Andreas, 83, Dry Cleaners/Laundry, Nicosia

**1. Can you tell me a few things about yourself? For example, when and where you were born? Did you study for anything? Have you travelled or lived overseas?**

*I’m 83 years old and I was born in Nicosia. I have three children, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. I opened this laundry with my wife in 1966 and we’ve been here ever since. I come here five days a week from the morning ‘til the afternoon. I like it here, I have contact with people; people drop in for chats … just like now when you came in to meet me.*

[the place was still fitted with old washing machines and machinery which are no longer in use, so we asked if the business still operates normally since it didn’t appear to be a working shop.]

*In the past we used to work with white spirit; later on its use was prohibited. My machines here are old and they don’t work with the new cleaning chemicals and so they’re sat here out of use. I don’t have a washing machine at home; we’ve got an old one here and we bring in our laundry to the shop.*

**2. Have you ever owned another business in the past? How long have you been an owner of a business? How many businesses have you owned in the past?**

*No, this is the only business I’ve ever owned. I was a tailor a long time ago and I know how to sew a little, but back then we saw that there was a need for a laundry in the area, so my wife and I decided to open one. After that, others opened up in the area too. There was one further up, another two further down that way; though they’ve all closed over the years.*

**3. Can you tell me about the history behind your business?**

*We opened this business with my wife 52 years ago. Back then people would come to the laundry to have their clothes washed; not everyone had a washing machine at home. There were hotels that would bring in the bed linen, the church nearby {Faneromenis} would bring us table cloths soiled with wax and we would clean them. We had ample work. Then business started to die down.*

**4. Are you facing any obstacles or problems in keeping your business going?**

*People would come to the laundry before. Now there are new methods which have affected our work and these don’t allow us to carry on. Our machines are old, we used to use white spirit, which as I told you before, is now a prohibited substance. I have old pressing machines here [he points to them] which are out of use now, technology has changed.*

[we asked why he didn’t invest in new equipment]

*It’s expensive machinery. We’ve got these old ones and we get by with these. We don’t have work anymore.*

**5. What advantages did you see in continuing your business? Why don’t you just retire since the business isn’t doing well?**

*I get a pension of €300 a month and my wife gets a pension too. I rent this place for €95 a month, it’s low cost and so I’ve held on to it. If I went to the coffee shop and played cards I’d gamble away that much anyway. But I like coming here and passing my time. I come in every morning and greet my neighbours; we chat with the customers of the small coffee shop on the corner and I know all of them [he points to the coffee shop across the street]; and the day passes by pleasantly [as we were talking an elderly gentleman greeted him and asked where the shop-owner of the shop next-door was]. Sometimes I sit under that tree [pointing out to the tree across the street from the shop] and watch them playing backgammon in the coffee shop. What would I do at home?*

**6. Considering the experience that you have built up over the years but also the experience that you are going through now, would you say that you are still able to maintain the business and deal with the problems that affect it?**

*I like my job, when we had customers I had people coming in everyday. Our customers were happy with our work. Our children have gone their own way, and we don’t have that many customers anymore. [The place looks like a museum for antiquated machinery and it was obvious that the laundry doesn’t operate anymore; even so Mr Andreas still opens up every day, just like he used to.]*