



GLASGOW

ETHNIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME

Easing the way for migrants to establish their own business

In 2000 Glasgow became the only Scottish city to accept asylum seekers under the National Asylum Support Services. A successful asylum applicant gains the status of 'refugee' and has the right to work or own a business.

Business Gateway's Ethnic Entrepreneurship programme (EEP) was launched in 2005 by Scottish Enterprise after their research indicated that many refugees had run businesses in their country of origin and wished to do the same in Scotland. The target group also included migrants from the EU and Scots from ethnic minorities. The EEP is the only programme of its type in Scotland.

Many refugees arrive with no English, money or possessions. They often require multiple interventions from health specialists, the housing department or social services, straining the already stretched city resources. 40% are housed in the north of Glasgow, in what are some of the most economically disadvantaged areas in the UK.

Despite varied backgrounds, qualifications and skills levels, most refugees face multiple challenges entering the labour market. Self-employment is sometimes the best or only option for them to improve their quality of life.

A COMMUNITY-WIDE SOLUTION

The EEP identifies barriers to self-employment and how to overcome these. Its primary aim is to boost business creation but more established entrepreneurs can also get advice. Free local awareness-raising events are regularly held, promoting self-employment and tackling perceived barriers.

Two start-up advisers were appointed from within the target communities. They identify knowledge gaps, provide tailored training, drop-in services, one-to-one coaching, financial expertise, personal contact, signpost funding options, identify partner organisations and put a human face to the public sector support system.

The start-up advisers are crucial to the entrepreneur's understanding of local and cultural issues. The advisers need to adapt to the needs of the entrepreneur. They take a low-tech approach and establish long-term goals while recognising that progress is made in small steps.

The programme is part of the city's business support network. Clients are referred to other targeted programmes when appropriate.

SUCCESSSES

The programme is now seen as an integral part of Glasgow city council's economic activity and is going from strength to strength. In 2005 only 56 ethnic enterprises were started in Glasgow - this has grown to over 145 in 2012, representing 14% of the total number of start-ups for the city. 65 businesses started by people furthest from labour market can be directly attributed to the programme last year, transforming clients from welfare statistics to tax payers. Increased self-confidence, personal wealth and health benefits follow. Two advisory jobs were created and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) financing was secured.

More people from ethnic minorities gained the confidence to attend free mainstream Business Gateway training courses and a specially created Ethnic Diversity event. Awards were held for the first time in 2012, allowing clients to pitch their idea to a panel of business people with a view to securing funding.



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CHALLENGES

- 1 Many of the EEP's clients speak little or no English and have difficulty communicating with public bodies. The EEP overcomes this by working with local ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses and has appointed advisers who speak a range of community languages. Promoting integration through English is encouraged.
- 2 Clients often lack the basic requirements to start a business such as a bank account, or have a poor credit history which can impinge on access to start-up funding. Many have low self-esteem and experience problems getting used to the business culture in Scotland or distrust government systems and public programmes. Other problems can include a lack of access to the internet or essential electronic business communications tools. Clients have reported experiencing racism (or racial stereotyping) and lack of understanding which has prevented them from developing their business idea.

FUTURE

The programme is guaranteed for another five years under the current Business Gateway contract. Glasgow city council now runs the programme and would like to expand it to other Scottish cities but this is not feasible at the moment.

The programme's results are reported monthly to the council and case studies are presented in an annual report. Success stories are published in local and national media and they will soon be available on the Business Gateway website.

FUNDING

The programme was initially jointly funded by Equal through Napier University and Scottish Enterprise (2005-08). Subsequently (2008-12) it received discretionary local funding as part of the Glasgow Business Gateway contract and is now, for the first time, part of mainstream business support.

Salary costs for one full time and one part time adviser are around £38 000 (€44 500) annually, paid by the municipality and there is a small budget for hosting or facilitating events.

Match funding (£10,500) is available for the part-time adviser through the ERDF and the EEP has a marketing/events budget.

