



## FLIPPED STUDIO “SUCCESSFUL INNOVATOR” - NOVA

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**There is a place for everyone in the field of creativity!**



**Maya Tsetanova, Bulgaria**

**Sector:** Arts and crafts

**Position:** Self-employed

### About me

My name is Maya Tsetanova, I am a Philosopher by education, a teacher of philosophy and PR. I have been working in the field of education for more than 14 years. I chose the teaching profession, and it chose me. Over the years, I have been involved in both formal and non-formal education, which happened when I started working for a non-governmental organization. I chose the profession because I love school very much. My teachers gave me the basis for everything I've become so far for better or for worse. The contact with children gives a lot, of course, and



takes a lot, but what you can learn from this profession is vast. Every day brings something and every day is new!

The beginning of the pandemic in 2020 coincided with the beginning of my pregnancy. This forced me to stay home for other medical reasons. At the moment I am still on maternity leave, but I still participate in some activities of the company when I have the opportunity. During the first wave of the pandemic, I worked from home without a problem, as well as conducting online meetings with teachers in the frame of a project I was working on at that time. I think the pandemic has shown how flexible we can be and has changed perceptions of the workspace forever.

### My way to the CCS and main achievements before the Pandemic

Ever since I was a child I have loved to be engaged in creative activities. I painted models of clothes, sewed clothes for my Barbie dolls and imagined that one day I would become a designer. However, I'm not very good at painting, but I do well with making small things with my hands. So a few years ago, when I was under more stress at work, I decided to buy some craft materials and start trying to do different things when I have time at home or need to relieve the accumulated stress.

First, I started with making bracelets and rings as a gift for my friends. Then I returned to a forgotten hobby of mine to give life to old clothes. It all started with one of my favourite blouses, which I inadvertently dripped with grease. An unpleasant greasy stain remained, and then the idea came to me to look for something that I could stick on top, which would both cover the stain and diversify the blouse. So I found ready-made embroideries in a clothing store that can be sewn or glued to clothes. I bought one, tried it and got a great result. The blouse became like new. Then I started buying similar materials and again offered my friends to give life to their old clothes and fix the irreparable stains on favourite blouses and jeans.



*Photo: Maya Tsvetanova – personal archive*

Over the years, my boxes of craft materials in the closet also increased. It turned out that I relieved the stress of a hard day perfectly by sitting down, opening a box with a lot of colourful materials and starting to make something that comes to me as an idea at the moment. Of course, the holidays were also inspiring and so little by little I started making Christmas toys, Easter



bunnies and wreaths, and autumn decorations for the door of the house. I draw inspiration from every season and from nature, I collect cones, leaves, moss, tree bark, mussels and pebbles. All useful for me and useless for my family.

### The challenges faced during the Pandemic and innovation solutions to overcome them.

The biggest challenge related to my work I faced during the pandemic was overcoming my own apathy and fear of failure. At the beginning of the pandemic, I was convinced that no one would want to buy anything from me. It seemed impossible to sell jewellery during a lockdown. Then I thought about what I would buy online besides the essentials. Back then, people were still required to have their noses and mouths covered, but not necessarily by masks. Then I remembered that I could use the fabrics that I have left and are suitable for sewing bandanas. They are both an accessory and practical tool. The quality breathable fabric makes them suitable for athletes. So in a week the bandanas became a reality and were 100% sold at no time. Creativity and innovation go hand in hand and when you have them, the pandemic cannot stop them, on the contrary - it can provoke them even more.

The same year I made “martenitsas” for the Bulgarian holiday Baba Marta and Easter bunnies from the remaining fabrics I used for my other products.

I also found cheap sneakers which I bought online and painted at home with flowers and other decorations. Talking to my friend, I decided to surprise her by making wizard wands for her kids and scarves to imitate sea waves. She, in turn, uses them in educational games and so it came to me that I should look for information about what educational fabric toys I can make.



*Photo: Maya Tsvetanova – personal archive*



In addition, the idea of recycling arose in me at that time. Since I have a small child and piles of jars of baby puree, it so happened that they became part of my creative projects. They became ideal for decoupage, and also became gifts for the guests at the child baptism. In almost every seemingly useless package, I can see a potential for a creative project and I am very happy about this fact, because sometimes it is not only personal therapy and relaxation for me, but also brings very interesting end results.

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**Never stop and give up on your dreams, there is always a way when you are honest and put your heart into what you want to achieve and do!**

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### My future plans and aspirations for developing my career in CCS.

The pandemic has put many areas of activity to the test. For me, the biggest challenge was to overcome my own feeling that I was drifting and doing nothing with the excuse that now is a difficult time and hardly anyone wants to buy anything but the most essential products.

I hope to have the time and opportunity to develop a platform in which not only to show, but also to sell the products I make. I believe that this can be a good business in Bulgaria, especially if you have a special attitude towards your products and customers.

I also want to develop this activity with fabric toys that could be used in educational games. I believe that very good results can be obtained.



*Photo: Maya Tsvetanova – personal archive*

I liked to discover new techniques such as ebru, decoupage and many others. Some work well for me, for others I need to invest more time and knowledge and I hope one day to have the time and opportunity to improve my skills and try them.



## My suggestion for those who wish to work in CCS

The field of creativity is unlimited. There really is a place for everyone there. Even if a person is not perfect in what he does, there will still be someone who likes his works.

So do not give up, be original, research the market well, especially if you want to sell your products. Seek feedback not only from your loved ones, sometimes they may not understand you and are not a good advisor.

### Self-reflection questions

1. What are my favorite hobbies? Can I turn them into a business opportunity?
2. What kind of creative activities are not affected by Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions?
3. How can I use my talents and aspirations to create something?
4. Can motherhood be combined with artistic and crafty activities?

**This good practice story is prepared by Know and Can Association.**