



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

selfm.aid, April 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. About selfm.aid

02. Marketing & Communications

03. Fundraising

04. Financial Report

05. Context (Samos, Greece)

06. SKILLS FACTORY

07. One-for-One

08. Phones without Borders

09. Outlook

10. Acknowledgements



FOREWORD

Dear selfm.aid community,

2025 was a difficult year for the humanitarian sector and for many organisations working with people on the move. Political shifts and major cuts in humanitarian funding affected work across Europe and beyond. Many partners were forced to reduce activities or close entirely. selfm.aid also felt these pressures. Still, we worked hard and managed to adapt by finding new funding sources and continuing our core programmes.

At the same time, the political climate in Greece and across Europe became more restrictive. Harder migration policies and increasing legal pressure on displaced people and those supporting them made our work more challenging. These developments show how important independent and community-based initiatives like selfm.aid remain.

These global challenges also affected selfm.aid internally. Increased fundraising efforts required significant capacity at the same time as we were undergoing staff transitions, leadership changes, and handovers of roles. As a result, some programmes were paused or concluded.

At the same time, other areas grew stronger: The SKILLS FACTORY continued to develop, and our production quality reached a new level. We were honoured to receive the iF Social Impact Prize and to see our work featured on television in Greece and Germany.

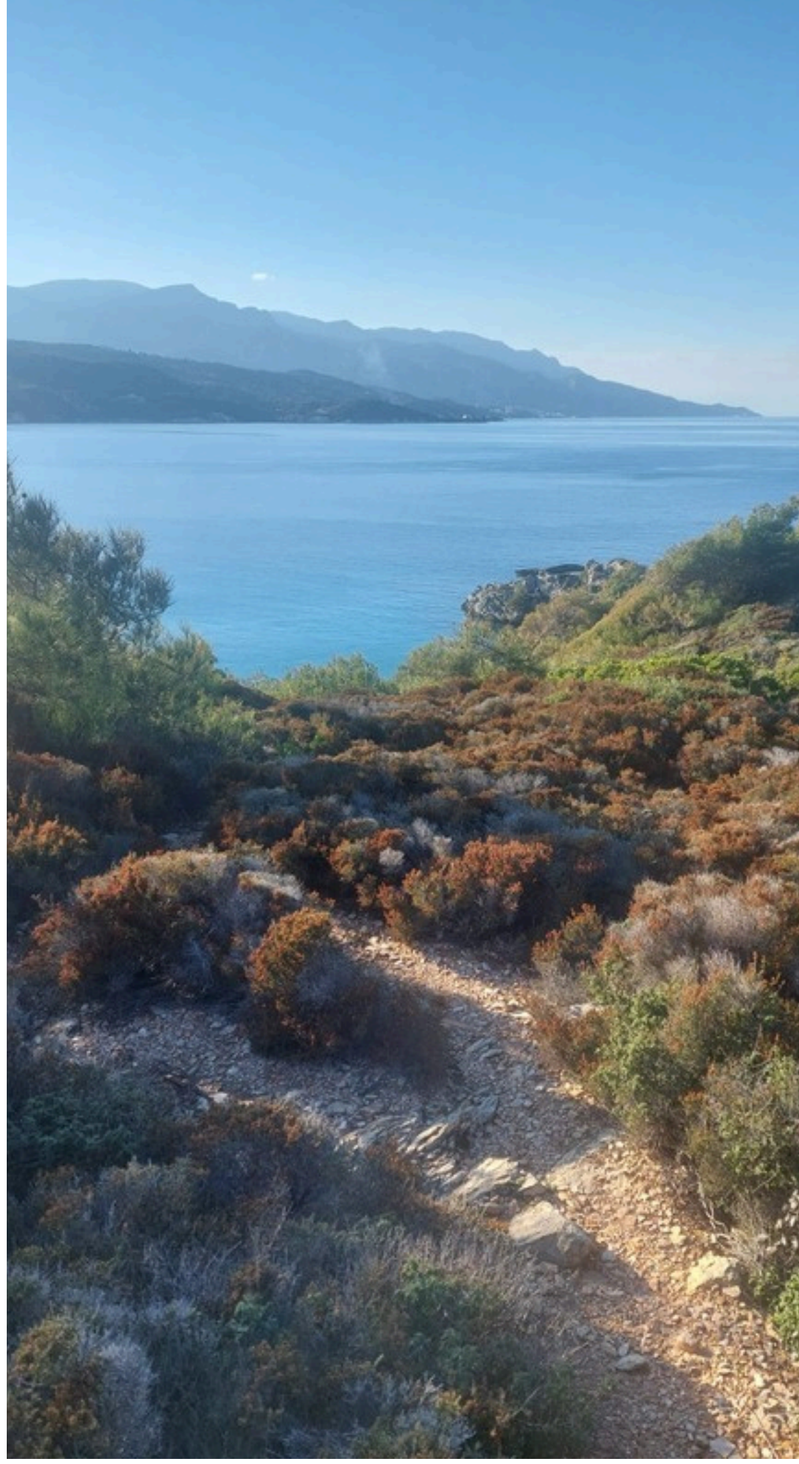
At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to announce my resignation as Director. After six years working on Samos and in direct humanitarian field, I have decided to close this chapter and to move on. I am very proud of what we have built together and confident in handing over the organisation to my successor. I will remain committed to selfm.aid in a voluntary role on the Board.

I am deeply grateful to all staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters for their support from the very beginning, and particularly during this difficult year.
Thank you - Σας ευχαριστώ - vielen Dank - شكرًا كتير - Merci beaucoup!

With appreciation and determination



Julia S. Minder
Co-Founder & Managing Director of selfm.aid (2020 - 2026)



1 selfm.aid

DISPLACEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The world is currently facing a multitude of complex challenges. Humanitarian crises, displacement, migration and climate change are just a few of them. We identify the main cause as limitless consumption, accompanied by the destruction of nature and the exploitation of workers. The world is out of balance.

Over the last few decades, the production of essential goods has been gradually outsourced - far away from our consciousness. As consumers, we no longer have the opportunity to be connected to the people who work for us and the natural resources that are used. As a result, these products and the professions behind them have increasingly lost value and recognition in our society. Much of the traditional knowledge and the means by which one can produce for oneself has been eroded or forgotten.

We believe it is time to fundamentally rethink: We have to remember the ways of life from the past in order to develop innovative solutions for the future. We have to again be able to know for ourselves, to act ourselves and to produce ourselves, without relying on large corporations.



OUR VISION

We produce humanitarian aid ourselves:
by hand. locally. sustainably. independently.
honestly.

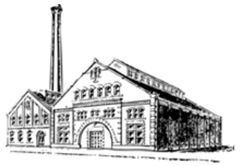
«selfm.aid» is a Swiss grassroots non-profit organization registered in Samos (Greece) and Switzerland. The organization aims to combat humanitarian crises and social injustices with a sustainable concept.

Vision

Our vision is to assist in creating a strong local community, which is able to fight humanitarian crises and social grievances independently through the use of existing local, human and natural resources.



OUR PRINCIPLES



WE FACILITATE

With our projects, we provide attractive workspaces where interested people from the entire community can freely develop their craft skills.



WE EMPOWER

We encourage and support our participants to take responsibility for the workshops and to improve living conditions through their own efforts.



WE PRODUCE

We produce and repair the most important products for everyday basic needs independently and from natural, local, raw materials.



WE CONNECT

The shared interest in manual work enables encounters on equal footing. People from diverse cultures and life situations work as peers to solve existing problems.



WE PROMOTE

We promote the potential of people on the move as well as the future and appreciation of traditional crafts, both of which we regard as elementary pillars of our society and economy.

OUR VALUES

Respect for people and the environment

This at the heart of our work. We give great importance to fairness and sustainability.

Participatory

Our programs are determined, developed and evaluated by the participants.

Creative and Innovative

This is the only way to break previous patterns and develop new solutions.

Resource-oriented

We recognize and promote the potential of every person.

Local and seasonal

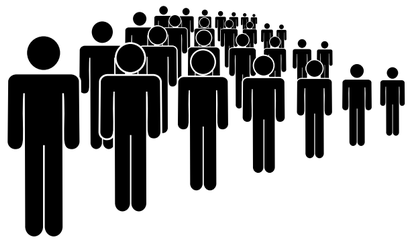
We use products and natural resources directly from our surroundings.

Collaboration

Together we are stronger and better. We support and learn from each other.

SELFM.AID 2025 - KEY FIGURES

A selection of key figures reflecting our organisation, our work, and our impact. More information is provided in the following annual report.

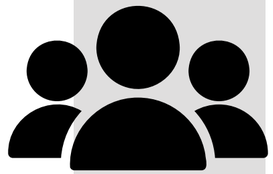


15’618

people supported

09

staff members



€ 178'365

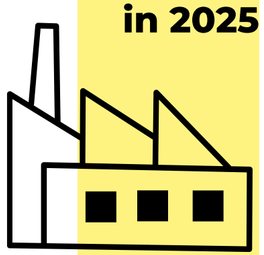
Annual income in 2025

*equals CHF 165'786



03

active projects in 2025





152

volunteers involved with selfm.aid



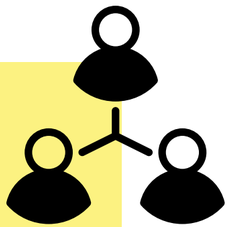
2020

founded in 2020, registered in Switzerland & Greece

89%

Percentage of funds spent locally





2025 board members

04



2025 AT A GLANCE

by Linda Wanklin, Board Member since 2021

For those of us on the board of selfm.aid, writing this annual reflection brings a familiar mixture of admiration and sobering realism. In 2025, **the humanitarian crisis at Europe's external borders entered its tenth year**. For people arriving on Samos, the situation remains fragile: conditions can change suddenly and unpredictably, yet at the same time much remains painfully unchanged. **The humanitarian emergency at Europe's borders continues without a structural political solution in sight**.

This broader context has also shaped the environment in which selfm.aid operates. Across the humanitarian sector, we are witnessing a **worrying retreat of the international community from humanitarian engagement**. Funding streams have become increasingly uncertain, and several organisations have had to reduce or close their activities. We felt this development strongly in 2025, when **support from UNHCR for the Phones Without Borders project – a central pillar of our work – as well as funding from various foundations, came to an abrupt halt.**

What followed was an impressive demonstration of the **resilience of the team on the ground**. Faced with the sudden loss of major funding sources, they mobilised an extraordinary SOS fundraising campaign, activating networks, partners, and supporters. Within a short time, they secured the resources needed to stabilise the project and continue the work. **By the end of the year, cooperation with UNHCR could also be resumed**. This moment once again showed that the **approaches developed within selfm.aid are not only innovative but also sustainable**.

2025 was therefore not only a year of challenges, but also one of **perseverance and consolidation**. The structures around **SKILLS FACTORY 2.0** continued to mature, providing a stable foundation for the work ahead. At the same time, new developments took shape. Alexandra Stadler stepped into the role of project manager for SKILLS FACTORY, and parts of the fundraising responsibilities were increasingly delegated to the project team itself.

From Switzerland, we are constantly reminded how much of the real work happens far from board meetings. Time and again, we are deeply impressed by the **creativity, leadership, and determination shown by the team and communities on Samos**.

At the same time, this year has reminded us that **strengthening management capacities and organisational structures will remain an important task for the future.** Much has been achieved, yet there is still more to learn and improve.

For us on the board, the dedication of the team and community on Samos is a powerful reminder that **even in difficult times, acts of solidarity can create spaces of dignity and keep alive the hope for a more peaceful world.**

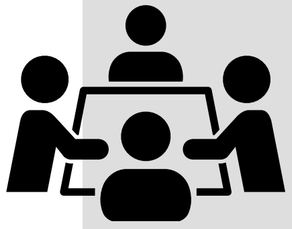


BOARD OF SELFM.AID - KEY FIGURES 2025

This section highlights selected aspects of the voluntary work of the selfm.aid Board in supporting and advising the teams on the ground.

14

Board Meetings



*including 4 extraordinary



4

Board Members

73%

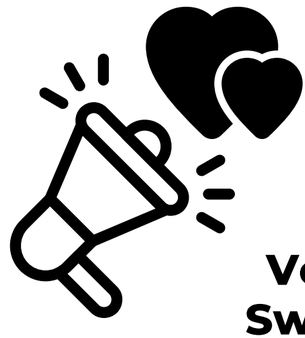
Average attendance



51

Members





11

Volunteers Switzerland

11

media publi-cations



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Current board members



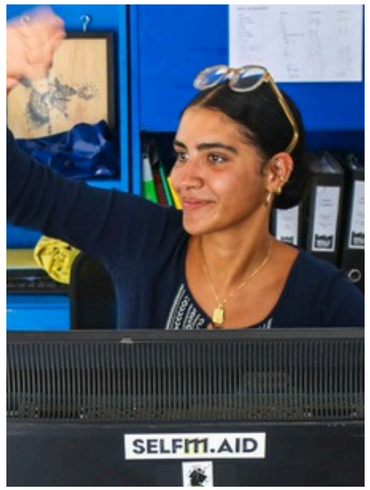
Linda WANKLIN

Events, Fundraising & Director Support
since 2021



Janine KOBI

Administration
since 2024



Noor Qaiser

Fundraising Support
Since 2024



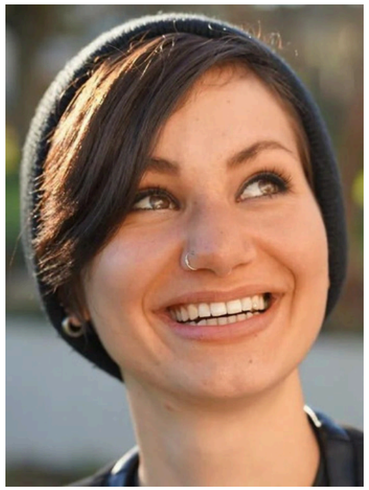
Alexander BRUUN

IT-Support
Since 2024

All current board members stand for re-election.
We thank you very much for your continued support, your strategic guidance, and your reliability over the years.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

New members for election



Julia MINDER

President of the Board
from 2026



Robyn LINDEQUE

Marketing & Communications
from 2026



Uzoma OKWARA

Accounting & Finances
from 2026



Elpida Lou ANDREADI

Mental Health Advisor
from 2026

The following candidates are nominated for election to the Board.
Further details are provided in the following section.

MEET JULIA

Co-Founder & Board Candidate (Presidency)

After six years on the ground - from founding selfm.aid, to implementing and managing projects, to leading the organisation as Director - I have been part of every phase of its development. I am proud of what we have achieved together and deeply grateful for the opportunity to continue supporting this inspiring work in a voluntary role from afar as a member of the Board.

I remain available for advice and support to ensure the best possible handover, while also recognising that this transition will bring change to the organisation. I welcome this next phase with confidence and see great potential in what lies ahead.





MEET ROBYN

Board Candidate (Marketing & Communications)

After an education and career in technology in the UK, I began a journey to find a meaningful path that allowed me to engage and support my community around me. This started by volunteering with refugees in my local area of London and led me to spending 5 months at the SKILLS FACTORY, as the Fundraising Officer. selfm.aid's philosophy of focusing on the potential and skills of people on the move completely changed the way I viewed not only humanitarian aid, but myself.

I had felt that my technology background would limit my career change, but **selfm.aid taught me to focus on my potential, not just my past**. As a direct result of my time at selfm.aid, I transformed my life and moved to Lesvos to begin working as the Programmes Manager for Collective Aid Greece.

When I first left SKILLS FACTORY, I wanted to shout it from the rooftops 'This place is totally amazing!' As the Marketing and Communications board member, I will continue to share this message, using my love for visual design and my passion for selfm.aid.

MEET UZOMA

Board Candidate
(Accounting & Finances)

My name is Okwara Uzoma. I have an academic background in Quantity Surveying and experience in cost management, budgeting, forecasting, and the financial control of projects. I am currently also pursuing a Master's degree in Digital Business Administration at the Bern University of Applied Sciences, which is further strengthening my understanding of digital transformation, strategic thinking, and data-driven decision-making.

I decided to join selfm.aid because I want to apply my financial and analytical skills to meaningful work. The mission of selfm.aid - to empower people and create sustainable social impact - strongly aligns with my own values and beliefs.

In particular, I would like to support the organization by assessing financial impacts, preparing monthly and annual reports, carefully documenting all transactions, and contributing to well-informed, sustainable decisions, with the goal of strengthening the long-term success and impact of selfm.aid.





MEET ELPIDA LOU

Board Candidate (Mental Health Specialist & Advisor)

Experienced psychologist in the field of migration in Greece, working for various organizations in Lesbos and in Athens.

My main goal is to create of a safe space for people to explore the sides of themselves that require care and find their strengths thought community-based and holistic approaches.

Experienced in supervision and management of multidisciplinary teams through collaborative learning and development.

Currently training in Systemic Psychotherapy approach and holding a MSc. Degree in Gender Studies.

OUTLOOK 2026

And this is how it continues...

Onboarding and training of new leadership and staff:
Following the resignation of Julia Minder as Director, 2026 will focus on the handover to and training of the new leadership and Board structure, ensuring stable operations and the sustainable continuation of selfm.aid's work.

Vision Day 2026:
The Board and new Director will meet to define annual priorities, goals, and milestones for the organisation.

selfm.aid Switzerland - strengthening roles and outreach:
In recent years, the Swiss association has experienced a decline in members, Board participation, and volunteer engagement. As a Swiss-registered NGO, maintaining a strong base in Switzerland remains essential. In 2026, we will therefore focus on clarifying roles and responsibilities, developing a renewed outreach strategy, and engaging new members and volunteers from Switzerland to support our work.



2 Marketing & Communication



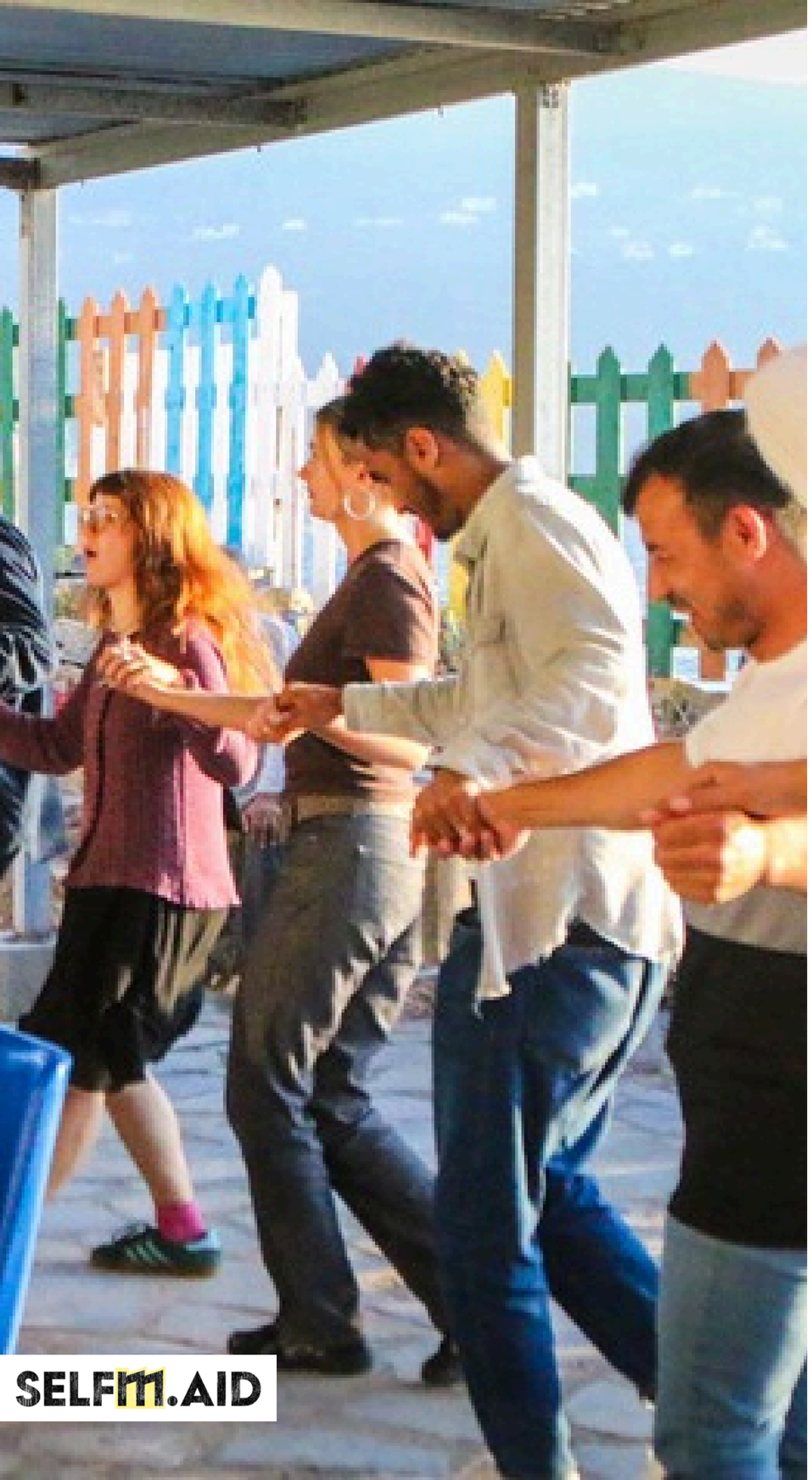
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Selfm.aid uses its communication channels to **present a different narrative about people on the move**: Since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis in Greece and across Europe, media coverage and advocacy by many organisations have focused on devastating living conditions and violations of human rights. This reality is important and must not be ignored. However, over time this perspective has often created a one-sided perception.

Too often, asylum seekers - and especially men - are portrayed as a burden or even as a potential threat to European societies, rather than as individuals with the capacity to contribute.

Through our daily work on the ground, we see a much broader picture. The people arriving in Europe bring with them (professional) **experience, craftsmanship, knowledge, creativity, resilience, motivation, and ambition**. Our work demonstrates that people on the move are not only in need of support - they also bring valuable skills and potential.





PURPOSE

Through our communication, we aim to encourage a more balanced understanding. **Our goal is for European societies to recognise the skills, experience, and potential that people on the move carry with them, and to support environments where everyone has the opportunity to develop their abilities and contribute to society.**

In this way, our social media and communication efforts aim to help shift the narrative **from victimhood to potential**.

MARKETING - KEY FIGURES 2025

This section highlights selected aspects of selfm.aid's marketing and communication efforts during the past year.

11
media publi-cations





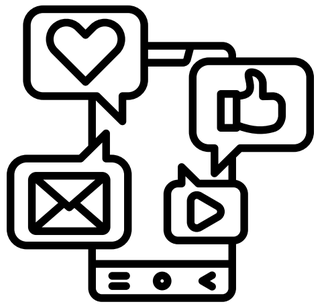
3
TV-features

1129
Newsletter subscribers



2
Prize nominations





55
Social Media Posts

2
Newsletters



HIGHLIGHTS

From selfm.aid

In 2025, selfm.aid continued to strengthen its public visibility and storytelling despite a challenging year for the humanitarian sector. Through newsletters, videos, media collaborations, and public appearances, we shared insights into our work on Samos and highlighted the skills and potential of people on the move.



Video: SKILLS FACTORY 2.0

A community-driven initiative where humanitarian aid is produced by the people, for the people. It recognises individual skills regardless of nationality and demonstrates inclusive, collaborative models for society. Watch it now!

ERTFLIX – “Here We Are: Samos”

Featured on ERTFLIX, the programme explored Samos’ culture and traditions, ending with the SKILLS FACTORY to highlight stories of solidarity and creativity. Watch it now!

European Commission – “For Our Planet” Award: PWB

Phones Without Borders was selected as a finalist for the European Commission’s For Our Planet Award, recognising its innovative approach to repairing devices, restoring lives, and reducing electronic waste. The initiative addresses both environmental and social challenges, demonstrating how technology can empower people on the move while promoting sustainability. Read more.

MareTV (NDR) – Samos Documentary

MareTV visited Samos in 2025 to create an honest portrait of selfm.aid’s work, showcasing both the island’s richness and our projects. Watch it now (in German only)!

iF Social Impact Price – SKILLS FACTORY

Awarded the iF Social Impact Price 2025, recognising SKILLS FACTORY as a global model for practical, inclusive, and sustainable humanitarian innovation. Read more



Follow us:

selfm.aid @selfm.aid.ch www.selfm-aid.ch selfm.aid

JURY STATEMENT

iF Social Impact Price 2025

“SKILLS FACTORY is a place where displaced people don’t just get help - they build, cook, sew, and create it themselves. It’s smart, hands-on, and full of heart.

A powerful example of how dignity, skills, and community can turn crisis into opportunity.”


SELFM.AID
3 Fundraising
IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT SKILLS FACTORY

FUNDRAISING REVIEW 2025

2025 was a **challenging year for humanitarian funding worldwide**. Following the return of the **Trump administration** and drastic cuts in U.S. foreign aid, global humanitarian funding fell sharply. Between 2024 and 2025, U.S. contributions dropped from approximately $14 billion to $3.7 billion, reducing the overall global funding pool by **more than 30 percent**. The consequences were severe: millions risked losing access to basic healthcare, education, and essential services (Refugees International, 2026).

This global funding collapse **directly affected selfm.aid**. Three of our key institutional funding partners had to reduce or halt support, **leaving a shortfall of €60,000**. To ensure the continuity of our projects - which were at the same time larger and more impactful than ever - we had to act quickly, mobilising new donations and diversifying our fundraising approach.

Selfm.aid reacted, as always, with creativity, passion, and commitment when facing challenges. A "**Save the SKILLS FACTORY – Fundraising Taskforce**" of two full-time team members, supported by other staff one day per week, was established to **diversify funding sources and reach new donors**. At the same time, our **existing private supporters continued to provide essential backing**, sustaining operations while institutional funding paused. Thanks to these combined efforts, we were able to close the funding gap by the end of the year.



FUNDRAISING - KEY FIGURES 2025

This section showcases selected efforts of selfm.aid's Emergency Taskforce and their impact over the past year.

26

submitted Grant Applications



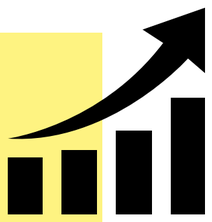


278

letters of inquiry

473%

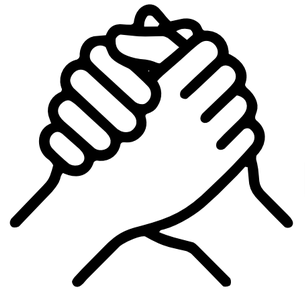
Increase in fundraising activities compared to 2024



4

Team members involved





57

57 individual donations in one month

1



Emergency Campaign



OUTLOOK

After the substantial crises in 2025 - which we managed to overcome thanks to our unique concept, the unwavering support of our donors, and the commitment and determination of our team - we have **implemented several structural changes to reduce the risk of similar challenges in the future**.

From now on, **each project is responsible for fundraising for its own activities**, integrating this into project management. In the SKILLS FACTORY, fundraising responsibilities are also delegated to a **dedicated volunteer Fundraising & Sponsoring Officer**. At the same time, the directorate and board approve and submit larger, strategic grant requests that have a significant impact on the organisation's structure, sustainability, or public visibility.

With these changes, we aim to **invest more capacity into fundraising, while keeping our focus on the people we work with** and the activities we run. The goal is to strike a **sustainable balance**: enough investment to secure resources, but without creating excessive overhead.

SELFM.AID

SELFM.AID

4 Financial Report

INCOME STATEMENT 2025

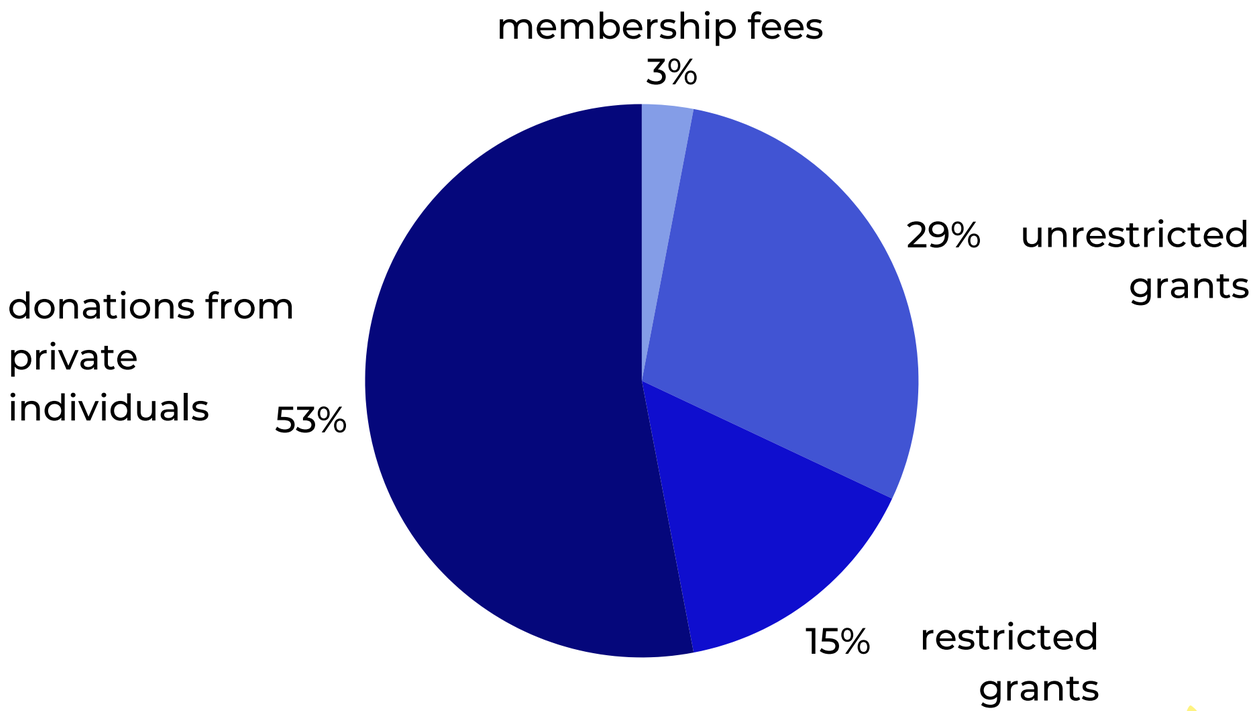
The financial statements are presented in CHF. Currency conversions reflect the exchange rate as of 31 December 2025.

Label	2024	2025	±%
Revenue			
MEMBERSHIPS	6'591.46	5'389.30	-18%
DONATIONS / GRANTS	158'486.98	160'267.40	+1%
OPERATING REVENUE	52.94	656.20	+1140%
DECREASE IN PROFITS	-1'036.66	-530.73	+49%
Total Revenue	**164'094.72**	**165'782.17**	**+1%**
Expense			
EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	28'887.02	25'960.40	-10%
LABOUR COSTS	77'340.55	74'085.98	-4%
OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES (INFRASTRUCT...	46'780.77	47'468.08	+1%
DEPRECIATION	2'673.38	5'106.90	+91%
FINANCIAL INCOME AND EXPENSES	166.40	1'990.41	+1096%
NON-OPERATING INCOME	669.23	727.31	+9%
Total Expense	**156'517.35**	**155'339.08**	**-1%**
Profit / Loss	*7'577.37*	*10'443.09*	*+38%*

*In 2025, selfm.aid reported total **expenses of CHF 155'339** and total **income of CHF 165'782**, equivalent to **€167'122** and **€178'365** respectively

REVENUE 2025

Revenue 2025 by category



Funding Mix

Compared to last year, total income remained stable, but the composition of funding shifted significantly.

Private donations increased by 13%, reflecting the continued loyalty of our supporters, while institutional grants required active acquisition of new partners as some longstanding funders reduced or paused support.

Despite maintaining the same overall income, acquiring new institutional partners required a 473% increase in fundraising efforts compared to 2024.

BALANCE 2025

Label	31/12/2024	31/12/2025
Assets		
CURRENT ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS	65'692.93	87'487.97
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	61.26	0.00
OTHER ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	117.89	132.47
ACCRUALS	8'292.11	5'759.45
Total Current assets	**74'164.19**	**93'379.89**
FIXED ASSETS		
FINANCIAL ASSETS	0.00	467.18
TANGIBLE ASSETS	12'617.77	7'510.87
Total Fixed assets	12'617.77	7'978.05
Total Assets	**86'781.96**	**101'357.94**
Liabilities & Equity		
COMMITTED ASSETS SHORT TERM		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	5'244.84	6'672.47
ACCRUALS AND DEFERRALS	9'630.41	12'329.08
Total Committed assets short term	**14'875.25**	**19'001.55**
OWN CAPITAL		
ORIGINAL CAPITAL	64'329.33	71'906.70
Total Own capital	**64'329.33**	**71'906.70**
Sub-total Liabilities & Equity	**79'204.58**	**90'908.25**
Unbooked profit / loss carried forward	*0.01*	*0.03*
Unbooked profit / loss	*7'577.37*	*10'449.66*
Total Liabilities & Equity	**86'781.96**	**101'357.94**

EXPLANATIONS

Generally
In 2025, selfm.aid achieved a profit of approximately €10,000, reflecting solid financial management in a challenging year. Reserves remain strong, and bookkeeping has been maintained in an orderly and coherent manner.

Stable expenditures despite increased activities
Expenditures remained largely stable despite increased activity: the Phones Without Borders project was temporarily on hold, while the SKILLS FACTORY operated on an emergency budget during the fundraising efforts. This careful management allowed the organisation to continue its work without overextending resources.

Increase in revenue
Revenue increased slightly compared to previous years, thanks to private donor support and successful emergency fundraising. Planned crowdfunding campaigns were postponed to early 2026.

Overall, the financial position at the end of 2025 demonstrates resilience, prudence, and a stable foundation for the organisation’s growth in the coming year.

AUDIT REPORT

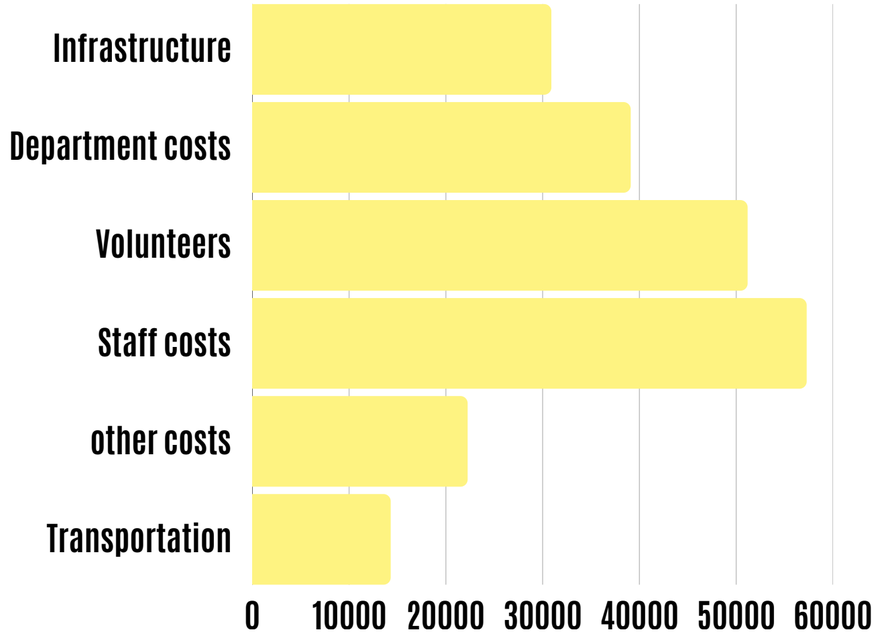
Pending

The **voluntary audit** is currently being conducted by **Nubi Treuhand AG**. The audit report will be incorporated into the annual report as soon as it is available.

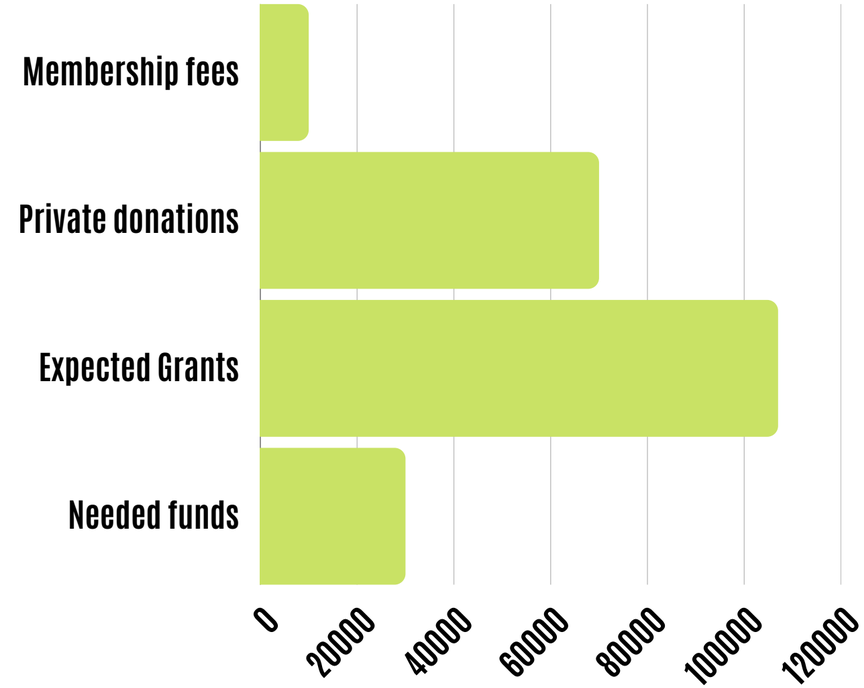


BUDGET 2026

EUR 214.211
Total Costs 2026



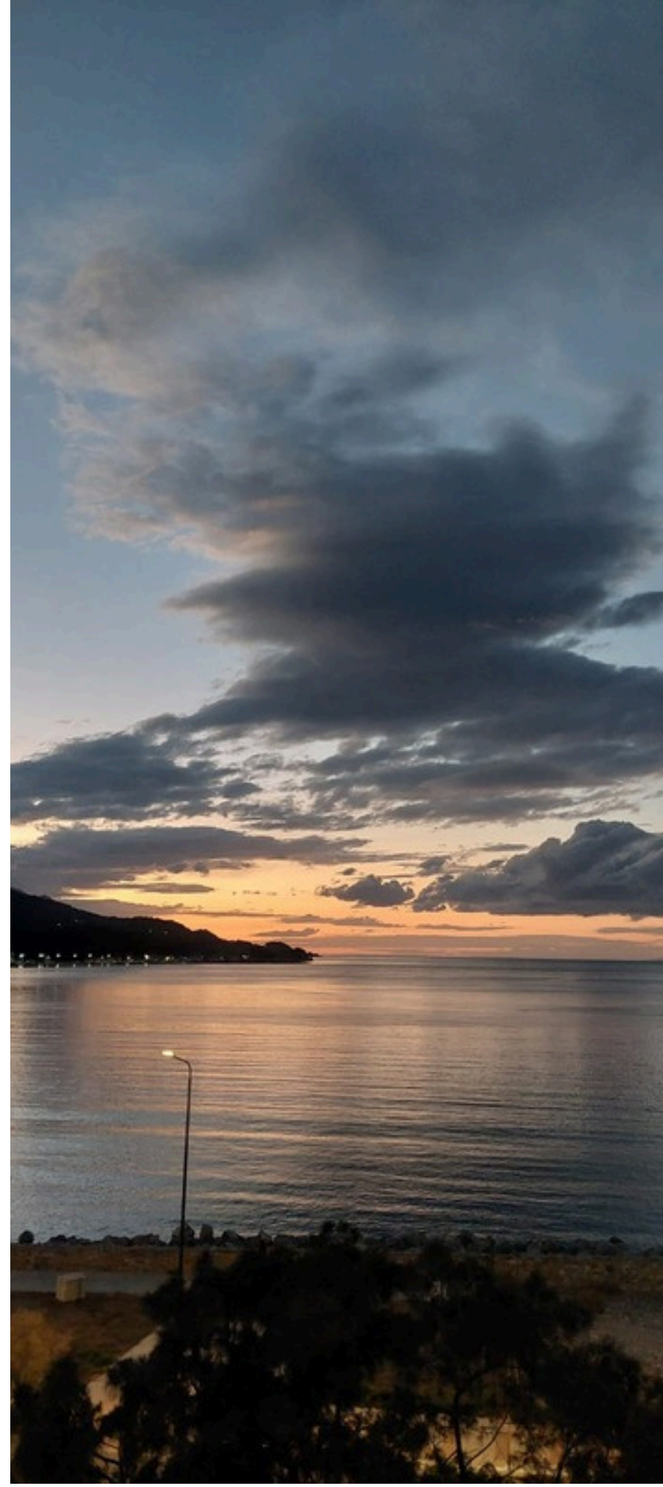
EUR 217.271
Total Revenues 2026



EXPLANATIONS

The 2026 budget is expected to **remain relatively stable**. The Phones Without Borders project is fully operational again under the new project management team, and the SKILLS FACTORY will continue running at full capacity with its new management.

The focus for 2026 is on **stabilisation and handover within the directorate and project management, rather than expansion.** This approach ensures continuity, strengthens organisational structures, and allows the team to consolidate lessons learned from the previous year while maintaining high-quality operations.



SELFM.AID

APPROVAL AND DISCHARGE



The Annual General Assembly of selfm.aid took place on Thursday, 23 April 2026, in Bülach.

- A total of 9 members, together with several non-voting guests, attended the meeting.
- The annual report, balance sheet, and income statement for 2025 were approved.
- All Board members were discharged, and both the 4 existing Board members and the 4 new candidates were elected or re-elected.
- The membership categories and corresponding fees remain unchanged.

We congratulate **Linda, Janine, Noor, and Alex** on their re-election and warmly welcome **Julia, Robyn, Uzoma, and Elpida** to the Board.

SELFM.AID

5 Context



WORSENING POLITICAL CONTEXT

What has changed in Greece in 2025?

In 2025, migration policy in Greece entered a **new and increasingly restrictive phase**. With the appointment of **Migration Minister Thanos Plevris**, the political direction has **shifted further towards far-right approaches**, where **deterrence and control dominate over protection and integration**. Public discourse has hardened, and migration is increasingly framed as a security issue rather than a humanitarian responsibility.

This shift is reflected in concrete policy decisions, which set the stage for the key developments of 2025. Funding cuts and **reduced support programmes** have left people on the move with **fewer resources**, while **stricter border controls and increasing pushbacks** are isolating arrivals and limiting access to protection. At the same time, the legal and public framing of migration has intensified the **criminalisation of** both **asylum seekers and humanitarian actors**, creating additional risks for those trying to support vulnerable communities.

Overall, these developments reinforce an already restrictive political landscape, further impacting people on the move and those supporting them.

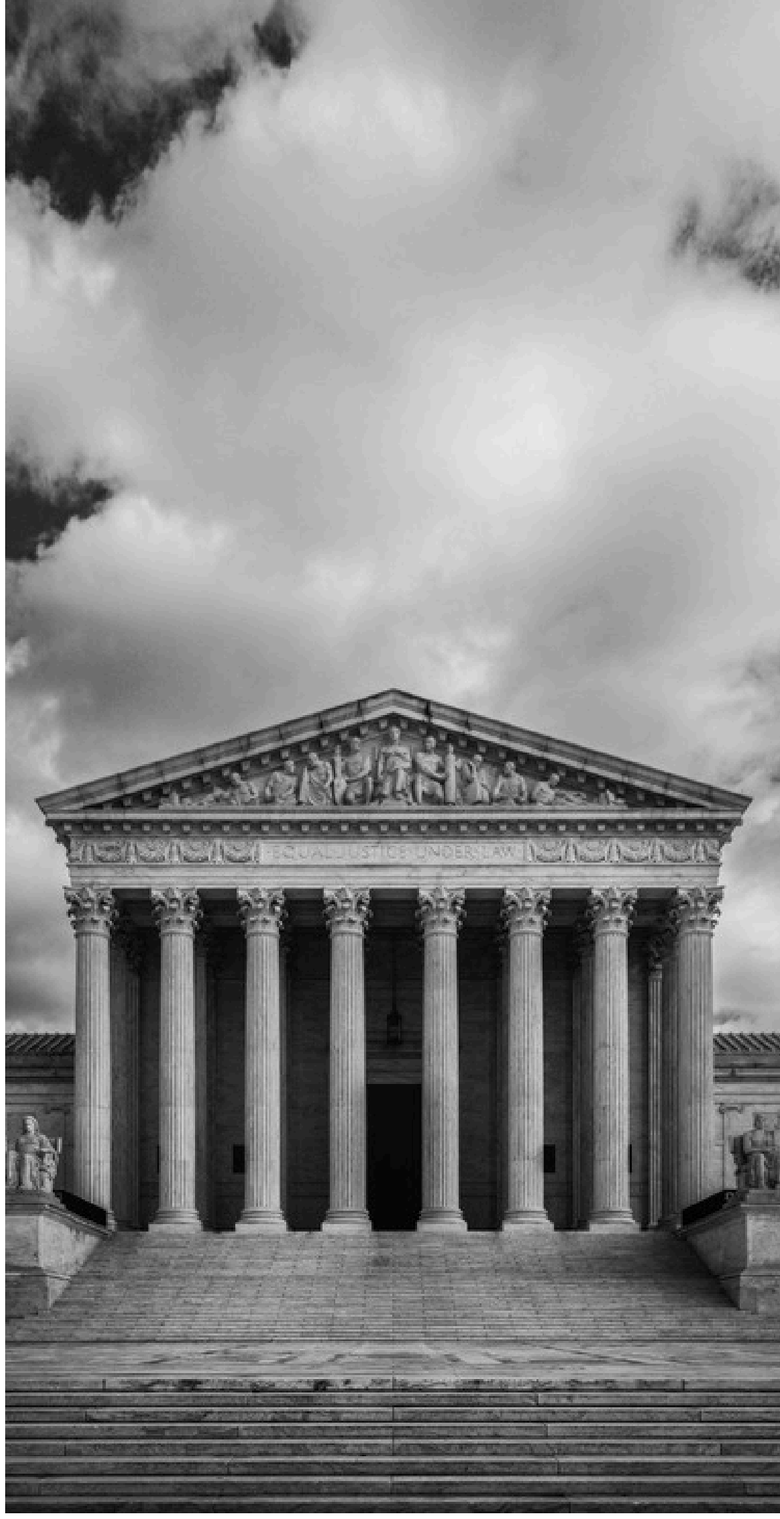
CRIMINALISING SOLIDARITY

The developments in Greece are part of a wider global pattern in which **human rights are increasingly disregarded and legal protections are no longer guaranteed**: Migration has become a highly politicised and securitised issue across Europe and beyond. Legal frameworks are being tightened, and the distinction between lawful migration management and outright criminalisation is disappearing.

Humanitarian obligations, including access to asylum and protection, are increasingly **ignored**, and **illegal pushbacks** and other **violations** are **implemented with impunity.** In January 2025, the European Court of Human Rights confirmed Greece's systematic practice of illegal pushbacks, yet these actions continue with almost **no consequences,** ECCHR (2025).

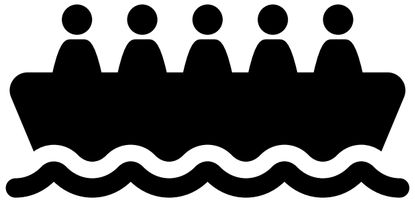
Parallel developments show a disturbing trend: Asylum seekers and humanitarian actors alike are being **targeted through criminal investigations and legal harassment**. **Solidarity** itself is framed as a **potential offence**.

Across borders, the right to seek protection, the duty to provide aid, and the basic guarantees of human rights are being undermined, creating a global climate of repression, deterrence, and legal insecurity.



ARRIVALS AND PUSHBACKS 2025 - IN NUMBERS

A snapshot of key figures from multiple reports (see sources below), illustrating arrivals, border interceptions, and illegal pushback practices at Greece's external borders in 2025.

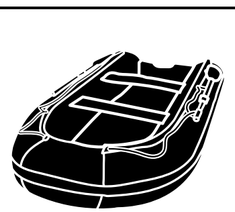


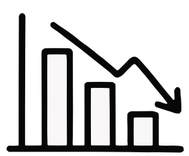
41,696
people reached Greece via sea

16
Boats sank en route to Greece



794
Boats arrived on Greek Islands





24.4%
decrease in arrivals compared to 2024

40
people reported missing



confirmed dead
58





1'105
Boats stopped by Turkish Coast Guard

1'719
lowest camp population in December 25



Arrested for trying to reach Europe
25'060

4'139
People in the CCAC Samos Camp by the beginning of 2025





No. 1
For the first time Crete became the main entry point in 2025.

Sources:
RSA, 2026: https://rsaegean.org/en/at-least-58-refugees-dead-and-40-missing-refugees-at-greeces-maritime-borders-in-2025/
UNHCR, 2025: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/europe-sea-arrivals/location/24489
Aegean Boat Report, 2025: https://aegeanboatreport.com/monthly-reports/



CRETE: CHANGING ROUTES

In 2025, arrival dynamics in Greece shifted significantly. While overall numbers slightly decreased, migration routes changed, with Crete and Gavdos emerging as main entry points and arrivals from North Africa increasing sharply, Euro News (2025).

This reflects **changing border practices**, pushing people onto **longer and more dangerous routes**, often without adequate reception infrastructure. The shift towards crossings from Libya, for example, exposes people to higher risks at sea and greater dependence on smuggling networks.

In response, the Greek government moved quickly - but not to strengthen protection. From 14 July to 14 October 2025, **access to asylum was suspended** for people arriving via North Africa, **leaving around 2,000 individuals in detention without access to procedures or protectio**n. Reports highlight serious procedural gaps and human rights concerns, RSA (2025).

These developments show that **reduced arrival numbers do not mean reduced movement, but rather a shift in routes, risks, and access to rights**.



SITUATION ON SAMOS

On Samos, the year was marked by a relative **decrease in arrivals**, but **no corresponding improvement in living conditions**. The section for **unaccompanied minors had to be evacuated**, closed, and renovated after the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) exposed the **alarming conditions in the so-called "safe zone"** of the Samos Closed Controlled Access Centre (CCAC). At the same time, the overall population declined, partly due to stricter policies requiring recognised refugees to leave shortly after receiving their status, Republik (2025).

In practice, this has created new challenges. Many individuals are forced to leave the camp within a very short timeframe, often without adequate support to organise housing, travel, or their next steps. As a result, a **growing number of people - including families with children - have been left without shelter, leading to a visible increase in temporary homelessness on the island,** Joint Statement (2025).

At the same time, the presence of **NGOs** on Samos has **further diminished**, leaving selfm.aid among the very last organisations still providing support. The resulting gaps are increasingly being **filled by religious groups** expanding their activities on the island, **linking support to religious conditions**. This raises serious concerns regarding neutrality and the adherence to core humanitarian principles.

These developments reflect a broader shift: From **containment within camps** to **exclusion** outside of them, **without sustainable alternatives** for those affected.



OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS



Melting Pot Europa (2025):
Greece: Court acquits 11 asylum seekers accused of human smuggling

Fair Trails (2026):
Search-and-rescue workers acquitted of human trafficking charges in Greece

Aljazeera (2025):
Greece’s Crete sees surge in boat arrivals despite harsher detention policy

NZZ (2026):
Die Schweiz und die EU finanzieren in Griechenland gefängnisartige Asylzentren. Was passiert im Innern?

Greek Reporter (2025):
12-Year-Old Killed by Boat Propeller During Migrant Landing on Samos, Greece

SELFIE.AID

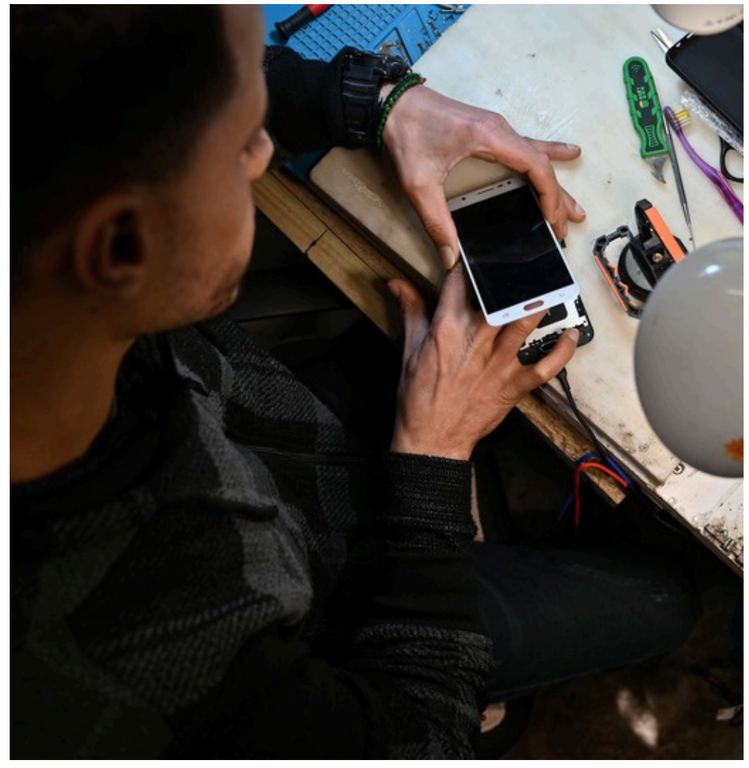
OUR PROJECTS



SKILLS FACTORY
Samos



ONE for ONE
1print for 1case



PWB
Phones without Borders

SELFM.AID

6 SKILLS FACTORY, Samos

SKILLS FACTORY

Here we produce humanitarian aid ourselves:
by hand. locally. sustainably. independently. honestly.

In the closed refugee camp on the Greek island of Samos, everything is lacking. But the people who live in this misery have the knowledge and skills to produce everything they need themselves. And the fertile island of Samos provides the necessary raw materials.

And that's exactly where the "SKILLS FACTORY" comes into play.

In our workshops, we work together, learn, share knowledge, laugh and develop innovative solutions. In doing so, we produce products that directly improve current living conditions and alleviate humanitarian suffering.

This is how we break the vicious circle of dependency.



THE CONCEPT

The SKILLS FACTORY is a large, safe workplace for the people of Samos to practice and pass on their skills. Products are produced with which the participants can directly improve their current living situation, reduce humanitarian suffering and break the dependency on aid organizations.

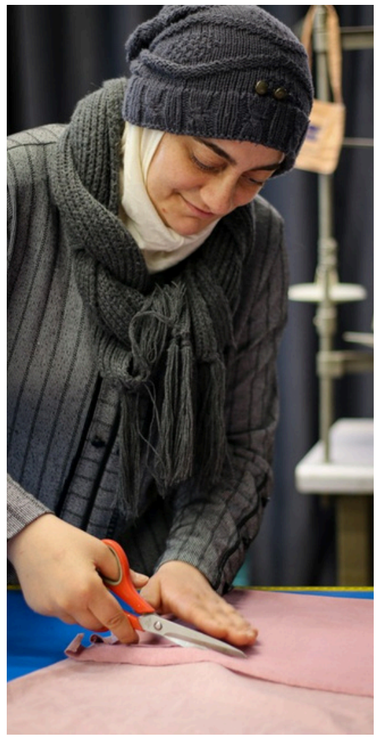
In our workshops we work together, produce, cook and sometimes debate, but always laugh a lot. Together we develop innovative solutions and build bridges between people, cultures and languages.

In this way we break the vicious circle of dependency and hopelessness.

“I feel like I can breathe here!"
- Zarifa, Community Volunteer Media Department

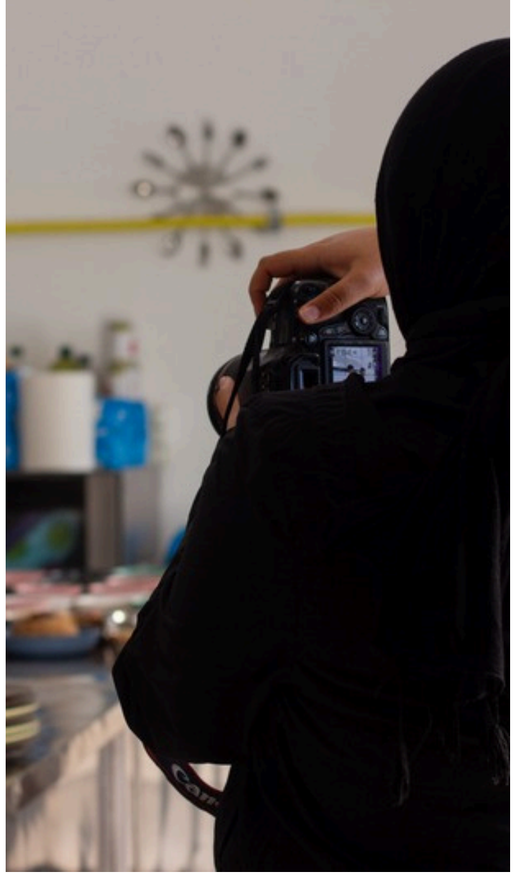









Workshop
S FACTORY

SELFIE.AID






THE CONCEPT II

Production and distribution: Together we set targets for production based on people's needs, product urgency and local material availability. The products manufactured are distributed where they are most needed.

Training and further education: We develop training plans for young talents and offer informal language courses to support work integration.

Target groups: Our offer is aimed at adults (18+), regardless of gender, with manual skills or the desire to learn them.

Remuneration: Work in the SKILLS FACTORY is voluntary and unpaid. In return, we provide material benefits such as meals, hygiene products, bus tickets and clothing.

Teamwork: The departments are led by the community. We provide support and space and encourage the joint development of work plans, regulations and products.



SELFM.AID

MEET ALADIN

My name is **Aladin Saleh**. I am from Sudan, and I work as a **barber in SKILLS FACTORY**. Working as a barber here is **not only about cutting hair**. We learn many things. We learn **how to communicate** with people and how to **understand different personalities**. The person who manages the barber section is a great person, and everyone who works with him comes to work **every day with a smile**. That makes the day better for all of us.

SKILLS FACTORY is very important for me. It helps me **improve my barber skills** and learn new ones. It also helps me **practice my English** and communicate with people from different countries and cultures.

The barber shop is also **very important for the community**. Haircuts here are affordable, which matters a lot because many refugees do not have much money. **Being able to get a good haircut for free / for a low price helps people feel good and confident.** The way people are treated here makes them **feel welcome and respected.**

For me, SKILLS FACTORY is **like a school that teaches many things**. When I first started, I didn't know much. Since then, I have learned many **new skills**. I already had some experience in barbering, but here I learned much more, especially how to work with different types of hair and styles.









Personally, I have grown a lot. **I have even become a little famous on the island as a barber**. People know my name and come especially to see me for a haircut.

In the barber department, we also grew together. SKILLS FACTORY taught us how **to make everyone feel welcome**. All the barbers learned how to treat people with **kindness and respect**. Because of that, people want to come back.

SKILLS FACTORY is my favorite place. **I feel that I have already achieved one of my dreams here.** I wanted to become a well-known barber and learn how to work with every type of hair. At SKILLS FACTORY I gained a lot of experience. **Before I came here, I was confused about my future. Now I am sure that one day I will open my own barbershop using everything I learned here.**

Back in Sudan, I was always looking for an organization where I could work or volunteer, learn, and feel like part of a family. Here I found all of that. At SKILLS FACTORY **we are like a family and we look out for each other**. **You can be yourself, learn from others, and care about each other's happiness and well-being.**

SELFM1.AID



REVIEW 2025

The year 2025 at SKILLS FACTORY was marked by **adaptation, resilience, and growth within a challenging environment.** We began the year with only a few applications but quickly rebuilt the team, bringing in new community volunteers and fresh energy. **Core services such as laundry and barbering were consistently in high demand**, reflecting both urgent needs and strong community trust.

At the same time, **uncertainty** - particularly among Syrian community members - continued to **affect mental health**, requiring close collaboration with organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières. Despite this, strong relationships were built, and **increased diversity within the team** enriched the project.

Spring brought a **dynamic mix of challenges and connection**. While Ramadan shaped a quieter rhythm, moments such as **Eid celebrations, project milestones**, and growing employment opportunities through Skills Connect strengthened the sense of community. **Media attention from international teams** helped amplify the project's visibility.

The **summer months** saw a **temporary slowdown**, allowing space for **internal development**, innovation, and intensified fundraising efforts. At the same time, the humanitarian situation remained fragile, with incidents such as fires in the camp highlighting ongoing gaps in infrastructure.

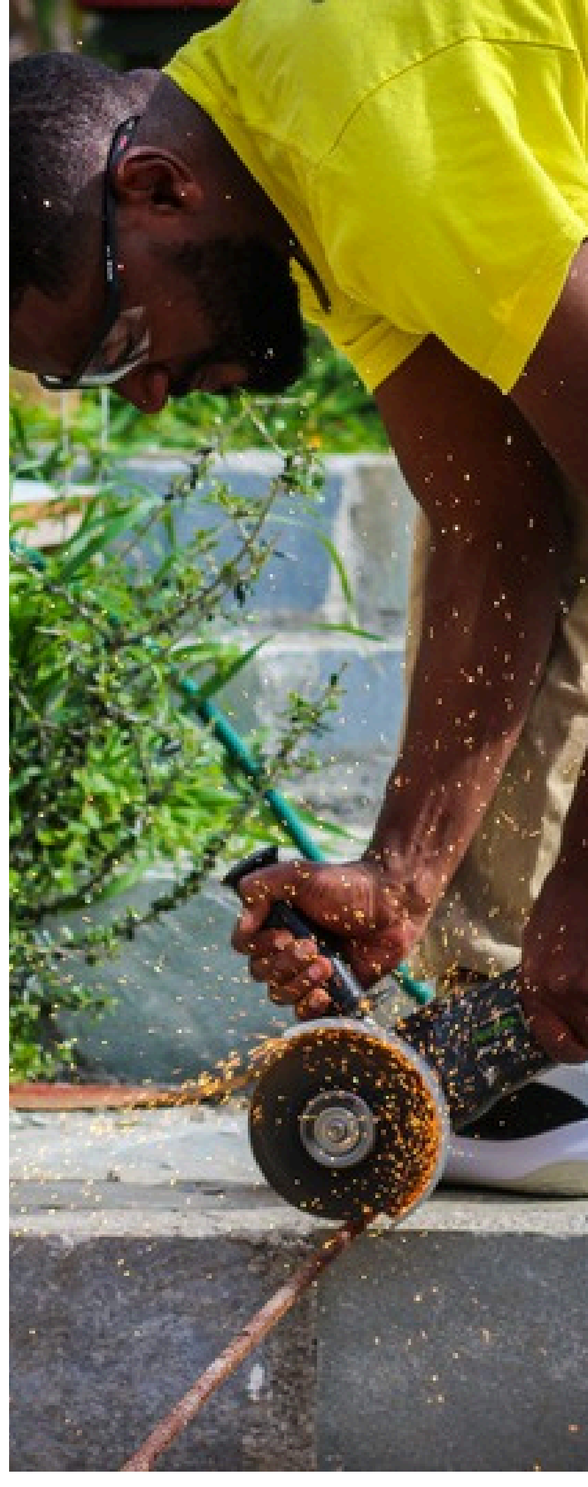
From late summer onwards, **activity increased** again, with rising demand for services and continued **high turnover due to transfers**. The project adapted continuously, supporting individuals as they gained experience, including through seasonal work on the island.

The final months brought greater stability, enabling deeper engagement and growth within the team. **Over 1,000 people were reached monthly, alongside improvements in infrastructure and service capacity**. The year concluded with moments of celebration, including the Christmas Bazaar and the certification of community members.

Overall, 2025 was a year of both challenge and consolidation. Despite a difficult context, SKILLS FACTORY continued to grow as a space of community, learning, and opportunity.

"Working with SKILLS FACTORY has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I have learned so much, enjoyed every activity, and always felt proud to be part of such an inspiring team."

- Omar K. (Long term community volunteer)



SKILLS FACTORY KITCHEN

Department Insight 2025

by Mike Logan, Project Coordinator

In 2025, the Kitchen Department continued to grow as a **cornerstone part of SKILLS FACTORY**. It remained far more than a space for preparing meals - it became a **hub for skill-building, creativity**, and a sense of **community connection**.

Over the year, the kitchen's output **expanded considerably**. Portions increased from 55 meals per week in January to consistent weeks of **120–190+ meals**, reflecting both the project's growth and the kitchen team's growing capability.

Culinary **experimentation flourished**. Volunteers explored **Afghani, Arab, and Greek cuisines**, honed baking skills with bread, focaccia, cakes, and tiramisu, and trialed new cooking techniques. Major events including the Community Open Day, a Greek TV/film crew visit, Eid celebration, a Fashion Show, and the Christmas Bazaar - showcased the team's creativity, resilience, and ability to manage large-scale meal preparation. By year's end, the kitchen had evolved into a **highly capable and innovative department**.

Volunteer growth and leadership were clear highlights of 2025. Many team members **advanced through skill levels, earning certificates** to formally recognise their progress. The introduction of **rotating "head chef" days encouraged leadership, autonomy, and confidence**. Volunteers supported one another, building cohesion and mentoring new team members.













Local partnerships deepened in 2025, strengthening both the kitchen and the wider Samos community. Our weekly **‘Thursday Chicken Day’** was sourced from a **family-run butcher shop**, who consistently provide halal meat with care and understanding. A newly opened **mini-market, run by a former CCAC resident**, supplied essential spices and high-quality rice, often offering reduced prices or small donated goods - a reminder of the solidarity surrounding SKILLS FACTORY.

The kitchen team also worked closely with our **Skills Connect program**, creating meaningful **pathways for volunteers to apply their skills beyond our space**. Many team members were **successfully placed in restaurants and hotels** across the island, demonstrating that **the local Samian community recognises the talents, knowledge, and value of the people we support**. These partnerships highlight the Kitchen Department’s role not only in nourishing our team but in **building bridges** between SKILLS FACTORY and the broader community.

In short, in 2025 the Kitchen Department achieved **significant growth, expanding output, diversifying cuisine, strengthening team leadership, and deepening local partnerships**. It remained a vibrant space for **learning, empowerment, and community**, providing our community with skills, confidence, and opportunities that extend beyond the kitchen. The foundations laid this year position the department to continue thriving and growing in 2026.

MEDIA DEPARTMENT

Department Insight 2025

by Katharina Scholle, Project Manager

The Media Department at SKILLS FACTORY has continued to grow as both a **creative hub and a space for learning, documentation and expression**. Powered by a dedicated team of community volunteers, the department has played a key role in sharing stories from across the project and capturing daily life at SKILLS FACTORY.

After a year of growth, the department **moved into a larger room inside the project building**. This new space sparked new ideas and motivation. **The team was full of energy, projects, and stories they wanted to tell** - bringing them to life step by step.

At the heart of the department are the individuals behind the camera. Each volunteer brings their own perspective, creativity and skills, showing the beauty of the project through different lenses. **Through photos, videos, and storytelling, they document the everyday moments of community life, skills-sharing and empowerment.**

One highlight was a **documentary created by media volunteer Assem, who directed, filmed and edited the project himself.** The film tells the story of SKILLS FACTORY - from the founding idea of the project to the experiences of team members today. It was screened for the whole team and received a very warm response. As Assem said: ***"****For me,* ***the camera is a way to capture stories of hope and unity*** *and to* ***preserve moments*** *that remind us* ***of the beauty of humanity."***













Other highlights in 2025 included **planning and documenting events** such as our **Open Day, Fashion Show and Christmas Bazaar** at SKILLS FACTORY as well as a Community Summer Fair hosted by Samos Volunteers, documenting moments of solidarity, community and celebration.

The Media Department continues to be **shaped by the volunteers** who contribute their time, ideas, and unique ways of seeing the world.

*"Together, **we paint our dreams with light and color**, **turning every image into a story** and every shot into art. Photography is **freezing a moment** and turning it into an **everlasting memory**. Every photograph is **a window onto another world**, a world the photographer sees deeply.*

*The photographer is **an artist who paints with light and** immortalizes moments with **endless colors.**"*

- **Rostam**, former Volunteer of the Media Department

WASH-DEPARTMENT

Department Insight 2025

By Josephine, former WASH Manager

The WASH department at the SKILLS FACTORY remained a **critical lifeline for people facing dire conditions in the CCAC**. With still **no usable washing machine in the camp**, and water and hygiene conditions remaining very poor, our department continued to be an essential alternative, **preventing the spread of scabies** and **preserving the dignity** of every service user.

Working in a team of 3 to 5 community volunteers and volunteers, we managed laundry daily with care and dedication. At the height of spring, **we received up to 50 bags per day**. To meet this demand, we built **additional drying lines and introduced a new computerised tracking system**, allowing real-time communication between reception and the WASH department.

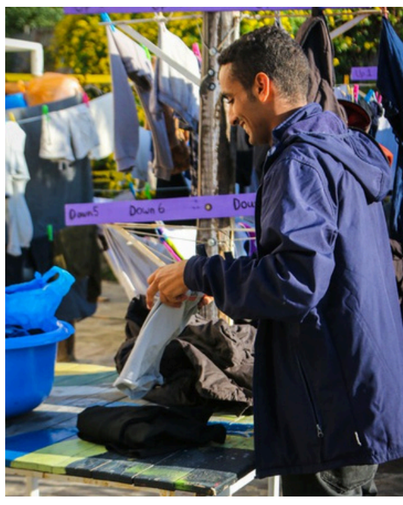
Tasks were shared efficiently: registering bags, photographing clothing, managing drying lines, and returning laundry. April brought particularly challenging weather, with persistent rain limiting outdoor drying, but the team's commitment ensured continuity throughout.

We also continued our **collaboration with Médecins Sans Frontières**, prioritising and treating laundry for people **affected by scabies** to support medical care. 2025 was a demanding but rewarding year for the WASH department. Despite difficult conditions in the CCAC, the team remained committed to **supporting clothing hygiene and dignity**.

Ali A.: *"At first I didn't want to do this, but **then I realised how useful it is**. Now I'm happy to do it."*







BARBER WORKSHOP

Department Insight 2025

by Ezedin, Project Coordinator

More than a haircut: MoustacheMou is a small space where people learn, support each other, and regain confidence.

Every day in the barbershop feels like a small human story - people arrive tired and leave a little lighter.

Throughout this year, the barber workshop remained one of the most active spaces in our community. People came not only for a haircut, but also for a small moment to experience a “sense of normal life” for a short time. Over the year, the team provided 3,191 haircuts, showing how important this simple service is for people living in the camp.

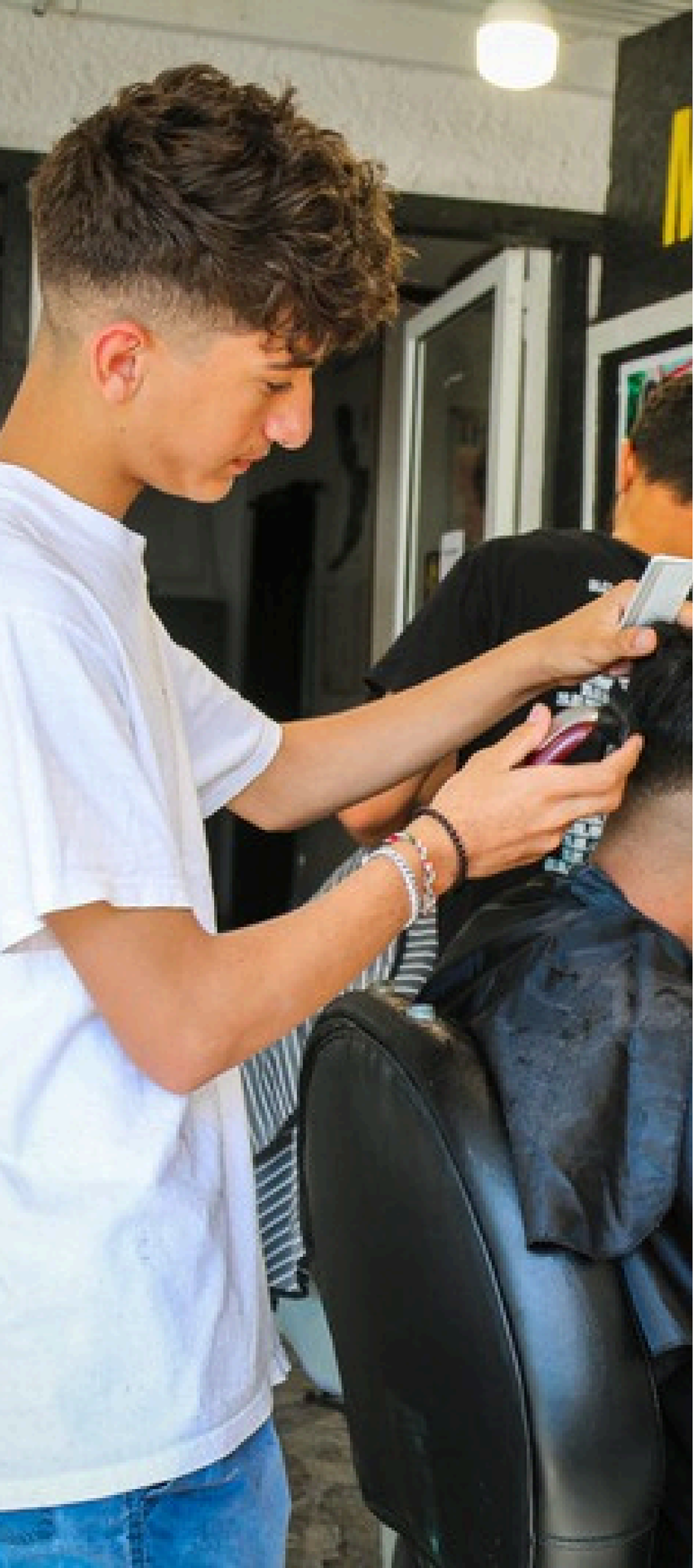
The barbershop is run by community volunteers, many of whom began with little or no experience. Through daily practice and teamwork, they gradually developed their skills and confidence. This year, 86 volunteers participated in barber training, and 22 certificates were awarded to recognise their progress and dedication.

Some volunteers showed remarkable growth. Qasem and Aladeen, for example, developed strong barbering skills over time and began supporting new volunteers as they learned the basics. Their journey reflects the spirit of the workshop, where people learn from one another and grow together.









The barber workshop also continued its collaboration with Metadrasi, offering haircuts for unaccompanied and vulnerable minors. These visits are meaningful moments, helping young people feel comfortable, respected, and cared for.

There were challenges during the year, especially on very busy days when the number of experienced volunteers was limited. Maintaining equipment, sanitation, and fair scheduling required constant attention.

In the end, the barbershop is more than a service; it is a small scene of everyday life, where a haircut, a conversation, and a moment of care can quietly change someone's day.

TAILOR DEPARTMENT

Department Insight 2025

by Ezedin, Project Coordinator

“When people sit together to sew, they are not only making clothes, they are rebuilding patience, skill, and dignity.” - The tailor department is where skills grow slowly, hands learn together, and simple work turns into confidence.

This year, the tailor workshop continued to grow as a place of learning, creativity, and cooperation. Volunteers from different backgrounds came together to repair clothing, produce new garments, and develop practical sewing skills.

Over the year, the team completed 1,712 clothing repairs and produced various items, helping many people in the community extend the life of their garments. The workshop also welcomed 82 volunteers, many of whom began with little sewing experience but gradually improved through practice and peer support.

Experienced tailors played an important role in guiding beginners, sharing knowledge in cutting, stitching, and finishing garments. Through this process, 27 certificates were awarded to volunteers who successfully progressed in their sewing skills.













One of the most memorable moments this year was the fashion show organised in our space, where clothes made by the tailor team were presented. It was a proud moment for the volunteers to see their work displayed and to celebrate the creativity and effort behind each piece.

Despite some challenges, such as limited materials and balancing personal projects with community production, the team remained motivated and supportive of one another.

In this quiet workshop, every stitch tells a small story of patience, learning, and people rebuilding their confidence one thread at a time.

MAINTENANCE-WORKSHOP

Department Insight 2025

by Mike Logan, Project Coordinator







In 2025, the Maintenance Department continued to **grow, restore, and rebuild** SKILLS FACTORY's facilities, providing vital **cross-department support** while creating opportunities for our community to **learn and develop practical skills**. With the hands-on contribution of both highly skilled tradespeople and enthusiastic newcomers, the team carried out **essential repairs and built new infrastructure**. Their work enabled the wider SKILLS FACTORY team to increase capacity, improve systems, and achieve tangible results - all while **fostering confidence, creativity, and room for personal flair**.

Key Projects and Achievements included:

- **Outdoor infrastructure:** Constructed new seating areas for meetings, meals, and rest, creating inviting spaces for our team.

- **WASH support:** Built shelves for laundry bags in both the reception and WASH department, and repaired numerous washing machines and dryers, ensuring essential services ran smoothly.

- **Solar washing lines:** Installed new washing lines in the WASH department to harness solar power, improving efficiency and reducing electricity use.







- **Barber Department expansion:** Built new barber tables and chairs, installed mirrors, and increased overall capacity to serve our community.

- **Microgreens project:** Hosted an external volunteer to introduce a microgreens initiative, growing fast-growing, nutrient-dense greens that were incorporated daily into our Kitchen team's salads - linking maintenance, agriculture, and food services in a practical innovation.

- **Roof extension and sun protection:** Added a shaded area with donated iron sheets, providing shelter for meals and rest during the hot summer months.

- **Connectivity improvements:** Installed a better Wi-Fi system throughout the building.

In a nutshell, our community volunteers advanced their **practical skills across carpentry, plumbing, welding, gardening and agriculture**. Mentorship within the team strengthened cohesion, and plans for a more clear and structured Maintenance certification system continue to formalise skills recognition, skill sharing and growth.

The foundations laid in 2025 positions the team to continue building, innovating, and supporting SKILLS FACTORY - and beyond - in 2026.

SKILLS CONNECT

Program Insight 2025

by Kate Knott, Project Coordinator





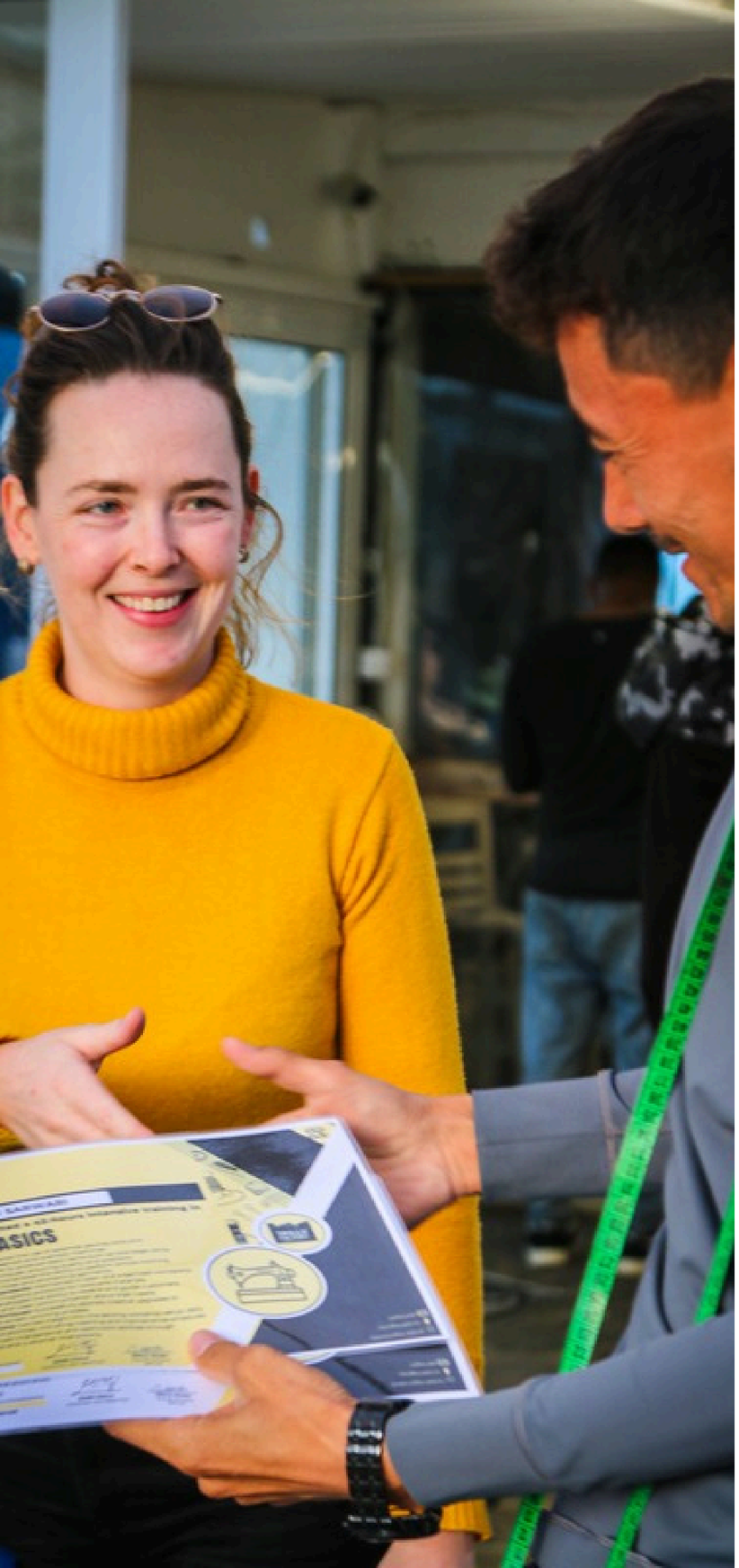


2025 was an impressive year, in relation to employment: After Maria's great work the previous year, we continued to add more businesses to our support group, and it worked perfectly.

From early Spring we had **companies coming to SKILLS FACTORY**, asking for trusted employees, and we had many of them, who had been with and working beside us, for months on end. Taking advantage of this meant **we had the opportunity to find positions in various establishments, from car hire services to restaurants and hotels**.

Working with and within the local community gives SKILLS FACTORY the advantage of joining all the differences people may have, and enables us to give **the opportunity** to so many people **to become one with the people of Samos**.

Every year is, and will be a challenge, however, **SKILLS FACTORY has become part of the local community, has earned respect and continues to be a significant part of the island**.
The respect and cooperation which we have achieved and continue to, is a **great reflection of the employees integration into the Greek culture** and **friendships which have been built over the years**.



Our **permanent presence** on the island and our **want to make things happen**, and not just dream about it, has made all this possible, which has given so many people **the chance to live here and work within the community** and grow, to hopefully give them a positive outlook and connection with Samos through SKILLS FACTORY.

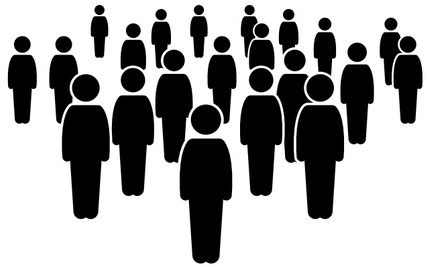
Our presence, here in Greece, is a fundamental need, it's a necessity and **jobs are available**, as long as **we have the time and skills to put the right employee with the perfect position**.

Samos, as a **small island, has lots of opportunities** for so many people, and we tried and will continue to try to give as many opportunities as possible to allow **job positions to be filled by people who chose Samos and the SKILLS FACTORY as a "home far away from home”**.

SELFM.AID

SKILLS FACTORY ‘25 IN NUMBERS

Extracts from our Impact Report 2025

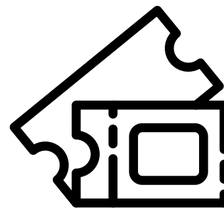


15'528+
acts of support

114
Community Volunteers



1712
Tailor Customers



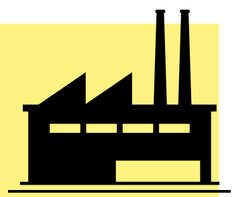
Bus Tickets distributed
3158

3191
Barber Appointments



The coordinators
7

1



place of belonging



6528
Meals

50+

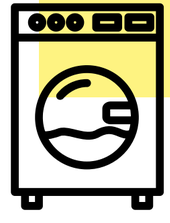


local Partnerships established since opening of SKILLS FACTORY

Certificates
73



3403
WASH Appointments



.. and that is just a small selection. Despite an exemplary registration system, many of our encounters and assistance remain spontaneous, direct, honest and sometimes without an appointment.

OUR IMPACT

- Any **gaps** in the support system are **covered by the community** itself.
- **Positive influence** on the **living conditions** and supply situation of people in the camp as well as local people in need of help.
- **Improved mental health** through daily structure, tasks and responsibility.
- **Self-empowerment** and **strengthening of identity** through recognizing and appreciating professional past and expertise.
- Improved **chances of labour market integration** in Greece or the EU.
- Interest in craftsmanship builds **bridges between people and cultures**.
- Using local products **promotes local agriculture**.
- **Reduction of imports** and **waste** volumes.

MEET HIND

My name is Hind and I am from Syria. During my time on Samos, I worked in the Tailor Department at SKILLS FACTORY for six months.
When I first arrived, I was in a very difficult moment in my life. ***I felt like I was in one of the most bitter places. But SKILLS FACTORY brought the smile I needed to my face many times.***

During my time at SKILLS FACTORY, ***I learned many new things****. I* ***improved my sewing skills*** *in the Tailor Department and also had the opportunity to* ***learn about farming****, which was something I had never done before. These experiences helped me* ***gain new skills and confidence****.*

In the SKILLS FACTORY, I felt a strong ***spirit of love and cooperation.*** *People* ***supported each other and worked together****, which made me feel* ***welcomed and cared for****. They became* ***my second family*** *while I was abroad.*







SKILLS FACTORY was more than just walls; it was an environment for creativity, self-development, and building friendships.

*The **staff was absolutely fantastic**, and SKILLS FACTORY became a place where I wanted to spend more time, so I didn't have to go back to the camp.*

I wasn't earning money, but I was receiving something far more valuable: friends and a wonderful team who allowed my ideas to flow freely, blending challenges with enjoyment and turning tasks into achievements I am proud of.

I am very thankful for everything SKILLS FACTORY gave me. Thank you, SKILLS FACTORY, for everything. I love you all, SKILLS FACTORY team.

SELFM.AID

TEAM DEVELOPMENTS 2025

After years of relative stability, 2025 brought **significant changes to the project team on the ground**. At the same time, these **transitions felt natural** and ensured continuity, **as key roles were filled by people already connected to selfm.aid - returning, stepping up, and growing within the organisation**.

We would like to thank Rafiq for his contributions over the past two years. From arriving in Greece as an external volunteer to becoming a respected Project Coordinator with fluent English skills, he played a key role in expanding the Tailoring Department. It has been an honour to witness your journey and growth. We thank you for your dedication and wish you all the best for your future.

Luca has left a deep and lasting impact - not only within SKILLS FACTORY, but across Samos. With great care and experience, he transformed an empty space into a fully functioning kitchen, filled with flavours, ideas, skills, and opportunities. Beyond food, he created a space of connection, laughter, and learning. We will miss you and wish you all the very best for your next chapter.

We also thank Alexandra, who managed SKILLS FACTORY for one year after contributing as both a board member and volunteer. Thank you for stepping in at a crucial time, ensuring the project remained on track, well represented, and organised. We wish you all the best for your future path.

At the same time, **we warmly welcome and congratulate Jasper, Katharina, Ezedin, Mike, and Maria for coming back and / or stepping into new roles and responsibilities.** We are excited to continue this journey together and to build on the strong foundation you already know so well.

THE TEAM ON THE GROUND



Jasper DUIVENSTIJN

Co-Project Manager
Craft & Production
since 2025



Katharina SCHOLLE

Co-Project Manager
Admin & Social Work
since 2023



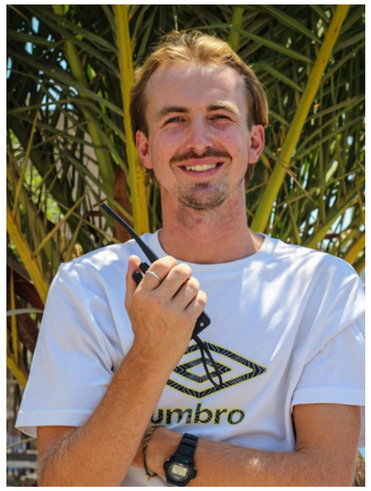
Maria GIANIKOU

Project coordinator
volunteer recruitment & local relations
Since 2023



Ezedin PETROS

Project coordinator
Barber- & Tailor departments, community outreach
Since 2025



Mike LOGAN

Project coordinator
Kitchen-, WASH- & Maintenance Departements
Since 2025



Kate KNOTT

Project coordinator SKILLS Connect-Program
Since 2024

More about the team on the ground:
In the following section, we introduce our team members. Thank you for your commitment, professionalism, and incredibly hard work.



MEET JASPER

Co-Project Manager

Responsible for Craftsmanship, Workshops and Production

Jasper has **returned to the SKILLS FACTORY**, where he **previously contributed as both a volunteer and Department Coordinator**. He now steps into the **role of Co-Project Manager alongside Katharina, bringing with him a strong blend of creative and practical expertise.**

Holding a **BA in 3D Design**, Jasper combines his academic background with **many years of hands-on experience as a carpenter and builder, both within and beyond humanitarian contexts.** His work is grounded in the belief that **when people** are **given the space and opportunity to grow, they flourish**.

Jasper is **deeply committed** to helping create that space - **offering structure, strategy**, and support so that the many talented and capable individuals at the SKILLS FACTORY can **realize their potential and contribute meaningfully**. Through his **leadership of community-driven projects** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, Croatia and Greece he has witnessed firsthand the extraordinary willingness of people on the move to support others, as well as the **profound sense of purpose** and **personal growth** that emerges when they are empowered to do so.

He believes in **moving beyond short-term solutions toward lasting empowerment - because giving someone the tools to build, create, and contribute is far more powerful than simply meeting immediate needs**.

MEET KATHARINA

Co-Project Manager
Administration & Social Work

Katharina is already a **familiar face within selfm.aid**. She joined SKILLS FACTORY in October 2023 as Reception Manager and **quickly became a core team member**. Following the relocation and restructuring of the project, she took on **coordination of Reception & Office, the Media Department**, as well as communications and car logistics. In October 2025, we celebrated her two-year anniversary with SKILLS FACTORY.

With the restructuring of the team and management at the end of 2025, Katharina stepped into the role of Co-Manager. Her previous responsibilities in office coordination and communications provided a **strong foundation for this position**. Today, her role combines **operational coordination with a management focus on Administration, Monitoring & Evaluation, Reporting, Social Work, and Representation.**

Her **deep knowledge of the project**, strong **organisational skills**, and **experience working with the community and partner organisations** make her an invaluable part of the leadership team. **Together with Jasper, she forms a strong management duo**, complementing each other in leading both the project and the team.



Katharina is known for her **ability to make people feel seen and welcome**, bringing **calmness and clarity even in challenging situations**. She continues to expand her **language skills, learning Arabic and Greek while improving her French and picking up Turkish phrases**.

Her background in **International Relations and Social Sciences**, combined with experience in **projects in Greece, Serbia, and Sub-Saharan Africa**, shapes her **empathetic yet critical perspective** on humanitarian work and social justice.

"***SKILLS FACTORY is not just a project, but lived justice.***

A place of community, empowerment, resilience, exchange, and solidarity. Proof that justice emerges where people meet as equals and learn from one another."

— Katharina SCHOLLE
Co-Project Manager







MEET MARIA

Project Coordinator

Volunteer recruitment & local relations

Maria’s journey from Athens to abroad and back to her roots in the island of Samos is one defined by a deep-rooted commitment to supporting People On The Move and a relentless pursuit of her passion for art and community empowerment.

Beginning with her first Bachelor’s degree in Renovation and Restoration of Buildings in Patra, Greece, Maria’s academics odyssey led her to The Netherlands, where she pursued another Bachelor’s degree in Architecture, Urbanism, and Building Sciences at TU Delft.

Her strong passion for art, her charismatic personality and her desire to help refugees in the CCAC of Samos motivated her to join the great work of the SKILLS FACTORY.

Our Maria never stops: In addition to her role as a full-time passionate mother and manager of her own company, she coordinates the recruitment of volunteers, local public relations as well as the art and printing departments of the SKILLS FACTORY.



MEET EZEDIN

Project Coordinator

Barber- & Tailor departments, community outreach

“Every day here reminds me that small acts of support and learning can quietly change someone’s story.” - My name is Ezedin Petros, originally from Eritrea. I studied cinematography and filmmaking, and storytelling has always been important to me. In many ways, working with people and supporting a community is also a form of storytelling - one that happens in real life every day. At SKILLS FACTORY, I work as the Coordinator of the Tailor and Barber Departments. My role is to organise daily activities, support the teams, and help ensure that the workshops run smoothly for everyone involved.

Through coordination and community outreach, I help create a space where people from different cultures and backgrounds can come together, learn practical skills, and support one another. For many people in our community, these workshops are not only about learning a trade but also about building confidence and connection.
What I appreciate most about SKILLS FACTORY is the sense of community it creates. It is more than just a workshop - it is a place where people share experiences, encourage each other, and move forward together.

My hope is that SKILLS FACTORY continues to grow so that we can welcome more people and continue making a positive difference in the community. As someone who studied storytelling, I see every day here as part of a larger human story, where small moments of support and learning can quietly change people’s lives.



MEET MIKE

Project Coordinator

Responsible for Kitchen, WASH and Maintenance Departments

Mike first joined SKILLS FACTORY in August 2025 as Interim Support Coordinator before returning full-time as Project Coordinator in December. His connection to Samos began in late 2023, where he volunteered with another NGO and later managed one of their community centres. It was there that he discovered his passion for building community with people on the move - seeing how quickly people from different backgrounds can connect when given a dignified and welcoming space.

Mike has found food to be one of the simplest ways to bring people together. In the SKILLS Kitchen, he enjoys working with fresh ingredients available on Samos and creating a space where the community can prepare nourishing meals and share recipes from their home countries and beyond. Around the shared table, food becomes more than a meal - it creates belonging and connection.

While living on Samos, Mike has also been learning Arabic and enjoys picking up words and phrases from different languages. He believes that even small efforts in communication can build trust, and that meeting people with curiosity, respect, and openness is at the heart of community.



MEET KATE

Program Coordinator - SKILLS Connect

I joined SKILLS FACTORY after several years of living on Samos, where I built strong relationships within the local community - from the bank manager to the greengrocer. These connections have become an important foundation for the project, helping us solve problems, access resources, and build trust locally.

My work focuses on engaging with the Greek community, managing logistics, and ensuring that SKILLS FACTORY runs smoothly.

A central part of my role is leading the Skills Connect program, which bridges local businesses with people from SKILLS FACTORY who are trained and ready to work. In 2025, the program saw strong success, creating meaningful employment opportunities and supporting greater independence within the community.

I have also been involved in teaching English classes with elements of Greek, helping participants navigate daily life with more confidence. Education remains a key part of our work, strengthening both skills and opportunities.

Overall, my role is to ensure that SKILLS FACTORY operates effectively while building connections - between people, opportunities, and the local community.

SELFM.AID

OUTLOOK 2026

And so it continues...
by Jasper & Katharina

With **changes in our coordination and management team**, comes a lot of **new energy and fresh ideas.** As a team, we are **motivated to build on everything that has been established so far and to utilize that drive to expand and evolve**.

With the kitchen license now acquired, and the production across all departments up and running, we are looking **forward to a year in which we can take our work to the next level**. Our **goal for 2026** is to **increase the impact of our work** and activities awhile continuing to strengthen a **safe and healthy working environment** for everyone involved.

At the same time, the humanitarian contact is changing. Since the slashing of USAID, many **humanitarian organisations**, both **globally and here on Samos**, are experiencing the effects of a widespread **lack of funding**. As a result of this, they are being forced to **limit their activities**.

This makes **our project and role is more crucial than ever** and **the need** for our services **is growing rapidly**. We are ready and motivated to face this new and increasing challenge heads on in 2026.





While **others are being forced to scale down**, we aim to **responsibly scale-up** our efforts and continue to support the community on Samos, **advocate for people's skills and potential** and **help fill the gaps** that are emerging on Samos and beyond.

Looking ahead to 2026, several **concrete plans** are already in development. One of the first one is the construction and **opening of a women's salon, a female hairdresser** which will be a women's only space. **This initiative comes directly from the needs and advocacy of our community and addresses an important gap.**

In addition, we aim to **improve or even expand our WASH Department**, start with our **kitchen and food distribution** activities as soon as the final licensing process is completed. With our **maintenance department expanding**, we aim to develop the applicable three-level certificate system further. The same applies to our Reception, which became a popular department with important experience gained by team members. Furthermore, we plan to continue **supporting other NGOs on the island wherever possible**.

Alongside these developments, we will continue supporting other NGOs on the island wherever possible and collaborate in order to support the community in the best possible way.

SELFIM.AID

SELFM1.AID



7 One.For.One

CONCEPT

Overcoming obstacles in the asylum process with art.

Background: In 2022, the legislation on the asylum process in Greece changed. Anyone who wants to reapply after a rejection must now pay a fee of €100. For the vast majority of those who are already in a hopeless situation, this is impossible. At the time, a large part of our team was also part of this group.

Our solution: The SKILLS FACTORY team has found a creative solution to free themselves and their community from this situation. We produce individual selfm.aid linocuts, which we send out for a donation of €100. This allows us to finance the fees incurred on a case-by-case basis.

This is how it works: We are contacted by NGOs that offer legal advice when they are involved in a case where a new application is worthwhile. As soon as we have sold the print, we can settle the bill directly. One Print for One Case.



CLOSING A CHAPTER: 1 FOR 1

Over the past four years, the One Print for One Case initiative has supported 71 individuals in accessing their right to reapply for asylum or obtain essential documents, in close collaboration with our legal partner NGOs. What began as a creative response to a structural barrier became a powerful example of community-driven solidarity - turning art into access to rights.

In 2025, however, the context changed. Positive asylum decisions became more frequent, reducing the need for subsequent applications. At the same time, the Greek government **increased the reapplication fee from €100 to €300 per person**. This shift significantly altered the balance between effort and impact, making the model increasingly difficult to sustain.

For these reasons, we have decided **to close the project after four impactful years**. This is not a step back, but a conscious decision to adapt to a changing reality and to focus our resources where they are most needed.





OUR IMPACT 22-26

71

funded cases

Revenue from sold prints

€8’525

8

supported partner NGOs

21

designs

CONCLUSION

One Print for One Case has shown what is possible when creativity meets necessity - and leaves behind a legacy of solidarity, creativity and dignity.

The remaining funds of € 2’150 will be donated to our long-standing legal partners on Samos: I Have Rights, ASF France, and Human Rights Legal Project - who continue to provide essential legal support to the community.

We close this chapter with gratitude and pride. One Print for One Case has shown what is possible when creativity meets necessity - and leaves behind a legacy of solidarity, creativity and dignity.



Watch the One-for-One Video one more time...

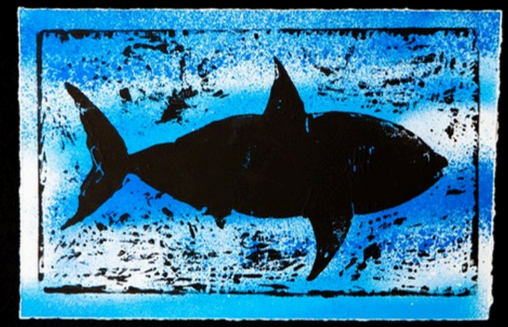





NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL













SELFM1.AID

8 Phones without Borders

CONCEPT

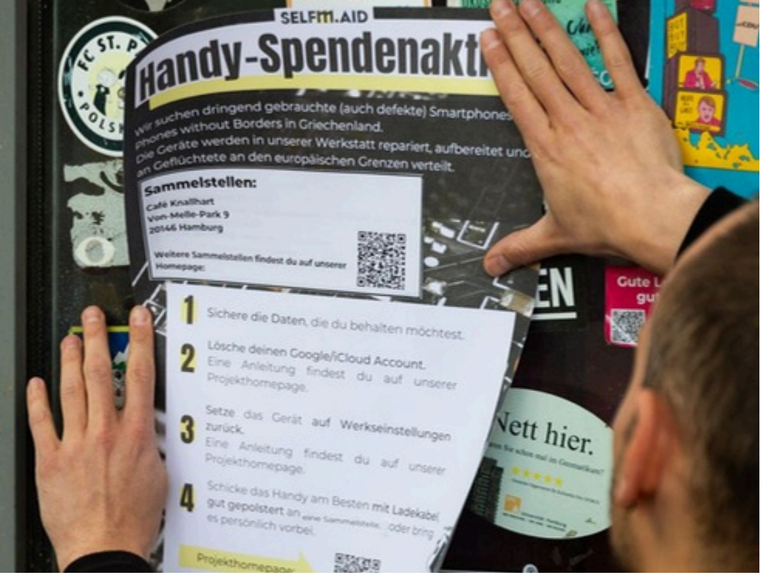
Smartphones that are no longer needed in Europe can save lives while fleeing.

Shipwreck, police violence, accidents or thefts...
...there are numerous reasons why people on the move cross the border with a working telephone in less than 50% of cases.

The smartphone is indispensable when on the run:
It is considered the main means of communication in exchanges with the asylum authorities, helps to find one's way in an unfamiliar environment, to get help in emergencies and to stay in touch with family and friends.

Our solution:
We collect used smartphones in Europe, prepare them on site (repairs and data deletion) and then distribute them directly and easily to people in need.









RECAP 2025

2025 was a challenging year for Phones Without Borders, yet one that demonstrated the resilience, adaptability, and growing impact of the project.

At the beginning of the year, **funding** from UNHCR - secured through the Refugee-Led Innovation Fund - was **unexpectedly paused** following global political shifts. Faced with this situation, the team made a strategic decision to **temporarily suspend the training programme** and focus on what remained most essential: providing access to mobile phones for people on the move.

During this period, team members took on seasonal work across Samos, while continuing to run phone distribution activities in their free time. **Despite these constraints, the reach of the project expanded** significantly. Requests for devices came from a **growing network of organisations across Europe**, including initiatives supporting **LGBTQI refugees, housing projects for displaced people in Athens, hospital social services, and individuals living in camps without access to communication -** from Greece to Austria and Ireland.

In this phase alone, around **57 refurbished devices were distributed**, with numbers continuing to rise. At the same time, the project gained international recognition: **Phones Without Borders was nominated for the For Our Planet Award by the European Commission for Energy, Climate and Environment**, receiving third place.

The second half of the year brought **positive developments**. **Funding** from UNHCR was **reinstated**, allowing the team to resume full operations. **Trainers returned** from seasonal work, and the training programme - at the heart of the project's long-term vision - could finally restart.

A key element of this success has been the **growing solidarity network across Europe**. Through the **Verbund Offener Werkstätten**, multiple workshops have established **smartphone collection points**, contributing devices and strengthening the project's reach. This collaboration continues to grow, reflecting a **shared commitment to access, repair, and inclusion**.

Despite a year of disruption, Phones Without Borders not only sustained its work but expanded its network and recognition. The project stands as a **strong example** of **how community-driven initiatives can adapt to changing conditions** while continuing to provide essential support and long-term opportunities.







SELFM.AID

PHONES
WITHOUT
BORDERS





COLLECTION POINTS GERMANY

Review 2025

by Phil Mertsching, Coordinator for Collection Points and Outreach (Germany)

In 2025, Phones Without Borders Germany **successfully expanded its network by establishing two additional collection points**. This brings the total to **seven locations across Germany** – including open workshops, cafés, and small local shops – that now serve as drop-off points for used mobile phones. Over the course of the year, **51 devices** were collected through this growing network.

In parallel, **outreach efforts were strengthened** through the distribution of **informational materials such as flyers and posters**, helping to raise **awareness** of the project and its mission across Germany.

PWB 2025 - IN NUMBERS

Extracts from our Impact Report 2025

9
Volunteers

11
Countries sending requests

3
Donation Actions

4
Certificates

13
Collection Points

87
distributed devices

163
donated smartphones

10
NGOs supported with phones

Repaired Phones
164

7
Individuals

1
New Mural

27'993€
Reduced costs due to project halt

PORTRAIT OF A PARTNER ORGANISATION

SAMA Community Center, Malakasa (Athens)

Over the past months, Phones Without Borders has supplied refurbished phones to 11 NGOs and numerous individuals in urgent situations across Europe. One of these partners is the **SAMA Community Center, supporting residents of the Malakasa refugee camp** near Athens.

SAMA reports a sharp increase in young **arrivals from Sudan**, many of whom have **crossed from Libya to Crete** and **arrive with little more than the clothes they are wearing** - often without a functioning phone. Devices are frequently lost at sea or destroyed along the route.

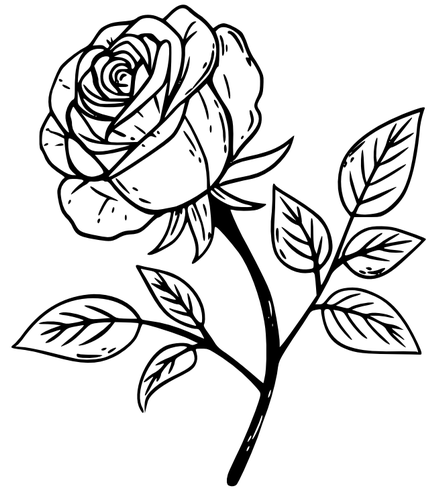
A phone is not a luxury - it is a lifeline. It provides access to family, legal information, and emergency support.

The ten phones provided by Phones Without Borders were distributed within days. As SAMA shared: "*We desperately need phones. They are invaluable to the Sudanese refugees fleeing the humanitarian crisis. I have already distributed all ten and hope more can be sent - we have many people asking.*"

While SAMA responds to immediate needs such as clothing, **phones remain one of the most urgent priorities**. This collaboration highlights why Phones Without Borders continues its work: because **connection means safety, dignity, and access to rights**.







MESSAGE FROM MOHAMMED

Founder and former project manager Phones without Borders

Hello together

I am Mohammed and I was a volunteer in SKILLS FACTORY, working in the department of phones and supporting people. Then I got a contract with a German NGO and even went to Ethiopia to teach the teacher in phone repair. This was the most beautiful moment of my career.

When I came back from Ethiopia, we heard that we won the Refugee-Led Innovation Fund - 45,000 USD for the project. This was the second big success in my professional life. Then I founded and built up the project Phones Without Borders. I put all my energy into this project and I never got tired because I was so proud of our work.

It was very difficult for me, but now I am a father, and for this reason I decided to leave the project. But the most beautiful thing is: I give it to new and very good people, and now it continues without me.

This makes me very happy and very proud. I will stay a pillar from afar if you need me. I hope the team succeeds and that everyone understands the importance of this project for people on the move.

Thank you to everyone who helped me on this way and who believed in Phones Without Borders.



Mohammed

SELFM.AID

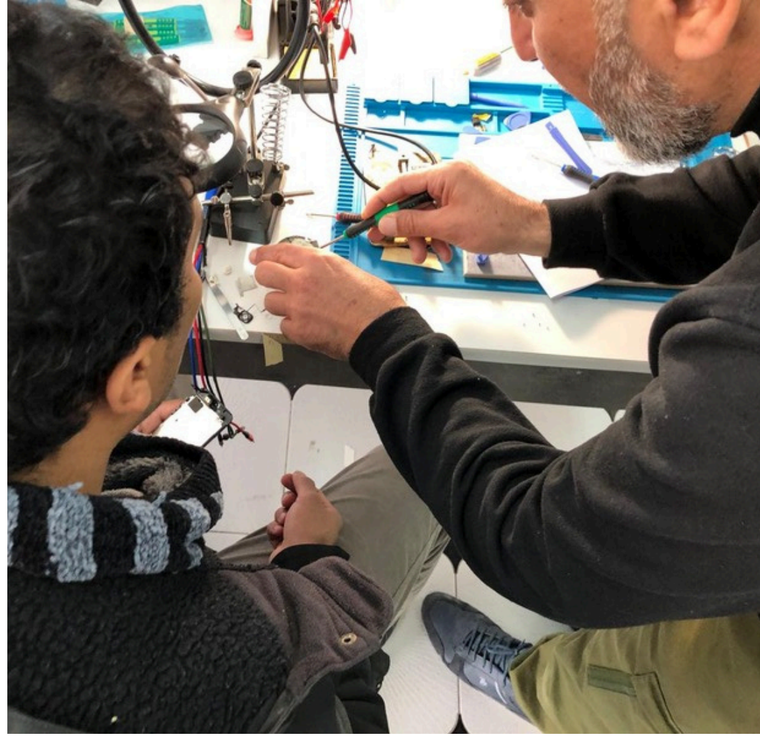
OUTLOOK 2026

New Management Team – New Energy

We are very excited to announce that Phones Without Borders continues into 2026 with a **new management team**, renewed energy, and new students. In March, **Lucile Macé** and **Mohammed Kado** took over the project and reopened the training programme for people on the move to learn phone repair.

While Mohammed brings over a year of experience within the project, along with strong technical and teaching expertise, Lucile contributes extensive experience as a humanitarian worker and project manager.

Together, they bring the energy, structure, and care the project needs - taking Phones Without Borders to the next level.







MEET LUCILE

Co-Project Manager
responsible for Administration & Reporting

Originally from France, she holds a Bachelor's degree in Law, with a strong interest in international and human rights law, reflecting her commitment to justice and global solidarity. While she initially planned to pursue this path, she gradually realised she wanted to engage more directly in projects with tangible, on-the-ground impact.

She later completed a Master's degree in Project Management specialised in humanitarian action. Through a work-study program, she collaborated with organisations in France's social and solidarity economy, developing community-oriented projects focused on collective well-being and environmental sustainability.

While this training provided solid technical and organisational foundations, it also strengthened her desire to work closer to the field and gain first-hand experience. Since 2023, she has been based in Greece, working with grassroots NGOs supporting people on the move. She contributed to community centres and the distribution of essential non-food items, helping create safe spaces for people in transit. Later, on Samos, she managed a legal project supporting people through their asylum procedures, ensuring access to information and guidance at a critical stage.

Joining Phones Without Borders was a natural step toward a concrete, community-driven initiative. She is glad to contribute her administrative and financial skills to a project that offers practical support while fostering dignity, connection, and mutual learning.

MEET MOHAMMED

Co-Project Manager
responsible for Phone Repair-Workshop and Training Program

Hello, my name is Mohammed Kado, and since the beginning of March, I have been co-managing the Phones Without Borders project together with Lucile.

I originally come from Iraq and arrived on Samos with my family - we have three children - in search of protection in Europe. However, asylum procedures for Iraqi nationals are very lengthy, and even after one and a half years, we have still not received any feedback. This uncertainty is extremely challenging for both me and my entire family. All the more, I am grateful for my role in the project, which provides me with structure, purpose, and an important distraction during this difficult time.

I was very happy to meet Mohammed and get to know the project shortly after my arrival on Samos. I have been working in mobile phone repair for more than 20 years. I carried out this work both in Iraq and in Turkey, and later continued it together with Mohammed Alfurani.

One aspect of my work that I particularly enjoy is teaching others. I am passionate about sharing my knowledge and experience and supporting people in developing their skills and growing with confidence. I am very much looking forward to the future of Phones Without Borders.






PWB 0423
PWB 0447
SELFM.AID

SELFM1.AID

9 Outlook

OUTLOOK 2026

And this is how we will continue...

With all projects now firmly established and in highly professional hands, the time has come to initiate the **transition of the selfm.aid directorate**. While this marks a **significant transformation** - particularly as Julia Minder steps down after nearly six years of building the organization and the projects from the ground up - we also see it as a **valuable opportunity for further development and growth**.

The year **2026 will therefore be shaped by this transition process**, with a strong **focus on collaboration, continuity, and shared responsibility**. By working closely together, we aim to ensure a smooth and sustainable handover while **maintaining the quality and impact of our work**.

At the same time, this moment **opens the door to new perspectives, fresh ideas, and the continued evolution** of selfm.aid towards an even stronger and more resilient future.



10 Thank You

THANK YOU

For your loyal support, trust and shared belief in a fairer and more sustainable world.

Thank you very much for your loyal and continuous support.

selfm.aid would not be what it is today without the trustful, generous, and visionary support of our members, supporters, and sponsors.

From a small seed, something incredibly meaningful has grown - nurtured by your trust, encouragement, and belief in our mission. We are deeply grateful for five years of confidence and for all the courage you have invested in our work.

Thank you for everything.

Together we build bridges instead of barbed wire.

Together we can make the world a place where everyone has the opportunity to develop their potential.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

CHOOSE LOVE

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Stiftung
Anne-Marie
Schindler

alda
European Association
for Local Democracy

forRefugees

Lucerne University of
Applied Sciences and Arts
HOCHSCHULE
LUZERN
Soziale Arbeit
FH Zentralschweiz

Project
Elpida e.V.

GLS Treuhand

IFIXIT

HOSTFACTORY

teamup

I HAVE
RIGHTS.

Verbund Offener Werkstätten
Freiraum zum Selbermachen

FESTOOL

CONTACT

SELFM.AID

selfm.aid

@selfm.aid.ch

www.selfm-aid.ch

Contact

SELFMADE-AID MKO
Sofouli 2021
83100 Vathy, Samos
GR-Greece
AFM: 996992359

verein selfm.aid
Sandstrasse 1
8182 Bülach
CH-Switzerland
UID: CHE-244.190.094

EURO - ACCOUNT
IBAN: CH42 0900 0000 1565 6039 7
BIC: POFICHBEXXX

CHF - ACCOUNT
IBAN: CH40 0900 0000 1565 6033 6
BIC: POFICHBEXXX