

Faculty of
**Business
and Law**

**Small Business
Research Centre**
Report 2009



Kingston University London



2009 was the Small Business Research Centre's (SBRC) 22nd year, making it one of the longest established research centres in the UK, dedicated to research in the field of small business and entrepreneurship.

"In presenting the annual report for 2009, I am delighted to be able to share with you our successes on an excellent year." Professor Robert Blackburn

Report 2009

2009 has been another busy year in the SBRC. A total of 12 externally funded projects either started or continued into 2009 and 54 outputs of various types were published during the year.

International links

In recent years, the SBRC has become increasingly internationalised, and many of our projects involve overseas collaboration. In 2009, all SBRC researchers were involved in major international conferences (including RENT and the ICSB) and a number of invited keynote presentations at venues that included Turkey, China, Russia, Slovenia, Egypt and Malaysia. As in previous years, the SBRC has hosted a number of international researchers, and this year included staff from Japan, Finland and Slovenia. In addition, three projects were sourced internationally in 2009: one for the OECD, one for the New Zealand government and a further project for the International Federation of Accountants, New York.

Research projects

Externally funded research projects undertaken during 2009 included the following:

- **A study of business performance during difficult economic circumstances.** Commissioned by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), this project involved John Kitching, Robert Blackburn, David Smallbone and Sarah Dixon (University of Bath). The report was based on a review of key literature and a 'think tank' comprising 10 senior professors to capture their relevant knowledge and experience.



David Smallbone with OECD colleagues in Poland

- **A study of the effects of recession and the financial crisis on small businesses in the UK.** This was an empirically based investigation of London-based SMEs, sponsored by the Workspace Group PLC and undertaken by David Smallbone, John Kitching and Mirela Xheneti. The report stressed the resilience of small businesses to the economic and financial crisis.
- **The development of a measure of the innovative characteristics of young people.** Led by Elizabeth Chell and involving Rosemary Athayde, the current project builds on earlier work by further developing and testing the tool for measuring innovative characteristics in young people, establishing norms by age of student.
- **Measuring enterprise potential in undergraduates.** In 2009, Rosemary Athayde carried out evaluations of two cohorts of participants in the Bright Futures Programme, run by West Focus. The aim was to measure the impact of participation in the Programme on levels of participant students' enterprise potential, using an Attitudes to Enterprise Test (ATE) and a pre and post participation research design.

- **An analysis of the take up and impact of business advice and support for small firms.** Undertaken by Robert Blackburn and Paul Robson, this research was carried out with Blue Rubicon for the Royal Mail to map the range of support and advice available to SMEs in the UK.
- **The role of small and medium-sized accountancy practices (SMP) in providing business support to SMEs.** This study was commissioned by the International Federation of Accountants and was undertaken by Robert Blackburn and Robin Jarvis (ACCA). Based on existing literature, the study focuses on the provision of advice by SMPs to SMEs, over and above statutory compliance services.
- **The role of competence, trust and professional ethics in the supply of external financial advice by accountants to SMEs.** This research was commissioned by the ACCA and undertaken by Robert Blackburn in collaboration with Peter Carey and George Tanewski from Monash University (Australia). The aim is to examine the intervening role that institutional and professional competence, trust and ethics play in the demand for business services from accountants by SME clients in England and Australia.
- **A review of entrepreneurship policy in Poland.** David Smallbone was invited by the OECD to join with two other experts to review entrepreneurship policy in Poland, focusing on the relationship between the national and sub-national levels.
- **Exploring the transferability of entrepreneurship policy into a post-communist context.** Funded by the British Academy and undertaken by Mirela Xheneti, this project is investigating the scope for enterprise policy transfer from market-based economies into post-communist Albania.
- **SME capability to manage regulation.** This project was commissioned by the National Research Unit of the Inland Revenue and Ministry of Economic Development, New Zealand and undertaken by John Kitching and David Smallbone. The project involves a literature review to document what is known about SME's capability for dealing with regulations.
- **Workforce and supplier diversity in SMEs.** This study was commissioned by the London Development Agency (LDA) and undertaken by David Smallbone, John Kitching and Peter Garside. The project involves identifying and analysing SMEs that are engaged in good workforce and supplier diversity practices for wider dissemination by the LDA.

Copies of the reports for most of the projects listed above may be downloaded from <http://eprints.kingston.ac.uk/>



Friederike Welter, Mirela Xheneti and John Kitching at the RENT conference in Budapest

People news

External activities and appointments

SBRC staff have continued to be actively involved in external events and appointments. **Robert Blackburn** is a member of the ABS Research Committee and ACCA Small Firms Committee. In 2009, he sat on appointment panels for Professorships at the Royal Veterinary College and Manchester Metropolitan University. Robert is also Editor in Chief of the *International Small Business Journal* which in 2009 had an impact factor of 1.729, making it the second highest in the field of entrepreneurship worldwide. Robert also contributed to BAMs Annual Doctoral Symposium and the Doctoral Seminar at the RENT conference in Budapest.



Rosemary Athayde's ATE test is in widespread use

John Kitching was lead author on a paper that received the Best Paper Award at the ISBE conference in Liverpool in November. The Attitudes to Enterprise (ATE) test developed by **Rosemary Athayde** to measure enterprise potential in young people has attracted considerable international interest, opening up possibilities for collaborative, comparative research. In 2009, **Mirela Xheneti** successfully completed her first personal, externally funded grant project supported by the British Academy.

In 2009 **David Smallbone** was elected President Elect of the International Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ICSB). In November 2009, he became the 5th Fellow of the European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB). David acted as external assessor for a Professorship in Economics at Babson College, USA; Convenor and Chair of Entrepreneurship Policy Fora at the ICSB Annual Conference in Korea and the RENT Conference, Budapest; and joined the European Supplier Diversity Forum. David has continued as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Small Business Management*.

Elizabeth Chell has continued on the review boards of a number of major entrepreneurship journals, as well as reviewing research proposals for the ESRC and the Marsden Foundation. Elizabeth was invited to become a member of the CMI Academic Advisory Committee. Elizabeth is a Fellow of the RSA and BAM.



Charles Harvey (University of Wollongong), Michael Schaper (Australian Consumer and Competition Commission) and Robert Blackburn at the 6th SME's in a Global Economy conference in Beijing

New staff appointments

We are particularly pleased to welcome **Paul Robson** to the SBRC. Paul joined us in August 2009 as a Professor of Entrepreneurship after spending four years at the Business School, Durham University. Paul brings expertise in econometric methods, which will strengthen our capacity to undertake a full range of research and policy evaluation studies.

David Purdy has been working in the SBRC during 2009 on an associate basis. David is an experienced small business researcher and has been responsible for delivering a number of short-term assignments secured through the ENSR network.

Staff leaving the SBRC

We were sorry to say goodbye to Arthur Seruga (placement student) who left the SBRC in December 2009. The office will not be quite the same without him, and we wish him every success with his studies.

Postgraduate research

The SBRC has a number of doctoral and DBA students researching various aspects of entrepreneurship and SME development. Two new research students were recruited in 2009. **Alexander Babumba** is studying ethnic minority small businesses in the UK, and **Suthinee Mongkol**'s research focuses on the role of networks in the internationalisation of SMEs in Thailand, looking at the food-ingredient sector.

During 2009, SBRC staff have conducted PhD examinations at Lancaster, Royal Holloway, the Open University, Newcastle, Adelaide, Swinburne, Aalborg, Swansea, Stirling, West of Scotland, Bucks New University, as well as DBAs at Kingston University and the University of South Australia. In addition, reviews of PhD submissions have been undertaken at Valencia Polytechnic University and the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Staff

Robert Blackburn, Director of SBRC and HSBC Professor of Small Business Studies
David Smallbone, Associate Director of SBRC and Professor of Small Business and Entrepreneurship
Paul Robson, Professor of Entrepreneurship
Elizabeth Chell, Professor of Entrepreneurial Behaviour
Dr John Kitching, Reader
Rosemary Athayde, Senior Researcher
Dr Mirela Xheneti, Researcher
Valerie Thorne, Research Administrator

Visiting Professors and Fellows

Professor Robin Jarvis
Professor Friederike Welter
Dr David Stokes
Ewald Kibler
Dr Jari Kuusisto
Sue Lawton
Richard Parkes
David Purdy

Publications 2009

Books

- Smallbone D., Landstrom H. and Jones-Evans D. (eds) (2009). *Entrepreneurship and Growth in Local, Regional and National Economies: Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham.

Articles

- Athayde R. (2009). Measuring enterprise potential in young people. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 33(2), 481-500.
- Blackburn R. and Kovalainen A. (2009). Researching small firms and entrepreneurship: past, present and future. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 11(2), 127-148.
- Brush C.G., Ceru D.J. and Blackburn R. (2009). Pathways to entrepreneurial growth: the influence of management, marketing, and money. *Business Horizons* 52(5), 481-491.
- Deakins D., Smallbone D., Ishaq M., Whittam G. and Wyper J. (2009). Minority ethnic enterprise in Scotland. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(2), 305-330.
- Kitching J., Smallbone D. and Athayde R. (2009). Ethnic diasporas and business competitiveness: a study of minority-owned enterprises in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(4), 689-705.
- Robson P., Wijbenga F. and Parker S. (2009). Entrepreneurship policy: Challenges and directions for future research. *International Small Business Journal* 27(5), 1-5.
- Robson P., Haugh H. and Obeng B. (2009). Enterprising Africa: Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Africa. *Small Business Economics* 32 (3), 331-350.
- Smallbone D. and Welter F. (2009). Entrepreneurship and government policy in former Soviet Republics: Belarus and Estonia compared. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* advance online publication, (doi:10.1068/c0834b, ISSN 1472-3425 (electronic)).

Book chapters

- Chell E. (2009). Introduction and overview to the entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial process. in Ateljevic J. and Page S. (Eds). *Progress in Tourism and Entrepreneurship: Global Perspectives*. Elsevier.
- Chell E. and Karatas-Ozkan M. (2009). Exploring women academics' involvement in science entrepreneurship: a structuration view. in Özbilgin M and Malach-Pines A. (eds). *Handbook of Research in Technology Entrepreneurship*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Smallbone D. (2009). *Fostering entrepreneurship in rural areas. in Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Economic Development in East Germany: Lessons from Local Approaches: Final Report*. OECD, Paris, pp161-188.
- Smallbone D. (2009). Social enterprises in a mature market context; the contemporary UK experience. in Grancelli B. (ed). *Co-operative Firms, Social Economy and Local Development: Cases in Mature and Catching-up Economies*. Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Trento, Italy.
- Smallbone D. (2009). The interface between research and public policy. in Piasecki B. and Kubiak K. (eds). *Partnership for Innovation*. Wydawnictwo SWSPiZ, Lodz, 35-43.
- Smallbone D. (2009). Policy to promote FDI-SME linkages. in Piasecki B. and Kubiak K. (eds). *Partnership for Innovation*. Wydawnictwo SWSPiZ, Lodz, 133-148.

- Smallbone D. and Xiao Jianzhong (2009). China. in Dana L., Han M., Ratten V. and Welpel I (eds). *Handbook of Research on Asian Entrepreneurship*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, and Northampton MA, USA 67-76.

- Welter F. and Smallbone D. (2009). The emergence of entrepreneurial potential in transition environments: a challenge for entrepreneurship theory or a developmental perspective? in Smallbone D., Landstrom H. and Jones-Evans D. (eds). *Entrepreneurship and Growth in Local, Regional and National Economies: Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham and Northampton MA, USA, 339-360.

Research reports

- Athayde R. (2009). *An evaluation of the Bright Futures Programme: Interim report for WestFocus*. Small Business Research Centre, Kingston University.
- Chell E. and Athayde R. (2009). *The identification and measurement of innovative characteristics of young people: development of the youth innovation skills measurement tool*. Final report, National Foundation for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), May/June.
- Chell E. and Athayde R. (2009). *An evaluation of the Future World of Work Projects, using the tool developed by NESTA to measure the innovative characteristics of young people*. London: NESTA, unpublished manuscript.
- Kitching J., Blackburn R., Smallbone D. and Dixon S. (2009). *Business strategies and performance during difficult economic conditions*. report commissioned by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).
- Kitching, J. and Smallbone D. (2009). *Literature review for the SME capability to manage regulation project*. Report commissioned by National Research Unit within Inland Revenue, New Zealand.
- Parkes R., Gracie A., Smith L., Blackburn R. and South R. (2009). *Survey of Londoners who recently set up their own businesses*. Final Report for the London Assembly, June.
- Smallbone D., Robson P. and Athayde R. (2009). *A quality assessment of Business Link in London's service delivery*. A report commissioned by Business Link in London, November.
- Smallbone D., Kitching J. and Xheneti M. (2009). *Are small businesses resilient to recession? A report commissioned by Workspace PLC*, October.

Conference papers

SBRC staff presented a total of 12 papers at a variety of national and international conferences (eg ISBE, RENT, ICSB) during 2009. These included events in the UK, Hungary, Korea, Israel and Germany.

The paper by John Kitching, David Smallbone and Mirela Xheneti – Have small businesses beaten the recession? – won the award for the best overall paper at the 32nd ISBE National Research and Policy Conference in Liverpool in November.

Further information

Small Business Research Centre, Kingston Business School,
Kingston University, Kingston Hill, Surrey KT2 7LB, United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)20 8417 5354
E: r.blackburn@kingston.ac.uk
www.kingston.ac.uk/business/sbrc