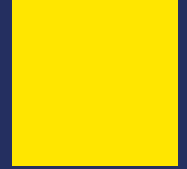




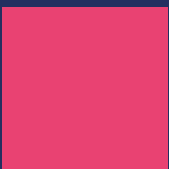
UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Management
School



IMPACT REPORT 2022/23

BRETT CENTRE FOR
ENTREPRENEURSHIP



BRETT CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IMPACT REPORT 2022/23

The Brett Centre for Entrepreneurship is a connected hub of excellence for people and organisations interested in entrepreneurship research, theory, policy and practice.

The Centre is one of six Research Centres based at the University of Liverpool Management School, and whose mission is to develop and harness the power of entrepreneurship across its international collaborative network.

Whilst there is an emphasis on entrepreneurship research, the Centre also focuses on two other important areas of activity – education and impact. Collectively these three pillars are mutually supporting to provide a solid foundation to help achieve our mission.

The Centres 3 pillars:

RESEARCH

Identify and address key research challenges in entrepreneurship along the themes of people, place and performance. We strive to create a positive impact at a community level drawing upon world-quality, problem-based, impact-driven research.

EDUCATION

Help prepare students with a foundation to operate effectively within the world of employment and to be equipped with the knowledge and the skills to go onto and create new start-ups and SME's of tomorrow.

IMPACT

Create impact at a local, national and international level, helping more people use an entrepreneurial mindset to lead, innovate and drive successful new and existing businesses; work with stakeholders to raise levels of effective support; and contribute to the prosperity of the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

The Centre, led by **Professor Robert Blackburn**, comprises of a multi-disciplinary group of researchers, enterprise educators and practitioners.

The core team comprises of **Professor Robert Blackburn** – Director, **Professor Dilani Jayawarna** – Associate Director, **Richard Leighton** – Entrepreneur-In-Residence, **Dr Zeineb Djebali** – Senior Lecturer, **Dr Jordan Gamble** – Research Associate, **Christina Potts**, Administrator.

Within the University, we are part of the Strategy, International Business and Entrepreneurship (SIBE) subject group, providing an intellectual focus of activities on entrepreneurship, research engagement and impact. We have an extensive membership, as well as eight PhD students and visiting fellows.



Core team from left to right: Christina Potts, Professor Dilani Jayawarna, Richard Leighton, Dr Jordan Gamble, Dr Zeineb Djebali, Professor Robert Blackburn

ENTREPRENEURSHIP RESEARCH

The Centre focuses on problem-based, impact driven research led by Professor Robert Blackburn, working alongside Professor Dilani Jayawarna and Dr Jordan Gamble. Our goal is to ensure research agendas are relevant and have impact focusing on some of the most contemporary challenges faced by entrepreneurs in society and the economy.

The Centre utilises a range of research methodologies including the analysis of secondary data sets as well as primary data, and collaborates with leading researchers and organisations to ensure authenticity and rigour.

The Centre also draws upon existing expertise across the Management School to raise understanding and contribute to theory and practice, as well as connecting with other groups and Centres across the University, such as the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place and the Virtual Engineering Centre, reflecting our ambition to shape policy and practice. In 2022/23 we were delighted to see the PhD completion by **Katie Neary** co-supervised by **Professor Robert Blackburn** and **Dr Paul Ellwood**.

Our research mission is organised around three main interrelated themes: people, place and performance.

PEOPLE:

Understanding the issues concerning people who undertake entrepreneurial activities

PLACE:

Exploring the context in which entrepreneurship occurs and how the environment, policies and institutions shape business activity

PERFORMANCE:

Focusing on how businesses develop and address challenges around productivity, innovation and growth

In this academic year, the Centre's research focus has been to look at how entrepreneurship can serve as a vehicle for social inclusion, with an emphasis on social mobility, well-being and enabling under-represented and disadvantaged groups to realise their potential. We theoretically develop and empirically analyse how socio-economic contexts interact with individual abilities to form various productive opportunities for entrepreneurs. We aim to understand the long-term trends, societal impact, and the forms of entrepreneurship that can enable productive and 'good' work as policy makers 'build back better', 'level up' and develop inclusive economies.

Within this broader area of social inclusion and entrepreneurship, we aim to contribute to the debates on the topics:

- Entrepreneurship and disadvantaged groups
- Organisational forms (e.g. social enterprises; self-employment)
- Small business strategy
- Sustainability and entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship policies

3

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP WORKSHOPS

2

REPORTS WITH THE LSE*

on the impact of COVID-19 and the cost of living on the self employed

4

RESEARCH SEMINARS

2

DAY CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

on delivering entrepreneurship research with impact

*London School of Economics

RESEARCH THEMES:

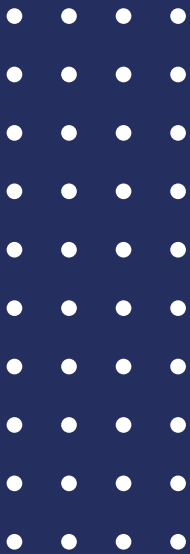
Entrepreneurship and disadvantaged groups

Organisational forms (e.g. social enterprises; self-employment)

Small business strategy

Sustainability and entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship policies



The Centre's key achievements include:

THE SELF-EMPLOYED REPORT SERIES

Two reports have been published in 2023 by Professor Robert Blackburn in collaboration with Maria Ventura and Professor Steve Machin at the London School of Economics. These reports examine the experiences and performance of the self-employed in the UK who have been one of groups hardest hit by the pandemic with rising inflation contributing to the cost-of-living crisis.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY PAPER

The Centre held three workshops for the *Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Paper project*, funded by the University. These were held in Liverpool (May), London (June) and Paris (July). The workshops included presentations by academics, practitioner and policy experts. Collectively the workshops generated a network of people in the field and the outcome will be a policy paper on Youth Entrepreneurship with the development of an impact case study. The final workshop was held at the headquarters of the OECD and the paper will be published under the auspices of the OECD. This project is built upon by a further study of young people in Sri Lanka.



Youth Entrepreneurship policy workshop, London, May 2023

PROGRAMMES, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

The Centre's range of programmes, seminars and workshops with thought leaders offer experiential learning and networking opportunities for researchers, enterprise educators and practitioners in the field of entrepreneurship. Since launch, representatives of the Centre have sought to deepen thematic knowledge through **four seminars** with visiting scholars: (October 2022) Professor Colin Mason - Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, (February 2023) Professor Monder Ram, OBE - Director of the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME), Aston University, (July 2023) Professor Friederike Welter- Institut für Mittelstandsforschung, Bonn and University of Siegen, Germany, and (November 2023) Professor Susan Marlow - Haydn Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

The Capacity Building Workshop in June, co-funded by the Society for the Advancement of Management Studies (SAMS), aimed at increasing the capacity and stimulating interest in developing entrepreneurship research with impact for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and Post Graduate Research (PGR) students. The workshop bridged research and impact agendas by bringing academics and practitioners together. Over 20 participants from across the UK attended the workshop with four guest speakers (Professor Mark Saunders - Birmingham Business School; Professor Susan Marlow - Nottingham University; Professor Mark Hart - Aston Business School; Professor Paul Jones - Swansea University) including two practicing entrepreneurs Grace Harrison (Kitty's Launderette) and Kyle Stranger (Boys Get Sad Too), and Maggie O'Carroll from the Women's Organisation.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

This academic year, two cross-disciplinary modules 'Becoming Entrepreneurial' have been developed and launched by **Dr Zeineb Djebali**, the Centre's Senior Lecturer, both of which are available at undergraduate/postgraduate levels for students studying at the University of Liverpool.

The modules are designed to enable students, whatever their core subject or discipline, to develop their entrepreneurial thinking and the skill set they need for tomorrow including the ability to be adaptable, flexible, creative, resourceful, entrepreneurial and innovative. Students will be equipped with an entrepreneurial mindset and the fundamental tools they need in building their start-up venture. They will also be in an excellent position to pursue a professional career in start-ups, fast growing companies, and socially purpose driven organisations.

The undergraduate module was launched in the academic year 2023-2024 to around 100 students from different disciplines across the University, including Actuarial Mathematics, Chemistry, Business Studies with Languages, Communication with Business Studies, Law and Business Studies, Mathematics and Economics/Finance, Medicinal Chemistry, and Sociology and Business Studies. More information on the modules:

Becoming Entrepreneurial UG Module

Becoming Entrepreneurial PG Module

Having worked closely with our International Partner Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU Entrepreneur College Taicang), two new modules on Corporate Entrepreneurship and Business Modelling and Innovation have been developed and will be launched in 2024-2025. They will support students harness their entrepreneurial/intrapreneurial skills.

The Brett Centre for Entrepreneurship also hosted its first Innovation Sprint at XJTU – Taicang Entrepreneur College on Friday 1st December 2023. This was led by Dr Zeineb Djebali to encourage students to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and think entrepreneurially and innovatively of solutions to real-life world challenges. Students together with staff members from Taicang Entrepreneur College and University of Liverpool were immersed into developing innovative products/services related to some emerging business models such as driverless cars, mobile location services applications, and fractional ownership services. The Innovation Sprint ended with awarding 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize winners with an award certificate for their most innovative product/service.

The Brett Centre for Entrepreneurship in collaboration with the Liverpool Centre of Doctoral Training for Innovation in Data Science (LIV.INNO) ran a two-day workshop on 6th and 7th December 2023 for Doctoral Students (PhDs) and Post-Doctoral Students (PDRAs) on entrepreneurship and the commercialisation of research. The workshop was led by Dr Zeineb Djebali with participants gained insights on how to apply entrepreneurial tools and business concepts to develop a business idea stemming from their research. Students explored entrepreneurial opportunities and how to communicate these to the market, together with assessing their skills and reflecting on possible future impact of their research from individual, societal and organisational perspectives.

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NEW CROSS- DISCIPLINARY ENTREPRENEURSHIP UNDERGRADUATE/ POSTGRADUATE

modules launched

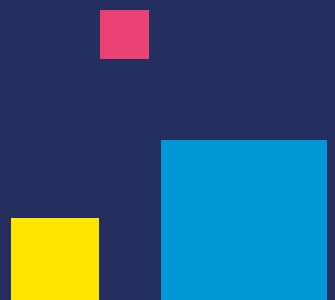
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NEW INTERNATIONAL MODULES

developed with XJTLU
Entrepreneur College
Taicang, China



Dr Zeineb Djebali hosted an "Innovation Sprint" as part of the University of Liverpool delegation to XJTLU, China, November 2023



SMALL BUSINESS CHARTER RE-ACCREDITATION AWARDED

8

ENTREPRENEURS MEET-UPS

2

ENTREPRENEURS START-UP SCHOOLS

for 16-19-year olds

LAUNCH OF THE ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

in Secondary Schools pilot



ENTREPRENEURSHIP IMPACT

The Centre's goal is to create impact at a local, national and international level by helping people to develop and use an entrepreneurial mindset to develop new and grow existing small businesses that contribute to the prosperity of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and beyond.

A programme of engagement and impact activities led by our Entrepreneur-in-Residence, **Richard Leighton**, has involved collaborating with key stakeholders to develop and enhance a local support eco-system with the Centre as a key agency of change.

This has included engagement with business support organisations, public sector bodies including the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, practitioners, entrepreneurs and businesses, and student-led entrepreneurship organisations.

The Centre led on the successful Chartered Association for Business Schools 'Small Business Charter' re-accreditation in October 2022. The accreditation award which is for 5 years means the Management School can continue to expand its support of small business and enterprise communities through the business growth and leadership course **Help-To-Grow: Management** which is 90% Government funded.

The Centre also provides input to the delivery of the **Help to Grow: Management** course supporting entrepreneurs and Small Business Enterprise (SME) Leaders to develop and accelerate their businesses across the Liverpool City Region. The Help to Grow course is currently on its 8th cohort of SME leaders/entrepreneurs from across the Liverpool City Region with over 130 businesses to date taking part.

The Centre also provides content, academic leadership and support for the **Growth Catalyst Programme**, which is an innovative leadership development programme for SMEs in the Liverpool City Region with 2-250 employees, designed to meet the needs of owners and managers, providing both personal and business growth. It has been running since 2014 and more than 300 businesses have taken part in the programme so far.

Developed by experts in the field of leadership and management, it is a programme entirely practical in nature and employs an integrated delivery model incorporating seven distinct elements over a seven-month period. It is underpinned by a network of like-minded individuals keen to share ideas and support each other. It gives SME business leaders the opportunity to reflect, take a step back and work on their business rather than in it.

The securing of UK Shared Prosperity funding (UKSPF) ensures continuity of the Growth Catalyst Programme, with two further cohorts planned for 2023/24. This is under consideration for an Impact Case study REF2028.

As part of our drive in developing strategic alliances and collaborative projects, the Centre has engaged with over 40 organisations across the LCR, supporting the entrepreneurship eco-system and mapping the local entrepreneurship infrastructure and identifying areas of opportunity. Key stakeholder organisations include Kindred LCR, Capacity, Start-up Grind, LCR Finance Hub and Merseyside Special Investment Fund.

ENTREPRENEURS MONTHLY MEET-UPS

In 2022-23 the Centre launched and ran eight **Entrepreneurs Monthly Meet-ups**. These have been very popular attracting 520 participants and 18 speakers to date. These are a Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) initiative led by the Brett Centre for Entrepreneurship, in collaboration with six colleges and universities from across the LCR. Each event is held in an independently run business venue, organised around a theme and with guest speakers from the local entrepreneur community who share their experiences and expertise on business ownership.

The event seeks to connect both students and graduates to experienced entrepreneurs and business organisations in the Liverpool City Region. The meet-ups also provide an opportunity to showcase the University's successes - three of the Meet-ups have been run in conjunction with entrepreneurs and SME leaders who have completed the Growth Catalyst and Help to Grow Management courses.



November's Entrepreneurs Monthly Meet-up with Molly King of Bridge the Gap and two of the panellists: Isabel Pollen, Performance Under Pressure Professional Coach and Lisa Jones from the Calm Charm

WIDENING PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE

The Centre has also contributed to the University's **Widening Participation Initiative** supporting the University in delivering projects and activities designed to widen access to the University. Working in partnership with schools and colleges, the focus has been to raise awareness of higher education and provide a taster of life studying at the University. Two examples of this are:

THE BRETT CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP - START-UP SCHOOL INITIATIVE

aimed at 16-19-year-olds interested in entrepreneurship including those students and graduates already studying at the University. The programme is designed to teach students about all aspects of creating a commercial or social enterprise, as well as offer seed funding and a Level 1 qualification in entrepreneurship at the end of the programme.

THE ENTERPRISE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

aimed at 11-16 years olds in secondary education interested in entrepreneurship. The programme introduces students to the processes involved in starting up commercial, social or community initiatives. Most recently, the Centre welcomed students and staff from Year 9, King's Leadership Academy Hawthornes, Bootle to the MBA Suite at the Management School for an Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Open Day. The one-day immersive activity experience gave the students interested in entrepreneurship the opportunity to take part in a range of activities that supported their entrepreneurship ambitions and provided them with a taster of life on campus.



Students from King's Leadership Academy Hawthornes, Bootle taking part in a workshop as part of the Enterprise Education in Secondary Schools Initiative

KEY PROJECTS FOR 2024

RESEARCH

Our programme of research will deepen and broaden its reach through the consolidation of our existing projects, launch of new projects and the engagement with new members of the Centre. We aim to build upon our interest in youth entrepreneurship through working with the OECD and a project in Sri Lanka. We also aim to develop projects with other research centres within and outside the University as well as work closely with entrepreneurship scholars within SIBE and other research centres.

Research project: Improving Economic and Social Outcomes for Marginalised Young People: a Youth Enterprising Model for Inclusive Opportunities

Internationally, young people especially in the 16-24 age group, are shown to experience disproportionately high rates of unemployment, economic inactivity, precarity and other barriers to participation in the labour force. This project studies the prospects of young people starting social and digital ventures within a vulnerable population in Sri Lanka, a country that has been considered a weak state, characterised by a high incidence of poverty and inequality. In Sri Lanka, enterprising to address the disadvantages youth face has become a focal point of policy interest. The project aims to work closely with local, national and international partners to implement a programme of research and education that is sensitive to the diversity and experiences of young people and to the place-specific barriers to their labour participation. It will offer a deeper understanding of the experiences of (would-be) youth entrepreneurs and their needs, provide a new Youth Enterprising Model for Inclusive Opportunities, and design an education programme that is flexible, scalable, and transferable across places and youth populations with variable characteristics.

As part of a European Institute of Innovation and Technology project, a body of the European Union, we are the research partner in a project 'Move Your Future', that seeks to enable professional freelancers in the creative industries to develop their entrepreneurial, sustainable and digital skills leading to the

enhancement of their economic resilience. This project will start in earnest in 2024 and provide an international platform for research and engagement with the creative industries for the Centre, as well as allowing a focus on the UK and the Liverpool City Region.

Seminar Programme

Our planned programme of Seminars for 2024 will include Professors Leo Paul Dana - Dalhousie University (Canada) and Montpellier Business School (France), Paul Jones - School of Management, Swansea University (UK) and Johan Wikland - Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University (USA). We are also collaborating with the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place and the Centre for Organisational and Employee Wellbeing to develop research agendas and activities.

EDUCATION

The Centre has received funding through the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Impact Accelerator Account (IAA) to provide a suite of entrepreneurial training /workshops designed to raise awareness and levels of commercialisation activity within the social sciences, as part of the wider IAA activity over the next five years. The Centre will lead on two workshops per year, informing and upskilling staff in social science disciplines to understand and realise the potential of the commercialisation of their research and knowledge base. The workshop programme is primarily open and tailored to researchers (staff, ECRs, PhD students) working in social sciences disciplines.

IMPACT

Our goal is to continue with research and engagement initiatives that create impact. The Centre will be applying for additional funding to continue to further develop and run the Enterprise Education in Secondary Schools programme to benefit additional schools in the Liverpool City Region.

The Centre will be applying for UK Shared Prosperity Funding in 2025 to ensure that the Entrepreneurs Monthly Meet-ups and Start-up School initiative for 16-19-year olds can continue to run across the Liverpool City Region.



TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF THE CENTRE

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