Conference

"Belongingness, Connectedness, and Embeddedness et vice versa in Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Migrant and Refugee Entrepreneurship in Times of Political Turmoilt"

IAT / **WH** Westphalian University RUHR UNIVERSITY BOCHUM **RU**B

Universität Bremen LEMEX

Call for Track Proposals

"Belongingness, Connectedness, and Embeddedness et vice versa in Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Migrant and Refugee Entrepreneurship in Times of Political Turmoil"

Date: 29-30 January 2026
Location: Bremen, Germany
Keynote Speaker: Professor Monder Ram, Aston Business School,
Centre Director, Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME)

In times of political turmoil and global crises, the entrepreneurial experiences of migrants and refugees are deeply intertwined with emotional, social, societal, and political challenges. The concepts of belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness et vice versa are crucial to understanding how these entrepreneurs navigate their journeys, yet these concepts are often underexplored in the context of migration and entrepreneurship studies.

Background:
Migrants and refugee entrepreneurs frequently face feelings of not belonging to their host communities, which can significantly hinder their ability to form meaningful connections with local networks, institutions, and other entrepreneurs – and the entrepreneurial ecosystems in general. These feelings of exclusion, rejection, loneliness, detachment, displacement, and alienation create barriers to the development of trust and cooperation, which are essential for successful entrepreneurial ventures. While being pivotal for establishing their ventures, their ability to become embedded in local entrepreneurial ecosystems is often severely compromised. Without belongingness, connectedness cannot thrive (David et al., 2025), and without a strong sense of connectedness, long-term embeddedness within local or transnational entrepreneurial networks remains elusive (Harima, 2022). These dynamics contribute to the marginalisation and exclusion of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs (Bolzani & Mizzau, 2020, Neumeyer et al., 2018), preventing them from fully accessing opportunities and resources that could sustain and grow their businesses in the long term.

To explore how belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness shape migrant and refugee entrepreneurship, particularly during times of political instability, we invite scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to submit track proposals for the upcoming conference. We seek contributions that examine these concepts in the context of migration, forced displacement, and the barriers these entrepreneurs face in establishing sustainable business ventures.

Central Questions to Explore:

- How do migrants and refugees experience belongingness in their host countries, and how does this emotional connection—or lack thereof—affect their ability to develop connectedness with local networks and entrepreneurial ecosystems?
- In what ways does the absence of belongingness and connectedness hinder long-term embeddedness in local and transnational entrepreneurial ecosystems?
- How do feelings of exclusion or alienation affect migrant and refugee entrepreneurs' access to resources, networks, and business opportunities that are necessary for entrepreneurial success?
- How far does context in terms of turmoil as well as social, technological and/or economic disruptions matter when it comes to issues of (lacking) belongingness, (dis-) connectedness, and (dis-)embeddedness?
- What role do formal and informal networks, including diasporic and transnational communities, play in fostering connectedness and eventual embeddedness for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs?
- How do stakeholders in entrepreneurial ecosystems behave in terms of including migrant and refugee entrepreneurs?
- How can policymakers, support organisations, and host communities help to foster belongingness, improve connectedness, and ultimately enable embeddedness for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs?

Key Themes to Explore:

- The psychological and social dimensions of belongingness and how these influence entrepreneurial identity and resilience
- The barriers and opportunities in forming connectedness within local and transnational entrepreneurial networks
- The challenges and opportunities for embeddedness in politically unstable environments and contexts of forced migration
- The role of discrimination, exclusion, and marginalisation in limiting belongingness and connectedness
- Power imbalances among and between groups of entrepreneurs and the actors of an ecosystem
- Gendered experiences of belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness among migrant and refugee entrepreneurs
- Intersectional issues of belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness in the case of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs
- Comparative studies of belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness in different regional and political contexts (e.g., urban vs. rural, post-conflict regions, border zones)
- Evolutionary aspects of the development of (lacking) belongingness, (dis-)connectedness, and (dis-)embeddedness
- Policy recommendations to foster belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness in migrant and refugee entrepreneurship

We welcome proposals that adopt diverse methodological approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, action research, and case studies. We also encourage submissions

that critically engage with how these concepts can inform policy design, enhance support structures for migrant entrepreneurs, and foster more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Submission Guidelines:

Track proposals should include:

- A title and abstract (max. 300 words) outlining the track's relevance to the conference theme
- A brief description of how the track will address belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness et vice versa in migrant and refugee entrepreneurship
- A short biography of the track chair(s) and an outline of key themes/topics to be addressed

Additionally, track proposals may also include suggestions for further topics and speakers beyond those of the designated track convenors. This allows for the potential inclusion of additional perspectives and expertise, expanding the scope of discussions and incorporating diverse viewpoints on how belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness intersect in the field of migrant and refugee entrepreneurship.

Submission Deadline: 15th of April 2025
Notification of Acceptance: 15th of May 2025

Please submit your proposals to: david@iat.eu.

For any enquiries regarding the call, please feel free to contact us at: david@iat.eu.

We look forward to receiving your proposals and fostering in-depth discussions on the essential concepts of belongingness, connectedness, and embeddedness et vice versa in the context of migrant and refugee entrepreneurship and ecosystems.

Organising Committee
Alexandra David, Judith Terstriep, Jörg Freiling
Westphalian University, Institute for Work and Technology; University of Bremen, LEMEX