

## Chapter 13

# Supporting Business Across Continents: Perspectives for Migrants

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter is aimed at providing information and guidance that may help voluntary migrants and refugees construct a new life for themselves and for their families by starting a new business to support them financially in a new setting far from their original homeplace. Cultural, legal, and operational aspects as well as management issues are of the utmost importance for a fledgling entrepreneur. In fact, these are issues that are relevant anywhere in the world and should help guarantee the success of a new company. The steps an entrepreneur will have to follow to turn a dream of starting a business into reality are discussed here. Such steps go from the starting point of identifying a business opportunity in the new region and evaluating the skills and financial resources available to implement the idea up to planning, executing, and monitoring. Specific advice is provided regarding family businesses.*

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## INTRODUCTION

From the second half of the 20th century onwards, the world began to change at a speed that is difficult to measure, and barriers between countries have practically ceased to exist. Informal traders from a wide variety of origins are now present in public places worldwide, trading in a vast range of goods and, principally, taking advantage of their native regional culture.

In Brazil, businesspeople working in the field of traditional Italian and Japanese cuisine are examples of a migration phenomenon that was intense in the mid-20th century. In addition to introducing different foods to the region, they have also brought new vocabulary to the local vernacular, specific manual skills in food preparation, and have transmitted cultural knowledge from their countries of origin. In this case, immigration led to the acquisition by the local population of the skills required to produce the previously unknown items, since professionally trained personnel were required in order to guarantee the quality of the final products.

Currently, a new migration phenomenon is occurring within Latin America. Most particularly, Venezuelans are fleeing their country's political and economic instability and seeking refuge in Brazil. Likewise, the media reports on an almost daily basis the horrors experienced by large numbers of refugees from Syria, as well as from Africa and other geographic regions, all looking for a better life in world locations far from their homes.

Observing this reality, the authors of this chapter decided to elaborate this reflection, seeking to answer the following question: what guidance does a migrant or refugee need to undertake in a foreign country? As a methodological path, we chose to collect experiences reported by small entrepreneurs who witnessed the daily lives of their companies, their difficulties and the way they solved their problems.

First, let us clarify some of the terms will be used in this chapter, since misunderstandings could result in possible consequences to the management of the business. When starting a business, you will in fact represent three separate individuals in one: an **entrepreneur**, a **manager** and a **worker**. Conflict between these three characters represents a pathway to failure. Therefore, let's define the **entrepreneur**, the **manager** and the **worker**.

An entrepreneur is a person capable of transforming the simplest condition into an exceptional opportunity. When talking of entrepreneurship, it is usual to imagine the business aspects of creating an organization based on the qualities of someone classified as an entrepreneur: a visionary, a dreamer, someone capable of seeing into the future. Hence, if you are dreaming of setting up your own business, then you have an entrepreneurial personality.

Setting up a business will demand your role as a manager. The **manager** is a pragmatic, rational figure. Once the **entrepreneur** has identified the opportunities, it is the task of the **manager** to plan, organize, control and push forward initiatives aimed at making these opportunities feasible and putting them into practice. Finally, the **worker** is the person who does the work. He / she is hands-on. If you, as a migrant, decide to open a business, you may already be skilled in a certain technique, in some task, because you have already worked with someone in that field and have decided to take advantage of this skill and open your own business (e.g. mechanics, accounting, cooking, the retail trade, bars, snack bars and restaurants, sewing, etc.).

The operational work carried out within a business and the company that deals with that particular operation are two totally different things. When a worker opens his / her own business, he / she may not be aware of this difference, considering the business as a workplace and not as a business. This viewpoint is crucial when running a business. The routine daily tasks involved in carrying out the work take the

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