

Proceedings from the EGU workshop on  
**Club Development,  
Recruiting  
and  
Keeping Members**

Amsterdam 2012-02-24

European Gliding Union





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# Club Development, Recruiting and Keeping Members

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Edited by Robert Danewid

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## Preface

The European gliding community has long shown that, by working collectively, our sport can address fundamental issues more successfully than if individual countries had worked in isolation. We have refined our ways of pan-national working over many years and have brought that tremendous capability to bear in a variety of regulatory and technical areas. Without such efforts our sport would not be as well positioned as it is.

One of our most pressing issues remains, however, unaddressed. Participation levels in gliding are declining in almost every country in the world. If this trend is not reversed then our sport will become increasingly marginalised and difficult to sustain in any appreciable way. We have known about this issue for many years - it is the elephant in the room that everyone can see, but seemingly no one wants to talk about. And, whilst individual countries might have tried to do things in order to systematically grow participation and activity levels, there is no evidence that the sport is anywhere close to understanding the basic issues it faces, never mind come up with ways of dealing with them.

It was an important moment when the members of the EGU decided to take the first, tentative steps in looking at the participation crisis. That was during our 2011 Congress. At this year's meeting in Amsterdam, we held a workshop designed to allow various countries to share their perspectives on the issue. At the end of that session, there was an agreement in principle to have the issue of participation added to the EGU's agenda. Further work was to be undertaken in order to scope properly both the issues and potential options we have to begin the process of putting the sport back into growth mode. That work will be progressed this autumn, in time for more substantive input to be made to our Congress meeting next year.

I believe that growing participation - and all that it naturally entails - is the single biggest, unaddressed issue that we all face. It is an area where pan-national collaboration will add greatly to the efforts of any one country working alone. I urge you to support and contribute to this effort to the maximum degree you can. Reflect on the notes that Robert and his team have prepared following this year's workshop; input your ideas.

Patrick Naegeli  
President European Gliding Union

## Introduction

At the 2011 European Gliding Union Congress it was suggested by the British Gliding Association to organize a workshop on marketing, club development, recruiting, keeping members and associated topics. The decline in membership is the largest problem gliding is facing today. There has so far been no European forum for discussing this problem. The attending members were supporting this idea and the Board to take action.

The EGU Board decided to organize the workshop adjacent to the 2012 Congress and early in the autumn a call for paper was sent out.

On February 24th 2012 the EGU organized the workshop on "Club Development, Recruiting and Keeping Members".

This proceeding contains eight papers presented at the work shop.

I would like to thank the authors for their contributions.

We hope that the reader will find ideas and thoughts in the papers that you can use in your federation or club. Material in this publication may be used free if appropriate reference is made to EGU and the authors.

Robert Danewid  
Organizer and Editor



## Abstracts

### **1 From the IGC Pilot Survey to the development of a strategy for growth in gliding: lessons learned at the Country Development working group and how they relate to club development**

*Alexander Georgas, IGC Country Development working group*

In 2009, the IGC Country Development working group performed a worldwide online survey of glider pilots. The aim of the survey was to guide the group's strategy for development of soaring in emerging gliding countries. The main results of the survey focused on the issues concerning glider pilots, their image of their sport and an attempt to better understand what constitutes an advanced versus an emerging gliding nation.

This paper will explore how these findings relate to development in the club level, what lessons can be learned from our membership in trying to bring in new members, maintain our existing pilots and develop our sport in an environment which is ever more competitive and challenging. It will also look at how the resulting Country Development group strategy and experience can relate to actual development initiatives at the club level and how the different involved parties, from international groups to local clubs, can work together to bring about results.

### **2 From a Glorious Past to a Glorious Future**

*Claus Nedergard-Jacobsen, Denmark*

No doubt that Gliding has a glorious past but, whether there will be glorious future is not for sure any longer given the world-wide decline in number of members. Many solutions have been proposed to counteract this development and to make the sport of gliding blossom and bloom again. However, behind each and every proposal for a solution lies an (often unconscious) perception of what the problem is and what the goals are. We often jump to solutions long before having understood these two issues. Consequently, no one can agree on solutions and everyone gets frustrated. Most of us are technicians and we always ask ourselves the "How" question. But maybe there are other and more important questions to ask before jumping to solutions: "Who", "Where", "What" and most importantly: "Why". This presentation deals with the changes in society and culture that have changed the foundation for our activity and discusses some of the questions to ask rather than the answers.

### **3 Gliding is the Answer - But What is the Question?**

*Claus Nedergard-Jacobsen, Denmark*

Gliding used to be the answer to the question: "How can we make flying accessible and affordable to the Common Man". Back in the 30ies flying was a dream as magic and as inaccessible as manned space flight today except for the wealthy and rich. The solution was to abandon the engine, build simple gliders ourselves and organise into clubs run by voluntary labour. It was a cheap alternative to "real flying", i.e. flying powered planes, but it was flying. Up until 1985 gliding has had the privilege of

being the only affordable alternative to powered flight. But with the advent of Micro light aircraft, hang gliders, paragliders, simulators, cheap airfares etc. there are now many alternatives. Even though the average work week has been shortened since the 30ies, changes in family patterns and economy have meant that time has become a sparse and costly resource. And why should any sane person choose to fly powerless gliders if he/she can fly powered airplanes for less? We have lost our original justification. But perhaps we can find other ways of justifying our sport but "cheap flight". This presentation will list a number of candidates. If we can find out what justifies our sport today, we will have a much better stronghold for branding and marketing ourselves and it can also be used in an awareness campaign to make our members understand what it is that we have to deliver.

## **4 A Wonderful Gliding Day in 2025 - A Workshop Exercise**

*Claus Nedergard-Jacobsen, Denmark*

The Danish philosopher Soeren Kierkegaard once wrote: "Everyone wants improvement but nobody wants change". Everyone who has tried to impose changes on others has experienced the wall of resistance that follows. However, change is a fundamental condition of life and Change Management Skills have become an important tool for management . If we do not adapt to change, we die. It is as simple as that. Many professional consultants are available to help organisations accept the need for change and to help them take ownership of the required actions rather than have them dictated. During Nordic Gliding Meeting 2005 in Denmark we invited a professional Organisation Development Consultant to arrange a 4 hour workshop for the leaders of the Nordic Gliding Associations. This presentation will focus on the particular method she chose (which is but one of many) rather than the results.

## **5 The Story of Valde who reinvented Gliding - A Story-Telling exercise**

*Claus Nedergard-Jacobsen, Denmark*

When working with glider pilots to make them propose and take ownership of new approaches it is rare to meet someone capable of "Thinking Outside the Box". We are so constrained by our traditional thinking, more so, the longer we have been in the gliding community. Of Course we love our ways but maybe - just maybe - some of them are obsolete. There are ways, however, to switch off those natural constraints and trick the brain into thinking "Outside the box". One such method is presented that was developed together with a professional Danish Organisation Development Consultant. Basically it is a story telling exercise where the participants are urged to write a story about a young man, who reinvents gliding from scratch in the year 2055, long after all gliding clubs and organisations have ceased to exist. The story can be purely fictional, but by doing it this way the participants will find it legal to think "illegal" thoughts. And maybe - just maybe - somewhere along the way, he/she will stumble across new ways of thinking which could open doors of opportunity already in 2012. Or maybe it will sow that seed which will blossom into a tree in 5 - 10 years time.



## 6 The iFly! Programme

*Bart Pelt, Head of Gliding Department, the Netherlands*

1. In 2006 the Royal Netherlands Aeronautical Association (KNVvL), developed the iFly! program, in cooperation with sponsor European Pilot Selection & Training (EPST), which is a Dutch based organisation fully equipped to train young professionals to become a commercial airline pilot. The iFly! program offers young people in The Netherlands ( 80 in total, from 14-19 years old) the possibility to get acquainted to gliding and to learn to fly glider planes for one full year for approximately half of the normal price. In springtime these youngsters must attend a mandatory introduction day at the EPST office in Utrecht where they learn everything about EPST and the iFly! program. Thereafter, the iFly! candidates start their glider training during the rest of the season at one of the glider clubs in The Netherlands, where they have to make at least 30 starts to be eligible for the sponsorship of € 300,-

After their first year of gliding the KNVvL hopes that these iFly! candidates will continue their glider training, to become fully licensed glider pilots. And sponsor EPST equally hopes that after several years of gliding the iFly! candidates will start a commercial pilot training at their Academy in Utrecht. So both the KNVvL as well as sponsor EPST might benefit from this iFly! program, which in 2012 enters its seventh consecutive year of successful cooperation.

Results of the iFly! Program as of 2006:

Of the 80 candidates who started the iFly! Program, in 2006 71% continued their gliding career, in 2007 the result was 72%, in 2008 it was 72% again, in 2009 it dropped to 58% and in 2010 59% of the youngsters continued their membership of the gliding club of their choice.

2. Next to this iFly! program, the KNVvL offers people who are interested in gliding the possibility of a reduced membership. This reduced membership gives them the opportunity to start a gliding course for a maximum of one month, during which they are fully insured for third party liability.

3. Most gliding clubs in The Netherlands have developed special programs (exhibitions at schools, fairs etc.) to attract possible new members.

## 7 Experiences in Finland on GPL and TMG theory distance learning system over web

*Sakari Kuosmanen, Managing Director, The Finnish Air Sports Institute Ltd, Finland*

Our distance learning system is based on nationally approved training system for Glider Pilot License (GPL). It requires theory in 9 subjects and about 44 hours class teaching. We have convinced our CAA that with this training method when student is using time with doing his/her tasks/solving setted problems he is "sitting" required time "in classroom". Previously and even now you have to sit at lessons all necessary time.

Our system is based on doing tasks which are questions dealing with problems with topics of 9 subjects. We have at least 5 to 10 questions from every topic.

Our environment is working at Tampere University of Technology. All backups and support is 24/7 – very reliable! For technical question on what operating system it is based I can't give answer- I don't need it because our user interface is very simple.



## 8 If only clubs can improve participation figures, how can we help?

*Alison Randle, British Gliding Association*

Gliding, our amazing sport, is in decline. Deep down we are all concerned that this decline might be terminal. Ever the eternal optimists, we all believe that we WILL find a way of ensuring that gliding thrives as a sport for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

But how?

How can we, as a group of dedicated professionals and volunteers, work together to ensure a brighter future? How do we best support our individual gliding clubs to ensure they are strong and healthy? For instance, in the UK we've been working on a specific Junior Gliding strategy. It is beginning to make a difference – numbers are holding, rather than falling. We look at other countries and see excellent work going on in other areas, but none of us have all of the answers.

It is time for us to pool our ideas and develop practical tools for countries to use to strengthen gliding clubs, and gliding, across Europe.

Clearly we can't do this in just one hour, but at the end of our hour we need to be able to have a way of moving forward. How will we make decisions about what areas to focus on? How will we carry out research so we understand what is happening? How will we share good work going on at clubs and convert these into tools that can be used elsewhere? How will we work? How will it be funded?

# 1

## **From the IGC Pilot Survey to the development of a strategy for growth in gliding: lessons learned at the Country Development working group and how they relate to club development**

**Alexander Georgas - IGC Country Development working group**

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*In 2009, the IGC Country Development working group performed a worldwide online survey of glider pilots. The aim of the survey was to guide the group's strategy for development of soaring in emerging gliding countries. The main results of the survey focused on the issues concerning glider pilots, their image of their sport and an attempt to better understand what constitutes an advanced versus an emerging gliding nation.*

*This paper will explore how these findings relate to development in the club level, what lessons can be learned from our membership in trying to bring in new members, maintain our existing pilots and develop our sport in an environment which is ever more competitive and challenging. It will also look at how the resulting Country Development group strategy and experience can relate to actual development initiatives at the club level and how the different involved parties, from international groups to local clubs, can work together to bring about results.*

The issue of club development, or the development of soaring as a sport in general, is commonly viewed as an matter of increasing the membership numbers in our clubs. This is to a large degree a valid approach. However, when we start to look at this issue more closely, the complexity of the task start to emerge.

Do we care just about the raw membership numbers, or should we make some sort of distinction on how many of our members are active? When we talk about active membership, should we be looking at age distribution, sex distribution, type of gliding activity (training, local flying, cross country, etc) these numbers represent? Should we be



**Figure 1a - Athens Gliding Club (Greece)**

*Despite being at the edge of a city with a population of four million, Athens Gliding Club has failed to convert the thousands of persons that have passed through its doors into active glider pilots.*



**Figure 1b - Club de Planeadores de Vitacura (Chile)**

*In a country with a very small gliding movement but excellent soaring conditions, Club de Planeadores de Vitacura has developed into a club which would be envied in the most advanced soaring nations.*



**Figure 1b - Aeroclub de Colombia (Colombia)**

*Operating within a robust financial and organizational environment, but facing the challenges of tropical weather and lack of soaring heritage, the gliding operations of the Aeroclub de Colombia pose an interesting challenge: how do we get people to convert to gliding from other aviation activities.*

addressing other matters as well? And if we decide what is important, what policies should we put in place to achieve these goals?

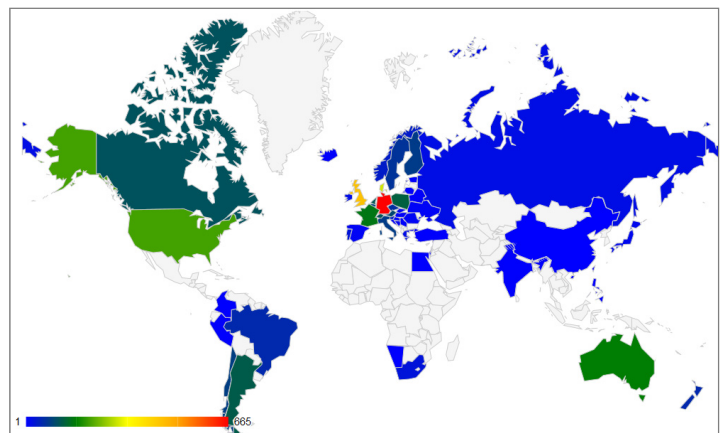
In trying to form a development strategy for our clubs, it is helpful to remember a simple fact: not all clubs are born equal. A good starting point would be to admit that there are so many different sets of challenges out there that it would be impossible to address all of them with a simple, one-dimensional, policy prescription. Figure 1 shows images from three different clubs around the world. The only common point these clubs seem to share is that they are home clubs to one of the members of the IGC Country Development working group.

So if we admit that there will be no solution which will fit all club environments, how do we proceed from there? A good first step would be to try to develop an understanding about what is indeed different and common about all the clubs out there. It is only then that we will be well placed to understand the challenges and opportunities before us.

This paper does not try to introduce a complete strategy for the development of gliding clubs. Nor does it try to identify the complete list of challenges facing gliding. It is hoped, however, that this brief exploration of the results of the pilot survey, as well as our experiences within the IGC Country Development working group in trying to form these conclusions into meaningful insight for policy, can help enliven the debate on how we may guarantee a promising future for our sport.

## The IGC Pilot Survey

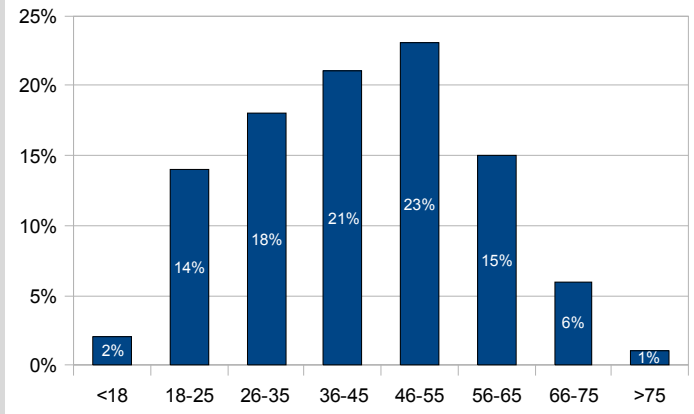
In 2010, the then newly formed IGC Country Development working group conducted a study of glider pilots around the world. Our purpose was to better understand the issues concerning our membership and how these vary from country to country. The study was conducted via web questionnaire and the response was very encouraging: In all 3,434 pilots participated, a figure representing almost three percent of the world glider pilot membership. We received responses from 55 different countries, of which 34 achieved a level of statistical significance.



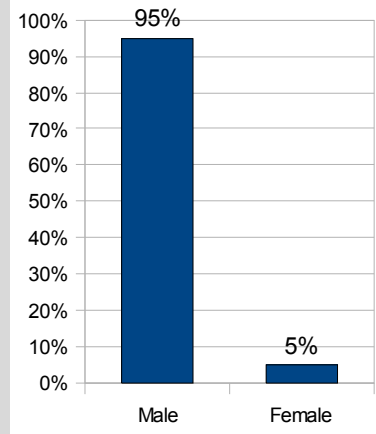
**Figure 2 – IGC Pilot Survey participation**

The complete range of results are available in the Pilot Survey report, which can be downloaded from the FAI website ([www.fai.org](http://www.fai.org)). A summary of the demographics of participating pilots is shown below (figures 3 through 7). While the study's results are statistically significant in terms of participation, the way the study participants were selected (i.e. by publicising the survey in internet forums, through certain soaring print publications and through the IGC delegate network) does not ensure a random sample of the glider pilot population. In fact by taking a closer look into the results, we can see that the study is biased towards the "core group" of glider pilots, those who follow and practice the sport most passionately. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as we bear this in mind when interpreting the results.

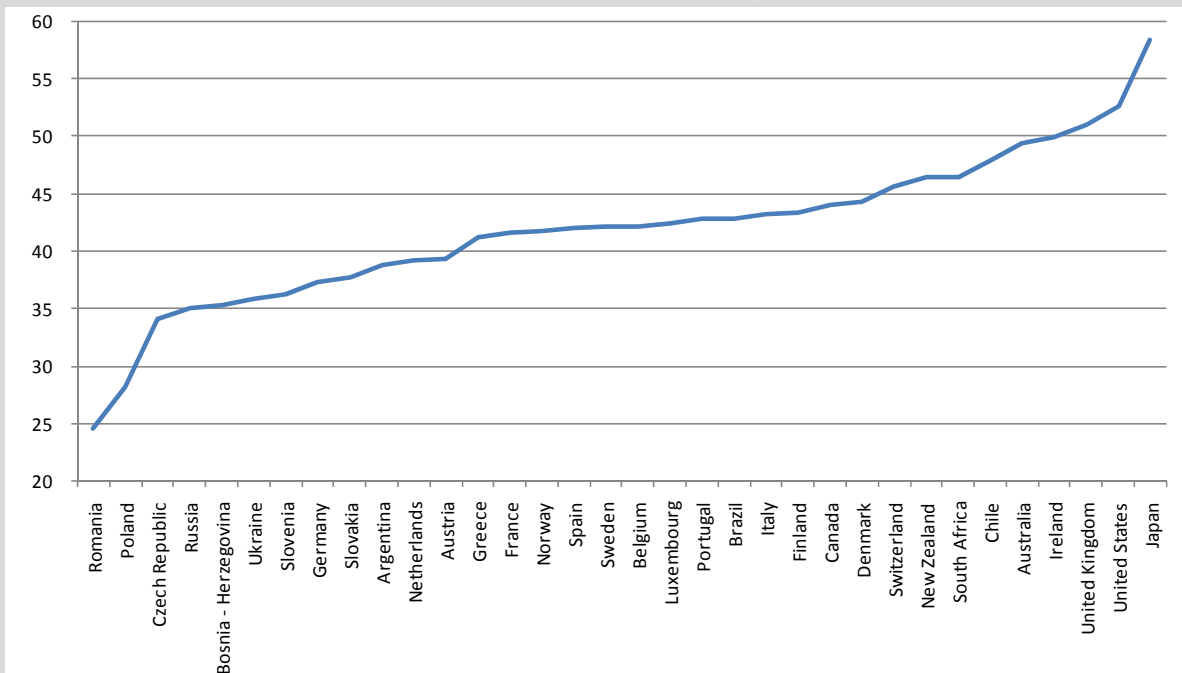
If we look at figure 7 we can imply that the majority of this core group likes to pursue activities which are related to cross-country flying. If we total the number of pilots who identify most with cross-country activities, we get a percentage of pilots way above 50%, which we know from other studies, represents a figure much larger than the number of cross-country pilots we should expect (evidence suggests that the figures of active cross-country pilots typically range from 25% to 40% of the entire soaring movement, depending on the country). If there is one conclusion we can draw from all this is that our most engaged members tend favour cross-country flying, rather than other glider-related activities.



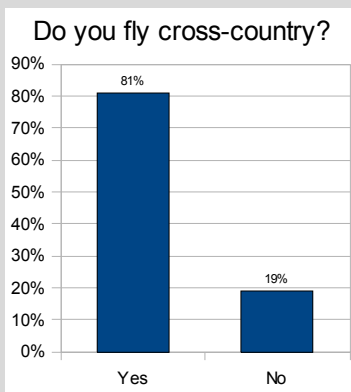
**Figure 3 – Pilot age groups**



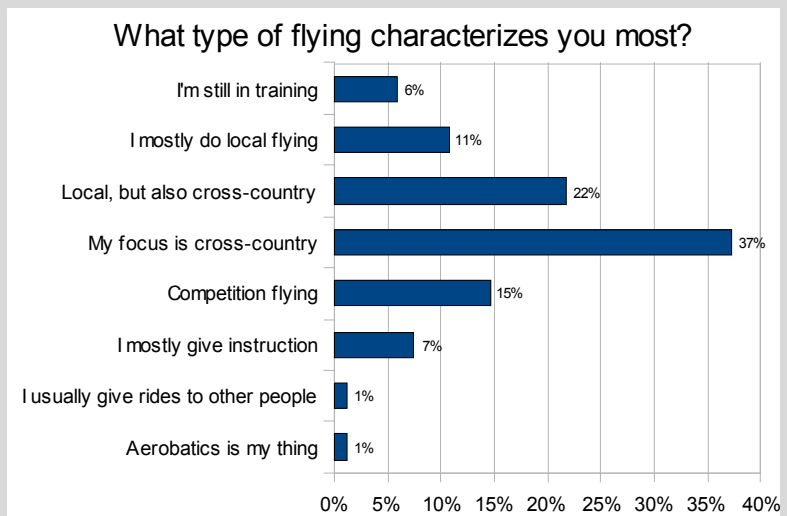
**Figure 4 – Pilot sex**



**Figure 5 – Pilot average age**



**Figure 6 – Cross-country participation**



**Figure 7 – Preferred gliding activity**

## Marketing gliding

Understanding how our core membership perceives gliding is a useful guide to building a successful image for our sport. When trying to attract people, it may be a better strategy to portray an image that will attract the most promising audience, the one that will probably stick with the sport, rather than attracting the biggest possible number of persons.

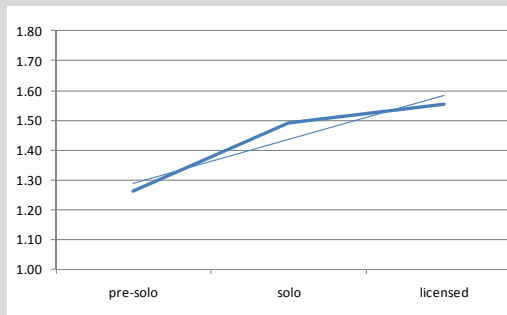
The study questionnaire included a section devoted to the perception pilots have of our sport. A number of statements on soaring were offered and participants were asked to rate them according to whether they agree or not. Statistical analysis of the results produced a number of perception groupings, which were further analysed within various cross-sections of our membership (figure 9).

Primary values	Factor loading
I love silent flight	.707
It is a great challenge	.682
I enjoy the technical aspects	.646
I love the adventure	.523
It is a beautiful sport	.519

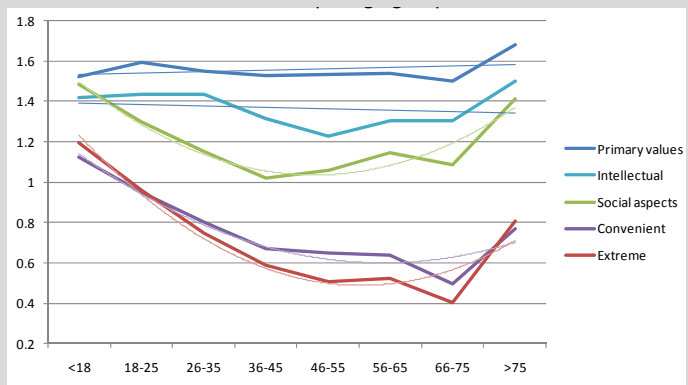
  

Extreme sport	Factor loading
I love the adrenalin	.793
It is an extreme sport	.672
I enjoy the competition	.642
I love the adventure	.561

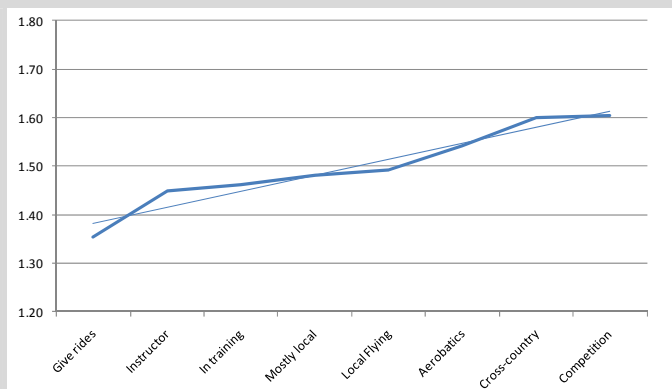
**Figure 8 – Perception factor loadings**



**Figure 10 – Primary values vs pilot stage**



**Figure 9 – Value appeal per age group**



**Figure 11 – Primary values vs pilot activity**

For charts in figures 9 to 11, y-axis units are average response of result set with -2 meaning "I strongly disagree" (not shown in axis scale), 0 being a neutral response and 2 signifying "I strongly agree".

The full results are available in the study report, however, a couple of points, which are relevant to creating a marketing strategy for gliding are worth mentioning here:

The strongest values pilots were found to associate with relate to the "core nature" of soaring, which we have termed "primary values" (figure 8). It is difficult to characterize this core image in a single sentence, however, the best approximation know to the author is:

*"Soaring is a conversation with nature"<sup>1</sup>*

Contrasting with this, portrayals of the sport as "extreme" found little support among glider pilots. This identification with the primary values and disassociation from an extreme sports image tends to strengthen as the level of participation in the sport continues (figure 10). The main conclusion here is that it pays to highlight the core values when marketing the sport, rather than resorting to gimmicks, such as the inherent tendency nowadays to oversell the "extreme" elements of an activity. Pushing the environmental image would probably not hurt as well, as this is a head-turner which plays well with the "primary values".

## Issues affecting development

A central part of the study focused on understanding what issue pilots are most concerned with and how these issues vary in different pilot backgrounds and from country to country. This was done by asking the survey participants to score a set of statements according to their level of agreement or disagreement. A number of different subjects were examined, ranging from the cost of gliding, availability of training, satisfaction with the social element of gliding etc.

The analysis of results showed that two subjects resonated above everything else, with statistical significance (figure 13):

- Barriers to cross-country flight
- Airspace and regulatory issues

By barriers to cross-country flights, we mean things that make it more difficult to either transition to or practice cross-country soaring. Airspace and regulatory issues are a well known problem in Europe and this would probably come as no surprise. It is important to stress that these two themes correlate well in the survey sample with the level of success and satisfaction from soaring activities of the respondents. In other words, where pilots are experiencing problems, barriers to cross-country and/or airspace issues are of great concern, whereas in places where soaring is practiced with great success, these tend to be non-issues.

While the threat posed to gliding by increasing airspace restrictions and over-regulation is well documented and is being actively pursued, we must examine the implications of barriers to cross-country flight, especially within the context of club development.

If our core membership is telling us that cross-country is what they like to do and if study results link barriers to cross-country with the success of gliding activities, the alarm bell should be ringing in every club officer's mind on two key questions:

- Is our club doing everything possible to ensure that we successfully transition our pilots to cross-country soaring?
- Is our club infrastructure and organization conducive to the pursuit of cross-country flying?

While a number of successful clubs have this all figured out, anecdotal evidence does suggest there is often a bias in clubs towards the training of ab initio pilots to certification. Once you are cleared by

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<sup>1</sup> I first heard this comment from Herbert Weiss, although I am not sure if it may originate from somewhere else as well.



the CFI or flight examiner to fly as pilot-in-command, it is commonly the case that you are often left on your own devices. In some clubs there is a healthy community of cross-country practitioners and new pilots will often tag along in the hope of transitioning. But unless there is a rigorous cross-country training program (and by rigorous it is meant not only to Silver level, but to advanced cross-country), the gap is often too large for people to step over.

For club development officers<sup>2</sup>, the significance of having a solid plan for transitioning pilots to cross-country is twofold:

- By increasing the number of cross-country pilots at your club, you are increasing the percentage of your membership which tends to be the most active and committed to gliding. This core group will probably stick around for more years and contribute back to the club community in a more tangible way.
- By creating a tangible path to cross-country you are giving newly-certified pilots an additional option to pursue in their gliding activities, helping avoid a common path out of our sport in which new pilots will often feel aimless and tire of flying locally, once they have achieved their goal of certification.

The second point above is well worth noting. Having a great number of ab initio students to train is certainly an important financial proposition for clubs. However, from the point of development, it contributes nothing to our numbers when newly trained glider pilots elect to move on to other things. Presenting these pilots with the right goals and incentives to keep engaged in our sport should be our number one development priority. There are many interesting and challenging activities within the sporting and social environment of a gliding club. Some people will choose the path of instruction, some will become involved in the social element, some will pursue aerobatics. Cross-country soaring is often the most challenging of these activities to start getting involved in, by virtue of the often huge gap that needs to be crossed just to start practicing. It is also one of the most rewarding for those who manage to make it.

The message we get from the survey results is clear: if you are looking to develop your club, do not just focus on training to license and overlook transitioning pilots to cross-country. Put a solid plan in place. However, there are a number of clubs where, for all sorts of reasons, cross-country flight may not be possible for most of the year or not at all. In that case, there are other ways to meet this goal:

- Clubs in this situation can build a working relationship with clubs that have extensive cross-country capabilities. Club members can then be seamlessly sent to train in cross-country as part of a vacation course.
- An annual soaring camp, soaring expedition, overseas comp, or the like, can be organized where members of the club congregate jointly in a familiar social surrounding to an exciting cross-country destination.

In fact, making cross-country a focal point of the club's life in situations where no local cross-country possibilities exist should not be an unreasonable proposition. There are a number of other sports in which clubs successfully organize around an activity that can only be practiced in very remote

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<sup>2</sup> In the EGU Club Development workshop, I used the term "club development officer" and received a comment that this was quite an interesting position description. Does your club have a development officer?

locations. A simple example of this is the excellent mountaineering tradition that exists in the United Kingdom, a country with very few opportunities for serious climbs. It is all about organizing events to showcase previous year's activity, or notable destinations and the expectation and preparation that surrounds next year's expedition. Furthermore, the social bonds that form around a soaring trip to a remote destination work to strengthen the club's sense of social cohesion.

Conversely, in clubs that have extensive cross-country operations, there is an opportunity to further develop operations. In this case, the key is to make access to out-of-club pilots as easy as possible. The key questions for a development officer here are:

- Does the club successfully publicise its cross-country opportunities within the soaring community?
- Is information on cross-country courses and requirements to fly provided in a way which is clear and easily accessible?
- Is there a clear procedure in place to handle non-member pilots arriving at the airfield?

While transition to cross-country and airspace/regulatory restrictions are not the only development challenges we are facing, they are two key issues which will be significant in determining our success or failure in developing our sport. If dealing with the regulatory authorities is principally the work of our national and international associations, emphasis on cross-country activities is something which must happen on the ground within the club environment, member by member.

## **Working towards a better understanding of our soaring movement (and maybe clubs as well)**

Understanding the key issues contributing to the success or failure of growth in our sport is only the first step towards creating a development strategy. As we identified in the beginning, every club has its own unique set of challenges and competitive advantages. If we are to start generalizing, we must also start developing a better understanding of the nature, or typology, of the clubs that are out there.

One of the most interesting results to emerge from the IGC Pilot Survey concerned our understanding of gliding nations' relative strength: When we started designing the study, we wanted to gain a better view of how strong the soaring movements were and indeed which were the most problematic and which the most advanced nations. Statistical analysis of the results gave us a bit of an unexpected answer in that the actual situation is not so one-dimensional. What we saw is that countries tend to cluster around three different groupings, which we termed as follows:

- **Barriers to flight:**  
Numerous problems make the practice of gliding very difficult. Anything from small gliding communities, lack of gliding heritage, problematic operation of clubs, lack of equipment, bad soaring weather, regulatory and airspace issues.
- **Advanced but slightly restricted:**  
Mature gliding community. Gliding clubs operate very well, very good equipment and organization. However, gliding operations are restricted by such things as regulations and airspace, bad soaring weather.

- Land of plenty:  
Very few barriers to gliding exist here. Good soaring weather combined with plenty of available airspace and a friendly regulatory and operational environment. Gliding communities, both small and large, thrive under these conditions

The approximate fit of each country in these groupings is shown in figure 12. Some countries share a bit of all the above characterizations, while some belong much more clearly in one category. Of all the categories, the most interesting one is the "land of plenty". This is where every soaring pilot would like to live. We can see a number of quite different countries belonging here. Some are gliding super-powers, but others are countries with little gliding activity but huge potential.



**Figure 12 – Country typologies**

It would be logical to assume that this characterization extends to individual clubs as well. In terms of policy-making, understanding the slight nuance this typology introduces opens the door to a few interesting propositions. Not only does it help us better understand the different sets of challenges and opportunities in each club, it offers an obvious conclusion and an interesting question:

- The most immediate growth potential is in clubs that are in, or close to, the "land of plenty" grouping. This is where we will get our most immediate returns from the effort invested.
- Can we then take advantage of the "land of opportunity" clubs/countries to develop other clubs?

## Building a development strategy

The urgent concern with developing our clubs, and our sport in general, is derived from the fact that our numbers are dwindling and our membership is ageing. Wherever we look, in whichever country and with very few exceptions, our soaring community is becoming smaller year by year. Our immediate response to this threat is to try and draw more people to our gliding clubs, by doing a marketing campaign for our club, or maybe trying to put the sport of gliding in the spotlight of the media and in the consciousness of the general public.

What really counts, however, is not how many people we manage to get into an introduction-to-gliding flight, but how many people will stick around to become glider pilots. And for the sustained development of our sport, what ultimately matters is how many of these pilots will continue to engage with gliding and become active members of our community. The moment a person new to gliding arrives at the airfield for the first time is when the real work begins. And whatever strategies we conjure and policies we implement, it is the experience this person will have that day and for the next couple of months and through the years to come that will define the success or failure of our development efforts.

In other words, developing gliding is a battle that is fought day-to-day on the ground in our clubs. As a sport, we have to prepare well for this and we have to make sure our initiatives reach the grounds where this is all taking place.

The first step in this direction is to understand why our numbers are falling in the first place. There are probably a number of reasons for this, but a key factor influencing these rests with the realization that the world around us is not how it was fifty, twenty, or even ten years ago. Long gone is the time when our clubs could rest assured of the regiments of volunteers with infinite spare time to push around gliders in the hope that one day they will get to accomplish their long-sought-after sole-purpose-in-life of riding in the skies.

The world has moved on and, in many respects, so has our sport. We now have sailplanes which enjoy glide angles so high, they surpass what can be grasped by their pilot's mind. We also have electronic aids which greatly facilitate our workloads as pilots and allow us to harness the potential of these incredible aircraft. Equally important, we now have at our grasp the tools to capture our experiences as pilots and share them with our friends, family and with the world at large.

What has probably not changed as much is how we run our clubs and seek to develop them. While we must identify the strengths we have, such as the volunteer nature of our clubs and the deeply rewarding nature of our sport, we must as well recognize that we now face strong competition from an ever-increasing choice of interesting sports and leisure activities. At the same time, people often have less time to spend on their leisure and require more in return.

Living in an environment of instant gratification and overload of choices, we must first admit that we will not be able to market our sport to everyone. A good starting point, however, is to try to address the people most likely to appreciate gliding. We can then start building a strategy to convert them to our sport. There are many ways to do this, but, in the end, being successful in making people stick with gliding comes down to the following realization:

**Developing gliding means increasing the quality of our sport for our members.**

## Recommendations emerging from the study

This paper barely scratches the surface of what we could do to develop our gliding clubs, but if we were to put the elements of what was presented here into a coherent policy, this would have to do with the recurrent theme of pilot mobility. As we saw previously, in trying to narrow the gap between pilot certification and cross-country flight, the mobility of pilots from clubs with unsuitable soaring infrastructure to locations with good soaring opportunities is one way to overcome this fundamental issue. Furthermore, the organization of club expeditions to interesting soaring destinations strengthens the club's activities and provides more interesting options to glider pilots.

To generalize this concept a bit, we can introduce the concept of soaring tourism. Soaring tourism is the idea that we do not just practice soaring from our home airport, but that we may visit other places to fly from as well. This may be a different airfield a bit farther from home with more promising or different soaring conditions. But it might as well be a distant foreign and exotic destination with mighty, or maybe unknown potential, exciting scenery, or maybe just the right ingredients to combine with a family vacation.

Being able to fly in a different interesting place, to take a soaring vacation in the winter when there are no opportunities to fly locally, to combine soaring activities with a family vacation, or make an adventure of exploring a new, undiscovered, location, provides valuable options to pilots which increase their enjoyment of their sport and enhance their possibilities for practicing it. By taking advantage of what "land of plenty" clubs/countries have to offer, we can build an effective strategy for improving the quality of our sport.

But how can we promote such activity? First, we must acknowledge that this is something that is already taking place. However, there are often barriers in place, whether this is lack of knowledge of the information for a particular destination or the requirements to fly there, logistical details, difficulty of organizing this with the local operation, or just inertia. If we could make all this just a bit easier, we it would be much simpler for people to participate. And if we just manage to turn this into a mainstream activity at our club, we are not just solidifying our club's future but also contributing to the development of new exciting soaring destinations around the world.

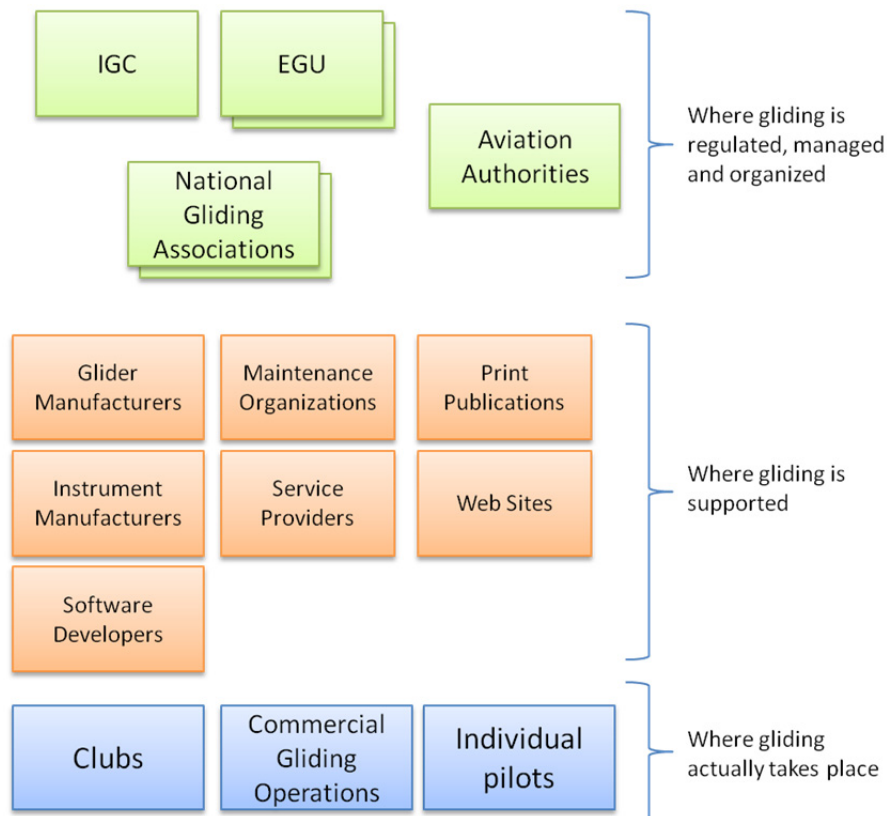
## Putting policy to work

The concept of pilot mobility and soaring tourism may give more interesting options to our pilots, therefore improving the quality of our sport, however, to get there will require work in an international level but also within the individual clubs.

Even if we come up with the perfect strategy to develop gliding, who will be doing all the work? When we started working on development in the IGC Country Development we were immediately faced with the most obvious and intractable of problems: here we were trying to solve the world's problems, but in fact there were not that many of us. And we were volunteers, with real work to do and hobbies that also required our time (after all, we would like to fly a bit as well). With such a big task but very few resources, a very efficient strategy must be found or there will be no result.

It is indeed a constant problem that the international organizations that often have the most visibility and connections to come up with and communicate development policies, are often the

actors that have the least resources, and that the clubs where the meaningful work has to take place are often the farthest removed from this process.



**Figure 13 – The different actors in the soaring movement**

Putting together a solid development plan involves working together with all the actors of the soaring community. We have to take advantage of the visibility and networking abilities that international forums like the IGC and EGU represent. We have to take account of the important knowledge and organizational capabilities of national associations. Beyond the important role they may play in putting policy to work, they have many valuable experiences which when shared in an international forum, may contribute enormously to the formulation of policy. We also have to consider the commercial sector of soaring, whether this is the supporting industry or actual gliding operations. Not only do they have a development role to play, but strengthening those parts of the movement could play a significant contribution to the development of gliding. But we also have to find a way to work directly and efficiently with the members of the gliding community in the clubs, where all the actual action will take place. Ultimately, to be able to impact meaningful change will require that we all work together towards a common goal.

## Conclusion

The recommendations that emerged from the IGC Pilot Study and work within the group to turn this into actual policy, are the following

- Developing gliding depends on increasing the quality of our sport for our membership
- Appropriate marketing will attract the most promising prospective glider pilots

- Focusing on easing transition of pilots to cross-country is an important development goal, both in increasing the quality of the sport and in improving pilot retention rates
- Working together with other “types” of clubs/countries to increase pilot mobility and soaring tourism is a good way to help development
- Let’s all work together towards the same goal. We need to better connect the institutional level (IGC, EGU et al) with the club level.



# 2

## From a Glorious Past to a Glorious Future

Claus Nedergaard Jacobsen, Denmark, Nordic Gliding Secretary 2002 - 2008.  
Contact: [www.cnj.dk/contact](http://www.cnj.dk/contact)

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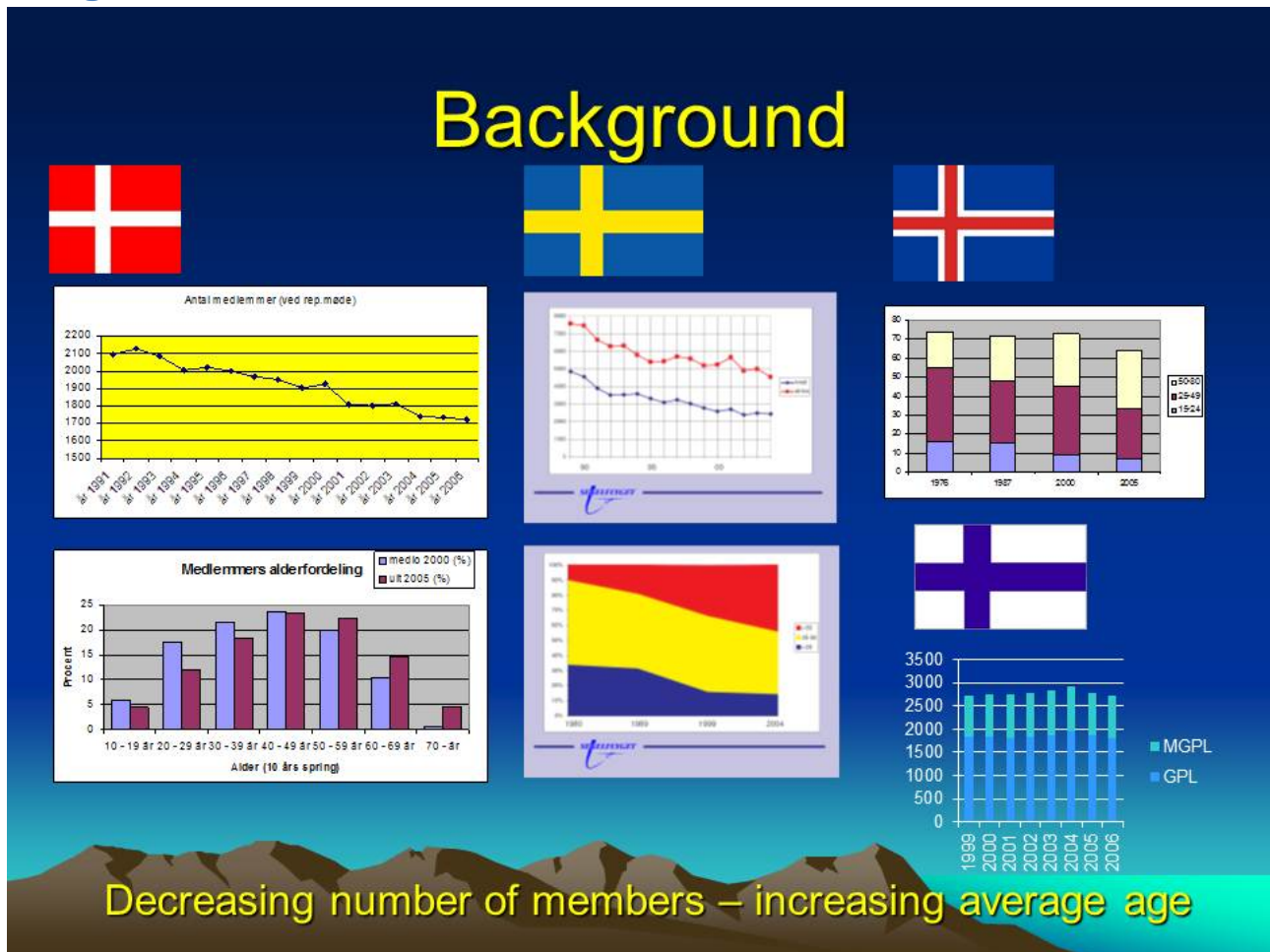
### Intro and Abstract.

When working with our membership challenge in gliding, most of us are focused on solutions. This paper aims to give a different and maybe somewhat controversial approach to the subject. It is targeted at top-leaders in the gliding community and - as such - may not prove very useful at the club level.

"From a Glorious Past to a Glorious Future" is a preposterous title and, some of you may ask yourself what kind of fool it takes to imagine that he has all the answers, we are looking for? Well, if you are looking for answers, you will be disappointed. This paper is more like a reflection on the way we tend to think and behave in the gliding community and, it aims to show that there are alternative ways. But we cannot change until we become conscious of our current way of thinking.

Rather than giving answers, the paper discusses a number of questions to consider before jumping to solutions.

## Background.



By now it should be evident to everyone in the gliding community that we are losing members at a much too high pace and, that our sport could be about to die, unless we manage to turn the tide. The trend has been going on since 1990 but, it is not until a couple of years ago that we have started to openly face the problem. Sweden has already lost half of its active members between 1990 and 2005 (down from 5000 to 2500). Denmark used to have close to 2500 glider pilots. Now we have some 1500. In Denmark we manage to gain some 8 % new members every year but we lose 8.5 % (if the presenter remembers correctly). That is not too bad. Worse, and less understood is the fact that, the members we lose the most, are the ones that began their gliding career only 2 or 3 years ago. The members that have been in the community for ten or more years are likely to stay until they disappear for natural reasons. A consequence of this is that our average age rises every year to the point where we see many clubs dominated by 60+ year old guys. There is nothing wrong with 60+ year old guys having fun with gliding. In fact they are a huge asset to many clubs. But age will inevitably take its toll and we are faced with the risk of a massive loss of resourceful members in 5 - 10 years time, something which could further accelerate the negative development. Our community needs a certain critical mass of members to work.

## What has been done?

Many things have been done and tried already - the problem is that the solutions have not worked sufficiently well and that we are still struggling to find - and agree - on the right solutions. For instance, in Denmark, we have put massive efforts into PR and recruitment between 1990 and 2005. "But to what use?" is the conclusion. There is no point in putting huge amounts of efforts into recruiting and training

members that drop out after 2 - 3 years, often wearing out instructors and other valuable club resources along the line. Before the PR-years, we spent 10 or more years making gliding a "real sport" (as opposed to a "rich man's hobby") in the hope, that once it became accepted and we started to see some international competition results, money would flow in and new members would flock at our gates as is the case when the football team wins an international title. Many other attempts have been made. In the recent years, the focus has been on making gliding more accessible and less time consuming using new techniques of training (simulators, motor gliders ...) and on alleviating known problems like the dominant, so-called alpha-males, known to scare newcomers away, and other perceived problems.

At the Nordic Gliding Meetings and in other forums, other approaches have been discussed, like:

- Getting gliders clubs to merge into larger units (time-efficiency and critical mass)
- Semi-commercial operation
- Leadership - and training of leaders
- Goal setting
- Intensive courses arranged across clubs
- Coaching
- ...

The worst problem with these proposed solutions is that it is impossible to agree on anyone of them. And even if the political leaders find a solution which they believe in, it is bound to be rejected by the members. "Not invented here", apparently, is quite an international reaction.

Several speakers at the Nordic Gliding Meetings, amongst them, David Robert of BGA (now EAS), Roland Stuck of EGU and Jens Chr. Pedersen from Denmark, a successful club leader, have warned the political leaders against working with solutions and instead work with leadership issues like goal-setting, strategy and process management.

Thus, this presentation is more about process than it is about solutions. It does not represent the official viewpoint of the Nordic Gliding Meeting. Rather, it should be seen as one of many contributions at the Nordic Gliding Meetings on this issue.

## Solutioneering.

From the text above it should be evident that dozens of solutions have already been tried and implemented and hundreds of solutions have been discussed. If you watch various online forums you will see fierce fights between the believers of each type of solution. It suddenly dawned on the presenter one fine day that this was the prime lesson taught in one of the very first collaboration courses that his company had asked him to participate in 30 years ago:

A group of people were presented with a little task that they had to solve within an hour or two. Within minutes the group members were fighting over whose solution was best. Each group member had his own ideas and fought for his own solution. In the end the group came up with nothing but frustration. That is when the instructors revealed that that was the exact purpose of the exercise: The task definition had deliberately been made vague and had deliberately contained certain ambiguities.

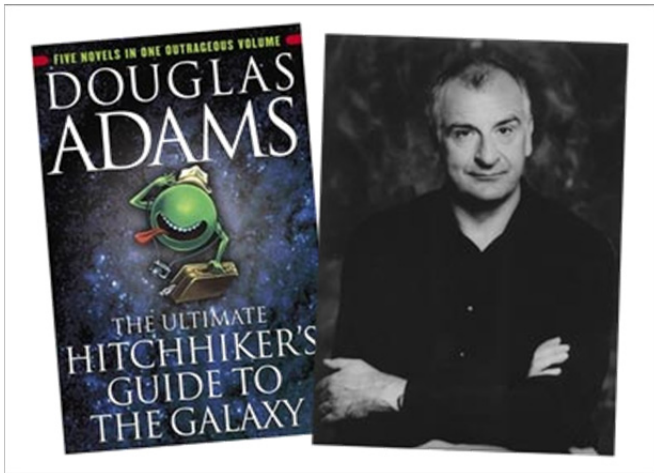
*The instructors wanted us to see how impossible it is to solve a task in a group of people unless you have a common understanding of the task at hand and the goals.*

They certainly made their point clear. That is why, this presenter advocates the idea that we should stop fighting over whose solution is the best and instead, try to focus on what it is that we want. From that point on we can start setting up goals and strategies. And THEN we can start looking for solutions. But it is a long process involving a huge organisation of people and - unlike professional organisations - we need to involve

the entire organisation to ensure success. That is why this presenter focuses on process: The steps leading to success.

### What is more important: Answers or questions?

The traditional quest has been the search for answers. However, just as in the case of solutions, any answer implies a certain perception of the question. But if the perceived question is vaguely defined or ambiguous, no one can agree on answers.



In order to illustrate his point, the presenter would like to divert to a story from "Hitchhikers Guide", written by Douglas Adams in 1979. There are many silly stories in this book but behind the silliness lies a certain wisdom. Particularly there is this story about a remote civilisation on a remote planet who - just like us- is struggling to find the answers to the difficult answers in life: What is the meaning of life, why do we die, what is it all about and so forth. But this civilisation is determined to do something about it and they build a wildly complex computer named Deep Thought whom they ask to find the answer to the difficult question of "Life, Universe and everything". "Can you do that?" they ask. "Definitely", says Deep Thought, "but it will take millions of years to compute the answer" (if the presenter remembers correctly). Of course, the remote civilisation did not like the idea of waiting that long, but the simple assurance, that the answer was about to be found, kept them going for generation after generation.

Then, one fine day, Deep Thought came up with the answer, although it did not like to present it at first. Most of you reading this already know what the answer was: "42"!

Once the dust had settled, the residents realised that they might have gotten the right answer, but to what use? They were looking for something, but apparently they had not known what question to ask. So they decided to build another computer to find the right question. But that proved to be a much more difficult task....

The membership challenge has been discussed at hundreds of meetings in the gliding community but with various headlines like:

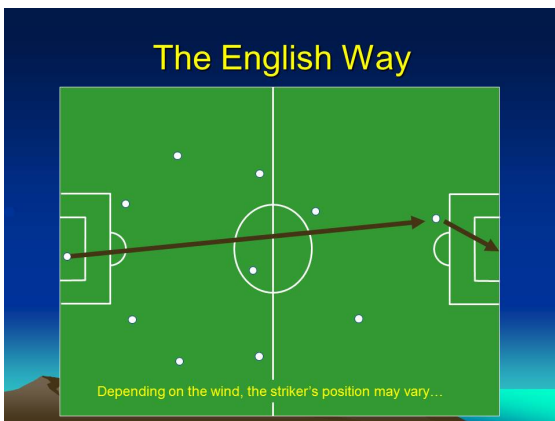
- How do we gain more funding?
- How do we breed World Champions?
- How do we get more media attention?
- How do we recruit more members?
- How do we breed better club leaders?
- How to keep members?

- How to develop our organisation
- How to set up goals.

Now we are discussing it at an EGU conference in Amsterdam with the headline: "Club Development, Recruiting and Keeping Members. What has been done in your country?" Did the presenter make his point clear? We are looking for answers but the truth is that we do not even know what the question is!

### Goal Setting.

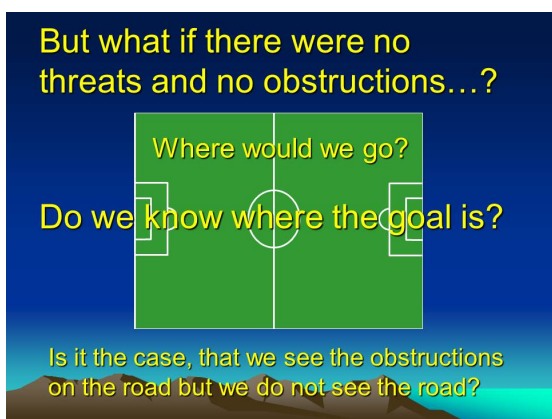
Before proceeding to the important task of finding the right question(s), a small diversion to a related subject that has many literal analogies in sport:



There are many ways to score goals. However, simple as it may sound, you cannot score goals unless you know where the goal is. And to work together as a team, you need to have a strategy. When watching the behaviour of the gliding community for the past 30 years, the presenter finds it hard to see any goals or any strategies. Clearly we know what we DO NOT want such as overregulation, increased fees, loss of airspace, loss of members and so on. But do we really know where we want to go?

We started out many years ago (1930ies - 1950ies) with a wonderful mission: that of making flying accessible to common man. In the dawn of flying it was perceived as something as magic and heroic as manned space travel today but it was a privilege reserved to the wealthy and few. We changed all that. We could only provide simple, non-powered flight but it was flying. And somewhere along the road we

discovered that non-powered flight is even more fun than powered flight. That is the mission we succeeded with. But what has our mission been since the 80ies? To defend what we have? To protect ourselves from any threats? The presenter is sorry to tell you this, but it seems as if we have changed from a proactive organisation with a mission and a bright, shining goal to a reactive organisation who is merely responding to problems. That is a survival technique known from many public institutions including the CAA's we love to hate, but survival is not enough to have a decent life in the long run. Eventually we will die unless we find a positive trajectory ahead.



***We need a winning strategy – not just a survival strategy!***

### **Long live the questions.**

Now back to the questions to be considered when formulating new goals. Clearly, up to now, we have asked ourselves many "how to" questions. Every time someone comes up with a proposal for a solution, a "How to" question is perceived. But if you dive into that (often unconscious) question you will find that it is based on (possibly subconscious) assumptions: For instance, many people think that if we could just find funding, gliding could be made cheaper and many more people would flock at our gates. But is that really true?

Behind many proposals for solutions you will find that the real drive is the wish to preserve the gliding culture, the clubs and the traditions and values within as they exist today. Gliding itself is of less importance. Here, the presenter would like to ask the controversial question: is the preservation of our culture, our clubs and values our real purpose? Or is it just the means that were required to make gliding possible as the world looked fifty years ago? If the preservation of current culture, clubs and values is the real purpose of what we do, let us be honest about it and call ourselves what we are: a lodge. And let us be honest about it to newcomers: "We are not here for your sake - it is you who are here for our sake". Many lodges, by the way, are contributing wonderfully to society, so there is nothing wrong in being a lodge. But let us be honest about it - to ourselves and to the outside world.

The mantra so far has been that gliding is "easy, safe and inexpensive". Certainly, those were the right buzzwords in the 70ies. A Finnish delegation at the Nordic Gliding Meeting once challenged this mantra and asked, what would happen if instead, we started marketing gliding as "difficult, dangerous and horribly expensive". What do you think? We will leave the answer blowing in the wind.

The presenter thinks that the "How to" question is the least important to consider from a management point of view. There are other, far more important questions to consider. They will be discussed in the remainder of this presentation.

### **The "Why" question.**

The most important question is "Why". Why would any sane person want to fly a non-powered aircraft that is twice as expensive as a similar powered micro light aircraft? (Try to compare the price of a Duo-Discus XLT to that of a Dynamics WT-9). If you take in expenses in term of time required, you might find that expenses per flying hour are higher in a modern glider than in a GA-airplane like the Cessna 182 (depending, of course, what your time is worth).

Our original justification was that of providing flying to common man in an age when nobody had money, time was an abundant resource to "kill" to prevent boredom, and there were no feasible alternatives to gliding.

So what are our role and our justification today?

(If the presenter had thought that no relevant answer exists, he would NOT have been holding his presentation. It is not criticism - it is something to consider and get a common agreement on. This question, by the way, is further debated in another presentation "Gliding is the Answer - What is the Question").

### **"What" questions.**

Many "what" questions could be asked. One has been asked above. Another relevant question could be:

- What has changed since gliding had its glorious time?

### **"Who" questions.**

Similarly many relevant "who" questions could be asked like:

- Who are the people we should try to attract and please? ("Market segments"). The rich? The technically minded. The poor? The adventurous? Females? Teenagers? ....
- Who should we consult when trying to figure out how gliding could be adapted to life in 2012? The tribe of elderly members amongst us with the most experience on running gliding clubs? Young people hanging out in streets? Members who dropped out? ....

By the way, if you compare an organisation of volunteers to a commercial business, there is one very important difference: In the commercial business the CEO is hired by the owner or the board to serve their interests. That implies the careful balancing of the interests of the owners, the market and the employees to work out, at least in the Scandinavian culture. In an organisation of volunteers, the managers are "hired" by the members to serve their interests. How long do you think a commercial business would survive if the CEO was to be re-elected by the employees every year? Again, the presenter does not think that it is impossible to impose (non-popular) changes on an organisation of volunteers but it helps to be conscious of the interests of the parties involved and to consider what processes need to be applied to change attitudes.

### **"Where" Questions.**

The obvious question to consider is:



- Where should gliding be conducted? Should there be a gliding centre next to each and every village? Next to major cities, only? Regional centres? National centres? Or international centres only? Or a mix?

The question of merging clubs to reach a certain critical mass has been discussed for years. Clearly it does not work to have hundreds of gliding clubs in a country with only 10 people in each. But it is also hard to run a gliding club if the members have to drive 200 kilometres to get there. At least when we run operations like we do today. So what is the right size and distribution?

A Finnish delegation at the Nordic Gliding Meeting once came up with a very interesting observation: The Finnish season is very short, only 3 - 4 months. So they had discovered that, if they took in all the (capital) expenses of operating a Duo-Discus, their flying hours would be cheaper if they stationed it in Spain where the season is 9 months long. Even when taking in travel and living expenses!

So the "where" question is by no means trivial. Even if most of us probably give a d... about it as long as our own club persists and it stays exactly where it has always been located.

### **Back to the "How to" question".**

Eventually we have to consider the "How" question. Or more accurately: we have to keep that in mind all the time because there is no point in putting up goals that are impossible to reach: When John F. Kennedy formulated the formidable goal of "putting a man on the Moon and getting him back safely within this decade" in the early 60ies, he knew that the technology that would enable his people to reach the goal was already in place. That, my friends, is a goal to learn from. (You do know the S.M.A.R.T criteria for setting up effective goals, by the way?)





The author is still of the opinion, though, that the leaders in the gliding community should leave the "how" question to our members and worry about the other questions more. To support this opinion, the author would like to quote the finest aviation author of all times: French Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. In his most well-known novel, "The little Prince", aviation plays only a very diminutive role, but he was a dedicated aviator all his life and has written dozens of other novels from the perspective of a pilot. His last and unfinished novel "The Citadel" (1944)<sup>1</sup> is different, though. In that novel he imagines himself to be the spiritual leader of a medieval desert community and gives a very thought-provoking view of what is important and non-important in life. A famous quote from the novel is this:

*"If you want your people to build ships, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea"*

So the advice that the presenter is trying to convey to the top-leaders in the gliding community is this: If you can come up with a vision of where we should go, a vision that stir passion and drive, then you can safely leave the "how" question to your members. They will find out how to get there.

### **Final Word.**

The author has discussed a number of questions to consider before starting to look for answers and solutions and how these questions can be used to formulate goals. We should allow ourselves to "Think outside the Box". As a matter of fact, we should only take one thing for granted here: Gliding: Gliding is the answer. Gliding is why we are here at this conference. But what the question is that it so wonderfully answers - let us dwell a bit on that. It might not be the same as it used to be.

*Claus Nedergaard Jacobsen, Denmark*

*- We fly gliders - not because it is easy but because it is hard*

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<sup>1</sup> The French authorities did not want Saint-Exupéry to fly war operations due to his fame but Saint-Exupéry wanted so badly to fly. He was shot down in a P-38 in 1944 during a reconnaissance mission to Northern Africa. Hence the unfinished novel. His fate was unknown until the wreckage was found near the harbour of Marseilles in the late 90ies. The presenter cannot recommend "The Citadel" as a starter on Saint-Exupéry because it is so heavy and loaded. But it certainly contains a lot of wisdom and many famous quotes.

# 3

## Gliding is the Answer - But what is the Question?

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### Intro and Abstract.

This is a continuation, more or less, of the previous presentation: "From a Glorious Past to a Glorious Future" and it aims to demonstrate how asking proper questions can open up new paths of thinking that would have been hard to stumble across if we had simply asked ourselves the traditional "How to" question implied, when we think in terms of solutions. Many similar presentations could be given rooted in the questions asked in "From a Glorious Past to a Glorious Future". This is just an example. It is targeted at top-leaders in the gliding community and may not prove very useful at the club level.

Gliding used to be the answer to the question: "How can we make flying accessible and affordable to the Common Man?" Back in the 30ies, flying was a dream as magic and as inaccessible as manned space flight today except for the wealthy and rich. The solution was to abandon the engine, build simple gliders ourselves and organise into clubs run by voluntary labour. It was a cheap alternative to "real flying", i.e. flying powered planes, but it was flying. Up until the mid-eighties gliding had the privilege of being the only affordable alternative to powered flight. But with the advent of micro light aircraft, hang gliders, para gliders, simulators, cheap airfares etc. there are now many alternatives. Even though the average work week has been shortened since the 30ies, changes in family patterns and economy have meant that time has become a sparse and costly resource to most of us. And why should any sane person choose to fly non-powered gliders if he/she can fly powered airplanes for less? We have lost our original justification. But perhaps we can find other ways of justifying our sport but as a "cheap flight substitute". This presentation will list a number of candidates. If we can find out what justifies our sport today, we will have a much

better stronghold for branding and marketing ourselves and it can also be used in an awareness campaign to make our members understand, what it is that we have to deliver.

## Product Adaption – is it possible?

There is no point in discussing changes to our sport<sup>1</sup> if nothing can be changed. Consider our sport: Of course we can “fine-tune” a number of parameters:

- We could optimise our operations, both in terms of time and money
- We could hire assistants or merge into sufficiently large units to make this economically feasible, if that is what is called for.
- We could modernise our equipment and our facilities.
- We could resort to low-cost gliders and equipment if cost reduction is what is called for.
- We could cave the alpha-males known to scare newcomers away.
- And a lot more.

But even if we squeeze our lemon as far as possible we cannot really change some existential features of gliding:

- Our members fly aircraft heavier than air in an environment where it is perfectly possible to kill or cripple themselves or someone else. It takes skill and judgement training to master this environment. Many attempts have been made to make flying as accessible to the public as car driving, but in vain. In 30 years’ time it will probably be possible to have a computer co-pilot with electronic vision, thermal-centring skills etc. so that everybody can fly a glider with no previous training. But for now: let us face it: it will never be as accessible as skiing, where you can fall without killing yourself, as car driving where you can live with a few dents etc. Flying is simply a different league.
- We are flying in environments which demand us to constantly keep our knowledge updated.
- Gliding is heavily dependent on weather. Today we like to have everything scheduled but we cannot really schedule weather. That calls for a very different approach to life – one that more closely resembles that of a farming society than today’s industrial society. If you have flown TMG’s or powered planes in the North European countries you will know how it is an illusion to think that an engine alleviates the dependency on weather (and yet PPL flying schools continue to sell thousands of PPL’s based on that illusion).

So, in the presenter’s eyes, the critics are right: There is a natural limit to how much we can adapt our basic product to suit today’s needs. We will never become competitive to sports like skiing, jogging, football, badminton etc. in that sense. Let us face and accept that.

However, if you look at the attempts to fine-tune our sport, they are mostly trying to reduce the “cost”<sup>2</sup> side of the “cost-benefit” ratio. But how about the “benefit” side, or more appropriately: “the perceived benefit” side? Could we improve on that to make gliding more attractive? To make gliding something you

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<sup>1</sup> Many people question the word ‘sport’ in this context: After all, the majority of us do not fly competitively. However, the word “sport” is not restricted to competitive sports. One dictionary defines it as “diversion; recreation; pleasant pastime”. Sail boating, horseback riding, skiing, hiking, fishing etc. are all sports and the majority of the participants are not competitive at all.

<sup>2</sup> “Cost” understood as everything you have to invest into the sport: Time, money, effort, emotional involvement etc. The perceived value of all this is, of course, very individual, but it matters when comparing the cost-benefit ratio to competing activities.

would want to spend a lot of time and money on even given the relatively high costs in terms of time. The presenter thinks there is a lot more we can do there.

Traditionally, we have measured our “product delivery” in terms of quantitative parameters like launches and flying hours, cross-country kilometres, licenses issued etc. Could there be others? Again, the presenter thinks there is. He would like to show you some analogies.

## A Car Analogy.

Although the cars of today look a lot different from what they looked like 80 years ago the basic product is essentially the same: 4 – 5 seats in two rows in a family sized, closed compartment, four wheels, a steering wheel in one side, a trunk and a combustion engine. The top speed is also essentially the same – at least the speed you are allowed to drive at.



Basically it serves the need for passengers to be transported from point A to point B. However, if that was the only need that a car should fulfil, why would any sane person bother to buy anything but a simple micro car such as the VW Up! or the Peugeot 107 both priced around EUR 13,000 in DDR<sup>3</sup>? Because, car designers and market developers have worked to improve the “perceived benefit” of the “cost-benefit” ratio! A car today is perceived as the carrier of much more than just simple transportation from point A to point B. Let us just name a few examples of possible “value-adding” benefits:

- A Status Symbol (for some)
- A Symbol of political viewpoint (for some)
- A Personality Symbol (for some)
- A symbol of Fashion
- A Phallic Symbol
- ... and a lot more



Those are some of the things that Henry Ford failed to grasp when he continued to produce and market the One-Size-Fits-All Ford Model T.

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<sup>3</sup> DDR: Dänische Demokratische Republik

The point is: Even if the basic product has not changed, there are a lot of other factors to play with.

## A Motorcycle Analogy.

The essential motorcycle has probably changed even less than the car over the past 100 years. It too was developed to enable a person to get from point A to point B. Today, very few motorcycles are bought with that purpose in mind – in Scandinavia, at least. It fulfils other needs. You can probably list many such needs yourself. Here is a thought-provoking example that was once explained to the presenter:



Look at the two motorcycles above. Can you tell any major difference? Both are 1700cc chopper-motorcycles with approximately 75 hp. and a two-cylinder V-engine with the crankshaft perpendicular to the driving direction (very inefficient in terms of cooling). None of them are capable of running very fast or very far nor are they fit for that purpose. The one on the left has superior, new, vibration-free technology. The one on the right has old-fashioned technology known to vibrate itself to death, a clunky gearshift and lots of potential for improvement. However, the bike on the right costs nearly twice as much as the one on the left. Even more astonishing: customers are willing to pay that price (EUR 56,000 compared to EUR 32,000 in street prices quoted from DD Denmark). Why?

A hint: The bike on the left is a Japanese Kawasaki. The one on the right is an American Harley-Davidson.

Now, the presenter likes questions much more than answers, but since this is a one-way communication medium, he will give you the answer as it was explained to him by a couple of market analysers in his company once:

*“Customers who buy the Harley Davidsen motorcycle are not buying the motorcycle. They are buying the dream and the image that comes along with it. The Harley is simply the carrier of something else”.*

## Why Gliding? Steps towards creating a Brand.

Now back to the essential question: Why would any sane person want to fly a non-powered aircraft even if he or she could probably get more flying hours in a powered aircraft at a lower cost? (Again: “Cost” in a wider sense). Gliding used to be an inexpensive alternative to powered flight and many of us continue to market gliding as if that was still the case. No wonder why so many people drop out when they discover how costly it is in other terms.

All of us who have been gliding for many years know that, there is a lot more to gliding than inexpensive flying. But do we get the message across? And what is the message, by the way? Do we agree on what the message is? Fifty years ago you could sell washing-detergent by simply claiming "Our washing detergent is the best". That does not work any longer. Fifty years ago information was a sparse resource and something you had to look for. Today potential customers are bombarded with an abundance of information every day and unless you are able to express what it is that you can provide in a short phrase and you are willing to pay the costs for having that phrase repeated to the market over and over again, you will never get your message across.

Today's marketing of gliding is mostly done at the club level and, each club has its own way of marketing itself but mostly it is in the line of how washing-detergent was sold fifty years ago. That way nobody will get their message across. We need to align our voices to be heard. In modern language, you would say we need a "Brand". It is not impossible. The scuba divers have successfully implemented a brand named PADI. As one speaker reported at the EGU conference in Amsterdam: Whenever a potential scuba diver stumbles across the PADI acronym or flag anywhere on a remote beach in the world, he or she knows what it implies: a skill level, a set of requirements, a service level, a price level etc. We cannot do that until we start agreeing on what it is that we providing. It is NOT inexpensive flying unless we restrict our market to young people and elderly people who are not in the working market. Well, given the car and motorcycle analogies above the presenter thinks that gliding can be seen as the carrier of much more than just inexpensive flying. To name a few candidates:

- Flying for fun?
- Silent Air Sport?
- Competitive Air Sport?
- A Non-Competitive sport?
- An Extreme/Adrenaline Kicking Sport?
- A Green Air Sport?
- A way of enjoying a beautiful and unnoticed scenery only 1 kilometre away (right above our heads, actually)?
- Technology achievement/applied science?
- Flying combined with beauty and elegance (feminine qualities)?
- A flying environment where men can be men and women can act out their masculine sides? (Like in motorcycle clubs)
- Personal and professional development?
- A Dream and Identity Container?
- A place to Meet Role Models? (Actually this has been mentioned as the real quality in the scouting community today).
- A Safe Air Sport
- A Dangerous Air Sport where the pilot is allowed to take responsibility of his own life
- And the presenter's own favorite: A Challenging Air Sport (Watch John F. Kennedy's famous speech at Rice University on September 12, 1962, and you will understand:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g25G1M4EXrQ>)

The presenter is a simple IT-engineer and he is certainly not the right person to tell which of the qualities mentioned above should be our future justification. But amongst us there must be people who can?

By the way: Wind driven sail boats and horse driven vehicles have also lost their original justification. And yet millions of people world-wide have fun sailing sail boats or riding horses. Maybe there is something to be learnt?



The point is: Everything is better than marketing with an unconscious idea of what it is we are marketing (and delivering).

### A Couple of Quotes for Inspiration.



David Roberts (Former BGA president, now president of EAS, European Air Sports, invited speaker during Nordic Gliding Meeting 2006 and 2008):

- “Marketing is not about putting more efforts into selling your product. It is about understanding the market and providing what is needed”. (Loose quotation).



Bernard Eckey in “Streckenflug Leicht Gemacht” (“Advanced Cross Country Made Easy”)

- “Only by asking less what newcomers can do for us and asking more what we can do for newcomers is it possible to turn the tide”. (Loose quotation exposed to several translations)

### Final Word.

It took many pages to get to the point. Probably everything that has been written here can be condensed into the recommendation: “Become customer oriented – or die” or “Find out what the needs are that gliding should fulfil”. It might not be such a radical change that we think it is; Just a change of attitude.

Many people have talked about making gliding commercial (or semi-commercial as the scuba divers do it). And maybe we should. The presenter is not sure, nor does he know if there would be a market to support semi-professional operation. But he is sure that we need to become more professional to deal with competition from professional players in the market for spare time activities. Certainly, we are better than any when it comes to gliding in a technical respect, but most of us are amateurs when it comes to disciplines like marketing and sales, customer care, learning theory, management and many other things that play a key role amongst our competitors.

You may ask why we should grow our skills in this area when really; all we want to do is to fly for the remainder of our life? Well, one thing is that our organisation might not survive to keep you flying that long unless we do something. The other thing is that the effort you put into learning new skills is not wasted. You will need the same skills in your professional work life. We live in a time when we all have to develop and learn new things all the time to survive until retirement. Why not combine that with having fun in your gliding club and seeing it blossom again?

*Claus Nedergaard Jacobsen, Denmark*

*- We fly gliders - not because it is easy but because it is hard*

# 4

## A Wonderful Gliding Day in 2025

**Claus Nedergaard Jacobsen, Denmark, Nordic Gliding Secretary 2002 - 2008.**  
**Contact: [www.cnj.dk/contact](http://www.cnj.dk/contact)**

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### **Intro and abstract.**

When working with our membership challenge in gliding, most of us are focused on solutions. This paper is targeted at (top-) leaders in the gliding community and aims to demonstrate ways of achieving results by focusing on process rather than on solutions.

The challenge of the gliding community is one of change management. Despite the decline in membership numbers, we have not become any worse at running gliding clubs since the sixties - on the contrary we are better than ever. The problem is that the surrounding world has changed much more than us. We cannot halt the outside world even if we want to. We can only try to adapt - or die.

But, as anyone knows, it is hard to impose changes on others. That is not a new thing. Back in 18'th century Danish philosopher Soeren Kierkegaard noted: "Everybody wants improvement but nobody wants change". Everyone, who has tried to impose changes on others, has experienced the wall of resistance that follows. However, change is a fundamental condition of life, and Change Management has become an important issue in any organisation.

The good news here is that we do not have to invent everything from scratch: Although business leaders have certain weapons up their sleeves, even they have learnt that there are smarter ways of obtaining

lasting results than by resorting to use of sheer power. And why not learn from business life? The people and the majority of the mechanisms are the same as in our organisations of volunteers. So are the market mechanisms, by the way.

During Nordic Gliding Meeting 2005 in Denmark we hired a professional Organisation Development Consultant to arrange a 4 hour workshop for the leaders of the Nordic Gliding Associations. This presentation will focus on the particular method she chose (which is but one of many) rather than the results.

### The Consultant.

The consultant we chose is named Karin Odgaard. She runs her own company "KOach".



Karin Odgaard

Karin is not a stranger to the gliding community, not at all. Her father was a devoted glider pilot, and Karin made it as far as soloing an ASK-21 before ... (ask herself what happened then).

She describes her key competence as "facilitating meaningful processes for the participants as invisible as possible. - Because it is **you**, who have all the questions and answers and need to have to all the meaningful conversations to be able to change focus in action". Her motto is: "Long live the questions".

## Her method, step 1.

Karin did not start out asking the participants to analyse all the problems of today and looking at past history. No, she asked the participants to look ahead and visualise a wonderful gliding day in the future. And more: she asked the participants to put themselves into the shoes of

1. A 20 year old, totally inexperienced (female) gliding student
2. A 35 year old, totally inexperienced (female) gliding student
3. A 55 year old, totally inexperienced (female) gliding student

The participants were to describe what it would take to make that imaginary day in the future "A Wonderful Gliding Day" from the perspective of that imaginary new member and what it would take to make that new member want to stay.

The participants were to describe the day in **present tense** (a psychological trick - unleashes your creative powers).

Karin's session was held in 2005 and she focused on an imaginary day in 2010. Today, she would probably have suggested to you to look 12 - 13 years ahead. Hence the title of this paper/presentation. Out of respect for Karin's work, the presenter has not changed the years in the presentation.

This was the first task (to be solved in groups of 5 - 8 people).



## Step 1: the vision

(One soaring day (the 10. of september 2010))

Concerning **your** topic. What does this day look, smell, sound, taste, feel like? In details. Tell your story

**Present tense!**

## The method, Step 2.

Now, of course, impossible dreams are but day dreams. We have to somehow make the dream come true - to link the situation of today with the dream of the future.

Again, Karin asked the groups to imagine and explain what brave steps had been made in the past that had enabled the dream to come true. The participants were to describe the steps in **past tense** (another psychological trick - you have to trick yourself into believing that it COULD be done). This is the slide:



## Step 2:

### Brave steps to make the vision come true:

Explain in details how you dealt with the individual statements in the vision. What exactly made them come true?

### Past tense!

## The method, step 3 and 4:

Now, as you can imagine, the sense of reality amongst the participants that had been carefully leashed until now, started to burst out: "we have tried that already and it did not work", "we have always done it this way, "we have never done it this way" etc. etc. But by now, Karin introduced a balanced sense of reality into the exercise. The participants were now asked to describe all the problems/opponents in making the dream come true. But for every single problem/opponent identified they were to describe a possible, counter weighing opportunity/helper. Similarly, for every single opportunity/helper they were to describe a number of counter weighing problems/opponents.

For instance, if someone saw the current financial crisis as a problem in achieving a dream, a possible helper could be an improved economical climate, financial support due to the green nature of our sport or many others.



An important point was: Look for opportunities first and problems last. But be realistic. Not a day dreamer. Not at this stage, at least.

Here is Karin's slide for Step 3 and 4:



## **Step 3 and 4: helpers and opponents:**

Identify your helpers and your opponents.  
Dealing with the opponents you make an effort trying to turn them into helpers. How to make opponents into allies?

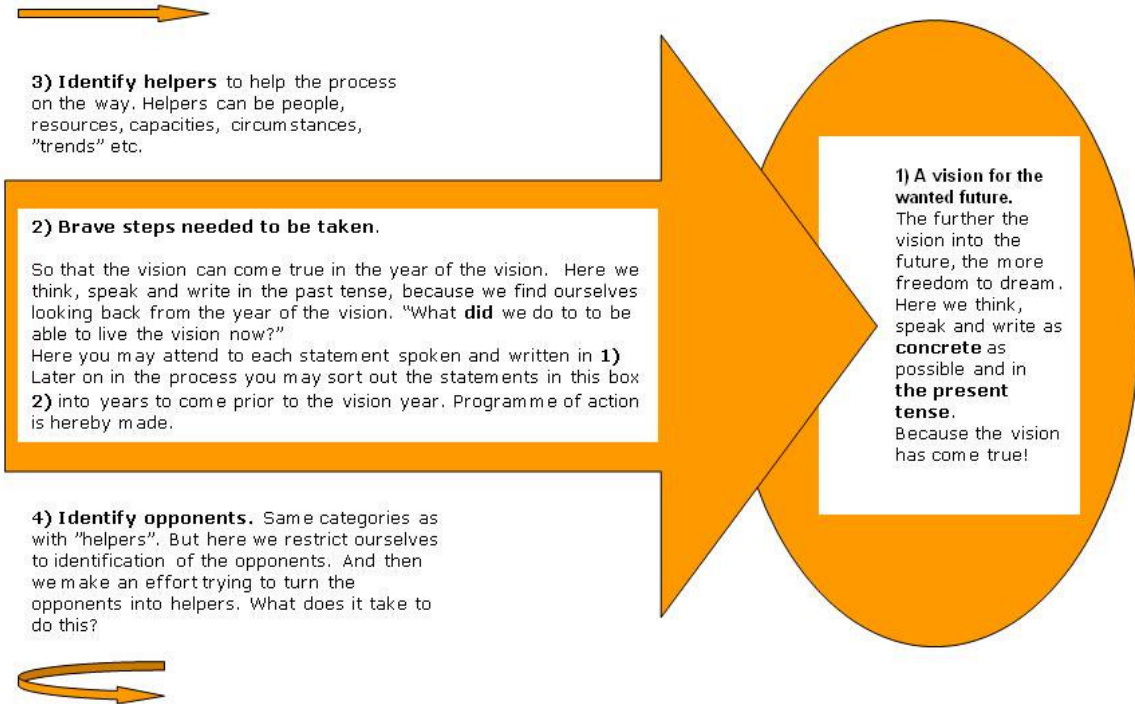
### **Overview of the process.**

Here is an overview of the process:





### Project tool with A.I.



Ask Karin what A.I. means in this context. The author not know.

### The Outcome.

All the ideas were written on slides and presented by the groups in the (traditional?) workshop fashion:





It would be tempting to give you the results: "Look ma, what we have come up with" but the point here is not the results. Not at this stage. **The point is the process.** Had we published our ideas we would probably have run into the "not invented here" wall of resistance when trying to persuade the clubs. And why drown our beautiful babies just after birth?

Leaders from the Nordic countries have reported how they have tried to run this process in their clubs and how fierce opponents have ended up proposing and taking ownership of changes which they would never have accepted if they had been proposed by any other person. **It can work.**

### Final Word.

Identifying the questions to ask and running the process is the hardest thing. But there people out there who can help you with that. Never be too proud to learn from others. (That is called "arrogance" by the way - and we are not arrogant, are we?).

The author can put you in touch with Karin Odgaard, if you like, or you can write her yourself at [karin@koach.dk](mailto:karin@koach.dk). She is but one of many consultants in this area, though and the method presented is but one of many. So you can probably find others in your home country. How about business psychologists, for instance?

By the way, having a creative session like this creates a lot of energy and ideas. But unless you have a person or an organisation in place to follow-up, no action will result. So make sure you get that in order first.

*Claus Nedergaard Jacobsen, Denmark*

*- We fly gliders - not because it is easy but because it is hard*

# 5

## The Story of Valde who reinvented Gliding

Claus Nedergaard Jacobsen, Denmark, Nordic Gliding Secretary 2002 - 2008.  
Contact: [www.cnj.dk/contact](http://www.cnj.dk/contact)

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### Intro and Abstract.

When working with our membership challenge in gliding, most of us are focused on solutions. This paper is targeted at (top-) leaders in the gliding community and aims to demonstrate ways of achieving results by focusing on process rather than on solutions.

When working with glider pilots to make them propose and take ownership of new approaches it is rare to meet someone capable of "Thinking outside the Box". We are so constrained by our traditional thinking, more so, the longer we have been in the gliding community. Of course we love our ways but maybe - just maybe - some of them are obsolete. There are methods, however, to switch off those natural constraints and trick the brain into thinking "Outside the box". One such method is presented here that was developed together with a professional Danish Organisation Development Consultant, Karin Odgaard, for a conference in Denmark in 2007. This paper is closely tied to the paper named "A Wonderful Gliding Day in 2025". Read the introduction there.

### The Method.

Deep within our minds we probably know the answers to our membership challenge- but we have to get access to and open that hidden shrine deep within: To allow ourselves to let our thoughts wander outside the accepted and safe circles. The method presented here is a story-telling exercise. When drawing or composing stories we tend to switch off our rational thinking and unleash our creative powers, some of which may be deeply rooted into the unconscious parts of the mind.

So the point is: challenge your members into writing a story about a young man (or woman) that reinvents gliding long after it has ceased to exist. In another world, in another time with no ties to the way we currently run gliding. And see if some brilliant ideas show up. At least the members who have contributed have allowed themselves to wander outside the safe circles. That will inevitably teach them to be less scared of changes, unless, of course, they have written their contribution with their current gliding club and current traditions in mind. Avoid that. You might also want to ask your children to write the story. They are the future and their thinking is the one to be inspired by.

## **The Story.**

Ok, here is the story of Valde, or at least the beginning of it, because you are supposed to finish it yourself.

*"Valde was a young man aged 25 who had just finished his engineering degree two years ago. After graduation he had gotten his first job, a job he was very happy with. Valde had always been very fascinated by flying. Not the kind of flying conducted by current airline pilots who were merely computer operators, but by real pilots. Valde had read dozens of novels about his aviation idols which counted names like Charles Lindbergh, Chuck Yeager, Neil Armstrong etc.: People who had had the courage and skills to commit themselves to seemingly impossible flying tasks and who had succeeded due their own willpower and skills. Those were REAL pilots in the eyes of Valde.*

*As soon as Valde had gotten his first job, he had pursued his dream of flying by buying a micro light, jet-driven airplane. He had had lots of fun flying it but lately, some of the magic seemed to have vanished. Something was missing and Valde did not quite know what it was.*

*On this fine spring day in May 2053, Valde considered going flying but he also knew it would be very turbulent due to huge cumulus clouds. Valde did not quite like that. Instead he decided to go visit an aviation museum.*

*Valde loved the museum and spent hours imagining what it would have been like to fly these real airplanes where the pilot himself had been in control - not the global flight management system that all airplanes today had to be hooked up to and controlled by - remotely.*

*In a corner of the museum there was a little stand. Nothing particular to see from a distance but, when facing the stand, Valde noticed that it contained a description of three airplanes suspended beneath the roof of the museum. Valde looked up and nearly fell backwards in astonishment. Because there, he saw the three largest and most beautiful airplanes, he had ever seen: They were gliders and they were named ASD-42, Arcus 6bxz and DG-8000. "Wauw". Valde had read about gliding and he certainly understood the thrill people had had flying gliders in the 1950ies up through the 1980ies when there were hardly any alternatives except for the wealthy and rich people. But he did not understand why people had continued to fly gliders long after the emergence of reasonably priced alternatives like the micro light aircrafts in the 80ies. And he certainly did not understand what had kept gliding alive way into the 2020ies. But when watching those three beautiful airplanes up there, Valde realised that there might be more to gliding than just inexpensive flying. Deep within, something told him that those three airplanes up there contained the answer to his yearnings.*

*Valde went home and dug up everything he could about gliding. Soon his list of aviation heroes had quite a number of glider pilots in it. He really had to try it. But the last gliding club had closed down operations in 2025 nearly thirty years ago so what was there to do? In desperation he wrote a letter to the aviation museum describing his dream. Maybe they could refer him to someone? Maybe they knew of some remote corner of the world, where an airworthy glider could be found? The answer that Valde got from the museum astonished him even more than the first sight of those gliders: The letter said that "the gliders were donated to the museum on the premises that if some day someone wanted to take up gliding again, the gliders were to be lent to him or her free of charge." The museum had read Valdes letter carefully and checked his aviation merits and decided that if he wanted to give it a try, they would trust him with the gliders. "Wauw", Valde had never encountered that much confidence from a public institution and he was really eager to prove worthy of it.*

*It would not be an easy task, Valde realised. After all, there were no clubs to join, no flying-schools with gliding skills, no towing planes, no winches but there had to be a way. And it would be costly in terms of time. After months of consideration, Valde decided to take on the challenge".*

This is where you take over and finish the story. But a few hints on what happened later:

*"Within the first year, Valde managed to get to fly one of the gliders for the first time (You describe how). His first cross-country flight from one airfield to another 40 kilometres away stirred up media hype and was compared by the press to Lindbergh's first transatlantic flight. Nobody had ever imagined that such a thing would be possible in non-powered airplane controlled by a human and not a computer. Something in what Valde had done struck a chord in society and soon Valde was asked by many people if he could help other people get to fly gliders. Valde decided to take on that challenge too, quit his job and started working full time on making gliding accessible to a much wider audience.*

*It became a huge success. Within five years 150.000 people world-wide were flying gliders."*

Now, here come the million dollar questions that your story should somehow deal with:

1. How did Valde do it?
2. What was it that made gliding so immensely popular?

## **Final Word.**

Creative minds are not always the most realistic ones so; do not expect each and every contribution to contain feasible solutions. But maybe -just maybe - somewhere along the way, you will stumble across new ways of thinking which could open doors of opportunity already in 2012. Or maybe the writing has sowed that seed which will blossom into a tree in 5 - 10 years time within the contributor. Even more important: by writing these stories, your members will get used to "Thinking outside the box" and they will be less scared by changes.

*Claus Nedergaard Jacobsen, Denmark*

*- We fly gliders - not because it is easy but because it is hard*

# 6

## The iFly! Programme

**Bart Pelt, Head of the Royal Netherlands Aeronautical Association  
(KNVvL) Gliding Department**

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### **Introduction:**

My name is Bart Pelt, since 2006 I am  
Head of the Royal Netherlands Aeronautical Association  
(KNVvL) Gliding Department in Arnhem.  
I started gliding in 1982 in my hometown Castricum,  
where I was chairman of the club for 14 years (1992-2006).

1. In 2006 the Royal Netherlands Aeronautical Association (KNVvL), developed the iFly! programme, in cooperation with sponsor European Pilot Selection & Training (EPST), which is a Dutch based flight academy, fully equipped to train young professionals to become commercial airline pilots. The iFly! programme offers young people in The Netherlands ( 80 in total, from 14-19 years old) the possibility to get acquainted to gliding and to learn to fly glider planes for one full year for approximately half of the normal price.

In springtime these youngsters must attend a mandatory introduction day at the EPST office in Utrecht where they learn everything about EPST and the iFly! programme. Thereafter, the iFly! candidates start their glider training during the rest of the season at one of the gliding clubs in The Netherlands, where they have to make at least 30 launches to be eligible for the sponsorship of € 250,-

After their first year of gliding, the KNVvL hopes that these iFly! candidates will continue their glider training, to become fully licensed glider pilots. And sponsor EPST equally hopes that after several years of gliding the iFly! candidates will start a commercial pilot training at their academy in Utrecht. Most important for EPST is that they found out that the iFly! candidates developed perfect social skills at their gliding clubs, very needed nowadays in a professional cockpit.

So both the KNVvL as well as sponsor EPST might benefit from this iFly! programme, which in 2012 enters its seventh consecutive year of successful cooperation.

2. Next to this iFly! programme, the KNVvL offers people who are interested in gliding the possibility of a reduced membership. This reduced membership gives them the opportunity to start a gliding course for a maximum of one month, during which they are fully insured for third party liability.

3. Most gliding clubs in The Netherlands have developed special programs (exhibitions at schools, fairs etc.) to attract possible new members.

### Some iFly! figures:

#### **Total number of applications over the years**

2006: 76 (for 50 available places)  
 2007: 82 (for 60 available places)  
 2008: 106 (for 80 available places)  
 2009: 107 (for 80 available places)  
 2010: 123 (for 80 available places)  
 2011: 128 (for 80 available places)

#### **Total number of available places at the gliding clubs**

In the autumn we ask the clubs the number of places they have available for iFly! candidates.

2006	-	214
2007	-	187
2008	-	210
2009	-	199
2010	-	154
2011	-	170

In accordance with the available places at the clubs, the Gliding Department makes a fair and equal distribution of candidates over the participating clubs, where we use the following preferences:

- priority for university students.
- priority for girls (more girls = more boys).



### Girls who applied

2006	- 10 applied; 9 became iFly!-er
2007	- 16 applied; 14 became iFly!-er
2008	- 12 applied; 11 became iFly!-er
2009	- 17 applied; 14 became iFly!-er
2010	- 18 applied; 14 became iFly!-er
2011	- 19 applied; 13 became iFly!-er

### Total launches of the girls per year

2006	- from 30 to 135
2007	- from 33 to 118
2008	- from 30 to 66
2009	- from 30 to 152
2010	- from 30 to 109
2011	- from 30 to 75



### Highest total of launches per year

The number of launches per iFly! candidate varies from 30 up to 165 launches per year.

2006	- 135
2007	- 151
2008	- 161
2009	- 165
2010	- 138
2011	- 121



### **Results of the previous years**

Number of paid sponsorships in December

2006 - 46 of 50

2007 - 56 of 60

2008 - 70 of 80

2009 - 76 of 80

2010 - 68 of 80

2011 - 70 of 80

### **How many candidates continue gliding**

2007 - 43 of 60 = 72%

2006 - 35 of 50 = 71%

2008 - 57 of 80 = 72%

2009 - 46 of 80 = 58%

2010 - 47 of 80 = 59%

2011 - 46 of 80 = 58%

**And most important, EPST continues the iFly! sponsorship in 2012**

# 7

## **Experiences in Finland on GPL and TMG theory distance learning system over web**

**Sakari Kuosmanen, The Finnish Air Sports Institute Ltd**

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System we use in Finland as distance learning system is based on nationally approved training system for Glider Pilot License (GPL). Normally it requires theory in 9 subjects and about 44 hours class teaching. There was quite big job to get our CAA convinced about this training methodology. In this system student is using time with doing his/her tasks/solving setted problems. Student is "sitting" required time "in classroom" while doing homework really at home!. Previously and even now you have to sit at lessons all necessary time if not using this web based learning. We are only approved organisation with this web learning.

Our system is based on doing tasks which are questions dealing with problems with topics of 9 subjects. We have at least 5 to 10 questions from every topic.

Our environment is working at Tampere University of Technology platform. So all backups and support is 24/7 – very reliable! Platform is tailored specially for us.

Every subject is open 2 to 6 weeks depending on how large subject is. Large subject like aviation law that requires classroom sitting 6 hours is divided to 6 week learning in 2 week periods. Every week correspond 2h in classroom.

When student has passed all subjects by finding answers to our questions he has right to participate to final exam.

Final exams are held in 2 days session where we give also training for radiotelephone use. And after practising fraseology we keep final practical test also for it.

We give certificate which is valid in every flying club in Finland.

# E-Learning Statistics

- **CAA licenced for testing platform 2006**

2006 tot: 54

- GPL 35
- RTF 19

2007 tot: 38

- GPL 33
- RTF 5

2008 tot: 79

- GPL 45
- RTF 34

2009 tot: 100

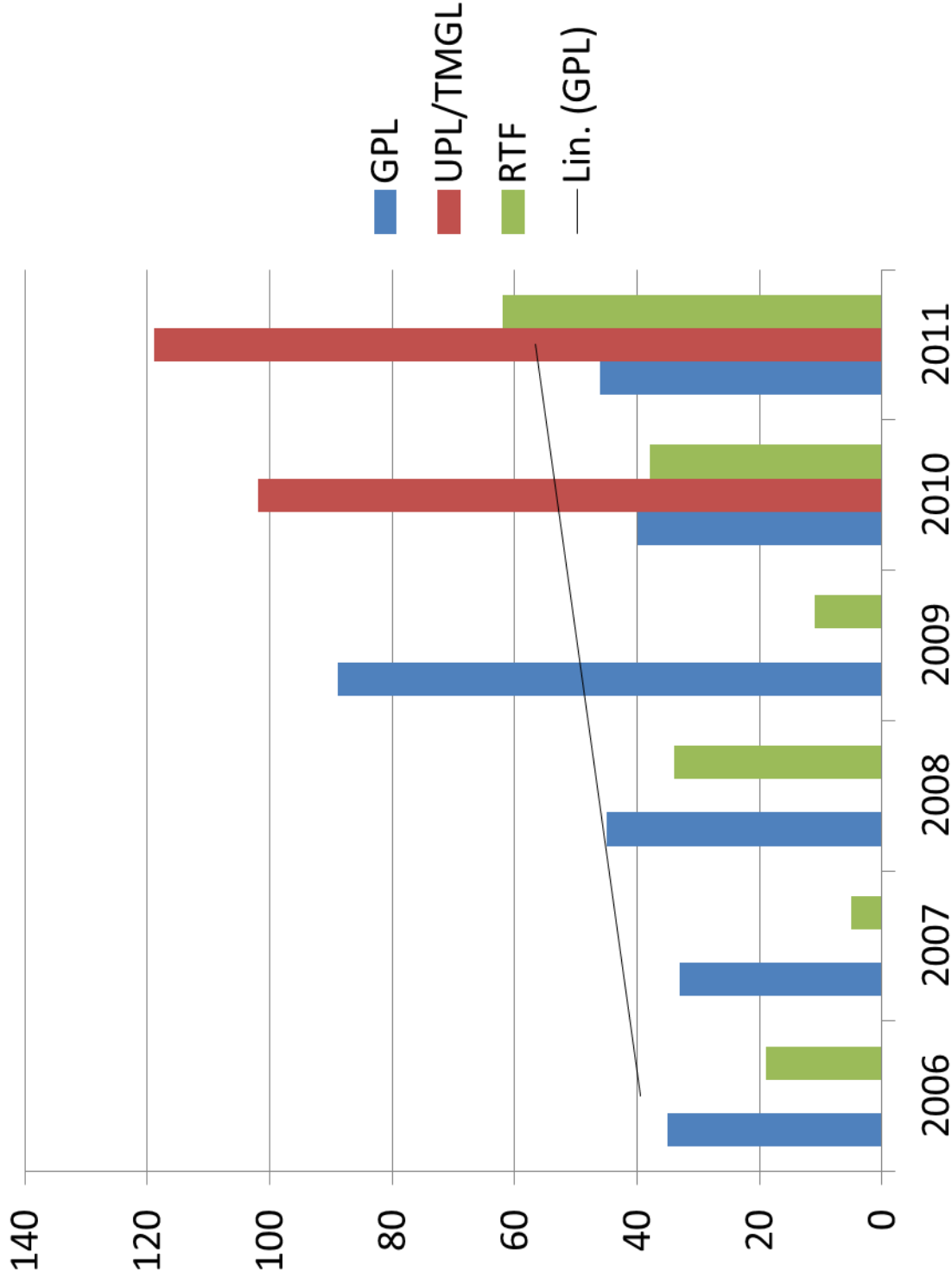
- GPL 89
- RTF 11

2010 tot: 180

- GPL 40
- UPL/TMGL 102
- RTF 38

2011 tot: 227

- GPL 46
- UPL/TMG 119
- RTF 62



# 8

## If only clubs can improve participation figures, how can we help?

Alison Randle, BGA Development Officer

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My work with the BGA largely involves supporting UK gliding clubs and their management committees with their non-operational activities. I have been in the role since 2005.

### Assumptions

As has been discussed and acknowledged at various points during the workshop, part of the gliding 'problem' is that we do not properly understand the complex mechanisms at play as the numbers of people taking part in the sport continue to fall.

I needed to hang the discussion on something (you will note that I have used the word 'if'). I have made the following assumptions:

- 'the gliding club' is an important factor; one that is common to all countries and types of gliding
- in order to take part in gliding, people need to join a gliding club
- an important function for National gliding organisations is to support gliding clubs

### Aim

To begin a shift away from pure discussion about the problem.

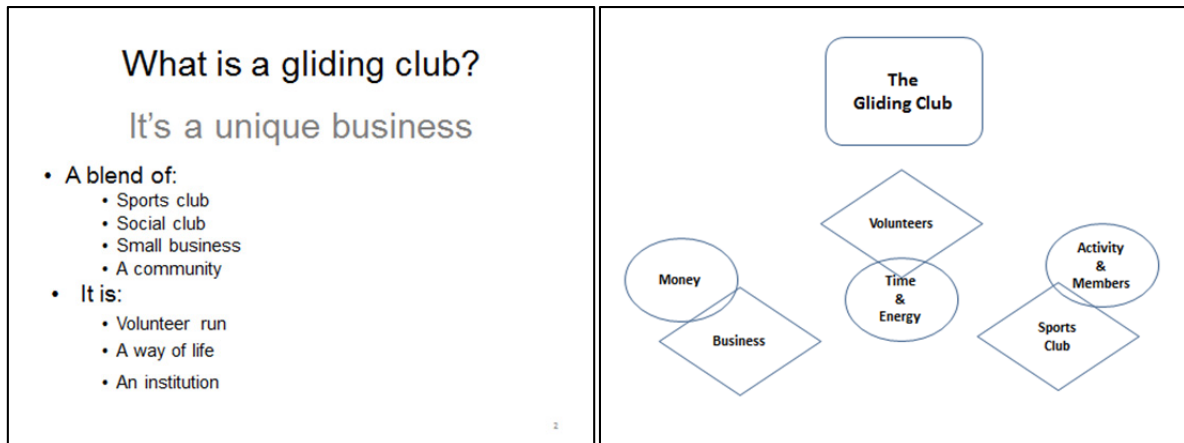
Given the collective knowledge and experience within the EGU, we should aim to work collectively and collaboratively to gain a greater understanding of the problem(s) at play and begin to implement practical solutions.

Two further assumptions that may be relevant:

- all clubs do at least one thing very well or else they would have gone out of business
- It is most unlikely that any club anywhere does everything well.

## Background and context

The gliding club is a unique type of organisation. Ignoring the safety and regulatory aspects of gliding which make a gliding club even more complex, it is comprised of the following elements:



On the right hand slide, the key areas for the gliding club 'business' are shown in diamond boxes. For each of the key areas there is a critical contributory factor, shown in the ovals. First and foremost, a gliding club is a sports club. I have a theory that people join gliding clubs in order to fly. I also know that when people are getting plenty of flying they become more enthusiastic, spend more time at the club, spend more money and are more likely to volunteer. Therefore, the single most critical factor for gliding club business is flying activity.

Every club's priority should be that ***people must fly as much as possible.***

So what do we know about the present situation?

### Facts

Membership declining (down 15% 2004-2010)

The UK's annual average participant age 57 and rising...

But it's not just a gliding problem

- *With a few exceptions, most UK sports participation is declining*

Lots of challenges... *Internet age, societal changes, expectations, economy, barriers to participation...*  
how do we face them?

### IGC membership figures

Loss of 10 000 in just 5 years



If the life blood of gliding = participants  
does gliding have a viable future?

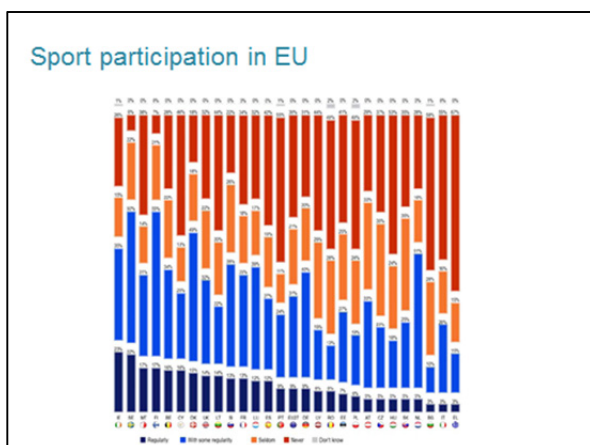
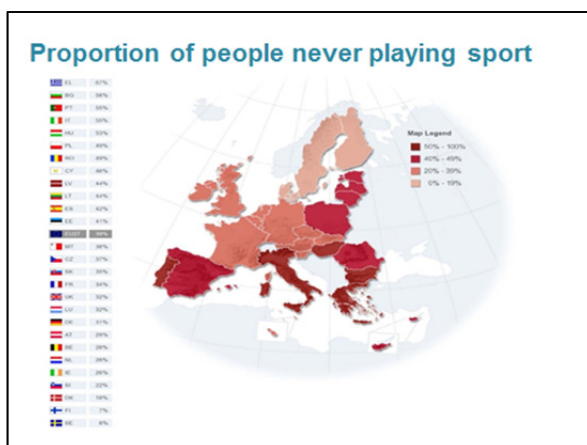
The picture is looking grim – even allowing for variations in the way that information is gathered.

*It is clear we are not getting it right.*

## What is the sport situation across the EU?

The Sports and Recreation Alliance, an umbrella organisation for sporting National Governing Bodies in the UK, has gathered the following information from the EU.

[Please note: only EU member states]



Sport may be popular – but are people watching it or taking part in it?

For the slide on the left, the redder the colour, the higher the percentage of the population who never take part in sport.

The slide on the right: blue = regular participation, orange = seldom, red = none



### Those that regularly and somewhat regularly participate

- Sweden 72%
- Finland 71%
- Denmark 64%
- Ireland 58%
- Netherlands 56%
- Slovenia 52%
- Belgium 50%
- Germany 49%
- France 48%
- Malta 48%
- UK 46%

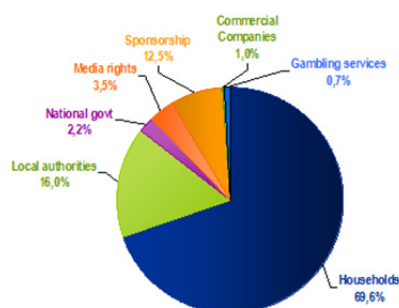
The good news is that many of us in the EGU are dealing with populations who are more inclined to do something active.

### Why are people not active?

QF5 From the following reasons, what is currently preventing you the most from practicing sport more regularly? - EU



### Revenue to sport at EU level

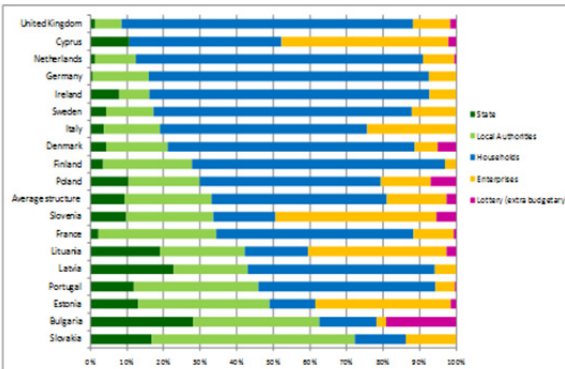


For the slide on the left people were asked why they are not active (note that ‘because I can’t be bothered’ wasn’t one of the optional responses) and time is a clear factor, whereas cost isn’t. Yet if we look at how sport is funded across the EU, the majority of it comes from households, which can only mean that ultimately cost is an important factor – this is something we need to be aware of.

### Funding model for Amateur Sports

- Subscriptions
- Commercial income
- Voluntary work
- Public subsidies (central government, local government, state lotteries, tax breaks)
- Sponsorship
- Solidarity payments

### Structure of Sport Funding by Country



We can see from the slide on the right that the way sport is funded varies greatly between countries. Green = State & local Government funding; blue = households; yellow = enterprises; pink = lottery.

Looking specifically at England where Sport England carries out regular surveys [note the rather low threshold for what qualifies as 'active']:

**English sport participation**

30 minutes moderate activity, once a week

Only 4 sports increasing participation:

- Netball
- Table tennis
- Mountaineering
- Athletics (which now includes jogging)

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Both netball and table tennis have made changes to the way they market their sport and held specific campaigns.

Mountaineering is not certain what has contributed to the increase.

Athletics now includes jogging which probably accounts for the increase.

The only conclusion we can logically draw from all this information is that sport is complex; there are unlikely to be any simple explanations or solutions.

So what can we do?

## The emerging hypothesis

**Should we be working the European system more?**

- Most of us do lobby
  - together and individually
  - for various reasons
  - in various fields of aviation
- Emerging hypothesis...
  - Looking up won't find us THE solution
  - Need to look down to club level

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From my work with clubs, I am convinced that the clubs are key to both gaining a better understanding and to implementing the potential solutions.

One size will never fit all, all clubs are highly individual, as are the pilots within them.

## Developing the hypothesis

The BGA were invited to the Nordic Group meeting in Sweden in September 2011. A very useful discussion workshop session was held. In preparation for the meeting, delegates from the five countries were asked the following questions:

Nordic Group were asked:	Responses (summary!)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. One thing your <b>country</b> does well?</li><li>2. One thing your <b>country</b> could do better?</li><li>3. One thing your <b>club</b> does well?</li><li>4. One thing your <b>club</b> could do better?</li><li>5. What is your personal vision for gliding in your country?</li><li>6. What is one thing that would make a practical difference to how things currently happen?</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gliding is important, it matters very much</li><li>• Good fleet, facilities and initial training</li><li>• Need improvement of support beyond C badge</li><li>• Need to match today's gliding with today's society</li></ul>

The responses were very interesting – especially those that were most common. Yet again there appears to be a mis-match between what potential glider pilots want and what gliding provides. There is little doubt about the appeal of gliding, but the reality can be rather different.

## Perceptions



Picture montages like this, and on a number of topics, have been circulating on social networking sites recently. There is much wrong with this, but I include it because of what it tells us about mis-match between perception and reality.

[Images top row, left to right are: What my friends think I do; what my Mom (American spelling) thinks I do; what girls think I do. Bottom, L to R: What the ATC thinks I do; what I think I do; what I actually do.]

Bearing in mind the likely age of the person who edited this together, the picture on the bottom right is frankly depressing.

At a recent UK Junior training day, it was clear that there is some difference between what clubs say they are providing for Junior pilots, and what the Junior pilots would be saying they require for their flying development. Some clubs are providing excellent support, but others fall short.

A very important point was raised in Sweden, and one that I took some time to properly understand. The question was asked 'Are we, the people who have been involved with gliding for many years, the right people to work out what is going wrong?' My initial reaction was to dismiss the point. However, it was one of those significant moments that demands greater attention. I have since discussed the point with the person who raised it and thanks to the following analogy, I better understand why perhaps those of us who are in gliding may be part of the problem.

Someone who is a bad driver, but thinks that their driving is good, drives into a ditch because they couldn't keep the car on the road when it went round a corner. The car is stuck. They have to get help to get the car out – they need another person to help them. The driver has a choice about the ways of reacting:

- a) Blame the condition of the car, the road conditions, the lack of warnings, the ditch, then go on and drive in exactly the same way; or
- b) Acknowledge that there is a problem with their skills, take advice on how to drive better

However the car driver will not be able to get out of the ditch on their own; neither will they be able to improve their driving skills without taking advice and assistance from other people.

### So if we want more people taking part in gliding, how do we achieve it?

It is clear this is complex. It will take time to make alterations that result in lasting changes. Doing nothing is no longer an option.

Considerations	Project Proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stepping stones... how to make progress?</li><li>• We know there is a serious problem</li><li>• We know that just talking is not an option</li><li>• Together we have great potential strength</li><li>• We're proposing a joint project</li><li>• Funding is available</li></ul> <p style="text-align: right;">24</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practicalities &amp; principle only</li> <li>• The questions for later:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Do we need to do this?</li><li>– Do we want to do this?</li><li>– Or is there a better suggestion?</li></ul></li></ul> <p style="text-align: center;">So let's focus on the idea and ask 'Could it work?'</p> <p style="text-align: right;">25</p>

The numbers of people taking part in gliding has fallen; we need more people to take part, therefore, the focus for this project should be participation.

As people need to join a gliding club in order to glide, it makes sense to look at how clubs support people and their gliding.

In particular, we need to better understand the reasons why people don't persist with the sport and ask 'what are the barriers?' How can we ensure that people are encouraged to take part and to achieve potential?

We know that there are some excellent examples already in use at various clubs around the world. Likewise, at a National level. The proposal is that we find them and share them, using outside help as required to try to ensure we aren't wasting time or energy.

## Project Proposal

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Project proposal</b></p> <p>Aim of project = PARTICIPATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Getting glider pilots</li><li>– Keeping glider pilots</li></ul> <p>Emphasis on club development and how that can be supported at National level</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Removing barriers to participation is about creating a favourable environment for equality and sports equity</p> <p style="text-align: right;">26</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gather and share:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– information</li><li>– case studies &amp; examples of good practice</li><li>– resources already in use</li></ul></li><li>• Carry out (or commission) research as required</li><li>• Bring in expertise – internal &amp; external</li><li>• Design new resources that countries can adapt for clubs to use</li><li>• Create a central reference resource</li><li>• Regularly review results</li></ul> <p style="text-align: right;">27</p>
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To be truly effective, it is important that the people involved with the project understand club and pilot development. So we need to ensure we have the most appropriate people involved with the project – these are not necessarily the same people who have been working on the various EASA projects.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>More considerations</b></p> <p>This is a development project dealing with club management...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Volunteer or paid development worker?</li><li>• Who is the <b>best</b> person in your organisation?</li></ul> <p>How often will we need to meet to make this work?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">28</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practicalities &amp; principle only</li><li>• The questions for later:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Do we need to do this?</li><li>– Do we want to do this?</li><li>– Or is there a better suggestion?</li></ul></li></ul> <p style="text-align: center;">So let's focus on the idea and ask could it work?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">29</p>
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## Discussion

Brought out the following points:

- Need to understand issues, influences and other factors
- Need to identify experts from other EGU countries
- Facilitate access to ideas and resources rather than 'rolling out' programmes across Europe
- 9 countries agreed to get involved [Denmark, Sweden, UK, Finland, Switzerland, Norway, Netherlands, Greece, Germany]
- There must be a way of sharing results across Europe with countries who choose not to be directly involved with the work of project itself
- Do we (EGU) need to better explain the idea to others?

## EU Funding

Funding is of second order importance; however, there is an EU funding stream (Leonardo Partnership) available that would support this project.

## Conclusion of the session

It was agreed that the proposal would be taken forward to the EGU Congress for a decision on what the next step should be.