



Name:	Isabelle Stead	Age:	29
Business:	Human Film Ltd – production company	Website:	www.humanfilm.co.uk
University:	Leeds Metropolitan University (2007)	Degree:	MA, Film and Moving Image

"I set up Human Film Ltd with two colleagues – Mohamed Al Daradji, who is originally from Baghdad, and Danny Evans – after we met at Leeds Metropolitan University. It's the realisation of a long-held ambition for me. I wanted to make movies that matter to me. Our first feature, **Ahlaam**, also known as **Dreams**, was filmed in Iraq and set in the bombed ruins of a psychiatric facility. It won 18 awards for us internationally and was entered into the foreign language section of the 2007 Academy Awards and Golden Globes. We are currently completing Human Film's third feature, also set in Iraq."

The Business

"After two years of a degree in Film and Television, I had the chance to go and work in the film industry. I spent nearly a decade gaining experience working on movies, including five years in Los Angeles and Canada. During all that time I had little influence over the types of projects I worked on. I wanted to have a legacy of filmmaking that makes me proud when I look back in 20 years' time, so I returned to the UK to 'start from scratch' and enrolled on an MA determined to pursue my own projects. In Human Film, we each have different strengths: Mohamed writes and directs, Danny provides technical expertise, while I produce the films. We did well creatively, but needed to learn the 'nuts and bolts' of running a business."

How the NCGE helped

"I joined the NCGE's first FlyingStart Programme for Women Entrepreneurs in January 2008 and met some super creative people. I thought 'What we're doing running our business isn't so crazy after all.' At school I wasn't the best person in any one subject, so I never thought I'd set up a business! I've gained commercial knowledge and confidence. Now I handle all sorts of responsibilities: solving logistical problems, raising finance and chasing funds, running accounts, writing 26 page contracts, hiring crew members, creating business plans, and handling marketing."

At a glance...

Started Trading: 2007
Employees: 5 core, many freelance
Funding: Business Link, UKTI, Yorkshire Forward (TESS), UK Film Council, French Ministry of Culture and Communications

Business Growth

"After **Ahlaam**, we produced **Welcome To Baghdad** – which screened at the Goteborg, Rotterdam and Tribeca International Film Festivals. The third Human Film feature is now in the final stages of production. Called **Son of Babylon**, we hope to have it ready in time for for the Cannes Film Festival. Each production is a 'micro business' in its own right. Our latest feature, a UK/France/Iraq/Palestine co-production, has a budget of around £1 million. I've directed my own short film, **Chthonic**, and another, called **Kasher**, begins filming in France in July 2009 on a budget of £50,000."

About the FlyingStart Programme

This 12-month business start-up programme for new entrepreneurs is delivered by the NCGE and supported by the UK Government's Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). An intensive three-day residential training course is followed by 12 months' specialist mentoring and support. The aim is to have 66% of all graduates trading within one year. FlyingStart ensures all new graduate businesses have a ready-made national and regional network, a dedicated mentor, appreciate the 'know-hows and know-whos' of practical business, and understand how to make money.