

Mentor SUCCESS STORY Helen Tindale



NICE GREEN CAFÉ AT CECIL SHARP HOUSE PROVIDES A VIBRANT CAFÉ SERVING IMAGINATIVE, FRESH, AFFORDABLE, CULTURALLY DIVERSE AND ETHICALLY SOURCED FOOD.

MOTIVATION

- ▼ To give back after experiencing the benefits of mentoring for herself
- ▼ To inspire and encourage entrepreneurship in the MENA region
- ▼ To revisit the region in which she had grown up and learn about Syria

ACTION

- ▼ Participated and completed the 1-year Mowgli Mentoring Experience (MME) program
- ▼ Regularly attended, engaged and spoke at Mowgli Jams and events
- ▼ Continued the mentoring relationship with her Mowgli Entrepreneur, Rawad Abdel Massih however, the current circumstances has made it difficult to communicate regularly



ACHIEVEMENT

- ▼ Successfully acted as a sounding board and guided Rawad through the program, which enabled him to see visible personal and business growth results
- ▼ Personally able to reflect on her own business and life and further develop her leadership skills
- ▼ Personally inspired by being part of a deeply connected support network, the Mowgli Family Network
- ▼ Developed a concept for a new business venture in Syria
- ▼ Decided to take on a 2nd Mowgli Entrepreneur in Jordan and is looking to participate in her 3rd program

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HELEN TINDALE

Green Café at Cecil Sharp House, UK

Helen Tindale has had an interesting and varied entrepreneurial career, having established a successful catering business and been a partner in a landscape design company. Over the past few years, she founded 3 successful projects: Green Café at Cecil Sharp House, Nice Green Van and UnLtd award-winning Kids Food Matters, enterprises promoting food education and combatting child food poverty.

Her involvement in mentoring started when she participated in one of Mowgli's programmes in Syria, in October 2010. She enjoyed and benefited from the experience so much that she enrolled in a second programme, which began in December 2011, this time in Jordan.

"For me, mentoring has been a spring board to so many avenues unexplored," she says. "It's had a very powerful impact on my day-to-day working life and inspired me to do more. Before I joined the programme in Syria, I wanted to do something useful, constructive and interesting. I like taking risks and doing something out of the ordinary. Mentoring offered all of these things, but within a framework that I admired and respected.

After having such a wonderful experience with Rawad, my Syrian mentee, I couldn't wait to sign up again!"

The Mowgli Foundation is passionate about mentoring, creating a sustainable mentoring culture and ultimately placing mentoring at the heart of supporting entrepreneurship, and was thrilled to hear about a project Helen initiated in her own community. Helen brought up Mowgli's programmes at a meeting for parents at her daughter's school in London. She shared her experiences and voiced the view that mentoring could be something that pupils could also gain from.

"Everyone can benefit from mentoring," she says. "Whatever age and stage we are at; we all want someone to listen and to care about what we have to say... someone who's interested in our paths and our futures."

The idea progressed and a small group of parents set up a steering group for the initiative, launching a 6-month pilot. It's been offered to year 12 students (aged 16-17) and has had a tremendous uptake with around 50 pupils participating. Mentors are parents with backgrounds in a wide range of sectors. The programme has been extremely successful; so much so that the school has been approached by other schools in the area who want to imitate it. Feedback from students has been very positive and those involved have shown an increase in confidence and ambitions; important at such a crucial time during their studies. "Young people rarely have the opportunity to get the

perspectives of adults who aren't family members or teachers," says Helen. "The ability to gain different perspectives has had a powerful impact on the students."

Many have had the opportunity and drive to access much more interesting work experience placements than they otherwise would have and Helen points out how the project has allowed students to get a "real departure from slogging away at maths and science" and gain some "valuable life experience." The success of the programme has meant that it will be continued into the next school year.

"I listen more and more effectively. I'm more sympathetic and empathetic. I'm much more focused. I put it down to what I've learnt through Mowgli"

Mentoring has had a profound impact on Helen's life and the school programme isn't the only expression of that. She hopes to set up a social enterprise in the MENA region, an ambition that was in large-part inspired by her participation

as a Mowgli Mentor. This experience gave her increased knowledge of and access to the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the MENA region, an aspect which has been invaluable in this process. Initially she had hoped to establish the enterprise in Syria but this plan has been put on hold due to the country's continuing unrest. With a visit planned to Egypt in the near future, she is now exploring other options.

Helen is keen to emphasise the changes that she's experienced both personally and professionally as a result of her experiences with Mowgli. This is evident in the way she deals with friends, family and employees: "I listen more and more effectively. I'm more sympathetic and empathetic. I'm much more focused. I put it down to what I've learnt through Mowgli."

Helen talks about her mentoring experience in Syria with Rawad

Helen Tindale has had an interesting and varied entrepreneurial career. As a partner in a successful Landscape Design business for 15 years, she built a strong track record of extensive consultancy experience. Helen also founded successful projects Nice Green Van and the UnLtd award-winning Kids Food Matters, enterprises promoting food education and combatting child food poverty. Helen became interested in Mowgli mentoring after a friend who had been involved in Mowgli Jordan recommended the experience.

Helen joined a Mowgli Syria programme in 2010. Having found mentoring beneficial

in her own career, she was keen to give someone else the same support. "I really enjoyed the matching weekend and the mix of wonderful people that I met," says Helen, "even though I didn't quite know what to expect! But I was very excited to visit Syria, especially since I grew up in the region."

Helen was matched with Rawad Abdel Massih, an entrepreneur from Homs, and the two got along well from the start. His business is a social enterprise in renewables, a passion shared by Helen's brother, and so they immediately found some shared interests. "Rawad has so much energy and drive," she says, "He really is a true entrepreneur." Initially, Helen gave Rawad some advice on the structuring of his business, but their mentoring relationships focused on encouragement and support rather than detailed advice. Helen visited Syria on two further occasions after the matching weekend. Unfortunately, because of the unrest, which arose in early 2011, she was unable to visit again.

Rawad has had to put his business on hold for now, but is doing well and is a member of a rock band that has recently released an album- the two continue to stay in touch as best they can. Helen's advice to anyone thinking of becoming a mentor is to know when and how to "hold back" while maintaining a strong friendship and connection- the situation in Syria provided a particularly challenging testing ground for the 'hold back' approach, but she feels it was ultimately the best one for Rawad.

"Mowgli really does change people's lives."

Personally and professionally, Helen has gained enormously from the Mowgli

experience. "Mentoring and the learning you do on the programme helps you to work out when to ask for assistance; it stops you from over-investing in time, energy and finances," she says. The Mowgli Syria experience and the people she met there also helped to kick off a new project, a social enterprise that aims to bring people from the UK to Damascus to learn to cook with a Syrian chef. Inevitably this has also been put on hold for the time being, but she's exploring other countries in which to deliver the concept – while also taking part in more Mowgli mentoring schemes in 2011, in Jordan.

Helen is enthused about the Mowgli programmes, which are "well structured, well led and well facilitated", and is especially passionate about the mission: "Mowgli is extraordinary. It really does change people's lives."

