

Miranda has 18 years' experience as a nurse, spent ten years working in pharmaceutical sales, and has spent six years managing a GP practice near Leeds. She has delivered many aspects of small business management, including marketing, managing finances and building teams. She spent two weeks mentoring three entrepreneurs in Nairobi, Malewa and Kericho in July 2009.

SUNDAY: Arrival and orientation

I arrive at Nairobi airport in the morning, on the night flight from London. Some sleep on the flight! Am whisked off to the Kivi Milimani hotel in Nairobi. After a few hours' sleep and a swim, I spend a couple of hours with Peter, the Skills Venture facilitator. We run the orientation session over a beer and grilled tuna.



MONDAY: Initial meetings with mentees at their premises

I spend a day meeting my two Nairobi-based mentees. Edwin provides writing services for corporate and individual clients. He wants help with a marketing strategy and managing his finances. Timothy manufactures cosmetics and is looking for help with staff management and product pricing. Long discussions.



TUESDAY: Mentoring session with Edwin in Nairobi

The first full day of mentoring, also in Nairobi. We discuss Edwin's priorities in more detail. We devise a staff training strategy, complete a product pricing analysis, decide how to set up a website, and create a marketing strategy. Edwin now has a short, medium and long term plan for discussion next week.



WEDNESDAY: Mentoring session with Timothy in Nairobi

Timothy has business plans running around in his head to the extent that he can hardly sleep at night. He feels that the mentoring has given his business a new lease of life, and a positive view of the future which he did not have before. We will stay in touch by email, but first we have another mentoring day next week.



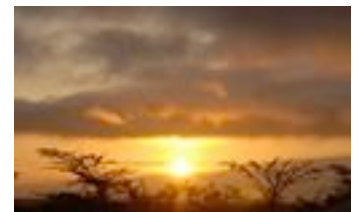
THURSDAY: Mentoring session with Sylvia in Kericho

Sylvia manages Kericho Academy and needs to set out clear roles for all staff, collect fees, attract more students, motivate teachers, and manage accounts. No small list. Sylvia says: "Miranda was of great help to me and I will continue to be in touch with her when I feel stuck or unable to handle any challenges."



FRIDAY: Time to reflect and prepare for next week

Nice to have some time to relax a bit after a tiring but immensely fulfilling four days! I use Friday to reflect thoroughly on the meetings I have had so far this week, and to decide what to focus on when I meet each of the mentors again for a day each next week. Lots of plans, lots of ideas to discuss with each one.



SATURDAY: Trip to the nearby wildlife reserve and Nairobi museum

I use Saturday to do some proper tourist activity, and spend the day at Nairobi National Park, which is only 45 minutes away by car. A great chance to see giraffe, zebra, gazelle, rhino, ostrich, warthog, flamingo... Followed by a quick wander round the fascinating museum in Nairobi, a filling meal, then bed.

