



Newsletter No. 4 – October 2022

# UPDATES FROM THE SKILLS FACTORY

from Julia Minder & Simon Bader

Dear selfm.aid - Community

We haven't reported with a detailed update for quite some time. This is not because we have been inactive – on the contrary.

Since spring, the SKILLS FACTORY on Samos has experienced an incredible growth, the demand has increased rapidly, some new departments were added, others have expanded and were restructured. But the most beautiful thing is that the team of refugees, locals, external volunteers, members, partners and supporters has grown and so has the community of selfm.aid.

With all these new developments we are better and stronger positioned than ever to respond to the new arrivals on Samos and to achieve our vision.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your trust and support. With the current autumn newsletter, we are very happy to give you an insight into the last months.

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**DO YOU SHARE OUR VISION AND WANT TO GET INVOLVED?**

There are many options to support us...

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## KITCHEN / BAKERY

DEPARTMENT UPDATE

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*Up to 600 meals per month...*

After we received a donation of materials from *Project Elpida* in spring, our construction team renovated and redesigned the entire kitchen. This happened at exactly the right moment, because there is still a significant lack of sufficient food in the camp on Samos.

Thanks to the new equipment, we were able to increase the capacity and can now prepare around 600 meals a month.

In addition, the catering sector is also one of the main employers on Samos. That's why we don't just focus on quantity when preparing the food, but also attach great importance to the work processes. Thus, menu planning, purchasing, budget management, time planning, preparation and basic cleaning are taken care of by the community itself.

## ELECTRICAL WORKSHOP

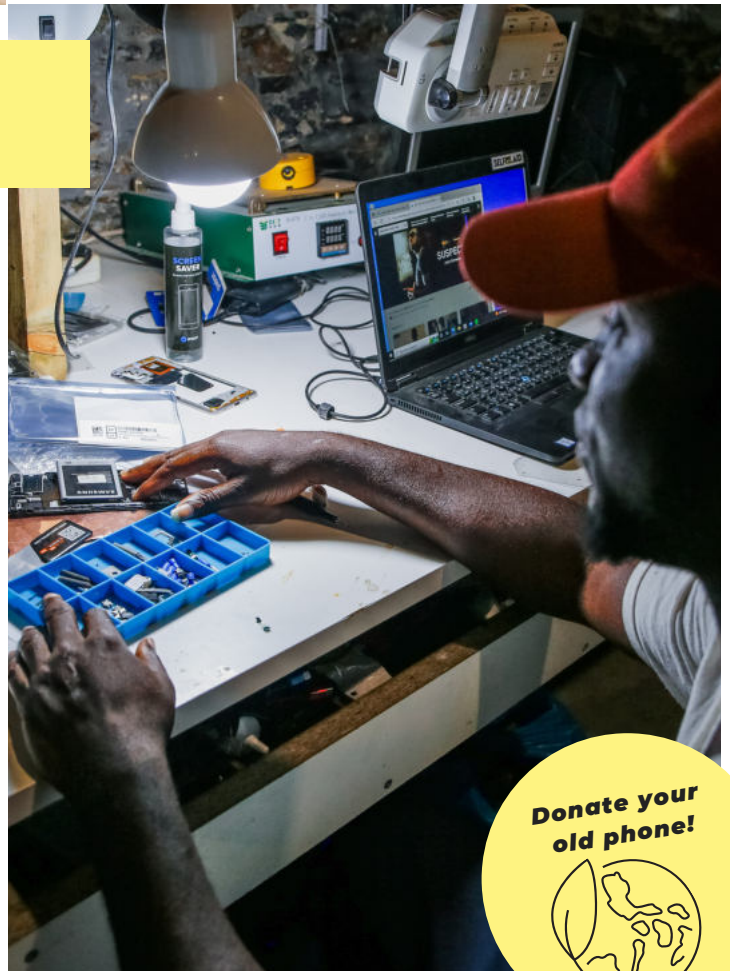
DEPARTMENT UPDATE

*The cell phone is the be-all and end-all.*

The workshop for electrical repair has become one of the most important departments of the SKILLS FACTORY. Every day we receive requests from refugees in the camp and from partner organizations.

For all of us, it's hard to imagine everyday life without a cell phone. But for asylum seekers, it has an even more central role. On the one hand, all communication from the authorities regarding their asylum application is handled via the phone. On the other hand, for many who have lost everything, it is the last place where a few family pictures or memories of home are still stored and it is the only way to communicate with family or friends.

Therefore, whenever possible, we try to repair the phones or provide a replacement device in case of emergency.



Donate your  
old phone!



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## GARDEN

DEPARTMENT UPDATE

*We enjoy daily fruits, vegetables and herbs from our garden.*

Thanks to a major effort, the SKILLS FACTORY garden has grown by many plots over the summer.

The old fallow land at the back of the garden was cleared, access points were built, vegetables were sown, and low-impact irrigation systems were installed.

Not only does gardening bring together a wide variety of experiences and knowledge, but also the joy of local production, the use of the fertility of the Samoan soil and the daily enjoyment of the fruits of our harvest.

## SEWING STUDIO

DEPARTMENT UPDATE

*Thanks to "Rostock hilft" and the Bosnian Women's Association for the generous donation!*

From an initial 2.5 half-functioning sewing machines and a seamstress, the sewing studio has grown the most.

Suddenly, many applicants came forward who are very motivated to support the people in the camp with their craft and to work together.

Thanks to the generous donations of "Rostock hilft" and the Bosnian Women's Association in Lucerne, we were able to meet the increasing demand for and enlarge the studio.

Clothing is, next to food, the biggest material problem on Samos. Therefore, the possibility to adapt, repair or produce new clothes is elementary. However, due to the increased production volume, we have too little fabric in stock.

*We greatly appreciate your support in putting us in touch with an organization or store that can supply us with fabrics.*



**We are  
urgently  
looking for a  
fabric  
supplier!**

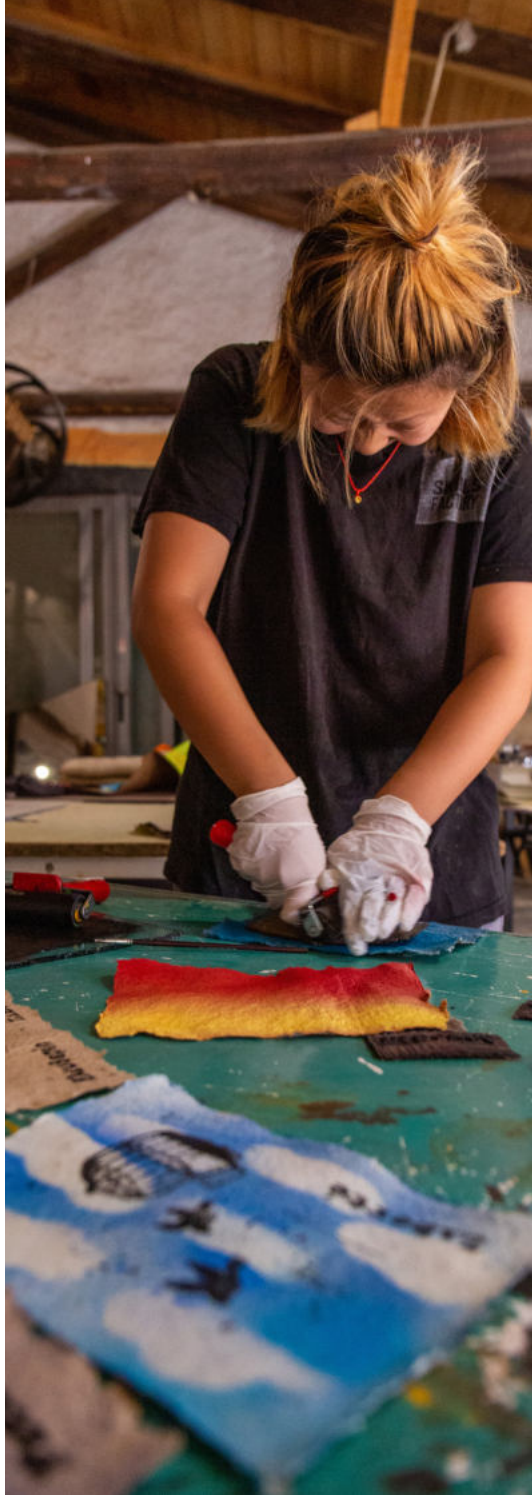
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# WOOD AND METAL WORKSHOP

DEPARTMENT UPDATE

*External jobs to support other organizations.*

Our construction team also continuously grew and with that the capabilities and possibilities also expanded. The most popular department is and remains the wood workshop, which due to the roar of the saws and sanding machines contributes to the typical "sound" of the SKILLS FACTORY.

But also some professional welders and representatives of various other professions in the construction sector joined the team. Thanks to this strong team, we contributed a lot to the improvement of the equipment of the other departments, but we were also able to take on numerous external jobs for partner organizations or local institutions.

External jobs are an important part of our work because we can help others do their jobs better or easier, use our skills for the common good, and proudly showcase them.



## FURTHER UPDATES

DEPARTMENT UPDATE

*The offer is based on the skills and needs of our team.*

While the existing departments blossomed, a few new ones were also created. In the newly established Barber Shop, braided hairstyles and beard cuts get a polish. Thanks to the Photo and Film Department, our work is better captured and work portfolios are created.

The offer is still based on the skills that people bring along, and combined with their needs. This can change quickly, depending on the composition, which makes the work not always easy, but all the more meaningful, individual and exciting.



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# SKILLS CONNECT

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SKILLS FACTORY?

*The SKILLS CONNECT project is designed to support and network participants beyond their time at SKILLS FACTORY.*

It is particularly important to us that we accompany and support refugees not only during their time on Samos, but also beyond. Therefore, we have invested a lot of energy and time this summer to establish contacts with local employers. Furthermore, we organized a first work forum, initiated the creation of a skills assessment together with Samos Volunteers and started developing the follow-up project "Skills Connect".

And we have already been able to record our first successes. Three team members of the SKILLS FACTORY have taken up their positions in the kitchen of the newly opened 5-star hotel «Casa Cook Samos». We are very happy and proud of the great work of the three.

## Positive asylum decision

But only a few people actually stay on Samos. After receiving their positive asylum decision, most of the recognized refugees move on to Athens or, if they have the opportunity, to Western Europe.

## Abdullah's rattan handicraft

Like *Abdullah from Syria*, for example, who was one of the first volunteers in the SKILLS FACTORY. In Turkey, he ran a company for the production of rattan furniture. He now wants to use this great craft and rare expertise as an opportunity for a new start in Paris. He is currently collecting donations to finance the initial equipment.

*We would be very happy about a broad support for Abdullah!*



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## SITUATION ON SAMOS

NEWS FROM THE ISLAND



*Marked increase in new arrivals pushes the camp to its limits.*

In recent weeks we have noticed a significant increase in the number of newly registered refugees. Since the end of August, over 700 new people registered in the camp. As only a small section of the camp is in operation, the facilities are already reaching their limits.

### **Doctors Without Borders (MSF) on the situation**

Sea rescue and the support for refugees who arrived on the Greek islands have been criminalized for several years. For example, it is not possible for us to support new arrivals with water. For some months now, however, MSF is the only organization able to provide medical first aid when boats reach Samos, thus making a major contribution to preventing arrests and illegal repatriations (which regularly end in death).

They published their experience in this [article](#).

## 1 YEAR NEW CAMP

CONTROLLED ACCESS REFUGEE CAMP

*Live behind bars...*

The "showcase camp" opened exactly one year ago. Back then, we already reported on the disastrous conditions behind the scenes.

One year later, many deficiencies remain.

[More info](#)



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## MEDIA REPORTS

NEW MEDIA REPORTS AND PODCASTS

*For detailed and exciting reports on current topics, highlights and challenges, please refer to our new media reports.*

On June 30, an article about SKILLS FACTORY was published in Baublatt Schweiz, the largest trade magazine in the Swiss construction industry, and on July 3, we were a live guest on the program "Die 5. Schweiz" on Swiss radio SRF1.

Click here for the article and the podcast:

- [Baublatt Schweiz](#)
- [Die 5. Schweiz \(Radio SRF1\)](#)



## SPONSORS WANTED

WE ARE LOOKING FOR PARTNERS FOR OUR WORKSHOPS

*Joint commitment to the future of the skilled crafts sector and society*

In order to keep our workshops running, we are looking for companies that support one department with financial resources, expertise and in-kind donations (tools, equipment) as part of a sponsoring partnership.

In return, we offer, for example, the naming and logo illustration of the partners on selfm.aid's website and social media channels, as well as opportunities for networking and exchange with professionals from all over the world.

Whether as a main or partial sponsor – we welcome any form of support. We are guided by the capacity and financial possibilities of our partners and strive for a long-term win-win situation.

We are very happy to receive information about companies that might be interested in a sponsoring partnership. If you have contacts or connections to potential partners, please feel free to contact us.



**Interested?  
Reach out  
to us!**

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## ROGER HUNZIKER

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

SKILLS  
FACTORY

*Roger Hunziker as new president of the association*

We are proud to announce that Roger, former volunteer in the SKILLS FACTORY on Samos, has taken over the office of the president of the board as of July 1, 2022. Roger is a psychologist and works as a sociotherapist in an open prison with mentally ill or addicted people.

In his free time, he likes to be creative and immerse himself in one of his many hobbies. These include photography, drawing, 3D design, basketball and sometimes, but rather rarely, dusting off the trumpet.

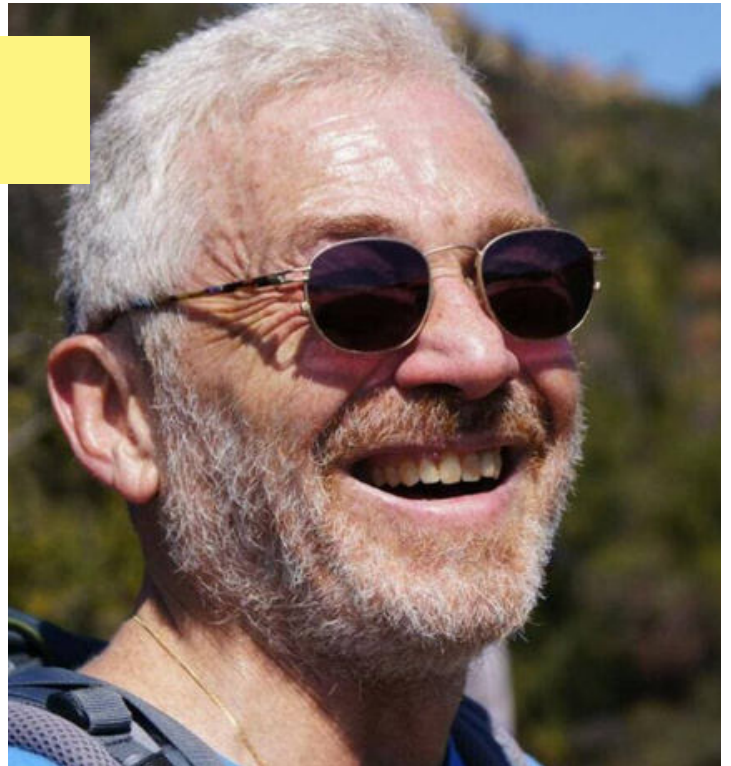
## CHRISTOPH MINDER

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

*We thank Christoph for his great and commitment!*

We are deeply shocked and saddened by the news that Christoph Minder, our head of accounting, suddenly fell seriously ill and passed away. It is difficult to find words for the loss, our gratitude and the shared memories.

Christoph significantly supported the association since the first days of its foundation and invested a lot of heart, soul and accounting accuracy. We will miss his upbeat, humour and unconditional support.





## OPEN POSITIONS

We are looking for a successor for the department of finance, as well as a president (in co-presidency with Roger). If you are interested in one of the two positions, please contact us directly: [info@selfm-aid.ch](mailto:info@selfm-aid.ch)

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