



Business Owner



Mahdi Mahdi was born in Iraq and came to London in 1992. He was a doctor in Iraq and later in Algeria, but was not able to qualify as a doctor in Britain. Instead he set up and runs a now highly successful Mediterranean food production business.

Mahdi at his factory

Photograph by Museum of London

'My wife started a small business project from home, with the assistance of my next door neighbours, who were Iraqi Jews. They began a small business to produce Falafel and sell it to small Arabic shops. In a short time their product began to develop well. They asked me then to help them in this project... I used to drive around looking for shops, showing them our products... We began without any financial support and we had no money. Seven or eight years later, we now have a recognised factory well known in London and beyond London. We even have contacts outside Britain. Before this we used to rely on state benefits, but we managed to get out of the trap of social security within a short time. Right now we are employing about thirty staff. Most of them are Iraqis and other people who have come to Britain, whom we are helping indirectly to get off of benefit and out of a position of dependency... We produce Iraqi, Lebanese, even Israeli food, some North African and Greek food, also the traditional food we started with, and we invent new things sometimes, to attract the market. We are known in the market because of our quality, not because of our prices... We distribute all over London and we also reach the rest of Britain, to well known supermarkets.'

Refugee Communities History Project, courtesy of the [Evelyn Oldfield Unit](#) and [Museum of London](#)
