



**International Journal of Management and Enterprise Development**

**Special Issue on: "From Displacement to Enterprise: The Contributions of Refugee Entrepreneurship"**

Guest Editors:

Dr. Stefan Lång, Dr. Maria Ivanova-Gongne, Dr. Jonas Lagerstöm and Prof. Malin Brännback, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

We invite you to contribute to a special issue dedicated to "Refugee Entrepreneurship - opportunities and challenges" an increasingly significant topic in the 21st century due to rising forced migration flows. One significant pathway for refugees to be included into their host societies is through entrepreneurship. Typically, refugees are viewed as necessity entrepreneurs, driven by integration barriers, limited market access, or language gaps (Korsgaard, Anderson, & Gaddefors, 2016; Bizri, 2017). However, often transition to seeking entrepreneurial opportunities as they expand (Bizri, 2017). Despite increasing academic interest over the past decade (see Lång et al., 2024), research on refugee entrepreneurship has been fragmented across various fields. This fragmentation has led to a lack of consideration of central entrepreneurship concepts in refugee entrepreneurship research, potentially slowing the development of both theoretical and empirical understanding (Lång et al., 2024).

Refugees typically face a range of receptions and attitudes from local societies and institutions, which significantly impact their inclusion and economic opportunities. These individuals come from diverse backgrounds; some flee war trauma, others political persecution, while still others have different reasons for seeking asylum. Their talents, skills, financial resources, and social capital (such as connections to their home countries and diaspora communities) vary, making it possible to understand and differentiate among them. Typical challenges that refugees face upon arrival to host countries is lack of needed social networks and poor knowledge of local language, and at times lack of proper institutional support. For instance, language challenges have been rarely accounted for in entrepreneurship literature, despite being a crucial factor for companies operating in new markets (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2023, 2024). For refugees the new host market is novel both in terms of language and in terms of cultural specifics, making it challenging to establish and develop a business that would be oriented towards growth.

Refugee entrepreneurship, however, holds great promise for fostering economic independence and social inclusion among forcibly displaced individuals. By recognising the economic contributions of refugees and supporting their entrepreneurial efforts, host societies can leverage their potential to enhance local economies and build more inclusive communities. At the same time, refugee entrepreneurship represents a promising avenue for fostering economic independence and social inclusion of refugees. By recognising refugees' economic value and supporting their entrepreneurial endeavors, host societies can harness their potential to contribute to local economies and at the same time build more inclusive communities. Furthermore, while most of research has been conducted in European context, more research in developing countries and refugee camps is needed to obtain a more holistic understanding of refugee entrepreneurship (Lång et al., 2024). For instance, developing countries may lack the institutional resources to support refugees, at the same time refugees may develop entrepreneurial spirit already when in a refugee camp, which could act as base for further endeavors in case supported properly upon their arrival to the host country.

We recognise the importance of being inclusive in our approach, considering different types and categories of refugees. Much of the existing literature focuses on the 2015-2016 refugee surge to Europe and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. However, it is also of importance to explore the experiences of refugees from various time periods and backgrounds to provide a comprehensive understanding of refugee entrepreneurship. Despite the official narrative of "welcoming refugees and migrants," the reality is often different, with significant challenges persisting at both institutional and societal levels. We encourage critical perspectives that highlight these discrepancies and provide a nuanced view of the refugee inclusion.

We invite scholars to submit original research, case studies, and theoretical papers that explore these critical aspects of refugee entrepreneurship.

We will hold a paper development workshop linked to the special issue on the conference Business and People on the Move at Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland (<https://www.abo.fi/en/event/bizmove2024/>) on 21-22 of October 2024. We encourage authors to submit an extended abstract to the workshop. Selected papers from the workshop will be considered for the special issue. This however does not restrict other papers to be submitted to the special issue.

## **References:**

- Bizri, R. M. (2017). Refugee-entrepreneurship: A social capital perspective. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 29(9-10), 847-868.
- Ivanova-Gongne, M., Lång, S., Brännback, M., & Carsrud, A. (2024). Sensemaking by minority entrepreneurs: Role identities and linguistic embeddedness. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 36(2), 239-262.
- Ivanova-Gongne, M., Barner-Rasmussen, W., Torkkeli, L. & Elo, M., (2023). Language in intercultural business interactions: A self-perceived power perspective. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 115, 312-326
- Korsgaard, S., Anderson, A., & Gaddefors, J. (2016). Entrepreneurship as Re-sourcing: Towards a New Image of Entrepreneurship in a Time of Financial, Economic and Socio-spatial Crisis. *Journal of Enterprising Communities*, 10(2), 178-202.
- Lång, S., Ivanova-Gongne, M., Lagerström, J., & Brännback, M. (2024). Refugee entrepreneurship: A systematic literature review and further research agenda. *European Management Journal*, 36(2), 239-262.

## Subject Coverage

Suitable topics include, but are not limited, to the following:

- The impact of local societal and institutional attitudes on refugee entrepreneurship
- The transition from necessity to opportunity-driven entrepreneurship among refugees
- The role of local societal and institutional support in fostering refugee entrepreneurship
- Comparative analyses of refugee entrepreneurship across developing and developed countries
- The impact of social capital, networks, and diaspora connections on refugee entrepreneurial success
- Temporal dynamics of refugee entrepreneurship: Short-term vs. long-term integration outcomes
- Spatial dimensions: Urban vs. rural refugee entrepreneurship
- Differences in entrepreneurial activities among various types of refugees (e.g., political, economic, environmental)
- Critical perspectives on the "welcoming migrants" narrative: Institutional and societal challenges
- The role of language and culture in the establishment and development of ventures by refugees.
- Refugee integration into official and non-official minority languages (e.g. Swedish in Finland, French outside Quebec) and venture creation
- Cognitive aspects of developing entrepreneurial agency in refugees in different environments
- Entrepreneurial growth orientation of firms owned by refugees

## Notes for Prospective Authors

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. (N.B. Conference papers may only be submitted if the paper has been completely re-written and if appropriate written permissions have been obtained from any copyright holders of the original paper).

All papers are refereed through a peer review process.

**All papers *must* be submitted online.** To submit a paper, please read our [Submitting articles](#) page.

## Important Dates

Manuscripts due by: *31 January, 2025*

Notification to authors: *31 March, 2025*

Final versions due by: *31 May, 2025*