

Proceedings from the 2nd EGU workshop on

Club Development

Strasbourg

2013-02-22

European Gliding Union



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Preface

In 2011, the EGU and its members knew one thing very well, but were far less certain about another. Participation levels in gliding were in almost universal decline. This was known to be a fact, indeed everyone had been aware of it for many years. What we did not know, was whether or not we knew how to reverse that decline.

The development workshop that took place immediately prior to the 2012 EGU Conference in Amsterdam, brought together several papers on different aspects of the participation challenge. Speakers from across Europe shared their perspective on potential underlying issues, and on some of the things that had been tried that had appeared to help address the issue.

What was clear, however, was that the problem was never going to be solved overnight – but that we had to go about things in a more systematic manner, if we were to increase the odds of reversing the decline in gliding participation.

Further work was done for this year's Conference in Strasbourg. This year's speakers built on from the prior year's outputs, and added several new perspectives. A selection of the papers and presentations from that event are included in this pack. These show that we are gradually developing a more useful understanding of the issues that we need to address. We are also starting to appreciate some of the areas where we now need to invest more time and focused effort.

It is, however, early days still, and we should not rush to a set of solutions at a pace faster than our understanding confidently allows.

Our 2014 Conference will continue to give this whole subject a high priority.

Like many things that go on in gliding, this effort relies on the committed efforts of a small band of volunteers.

I would like to thank all of those that have contributed papers, and made presentations over the last 18 months.

I would especially like to express my gratitude to the team that have been responsible for progressing this initiative. Alison Randle, Alexander Georgas and Arne Wangsholm are deeply committed to the work of their national gliding associations. Their commitment to our sport is such that they did not hesitate to volunteer to take the lead for this work in addition to their existing duties.

Recently, a number of other people have volunteered to join the team. Their offers are very much appreciated and will enable us to expand the team and its work.

Please look though the pack, dig out last year's as well, and use both to stimulate your own thoughts on the subject. Whatever you do, don't let it stop there – use it as a basis for a renewed set of actions within your own association.

The most reliable way to predict the future is to create it for yourself.

Patrick Naegeli
President European Gliding Union

Creating a simple structure for collaborative working

Alison Randle

Gliding is losing people. Glider pilots are getting older. We all want to change these two facts, which is why we are all embarking on this project and have formed the EGU Club Development Working Group.

This project holds incredible potential for the long term benefit of our sport. Unfortunately, it also holds potential for creating a level of complexity that could result in no progress whatsoever.

We all know that gliding cannot afford the second outcome.

We face many challenges:

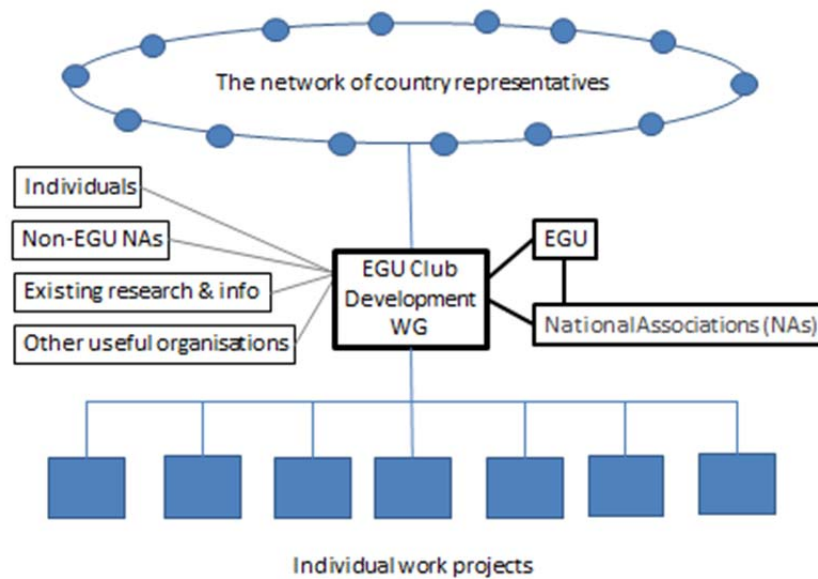
- Large variety of work projects
- Variety of levels – from detailed to strategic
- Geography
- Potential for creating monster dinosaurs...
- No-one really likes Committees

Therefore, the overall aim is to create practical solutions that real people in actual gliding clubs will use – we need something simple and elegant.

The project must be able to be adaptable to be able to accommodate the following factors:

- Busy people
- Varying interests
- Varying levels of commitment
- Language
- Time
- Resources

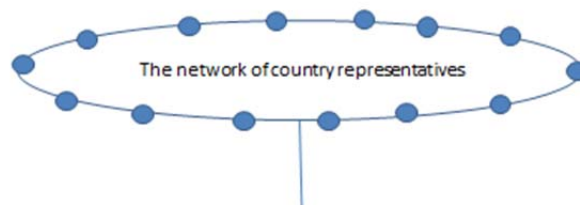
So this is what we have devised. It is what we are working with for the time being.



At the centre of the project, with the role of co-ordinating work and running the communication flow internally and externally is the Working Group. There are currently 3 members of this group: Alexander Georgas (Greece); Alison Randle (UK); Arne Wangsholm (Norway). We have room for 2 or 3 more members of this central group.

There are three distinct work areas of this project.

Possibly the most important for the long term success of the project is the network of country representatives.



Information flow to and from clubs

- Needs people with a good understanding of club development
 - Needs to be able to co-ordinate volunteer work
 - Needs to be able to communicate
- Will involve National Associations too!

We need a representative from every country. Who will be yours? Please email alison@gliding.co.uk to make contact and get them (or you!) involved.

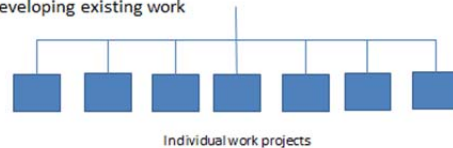
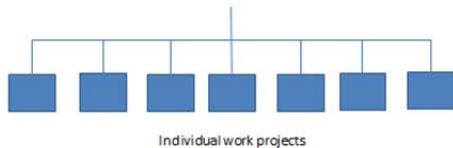
The second area is hosting work projects. The Working Group is leading 2 work projects at the moment – building a website and gathering a reference library of existing work together, to put on the website. In the future, the Working Group may co-ordinate some research work, but it is very

unlikely that we will lead any other work projects. What projects are you thinking about? Do you need other people to work with? Or perhaps you are already working on something? Please make contact by emailing alison@gliding.co.uk and let's make it happen and share the results and findings.

- Likely to involve a wide variety of work
- Will need 1 leader per work project to co-ordinate
- As many members as required

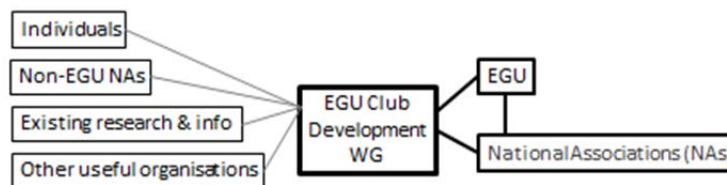
Could be:

- Website
- Library of papers
- Developing / sharing flight logging and club management software
- Developing or adapting advanced training materials
- Survey work
- Work with other sports
- Transfer of projects from 1 country to others
- Translating papers
- Developing existing work



The final area is internal and external communication. This is an EGU project, so the group is informing the EGU and member National Associations about the work.

We are also talking to organisations outside the EGU, including glider (and related equipment) manufacturers.



Clubs probably need to be at the heart of this project as this is where people fly. In order to be successful, we must all work together to develop a way of getting information to and from clubs relatively easily.

We have a lot we can achieve by working together. Will you join us?

Club Development, Trends in Europe Review of Existing Work Arne Wangsholm

Background

The membership situation is slowly decreasing in the soaring community. It is a tendency that has continued for some years, and different studies in national associations to try to understand the reason and figure out appropriate actions has been conducted. Those studies have been made in different language, and they might not be too well known outside their own associations or countries.

While the general tendency is decreasing membership, some countries have increased their membership. That indicates that some have successful programs going.

The membership per 10.000 citizen varies from 0,6 to 4,2 in Europe. The number might be above 10 per 10.000 in local area where a well-run gliding club is located. This indicates that there is a big potential to increase the membership.

Highlights from different studies

From the Norwegian Gliding Conference it was stated that the normal distribution of members in a healthy sport organization, should be the blue stippled line in the figure 1.

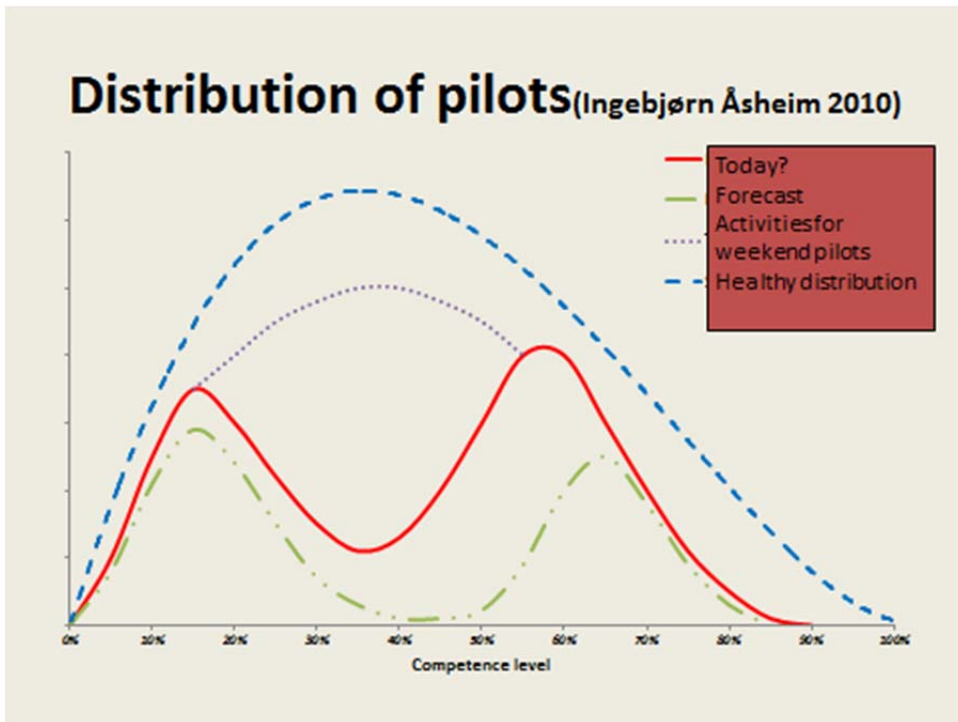


Figure 1 Distribution of pilots', according to their competence level.

The situation however, today might be like the red double camel back line, with the tendency aiming for the green double camel back dotted line.

Figure 2 illustrates a healthy distribution of pilots related to their competence level

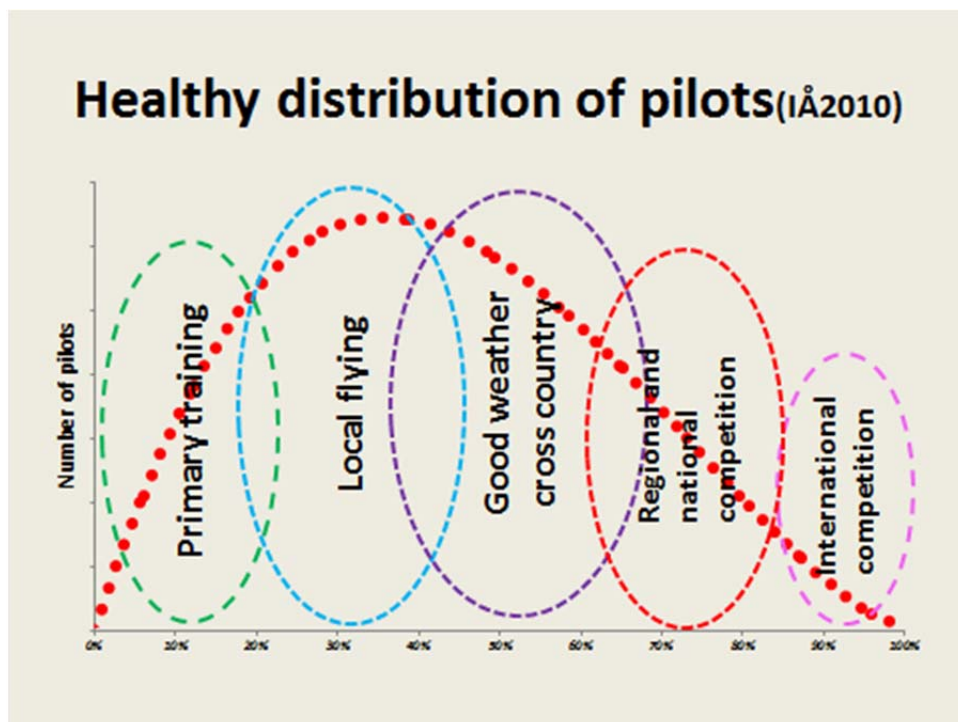


Figure 2 What the distribution-level of pilots' competence level should look like.

When we compare the existing distribution of pilots to the healthy distribution, it looks like it's the members involved with local flying and limited cross country on good weather days that are not renewing their membership.

Figure 3 is the summary of a study done by a consultant for the Swedish gliding association

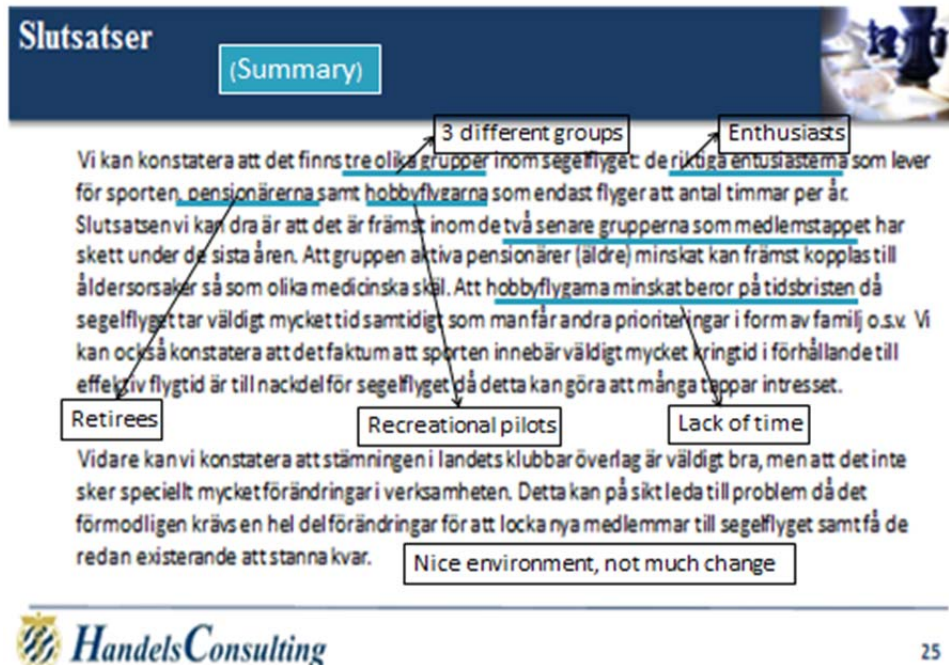


Figure 3 Summary of the Swedish study “Börja Flyga”, different reasons why pilots leave soaring

The purpose of the study, was to get a better understanding why members did not renew their license. The main findings were that there are three different member groups. The enthusiasts, the retirees and the recreational pilots. The membership reduction is in the two last groups. The retirees don't renew due to health reasons, and the recreational pilots don't renew due to lack of time. It is also mentioned that the club activity is a nice environment, but there is not much change.

The French study, Operation Optima, has investigated the same problem earlier. Lack of time, or that gliding took too much time, and high cost was the reasons in France for members to quit. An interesting point in the study, was that almost 70% wanted to return to gliding later.

There have been changes in the society that focus less on voluntary activities and more on efficiency and “buy a product/service/experience”. What sort of implication that might have on the membership issues in gliding, has not been fully analyzed.

From the business world it is known that the demand increase as the “product” gets better and it decreases as the prize increase. Both the Netherlands and Denmark have improved their “product” by introducing a “Fast track” to license. Both use TMG for the first lessons (up to 5 hours), to make a faster progress and make the student get a sensation of coping early on. After the first lessons the change to the normal launch procedure and continue the launch method till the student has made it to solo. In a Danish club, Herning Gliding Club, they have made their own type of fast track, by making an agreement with the student to train them to license within a ½ year if they agree on

certain conditions (like fly min 60 launches in 3 month, be at the glider field...). It is a new approach, and it looks like both the instructors that are responsible, as well as the students, are satisfied.

Recruiting new members

For all sports associations it is important to keep recruiting new members. Of special interest is the work they have done in the Netherlands in cooperation with a professional flying school; **The iFly! Programme**. A summary was given at the 2012 EGU CD WS Proceedings, and the work done in France.

France has made a program in cooperation with the aviation industry and the school system. More detail will be put forward in a separate presentation by the French gliding association. Both the Netherlands and the French programs focus on getting young people into aviation, using gliding as a tool.

Keeping members

Work has been done on keeping members. The Danish sport association has focused on the common challenge, from a voluntary organizations point of view. They have made a booklet "How to recruit and keep members". The important issues are to create ownership among the members to the club, the club's activities and the club environment. The Swedish Study, "Start Flying", have looked into this area and has suggested more actions to what clubs can do. Summary on keeping the members:

- Create a nice environment by making social activities/club events, camps, tours
- Further development for the members in X-country, TMG, Acrobatic, cloud flying
- Competitions both as club competitions, as well as sending teams to national competitions
- Infrastructure related to aircrafts, as well as appropriate airfield and buildings

Improving the product

Figure 4 is illustrating the correlations between customers and product, and what can be done to increase both.

Correlations

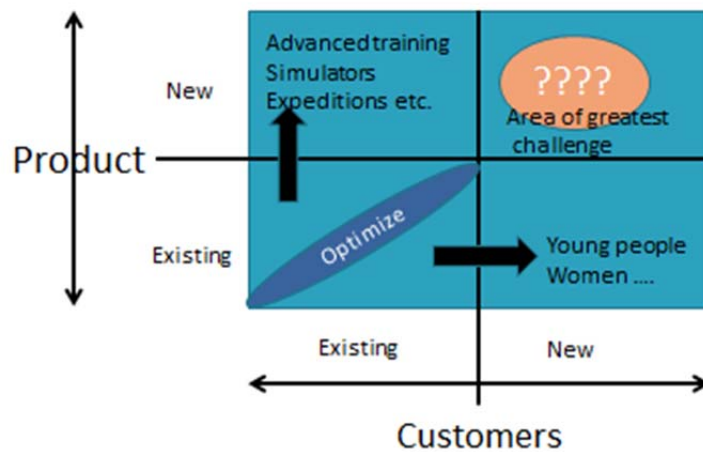


Figure 4 Correlation between customers and products, with focus on areas of improvement

The product to the members can be improved / optimized, by focusing on making it more available for existing members. That might include better organizations, better facilities, better ground handling equipment, better access to gliders, lower prices etc. When normal activities for the club are optimized, there is an option on adding other activities for the existing members. That might include advanced training, use of simulators and arrange expeditions to other sites/visiting other clubs. The purpose is to increase activities among existing members.

With existing product, optimized, it might be easier to attract new members. That can include groups that are underrepresented, like young people as well as women.

Conclusions

Different studies have been conducted around Europe. The cause for the decreased membership is that the recruitment is less than the number of members leaving. There are three groups of members, enthusiasts, retiree and recreational pilots. The recreational pilots leave gliding due to cost and lack of time. By improving the product, more recreational pilots might be enthusiasts and keep their membership longer.

When membership is put on the agenda, it gets more focus, and it is easier to address issues related to club development. That might create further activities that can benefit all, if we work together and keeps the information flowing.

Further reading

<http://www.letsoggliding.com/>

http://www.dif.dk/UDDANNELSE_OG_VIDENSBANK/kurser/klubudvikling.aspx (Danish)

<http://www.egu-info.org/dwn/EGU%20Proceedings%20Amsterdam%20workshop%2020122.pdf>

http://www.daec.de/fileadmin/user_upload/files/2012/sportarten/segelflug/download/

vereinsservice/optima.pdf (German)

"Club Logic vs. Market Logic"
Lessons Learnt from a Danish PhD Study
By Claus Nedergaard Jacobsen, Denmark

Introduction.

Most presentations at this EGU-congress are in the line of "What are we doing?" or "What should we be doing?" to reverse our membership decline. This presentation is more in the line of trying to understand the reasons *why* we have a decline in the first place. Actually it also suggests action to be taken but the applicability of those actions to gliding depends entirely on whether you believe that this study taken from an entirely different sports arena is at all applicable to gliding.

This presentation was meant as a way of kick-starting a discussion at the EGU-congress. Since these proceedings are one-way communication the author will give you his interpretation: Why he thinks the study is applicable to gliding. If you agree with the author you will also understand why we have been looking in vain for solutions to our membership problem: It is not a solution that is required but a different set of skills than those that most of us technically minded glider pilots are brought up with (including the author himself).

Context.

The membership problem used to be discussed at club-level, but slowly we realised that most other clubs had the same problem. Even if there were some that did not think they had a problem or others that thought they had found the solution, the grand total spelled out the problem loud and clear. Then we started discussing the problem at the national level, the Nordic level and now at the European level. Great:

at least we have faced and accepted the problem – those are essential steps towards solving it. The problem is universal in almost any country in the world, we have learnt, but we are still in the process of figuring out what the common factors are, i.e. to understand the problem. In Denmark we have learnt that membership decline is not specific to gliding: it is shared by **almost** any other sports association and as such there must be common factors that have nothing at all to do with the way we run gliding. Thus, Danish Soaring Association has gone to the extent of hiring a Development Consultant from the general sports association. The consultant knows hardly anything about gliding although he is learning, but his goal is to employ general principles to help gliding get back on track towards a glorious future.

Through our collaboration with the general sports association we have attended a number of conferences where the problem has been discussed from a higher and absolutely not gliding-specific point-of-view. It was at one of these conferences that we came across a presentation of a PhD study [1] made by a young sports analytic named Kasper Lund Kirkegaard that struck a few chords. Kasper has spent 3 – 4 years of his life studying an entirely different sports-arena and trying to isolate the factors that have caused *that* sports arena to loose members. A PhD title does not come easily: It is hard work that has to be defended against the highest-ranking experts in the area and as such the author thinks that this study deserves attention.

Kasper’s study aimed to analyse how the (commercial) fitness sector has managed to beat **most** volunteer driven physical exercise activities out of the market. The particular question addressed at this conference in June 2012 [2] was this:

- *“Do commercial fitness centres have capabilities that the traditional sport clubs cannot match?”*



Unfortunately, Kasper’s answer was a clear YES, but he also suggested ways in which the traditional sports clubs could fight back.

The Analysis.

First, Kasper Lund Kirkegaard established a number of key attributes to characterise the traditional sports clubs and the (commercial) fitness centres, two distinct worlds whose ways of thinking he coined as **“Club-Logic” vs. “Market-Logic”**.

Club-Logic	Market-Logic
How we refer to ourselves:	
The Club	The Company
How we refer to the participant	
The Member	The Customer
How we measure success	
Activity	Profit
The primary work quality	
Solidarity	Productivity
Focus on:	
Social Activities	Individual Activities
Main driving force for labour	
Joy	Duty

We have all witnessed the emergence of fitness-centres everywhere and we may think of that as an easy game to be in. But that is not at all true according to Kasper. In fact is a market characterised by strong competition and “survival of the fittest” only. Those, who are not fit, die and get replaced by others Kasper illustrated this statement with this piece of statistics dealing with centres in Denmark 2007 – 2011.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total Centres	380	424	451	425	444
Annual Net Growth	22	44	27	-26	19
New Centres	41	86	53	34	61
Closed Centres	19	42	26	60	42
Percentage replaced	5.0	10.1	5.6	14.1	9.5

The decline in 2010 is probably a delayed consequence of the financial crisis that began in 2008 but apart from that the total goes up and up only. The last two rows, however, spells out loud and clear that there is no guarantee for success in this area. Lots of less well-fit centres died. Not shown in the statistics are the certain losers, the club-driven sports clubs that could only match the competition in one area: price.

Next, Kasper set out to analyse what the factors were that differentiated the fitness-centres from the sports clubs and he came up with a number of factors:

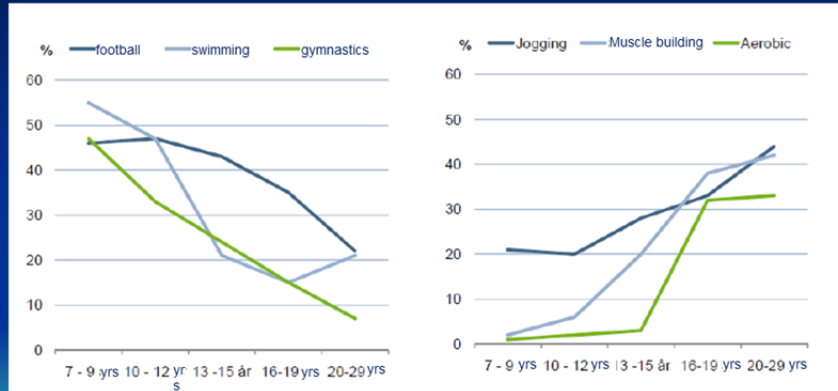
- No organisational obligations
- Not bound by rules, history and traditions
- Dare to challenge traditions –to rethink classic sports logic into popular fitness logic
- Develop new products and concepts that appeal to more customers
- Specialise in flexibility – to reach new customers in all ages and all income groups
- Works on lowering the entry-threshold by requiring very few or no initial skills
- Respond quicker to changing market conditions
- Only take up profitable activities
- Quickly and un sentimentally drop non-profitable activities
- Try all the time to expand the customer base to fill out capacity
- Do not have to legitimise public funding
- Re-educate instructors all the time
- ...

Next, he set out to analyse what had really given the commercial fitness centres their competitive edge over traditional sports clubs and found that the constant monitoring of market conditions (aka “Market Understanding”) is really what had made the difference:

- Conscience about customer’s “What is in it for me” approach
- Conscience about location and transport time
- Uniform and recognisable service level (“brand”)
- Recruitment, detainment and rewarding of qualified labour (HR-management)
- True interest in poorly skilled participants
- Constant collection and processing of (market) knowledge
- Customer Knowledge and Customer Care
- Continuing Customer Satisfaction Inquiries
- Strategies to avoid churn and to expand market.
- Continual Development

As examples of areas where commercial fitness-centres have prospered from the inability of traditional sports clubs to satisfy market needs, Kasper showed this slide that illustrates how fitness centres have managed to make a business (right) out of teenagers dropping out of traditional sports (left)

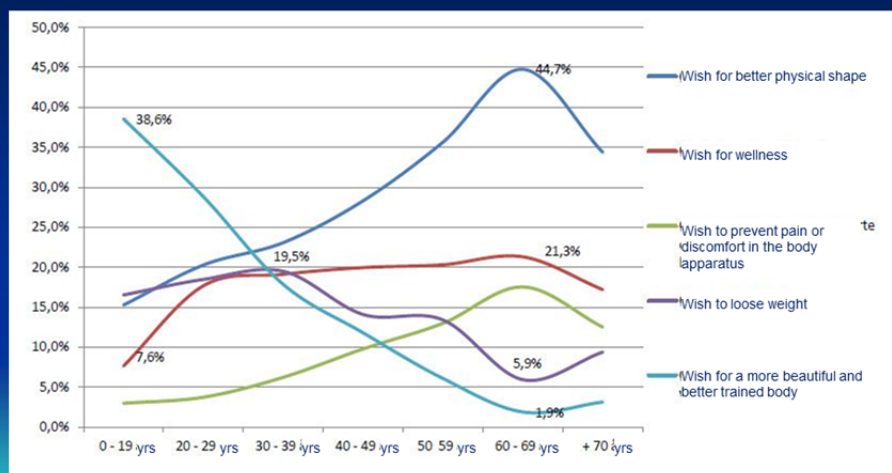
Prosper from teenagers dropping out of traditional sports



As you can tell, fitness centres are not the only ones that prosper from other organisations inability to satisfy needs: Many teenagers take up jogging but mostly in an unorganised fashion.

As an illustration of another area where fitness centres have a much better understanding of market needs, Kasper showed the slide below:

Awareness that motivation change with age



Customer/market understanding?

It shows how the fitness centres are aware how motivation changes with age. Do we have that understanding with respect to our members in gliding?

As examples of other capabilities of the (commercial) fitness centres Kasper mentioned their ability to attract and retain women and teenagers. More than 50% of the customers in fitness centres are women. We may think that gliding is special in the respect that we have so few female participants but that seems to be the case for most other club driven sports associations too. (Unfortunately, Kasper did not provide the numbers).

Now, to summarise his comparison of the two distinct worlds, Kasper gave this list of characteristics:

Club-Logic	Market-Logic
Success criteria:	
Vague	Clear
Products evaluated in terms of:	
Quality	Quantity
Worship:	
Tradition and History	Innovation and Development
Focus lies with the satisfaction of:	
The existing members	The new customers
Recruitment is mostly:	
Passive	Active
Management characterised by:	
Slow democracy	Efficient Implementation
What is the first thing that meets the eye? (Ouch, that hurt)	
Old men	Young women
Sector	
Culture	Health
Labour is:	
Voluntary	Professional
Environment is:	
Cozy	Efficient

Not much we can recognise there, or?

This was - of course - a very discouraging analysis. "However", Kasper said, "It is not the case that our society rejects traditional sports clubs. If only the traditional sports clubs could come up with the same offerings the vast majority of fitness centre customers would just as happily go there" as the following slide based on a customer inquiry shows:

But what if the sports club could offer the same?

Then I would just as happily go there (Result of inquiry with 1268 responders in commercial centres)

Very much agree	32 %
Agree	38 %
Neither nor	20 %
Disagree	8 %
Very much disagree	2 %

What to do about it.

Then came the million-dollar question: What to do about it? Should we (the traditional sports clubs):

- Go for sex-change operations?
- Go for age reversal medicine?
- Become commercial?
- Or plainly: Lie down and die?

None of the above! Kasper's recommendation was very clear:

We must wake up and learn from the professionals!

"They have been stealing ideas from the sports clubs all the time. Now it is time to steal back".

(Now, just to alleviate a common misunderstanding that also popped up at the EGU-congress: the recommendation does not say that we are to necessarily become commercial, does it? The qualities that differentiate the commercial fitness centres from the sports clubs could just as well be applied in non-commercial sports clubs –if we had the skills to do it–couldn't they? You might – with very good reason - ask where motivation and skills should come from. The author will give you his own answer to that later on).

Discussion.

This is where we step out of Kasper Lund Kirkegaard's presentation and into discussion and interpretation. Being unable to discuss this with you in a one-way media, the author here can only give you his personal interpretation and shortly touch upon the comments at the EGU-congress:

First: Why does this study apply to gliding?

We have long been trying to understand, why gliding is no longer seen as such an attractive sport as it was and why we fail to attract and – more importantly – keep new members. The author and many other contributors at the EGU conference think that gliding clubs are better than ever at running gliding and that our product is better than ever. It is not us that have become any worse - it is our competitors that have become better. We used to be in a niche where no one could offer a competing activity. Well, no one has a competing product if we restrict ourselves to talking gliding in the traditional sense (fixed wing aircrafts soaring through the forces of Mother Nature) but our potential customers are not necessarily going for that particular product. Some of them may go for inexpensive flying and they might find a better product in ultra-light flying. Some are fascinated by adrenaline, colourful fashion suits and freedom in the air and they might find a more suitable product in hang- and paragliding. Some might just want to know what it is like to pilot an aircraft and they might have their needs fulfilled by the wonderful flight simulators now available at PCs in every home. But that is not even the full story. We have more money and spare time than ever – theoretically – but the competition to win our time and money has become much stronger. The competition does not come from other air sports only but also from our families, from TV and Internet, social media, online gaming, low-cost airfares, from employers who have managed to change work from a nuisance into an addictive passion etc. etc. As EGU-president Patrick Nagaeli so wonderfully put it at the EGU congress: “It is a battle to win our affection. The one who wins this battle gets our money and our time”.

The study reported here deals with an entirely different area than ours and yet the reporter thinks that there are lessons to be learnt: The commercial fitness centres did not win because they had a better product: They won because they are more professional when it comes to market understanding, marketing, customer care, human resource management, management, continual development and many other soft skills that most of us glider pilots are not very good at. (Most of us have technical and scientific educations including the reporter and we do know – although hesitantly admitting – that those skills are not sufficient to run a successful business in a competitive market. Technical skills are definitely required but it takes more than that – a competitive edge - to run a successful enterprise such as a gliding club in a competitive environment. We need to grow our skills to become competitive. We can either do that by joining forces with someone who have those skills or we could start taking courses. In Denmark the general sports associations have been offering those courses for years and years and yet few of us see the need for such courses. This contribution is an effort to change that attitude: We need to grow and develop all the time and stop being self-sufficient. There is a world out there and we cannot make that world come to us –we have to come to that world. In Biz-talk that has a name: “Market orientation”. This whole presentation could have been cramped into one sentence: “Become market oriented or die!”.

If you agree to the applicability of these thoughts, then it means that:

- We do not have to change our basic product, gliding.
- We can keep most of our organisation as it is, but...
- We need to work on our customer and human resource oriented side and...
- That means acquiring new skills rather than inventing new solutions.

It is a new concept to approaching our membership problem, yet one that has been touched upon many times, e.g. In the Canadian soaring magazine [4], where a comparison was made between successful

gliding clubs and less successful ones and the statement was made: “[successful gliding clubs] are run using accepted principles of small business”.

By the way, have you noticed how the difference between successful gliding clubs and less successful ones can often be narrowed down to personal qualities of individuals? “Personal qualities cannot be learnt”, you may think, and you may be right. We – in the Development Committee under Danish Soaring Association – think that it is possible to learn soft skills like these. Of course it is better if you are born with good personal qualities but you can get a long way by acquiring understanding and skills through training. The first step, however, is seeing the need for that training and we need to see our operation in a wider context to understand that need.

Now, the final question: What should be the motivation to start learning new, business-like skills?

We live in a constantly evolving world. Skills become outdated sooner than we like it. Gone are the days when you could finish an education at the age of 25 and prosper from that competence for the rest of your days. Today you might find your competence outdated within 5 years or less. Now, “why would I want to re-educate myself in an entirely different direction for the sake of my gliding club? All I want is to fly.” The answer is that, the skills suggested here are the same skills that you need to survive in your work life until retirement. Technical skills are vulnerable and subject to automation and out-sourcing. Business specific skills are harder to replace. If you can combine your technical skills with business oriented (soft) skills then you are in much better position for survival. And why not grow those skills while at the same time seeing your gliding club prosper? That is a win-win situation and one that is not much different from the situation 30-40 years ago when our present resource members joined the gliding community and contributed with their (technical) skills and saw how the club prospered from that. That contribution is by no means obsolete but we also need contribution at a more business oriented level. “At a higher level in the value-chain” as some would put it.

If you are managing a gliding club and you ask yourself how you could possibly incur such a change in attitude in your club and motivate your members for change, do not despair: “Change Management” is another highly anticipated discipline in business management. The skills and tricks are out there and you do not have to invent them yourself. The theme was partly covered at the EGU-congress in 2011 [5].

Summary.

For decades, we have been looking for solutions. What this PhD thesis says is that we should rather be looking for a different set of competences than those most of us are brought up with. The (commercial) fitness centres did not win over the non-commercial competitors in the market because they are commercial but because they understand the customers and have adapted their customer oriented side accordingly, not the basic product (which is physical exercise). The skills required are “soft” as compared to the “hard” skills possessed by most of us technicians/engineers. That is, if you believe in the applicability of this study to gliding, of course.

References.

1. Kasper Lund Kirkegaard PhD Thesis, “Fitnesskultur.dk - Fitness-sektorens historie, de aktive udøvere og breddeidrættens kommercialisering”, Syddansk Universitet, Odense 2011 (Danish).

2. Kasper Lund Kirkegaard presentation at the Vejen conference, June 2, 2012:
http://idan.dk/~media/PdfWord/Pdf2012/Vejen2012/KasperLund_forening.pdf (Danish)
3. "Operation Optima", 2000 by Christophe and Valerie Bruneliere, FFFV, France. (French Gliding Market Analysis translated into German – An English translation should be underway):
http://www.daec.de/fileadmin/user_upload/files/2012/sportarten/segelflug/download/vereinsservice/optima.pdf
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Recruiting or keeping members or..... Some observations from a Swedish perspective Robert Danewid

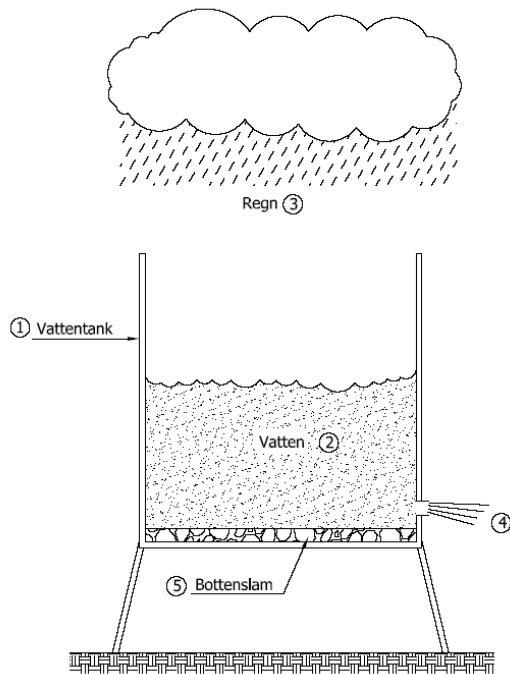
The gliding movement has lost members for many years. The European Gliding Union has established a working group to work with this problem and find common solutions and projects.

This paper discusses if we shall increase membership by spend resources on reruiting more members or work with "keeping members", mainly from a Swedish perspective.

The Gliding Club

In the Club Handbook of The Gliding Federation of Australia the "water tank model" is described. **FIG 1** shows a slightly modified version. This model describes very well the structure of a gliding club. The water tank itself is the club.

In the perfect world more water is coming in to the tank than out. Thus the water level increases, i e the overall membership increase.



- 1. The tank = the club
- 2. Water in the tank = members
- 3. Rain = new members
- 4. The tap = lost members
- 5. Silt = those who will never get out of the tank, i.e. the members that are the backbone of the club

FIG 1. The modified Australian Water Tank Model

FIG 2 shows the current situation. The club is in the middle of a desert, it has stopped raining. And the tap is fully opened. Water is pouring out of the tank. The result is of course that the water level decreases.

How can we stop this? There are two solutions. Either to increase the rainfall or close the tap, or, preferably both.

How do we increase rainfall, i.e. recruit more members? We can only do that by moving the club to where it is raining. The reason why it has stopped raining is that gliding has failed to adopt to changes in the society around us. To do this will take a long time and we have to tear down a number of walls in the process.

To start, gliding has to realize that we are a part of the society outside the clubs and that the international globalization and the new social medias like Facebook etc also affects gliding and the way to operate a gliding club.

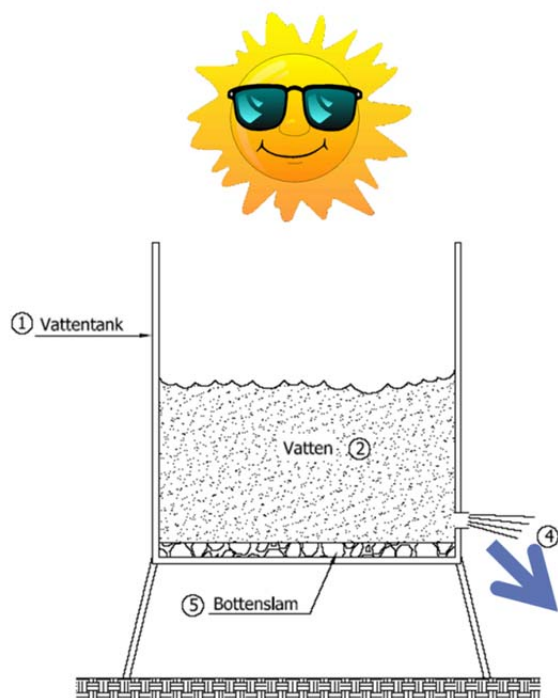


FIG 2. The current situation

The first thing to do to stabilize the water level is to close the tap. This is usually called “keeping members”, to focus on the existing members. It certainly requires less resources to keep old customers than get new ones.

You can also look at it at this way; it is the members in the club that will recruit and train new members. Therefore it is essential to first of all secure a good membership and make it possible for new members to proceed in gliding after having acquired the license.

Surveys

A few years ago the Danish Gliding Federation made a membership survey with the help of the staff of the Danish Sport Federation. The result shows that every year the Danish gliding clubs recruits 8% new members (based on the existing membership). This is a very high figure compared to many other sports. However, at the same time the Danish clubs lost 8.5% of the existing membership. The net result is thus a yearly decrease of the membership by 0.5%.

The survey also showed that new members on average remain members for 3 years before leaving gliding.

In the UK a recently survey also shows that on average new members leave after 3 years.

Comparing these figures with figures from Sweden, it is obvious that Sweden is in the same position as Denmark.

Why do people leave gliding after 3 years? BGA in the UK has started a project "Aim Higher!". On the web site for this project they try to answer this question:

"Formal gliding training takes place to a defined syllabus and results in tests and qualifications, eg a Sailplane Pilot Licence. That is a means to an end - qualifying as a glider pilot.

Gliding is many things to many different people - having fun in the air is obviously up there as a primary objective in most peoples minds! Meeting personal goals and in many cases, stretching ourselves a bit and perhaps competing with others are common aspirations. Some are very happy flying circuits around their local airfield. Others are keen to do much more. Each to their own, of course.

However, it's too easy for a newly qualified glider pilot to find him or herself stuck in a rut and not making progress. Is that fun? No. Frustrating? Almost definitely."

FIG 3 shows the "Swedish Gliding Wheel" which is adopted by the Swedish Soaring Federation as a model to use for working with "keeping members". The main area, i.e. where members are lost, is after the member has acquired his/her license and before he/she flies his/her first cross country flights. Once you have reached the "RST" area the chances to remain in gliding is much larger.

The thinking of **FIG 3** is supported by the IGC Membership Survey (2010), see **FIG 4**. The specific question was "what are the barriers to gliding" and the main barriers were considered to be barriers to cross-country flight and airspace and regulatory issues. These two statements are statistically significant according to the authors.

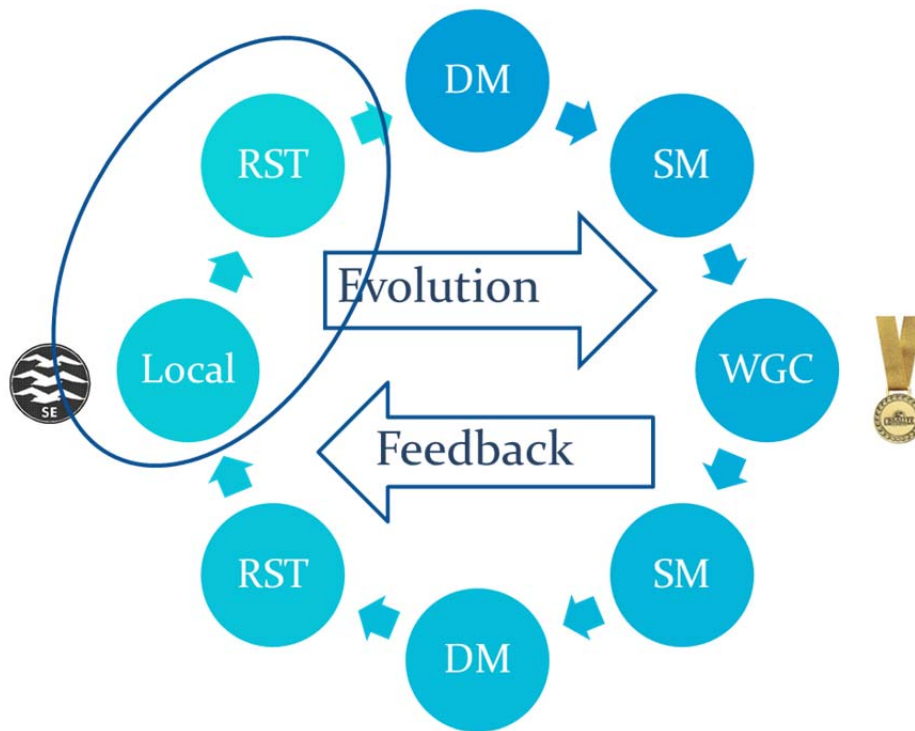


FIG 3. The "Swedish Gliding Wheel"
 Local = local Flying
 RST = OLC flying
 DM = regional competitions
 SM = National competition
 WGC = International competitions

- Barriers to cross-country flight
- Airspace and regulatory issues
- Barriers to glider ownership
- Quality of club fleet
- Difficulty of progress in training
- Social and time constraints imposed on gliding
- Politics and regulation of gliding
- Engines in gliders
- Difficult of recruitment of new pilots

Barriers to cross-country flight	Factor loading
I wish there were more expert cross-country pilots to fly with, in my area.	.712
I wish there was more opportunity to take a cross-country flying course where I fly.	.708
	.543
There are a lot of times when I would like to fly, but the airfield/club is closed.	.522
I would like to do more training, but it is difficult to secure a lesson as there is too much demand for the resources available.	.505
Knowledge of soaring conditions here is not as good as I would like.	.505

Airspace and regulatory issues	Factor loading
Airspace is restricted around my airfield.	.833
Flying cross-country is too problematic where I fly, due to regulations or ATC.	.712
Gliding activity is restricted by the amount of regulation.	.621
We have problems dealing with the authorities to secure our rights to glide.	.615

FIG 4. Analysis of pilot issues.
 From the IGC Membership Survey (2010)
 The question was "what are the barriers to gliding".

Age of members

You often hear that the age of our members is increasing and therefore we must mainly focus on recruiting young people to gliding to counteract this.

FIG 5 shows the age distribution in the gliding membership population according to the IGC survey. 55% of the population is younger than 45. 45% is older than 45.

16% is younger than 25.

The lower graph shows the average age in the different countries. Sweden is in the middle with an average age of just over 40.

If we compare these figures with the situation in Sweden in 1986 (the table to the right) we can see that then 28% were younger than 25, compared to 15% in 2012 (compared to 16% on the international level). This shows that indeed our members are older than 25 years ago.

Since 1986 the actual number of glider pilots in Sweden has decreased from around 4 000 to ca 2 000.

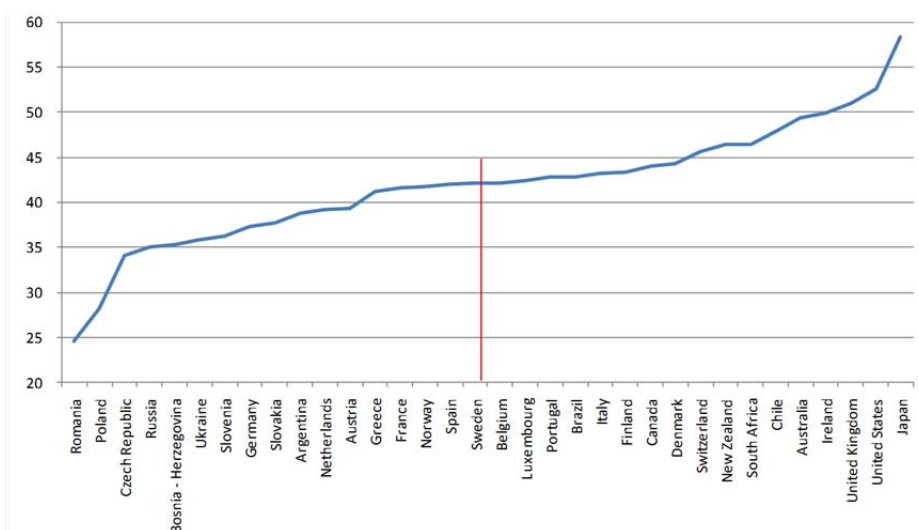
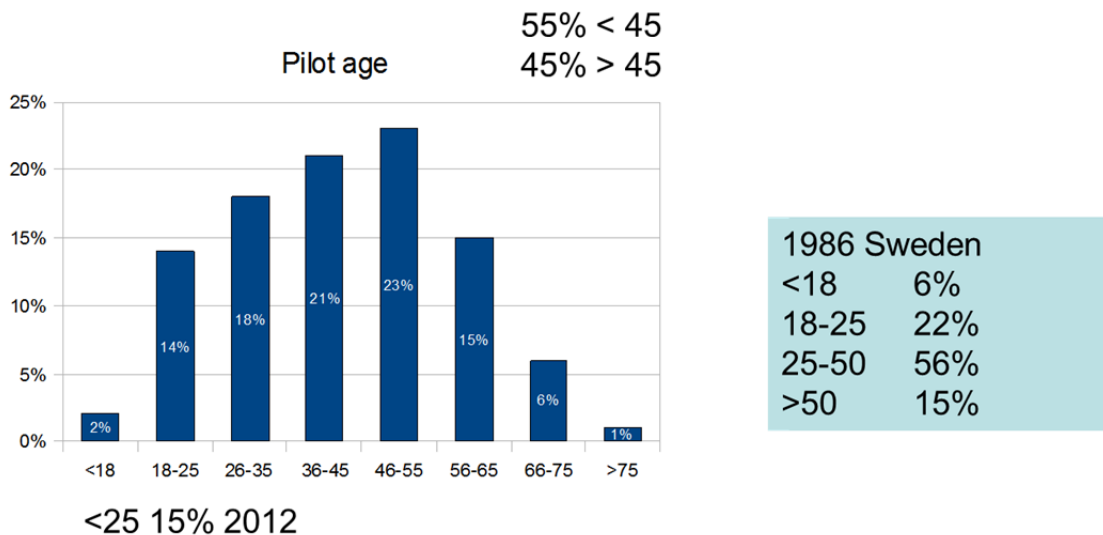


FIG 5. The age distribution in gliding. The red line shows Sweden

But if we consider the whole society – surely gliding must be a mirror of society – the picture is the same – we are getting older, see **FIG 6**.



FIG 6 Age distribution in Sweden – 1910, 1960, 2010 and forecasted 2060. The figure to the right shows the average life length from 1860 – 2010
Kvinnor = female
Män = male

Source: Swedish Medical Journal 48/2010

We are indeed getting older and older. Today a 65 year old man/woman is usually a very active person, but 30 years ago he/she was considered to be old. Today we have very active glider pilots above 70 that take parts in competitions and fly long distances. As an example, Hans-Werner Grosse, who at the age of 90, still make several flights over 500 km every year.

The age distribution in gliding is not a threat, it is a possibility. Retired people stay longer in gliding and the available population for gliding is larger than 30 years ago.

Training

35 years ago about 500 new licenses were issued every year in Sweden. Today that figure is down to ca 100. Long discussions are being held on this topic. “Our result is too bad, we train too few” is the argument often heard.

If we compare with other countries the picture is, however, not that bad, see **Table 1**. The ratio of new licenses/available instructors is 0.25 for Norway, 0.33 for Sweden and 0.16 for the UK.

	membership	# Instr	New licenses
Norway	800	120	30
Sweden	1900	300	100
UK	6000	900	140

Table 1. Number of new licenses annually in Norway, Sweden and the UK.

If we were able to keep these new pilots, the membership will increase with 5% annually, not considering natural loss of members due to illness, age etc.

Or in other words; with the current number of new licenses we have to keep the loss of existing members below 5% in order to have a net increase in membership.

Conclusions

- Society (rain) has moved away from the gliding club. Gliding must adopt!
- Concentrate on closing the tap – “keeping members” – not on recruiting
- Start projects that aim for the fresh glider pilot – e.g. “Aim Higher!”
- Do not care too much about age distribution - recruit at all age levels