



## Samir Outtar (FR) , 36 years old *bricklayer and Earth builder* **Many stones cleared from the path**



The 36 year old has had to clear many stones from his path before he was able to found his own bricklaying company. When Samir Outtar came to France, 8 years ago, he did not have the right diploma. His vocational experi-

ence was not recognised for an adult training place at AFPA, although he had already learned with his grandfather in Algeria how to work with stone, clay and cement, although he had completed secondary education there and an apprenticeship as precision engineer. An accident then robbed him of this last strength. Despite this, he completed the training as bricklayer at AFPA and a practical course in rammed Earth, also a clay plaster course with Akterre.

The decision to make a career of earth building was reached by Samir as he viewed clay houses during his training which had already been occupied by several generations. The houses are now in need of renovation. But there is a lack of skilled craftspeople. This is what the bricklayer is planning for the future: To give old houses a new lease of life, to repair

rammed Earth walls - here a great tradition - and to build new ones, to decorate interior spaces, extend buildings - always using clay. The building material is „almost like a medicine, especially for people with breathing difficulties. It reminds me of my homeland.“ He is considering further training in Morocco, where French associations offer courses on arches, domes and covings. Completing a course in Germany he currently sees as too difficult due to the language barrier, although he would find it very interesting. First, however, he must get some orders.. He could learn this in a course from the LearnWithClay partnership. But right now, there is neither time nor opportunity. At present his negotiations with customers are carried out by a young woman, since as a migrant he is faced with prejudice and therefore has less chance of success. Soon he wishes to employ another worker. He wants to pass on his knowledge of clay to others. Trainees from the organisation where he trained himself, AFPA in Saint-Etienne, will also be welcome.