Maria, 65, Clothes Shop, Frenaros

**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 65 years old. I was born in Frenaros and I’ve had this small clothes shop here for 20 years. I left school when I finished elementary school so that I could help my mum at work. I’ve got three children and one granddaughter, my Maria.*

**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 is the only business I’ve ever owned. I started working in the potato fields with my parents from a young age. I worked there until I was 30. After I got married, my husband didn’t want me to work in the fields anymore, and so I worked in other jobs that I didn’t even like. Then I opened this shop and it’s the only one I have.*

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

*I started this business by myself. I got a loan from the bank to open the shop because I had always wanted to work with fashion; I’ve always had a soft spot for clothes. My parents were well known in the village because it’s small and so when I opened the shop it attracted a lot of customers. The clothes are for ladies and they’re casual styles that ladies can wear at home or to go for a coffee with friends. I work here alone. My husband and children aren’t involved in the shop, they only come in to see their grandmother [she hugs her granddaughter who was there with her at the time].*

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

*I don’t make enough daily sales because it’s a small shop and there are so many other shops in the area now which the ladies can go to. Paralimni is close by and they prefer to go there. My customers are mostly from the village; I prefer it here because I only have good customers. Basically all my customers are older ladies, most of them anyway, and they only come to me for clothes. I like it because I have regular customers and I can rely on them. I could certainly stay at home now and live off my pension to spend time with my granddaughter, but my pension isn’t enough to say that we can live a life of luxury but we could certainly get by. Anyway I wouldn’t close the shop yet, even if I won the lottery.*

**5. 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?**

*It’s something I have been doing for a number of years now. I wouldn’t dream of closing the shop. My life is here and I’ll continue to work here for as long as I can. It’s part of my life. I don’t pay rent anyway or anything else. So, whatever I make is mine. But if you are wondering why I’m still working, it’s for sentimental reasons.*