

# NOURISHED ROUTES

## A COOK FOR CHANGE CASE STUDY

I'm Helen, a solo mum to two incredible girls and the Founding Director of Nourished Routes, a CIC dedicated to reducing health inequalities and tackling food insecurity.

We educate and empower children and young people, while supporting families through after-school clubs and community wellbeing events. Everything we deliver centres on cooking and nutrition, integrated with physical activity and mental wellbeing, because lasting health is never just about one thing.

Before starting Cook for Change, I had countless ideas pulling me in every direction. I was overwhelmed, sleeping just two to three hours a night, working over 60 hours a week, and paying myself less than minimum wage.

The programme challenged my thinking and helped me approach problems with clarity and confidence. Being part of a cohort of people who genuinely understand the realities of running a social enterprise was incredibly affirming. And whenever I've had a new idea or difficult challenge, Emma and Sarah have offered insight, encouragement, and practical advice.

I have now designed a curriculum for primary and secondary schools, which can be offered as a service or sold as a product. This has diversified our income streams, while widening our reach and impact. I'm also expanding our community workshops and programmes to better serve those who need us most. And I have a clear, streamlined action plan that positions Nourished Routes for long-term sustainability and growth.

The impact has been immediate and tangible. Since launching our new curriculum at the start of the academic year, attendance at our after-school club has grown from 30 children per week to 125 children per week in just one term. I now work around 45 hours a week, supported by an incredible team, including four new hires since joining Cook for Change.

This has given me the time and capacity to develop other areas of the business, and I finally have a much healthier work-life balance. My personal income has also improved significantly, which I'm deeply grateful for. This programme hasn't just supported my organisation. It's genuinely been life-changing.

