

WELCOME TO THE SKILLS FACTORY

by Julia Minder & Simon Bader

Dear friends, members, supporters, benefactors and sponsors

We are very excited and proud to finally send out our first selfm.aid newsletter!

Over the past months we have worked tirelessly to build our young organization and make the Skills Factory on Samos become reality. After weeks of preparation, organization and countless visits to the authorities, we finally made it:

The SKILLS FACTORY is alive!

For the past five weeks we have been working with our start-up team to establish the project, renovate the traditional building and set up the workshops. It is hard to find the right words to describe everything that has already come to life in this short period of time: friendships, the exchange of knowledge, first creations, new self-confidence, relationships with the local community and so much more.

With this first newsletter we would like to give you the opportunity to dive into some of the most beautiful as well as some of the most difficult moments of the last few weeks.

All of this would not have been possible without your support.

Many many thanks!



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DO YOU SHARE OUR VISION AND WANT TO GET ACTIVE?


There are many ways to support our work:


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WE STICK TOGETHER

THE START-UP TEAM

SKILLS
FACTORY

*Our team has grown quickly:
In the SKILLS FACTORY 20 people from 8
different countries work hand in hand.*

Even though we started with a small team of four community volunteers in the first week, it didn't take us long to grow (together).

Our vision "to build bridges between people from different cultures and countries" is not just a theoretical approach, it is lived reality.

Do you want to be part of our team too? We are looking for passionate crafts(wo)men!

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WE CREATE TOGETHER

FIRST RESULTS AND PRODUCTS

*Construction work - restoration of a
traditional stone masonry*

S. & S. from Cameroon are restoring the traditional masonry of our old tannery. Both of them having shown motivation, expertise and finesse that even Simon has never seen in his 20 year-career working on Swiss construction sites.

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Carpentry

M. and A. from Syria have worked as furniture makers in Turkey before they fleeing to Greece, in fear of being deported. For the past few weeks they have immersed themselves in woodworking while also restoring the entire furniture and implementing new ideas.



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WE SPIN IDEAS TOGETHER

COOPERATIONS

The garden project has been the perfect opportunity to showcase the multifaceted skills and great potential of our team.

After clearing the whole garden, we sat together with coffee and baklava (which was definitely needed after a hard day's work). Together as a team we developed a plan for future designs and distributed the tasks accordingly:

The carpenters create the furniture, the tailors repair the parasols and make new seat cushions, while the agricultural experts take care of the new plants.

Even A., who was not particularly enthusiastic about physical work, has found his place now that he is cooking for our team, spoiling us with his delicious food creations everyday.

WE CONNECT TOGETHER

COOPERATIONS

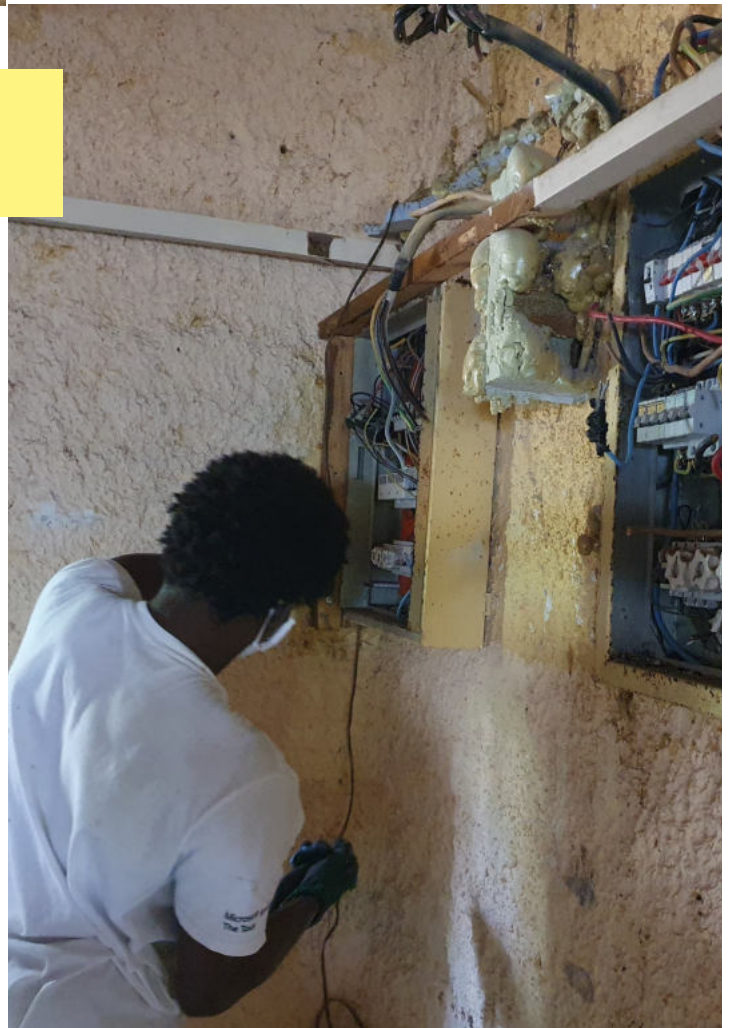
The common interest in handicraft enables people to meet at eye level and to develop solutions together.

We are particularly proud of the cooperation of L. - our electrician and his local colleague. Together they connected the SKILLS FACTORY to the power grid as well as planning and implementing the cabling for the entire site.

It didn't take long before the owner of the best known electrical company in Samos gave us an appreciative nod:

«L. is a very smart guy!»

- Yes, we know...



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WE BUILD BRIDGES TOGETHER

GREEK DAY

The food, for which refugees have to queue for several hours in the camp, is often inedible or even spoiled. But they are also largely denied entry to restaurants.

Therefore, it was a special highlight when G. from Samos announced that she would be spending a day with us cooking traditional recipes together.

And so the SKILLS FACTORY was filled with the smell of Greek food, loud voices and the Greek hospitality. We were rolling dolmatakia with herbs from our own garden while sharing philosophies about life.

Thank you Mama G.!

WE GROW TOGETHER

DONATION FROM THE YOUTH WORK OF USTER

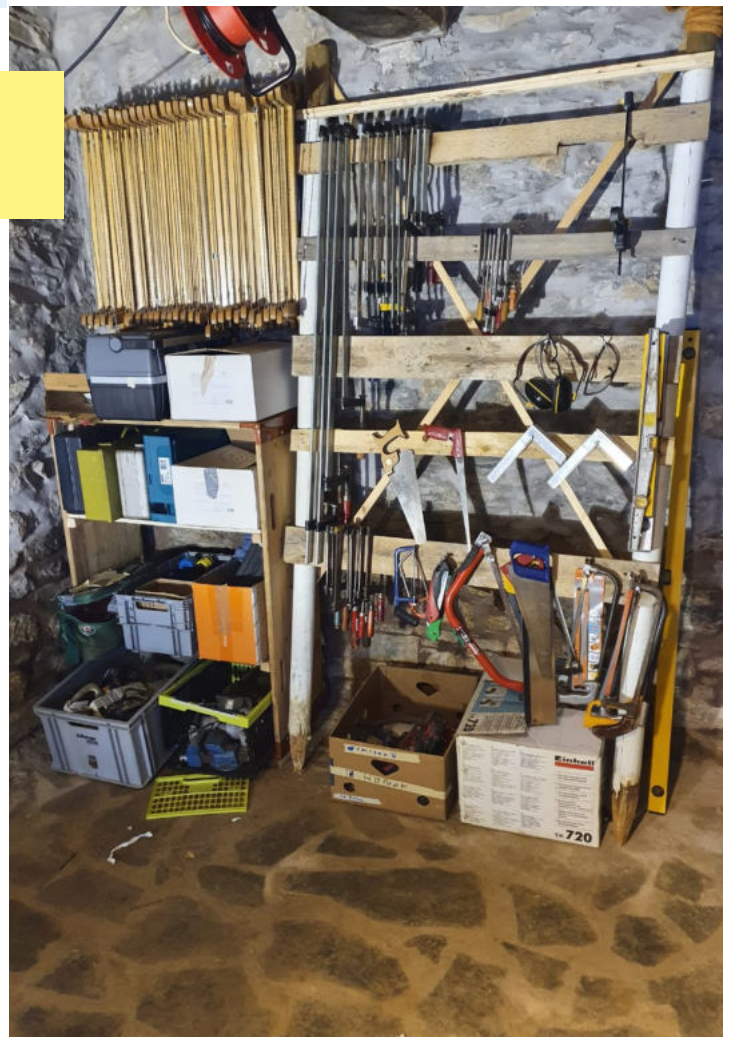
The donation from the youth work Uster arrived at exactly the right moment!

The unexpectedly rapid growth of the project has also put us in a difficult position and we were reaching our limits. Temporarily we were lacking almost everything - but especially tools.

Therefore, the generous donation from youth work USTER came exactly the right time. Everything young people had collected and lovingly packed before the outbreak of the Corona crisis could no longer be brought to the original destination due to the tightened export regulations.

To our great joy, the donations have now arrived on Samos - where they are not only used by us, but also by many of our partner organizations.

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WE HEAL WOUNDS TOGETHER

THE WOUNDS OF THE REFUGEECAMP

The years of persevering in catastrophic living conditions in the refugee camp left deep wounds.

As beautiful as the moments and the progress in the SKILLS FACTORY are, the wounds that are coming to light are just as shocking. Wounds caused by months of persevering in as well as battling with inhumane conditions in the camp. Wounds that should never have occurred in the first place.

And we often ask ourselves: how long does it take to break a person?

More about this on our [Gedankenreise](#) on the occasion of #worldrefugeeday (German only).



WE RISE TOGETHER

THE BOARD

It is with great pleasure but also relief to announce that our board of the Swiss membership association has grown as well.

We are only able to do our best work here on ground because we have a highly qualified and committed support network at home. We look forward to working with our [Swiss Team](#)!

Do you want to be part of selfm.aid too?
Then become a member today or support our work with a donation.

[More](#)



"TOGETHER WE WILL GROW"

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