

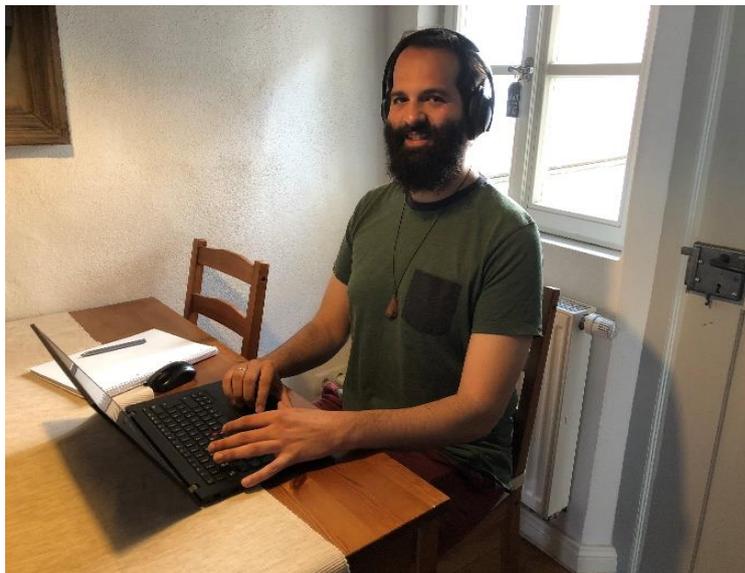


Interview: Valentina Murati

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Marcel Binzenhöfer

Recruiter and Scrum Master at empiricom GmbH & Co. KG and Co-Founder of Helping Hands



“Do not be afraid of asking people for help and start doing what you want to do.”



1. Hello Marcel could you tell us more about your work and the project "Helping hands " and who can provide from it?

Hello Valentina, of course. Helping Hands is an online platform (Web-App and App), on which people that need help relating buying food and everyday commodities (we call them "Homies") during and after COVID-19 can easily find volunteers ("Heroes") who take care of it. Homies can be, for example, people from the risk group, people with underlying health conditions, people with reduced mobility or single parents who don't have time to go shopping. On the other hand, heroes can be everyone who has time and interest in helping other people. On the first step we have focused on connecting people regarding shopping, after that, we want to enhance Helping Hands towards a platform for neighbourly help. Our vision is to bring people together, who share their support, competences and durable goods like drills or lawn mowers. Providing this platform, we want to strengthen solidarity between neighbours, bring people together and counteract consumption.

2. How did you got inspired to start with the Idea of "Helping Hands"

Between March 20th and March 22nd, the #wirvsvirus-Hackathon took place, at which 40.000 people wanted to create solutions facing the problems caused by COVID-19. A week before, I asked some colleagues of my actual work, if they want to join me to be part of the hackathon. We started with a team of 6 people and thought of a possible solution for the problem that some people are not able to go shopping during the crisis. The three days of the hackathon have been intense, but at the same time, it was great to be part of this huge event. We created our prototype during this hackathon and were chosen to be one of the top 200 projects there. This success motivated us to keep working on Helping Hands and to begin the exciting journey of starting our own business besides our normal job.

3. Were you afraid before starting your own business?

Afraid, I think, is the wrong word. On the one hand, we all were excited of trying to develop our own business. On the other hand, we knew, that there will be a lot of work and several challenges we had to face. It was the first time for all of us, starting our own thing. We tried to do it step by step, talking a lot about the different parts we had to consider. Fortunately, we had a good network of people who had already started their business. Furthermore, we connected to people with different know-how like marketing, law, business development, etc., who helped us to develop our strategy. It was amazing to see that people help each other so much during the current situation of COVID-19.

4. How would your friends, colleagues describe you as a person?

I think they would say that I am an open-minded, empathic and curious person. They often tell me that I have the skill to motivate people, bring them together and create a good atmosphere in the team. They appreciate my positive attitude, my communication skills and my calm nature.

5. What are some good-positive things or achievements that you think you gain by doing this ?

As a told in the question before, I was overwhelmed of the willingness to help each other in this special time. We got great feedback considering our work and many valuable ideas to improve our product. We grew together as a team, we tried to steadily improve our communication and internal processes. I think everyone learned so much in the past three months, about himself, about his job and about the process of creating a business.

6. What are some challenges during your job?

A huge challenge was to keep the motivation high. Developing a business besides our normal job is very exhausting, but at the same time, being free in our decisions and choices and recognizing that we are doing a great job helped us to be motivated. Another challenge was to improve our internal communication and processes. It was important, that everyone knew what he had to do, what the teammates will do and to strengthen our focus on the important tasks. It was all about open communication, transparency and commitment. A challenge we must face the next weeks is to reach publicity with our projects, find long-term support and keep the team together.

7. What are your plans for your future and for "Helping Hands"?

Personally, I want to enhance my skills regarding coaching, organizational development and training. For that reason, I started a further education in the area of systemic consulting in February. I want to keep learning in my actual job as a team coach and human resource manager, continue the journey of developing our own business with Helping Hands and find time for playing with my band.

For Helping Hands, the plan is to go live with our platform the next weeks, develop it further, provide social benefit with it and enjoy the upcoming journey.

8. What advice would you give to everyone who will read your story and want to get motivated?

Follow your heart, trust yourself, don't be afraid of asking people for help and start doing what you want to do. If we work together and share our competences, we can make the world a better place.

Infos: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/projekthelpinghands/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/projekt_helpinghands/

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/42951578/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzwmbZS02UIFknvVnty7eUA>

Homepage: <https://helping-hands.app/>



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#Bridge! gives people the chance to meet intrapreneur and entrepreneurs, to hear their stories and have them as inspiration.

#Bridge! stands for gender equality and diversity - we connect students with entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, network and support each other - **like a bridge** - and it is very important to us to increase the proportion of women in the start-up scene.

We help you to network with like-minded people. We are happy to publishing an interview of you.