

Immigrant/ Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship

FEBA – ETHNIC MINORITY BUSINESS AWARDS – United Kingdom



Objectives: Reward people from ethnic minority backgrounds for their achievements

Target group: ethnic minority entrepreneurs

Key words: award, entrepreneurship

FEBA

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The FEBA Ethnic Minority Business Awards specifically recognise achievement among firms run by ethnic minorities in the East Midlands with prizes awarded in various categories.

Implementing organisation: First Enterprise Business Agency

First Enterprise Business Agency (FEBA) is a non-profit organisation created in 1989, helping people from disadvantaged communities in the region of the East Midlands to create and sustain economic advantage through self-employment, by providing pre- and post-start up support in many forms. FEBA clients can access free services, including business advice and counselling, training, access to funding, and support with research, available at the FEBA head offices and a number of satellite offices across the East Midlands. FEBA offers its services for free as its work is funded by Government-led contracts.

FEBA has a specialist remit to serve the ethnic minority community, but not exclusively. About 20% of its client group consists of people from the wider community. Building on this success, FEBA also launched a loan fund pot to support new start-ups and small business expansion: Enterprise Loans East Midlands.

Implementing period, source of funding and budget

FEBA created the Ethnic Minorities Business Awards in 1999.

The event is sponsored by professionals like Bank Nat West, accountants, local authorities like the Nottingham City Council, local businesses and by the businesses helped by FEBA. The sponsors may vary from one year to another but FEBA looks to regular sponsors as it could not run the event without them.

The annual budget of the Awards is around £25,000.

1. The Good Practice

Policy context

Entrepreneurs from ethnic minority backgrounds hardly receive any recognition for their work. The Awards are in line with FEBA's mission to promote ethnic entrepreneurship and give FEBA a profile as an agency, but even more so they give recognition to the shortlisted entrepreneurs. The Awards give them a platform to publicise their businesses and also a tool to motivate their own staff to reach for the next level.

Objectives

The aim of the project is to reward people from ethnic minority backgrounds for their achievements in the business sector. The event showcases the enormous accomplishments of ethnic minority-owned businesses and their important economic contribution.

FEBA aims at having at least 10 applications per year and per category to guarantee the quality of the awards given, but it would like to drive up the standard in the coming years.

Target population

The event targets entrepreneurs with ethnic minority backgrounds from the East Midlands. For some Awards, sponsors like the Nottingham City council require a Nottingham business entry only. Applicants that have a proven technology, recruited partners, or attracted more and varied customers will likely be seen to have raised their chances of success in the Awards. Start-ups are concerned with most of the awards but some are also open to enterprises operating for up to 18 months.

The programme

The Award gives prizes in different categories to entrepreneurs with ethnic minority backgrounds in order to recognise and reward their achievements. There were five categories in 1999. This number has evolved since then depending on the sponsors of the event, but there has always been a Female category.

In 2011, the categories are:

- * The star prize (business of the year award): judges are looking for a business that could demonstrate the highest standards of care for its customers and staff and a strong base from which to expand.

- * Female Business Person of the Year Award: Judges are looking for someone with good business acumen, a strong understanding of her market and clear ambition to grow her business.

- * New Enterprise of the Year Award : The judging panel is looking for an outstanding business less than 18 months old which can demonstrate great potential for growth and job creation.

- * Most Positive Contribution to Nottingham Award: businesses need to demonstrate exemplary care for their community or local environment, through a proactive employment policy, job creation and improving the welfare of local residents.

* The Sullay Jalloh Memorial Award for Promoting Community Spirit: This award honours the memory of Sullay Jalloh, chairman of First Enterprise from 1989 to 2001. It is awarded to someone who, through his/her work, has made a major contribution to promoting community spirit

In 2010, one additional category was awarded: the "Outstanding Contribution to Business for Development". It was sponsored by the We Share campaign, a European project about second generation migrants in Europe. This prize category was only awarded once.

The whole FEBA team has some involvement with organising the Awards from their own specialist section. As such, the advisers get the applications and work with their clients to put applications together, the Admin Team writes out the letters for the sponsors and the judges, the Enterprise Development Manager coordinates the judging and the judges and writes up the comments, the IT staff work on the web site and the CEO coordinates the event and works with the Board on special guests and VIPs, etc.

The judges are asked to evaluate the business plans, based upon their likelihood of becoming a viable business, or their likelihood of making a meaningful contribution to the existing business. They evaluate the idea, its potential for success and the likelihood of achieving that success based upon the plan and experience of the people in the business.

The monetary reward for winners is not systematic. It depends on the sponsors of each edition. In 2011, a trophy and a certificate were awarded.

Results

The awards give entrepreneurs from an ethnic minority an exposure in the media and also the opportunity to knock on other doors to take their business forward. It gives them a platform to publicise their business and also a tool to motivate their own staff to reach for the next level. The entrepreneurs' feedback is very positive concerning the impact of the awards.

In 2011, FEBA received 52 applications for the awards. This result is a little below that of 2010 because of the economic situation but there had been an upward trend in the number of applicants before 2011.

Evaluations

The project is evaluated on an internal basis by FEBA's CEO, staff and board. There is a discussion about the successes and difficulties of each edition of the awards to try to improve them. Based on these evaluations, there is a project to feature more of the businesses through videos and to give them a profile both on the night and something to take forward and have for later to promote themselves. Unfortunately, budget restrictions have slowed down the implementation of such measures.

2. Lessons learned

Relevance

The project is well adapted to the insertion of ethnic minorities since the awards are reserved for entrepreneurs from an ethnic minority and since personalities from an ethnic minority are invited to participate in the event.

Effectiveness and efficiency

The project enables the winners to have exposure in the media. For example, the winner of the Business of the Year Award gets around 30 seconds on local TV.

The effectiveness of the project could be improved with more sponsors and thus a bigger budget: businesses could be evaluated more intensely and could be provided with media packs and videos that are TV-ready so they could get more media exposure.

Innovativeness

FEBA is not the only organisation that has an award project but the format of the ceremony is very innovative. It has evolved since the creation of the Ethnic Minorities Business Awards and now has a very professional format. As such, complementary elements have been introduced, such as a video of the short-listed businesses, as well as entertainment and a professional host for the Ceremony night, a TV personality from an ethnic minority. FEBA also uses professional event coordinators and their back room team for music and video and the stage set.

The event is an occasion to dress up and many participants participate wearing their country's traditional clothes.

Replicability

The initiative can and should be replicated. There needs to be a willingness on behalf of the ethnic businesses to participate. The event needs to be driven and the organisation running the event needs to have ownership of the event.

Sustainability

There is no sustainability guaranteed, it is reliant on the budget and also on finding sponsors and ticket sales. FEBA also offers discounted tickets to the winners' and runners' up family, etc, each winner and runner up gets two free tickets.

The programme benefited from loyal sponsors and from subventions from public authorities, but budget restrictions from both groups will lead to a reduction in the subventions next year. However, the project has been running for 13 years now and has proven to be sustainable in the long term. Thanks to such expertise, FEBA should find new sponsors in 2012.

Key learning points

1. An organisation organizing such an event needs to ensure the strong involvement of the communities it is working with to ensure their support: it is necessary to be supportive with other organisations working with similar groups, to promote each other's events. If they are familiar with your work and the facilities you offer then they can recommend you to their contact groups.

It is also a flagship for the agency to show to the wider community what you can do.

2. Be clear and precise in communication: this is very important and as the event takes place on a precise date, everything needs to be done on time. If the communication is not clear and things do not happen when they should, undue pressure is put on the organizers and the other organisations working with them.
3. Start early with the planning and budgets and get sponsors on board early so as to get into their financial planning.

Sources

- **Websites:**

FEBA website: <http://www.first-enterprise.co.uk/>

This is Nottingham website: <http://www.thisisnottingham.co.uk/ENTERPRISE-ETHNIC-MINORITY-BUSINESS-AWARDS/story-13580215-detail/story.html>

- **Interview with:**

Richard Tyas, enterprise development manager at FEBA