

An Internet Entrepreneur in Bulgaria

Bulgarian transcript:

Казвам се Ния Апостолова, от град Варна съм родом. Завърших Първа езикова гимназия във Варна, след което заминах за Щатите, за да завърша университет със две специалности - маркетинг и мениджмънт. Като завърших университета, започнах работа във Вашингтон, ДС, във една неправителствена организация. И по време на работата си и във последната година всъщност на следването участвах във един конкурс заедно със моя брат за един проект – Kolko.bg - това е една платформа за сравняване на цени във интернет за българския пазар. И благодарение на този конкурс, във който участвахме, с брат ми успяхме да спечелим един инвеститор на наша страна, който ни спонсорира проекта. И след две години работа във Вашингтон ДС нашият инвеститор предложи на мен и на брат ми да направим малко по-смели стъпки: това ще рече аз да се върна във България - и така реших да се върна във България.

Прибирайки се, доста неща бяха много различни от това със което бях свикнала. Бях доста учудена от това, че хората доста ми се чудеха защо съм решила да се върна, защо не ми е харесало там ,едва ли не, че не съм успяла да се реализирам, което не беше истина. Но като цяло съм щастлива от избора си. В момента мога да кажа, че чувствам много добре като собственик на малък бизнес, който се развива. В София си направихме нов офис, направихме едно парти за отварянето на новия офис, работим в момента със около 200 търговеца, правя е-мейл маркетинг. Интересно е. Много е интересно.

Ще ми се обаче като цяло хората да са по-позитивни, да са малко по-добре настроени. Като цяло хората във България в момента - единия от проблемите е, че хората са малко негативно настроени и недоверчиви към нещата, които могат да им се случат. И затова се надявам със времето тези неща да отшумеят и отново да се върнат усмивките по лицата и надеждата.

English translation:

My name is Niya Apostolova, I was born in the city of Varna. I graduated from First Language School¹ in Varna, and after that I left for the States in order to graduate from [go to] college in two majors – marketing and management. After graduating from college, I started working for a non-government organization in Washington, DC. While I was working there, and during my senior year too, my brother and I participated in a competition for the project Kolko.bg – this is an online platform for comparing the prices

¹ First Language School is a high school.

in the Bulgarian market. And thanks to the competition that we took part in, my brother and I managed to attract an investor, who sponsored our project.

And after two years of work in Washington, DC, our investor made an offer to me and my brother – that meant I had to go back to Bulgaria – so that is how I decided to come back to Bulgaria.

Returning back home, I found many things to be different from what I was used to. I was pretty surprised by the fact that people were wondering why I had decided to come back, why I didn't like it there [in the U.S.], even [thinking] that I couldn't fit in and find a job, which wasn't true. But as a whole, I am happy with my choice. Right now I can say that I am feeling very good as the owner of a small business that is doing well. We opened a new office in Sofia and we threw a party for the opening of our new office... We are currently working with about 200 merchants; I work with email marketing. It's interesting. It's very interesting.

However, I wish that people were generally more positive and had a better attitude. For the most part, people in Bulgaria right now... one of the problems is that people have very negative attitudes and are distrustful of the things that could happen to them². That is why I am hoping that those things will go away with time, and people's smiles and hopes will come back.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2013 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated

² The interviewee is referring to the general suspicion and mistrust of dealing with money, financial services, money transactions, and in her case, online marketing. This is something very specific to Bulgarian culture and has its roots in the process of transition to a free market after the collapse of communism. The main reason for the general distrust that the interviewee talks about has to do with the extreme popularity of financial pyramids in Bulgaria during the 1990s when a lot of people genuinely trusted pyramid schemes and ended up losing all of their savings.