

A: So I turn on the microphone. Yeah, actually this is my first interview here.

Y: Don't worry.

A: Yeah, so, could you, please, tell me a bit about your background? So, maybe, what is your education and how it is connected with what you are doing now?

Y: Yeah, I think when I read the first four questions, and I think that almost all of them are interlinked, so I can just start with how this all... how I came up with that.

A: Yeah.

Y: Because that has everything to do with my studies and stuff I'm doing, right. So I told you, I'm a German lawyer, actually. I studied Law in Germany. After that I studied abroad. Maybe just one second? Now you've recorded already a little bit, right?

A: Yeah.

Y: Check quickly if you can hear it because there's a lot of ...

A: No, it's OK. I already did it. It will be fine.

Y: OK. Just checking. I'd do it ... Yeah, so I studied Law in Germany, and then I went studying abroad in South Africa. In Germany when you study Law, it's very broad. Actually after, like, some really tough study, and it takes a lot of years, but after that you're basically qualified to do every type of legal work. You could be a lawyer, or an advocate, or you could also be a judge. Or, you know, all kinds of different things. And within these legal studies we had to specialize in some certain fields, and I was interested from the beginning in Public International Law.

A: Hm.

Y: And then again, because we had to study all the subjects, our studies also included Private International Law and International Relations. But it was perfect for me, because I was most of the time interested in international affairs and I wanted to become a diplomat. I went for Foreign Affairs. And that was a little bit like, how I could see my future – travelling a lot, and working, and solving problems where you are.

A: Oh.

Y: And then I did an internship at the German Foreign Ministry in Myanmar. I went to an Embassy there in Myanmar. And it was really interesting, because there, it's a very small country, and it was interesting then because Germany is a big country, right. But they also represented other European countries - Austria, Switzerland, like the small countries, and also the Netherlands. By that time I already lived in the Netherlands. So I spoke Dutch, and there, in Myanmar, they had to take care of a Dutch prisoner, and I took over this case.

A: Wow.

Y: So I went regularly to see him, to talk about legal options to get him out of prison. Because we were convinced, whatever he had done, he did not deserve the sentence that he'd got. It was 42 years of prison for almost nothing.

A: 42?!

Y: Right. And we didn't know if he actually had a fair trial because the country's really corrupt, right. So we didn't really know how to treat that. So we wanted to get him out first, and then, you know, to get him to trial in the Netherlands or in Germany.

A: Oh.

Y: So, that was the idea, and I worked really hard on this case for 3 months. And after that I actually managed that the guy got out. And this is when I realized that this is what I want to do in my future. I really want to help people one-on-one. Like, I've always thought that I had a privilege, that I was born in Europe, and that I could enjoy all this free education and go abroad... And actually, you know, I had the scholarship to go to South Africa. You know, this kind of things I've always thought about. There are so many people who are exactly my age, and they don't have that opportunity to learn so much. And so Law, I studied 8 years. I studied German Law, International Law. Then I went to South Africa and did International Relations and International Law. And eventually I did my Master's here in the Netherlands in Leiden University, also in Public International Law.

A: Hm.

Y: And I thought at the end that I really was very... I've always loved that, but especially at the end I concluded by saying that I was really lucky that I could learn all that. And I had the opportunity to go with this mindset to a lot of countries, and Africa, and Asia, and actually see the reality. And I wanted to do something. But I also need to make money, right. So, in my Master's still, I worked here at a law firm as a lawyer in Private International Law.

A: Hm.

Y: There you can make a lot of money, but I was constantly under the impression that I was helping the wrong people. So, because, you know, the people there were really commercial.

A: Oh.

Y: Our clients, they were just like, "*Yeah, I know I have to pay 1,000,000 and it's not so much money, so why would I care about this case.*" And I would be busy for half a year with this case! So I was constantly thinking, like, "*What am I doing?!*"

A: Were they like individuals or big companies that you dealt with?

Y: Both companies and individuals, but mostly companies. So it was like a typical commercial law firm. You know, I was thinking then, it's great that those people achieved so much, but I have seen in my life already so many other people who need more help, and I felt very privileged to help with that knowledge, so I just quit there.

A: Oh.

Y: And I thought, “*OK, so now I don’t have any money, but I still have my Master’s, which was Public International Law.*” And International Law field is where you don’t make a lot of money. And there are a lot of unpaid internships in the beginning, to be able to actually become a diplomat or like, working for a big international organization. That was by then still my goal, either the one or the other. Didn’t matter.

A: Hm.

Y: But by that time I had already studied for a long time. So I was interested in three fields of Law. The one was Law of the Sea because I was really interested in what was actually going on with transport...

A: You mean Maritime...?

Y: Maritime law. Yeah, Maritime law is more of a private side of it. So it’s Transport law, actually. And Law of the Sea is more like boundaries and limitations of countries, piracy and this type of things.

A: Ah, I see.

Y: And I find all of that very interesting. But also I have harder works with this type of things. I specialized a little bit more in that field, but also there you obviously come across a lot of trade issues. And I found that interesting because 90% of the trade in the world is done by ship, and still we don’t actually know anything about it.

A: Yeah, that’s right.

Y: So that was interesting. At the same time I was really interested in the field of Sustainable Development, because I really think that that’s the future. And still I was interested in the Property. So eventually I read up on all of these things, and I applied to New York for the UN for an internship, which I got at UNCTAD. That’s the UN Conference for Trade and Development. That’s exactly what they do. They help to make, for example, trade policies for developing countries to help them actually to get a chance in the world economy, to play a role.

A: Oh.

Y: So also my Master’s thesis was about disappearing island states. I also was interested in environment, and climate change, and all these related topics that we need to take into account when we want to talk about sustainability.

A: Oh.

Y: So I was thinking, “*OK, what’s actually happening if these islands disappear due to rise of sea level, for example, and people will have to move somewhere.*” I mean, does the state disappear then or, like, what happens? Like, the people are still there even if the island is gone. And they need to have a passport, for example, you know, to be able to move. And they don’t

really have a lot of money and a lot of items with them. So there was a very interesting finish also, of my studies, because I felt more and more, while I was interning in the UN, that I want to go this way. But I also realized that diplomacy or a big international organization, I mean, I was seeing in the center of it, it was not for me at this point in time, because I felt that they were talking about sustainability, very complex issues on a very high level...

A: Hm.

Y: And it's a very political level.

A: Yeah.

Y: And I felt that I understand the level, but I don't really think that I knew enough by that time about the reality.

A: Oh.

Y: So I got convinced in New York that the future of Sustainable Development will probably be the task of the business sector, because they are much quicker in making decisions. So if they change, a lot will change. And it's interesting for them to be sustainable in their acting, right. So, you know what. If I really want to make rules as a lawyer later on that work, or I want to be a diplomat and influence at the right policies, then I need to know how the reality looks like. And since I'm convinced that the business sector will actually make the change, and I got really inspired by the people who spoke there, for example, I was once at the General Assembly of the United Nations, and then the CEO of *Unilever* gave a speech. And I was really interested why he said the things that he said. You know, for example, he said that he doesn't think that capitalism is the future. And I was like, "*You're the CEO of one of the most powerful companies in the Netherlands and in the US, and saying something like that... Well, that must mean something.*" And *Unilever* is very busy with sustainability.

A: Yeah. I know, they came to us in terms of our studies and talked a lot about it...

Y: Yeah.

A: But you never know if they really do these things. Like, they talk a lot about it, but do they really help on this small level, not this high... like to real people?

Y: Yes, in a sense that they make products available to people everywhere because they're selling products at affordable price, you see. I'm not 100% sure, but I think *Colgate*, the toothpaste, they belong to *Unilever*...

A: Yeah.

Y: You see them everywhere in developing countries. And I'm like, "*OK. For example, let's say, they make a packaging of this toothpaste in a sustainable, maybe biodegradable way, they'll have a huge impact.*" So I agree, I'm not always sure that multinationals and other big companies are making sustainable decisions, because they are really convinced that's the future, or it's just a marketing strategy...

A: Yeah.

Y: I'm not 100% sure, but I think if they do it, it doesn't matter because the result will be good. You know, eventually it will be a trend. I've already seen this thing now, and I'm very happy that that is a trend. And I think that, to come back to your question, I think that convinced me the most that I should start my own business. Because I am convinced that this is the future, and I want to live with my own company. Like a very, very low carbon food brand, for example.

A: Oh.

Y: And I want to make a social impact. It will be very small in the beginning, but it's still doing the right thing. Actually supporting this trend and telling everyone about it will also have an impact on other companies, you know.

A: Yeah.

Y: And it's actually why I do that. Personally, I do that because I want to know how difficult it is to actually be a sustainable entrepreneur. And in this case, I chose for a social enterprise, right. It is investing 70% of the profit into small sustainable ice cream enterprises in developing countries.

A: Yeah.

Y: And here we are only hiring refugees. So every business decision that I make, I ask myself a question: "Is there a sustainable alternative, or a social alternative, or economically sound alternative for what I do?" So I, for example, didn't lend any money from a bank because I don't trust banks a lot, right. I do have a bank account, but that is a bank account where I know they don't trade weapons, they respect human rights, they are only making investments into the projects that are good for environment, you know.

A: So you try to support the same social entrepreneurial companies...?

Y: Yes.

A: ...whether it is in any part of your business?

Y: Yes. Any part. Even the pen that we're signing our contracts with is made from recycled material. It's everything. I have very, very high standards on sustainability. And, well, I know, the next question you gonna ask me is like, "*OK, so why you're making ice-cream?*"

A: Yeah. Well, how did you choose specifically ice cream? It's so like, yeah... So unusual!

Y: Right, it is. But if you come from the way that I just drawn for you, it doesn't actually matter what the type of business is that you do. It's just as long as you make some money, so you are self-sustainable, right. And for me, personally, I'm a very creative person, and before I started studying I thought: "*What am I gonna do?*" I'm interested in law and intellectual challenges, and I also like to do something creative. So I also would be interested in studying

arts, but that part completely disappeared because I always was so busy with studying Law. So eventually, I came back and I thought, “*Really, I want to do something creative. At least, something...*” If I can really choose, I’d own a company, which still serves intellectual challenge. I would like to produce something. Something that I make with my own hands and I’m selling it, instead of, you know, using a retail or something like other business types or being a franchise or somebody else, you know. Like, I really wanted to do something that I know, from the scratch, how everything works. Ice cream is a product that is popular in every part of the world...

A: Yeah.

Y: ...which makes it very suitable for our projects in developing countries. It’s not too hard to learn how to make it. It takes a lot of exercise after that, but the actual learning, like what are the ingredients you need, and how much sugar you need to not make the ice cream melt; these types of things – you can learn it easily. So I went to Italy to Gelato University, right.

A: Yeah.

Y: And I did a Gelato course there, and after that it was just a lot of exercise, but I learnt so many things that I can also learn out of people. But if you start, let’s say, choose something else, but food, if you want to start a bakery, you have to invest 3 years of learning how to do it. So this was a little bit how I got to ice cream.

A: So you also took it into account...

Y: Yes.

A: ...when you were choosing what to do. So what can you learn quite fast?

Y: Well, looking back, yes, I did. At the time when I decided to do it, I just always had a passion for ice cream businesses, I don’t know why.

A: So you just liked to eat it.

Y: Well, I loved the product. I was always passionate about it since I was a little girl. I always tell the story because people ask a lot about our logo. Well, it’s a three-unit ice cream bowl and ice-cream scoops, actually. And it actually came up, because I told once to friends of mine, when we were talking about that, I was considering doing it. That when I was little and I was with my family on vacation, we had *Magnums*...

A: Yeah.

Y: And I always come and say as a little girl that if I put the ice cream sticks in the ground, it will be an ice cream tree.

A: Yeah.

Y: Right. And this is how we came up with that.

A: I try to imagine. It would be a fantastic world!

Y: Yeah, it would be awesome. So, yeah. I think I've always had the passion. And when I was studying Law, it was a very hard time, because in Germany in law studies you have a failure rate of about 50%.

A: Oh.

Y: For the end exam. So it's really like a psychological pressure.

A: Yeah, I understand.

Y: But in that time, studying for that last exam, it means like 'all-or-nothing'. It's really like that type of exam. Like, none of your former grades count any more. Only that one exam.

A: Oh my God.

Y: And you have to study about one and a half years for it, right.

A: Wow.

Y: And in that time I almost dropped out, because I thought that it's crazy that they do it to a human person. And I thought: "*You know what? I can always have an ice cream store somewhere or sell ice cream at the beach if I don't like to be a lawyer later on anymore. For now I just gonna sacrifice my time for this stupid exam.*" But I could also always do something else if I like it, you know. And this helped me a lot.

A: Hm.

Y: So the ice cream didn't come from nowhere. But it's kind of all made sense, and all the dots were connected in one of the meetings that I had at the UN. There was a meeting about, like, a conference about a ten-year framework program for Sustainable Development, right. So they were talking about a program on certain fields, like tourism, for example, or housing, you know. How you can make all these things more sustainable and how you can achieve this goal within 10 years. And I was just sitting there, and it took 6 hours, so I was just like, "*What the hell?! Like the all of the things that you're talking about here, I heard them so often, but still nothing happens.*" It's so frustrating. We all know what we have to do, so why is nobody actually starting to do it, you know? And at this moment, it was just like ... *Sustainable Ice Cream!* That's what it is.

A: Wow.

Y: And then I missed the whole last part of the minute because I was writing my own business plan. I missed all kind of subway stops in New York because I was reading all *Ben & Jerry's* books. You know, and I was just so interested in social entrepreneurship that I did another course at Business school of Copenhagen in Social Entrepreneurship. I was so convinced, and actually I'm still convinced that you can make a change and solve social environmental problems by doing business. I think it's so much better than an NGO that is

always dependent on money from donators. You know, and like the whole philanthropy thing. There you always depend on somebody.

A: Yeah.

Y: Whereas if you just have your own business, you can just do it, you know. You're always the boss. I like that.

A: Yeah, I understand. You can influence immediately by doing. Just doing something.

Y: And what I also feel is that by doing it you already reach so many people, because I have to tell my story so many times. All kind of friends, family, you know, and everyone... And the cool thing is that ice cream is such an eye-catcher!

A: Yeah, it's true.

Y: It's like, "*Oh, I love it. My friend is an ice cream maker! How cool!*" And every time they say, "*And she's making the most sustainable ice-cream of Amsterdam.*" And that is how people go, "*Wow!*" You know.

A: Are there people inspired maybe, by your story?

Y: Yeah, there's like whole dynamic. Like one I didn't expect in the beginning. Like, obviously, I knew that if you are a social sustainable enterprise, you have a story to tell, and you have to tell it.

A: Yeah.

Y: So one of your questions is 'Are you using social media?' Yes! Our website is super-important! Because there you have the space to actually tell the story. And social media, yeah, for sure, because I have an ice cream factory, right, not a store. So we are invisible for the public, basically. Because the factory is somewhere there behind the houses, so nobody knows, right. And so for us the visibility is online, whereas we sell the product offline.

A: Oh.

Y: Actually, it's probably an interesting combination. But for us to announce that we will be on a market with a food truck, or we will be there at the beach selling ice cream, or that we have developed a new product – all these things we have to announce via social media.

A: Yeah.

Y: And we're using Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. For YouTube it's actually a little smaller, because you have to make a video on a professional basis.

A: Yeah, that's true.

Y: So we've made one video which is me, you know, in a like a 'Steve Jobs' type of interview. Somehow, he actually got to that idea. You know it's like everything will always be happy, because it's such a happy business.

A: And you need to be happy all the time!

Y: Yeah, but it's good. Because, honestly, I am.

A: That's great!

Y: So. And I have a lot of energy; I need to put it somewhere. And you know, business is a very good way of channeling your energy. Because, you know, I also feel that it ends at one point. It's gone. So yeah, that's actually the whole story about it.

A: Yeah, OK. So, I actually didn't ask, and you also maybe didn't mention which challenges did you face?

Y: Hm. Well, I know where you're going to. There are different types of challenges.

A: Yeah.

Y: So one challenge that I face is that I'm a pioneer, because I'm trying to make a sustainable product, and this is... What I really see, it's very interesting that in the mindset of the normal people the sustainability has already landed, whereas in the business world it hasn't. So if I go, for example, to buy ingredients, then I don't find organic products. I don't find fresh made products. And also for me it takes a lot of time and research to find the right ingredients, the ones that are satisfying the needs that I have. And also I really feel that when we're making gelato on stick, right. So that's also a new type of product. It also comes with challenges sometimes.

A: Oh.

Y: So I'm standing somewhere and they say, "*I would like a one melon, one vanilla.*" And, like, you have to have two sticks, so... Because we're not doing like the normal ice cream, scooping, you know. So these things, but... And also it's not normal, well not yet here. And America is here, because America is a lot more entrepreneurial and stuff, so... I've learnt that ice cream is an awesome product to make, because you can actually make it in a sustainable way. You can go to a fruit and vegetables store and just ask them this, like "*Listen, what can you not sell...?*" And they'd show you the banana that's just a little bit too brown... or too far in a riping process...

A: Yeah, I understand.

Y: ...and I take it and, I make the most beautiful ice cream with it. I don't need to add a lot more sugar, because it's already really sweet. And so my product is a little bit more healthy and everyone is happy. But people are looking at me and they're like, "*Why? No, I'm only selling the normal fruit.*"

A: Hm.

Y: You know. So moving into direction of sustainability is sometimes a little bit difficult. Since I know where you're coming from, combined with being a woman in that type of situation and that type of negotiation, you want to have a good price, because you know that the ice cream we're making is already not cheap.

A: Yeah.

Y: Right. But the cost price is really high too.

A: Yeah.

Y: The cost price gets higher if you have to pay the regular price for the fruit, for example, right. So that's definitely a challenge, and sometimes, like also ice cream making is a male world, you know.

A: Really?!

Y: Yes. Because it's a really hard physical job. You have to carry a lot of ten-liter buckets with mix, right. With the ice cream mix that you put into machine. And all the ingredients that you buy, like, a bag of sugar, for example, regularly comes in twenty-five kilogram bags.

A: Wow. I didn't know this.

Y: So, yeah. The factory work, the production itself is pretty hard physically. That's why there are more male ice cream makers than female.

A: Oh.

Y: And then it's sometimes hard, because you're buying a machine, and you want to negotiate a good price, and you're getting less discount just because you're a woman. You feel that!

A: So, you feel it?

Y: Yeah. Because the thing is, and now we're getting to a psychological part, if you're a female entrepreneur, you have to be hard in a way. But nobody expects you to be hard because then you get immediately the reputation of the witch. Yeah.

A: We just discussed it yesterday on our negotiation course. And I was doing presentation about gender differences in negotiations. Then we just discussed it, and one guy asked why I can sit. We also had to do two interviews. I did it with two men. And one guy did it with a man and a woman. And he said that he noticed that a woman did more hard negotiations. She had more hard style, like, she was more competitive, more aggressive. And a man was behaving more like a woman. He asked us, because we were standing in front of audience, doing our presentation based on one article, and he asked: "*Why do you think is that so?*" And we couldn't really answer because you never know. And our teacher told that it is probably because woman needs to try more, because she needs to overcome more challenges.

Y: Yes.

A: And just to get to some certain level she needs to act more aggressively.

Y: Right.

A: She needs to put more effort. Then she becomes like...

Y: Because there are a lot of women trying to act like a man in order to achieve what a man in the same situation could achieve.

A: Would achieve easier...

Y: Yes, but that is not the way it works. That's my experience. What does work is if you just take this stereotype, and you just live with it. So what just helps me a lot, what also got me a lot of advantages, is trying to act like a woman. Using the kitty-cat eyes, and "*Oh, sorry, could you carry that for me?*" Because it's really heavy, you know. I always get what I want eventually, but you need to use different strategies and you need to be aware that there is a different point of departure. They will not just treat you like you think that they would treat a normal person. They'd treat you like in my case - blond small woman.

A: Yes, so you need to take advantage from this stereotype, right?

Y: Yes. For sure.

A: You need to turn it ...

Y: To work for your advantage.

A: Yeah, I understand.

Y: There's just nothing more than you can do about it, right. It helps very often to get the right type of advice. If you just tell them: "*Listen, I'm really new in this business.*" Obviously, you know exactly what they gonna tell you, but it helps to actually open the door and go into the new field.

A: And also maybe men like when you show them that they are more clever, probably, and that they can help you... So at least in my country this is what often women do. So even if we feel we know better, we give men feeling to feel more powerful and to...

Y: I don't think that I would give in so easily. Also I never forget that everything is obviously connected to each other, so I'm a lawyer by profession. I know how to negotiate.

A: Yeah.

Y: And I know how to evaluate the person who is sitting in front of me, and then this way reach the goal that I want to reach.

A: Yeah.

Y: Right. I'm not easily... Like, I'm also a person who says, "*OK, if you're too hard on that, I'm just not gonna do business with you. I'm just gonna do business with somebody else.*"

A: You always can find somebody else, right?

Y: Most of the time, yes. But for example, there is an ice cream machine manufacturer that has, like, some kind of monopoly on the ice cream machine. So obviously, there is a million different types of ice cream machines, but there's one ... like a Porsche or Mercedes Benz out of the ice cream machines.

A: Yeah.

Y: So, and I bought such a machine, right. And that guy, he is the only representative of this Italian brand. He is the only representative in the whole Benelux area, right. And that guy is a sales person who played with me in the first place, and he's hard to get. I was just like, "*You want to sell me something, right?*" He definitely lets me feel that I'm a woman who doesn't have a lot of experience. Every time I need something, I need to talk to that guy!

A: Yeah, I understand.

Y: But then again, every time I actually call him, I'm just like, "*Hi, how are you doing?*" You know, being really femalelike, really friendly, being like "*Oh, oh, sorry, I didn't know it was like that.*" You know. This type of conversation. It's that you always actually admit things that you don't know if you are right or wrong about. But there is a chance that you're right about it, and the guy just tells you something else.

A: Hm.

Y: So that is definitely a challenge how to position yourself as a woman in this male entrepreneurial world.

A: Yeah, that's actually a good insight.

Y: Thank you.

A: Yeah, so one quick question. Did I understand correctly that your finance start-up was with your own money? So you didn't go to the bank or...

Y: Yeah. Well, if there would've been a chance to get a loan from a bank, then I would have really considered it. But in my case, I don't know if it was a little bit special, because eventually I needed less money than I expected.

A: Oh, wow.

Y: And that has to do with the factory facility I found. In the first place I thought I had to build it up from scratch. You know, like getting an ice cream store and renting in somewhere, and then build the facility for the production myself. Because you know, ice cream business has

doubled in intensity in the last ten years. So you cannot expect that there is an old ice cream store that you could just rent and you could use the facility that's already there. No. You're using an empty store and you have to build and do the renovation for yourself, and you obviously have to pay for it. So I thought that my investment would be around € 100,000, whereas eventually I could just take over an old ice cream kitchen. Just because I heard about it, and they were open for it. And everything was already there except for three machines that I had to buy myself. And obviously, all the ingredients. So eventually the investment was only a third of what I thought it would be.

A: Yeah.

Y: And I was lucky to be able to collect this money with the personal crowd-funding. Just family, friends. I have made some investment contracts with some friends, so they had some interests and stuff. But I don't know, I just was really lucky that that happened. Because also my financial risk was only a third of what I thought, really. So yeah, I was really happy with that because I think I would have got a loan, and there's a foundation here. It's got credits. And they give microfinance loans.

A: Yeah.

Y: So I would have been allegeable for that I think, but they have really, really high interest rate of 10 %. And also obviously, as soon as you lend money from some company, bank, foundation, whatsoever, then you have to report. It increases your personal budget.

A: Yeah, of course.

Y: Right. Besides the fact that you don't know what they gonna do with your money, you know. This type of things that I don't think are really sustainable.

A: Yes. OK. Well, I'm not sure that this question can be asked here, in the Netherlands, but in Russia I asked about economic crisis. Did it affect your business? But actually most start-ups just started out during this economic crisis, and for some of them it was even beneficial.

Y: Yes.

A: So...But I don't know how it was in Netherlands with this crisis, because I wasn't there...

Y: In Netherlands it was really hard with that economic crisis, but it only came later. So the economic crisis was in 2008, and then actually it only started to be really bad in the Netherlands by the close of 2010.

A: No, I mean the one that was just recently, like, one year ago? I don't know, at least in Russia it was very tough.

Y: I think Russia is a different situation. The sanctions being performed at the moment, which probably triggered the economic crisis, and with which I as an ice cream seller have nothing to do with. What I do feel is that if I would have bought the place where I am now, I

would have had a better mortgage, because of the economic crisis of this year that was on the housing market. And that played quite a big role in finding a place and being able to afford it. But again, obviously, we've just started. It was definitely not my motivation, and it didn't influence my motivation at all. It had nothing to do with that. And also ice cream is a crisis-resistant business.

A: Yeah. That's true.

Y: Because it's very cheap. Compared to other products, it's a product that everyone can afford, so it has been proven crisis-resistant. Especially in crisis times people buy ice cream because they cannot afford, like, the new shoes.

A: Yeah.

Y: At least they can afford something that will make them happy.

A: And I guess sales go up in the summer, right?

Y: Yes. Like, in my case it's a bit different, because my business model is not so much related to the weather because I'm making ice cream for all kinds of happy moments. So, yes, I'm selling a lot of them in summer in the weekends if the weather is like this. But I also sell a lot of ice cream, because I deliver to parties like Birthday parties, weddings, baby-showers and all this type of things. We call them just 'happy moments', various events. There are a lot of 'happy moments' all year around when you can serve ice cream as desert. That's just what I do. I'm not having a sort. This is one of the reasons why I chose to not have a sort, by the way, because the weather is also every time awful. So, it's true, like, it's a summer business. Usually most of the ice cream stores make the money for the winter in the summer. So we work double as hard in the summer and then can enjoy the winter. They can be closed, the stores. But my case is a little bit different. But I also see now that I'm busy even in the winter.

A: Yeah.

Y: And I also in January and February I don't do any business-related things, because this is the time that I keep free for going to developing countries and develop our projects abroad.

A: So this is the plan to...

Y: Yeah. I'm in a Board of a foundation situated in Geneva. And that foundation initially was founded by the former UN members. That is a UN related foundation from people from all over the world. They'd been working in Geneva in one point. They have all worked in international economy. So they also had that idea that I had in one point, that there must be a quicker way to assist small businesses, small or medium-sized enterprises. Actually that is what they are focusing on. And we had such a huge network, but we are not officially allowed... Because there was, you know, a suspicion on corruption and things like that. We are not officially allowed to help these people one-on-one.

A: Oh.

Y: So they founded this foundation that actually, for example, makes export strategies for small and medium size enterprises in developing countries. So they can actually benefit from the knowledge that the UN people have. Eventually, my company will be a project of this foundation.

A: Oh.

Y: So I can make use of the expertise and huge UN network. Because obviously if I go to a country, I will only start with countries that I've been to. And I've been to so many countries, so I've been busy for a while. But eventually you need to have the connections with local people, and they need to have local organizations that can point you in the right direction. Because I need a whole community that would be excited about having ice cream sold in their village. So I need a farmer who would supply milk, for example, and I need a woman entrepreneur who would like to run such a store. And these types of things, there are a lot of developing projects I've seen in my life that were well-intended, but it didn't work.

A: Yeah.

Y: To give you an example, I would go to Lesotho. That's a small country within South Africa. If I would go there, I know for sure, for example, that they are building solar powered ice cream carts, right. Awesome! So they have solar power on the roof that cools the whole system and you can actually scoop ice cream, right.

A: Wow. Sounds good!

Y: So I could imagine that if I would do a project there, I could just export such a machine, the ice cream cart. And then my intention would be that they would go to the market three times a week to sell the ice cream that they had made themselves.

A: Oh.

Y: But how the reality most likely, if you don't choose carefully, would look like is that they would finally have electricity, and everyone would try to default you, instead of going to the market and selling ice cream. So I'm convinced I don't want to be seen as a European savior, the one who knows everything. You know, like, I want to make a sustainable project, something that eventually will really work, something that people there are excited to do, because only that way it will actually work.

A: Yeah.

Y: So it takes a lot of research and a big network and local organizations to make such a project. And for that I'm using the foundation.

A: Yeah.

Y: And this is what I will do on the long run. I will give up the operation of business, and I will teach people how to make ice cream, or I will just hire ice cream makers to make the money here that we can eventually invest in developing countries. And this will be my role to assist people there and to manage the business here. But right now we've just started so for the next years I will just do everything myself.

A: Yeah. When did you actually start?

Y: I started to do this full-time on the 1st of January, this year. And I had an idea about one and a half years ago. So I started to work on it gradually, you know, to build up the network, and shaped the idea. Because in the beginning you're like, "*Oh, sustainable ice cream – and I will make everyone happy! So that's what we gonna do.*" But if things get concrete, you have to think, "*So, OK, How am I really gonna do it? And where, the hell. do I get the money for it?!*" This type of things.

A: Do you have many people who help you like, in your team? Is it a big team?

Y: No, it's really small that I have at the moment as we're still at the starting phase. A lot of my friends are very excited, so... So, on the day-to-day business I have a lot of friends that help making ice cream or selling it. Because there will be some days, June, 11 will be such a day, when a lot of things are happening at the same time.

A: Oh.

Y: There are four things happening at the same time. One is in Amsterdam, one is in Utrecht, and so on...

A: Yeah.

Y: So it's like, impossible for me to be everywhere at the same time. And then I just don't have enough money to have employees at the moment. We have just started. And also, in the context of, you know, I want to experience everything myself.

A: Yeah, I understand.

Y: I outsource a lot of things at the moment. But eventually there will be people, obviously, hired. And right now it's just friends and family, supporting from all the sides.

A: It's OK. I think it's how it's done in most of the cases.

Y: Right. Yeah. It's also I think one of the questions of friends supporting you. And at the beginning also your clients are, most of the time, people you know.

A: Yeah, the network of your friends.

Y: Yeah.

A: This is how you get first clients, I guess.

Y: Yeah. I wasn't aware of that, so I kind of didn't even think about that in the first place. I was just like, I open that store, and I'm making ice cream and everyone will come. Yeah, because there are so many things that you have to think about, that sometimes the most simple – you don't really think a lot about it. Because you know that you're making a popular product and there will be a sunny day. So when I started there was like a very small phase of

two weeks to make the thing happen. And I was just like, “*Oh, shit! I should push on sales a little bit maybe, you know!*” That’s when I started to apply for the local goods market, and I do it ever since.

A: Did it actually help to be on local goods market? Did you make a lot of new contacts?

Y: Yes, a lot of new contacts!

A: I guess you had quite a lot of sales, right? At least from lots of people nearby?

Y: Yeah, and don’t underestimate that we also gave free ice cream for people to try, which attracts a lot of people, and everyone after that buy something. This week we had really bad weather actually. It was cold, and it was rainy. And on the second day, on that Sunday when you guys were there we were standing next to the soups.

A: Oh.

Y: You know, they were giving out free soups to everyone. And obviously people walked away with a soup, but not interested in ice cream.

A: Yes, that’s true. You know why they actually didn’t try? Because they have just had soup and then it was a bit weird to have ice cream right away.

Y: Yeah, and I also don’t know why they actually put us right next to this guy. So next time I would request a place somewhere in other place. Because on Saturday we were standing on another spot, which was much better. But it actually was OK on the weekend. Like, if you take the weather into consideration, it was actually a good weekend.

A: Hm.

Y: So, it was OK. And yes, for sure, I really like these days of sales. Like I don’t do week, and I only do weekends at the moment. Because throughout the week I have to do a lot of planning and administration, and the production, actually. And I like the weekends. Because you get the reaction of the people on the things that you have made, you know. And then you think in the factory, like, “*Would it be nice to do yoghurt with peach flavor, for example?*”

A: Oh, yoghurt with peaches! I love it!

Y: I will make it this week...

A: Really! Are you going to be maybe in some parks, like outside...Westerpark?

Y: Yeah, that would be awesome! But unfortunately the city of Amsterdam is not so amused by explosion of food trucks. That has happened a lot this year. So it’s very, very hard and I don’t have time to challenge...

A: ... to find place?

Y: That is really a challenge for you. It is interesting to mention, because I feel here in the Netherlands, I don't know well about Russia, but it is... I totally underestimated how important it is to know people in organizations. So virtually, with every food festival in Amsterdam, if you don't know the people in organizations, you have zero chance to get there.

A: Wow.

Y: Because there's a lot of competition at the moment.

A: Yeah, I understand.

Y: But I sometimes think that the criteria that they use for, you know, giving the spots, they are just really subjective. Once again, maybe it helps if you're a guy.

A: Oh.

Y: Because you may be more persistent, you don't give in so easily. I don't know. Everyone expects you to be like a hard negotiator or pushing. Whereas if you do that as a woman, they'll go like, "*Oh my God, no! If she is already now so difficult, is she OK when we're really difficult...?*"

A: I don't know about Netherlands, but in Russia I wouldn't be surprised if you told me that you need to pay someone for it. I don't know how it is here...

Y: Yeah. This is like one of the most fundamental rules for such thing as corruption. Which, I'm not saying it's not there. It could be there, right.

A: It's maybe not paying...

Y: It's definitely paying. It's when you need to know somebody that needs that...yeah, you know.

A: Yeah, I know. In Russia it's the same, you need to know, otherwise it's impossible to...

Y: Yeah. And I think that it's really a weak spot in the Dutch society. Because there's zero chance that if you have a good idea and you just pop up with it, what would be is people would say, "*Oh, yeah, that's a cool idea. Oh, yeah, we should do something with it.*" You know, and now it's just like, "*Oh, yeah, your application number 250 for this food festival. And I don't think that you are... No! We don't even know!*" So that's difficult.

A: Yeah. That's sad, actually.

Y: So it's not that obviously this world is very well-preserved by the people who make it.

A: Hm.

Y: This whole like world is, you know, everything is just so vintage. You know, so easygoing. There's a serious business behind that, and there are key rules how to behave if you're there. It's not that you can just pop up a tent somewhere in a park and start selling ice cream. It's just impossible to do something like that. And all the festivals, they give the impression that they just, you know, basically, they just drove by with their food car and just said, "*Oh, there's a festival, maybe we should stand here.*" That's like, you know, a little bit an easy-going impression that they want to communicate to the audience, but that is not the reality!

A: Yeah.

Y: Something that is hard to realize. But, luckily, I don't live in Amsterdam anymore. I love the city, otherwise I would've never chosen to be here with my business, and I still think it's a great platform for the product. But I live in Noordwijk, at beach. Noordwijk is a little town between Amsterdam and the Hague, so it's a little bit more south. And I live five-minutes walking from the beach.

A: Wow.

Y: And I have a dog. And everything is beautiful there. And there I was really welcome with my food truck. I'm there usually in the dunes selling ice cream in the weekends.

A: Yeah.

Y: And the rest of ... or how I call them, 'the hipster events'...

A: Yeah, there are so many events going on here. And I think it's a great opportunity...

Y: It is. The thing is that we've just started, and we are invisible. I also have another friend who sells popsicles in the west of Amsterdam. He has a store and has a lot more exposure, because Amsterdam always, you know, is a village size of a city, you could say. I mean, they always say London, Paris, Amsterdam, Tokyo. And then you would be like, "*Wow, one is like 20 million inhabitants and the other one is like 500,000.*"

A: Yeah.

Y: So how can we be made in a row with these places? It still has like a metropolitan character, that's for sure. The only thing is that Amsterdam at the same time stays a village. So if there's something new, it's mostly a word of mouth. Promotion. So for us it would take a little longer, because nobody knows that we're there. That we are at the market, for example. Or somebody from the local newspaper happens to walk by, and they're like, "*Oh, that's cool, that's new!*" Whereas he had already everyone there, you know, like, all the food blogs and all the newspapers. He doesn't do any promotion; he gets called by the food festivals. "*Okay, would you like a doughnut?*" You know, this is just very different. That's definitely something that I have to cope with. But at the same time he has many employees and I don't. So if a very, very biggy man would ask me to do it, I would probably say yes, but that would mean a lot of stress to me.

A: Oh.

Y: So, I'm just doing everything in a sustainable slower way, like, I'm totally fine if we're slow. If we grow slowly. So, that's what I wanted to say.

A: Like you've just started, so...

Y: Yeah, so it's totally fine. I'm really happy that if it rains, I don't have to be in the store. Because it would be the worst for me to be there and just to wait a whole day, because you have to be open, because it's a store.

A: Do you have a store?

Y: No, no, no. I don't. But he has. The friend of mine, he has his own store. It's funny, because we met in Italy when we both did the Gelato course, and he was from Amsterdam, and I was from Amsterdam, and we had exactly the same aim then. The idea to make popsicles in Amsterdam. And we started on the same day.

A: Oh, wow.

Y: So it's like really good comparison all the time when you see our two businesses.

A: Does he have the totally same model of ice cream?

Y: Yeah, he has like a display of certain types of popsicles, and he sells coffee. So it's like a coffee-shop with ice cream.

A: OK.

Y: But, yeah, and there you could clearly see that everyone says, "*Oh, that's new! Oh, I saw that. Yeah, you should tell your friend about it!*" That's the way it goes. In our case, people are just like, "*Where's the place...?*"

A: So you sell it via the website, right?

Y: Yes. So, I like it to be flexible in that way, that's why I chose it after all. We have the food truck on a free-ground basis in Noordwijk at the beach. We also use it for events, for sure. And also that could be private and commercial events, right. So we sometimes go to companies and have like, you know...

A: Yeah, Alla told me that her company is interested. She wants to contact you...

Y: Really! Oh. That would be awesome! Cool. Yeah. This type of things, that happens very often. And also the factory is big enough, so I can hold some people and give ice cream workshops.

A: Oh.

Y: And for the rest, I'm just selling on order, you know. And all sorts of people order it. They go, "*You know, we're getting married. We have to do something.*" I'm very creative, and I love that. You know, it's not the type of work where you always have to do the same thing and

achieve the same quality. No. You always have to achieve high quality, but what you do – it doesn't matter, right.

A: You can do something you like...

Y: Yeah, and I do it all the time. So, for example, in two weeks, I'll be at the wedding. There we will have... Can I lend your glass for a moment?

A: Yeah.

Y: There will be an ice cream on a stick. And it will be a sugar and mint, watery ice cream. And I will put it in the glass. And all the glasses of the guests will be next to each other, and then we pour a rum over it...

A: Wow.

Y: And then they will be a Mojito eventually, right. Because it will melt and you can just...

A: Oh. Great!

Y: Or I'll just do really, really beautiful ice cream tarts, you know, when in cakes. I really like it to be new things all the time. So I'm happy I don't have a store.

A: Yeah, OK. I get your point. So let's maybe finish with all these questions that are connected with social media.

Y: Hm.

A: So actually, I have a question. What is your main target audience? But I guess it's everybody, right?

Y: For the social media or for...?

A: For your product.

Y: Yeah. Well, the product that we sell is pretty expensive if you compare to other.

A: Yeah.

Y: It's hand-made, only has sustainable ingredients, there is small quantity...

A: Is it for sophisticated customers?

Y: Yeah. Well, in that sense, because I think that's where you have to start. There's a marketing research done about this phenomenon that if you want to make a change in society, you have to start with the reach people. Because as soon as you have created a circle of fans, then you will have followers.

A: Yeah.

Y: Right. So the product that we're making still not, I mean, it's not €10 price. So it's not that a family cannot afford it. But it is definitely meant for families. Because another psychological research shows that if you convince the mother, you have everyone!

A: Yes.

Y: Right. So that's something we use. It is easy to convince the mother by saying that your products are only 65% fruit, water, lemon juice, that's it. But there obviously are other sorts of mothers that are higher in society...

A: Yeah, I understand.

Y: But on a beach day where we would be with the food trucks, everyone would go there. And for some people you see, you get the reaction, "*Oh, that's actually a lot of money.*" And other people are just like, "*Oh, I feel like ice cream! Let's have ice cream.*" So, yeah. Another social part of ice cream, you can reach a lot of people even if some people can afford it only once a week, that's fine. You make so many people happy instantly, on-the-spot, right.

A: So, you already told that you use YouTube, Instagram, right? And Facebook.

Y: And Facebook.

A: Yeah. So can you tell a bit more how you use it?

Y: I have already told you about YouTube, that we only actually use to make the statements. Facebook is more for the-day-to-day information. Like, "*Look, I've made a new flavor.*" I don't know if you check Facebook for us...

A: News in ... kind of Twitter?

Y: Yeah. But there are not too many people using Twitter in that way.

A: Yeah, in my country also.

Y: Yeah, so more for the updates. And also obviously Facebook is super-important when it comes to references.

A: Yeah.

Y: If people leave reference there, or, you know, if they like it, then it would be easier for us to be found on Google. Facebook and Google are totally connected. One of the reasons why we use Facebook so intensively is that we will be on a higher rank.

A: Yeah, I know. I had a workshop...

Y: In sales?

A: Yeah, in terms of there would be uprise start-up event. Like, few weeks ago there was a guy on Facebook who did a workshop and who told us how to get your business higher in search engines.

Y: This is super-important. Because we are not visible, right. We're only visible with our website and online. It's easier, you can always come and visit, but you have to find it first. And people are using and getting all the information from the website. Eventually, to get people to our website, we use Facebook. So, but it's also important to just inform the crowd. Because I think, all my followers are my crowd, right. So for me it's also nice just to tell them, "*We say, we're gonna do this. And we just do this. And look at this picture...*", you know. And people are really enthusiastic about it!

A: I see.

Y: In Instagram we use purity for the same reasons, actually. You need to be mentioned many times, and there need to be cross-references...

A: Do you use it?

Y: Yes. But I don't do it myself, there's somebody doing it for me. Somebody who is really good at photography.

A: Is it an agency?

Y: No, it's a friend who has his own company.

A: Oh.

Y: And she's just told me that I really, really need to use Instagram, and I've just said that I really, really don't have time for that. Then she said, "*You know what? I'll make an account for you, where you can add pictures and the rest. Just send me the pictures, I'll do it for you.*" So every time I do something that looks really nice, it just happens very often, like you've mentioned, that just now I made strawberry-raspberry sticks, right. They are so nice, like super colorful, very dark-pinky. Oh, and if you put the bowl next to them with some strawberries and whatever, it just looks really beautiful. Sometimes I just take a picture and I send it to her. So Instagram obviously is also important for the search engines, but it's also important for communicating the aesthetic part of our product.

A: Hm.

Y: Because you will only eat ice cream if you actually like how it looks like, right?

A: Yeah.

Y: For that with the whole brand, identification and just aesthetics of the product we use Instagram.

A: Yeah, OK. I guess, the question about rules, it applies more to your friend who actually does it. Well, there're some rules about social media, like, that it should be, I don't

know, same background or pictures, and maybe same idea... Like, yeah, there are some rules, that are commonly...

Y: I can't follow...

A: So yeah, I have a question. If you have some, but...?

Y: It's typical. I can say that from a design prospective, I understand what you're asking about, obviously. And also from a communication point, because we're using a certain language, and it's a very happy language, obviously. We are using very informal language. Also on our invoices, for example. You know, that in Dutch we make difference between addressing somebody in a formal and an informal way?

A: I do know it. I thought it's all the same like in English.

Y: No. There's a difference. But we choose to address everyone with the informal one. And we use the same type, the same style, informing our crowd about things on Facebook and also on Instagram, on a very 'happy-type' personal signature, right. So this is probably our rule that we follow. The other one is the pictures always made in the same way, right. They are always like this, and from above. This type of things. Also we don't use filters on Instagram, and we have a design concept that I am unable to explain, but people who work with us, they know how the design concept looks like. It's sweet, natural... And that type of thing is what we always adhere to.

A: But the logo that you have, it transfers some idea.

Y: Yeah.

A: Like, I can look at it and I can understand...

Y: Right, there we used watercolors. Very informal, fun and stuff. So this is what we always bring back. And also we always bring back some kind of...you know, like only natural ingredients. So if I make a picture of like, an ice cream with some red sauce on it, the ingredients of it will be next to it, right. Also they will only be the natural ingredients, like there will be nuts, fruit and things like that...

A: Do you keep an eye at your competitors in social media?

Y: That thing that we're doing with our product is that we make mostly the gelato on the stick. That's very innovative. So we don't have a lot of competitors for that, obviously. And Amsterdam is still a village, so I know all the other manufacturers of gelato on stick. Obviously, there aren't many. But ice cream business is really diverse. There are companies purely producing for cafes or for supermarkets. And they are not, I would say, our direct competitors, right. Even if they maybe make the same product. And then there are some bigger brands like *Ola* and commercial ones. We are not comparative to these.

A: Yeah, I understand.

Y: So I don't really consider them as direct competitors, because most of the time we are selling ice cream at places where there is no *Ola*.

A: So you don't take into account their activity...?

Y: No. Also because I think that the most direct competitor that I have is my friend.

A: Wow, he is your friend.

Y: It's an interesting friendship right now, but unfortunately we are the only two, making popsicles in Amsterdam at the moment. But I think our design concept is better than his. Because he's a guy.

A: And I think you're also making beautiful-looking things.

Y: So personally I think, obviously, I'm always keeping a look at the things he does, but we also speak on the phone once in a while. So there is no way I could miss a new product or a new decision.

A: OK. Yeah, the last question. Do you use advertising in social media, like, a paid one... Or not?

Y: No. Because I really don't... I'm very particular with advertising, because I think it doesn't work. Like, most of the time, if I look at myself, and that's a problem that woman entrepreneurs have – they look too much to what they actually like or they actually do and just transfer that to art. Whereas men are just like, “*OK, what can I sell that sells the best?*”

A: Yeah.

Y: Right, so I'm very particular with advertising, because I always look and I'm like, “*Come on, how often did I actually buy something that Facebook has shown me?*” They can tell me so many things like, you know I know that there's a business model, I know that they have to make money with that. So that's not how it really actually works.

A: Yeah. I understand.

Y: And even more, does that count for offline advertisement? Like, I don't believe in flyers. I don't believe in... and maybe radio spots. I don't know. You know, they create a target audience. Like, if I listen to a news radio about entrepreneur school all the time, there will be a chance if I want to target people and companies or to book a workshop or to book, you know, for me in the future for some business activity, I think that could work. You know, if you whole day bear it, you reach millions of people. And also we will do another marketing event in June. We have been asked from the magazine *Glamour*, I don't know if you know it?

A: Yeah, I know it.

Y: It's a fashion magazine. And they will have like a Health Challenge game with, you know, food bloggers and some, I don't know, kind of sports instructors. They'll have like a whole day of activities, and they asked us to do the ice cream. And then, obviously, we'll do some 'super-food' ice cream, like with coconut milk, with all the healthy stuff. And, yes, for that we will get the advertising for free.

A: Yeah.

Y: Because we will be mentioned on their website and this type of things. So I think what works even better is really if your friends on Facebook tell about...

A: Yeah. Reference.

Y: Yes. Cross-referencing is, I think, working the best. And for that I don't need to pay.

A: Yes, I understand. The same answer about Russia. That the most use cross-references.

Y: Yes, I think, because that's a certain type of credibility. I mean, I can say I make the best product, but if you've never tried it... Whatever. But if you try it. I mean this is exactly how it went on the market, right.

A: Yeah, sure.

Y: Your friend was there first, and she brought you later on.

A: Yeah. That's true.

Y: So this is what actually works. And I also think that in the time that there was so much information a human brain has to digest every day, we are getting unconsciously, probably, that's what I believe, really selective in the information that we get.

A: Yeah.

Y: So, I don't believe that if I put a board right here about, "*Hey, the best ice-cream in town is just behind that house!*", people would just, unless they're in a mood for having ice cream, maybe, people would probably move around. But there's no point for me in investing into really expensive advertisements in whatever newspapers or something.

A: Yeah.

Y: Because with ice cream you need some impulse to purchase. You feel like ice cream now!

A: Yeah.

Y: That's when you buy it. It's not that you think: "*Oh, maybe next week Sunday I will have an ice-cream.*"

A: Yeah. It's only about these events such as a wedding and so on when you can plan. But not when you just want it.

Y: Yes, and what we do is when we are somewhere, we make sure that people know where we are. So, for example...

A: This is when the social media comes in, right?

Y: Yes. Social media, but also offline. We just take some chalk and like, we just draw it in the streets, like, "*Ice-cream, 50 meters.*"

A: Can you do it? Like, the authorities, they...?

Y: Well, they don't mind. In this case most of the time they don't care. But, obviously, it's an issue of property and the law, or maybe it's just not allowed.

A: Yeah.

Y: You know, the thing that you also get, besides if you're a male or a female, you get a certain start of credit.

A: Yeah.

Y: Sometimes, authorities are just like, "*Yeah, I know.*" You should keep that in mind for the next time. Because you know, if you would be like a grown-up business, they would be like, "*OK, you have to pay your fee.*"

A: Oh, OK. I understand.

Y: So you sometimes get ready... For example, I don't know, there was one point where I was ... I forgot to transfer money from my one bank account to the other's. So I was standing in the store and I couldn't pay because I didn't have enough on my bank account. And they would just be like, "*Yeah, it happens.*" And then you can just transfer it there. Probably in other types, you know, of situations, if you were already a little bit further, there aren't so many... exceptions or support possibilities for you. In the beginning, when I started to think about social enterprise, I was reading reports from the European Commission about social enterprises in Europe, and there was a country profile about the Netherlands.

A: Yeah.

Y: And it was very interesting, because they found out that in the beginning social enterprises get a lot of support financially. And so much in Netherlands, because the social enterprise might be in a legal form. So it's very hard to actually translate your activities to the corporate world. But there are possibilities to get, for example, a reduced tariff on... I don't know, like your bank accounts fees that you have to pay every month. Or you get, like, a special parking somewhere...

A: Oh.

Y: Like, really diverse things, but there is a point in social enterprises that when they have grown a little bit, especially financially, it's easier in the beginning to do crowd-funding than later on...

A: Yeah.

Y: You know, there is no possibility, I mean, for growth. So the starting phase seems to be much easier, than the growing phase. That's also what I think how it will be.

A: Oh. So you should be ready for it...

Y: Yes. Or I just grow very, very slowly, which is fine...

A: And you don't notice the difference...

Y: No. Because then... Like, I grew up and my parents told me that you can only buy things when you have the money for it. So my parents never took any loans anywhere, because they bought the new car when they actually had the money for it. Obviously, when you buy a house, it's a little bit difficult, and then you can only buy a house when you're 65.

A: Yes.

Y: It's like, except the houses, they always told me, you can only buy something when you actually have the money for it. And this is also how I do business.

A: You can afford it, right?

Y: Yes. I don't believe in investment concepts and companies like *Zalando*, for example. They are already 5 years in the business, and they haven't had a single month when they actually made some profit, because it's not their intention to make any profit. Their intention is to grow rapidly, blow up the company and make it worth more than what they got it for. And then they sell it again. It's their business.

A: Which company is it?

Y: *Zalando*. Actually they started off with online sales of shoes.

A: Yeah. I know.

Y: And they do really aggressive advertisement. Maybe it is interesting for you to look at it, because it's the most unsustainable company that I know.

A: Wow. They've been on our market, but then they just... I don't remember them for few years. They suddenly disappeared.

Y: Well, they are here. It's a German company. It's two Swiss guys I think that had started this project. There's all documentaries about these guys. It's really weird or clever, I don't know, it depends on a point of view, I think. They started copying business models from the American market and bringing them to Europe. And one of them worked really well, because it started, as I said, as an online store for shoes, but returning of shoes if you don't like them is free. Which is why I hate them, because it's super bad for the environment. Because obviously, if you buy shoes online, you don't know if they fit. So you have the possibility of sending them back for free. Then you would always, like, buy the same type of shoes but maybe in three sizes, so just to take the one that you like, right.

A: Hm.

Y: But this way they don't make many money, because obviously it is super-expensive. All the magazines, you know, like, all the storage for all the stuff. They don't treat the employees well. They don't make any money at all, because every time they have a little bit they will invest it into really aggressive advertisement to give everyone the impression that's a very successful company. And eventually they would sell it for hundred times the price that they actually founded it for. And that is what they're making their money with. Not the shoes, or the fashion, or whatever.

A: Hm.

Y: This type of companies I just don't believe that they should be there.

A: Yeah. It's totally opposite to what you're trying to do.

Y: Yes, I'm more ... I'm really slow-grower. So I will only buy another ice cream machine. And maybe from an economical point of view, it's maybe not wise to do that, but from the ethical point of view it is. Because I will not lose control over my company. Because I don't need share-holders. I don't need a manager. I can manage everything. Until I understood completely how the company works, I can do it myself, right. But obviously, the day only has 24 hours, so I can only do a certain amount of work.

A: Yeah.

Y: So sometimes from an economic point of view, it's maybe more interesting to really hire people. Even if I don't have the money for it, I can just lend them from the bank, you know. Or I can buy a machine that can produce more. But if I don't have the money for it, I need, again, to lend it somewhere, which will make my company a little bit less sustainable, and I will keep losing control. Because as soon as the bank gives me a loan, they want to have the security for the machine...

A: Yeah. Control.

Y: And then they can just take it back at any given point. You know, so I just don't believe in all of that. And I'd rather save as my parents; I'd just save up the money, so that I can afford the new machine. But that means that I will grow very slowly. Much slower than other companies. And at one point you have to ask yourself, if there're more competitors, if that is wise to do, you know, this type of things. So again, I still think that being an entrepreneur is a high intellectual challenge...

A: Yeah, that's true. It's not easy.

Y: Yeah, it's not, and also it's because you're taking all the responsibility yourself. Like, you don't have any income for a year or something like that.

A: Yeah.

Y: And you have to be able to be competitive. So there's a lot of things, as they say in Dutch, that come up, pop up, looking at you. A lot of little things. Just like, "*Hey, I'm that problem, you know. Please, I'm here to be solved.*"

A: Yeah. OK. Very interesting. This is why I decided to write about this. Because I don't have that much experience, and I just wanted to get some insight into real world. Because I also had some thoughts to start up something on my own, but I don't feel that confident. Like, I think, you first need to have some experience. As you worked for somebody as you deed. Than when you grow up, and you know more, and you have gained experience, then you can do something on your own. When you're ready to take responsibility for your own actions.

Y: Yes.

A: When you have some savings, so you can afford, I guess, not to have profit for one year. Because you have something that...

Y: I'm living on my own savings at the moment, but obviously, what plays a role, is your financial security. Yeah, I'm very fortunate that my boyfriend and I, we live together. We're not married, but, you know, it doesn't matter, because in the Netherlands it's kind of the same thing. It's just the thing on paper. But, yeah, what we have is a very fortunate situation. He has a very, very good job that he likes a lot. He's managing one of the bigger companies in the Netherlands, which is why at the moment I still live on my savings, but in one point I will be dependent financially from him for a while, until I actually, you know, grow a little bit more and then make money for my own. But it's normal that that will take a little while, and he just jumps in that gap, you know.

A: Yeah.

Y: And I think that if I wasn't in that situation, I would have probably not been able to dare to do that.

A: It's very important for you, it's super-important, because this is what I got in Russia, the whole 6 interviews. They answered the same. And I was interested which answer I will get here.

Y: Yeah. Probably, the same. Because, I mean, the greatest idea, if you cannot pay your rent at the end of the month, you don't have a house. It's that easy. So, obviously, you have to think about that before and you have to make a plan for the time when you will not earn any money. Also with the legal forms of enterprises here, in the Netherlands, I mean, that it's not the one that I have, it's another one, that's really popular, and you're legally obliged to pay yourself salary.

A: Hm.

Y: So, if you don't have that money, you're bankrupt before you started.

A: So when you're registered as entrepreneur, you're obliged to pay yourself?

Y: No. There are like, different legal forms of the enterprises, and the one that I chose, it's not.

A: Oh.

Y: So I'm not obliged to pay to myself any salary. Like, I probably will pay myself in ice cream at the moment, but not in money. But there is another form, another legal form, where you are legally obliged to pay yourself some salary.

A: Hm.

Y: And this is when you have... Like, I've chosen a legal form where I'm personally liable for everything. That's the downside of it. But if you choose for legal form where the company is liable, you'll have to pay yourself some salary. And that is only like, from a tax point of view. It's only interesting if you make more, I think, than €150,000 per year.

A: Yeah.

Y: And I won't reach it in the first year, so there's no way. But if I want to have a lot of staff at the moment, at one point, right, then I will need to consider changing my legal form, which will have financial implications too.

A: Yeah.

Y: Which is why, again, it is really smart if you do your study before, and you take some time of preparing your company, because you need to know all of these things, otherwise you can just be ending up in a big trouble.

A: Yeah, that's true.

Y: So, as for me, it's awesome that I'm a lawyer, because I know all these rules, you know...

A: Yeah.

Y: And if I don't know them, I know where to look them up. And also, once again, what I tell a lot of people, I say, "*It doesn't matter what you study, because obviously you have the greatest opportunity of being an entrepreneur and start entrepreneurship.*" But if you're a real entrepreneur, and you want to be successful, and I think we all want to have a successful enterprise, I think, it doesn't really matter what you study. Because there are so many things that you have to take care of, and you cannot be an expert in everything. It's impossible. But yeah, it's true, like, the financial thing is really important.

A: Do you think everyone can become an entrepreneur? Or you are born with this kind of traits that help you to be entrepreneur?

Y: The thing is that I didn't know for a very long time that I would like to be an entrepreneur. I only found that out one and a half years ago, when I was sitting at that meeting at the UN. But I always had something like, "*Oh, yeah, I could just start something on my own.*" Because I'm not afraid of taking responsibility.

A: This is the main thing, maybe.

Y: Probably. Because I'm the person who thinks...Like, I'm a very creative person and I have a lot of ideas. But I'm also not afraid to face the risk that it will not succeed. You know, and that's why, I think, not everyone can be an entrepreneur. Because not everyone is like this. Being an entrepreneur you need to be a certain type of person.

A: Yeah.

Y: And one thing is self-confidence. I mean, obviously, sometimes I have days when I'm sitting somewhere and I think, "*Come on, I'm a lawyer. What did I do? How did I start this?*" You know, that happens.

A: Yeah, but not all the time, so...

Y: No, most of the time it's like enjoying the liberty of taking all the decisions myself, because I think, maybe what entrepreneurs have in common is that they cannot deal really well with authorities.

A: Yes.

Y: With hierarchies. I'm not saying that everyone who cannot deal with hierarchy should not be entrepreneur. Because they are also probably going wrong, right. But I think that there's something, how I see it now, that I'm so intensely involved in this field, there is sort of entrepreneurial genius. You have it, or you don't have it. Because as entrepreneur you have to be able to inspire other people. You need to be really passionate about what you are doing yourself, and you need to be confident that there will be a success.

A: Yeah.

Y: Because otherwise you cannot convince anyone.

A: Yeah, it's true.

Y: So that they follow you, right. As entrepreneur, you have to be a leader. I mean, I'm not leading a lot of people actually, but I know how it is going.

A: Yeah.

Y: And I know that at some point there will be people following me. And the people that are already following me as a leader now are the people that are eating my ice cream. Because they think that it's a great idea, and that sustainable ice cream tastes very nice, and that's why they buy it, right. So I think this way I get already inspired by people because I get questioned a lot, "*Who are you? What's your story?*"

A: Oh.

Y: But what I don't know, and that's also too psychological, I don't know if you're born with that or this is something that you acquire throughout your life, that you figure out. Like,

“Oh, but I would rather do this, because I saw people, that person doing this and actually liked what that person does”, you know. I personally, my background, like, my family are workers. I’m not from an entrepreneurial family at all. Like, there’s no entrepreneur in our family. Not my Grandma, not my uncle, nobody.

A: Hm.

Y: So, it’s difficult. But also, another thing that’s maybe important to know, is I’m from the Eastern part of Germany.

A: Oh.

Y: Which means that I was born in ’88, one year before the Berlin Wall came down. So my parents and my all family, I don’t have any brothers or sisters, they’re socialized in socialism.

A: Yeah.

Y: Yeah, in the socialism regime, which means there were no entrepreneurship, and everyone just followed the state. So, it’s very difficult to say, where do I get that from, then. Like, why do I suddenly feel like I’d just do it. That’s the question that I ask myself. I would be interested to know what other people answered to this question.

A: Yeah.

Y: You can maybe find out.

A: That’s what I’m going to make one of the parts of my research. Because it’s really very interesting. This is where the answer doesn’t exist yet, so yeah, there’s place for future research.

Y: Yeah, I think so. For sure. So yeah, I think, that’s it.

A: Yeah, thank you very much. Maybe it took more time...

Y: A little bit longer... But it’s OK, it’s a nice weather.

A: Yeah.