

Research Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: RE-skilling Businesses for new OpportUNities in the Covid-19 lanDscape (REBOUND)

Name of Researcher(s): *Seun Kolade, David Rae, Demola Obembe, Adebowale Owooseni, Kunle Ogunsade, Ibrahim Rufai, Aderemi Ojebode, Samuel Salia, Victor Atiase, Natasha Katuta Mwila, Funmi Obembe, Regina Frank, William Murthi.*

Invitation paragraph

You have been invited to take part in this study. Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish to. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part or not. Thank you for reading this.

What is the research about?

This project sets out a plan to provide a training and support programme for Afro-Caribbean owned businesses in the Midlands, in response to the challenge precipitated by Covid-19 pandemic, as many businesses have been forced to shut down. This proposal focuses on an under-served group, Afro-Caribbean owned MSMEs and micro enterprises (MSMEs), where the skill-gap may be even more pronounced. The project is set out both as an intervention as well as research project. Thus, the project aims to launch a database of Afro-Caribbean MSMEs (including women-owned businesses) in the Midlands, spearhead the establishment of a new network with a supporting web/mobile platform, and undertake case studies of MSMEs' response to Covid-19 pandemic. The intervention component of the project entails design and delivery of practitioner-based modules to provide skill and strategy options for business owners to rebound from the pandemic.

What does the study / participation involve?

You will be involved as a participant in the training and networking component of the project. As a part of this, your involvement will include answering a set of survey questions right at the beginning, and then at the end, of the programme. In addition, you may be asked to participate in an additional in-depth interview, for which a few of the training participants will be selected. The survey will be administered through electronic questionnaires, which will be subsequently processed in Excel/SPSS files and anonymised. The survey questions will focus on your awareness and use of e-commerce and digital marketing strategies, and a wide range of innovations in financial management, networking and resource mobilisation. Also, the interviews will address similar themes and will be audio-recorded and stored in a password protected computer. The anonymised transcripts will be used for subsequent analyses. You will reserve the right to withdraw from the training programme and associated survey and interview anytime if you so choose.

Who is doing the research?

The research is being undertaken by an interdisciplinary team of 13 researchers from the Centre for Enterprise and Innovation and the Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility, both at De Montfort University. The lead investigator is Dr Seun Kolade.

Who is funding the research?

The project is being funded by the Faculty of Business and Law, De Montfort University, under the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are an owner/manager of micro or small business in the Midlands.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

I am interested in taking part, what do I do next?

If you agree to take part in this study you will be required to complete an electronic survey at the beginning and end of the training/networking programme. You may also be asked to participate in an interview process that may last approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will be recorded exclusively for the purpose enabling accurate capture of the discussion and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The survey data will also be securely stored in a password protected computer and anonymised. Furthermore, all information collected will be kept on a password protected database and kept strictly confidential. Any identifiable information you may give will be anonymized. As you are sharing your details with DMU, we want you to know how we use your personal data and what your rights are. You can find this information at <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/policies/data-protection/data-protection.aspx>

What if I agree to take part and then change my mind?

You can withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason." If you choose to withdraw during the process, it will not be possible to withdraw your survey data because they are anonymised. For the interviews it will be possible to withdraw your data before the files are anonymised and transcribed, within 45 days of the completion of the interview.

What happens to the information I provide?

Information gathered from the research will be used in aggregate form only. The anonymized data may be presented at educational research and practitioner conferences, published in academic journals, and publicly disseminated to inform practice and support the recovery efforts of businesses within and outside the Midlands. As you are sharing your details with DMU, we want you to know how we use your personal data and

what your rights are. You can find this information at <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/policies/data-protection/data-protection.aspx>'

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept on a password protected database and is strictly confidential. You will be given an ID code which will be used instead of your name. Any identifiable information you may give will be removed and anonymised. Also, it is DMU policy that raw data is normally kept for 5 years after a study has been completed.

You should also be aware that we may be duty bound to pass on information that you provide that reveals harm has occurred to a child or other vulnerable individual"

Will anyone know that I am taking part?

If you tell us that [a criminal offence has, or may have been, committed – for example...], we have a duty to pass that information onto the [police/ other agency]. Only in those circumstances would we have to reveal your identity."

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings of this research will be disseminated via academic and public channels. The academic outlets include journals, book chapters and conferences. The public channels include social media channels and websites. The electronic and print versions of the project report will also be made available. We aim to share with you an electronic copy of the project report.

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

One obvious disadvantage of participation is that you will be giving up some of your time. If you are selected for the interview, should the interview questions have the potential to cause upset or raise emotive issues, the interview will cease immediately and you will have the opportunity to gather yourself or withdraw from the interview, if desired.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Given that this is an action research, the main advantage of participating is that you will benefit as a business owner from the training and networking sessions. In addition, as mentioned above, you will be provided with a copy of the project report, and thereby share in the new knowledge that the project offers.

What if something goes wrong?

If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for a legal action but you may have to pay for it. Regardless of this, if you wish to complain, or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, the normal University complaints mechanisms should be available to you

Who can I complain to?

If you have any complaints regarding anything to do with this study, you can initially approach the lead investigator. If this achieves no satisfactory outcome, you should then contact the Administrator for the Faculty Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation Office, Faculty of Business and Law, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH or BALResearchEthics@dmu.ac.uk

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is being organised by members of the African Entrepreneurship Cluster at Centre for Enterprise and Innovation, De Montfort University, under the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by De Montfort University, Faculty of Business and Law Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for Further Information

If you require further information about any of the above, do not hesitate to contact Dr Seun Kolade, Email: seun.kolade@dmu.ac.uk

Once, again, thank you for participating in the study!