Savvas, 81, Fabric Shop, 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 81 years old and I’ve had this fabric shop here in Ledra Street since 1970. I used to work in another shop like this one, then I opened my own. I’m married and I’ve got three children and four grandchildren [his wife and two of his grandchildren are sitting at the back of 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?**

*This shop was run by someone else, but then his children didn’t want the business and so I took over. I used to work at another fabric shop; I knew the business and I’ve been running this shop ever since.*

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

*We opened the shop with my wife in 1970. We’re still in the same place, in Ledra Street, which used to be the main road of old Nicosia. There were other fabric sellers in the area, some have stayed on, others have had their children take over and others have closed. My children are in other professions but I still come here with my wife. What can I do, should I close it? But then what would I do with the stock? [He points to the stock.]*

**4. What advantages did you see in opening your business?**

*It was a good business, I knew about fabrics and in the past many people knew how to sew; they would buy fabric for making curtains, dresses... it’s not like nowadays where they buy ready-made. The shop is on a main rod, but it’s not mine, I pay rent. I don’t make enough money to cover the expenses; I supplement money from my pension to keep the shop open. But I don’t mind. If we stayed at home all day, what would we be doing? Here we have passers-by, we see people we know... people know us here.*

[we asked if he thought about closing]

*When I’ve sold my stock I’ll stop [it’s obvious from the lack of work and from the amount of stock there is in the shop, that it won’t be happening soon].*

**5. What obstacles or problems are you facing in keeping your business going?**

*People don’t have things made anymore so they don’t buy fabric, business has really gone downhill but what can we do? We try. I put in money from my pension to keep the shop going, but if I went to the coffee shop instead I would be wasting my money there too.*

**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 love my shop. I’ve been here for years, we know all the shop owners – those that are still here - and the shop is like my home. So that’s why I consider it as part of my life; it’s my home - do you understand?*