

TRAINING FOR FISHERMEN

1. Organisations involved

The Fisheries Circle

2. Description of the case

2.1. Introduction

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) classification, Denmark is 'one of the top 20 fishing nations of the world'. The Danish fisheries production is mostly exported, both in terms of weight and value. Consequently, the fisheries sector plays an important role within the Danish economy.

However, a decrease in the number of fishermen has been noticed, especially since the early 1980s when the fisheries sector was confronted with a crisis due to overexploitation and overcapacity, which resulted in a decline in the size of the fishing fleet. As the number of commercial vessels continued to diminish (e.g. 1,933 vessels in 2005 versus 2,769 vessels in 1996), statistics published by the Danish Directorate of Fisheries shows that the number of fishermen has also continued to decline. In 2007, a total number of 3,497 fishermen were registered, some of which are 'independent fishermen' (vessel owner-operators), whereas others are 'parts-fishermen' (employees paid via catch share) or 'assisting spouses'.

The EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) provides the general framework in which the Danish fisheries sector develops its activities. At national level, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries has the responsibility of CFP implementation. The Danish Directorate of Fisheries plays a key role as it is responsible for 'administration, regulation, monitoring and inspection of the fisheries' activities in Denmark.

The institutional framework governing fisheries management in Denmark includes other important actors such as fishermen's organisations, industry representatives, trade unions, and local government in municipalities dependent on fishing. The Ministry regularly consults these organisations on general issues related to the fisheries policy via the so-called Regulatory Committee set up in 1979.

The Fisheries Circle (TFC), who's members include the Danish Fishermen's Association, the General Workers' Union, the municipalities dependent on fishing, private companies from the fishing sector, and educational institutions, was set up in 1997 with two main objectives:

1. provide well targeted promotion of fishing as a career option for the young generations;
2. be an active training provider for/with the fishing sector educational units (the fisheries schools).

Both of these objectives include OSH training as a key component. TFC was originally funded by the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries (50%) and from the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (50%). However, from the beginning of 2007, the Ministry continued to provide 50% of this funding while the remaining 50% came from the Fisheries Foundation.

TFC's membership base provides excellent links to workers within the fisheries sector, for instance:

- Fishermen's associations e.g. the Danish Fishermen's Association are the key actors in the fisheries social area. Members of these associations include both ship owners and employed fishermen. The Danish Fishermen's Association represents 65 local fishermen's organisations at national level and its main goal is to defend the fishermen's interests wherever they are i.e. at a local, national or international level. The association is represented in the Regulatory Committee and is an important member of the Fisheries Circle.

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- Trade unions are also a significant player on the Danish labour market. 3F is the major trade union entity representing the employed fishermen's interests. It is 'the largest trade union for skilled and especially non-skilled workers (blue-collar)' and comprises 375,566 workers in Denmark. The 3F trade union works in close collaboration with Fisheries Circle being represented within its management board.

The Conference on "Green Fishing Technologies and Solutions" held on October 7th, 2009, in Aalborg, Denmark, constituted a significant event for the fishery sector's future development. It aimed to identify 'new green fishing solutions', an efficient way of doing business and protecting the environment, whilst also developing 'sustainable fishing in the era of climate change'. On October 8th, 2009, 'a joint statement' by the Danish, German, UK and Scottish ministers responsible for fishery policy was made. They agreed that a New Fisheries Policy must be developed. Therefore, the above statement strengthened the need to revise the CFP (the Common Fishery Policy) and to realise improvements by the beginning of 2013. Even though the conference focused on the development of a responsible 'green' fishery policy to be promoted by the most important actors in this sector, it was also highlighted that there was a need to improve fishermen's training and development, including OSH aspects and environmental protection.

This case study describes an innovative recruitment strategy developed by key actors within the Danish fisheries sector. The main goal of which is to fight the ongoing decline in the number of fishermen through innovative promotion means, and to provide high quality training including a consistent 'safety and occupational health package' concomitantly with professional skills. In this context, the Fisheries Circle plays a major role with the support of other actors in the field (governmental institutions, fishermen's associations, trade unions, etc.).

2.2. Aims

The migration of skilled workers from the fisheries to other economic sectors and an ageing workforce in the labour market represent two major challenges for the Danish fishery sector. Therefore, it developed a series of initiatives designed to retain the existing workforce in the trade, and to enhance recruitment of a new workforce through innovative recruitment methods.

The innovative recruitment campaigns are mainly focused on the promotion of modern fishing techniques that are possible through the use of new technologies and IT tools. These campaigns also highlight the key role that adequate OSH training plays in providing a safer and healthier working environment for young people embarking upon a career in the fisheries sector.

The training of new recruits is carried out in stages, and each stage includes a compulsory 'OSH package'. The materials used for training are very attractive, user-friendly and designed to impart OSH knowledge to users of different educational backgrounds.

The main goal is to raise the awareness of the fishermen of the future regarding the occupational risks to their health and safety, with a special emphasis on preventive measures to protect young workers.

2.3. What was done, and how?

In the past 10 years, a wide range of innovative recruitment solutions has been developed in the Danish fishing sector, in accordance with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions' report, 2007. They have included technological solutions to reduce 'the physical strain of working onboard fishing vessels' and to raise the productivity and thus the fishermen's incomes, as well as significant developments in training. This case study focuses on the advances made in the training offered to new fishermen.

TFC plays a key role within the Danish labour market and the institutional framework in which the Danish fisheries sector develops. It provides training and promotes the fisheries sector as a

career option for young people. Health and safety represent the core of the training it provides for young people wishing to start working in the fisheries sector and is a mandatory subject.

2.3.1 The Fisheries Circle (TFC) as fishing career promoter

A well-targeted programme has been developed by TFC in order to provide information for young people about fishing as a career opportunity. TFC initiated and developed a coordinated recruitment activity to supplement the low profile individual marketing approaches used by the fisheries schools themselves.

The main elements of TFC promotion/training initiatives are:

- In Denmark, the fishing profession is considered to be part of the culture; therefore, basic information on fishing should be provided to all categories of young people from the earliest stages of their education.
- One of the TFC programmes targets students from primary and lower secondary schools who are trained at least three times during this stage of their education, as detailed below:
 - the 1st time in the 3rd grade – through 'Ferie i Havneby' (Holiday in Havneby) action,
 - the 2nd time between the 4th and the 6th grade, for 10-13 year old students – through 'Fish on the Job',
 - the 3rd time between the 7th and the 10th grade, for 13-16 year old students through 'Good Guys and Great Girls' actions.
- The training materials used in this programme are completely non-commercial and are distributed free of charge to every school in Denmark.
- This constitutes an asset in terms of credibility and objectivity of these materials and the information provided.
- Positive feedback came from the teachers and students who used these materials for training.
- These training materials highlight both the fishing particularities, including the risks related to it but equally the preventive measures to be taken to turn this rather dangerous profession into a modern and safe occupation to be practiced with considerably lower risks for people's health and safety.
- The training materials mostly consist of books and attractive posters, they are user-friendly, innovative and designed to provide accurate information and to stimulate students' interest in searching for new data, for example:
 - 'Ferie i Havneby' (Holiday in Havneby – a harbour in Denmark) – consists of a 15-part story book and 30 calendars distributed to each of the students; the material constitutes the basis of discussions between the students and their teachers about fishing before the Christmas holiday,
 - 'Fisk i jobbet' (Fish on the Job) – includes a teacher's guide, 30 student books and posters, and provides accurate information on various job related tasks in the fishing industry, with OSH related aspects being included,
 - 'Good Guys and Great Girls' consists of a CD-ROM to be used when choosing a career. Moreover, the students are given the opportunity to go to a harbour for an apprenticeship stage on various fishing related jobs and to experience a series of activities related to the career they envisage in the future.
- Other marketing/training activities/materials carried out by TFC consist of:
 - TV and movie theatre commercials,
 - radio commercials,
 - songs e.g. the Danish punk – rock song "rock'n'roll' fisher",
 - websites,
 - handouts,
 - participation in educational fairs.
- Since 2007, TFC has started to run a new campaign for people of 15-20 years of age, emphasising the advantages of fishing as a career option for young people, such as:
 - freedom (not a 9 to 5 job) and economically independent statute even from the apprenticeship stages,
 - higher income compared to the national economy average,

- availability of modern technologies and IT tools,
- lower health and safety related risks due to the new technologies and modern techniques used,
- short training stages (2-year training in principle).

▪ The Minna & Gunnar campaign – was the largest campaign ever run in Denmark (2003-2005) promoting broad information on fishing through innovative means such as: humorous songs and slogans, TV commercials, ring tones for mobile phones, etc.,

▪ The most important outcome obtained through this campaign was that it removed the generally unfavourable perception of fishing being a 'conservative and unstable industry with hard work and low prestige' implying high risks for the fishermen's health and safety, and made it an attractive career option for the young generations.

In conclusion, "TFC coordinates all marketing and recruitment initiatives for the fishing industry and is therefore the best source of information on recruitment activities for the fisheries industry in Denmark" (The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions Report, 2007).

2.3.2 The Fisheries Circle (TFC) as educational provider on fishing and fishing related OSH training

Danish fisheries education includes the so-called *Blue Certificate*, which constitutes 'the cornerstone' for anyone preparing to become a skipper and/or fisherman. It is awarded to students after acquiring the fishery industries basic knowledge through undertaking adequate training. The 2-year basic training required to obtain this *Blue Certificate* consists of theoretical knowledge taught in technical colleges and practical skills demonstrated on board fishing vessels. Safety and health in fisheries occupy a key place within a skippers' and/ or fishermen's apprenticeship, and is a mandatory component of each level of training.

These training courses include:

- Fishery specific topics such as fishing theory, maintenance on fishing vessels, radio and navigation notions, engine theory, etc.
- A series of OSH subjects are also included, e.g.:
 - a three-week course on safety at sea basic training for professional fishermen;
 - a one week course on safety at sea for experienced fishermen;
 - a three-week training course on health, nutrition and provisioning; and,
 - a two to four-day training course on first aid at sea.
- Complementary notions on fishing & shipping labour market, legal aspects and business are also provided.

The three-week safety course is the first step towards getting the *Blue Certificate*. It is mandatory for everyone who wants to start working on board fishing vessels in Denmark, for all forms of training. The students need to be 16 years or older and have a 9-year educational level. A medical certificate is also required to begin an apprenticeship or to complete the training. Students under 18 years of age graduate the fisheries' basic training programme after completing the safety course. Those who are 18 years or older, can go on to work as fishermen after completing the 3-week safety course.

The legal framework is represented by the STCW-F Convention (International convention on standards of training, certification and watch-keeping for fishing vessel personnel, 1995), which Denmark has ratified. Additionally, a convention stipulating mandatory safety training courses for fishermen has been implemented in Denmark (Benny Hansen, The Danish Maritime Authority), according to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions report, 2007.

The duration of the compulsory safety course varies, according to experience, for instance, trainee fishermen need to undertake a three-week basic training course about safety at sea, whereas experienced fisherman only need to complete a one week safety at sea training course.

Students may enrol for the compulsory safety training all year round and the courses are free for most students. The safety training courses take place within the Fisheries Training Centre

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(Fiskeriskolen) -Thyboroen (Fiskeriskolen Thyboroen) and on the 'Athene' training ship at various harbours in Denmark. The courses include both theoretical and practical training on the working environment and occupational safety and health on land, at sea and on-board. The course run on the 'Athene' training ship includes safety at sea and on board fishing vessels, including aspects such as:

- how to handle accidents, evacuation and rescue operations,
- the use of rescue equipment (e.g. life-saving suits, life jackets, life rafts, man overboard rescue boats, etc.),
- practice drills with life-saving helicopter rescue services,
- rescue equipment maintenance,
- ergonomics, hypothermia,
- first aid skills including the use of medicine chest,
- how to ask for/get help in emergencies,
- fire fighting (the use of fire extinguishing equipment)

The training aboard the 'Athene' training ship lasts for 15 days and concludes with a qualifying exam.

The apprenticeship stages are supported by very diverse, attractive and user-friendly training materials that are well suited to the needs of the target audience, who may be of various ages and have diverse educational backgrounds. They consist primarily of: Books, including:

- "Vessel and Occupational Safety for Fishermen" to be used at the introductory 3-week safety course for fishermen (Author: the Danish Fishermen's Occupational Health Service; Publisher: Fisheries Circle; 172 pages),
- "Working with Fish" – aimed at students from the 4th to 6th forms, which describes the fishing industry and the different professions and job tasks involved. It includes a teachers' guide, 30 books and posters.
 - Guides e.g. an emergency guide for fishermen,
 - Training materials on ergonomics, noise and vibrations,
 - Checklists,
 - Booklets,
 - DVDs on fish and fisheries,
 - Power Point presentations on fisheries related topics

All these training materials are published in Danish and are made available throughout Denmark.

The apprenticeship stages end with an exam where students have to prove the knowledge they have acquired on safety, first aid and rescuing techniques, as well as on fish species, fishing devices, methods of catching, etc. Economic and business aspects are also included.

Post-apprenticeship stages are also available for young fishermen of 20 years or older to supplement the basic fisheries training described above. This compulsory and complex OSH training is given to young fishermen prior to them becoming fully qualified, and has two major goals:

1. To raise young fishermen's awareness of the fishing related health and safety risks they are confronted with at sea, on board fishing vessels and on land,
2. To develop a preventive behaviour enabling them to manage the risks they face in day-to-day work.

2.3.3 The Hanstholm Project

A significant Danish governmental initiative is worth mentioning, namely the *Projekt Hanstholm* (Hanstholm Project, http://www.f-a.dk/artikler/2004/abning_projekthanstholm.htm).

This was a three-month project meant to reduce the risks of work accidents and burnout in the fishing sector and to create a better and safer working environment. It also aimed to raise fishermen's awareness of how to manage health and safety whilst performing their activities at sea and on land. Even though the project did not focus on recruitment, the conclusions drawn



highlighted that “the younger generation demand better work environments” and that “Bad ships will not attract new workers” (Hanstholm Project evaluation).

2.4 Problems faced

The fishermen's training approaches, including the OSH compulsory courses, have several major goals:

1. To enhance the young generation's interest in fishing as a safe career option thus increasing the recruitment of young people for this economic sector;
2. To raise fishermen's awareness of the health and safety risks they have to manage within the fishing sector through adequate OSH training, using modern and attractive methods; and
3. To create a better and safer working environment for the people working in this rather hazardous economic sector.

Consequently, the problems encountered consisted of:

- The constant decline of the fishing fleet in Denmark,
- The significant number of opportunities young people and the unemployed have to find good jobs in less dangerous economic activities,
- The perspective to stay far from the families for rather long periods of time, especially for the fishermen who work on big fishing trawlers,
- An outdated impression that people still have of this profession assimilated with considerable safety and health risks, hard work, unstable market, lower social prestige, etc.

2.5 What was achieved?

- A safer and healthier working environment for the young and/or the experienced fishermen at sea, on board fishing vessels and on land, due to the improvement in the technologies and the equipment used but equally to high quality OSH training,
- An increased awareness of prospective and/or experienced fishermen regarding the safety and health related risks they are exposed to, even from the very first training stages,
- Although there are no statistics to prove TFC was responsible, there has been an increased demand for fishing related jobs in Denmark, since the introduction of the training offered to prospective fishermen,
- Removing the perception that fishing involves hard work and a dangerous working environment, whilst promoting the benefits of a modern sector, including the use of modern technologies and equipment capable of reducing the human effort and rendering fishing a safer and healthier activity,
- Maintaining fishing as a constant component of the Danish culture,
- An increased social prestige of this traditional profession, making it more attractive for the younger generation.

2.6. Success factors

The major asset ensuring positive outcomes for this training was the partnership of the key actors involved both in the recruitment initiatives and in the training courses for the future or experienced fishermen such as: governmental entities, regional and local authorities, professional associations, trade unions, and media.

Another success factor resides in the high professionalism demonstrated during the elaboration of the promotion and training materials – good quality contents, very attractive presentations, innovative methods, creative solutions, well targeted messages, a large variety of training tools (books, DVDs, movies, TV/radio commercials using well known actors, humorous songs, etc.).

The fact that fishing is 'embedded' in Danish culture and civilisation still renders this sector of activity a viable option for the young people in search for their career.



2.7 Further information

- The Fisheries Circle

mail@fiskericirklen.dk

- Marianne Olrik, the Fisheries Circle General Secretary

Statistics on the number of students participating in compulsory safety courses, 2004–2005, The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions' report on "Innovative recruitment strategies in the fisheries sector", 2007.

2.8 Transferability

The particularities ensuring the success of fishermen's OSH training in Denmark can be adopted by other educational providers without major obstacles on the condition that they take into consideration the characteristics of the targeted public in terms of educational background, age, cultural tradition, employment opportunities, labour market trends, financial and human resources availability.

Moreover, when considering the creative side of the recruitment strategies (advertising through various media, campaigns) developed in the fishing sector in Denmark, it may be transposed to other economic sectors, both in Denmark and abroad, confronted with a decline in the workforce.

Young people's aspirations and career demands should be considered, especially where there are concerns about safe and healthy working environments, levels of financial income obtained, the regimented and repetitive nature of the work.

3. References, resources:

- The Fisheries Circle, Address: H. C. Andersens Boulevard 37 1. th., DK-1504 Copenhagen V
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URL: <http://www.fishermannow.com/become+a+fisherman/fisherman/safety+course>
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