Andreas, 76, Picture Framer, 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 76 years old. I’m from Lapithos and my wife’s from Dali. We live here in Nicosia where we got married. I’ve got two children and five grandchildren. I’ve had my picture frame shop for 45 years. I come here with my wife every day. We don’t have work every day, [he shows us pictures which he has framed for a customer]. When we’ve got enough work my son comes and helps me.*

**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?**

*I used to work at another framing shop, and then I opened my own. People come here to have pictures framed. Sometimes tourists come in wanting photographs of Cyprus framed.*

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

*We started off about 43 years ago; I rent the shop from the Archbishopric. All the shops you see around here belong to the Archbishopric. The rent is low, I pay Є150 a month. The Archbishopric is also a customer of ours and sometimes they assign large jobs to us, for example when they have an exhibition and they want us to make frames for them. When I’ve got big jobs like this my son comes in and helps us out, even though he is in another profession. Work is definitely not how it used to be, there are days when we have more work than others but I like it here, people drop in, we know the other shop-owners and our time here passes pleasantly. We bring our lunch with us from home and we eat here with my wife; we stay until the afternoon when we go home.*

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

*Financial reasons and also it’s what I know how to do. People ask me why I carry on, and I tell them that all my friends who are my age are walking around with walking sticks. They’ve grown old since they’ve retired. You know why? Because if you don’t have a reason to get up in the morning, go to work and be productive, you get depressed and grow old. But look at me! [Pointing to himself and we agree that he doesn’t look his age at all.]*

[we asked him if still has an appetite for his work]

*Of course. I wake up in the morning and can’t wait to get here. What would I do if I stayed at home? Watch stupid television programmes? And I’m not one to spend time in the coffee shop either; what’s the point of going to the coffee shop, playing backgammon and cards like other idlers? I come here in the mornings and open up the shop with my wife; have my coffee and chat with the neighbours. When new shops open around here, I meet new people. Old Nicosia is full of people and it never used to be like that. A lot of coffee bars and restaurants have opened over the past few years and many people visit the area.*

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

*Well work has died down. It’s not like it used to be. In the past Nicosia’s centre was in these areas. Then the shopping centre was moved further out and people stopped coming to our shops. It’s only recently that people have come back to Old Nicosia because cafes, restaurants and chain stores have opened. The streets have filled with people, whereas before it was just us. But even now, when there are more people coming in to the old town, it’s for a stroll and to eat; they’re not coming to have pictures framed.*

**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?**

*The shop has a sentimental value for me. I like coming here. I don’t do it for the money, but if I stayed at home what would I do? The shop has been open here for years, as long as I have my good health and I’m able to, I’ll come and open up, sit here and pass my time until the afternoon when it’s time to go home.*