

ERASMUS+ Programme 2015 – KA2 Adult Education

Project n°: 2015-1-ES01-KA204-015937

Document name: **Interviewing entrepreneurial women - Macedonia**

Partner: Alliance for Development of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning (ADAE)

Author: Jelena Peroska

Employment and Women on the 21st century in Europe: From Household economy to SME economy (Small and Medium enterprises) – MUPYME Project

INTERVIEWING ENTREPRENEURIAL WOMEN

Docka (Grujevska)



The interview took place at Docka's flower shop, on Thursday the 19th May.

The interview will follow the 29 questions divided in 5 themes: the identification, the beginning, the consolidation, the future, the enterprising woman

Reviewed by: Jelena Peroska

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1. The identification

1.1 Activity: Flower shop

1.2 Number of establishments: 1

1.3 Number of employees and professional qualifications: 1

1.4 Type of products or services: Making flower arrangements for different occasions, gift wrapping, decorative handmade products

1.5 Place and kind of markets that addresses: The shop is in Tetovo and it is situated in a multicultural area. The costumers are majority Albanians so the type of the service is adapted to the needs of the clients.

Docka is 28 years old. She lives in Tetovo. She is married and she was expecting in the time the interview was taken.

Her business is a private floral shop. She is the director and the owner of the business. She is the only employee in the shop but she is planning to hire someone because she will have to go on maternity leave soon.

She is a simple lady, kind and humble. She leans on the support of the family, especially her father who is constantly visiting her at the shop and helping her daily. He works nearby so it is easy for him to be around.

2. The beginning

2.1 Is this the first venture? This is her first private business. She worked before in other companies and she never had experience with managing her own business.

2.2 When and why she made the decision to start this business experience? The decision to open her own business was initiated by her father. Her father supported her and motivated her to start her business and that was crucial for her to begin working on her own.

2.3 Did you have previous experience in this particular field? She had work experience in sales, but not in the floral business. She worked as a sales person in a convenience store and with textile.

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2.4 What have been the main difficulties in the beginning? The difficulties in the beginning were affiliated with the financial area and the experience area. She had difficulties in investing for the business and she had to look for support from her family. Also, she did not have any previous experience in the floral business so she had to learn how to perform the activities in her shop.

2.5 Did you find help and support in the beginning? Eventually, she found out about a project that supported small businesses in the region so she applied for participation. The project aim was to promote women entrepreneurship and to strengthen the capacities of women to start their own businesses. She managed to get financial support from the project and with the funds she equipped the shop and started to work. Also, the project enabled her to attend several trainings connected to entrepreneurial skills and management of a small business.

2.6 What has allowed you to overcome the difficulties of the beginning? She had support from her family, especially from her father. Her father was the one that taught her how to perform all the administrative tasks in the company and he was almost every day at the shop in case she needed assistance with something.

2.7 What has been the most important decision at the start of your project? The most important decision that she made was to apply to participate in the project for support of small businesses. She gained experience in managing a small business through her participation in the project activities and she was then able to apply them in the work she is doing.

3. The consolidation

3.1 What factors have been crucial for the maintenance of your project? Docka considers that the support from her family was crucial in maintaining the project. She thinks that she would not have made it to here, if there weren't for her husband and mostly her parents. She needed someone to help her with the establishment of the company and with her responsibilities in her house.

3.2 What have you had to develop to keep alive your project? Docka did not have any experience in managing a business before, so she had to develop skills in order to be able to maintain the shop. The trainings from the small businesses project helped her a lot. Her father transferred his knowledge and experience on her so she learned from him also.

3.3 What has been missing, what things have helped you in this process of consolidation? As she stated before in the interview, without the support of her family she wouldn't be able to establish and run the business. They support her and help her with tasks within the company

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and in the household. They even support her financially at the beginning so she can maintain the business. She thinks that there should be more support from the institutions: the municipality, the employment agency etc. because they have programs and measures that can support women to be entrepreneurs.

3.4 What has been the most important decision in the process of consolidation? The most important decision she made in the process of consolidation was to research the market and adjust her offer on the market needs. She was aware of her surroundings and she explored what people need and would usually buy in a flower shop so she adjusted the products she offered for the customers. This helped her in obtaining regular customers and maintaining the business.

3.5 How do you react to perceived uncertainty or error? She tries to stay positive and look for the positive aspects in every situation.

4. The future

4.1 Docka is planning to expand the business in the future, but for now she wants to see how it will go for her and the family.

4.2 She considers being very fortunate because she has the support from the family. Other women do not have that kind of support and cannot dedicate themselves totally to the business. She thinks that this really helps in succeeding with her business because she can spend more time upgrading her products and the sale.

4.3 The future success of the business depends both on her will to work more on it and also the context in which the business is established. The society is changing and the needs of the people change so she has to be aware of the market needs and to act upon those needs. She need to be able to answer on the occurred changes and to be flexible enough and to adapt.

4.4 She is pregnant at the moment and she expects to be going on labour leave so for some time she will not be so much engaged in the work of the shop. She was planning to employ someone else to manage the shop while she is not there.

4.5. As she stated before, flexibility and reliability are essential. You have to be aware of the market needs and changes and be able to respond quickly. Responsiveness is the key for successful collaboration with customers.

5. Enterprising women

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5.1 The shop offers services that are usually perceived as a woman's job. So, she has a very large input in the business from her being a woman. She uses her creative skills to develop products that are appealing for the costumers and has the needed "woman's touch".

5.2 Docka says that there are a lot of things that you can transfer from the household to the business. The flower shop is like her second home. She makes sure that it is clean, well arranged, that the tasks are delivered on time. You have to manage the finances, to do the paperwork and make sure everything is as needed to be and the costumers are satisfied.

5.3 In her household she is also in charge of the finances and the maintenance of the household so she was familiar with some of the activities undertaken in the business. She had help from her father also with the work in the shop, as he is more experienced in administrative work because he also owns and manages a small business.

5.4 There are similarities between the both fields. Now that Docka is running her own business, she realizes that many tasks that she performed in the household, she performs them in the shop also. There is more complexity in the tasks performed in the business but also when you work in the household you do not notice all the tasks you are performing and it comes naturally to you.

5.5 Docka thinks that women are more detailed in their work, so you can notice that a woman is leading the business. Women can be more observant and pay attention to details. So you know when something is planned to the smallest detail there must be a women behind it.

5.6 For entrepreneurship the initiative is the most important part. You need to be willing to start something from scratch and to develop along the way. Docka says that you have to work hard if you want to achieve something and to take initiative. You need to try new things and take risks because if you don't do that you will never move forward and nobody will come and do all that for you.

5.7 Docka thinks that they have to develop continuously in the field of financial management and management of human resources. If you want to run a small business and you have expansion aspirations for the future, you have to build up your skills in these areas, especially if you did not have any formal education in financial management.