



**Civil society and entrepreneurial ecosystems: the case of Citizens UK and  
Birmingham's microbusinesses  
ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship**

**Aston University and Citizens UK Birmingham**

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). One of 14 such partnerships in the UK, the Midlands Graduate School is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

Aston University as part of Midlands Graduate School is now inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship in association with our collaborative partner Citizens UK Birmingham to commence in October 2019.

The collaborative studentship is for an action research study with the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME), based at Aston University, and Citizens UK Birmingham (CUK). It will investigate the role that civil society can play in facilitating a more inclusive business support environment (or 'ecosystem') in Birmingham.

The main research questions are:

1. What is the role of civil society in developing inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems?
2. How can CUK be supported to engage in this agenda?
3. How can the social (as well as economic) contribution of migrant businesses be assessed?
4. What institutional arrangements are required to ensure that migrant entrepreneurs are integrated into the 'mainstream' business support system?

The study will be interventionist in nature and will be undertaken in collaboration with CUK. The student will work closely with CUK Birmingham as well as the supervisory team at CREME. An interdisciplinary approach to action research will be employed because of its capacity to produce sound explanations of social reality, and its practical utility in helping the Collaborating Organisation to promote meaningful change. The intervention will support CUK Birmingham in its plans to provide business support to entrepreneurs in the some of the most deprived areas of the City. By establishing 'what works and how' in relation to the role of civil society in supporting microbusinesses, it is anticipate that the results will be generalizable to other similar contexts.

**Application Process**

To be considered for this PhD, please complete the Collaborative Studentship application form [available online here](#) and along with two references email this to: Andrew Maile [a.maile@aston.ac.uk](mailto:a.maile@aston.ac.uk).

**Application deadline: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Midlands Graduate School ESRC DTP**

Our ESRC studentships cover fees and maintenance stipend and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available only to successful applicants who fulfil eligibility criteria. To check your eligibility, visit:

[www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/](http://www.mgsdtp.ac.uk/studentships/eligibility/)

Informal enquiries about the research or the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship prior to application can be directed to: Professor Monder Ram

[m.ram1@aston.ac.uk](mailto:m.ram1@aston.ac.uk).