Link and the new migrant business community.
- Better appreciation of the Business Link model and close networking between and among the new publicly funded agencies and new migrant communities.
- Opportunity to attend several focus groups where they could directly speak to a representative from Business Link or NCISE.
- Access to funding opportunities through Business Link.

3. Boosting ethnic minority engagement with East Midlands Business Ltd.

The success of the various engagement efforts during the project led to a substantial increase in the recorded number of EMB Ltd's interactions with ethnic minority businesses. It rose from 2999 in the year before the project to 4214 the year after the end of the initiative. This increase was considerably more than expected.

4. Identification of new migrant intermediary networks

A key aim of the project was to identify intermediaries and networks not previously known to EMB Ltd. In relation to A8 migrants, the researchers identified over 20:

[text removed for publication]

In respect of African and Middle Eastern communities, the researchers identified over 30 networks and intermediaries:

[text removed for publication]

The researchers assisted EMB Ltd to engage with the above mentioned intermediaries and networks in the following ways:

- With NCISE, by holding several networking events together. On some occasions the

- researchers attended their board meetings and also collaborated on bids for new projects.
- With Refugee Action, by jointly organising a focus group in Leicester and also in gaining access to some of the hard to reach communities like the Afghan and Iraq communities.
 - With the Somali Community Centre, by obtaining more publicity for our project on EAVA FM (102.5FM radio station in Leicester).
 - With Enterprise Radio, by holding two joint breakfast shows on Black Entrepreneurship in Leicester.

5. New collaborations

Good working relationships were established with a number of organisations [text removed for publication], but two merit further attention: [text removed for publication]

- A 'Memorandum of Understanding' was signed with [text removed for publication] in order to facilitate working on initiatives of mutual interest. The researchers were co-opted onto their committee board and attended meetings at their offices across the East Midlands.
- The researchers joined [text removed for publication] board, which meets on a quarterly basis in various parts of the region.

This project demonstrates how appropriately designed research can have real benefits for the sponsor organisation, previous neglected migrant networks, and new migrant entrepreneurs. The nature of EMB Ltd's business is that in realising these local impacts for the business, substantial further impacts have been realised for the businesses EMB Ltd work with.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

For more information about EMB Ltd, please see their website: <http://www.embltd.co.uk/> (accessed 05/08/13).

The Chief Executive of EMB Ltd. would be happy to verify the impact this project had on his business. For example, he has said: *"I don't think that we should underestimate the efforts of just two people [the researchers] ... I think certainly a lot of it was increased awareness of the [our] brand and engaging with businesses ... With [researchers] out there on our behalf because of the research, and because they are talking about [EMB Ltd] ... The ... referrals that are generated get back into the system."*