Andros, 77, Ice Cream Parlour, Liopetri

**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 77 years old, I was born in Liopetri and I’ve got five children and six wonderful grandchildren. I have had this shop for just over 30 years. I didn’t finish school and that was my biggest problem because it was difficult to get a job. Wherever you go they ask for degrees and years of experience. It’s difficult to get a job the way things are now.*

**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 had always worked as an employee in various jobs. I worked in hotels and then I managed a warehouse at a company in Aradippou village. When I got older I realised that a job as a warehouse manager wasn’t something that I wanted to do for the rest of my life, as well as the fact that once I got to 65 I would be obliged to retire. So I decided to open this business, to invest in my future and to have a business of my own.*

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

*After I’d worked at various jobs, as a builder, in warehouses and others, I decided to open up my own business. I had ideas about what I wanted to do and one of those was to open an ice cream parlour or something in the contracting business. I ended up doing the first as it was easier, and because it wouldn’t have anything to do with governmental authorities. There’s a lot of running around for permits from the authorities if you’re a contractor and it takes up so much of your time. So I decided to open this shop. I work alone, but sometimes my wife comes in to help and my children might come when there’s a lot of work especially on the weekends. I don’t make very much money out of it but it’s a little extra so I can offer something to my grandchildren. I really do love what I do and I have never regretted it. I’m my own boss and have no one to nag me.*

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

*What I like about this job is that I always have customers. People always come in for an ice cream even in the winter. Of course the weather helps quite a bit because, even in the winter, temperatures rise to 18-20oC, so people will still drop in for an ice cream. I’m the owner of the shop and have no one else making rules for me. I’m 77 years old and I couldn’t imagine having someone giving me orders at my age. Thankfully, I do what I want to do. For example if I need to do something or I have a wedding to go to, there’s no one to tell me that I can’t go and have to stay at work; I close up and go. I was also able to set up the shop the way I want it without too much expense. The building here belonged to my late first cousin who was the chair of the community council. He left it to his children and because none of them wanted to make use of it, I pay €70 a month for rent and I have my shop here. My only expense is the electricity which is about €150 a month and the €70 rent; the rest of the income is for my family.*

**5. So there aren’t any problems with your business?**

*What problems should there be? I sit here from 9 in the morning ‘til 9 at night; I relax and watch people go by. No worries at all. If you don’t have a lot of expenses you don’t have a lot of problems. It’s that simple. Sometimes I might get bored when there’s no work, but there’s always someone who will drop in to keep me company.*

**6 Are you facing any obstacles or problems in keeping your business going? Why don’t you just retire and stop working?**

*I don’t have any problems with the shop. The income is not so good but things are better in the summer time which helps to boost my pension. It’s good to have an income but it’s mainly the fact that I feel better having something to do rather than staying at home and not knowing what to do. What would I do at home? Or should I go to the coffee shop from the morning and have coffee after coffee and play backgammon? I see others doing that, wasting half their pension at the coffee shop. So I still work and avoid spending money at the coffee shop but I’m also making an extra income since my running expenses are low.*

**7. 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 this job because there are only advantages. There are no problems and that makes me happy to be here. I don’t think I will ever close the business down. I will carry on for as long as I can because, truth be told, it’s not a difficult job. When the time comes and I won’t be able to carry on any more, I will pass it on to one of my children, that’s if they want it, of course.*