

Generation Z - the future of maritime



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Contents

3	Welcome	36	Challenges and reactions
4	Cadet experiences: Cadet Rachel Afriyie	39	Cadet experiences: Cadet Ummehani (Hani) Jahangir Mulla
6	Demographics	40	Education
10	Understanding cadets	43	Industry reflection
14	Retention	44	Cadet mental health
23	Industry reflection	48	Cadet mental health comparing two years of statistics
25	Cadet experiences: Cadet Adam Birch	50	General conference feedback
26	Q&A with Dr Syed Asif Altaf Chowdhury	52	In conclusion
28	Diversity	53	Maritime schools' conferences 2023 sponsors
34	Industry reflection	54	Cadet conferences 2024
35	Cadet experiences: Cadet Vaibhavi Pare	55	Sailors' Society - Our services

Welcome to Sailors' Society's second Cadet Report

We have once more collected data from the future of seafaring as cadets gathered for our global Wellness at Sea Maritime Schools' Conferences. But this year, the addition of new UK seafarers has provided us with significant fresh insight.

Each generation of cadets has its own characteristics and that's certainly true of our Gen Z seafarers. But the data reveals that alongside shared values around family, ethical treatment, social justice and inclusivity, we can see clear regional identities strongly linked to social and cultural differences.

By examining these in detail we can reveal what makes tomorrow's workforce and your future leaders tick - what motivates them, what worries them and what the industry needs to do to retain and support them.

At Sailors' Society, we place a strong focus on our maritime cadets; we know they are the lifeblood of the industry. It's their passion for a career at sea that keeps the engines running.

As well as our cadet conferences, now heading for their fourth year, we offer dedicated Peer-to-Peer Support Groups and a quarterly cadet newsletter packed full of valuable information and the latest wellness news. Our Gen Z seafarers also have access to our 24/7 support and wider wellness training via our ground-breaking e-learning app.

This provides them with a wellness toolkit that will support them throughout their careers, completing the circle of care we have for our seafarers from the beginning to the end of their maritime journey.

And it's a two-way partnership, as through this engagement the cadets are able to provide us with the unique in-depth data and insight that forms the content of this report.

Its contents and our focus on cadet wellness and mental health, will help shape our ongoing work and we are delighted to share this voyage with you.

We hope you will find this report insightful and a valuable tool as you look to the future and those who will define it.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Baade'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Sara Baade
CEO, Sailors' Society

CADET EXPERIENCES

Cadet Rachel Afriyie attended our Africa Conference

Awareness initiatives such as the annual Wellness at Sea cadet conferences organized by Sailors' Society serve as catalysts for change. They raise critical issues, facilitating open conversations and understanding. Sharing personal experiences through panels and testimonials normalizes challenges, reminding cadets that they're not alone. This destigmatizes seeking help, encouraging early intervention and fostering a culture of care.

Stepping aboard the conference felt like stepping onto a different kind of vessel – one dedicated to navigating the uncharted waters of seafarer wellbeing. As a young cadet, I was eager to learn the tools to not only weather my own mental storms but also become a beacon of support for my future shipmates. And let me tell you, this conference equipped me with a treasure chest of invaluable resources.

Perhaps the most significant takeaway was the conference's unwavering focus on the human element. Unlike many industry events that prioritize technical prowess or operational efficiency, this one placed

people at the helm. It reminded us that behind every sailor, officer and captain lays a complex individual with hopes, fears and vulnerabilities. This shift in perspective feels revolutionary, offering a chance to build a maritime industry where genuine care and support are not just buzzwords but woven into the very fabric of daily life at sea.

Attending this conference wasn't just about attending; it was about embarking on a transformative journey. As I set sail into my maritime career, I carry with me not just technical knowledge but a toolbox overflowing with skills to nurture my own wellbeing and become a pillar of support for my fellow seafarers.

This conference has undoubtedly shaped the kind of mariner I aspire to be – one who navigates the currents of challenge with empathy, communication and a deep understanding that at the heart of every successful voyage lies the wellbeing of its human crew.

Cadet Rachel Afriyie
Regional Maritime University, Ghana



"This data only confirms the social and cultural paradigm shift that is presently at play in the Industry, while highlighting some of the challenges that continue to threaten the ability to attract and retain talent.

"It is clear from this report that there is a lot to learn from this younger generation."

Andrew Roberts, Executive Director, EMEA, Rightship

Demographics

LOCATIONS

- | | | | |
|----|--------------|------------|-------------|
| UK | South Africa | Bangladesh | Philippines |
| | Namibia | Sri Lanka | Indonesia |
| | Ethiopia | India | Myanmar |
| | Nigeria | | Vietnam |
| | Ghana, | | |
| | Egypt | | |
| | Liberia | | |



Reflection

The extensive geographical reach of the conferences provides us with a unique vantage point for insights into the seafarers of the future, both in specific regional trends and broader global patterns.

By hosting events in diverse locations, we are able to delve into the nuances of wellbeing, mental health and maritime education and training within each specific geographic context. The localized focus also allows for a detailed exploration of the challenges, advancements and priorities within each region. This nuanced understanding is instrumental in tailoring wellbeing initiatives, recruitment practices and educational approaches to meet the specific needs and demands of individual regions.

Simultaneously, the global scope of the conferences facilitates the identification of overarching trends that transcend geographical boundaries. Comparing and contrasting the experiences and perspectives of cadets from different parts of the world enables a comprehensive understanding of the issues they hold in common.

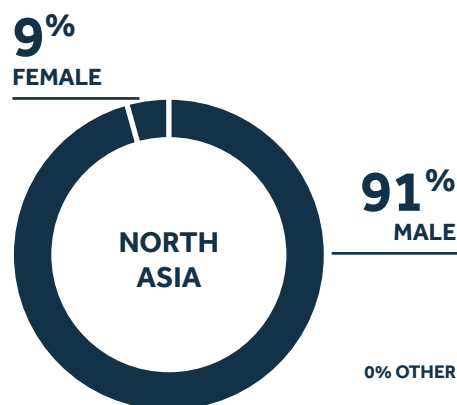
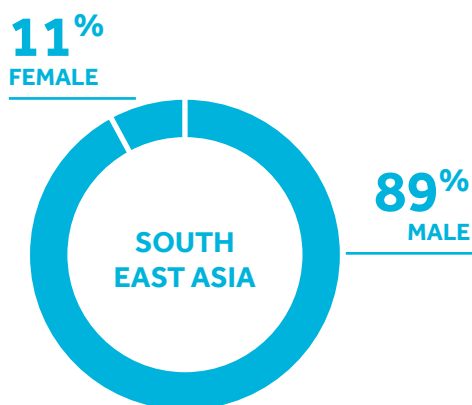
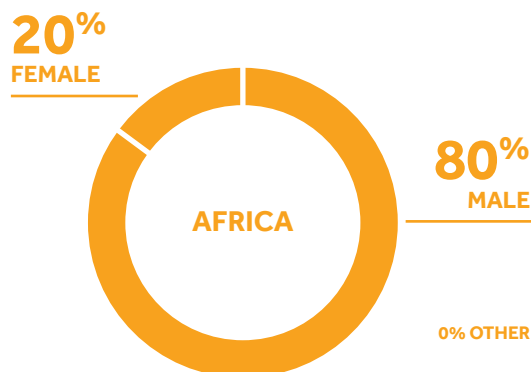
In essence, the reach of these conferences allows not only for a deep dive into local trends but also contributes to a holistic comprehension of global dynamics of our new generation of seafarers.



REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS:

UK	114
Africa	440
South East Asia	1661
North Asia	2034
Total:	4,249

GENDER



Reflection

At present, we have a workforce composed of around 98 per cent male and just two per cent female*. Despite ongoing efforts to promote gender diversity and inclusion in the maritime sector, aligning with goals set by experts such as the International Maritime Organization*, the maritime industry continues to grapple with the challenge of achieving gender diversity.

Encouragingly though, the gender distribution among conference participants paints a more positive picture for the future.

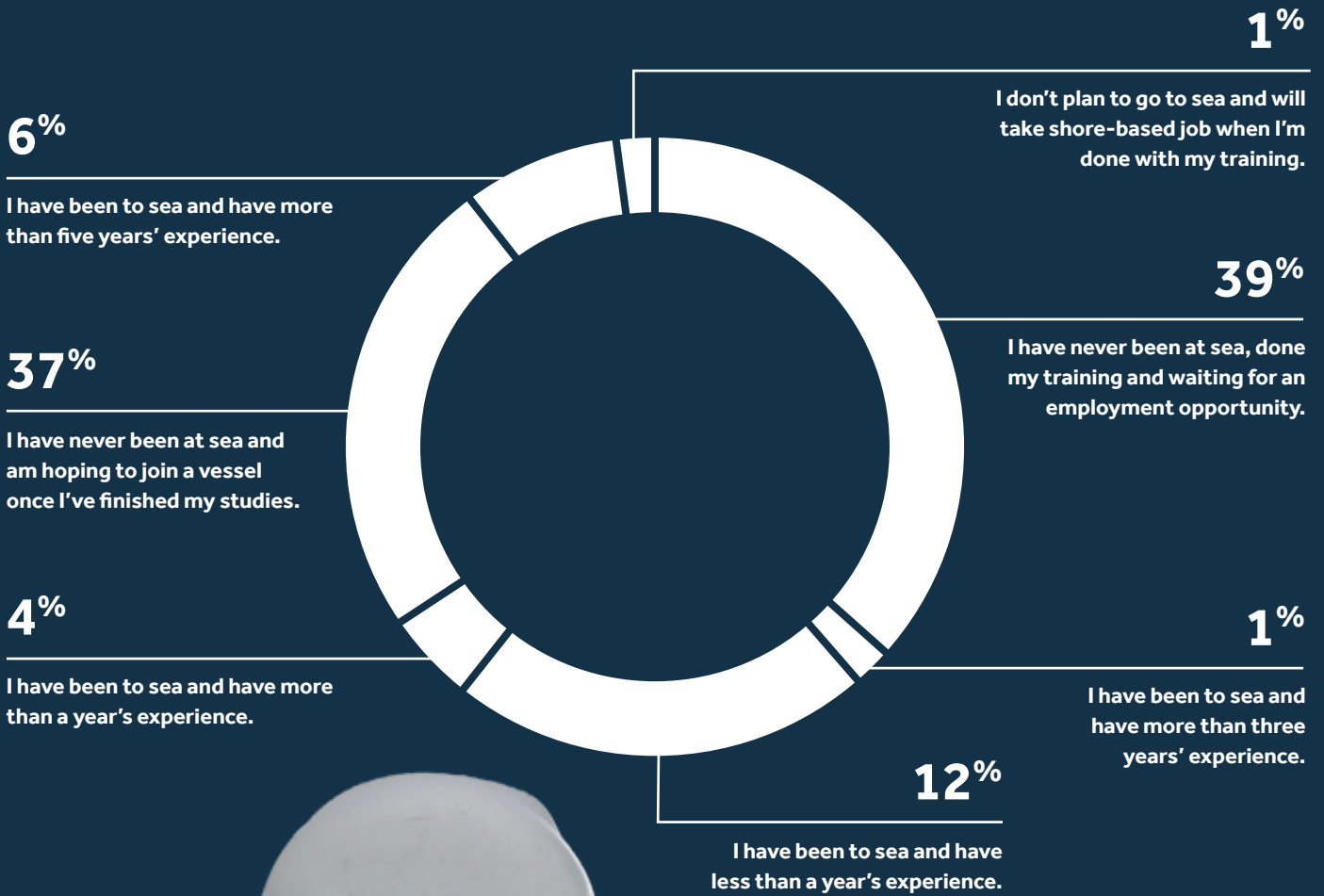
We saw the highest number of female respondents in the UK at 31 per cent, while in Africa respondents also showed promising diversity with 20 per cent being female. South East and Northern Asia reported lower percentages, with nine per cent and 11 per cent respectively being female.

While it is important to acknowledge that many of these cadets are not yet active seafarers, the fact that conference participation reflects a much higher percentage of females compared to the two per cent currently working at sea, is an encouraging sign.

Despite the existing gender disparity, these numbers suggest a positive shift and signify progress toward a more inclusive maritime industry. Ongoing initiatives and discussions within the conferences contribute to fostering an environment that supports and encourages greater gender diversity in the future.

* Figures from Pike et al. (2021)
 *(IMO, 2023).

HOW EXPERIENCED WERE THE ATTENDEES?



Reflection

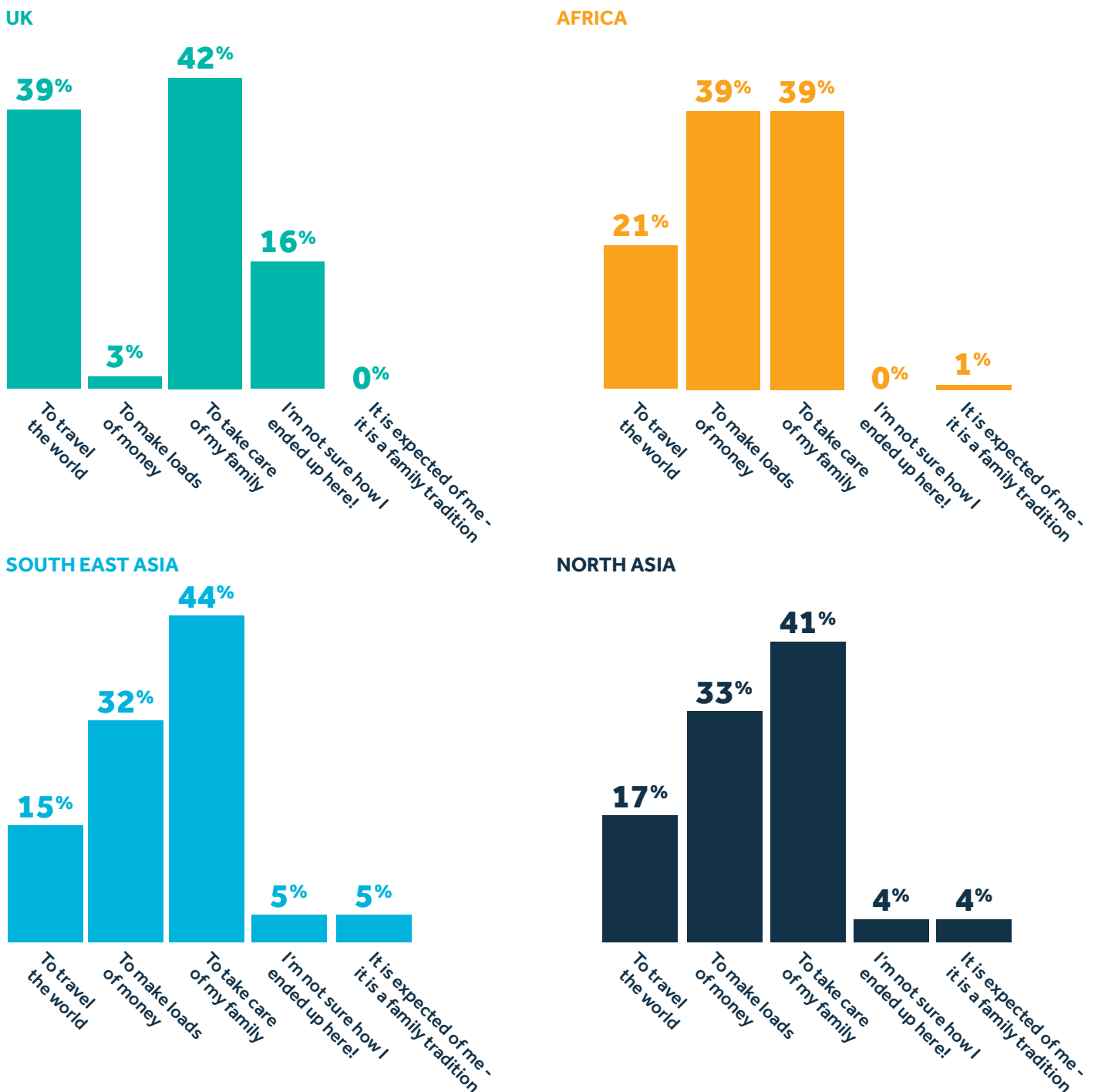
It is noteworthy that the vast majority of those in training for a maritime career, 76 per cent of those polled, had yet to experience life at sea.

This figure serves to highlight the importance of providing cadets with the tools they need to look after their own physical and mental health. With the overwhelming majority of these young people stepping on board a ship for the first time on graduation, it is vital we prepare them for this.

Understanding cadets

A Gen Z perspective

THE MOTIVATION FOR CHOOSING A CAREER AT SEA



Reflection

The motivation for choosing a career at sea highlights regional and cultural differences across the globe and the findings highlight the importance of understanding these nuances in shaping career aspirations within the maritime industry.

In the African context, the motivations highlight the economic issues and familial focus found on this continent. A significant proportion, 39 per cent, expressed a desire for substantial earnings and an equal percentage cited the motivation to take care of their families. While a notable 21 per cent emphasized the appeal of travelling the world. Notably, when considering gender differences within the African sample,

females leaned towards motivations centred around family, with 50 per cent expressing the desire to take care of their families and 43 per cent being drawn to the prospect of travel.

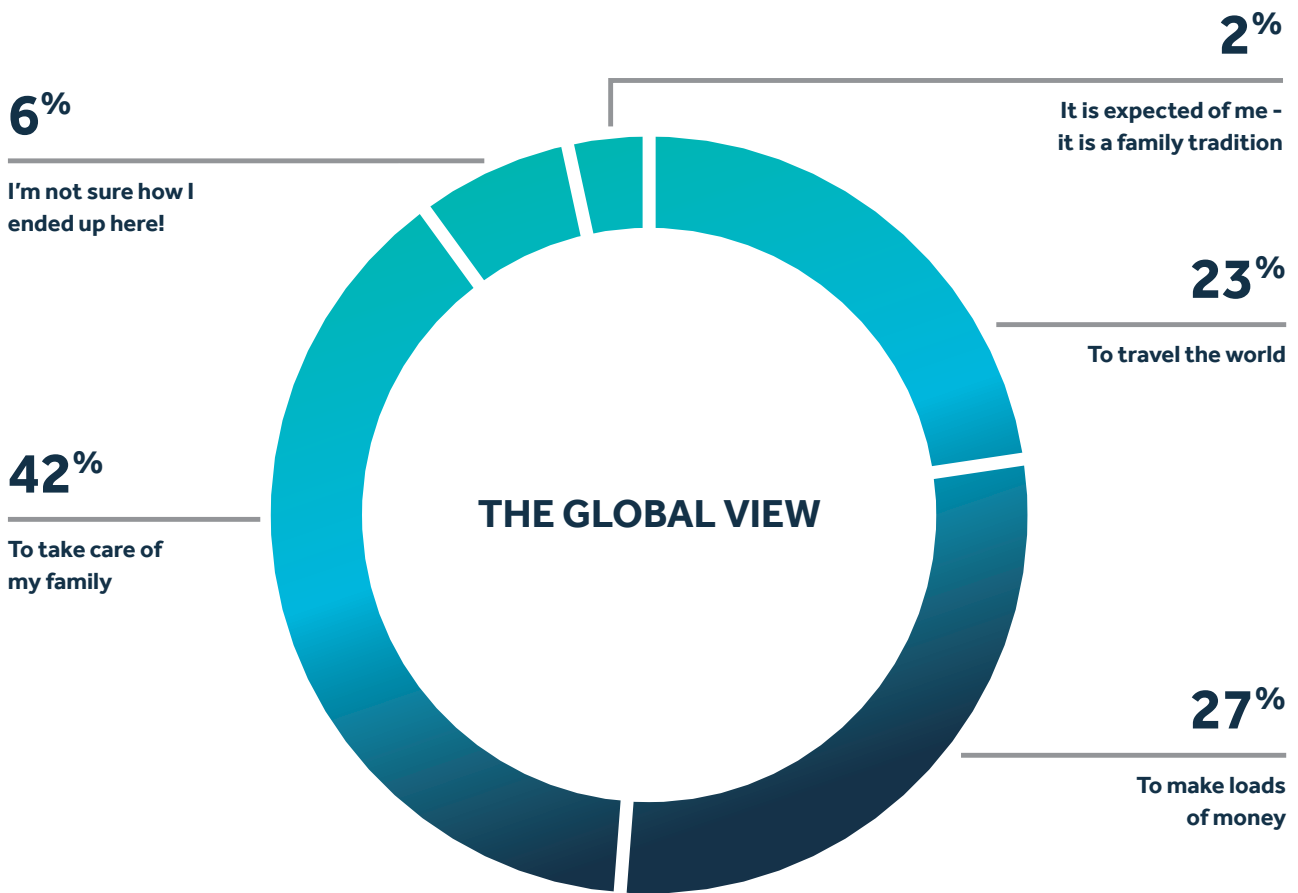
The motivation to pursue a career as a seafarer in North Asia and South East Asia is notably centred around family responsibility and the financial wellbeing of their families. In North Asia, 41 per cent of respondents expressed a strong motivation linked to family responsibility, while in South East Asia this figure increased to 44 per cent. The emphasis on familial obligations as a primary driving force for entering the seafaring profession underscores the importance of family support and financial stability within the cultural context of these regions.

In contrast to the other regions, the motivations of UK cadets present a very different picture. A mere three per cent cited the pursuit of financial gain as a motivation for becoming a seafarer. The primary driving forces for UK cadets were the opportunities to travel and to fulfil familial responsibilities. In comparison with other regions, money as a motivation seems an inadequate way to recruit new cadets in the UK.

These findings provide valuable insights that allow the tailoring of recruitment strategies, training programs and support systems. This way the industry can address the unique needs and motivations of individuals entering the seafaring profession in different regions.



A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE MOTIVATION FOR CHOOSING A CAREER AT SEA



Reflection

Despite the differences, the data across regions underscores the paramount importance of family responsibility as the primary motivator for the majority individuals entering the seafaring profession. Some 42 per cent of the cadets said they were motivated by a need to take care of their family. Recognizing this fundamental motivation is crucial in shaping the recruitment process and

cultivating environments that offer seafarers the optimal opportunity to fulfil their family obligations in a holistic manner.

Armed with this insight, the key question during recruitment becomes centred on creating an environment that not only addresses professional needs but also supports the broader spectrum of personal and familial requirements. Understanding and valuing this

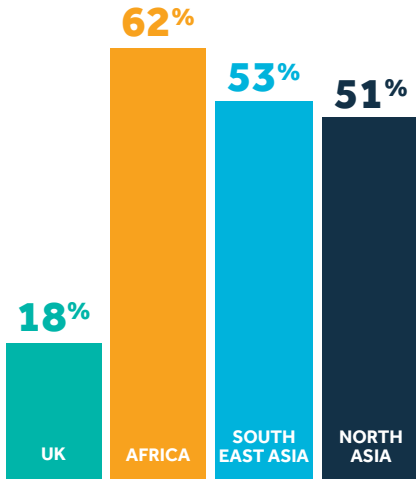
fundamental motivation can serve as a guiding principle in designing policies, practices and support systems that resonate with the core values and priorities of seafarers worldwide.

In doing so, the maritime industry can enhance job satisfaction, retention rates and overall wellbeing, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and supportive seafaring community.

CADETS BIGGEST FEAR FOR THEIR FUTURE CAREER AT SEA

2022 STATS:
N/A 74% 50% 57%

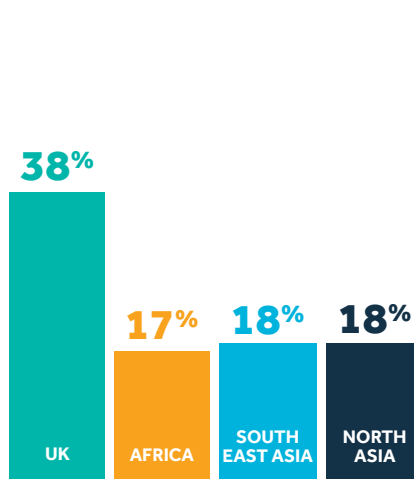
2023 STATS:



Not getting a job when I finish studying

2022 STATS:
N/A 17% 17% 20%

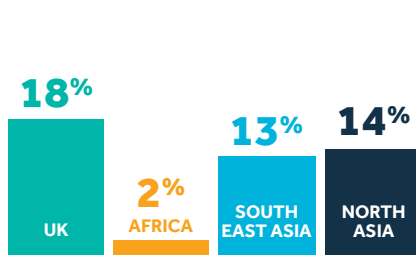
2023 STATS:



Not being able to cope with life at sea

2022 STATS:
N/A 6% 12% 11%

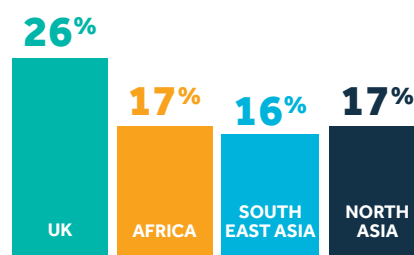
2023 STATS:



Not passing my exams

2022 STATS:
N/A 4% 22% 13%

2023 STATS:



Disappointing my family

Reflection

By comparing the data from the 2022 Cadet Report to that from 2023, we can see that across Africa, South East Asia and North Asia certain parallels can be drawn. In both years, there was a persistently high fear of unemployment in these areas.

Africa again showed the highest percentage in terms of concerns over unemployment and we can surmise that this aligns with the continent's record-high unemployment rates. In Africa, structural barriers to entry into the global seafarer

job market remain a significant concern. As cited in 2022, the need for policy reforms and concerted efforts to bridge the gap between maritime education and employment opportunities in the continent remain evident.

The UK stands out in the 2023 data with distinct fears. While the overarching fear in other regions continues to be the uncertainty of securing a job post-graduation, job security is a relatively low concern in the UK, with a mere 18 per cent citing it as their biggest fear.

However, UK cadets expressed a unique apprehension: 'Not being able to cope with life at sea' emerges as the predominant fear. This suggests that UK maritime students may place greater emphasis on the challenges of the seafaring lifestyle itself, highlighting a nuanced perspective compared to the predominant job security concerns in other regions. This indicates a unique set of challenges and priorities among UK maritime students, potentially influenced by the cultural and organizational context in the region.

Retention

What shipping companies need to know

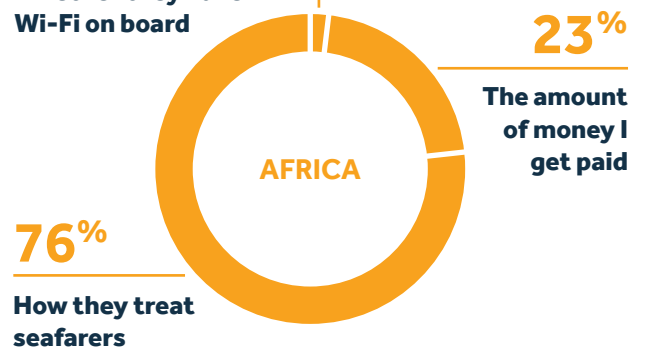
WE ASKED THE CADETS WHAT THEY SAW AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR CHOOSING A SHIPPING COMPANY:

0% Whether they have Wi-Fi on board



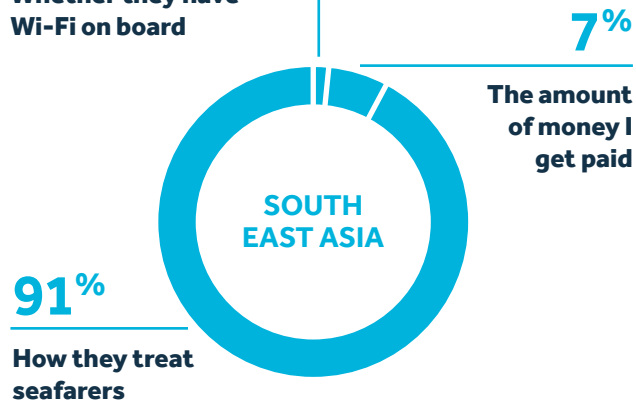
1%

Whether they have Wi-Fi on board



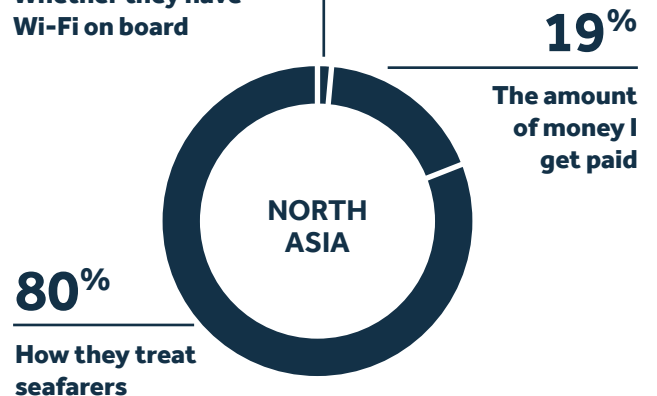
2%

Whether they have Wi-Fi on board



1%

Whether they have Wi-Fi on board



Reflection

Across all the regions, the overwhelming majority of the 2023 conference cadets – up to 91 per cent – placed the treatment of seafarers as their utmost priority when choosing their future employer.

And when we compare this with the same survey in our 2022 conferences, we see a remarkable consistency in cadet priorities across the two years.

This highlights a shared value that stretches across diverse cultural and regional contexts and mirrors a growing awareness and concern for humanitarian aspects within this Gen Z age group.

This new generation of seafarers expects employers to value workplace ethics and the wellbeing of their employees. The cadets' emphasis on fair and humane treatment aligns with the broader expectations and values often associated with this generation. Gen Z are known for their strong emphasis on social justice, inclusivity and ethical considerations, both in personal relationships and in the workplace.

These Gen Z cadets, who are just now entering the workforce and shaping societal norms, prioritize workplaces that demonstrate a commitment to ethical practices, employee wellbeing and

social responsibility. This in turn will bring a growing awareness and concern for humanitarian aspects within the whole maritime industry and how shipping companies treat seafarers will come sharply into focus.

This underscores the importance for shipping companies of promoting their work in crew wellbeing alongside wider ethical and social responsibilities. If the maritime industry wants to attract and retain talent from this generation, shipping companies will need to be aware of and prioritize the issues that are of concern to their future workforce.

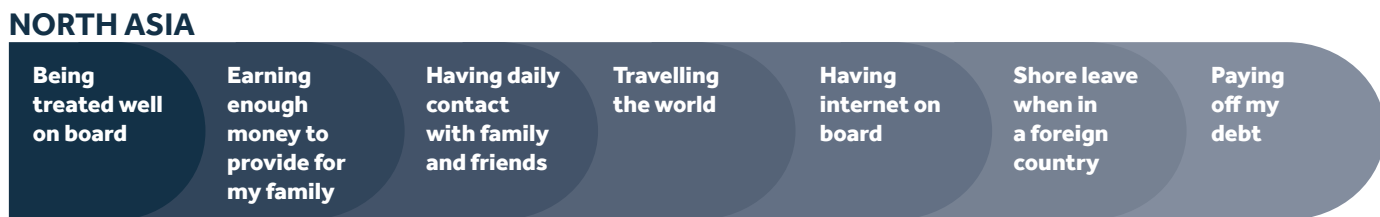
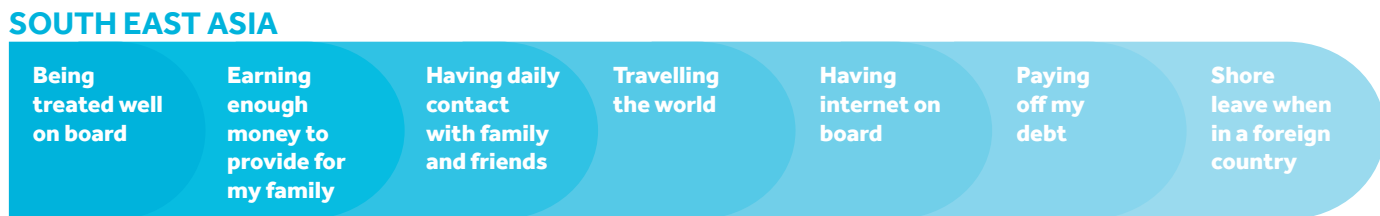
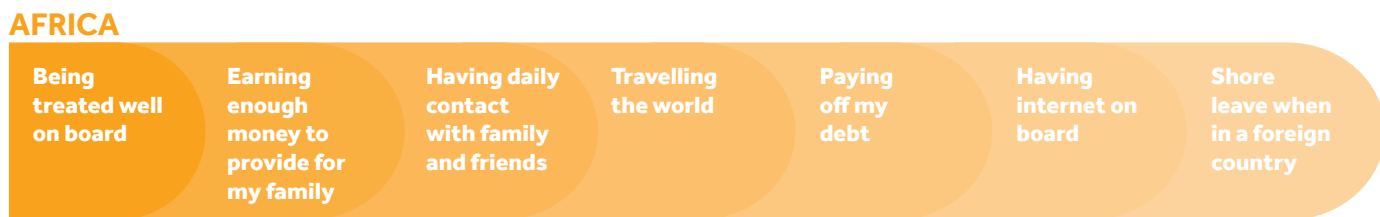
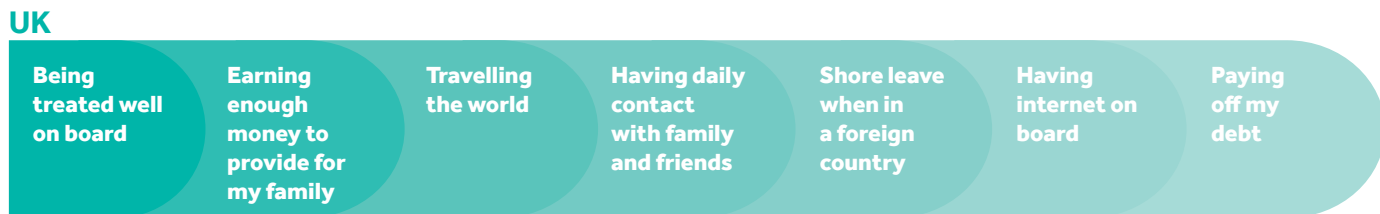


WE ASKED THE CADETS TO RANK WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE THE MOST TO LEAST IMPORTANT WHILE BEING AT SEA:

MOST IMPORTANT



LEAST IMPORTANT



Reflection

It's fascinating to see the common priorities and patterns among cadets from different regions in their rankings. The shared and definite emphasis among these Gen Z seafarers on being treated well on board reflects the importance of a positive work environment and the impact it can have on a person's overall wellbeing. This emphasis reflects the decision-making process for these cadets when choosing a shipping company.

The consistent prioritization of earning enough money to provide for their families highlights the universal nature of the responsibility all seafarers feel towards their loved ones and so it is not surprising that these results mirror those from the 2022 conferences. This shared concern across regions for taking care of

their families may stem from the fact that careers at sea often involve being away from home for extended periods, making financial stability a crucial aspect of their professional lives.

It is interesting that paying off debts ranges as a priority from region to region, with African cadets placing it higher than their counterparts, showing that financial concerns and wider economic conditions may be more of an issue with seafarers from this continent. Focused work on managing finances might be helpful for this region's seafarers.

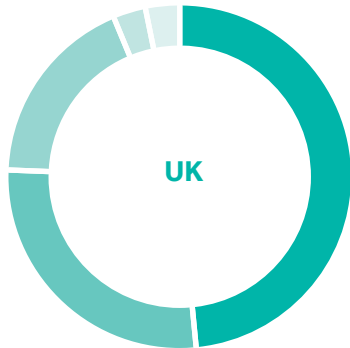
Just as in 2022, we see a clear disconnect between the cadets' strong desire to have daily contact with their family and their ranking of internet connectivity. This suggests that the gap between

expectations of connectivity by cadets and the real challenges of maintaining consistent internet access at sea still hasn't been addressed. It is clear more focus needs to be placed on this area of awareness training.

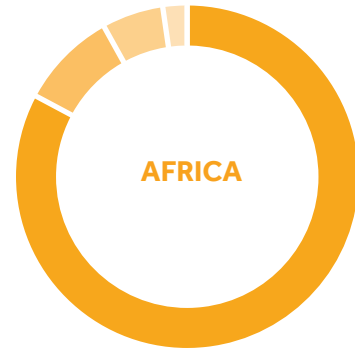
Overall, the nuanced differences in priorities (beyond the top two placings) indicate that while certain aspects are universally valued, cultural and regional influences that affect societal norms and personal values will lead to subtle variations.

Understanding these priorities and differences can be valuable for organizations involved in maritime training and employment. It could inform the development of policies, training programs and support systems that align with the needs and expectations of cadets from diverse backgrounds.

WE ASKED THE CADETS IF THEY PLANNED TO REMAIN IN THE INDUSTRY*



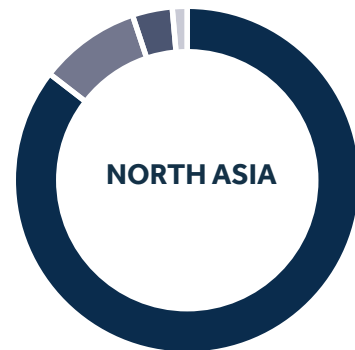
- 49%** I see it as a long term career
- 27%** I plan to do this for about five years
- 18%** I'm hoping to get a shore-based job in the shipping industry
- 3%** I'll probably never work in the industry after my training
- 3%** I plan to do this for a year or two



- 83%** I see it as a long term career
- 9%** I plan to do this for about five years
- 6%** I'm hoping to get a shore-based job in the shipping industry
- 2%** I'll probably never work in the industry after my training
- 0%** I plan to do this for a year or two



- 87%** I see it as a long term career
- 3.5%** I plan to do this for about five years
- 8.5%** I'm hoping to get a shore-based job in the shipping industry
- 0%** I'll probably never work in the industry after my training
- 1%** I plan to do this for a year or two



- 86%** I see it as a long term career
- 4%** I plan to do this for about five years
- 9%** I'm hoping to get a shore-based job in the shipping industry
- 0%** I'll probably never work in the industry after my training
- 1%** I plan to do this for a year or two

*Percentages for male and female cadets are the same

Reflection

The data in three regions - North Asia, South East Asia and Africa - presents encouraging insights for shipping companies. The overwhelming majority of cadets express a strong inclination towards a long-term career in the maritime industry. This commitment to a long-term career is promising, as it indicates a dedication to the industry, likely resulting in experienced and knowledgeable professionals.

This suggests that investment in cadets may yield lasting benefits for companies, as the cadets view the opportunities provided as a foundation for a sustained professional journey at sea.

However, the notable difference in responses from the United Kingdom raises intriguing questions. The significantly lower percentage of cadets in the UK envisioning a long-term career at sea might be attributed to various factors. Possible considerations include regional economic conditions, industry trends or the attractiveness of alternative career paths. It could also be indicative of unique challenges or perceptions within the UK

maritime sector that make long-term commitment less appealing to cadets.

Further investigation into the specific dynamics of the UK maritime industry, as well as understanding the career aspirations and opportunities perceived by cadets in the region, would be essential for a comprehensive analysis of this disparity. Shipping companies operating in the UK may need to explore strategies to enhance the attractiveness of long-term careers at sea to ensure a sustainable and skilled workforce.

What is of greatest significance is that female cadet answers mirrored the preferences of their male counterparts. An overwhelming portion (80+ per cent) expressed a commitment to a long-term career in the industry if given the opportunity.

Historically, there has been a misconception that women may not see a long-term future in the demanding and traditionally male-dominated field of seafaring. The survey results serve as a clear counterargument, demonstrating that female cadets share similar

aspirations and commitment levels as their male counterparts.

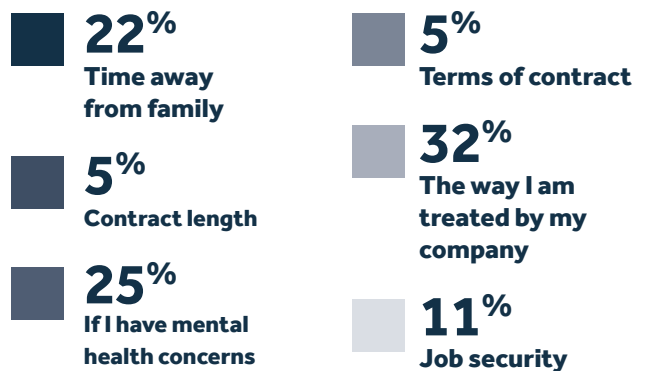
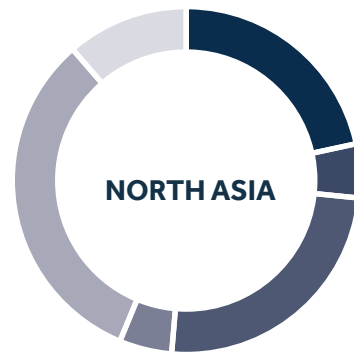
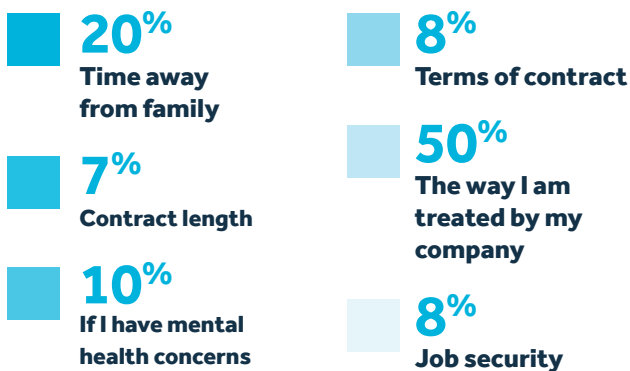
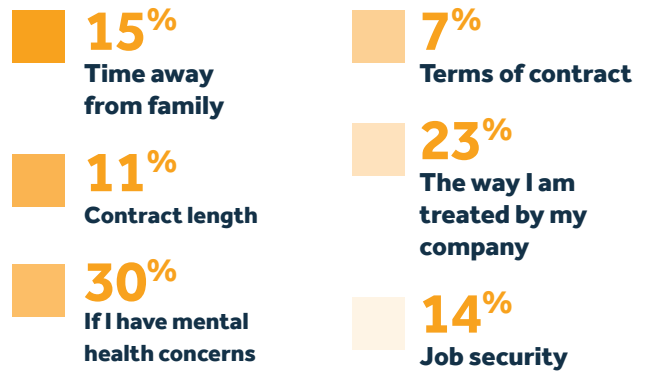
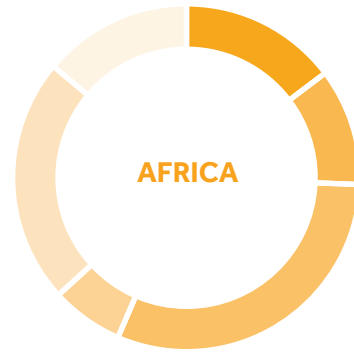
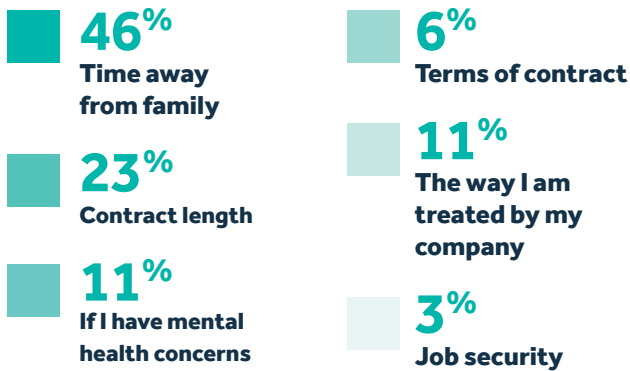
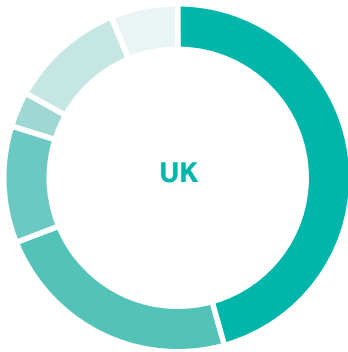
This challenges and contradicts the stereotype that has perpetuated the notion of females viewing seafaring as a short-lived or transitional phase in their professional lives.

The data not only challenges gender stereotypes but also highlights the evolving landscape of the maritime industry. It signals a shift towards a desire for inclusivity and gender equality, showcasing that women are not only interested in pursuing careers at sea but are also willing to make long-term commitments to the industry.

This information is crucial for fostering a more diverse and resilient maritime workforce, as it encourages the industry to recognise and support the ambitions of female professionals who see seafaring as a viable and enduring career path. Overall, these findings contribute to breaking down gender-related biases and fostering a more inclusive and equitable perception of careers in the seafaring sector.



WE ASKED THE CADETS WHAT THEIR BIGGEST MOTIVATION FOR LEAVING THE INDUSTRY WOULD BE.



Reflection

There is a notable trend across all the regions here - it is clear that the primary motivation for cadets leaving the maritime industry would be their treatment.

Again, this reflects the emphasis this generation places on their priorities of workplace ethics and the wellbeing of employees and therefore continues to underscore the universal importance of fostering positive and respectful workplace environments in the maritime sector.

The challenge of prolonged separations.

While their treatment is key, time away from home is also a predominant concern. And, whether this is described as time away from family or as the length of their contract, it is clear that across all the regions the challenge of prolonged separation is another central motivation for cadets contemplating departure.

This underscores the emotional toll of extended work periods at sea and emphasises the need for the maritime industry to address strategies that alleviate the impact of these separations and promote better work-life balance.

Recognizing the nuanced interplay between contract terms and the emotional strain of time away from family becomes crucial for industry stakeholders seeking to enhance job satisfaction and retain skilled professionals in this demanding field.

Mental health concerns.

The substantial number of cadets acknowledging that concerns about their mental health could lead them to exit the maritime industry is also significant.

A decade ago, there was much more stigma surrounding mental health issues in the maritime sector. This shift in cadets' attitudes highlights significant progress in mental health awareness within the industry and indicates that initiatives aimed at addressing mental health concerns are yielding dividends, fostering a more open and supportive environment where individuals feel comfortable acknowledging and addressing their mental wellbeing.

This evolution reflects a positive trend towards prioritizing mental health within the maritime community and underscores the importance of ongoing efforts to create a healthier and more resilient workforce.

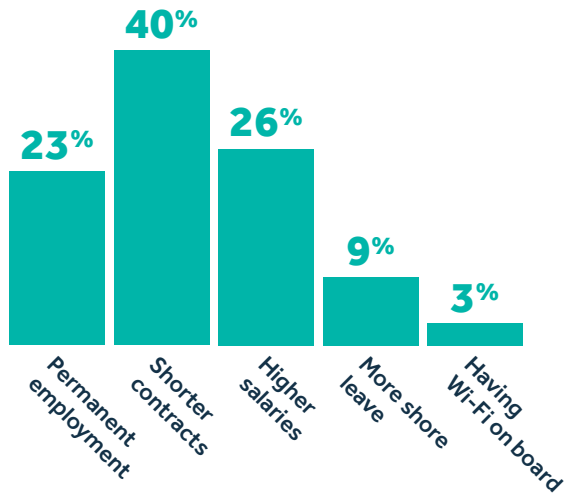
Amalgamating contract length and time away from family

Here we see the significance of time away from family as a key factor influencing cadets' decisions to leave the maritime industry. The data suggests that, regardless of the specific terms of their contracts, the overarching concern revolves around the challenging aspect of prolonged separations from family - highlighting its role as a central motivation for cadets contemplating departure.

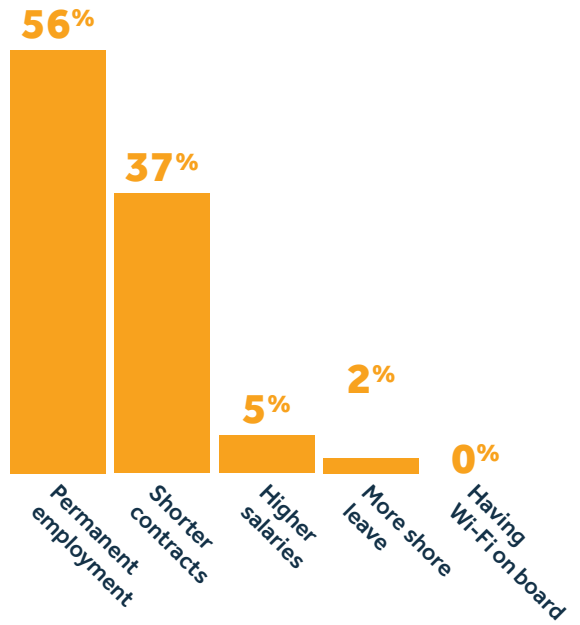


WE ASKED CADETS WHAT WOULD KEEP THEM IN THE INDUSTRY

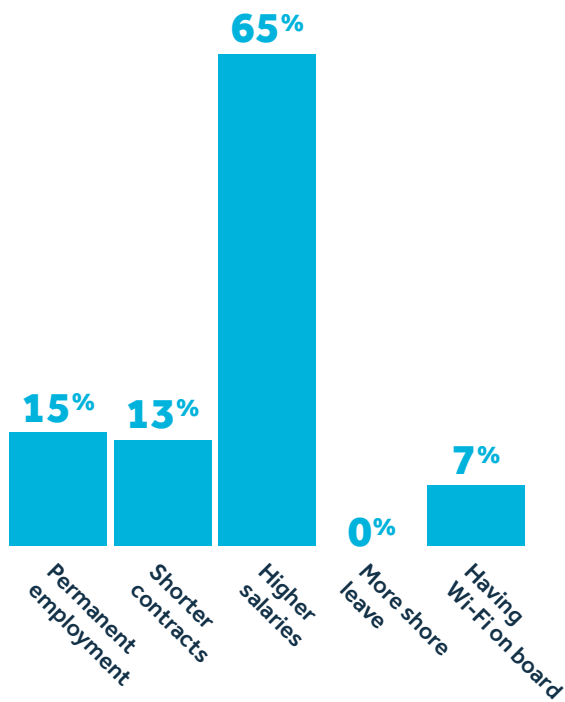
UK



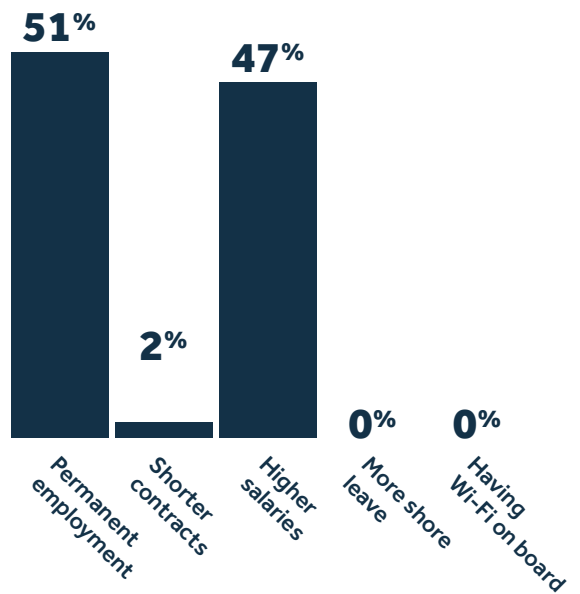
AFRICA



SOUTH EAST ASIA



NORTH ASIA



Reflection

The answers given again show subtle differences across the regions, reflecting the social and economic variations from country to country. This means shipping companies will need to address a range of factors if they are to retain a culturally diverse workforce.

Cadets from North Asia and Africa value permanent employment with 51 per cent of respondents indicating this is a key factor in retention. The focus on job stability suggests that individuals in this region value long-term commitment from employers.

South East Asia stands out for the cadets' significant emphasis on higher salaries, reflecting the importance of financial compensation in this region. But they are not alone. The desire for higher salaries is also a significant motivation among North Asian and African cadets, indicating that financial incentives will play a crucial role in retaining cadets.

Interestingly, the United Kingdom differs from the other regions, placing a considerable emphasis on shorter contracts (40 per cent). This suggests a more fluid approach to employment, with individuals in the UK maritime sector valuing the ability to explore different opportunities within shorter time frames. Higher salaries also play a role, but to a lesser extent than in other regions.

In conclusion, understanding these regional variations is crucial for industry stakeholders to tailor retention strategies that align with the specific preferences and priorities of cadets in different parts of the world.



Industry reflection

This data only confirms the social and cultural paradigm shift that is presently at play in the industry, while highlighting some of the challenges that continue to threaten the ability to attract and retain talent.

It also sheds light on the circumstances that can compromise the mental (and physical) wellbeing and wellness of our future seafarers and the desire, and more importantly the right, to be treated well shines through as a requirement for this generation.

Unfortunately for these cadets (and other seafarers), discrimination, bullying, sexual and physical abuse and other forms of social injustice and inequity continue to persist. There should be no room for this kind of circumstance or behaviour. Yet despite regulation, overall weak enforcement of on board standards by companies and regulatory bodies provides a pathway for these inadequate circumstances to endure.

Our future workforce needs to be made aware of the norms that they should reasonably expect, the rights and protections afforded to them under MLC regulations and the support available when these rights are not upheld.

It is certainly a positive that concerns around mental health and treatment are seen as important by this generation. Caution must therefore be exercised by the industry to safeguard against corrosive situations developing where mental health could be threatened. There is also a need to constantly raise awareness and highlight bad actors.

Again, we need to make cadets aware of their rights and the help and support networks available to them.

But it also remains to be seen if, once at sea, these cadets will end up tolerating unacceptable treatment and conditions at the expense of their mental wellness and wellbeing, out of loyalty or concern for future employment.

It is also important to highlight the potential safety implications. For seafarers involved in highly critical safety tasks, poor mental health can increase the likelihood of accidents, injury or fatality. In 2023, RightShip inspection data revealed that seven per cent of recorded findings pertained to crew health and welfare. Across 64 inspections, RightShip inspectors found that vessels failed to meet the on board key personnel training requirement to recognize signs of mental health problems. Additionally, in 26 other inspections, vessels lacked sufficient policies for addressing mental health and mental disorders.

It is clear from this report that there is a lot to learn from this younger generation. They have social clarity of mind and are motivated by purpose, equality and inclusion. Those companies that are unable to adapt to the calling for a shift in social norms and workplace culture not only threaten their own survivability but that of the shipping industry, given the challenges faced to attract and retain talent.



Andrew Roberts, Executive Director, EMEA, RightShip

THE MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECRUITING SEAFARERS FROM DIFFERENT REGIONS

UNITED KINGDOM:

Recruitment Emphasis:

- Highlight opportunities for travel and the chance to fulfil familial responsibilities as primary motivators.
- Address the unique apprehension about coping with life at sea, emphasising support systems.

Addressing Concerns:

- Understand and address challenges related to the seafaring lifestyle to attract and retain UK cadets.
- Focus on creating a positive work environment on board to alleviate concerns about life at sea.

Retention Strategies:

- Acknowledge the preference for shorter contracts and provide opportunities for development within the industry.
- Maximise opportunities to see different countries by rotating seafarers on different routes.

SOUTH EAST ASIA AND NORTH ASIA:

Recruitment Emphasis:

- Highlight the importance of family responsibility and financial wellbeing as primary motivators.
- Emphasise the potential for permanent employment and job stability.

Addressing Concerns:

- Recognise the significance of time away from family and implement strategies to alleviate its impact.
- Consider offering competitive salaries and job stability as key retention factors.

Retention Strategies:

- Emphasise permanent employment and job stability in recruitment efforts.
- Recognise the importance of financial incentives and offer competitive salaries for retention.

AFRICA:

Recruitment Emphasis:

- Highlight the potential for substantial earnings and the opportunity to take care of family as key motivators for pursuing a career at sea.
- Emphasise the appeal of travelling the world as a unique aspect of the seafaring profession.

Addressing Concerns:

- Recognise the high concern over unemployment and work towards bridging the gap between maritime education and employment opportunities.
- Implement policies that support family obligations and financial stability, considering the cultural context.

Retention Strategies:

- Emphasise permanent employment and job stability in recruitment efforts.
- Consider offering competitive salaries as a key retention factor.

GLOBAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Actively promote gender diversity and inclusion initiatives, recognizing the evolving landscape of the maritime industry.
- Tailor recruitment strategies to appeal to a diverse workforce, considering the motivations and priorities of both male and female cadets.

Mental Health Awareness:

- Continue efforts to address mental health concerns and create a supportive environment.
- Offer resources and support systems to ensure the wellbeing of cadets and professionals in the maritime industry.

Technological Considerations:

- Recognise the importance of internet connectivity for cadets and seafarers.
- Invest in technology on board to enhance connectivity and communication, addressing the expectations of the new generation.

Ethical Treatment:

- Prioritize fair and humane treatment in recruitment and retention efforts.
- Align recruitment practices with the values of Gen Z, emphasizing social justice, inclusivity and ethical considerations.

CADET EXPERIENCES

Cadet Adam Birch attended our first UK conference

As this was the first time I and my fellow cadets had the chance to attend a conference on wellness at sea, I must admit I was pleasantly surprised to see there was a huge number of both cadets and experienced professionals advocating for this – one of the most controversial topics when it comes to life at sea.

Let's not forget that life at sea can be challenging and it was instilled in me from the start that this life I have chosen, where the world can change with the wind and alter on the shift of a tide, is not for everyone.

But I am really pleased that it's because of initiatives like Sailors' Society's Wellness at Sea cadet conferences, seafarers both young and old, cadet and experienced crew, can approach the industry head-on and face the challenges with their heads held high.

Conferences like the one that I attended (the first in the UK!) make a difference, they give cadets like us the opportunity to have our say and for us to know that our opinions and concerns have been heard and addressed.

I think these conferences are key to our industry being able to move forward and continue to grow as we enter this new era where changes are constantly being made. It was amazing to hear such experienced and passionate people express their views on the situations regarding Wellness at Sea.

Life aboard a ship can be intimidating and nerve-racking at times and then on top of that having to deal with Isolation and homesickness can be very overwhelming. But it is important to note and remember that these feelings are completely normal and you won't be the only one to tackle them.

The conference showed me that you are not alone. In many cases, ships are like a big family. You are all there for the same reason, everyone's role is what makes that ship work and it is important to remember that no one is more important than the other.

Another message that I took away is that there are resources out there to help deal with all the issues that you will encounter out at sea, you just have to accept them. And, most importantly, it's clear a positive attitude can make all the difference and can help influence others.

I believe we are the stewards of the sea. We are there together and only together can we tackle the challenges going forward. Therefore, I think conferences like these are essential to our future and the future of our industry.

Safe seas and fair winds!



Cadet Adam Birch
Fleetwood Nautical College

Q&A with Dr Syed Asif Altaf Chowdhury Global Wellbeing & HIV Program Coordinator at International Transport Workers Federation(ITF)

In your experience, what would be the most effective strategies for balancing the demands of a maritime career with family life and how can the industry better support seafarers in this regard?

A maritime career is demanding and challenging as seafarers have, on average, to stay away from their home and family for eight to nine months. For a good work-life balance while on board, the first thing that is needed is mandatory internet connection on ships. We must remember that, unlike the older generation, new/young millennial seafarers are born and live with devices and with the internet. For them, it is a must. The industry also needs to find ways to shorten job contracts to ensure work-life balance and retention of seafarers for long maritime careers.

The data collected at the conferences highlighted an increasing concern about mental health among cadets. How has the industry's attitude towards mental health evolved over the past decade?

The COVID pandemic highlighted the importance of mental health issues not only for seafarers but all of us. Even before the pandemic, a study commissioned by the ITF, ITF Seafarers Trust and Yale University showed that 28 per cent of seafarers have either depression or anxiety disorder. Some 20 per cent of seafarers have suicidal thoughts. This is not just feeling sad, this is indicative of a much more serious mental health condition. The industry has been slow to respond to this emerging problem. And while the industry's response is now changing for the positive, the response is reactive rather than proactive and there is still not enough synergy and coordination among industry partners to provide support to seafarers.

Given the changing landscape and increased awareness of mental health, what recommendations do you have for maritime training institutions and companies to better prepare cadets for the mental health challenges they may encounter during their careers?

Maritime training is about getting ships from point A to point B in the quickest, safest way. However, maritime training across the world seems to have missed a fundamental aspect which can have a profound impact on seafarers' lives and ultimately on the shipping world. With a focus on industry-specific training, the human side of what the job of a seafarer requires is often neglected. From the ITF perspective, we think we need to take a proactive approach and prepare cadets/students about reality on board ships in maritime academies and training institutes. We need to tell them that seafaring is a rewarding career but challenging and demanding too. There will be stress and we need to teach them about stress; how to recognise/identify signs and symptoms early and also teach them to reach out for support when they need it. We must create a culture of openness and safe space so that all seafarers do not hide or remain quiet about their mental health issues, but reach out for support.

What role should the industry and regulatory bodies play in promoting family time and mental health support for maritime professionals?

As I mentioned before, for work-life balance and policies related to family time, it is essential that there is internet connectivity on board ships and in ports. It is expected that as part of MLC 2006 amendments, there will be internet on board and in ports. This policy needs to be enforced and from the ITF perspective internet must be of good quality and free of charge as it is the responsibility of the employers to promote the wellbeing of all seafarers. We must remember that happy ships are safe ships. To provide mental health support, companies should also offer access to a 24/7 confidential, non-judgmental psychological helpline managed by trained psychologists.

What do you see as the most significant barriers or challenges in implementing changes to address these issues in the maritime industry and how can stakeholders work together to overcome these challenges?

The maritime industry is slowly starting to take initiatives to address mental health challenges faced by seafarers and provide support. But the biggest challenge is that there is almost no or very little coordination, collaboration and synergy among stakeholders. Most of the initiatives are vertical initiatives rather than taking a holistic proactive approach. Some employers have started tele-counselling services for their crews, but confidentiality and trust issues prevent seafarers from seeking help. Many times, they are afraid to talk about their mental health conditions and seek necessary support and care because they are afraid of losing their jobs and being blacklisted. I think all maritime stakeholders including employers, trade unions, welfare organisations and others need to collaborate and coordinate.



**Dr Syed Asif Altaf Chowdhury
Global Wellbeing & HIV Program Coordinator
at International Transport Workers
Federation(ITF)**

Looking ahead, what actions and collaborations should be prioritized to ensure a positive and sustainable working environment for seafarers?

To have a lasting effect and to provide necessary mental health support, we need to create an enabling environment so that seafarers feel safe and comfortable talking about mental health issues. We need to have a free-to-use internet connection in all ships and ports. Because of the quick turnarounds in port and the decreased time for shore leave, it is a challenge to reach out to those sailing seafarers. We therefore need to take a proactive approach. We need to educate future/upcoming seafarers on managing stress and mental health issues by incorporating wellbeing and managing stress modules in the maritime curriculum. This would ensure that before going on their first voyage, these new seafarers have some understanding of the stress they will face and have the knowledge and skill to manage it. Again, I stress, that there should be a collaboration between employers, trade unions and welfare organizations to provide 24/7 counselling services for seafarers and their families.

Diversity

Our conferences have provided a clear insight into just how significant the issue of diversity in the maritime industry is to this next generation of seafarers.

From the discussions and panels to the presentations delivered over the past two years, we have gained valuable perspectives and these emphasised the need for a comprehensive exploration of this theme.

Beyond mere demographic considerations, diversity encompasses a spectrum of factors, such as age, background and experience. Recognizing and embracing these diverse perspectives is not only an ethical imperative but also a strategic move that fosters innovation, creativity and adaptability within the industry.

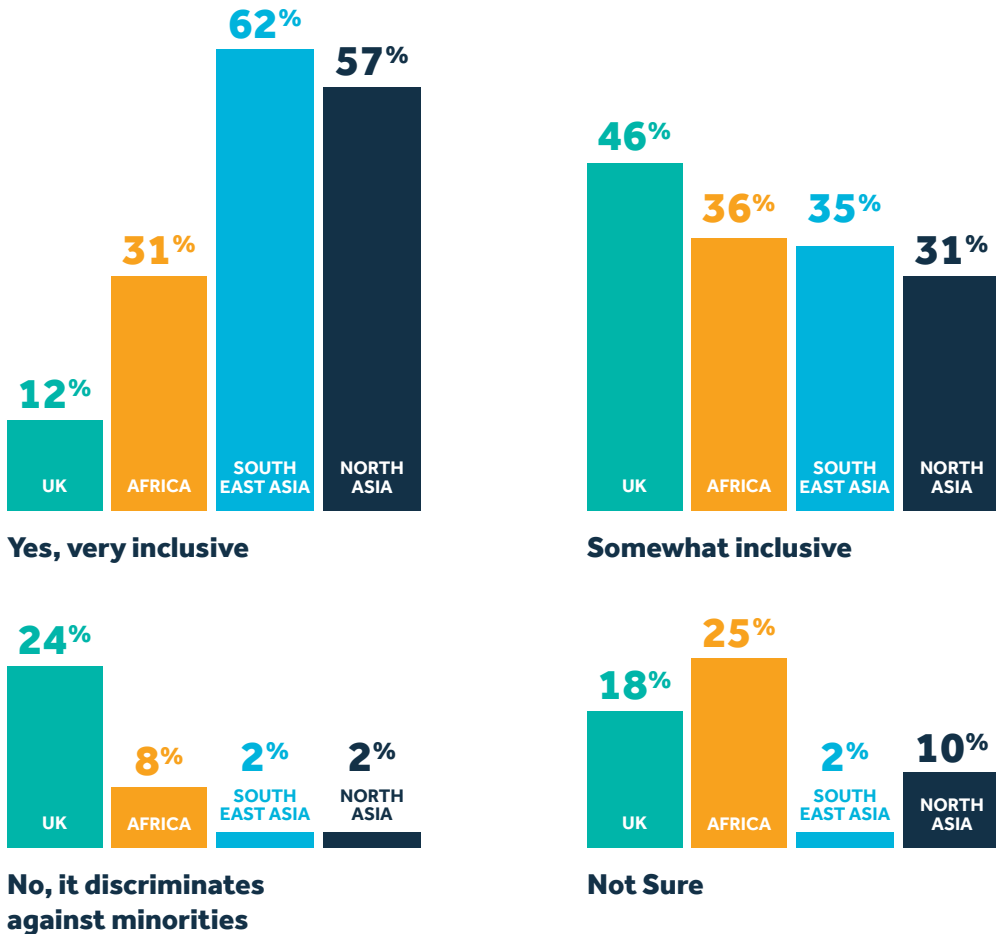
The maritime industry's understanding and action regarding diversity has evolved significantly and recent industry trends and developments underscore the critical importance of diversity. Policy changes, initiatives and success stories from companies that have embraced diversity highlight its positive impact on business performance.

We hope that by providing this insight from the future of the industry, who increasingly prioritize organizations that champion diversity and inclusion, we can highlight the need for an industry-wide commitment to meeting these expectations and values.



We asked the cadets:

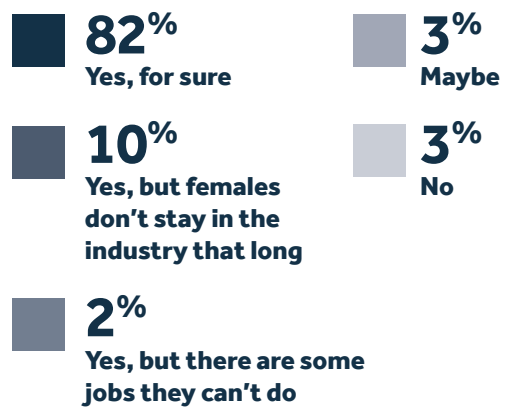
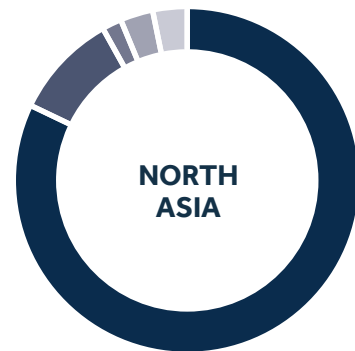
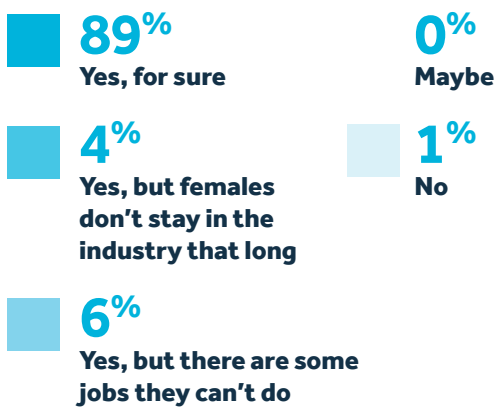
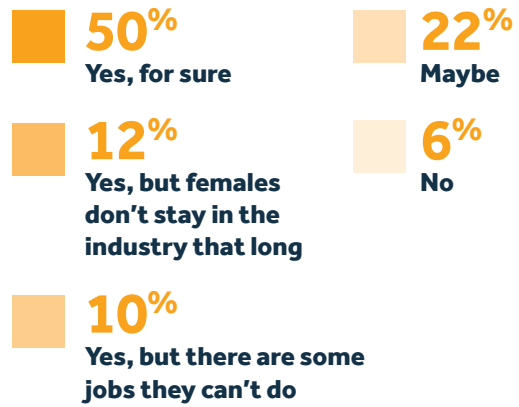
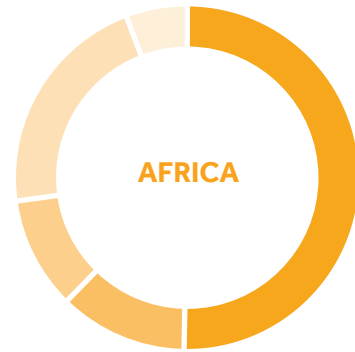
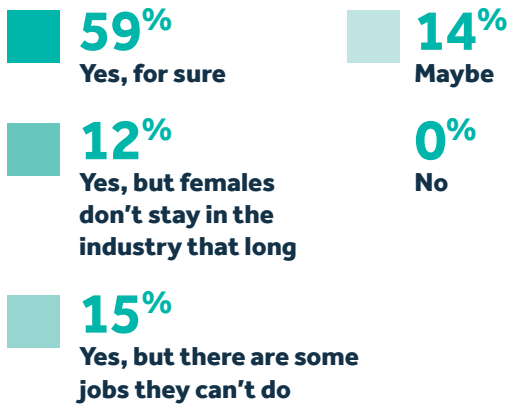
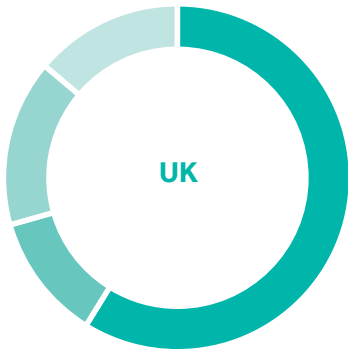
IN YOUR OPINION, IS THE MARITIME INDUSTRY INCLUSIVE IN TERMS OF WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION?



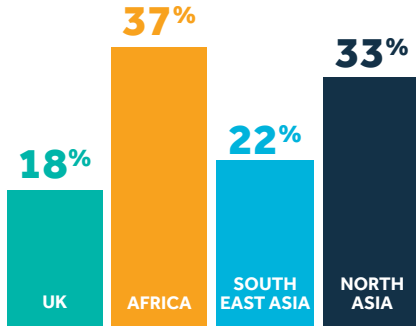
HAVE YOU PERSONALLY WITNESSED OR EXPERIENCED ANY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION (GENDER, RACE, ETHNICITY, ETC.) DURING YOUR TIME IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY?



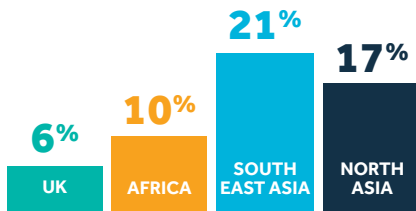
DO YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT:
"THERE IS A PLACE FOR FEMALE SEAFARERS IN THE INDUSTRY"



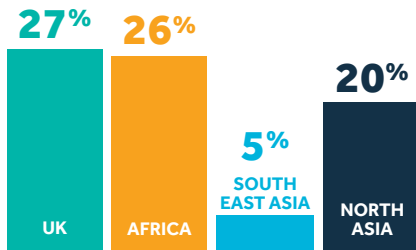
WHAT CHALLENGES, IF ANY, DO YOU BELIEVE FEMALE SEAFARERS FACE IN THE INDUSTRY?



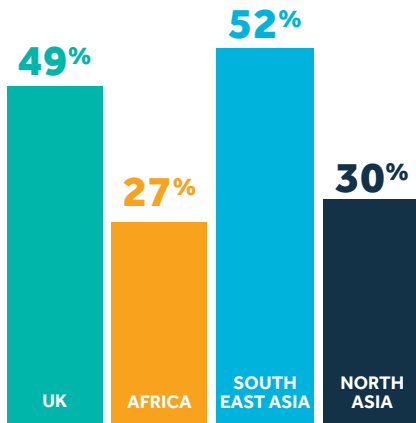
Limited access to training opportunities and career advancement



Adequate representation in leadership roles

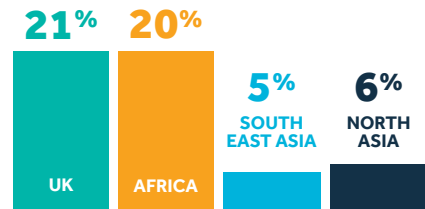


No significant challenges faced by female seafarers



Equal opportunities as male seafarers

HOW DO YOU BELIEVE DIVERSITY IMPACTS TEAMWORK AND COOPERATION ON BOARD SHIPS?



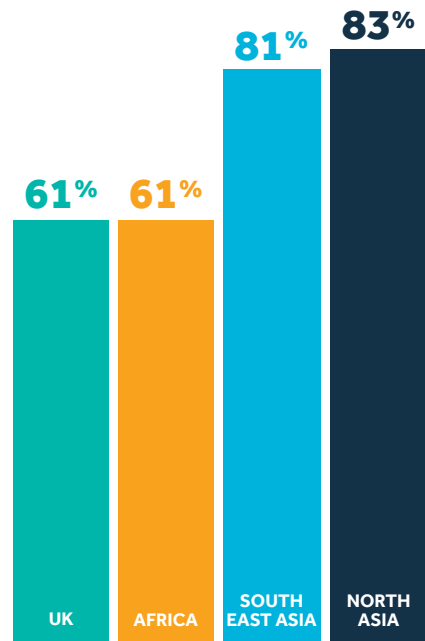
It has no significant impact on teamwork



I am not sure

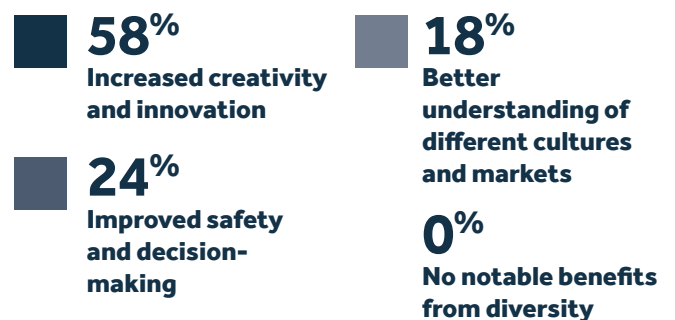
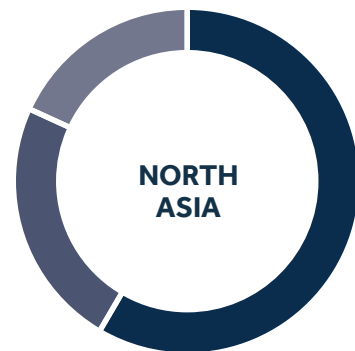
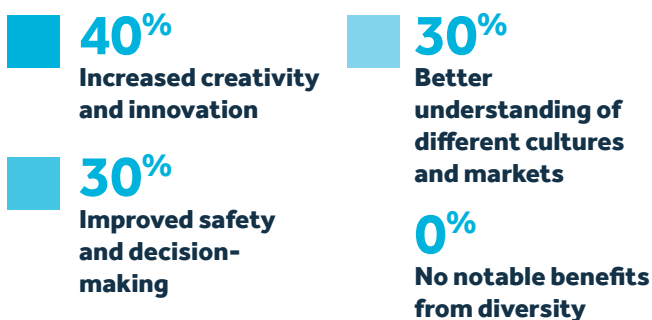
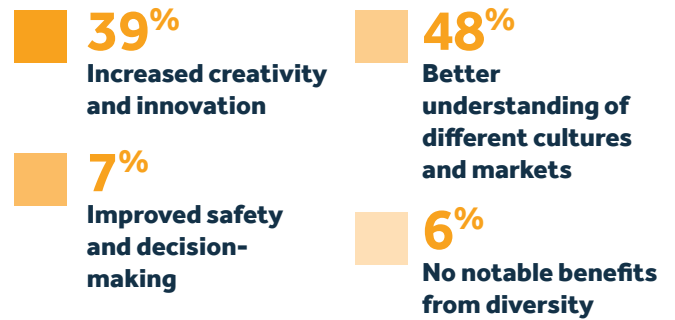
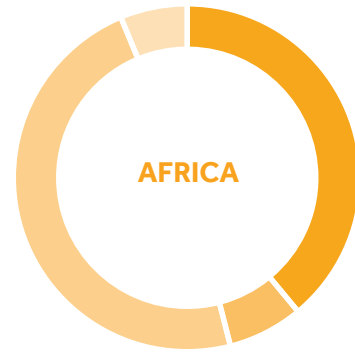
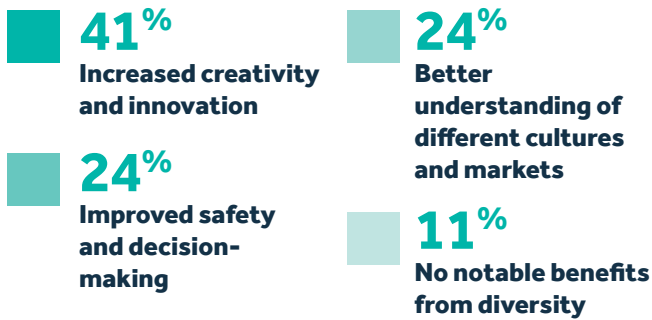
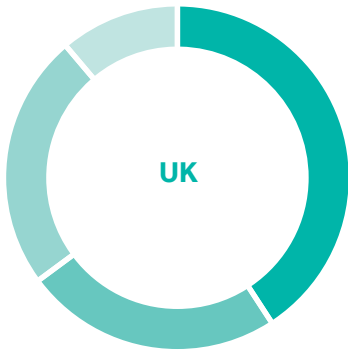


It hinders teamwork and cooperation

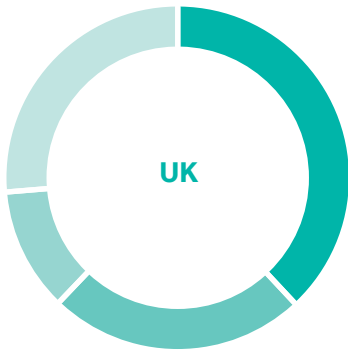


It improves teamwork and cooperation

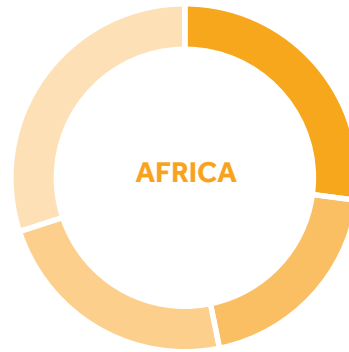
WHAT BENEFITS, IF ANY, DO YOU THINK HAVING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE BRINGS TO THE MARITIME INDUSTRY?



WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE FOR COMPANIES TO RECRUIT FEMALES IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY?



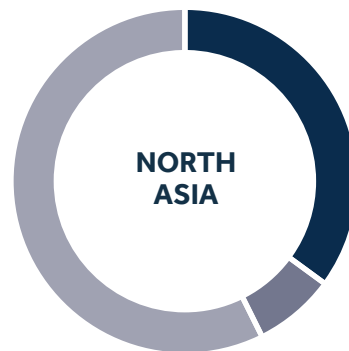
- 38%** Lack of interest among women in pursuing seafaring careers
- 24%** Gender bias and discrimination in the recruitment process
- 12%** Inadequate facilities and accommodations for female seafarers
- 26%** Limited awareness and outreach to encourage female applicants



- 27%** Lack of interest among women in pursuing seafaring careers
- 20%** Gender bias and discrimination in the recruitment process
- 23%** Inadequate facilities and accommodations for female seafarers
- 30%** Limited awareness and outreach to encourage female applicants



- 11%** Lack of interest among women in pursuing seafaring careers
- 54%** Gender bias and discrimination in the recruitment process
- 14%** Inadequate facilities and accommodations for female seafarers
- 21%** Limited awareness and outreach to encourage female applicants



- 35%** Lack of interest among women in pursuing seafaring careers
- 0%** Gender bias and discrimination in the recruitment process
- 8%** Inadequate facilities and accommodations for female seafarers
- 57%** Limited awareness and outreach to encourage female applicants

Industry reflection

What stands out to me from the cadet survey data is the clear variance in responses by region. This highlights the need for a nuanced approach when it comes to diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI).

As is often the case, the answers give rise to more questions. For example, why is there such a stark difference in regional responses when it comes to DEI?

In the UK, awareness around the depth and breadth of DEI is often considered more mature and will span gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, neurodiversity and gender identity, amongst others. Therefore, there is often an expectation among those entering the maritime industry that they will see this broad diversity reflected across the employee population.

However, this can differ greatly from reality, especially in other regions where lived and cultural experiences, societal 'norms' as well as legislation vary greatly and the interpretation of 'diversity' may be narrower.

Therefore, it would be useful to understand if the regional variations highlighted are down to diversity, equality and inclusion meaning different things to different people based on their geography. More specifically, we need to understand how this manifests in each region. The answers would allow us to adopt an appropriately tailored approach.

As increasing gender representation among seafarers is a focal area for many organisations and maritime educational establishments across the industry, it is interesting to see the differences across the regions and the spread of the results in the answers to the gender representation questions.

The data highlights a number of challenges. These include a perception around the abilities of female seafarers and a perceived lack of interest among females in seafaring careers. These may also be linked to the concept that there is little awareness of the industry as a whole, along with problems in the recruitment process. Again, this poses more questions. We need to be able to gain a more detailed understanding to be able to develop appropriate action plans.

We know that in diversity, equality and inclusion there is no 'one size fits all' approach and this data highlights the need to take a nuanced approach when it comes to learning about the different challenges and perceptions of those looking to start a seafaring career.

This will allow us to understand what is important to them in the workplace and how we as an industry can support them.



**Heidi Heseltine, Founder,
Diversity Study Group**

CADET EXPERIENCES

Cadet Vaibhavi Pare was an attendee at our Indian conference and a panellist at our UK Conference

Being an Indian Cadet Panellist and attending the UK conference has made a great impact on me. The panel discussion was very interactive and gave me the confidence and platform to speak up about the fears and challenges I and my generation face when going to sea.

Imposter Syndrome is a psychological phenomenon which threatens self-confidence, professional growth and these feelings of unworthiness and self-doubt - despite being as capable as others. I think this might be the biggest challenge faced by my generation.

But, like all seafarers, we will also feel lonely, suffer from fatigue and tiredness from continuous work, get homesick and feel overwhelmed by work pressure.

The conference showed me that these are all the key elements which affect and are responsible for the mental and physical wellbeing of any person. But it also allowed me to see that while embracing a maritime career one must also embrace the difficulties and that you can overcome them.

When I ask myself, how am I going to make the most of my life at sea when I go on ship? I now have learnt about the things I can do on a personal level.

The conference showed me I should always look to the positive side of life. I shouldn't hesitate to speak up and share the things which concern me with the person I am most comfortable with. It also stressed good hours of sleep are important.

I've learnt that, if possible, I should maintain a gratitude diary or a journal, meditation, do daily exercises for physical fitness and keep up with my hobbies.

The key is always to try to spare some time for yourself - even 15 minutes a day is sufficient.

I've also learnt that at sea we face unique challenges - in a crew of 20-25, where people come from different nations, it can be hard to resonate because of the difference in lifestyle and lack of effective communication. But a few changes can make a big difference, such as more awareness and right guidance, initiating monthly feedback of crew on board, a designated person for looking at welfare for crew and including some fun activities and weekly tasks, encouraging healthy conversations, shore support and improving the senior and junior interrelationships.

I have learnt a lot and gained in confidence for my future life at sea.



Cadet Vaibhavi Pare
TS Chanakya IMU (Indian Maritime University) NMC, India

Challenges and reactions

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE SEAFARERS FACE WHEN GOING TO SEA?



Reflection

Taking a holistic view and examining the interconnected nature of challenges faced by seafarers provides an insightful interpretation of cadets' perceptions.

The theme of missing family emerged as a predominant concern, expressed through various wordings such as 'homesick', 'away from family', and directly 'missing family'.

We believe this sentiment is closely linked to the theme of isolation and loneliness, where terms like 'alone' and 'isolation' encompassed more than just physical distance, likely reflecting the emotional impact of being away from family. While there is no explicit statistic connecting 'family', 'alone', and 'mental health', the link is strongly implied.

Notably, racism featured prominently as a challenge in the African region, aligning with the previous 2022 data which also highlighted racism as an issue within the African maritime context. The recurrence of racism and discrimination as a topic during the African conference underlines the importance of addressing these issues within the maritime industry.

A compelling observation is the frequency with which diversity-related topics were flagged as potential challenges for seafarers across regions.

Words like 'language barriers', 'culture-shock' and 'cross-cultural' signify the complexity of interactions in diverse maritime environments.

Perhaps most noteworthy is that many of the challenges listed could be linked to relationships, whether cross-cultural, on board or with those back home. This emphasises the significance of fostering supportive on board environments, addressing issues related to cultural diversity and implementing measures to enhance mental wellbeing.

Recognizing and proactively addressing these interconnected challenges is crucial for creating a more resilient and supportive environment for seafarers globally.



CADET EXPERIENCES

Cadet Ummehani (Hani) Jahangir Mulla, was also on the UK cadet panel.

Interacting with other officers and seafarers from the UK and hearing the different experiences they shared, really helped me to get an insight into their perspective.

I had many doubts about the difficulties and challenges I might face on board, but I am so grateful to the conference speakers and my fellow seafarer panellists who guided me and provided me with the information I needed.

There were big takeaways from the conferences. It helped me to get insight into how we should take care of our mental health while working on board. I saw that working in an environment while isolated from the world, you should not only be physically fit but mentally prepared to face the workload and work pressure.

At sea, taking care of your mental, physical and emotional wellbeing should never be compromised as it's clear these are the aspects that will help you to be more efficient and take wise decisions even in the toughest of times.

These virtual conferences were very informative and most required for cadets like me. I was very fortunate to be given this amazing opportunity to be part of such a knowledgeable event.



Cadet Ummehani Jahangir Mulla
TS Chanakya IMU NMC, India

Education

Cadet perspectives on wellness and mental health and the role of maritime schools in preparing them for a life at sea.



WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH IS A KEY PART OF BEING A SEAFARER



ENOUGH IS DONE BY MY MARITIME SCHOOL TO PREPARE ME FOR THE WELLBEING CHALLENGES OF LIFE AT SEA



Reflection

It seems that across the continents, cadets unanimously agree on the importance of wellness and mental health in the context of being a seafarer but feel more could be done while they are in training to prepare them for the challenges they will face at sea.

Historically, the maritime industry has been known for its challenging working conditions and isolation, which can contribute to stress and mental health issues among seafarers.

But happily, there has been a general increased awareness and acknowledgement of these challenges and this indicates a growing understanding of the need to prioritize the mental and emotional wellbeing of those working at sea.

It is now acknowledged that recognizing the importance of mental health and wellbeing is crucial not only for the individuals involved but also for the overall safety and efficiency of maritime operations. This marks a significant shift in perspective compared to a decade ago.

It is clear these Gen Z cadets felt their maritime educational institutions were making strides in their efforts to prepare them for the stresses and strains of their future careers, but they felt there was still room for improvement in this area. The addition of our Wellness at Sea conferences into the curriculum has clearly been welcomed as a step in the right direction. (See general conference feedback).

However, support for wellness and good mental health should not rest entirely with the maritime schools. Once cadets have embarked on their careers, employers should look to make efforts to address these concerns. This could include implementing support programs, providing access to mental health resources and fostering a culture that encourages open communication about mental health issues.

The data gathered shows there has been a considerable shift in mindset of the future generation of seafarers towards maintaining their wellness and mental health while at sea. This can only be seen as a positive step towards creating a healthier and more sustainable work environment for seafarers.



Cadet suggestions for improved education around their wellness at sea

During the four conferences, cadets posted more than 400 suggestions for maritime schools and governments that they felt could better help prepare them.

Some were basic, easily achievable suggestions, like taking cadets to visit a ship before they joined their first contract. Some were more philosophical, like 'train us for life, not just for work'. Others were focused on regulatory aspects.

In an effort to make these suggestions more digestible, we have summarised the spirit and essence by identifying the main themes and mentioning a few highlights:

THEME 1:

Practical training and exposure

- Provide ship visits for cadets to gain hands-on experience.
- Emphasise practical knowledge in the curriculum.
- Introduce on board sea experiences during academic periods.
- Provide training specifically aimed at enhancing wellbeing.
- Conduct regular port visits, interactive simulators and team-building exercises.

THEME 2:

Mental health and wellbeing

- Conduct regular psychological assessments through surveys.
- Expose cadets to on board stories and experiences to help them understand on board problems and stress.
- Offer free mental health support.
- Provide wellness programs and awareness about mental health challenges at sea.

THEME 3:

Government and institute collaboration

- Establish partnerships with maritime industry stakeholders.
- Ensure compliance with international standards in maritime education.
- Promote safety measures and higher salaries in collaboration with the government.
- Create laws and support systems for anti-piracy measures.

THEME 4:

Realistic view of life at sea

- Provide a realistic view of life at sea and shipping companies' policies.
- Avoid false promises about placements and career prospects.
- Include more real-life experiences and case studies in the syllabus.
- Encourage experienced seafarers to share their stories with students.
- Promote the field of merchant navy and enhance exposure through webinars and workshops.

Industry reflection

The overarching emphasis in recent times on marks, degrees and jobs has not only robbed the young mind of the fun of learning but has also multiplied the stress points. Social pressures arising from hours spent on social media, intense competition for classroom performance and those coveted maritime jobs have only aggravated the situation.

I strongly believe that the experience in the classroom moulds the attitude of the youth. Positive experiences boost confidence and negative ones dishearten their minds. These experiences lay the foundation for a student's attitude and confidence in the future life.

The questions and the results of the cadet conference surveys reveal two salient aspects – the confidence and maturity on the part of these soon-to-be seafarers to recognise the signs and symptoms of poor mental health and, for them, the comfort of having a friend to discuss and take judicious advice from.

The discrepancies in the responses from region to region, especially Africa, could well be a result of the mix of developing and developed countries and linked to this the affluence of the students and the entry-level educational requirements of each region.

Overall, we can see there has been a slight improvement in the awareness level of cadets with respect to mental health, especially in India and Africa. This could be in part because of better training programmes, especially companies taking the initiative to provide such training with their cadets.

However, the drop in the awareness levels from the 2022 data in South East Asia is of concern. The Philippines is a major seafarer-supplying country and it seems

we would need to see a greater take-up in wellness training to improve these levels.

So, how should maritime schools tackle wellbeing among these future seafarers going forward?

The data tells me that more training, such as Sailors' Society's Wellness at Sea programme, would increase the awareness level further amongst the cadets. Our maritime institutions must not overlook the fact that many cadets experience low phase of mental health at times resulting in low motivation. Specific wellness training such as faculty mentors, qualified counsellors, empathetic wardens and a conducive ecosystem (welcoming library, outdoor space and recreational facilities) would help them learn important coping mechanisms and also make them aware of resources available in case they need help.

We also need to address the language used around this area. The phrase 'signs and symptoms' can speak indiscreetly about 'illness' and create societal stigma. It brings with it negative connotations in young minds. If we are to inspire and educate to uplift this next generation of seafarers then the concept of 'mental happiness' is much better. It brings with it a positivity to the subject, suggesting happiness can be achieved by good wellbeing and sound mental health.

The good news is that the current generation of students is more receptive and has a good level of acceptance towards mental health. These cadets have strong viewpoints and are not hesitant to voice their opinions on mental health.

Harnessing this with positive targeted training across the regions will see positive results among these seafarers of the future.



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IAS (Retd)
Vice Chancellor
Indian Maritime University

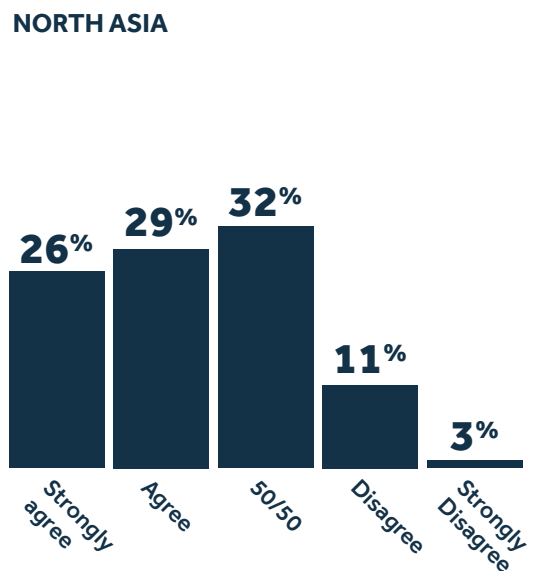
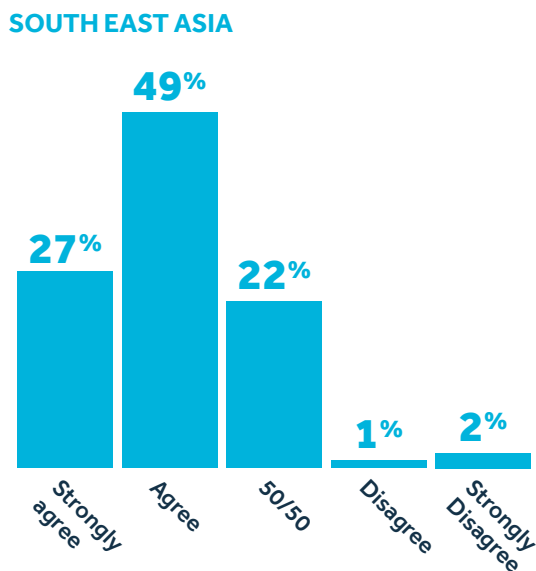
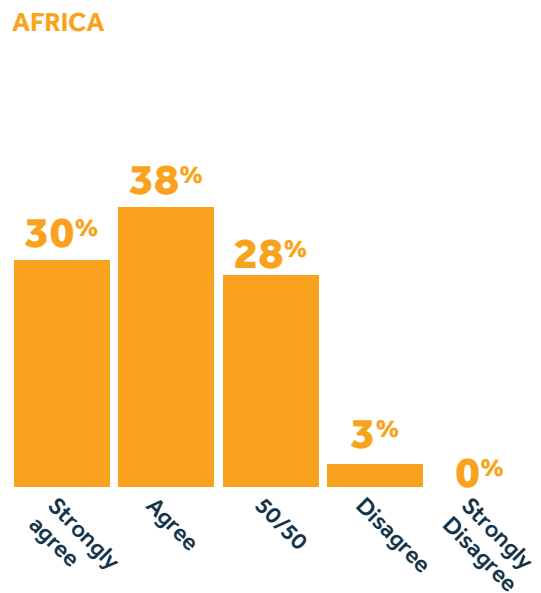
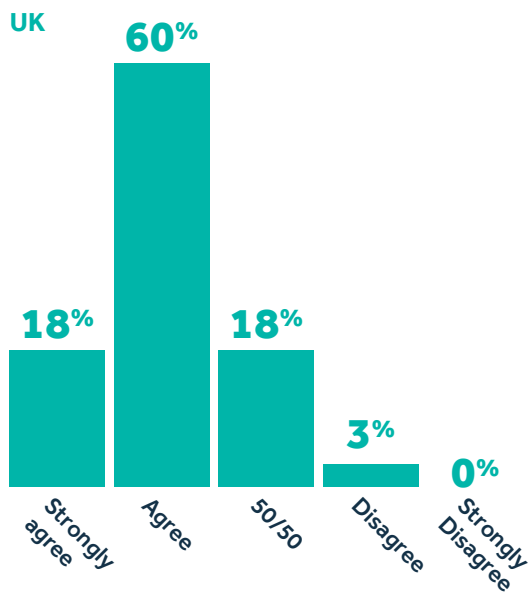
Cadet mental health

Recognising the signs and symptoms



Cadets were asked to reflect on the following statements:

I KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH TO RECOGNISE EARLY WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

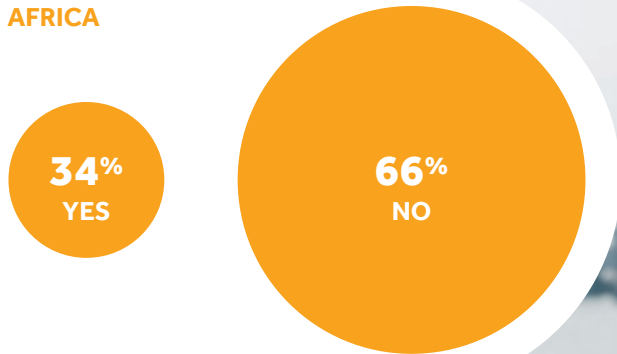


I HAVE BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE I HAVE RECOGNISED SOME SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH IN MY OWN LIFE

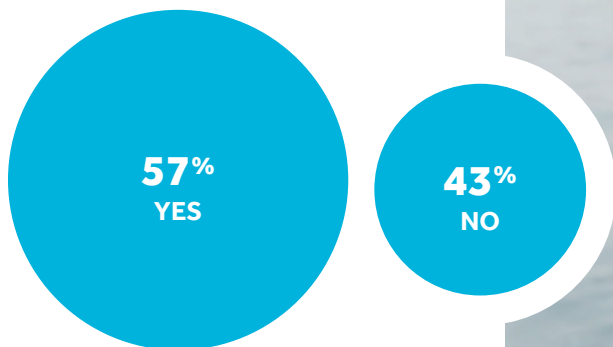
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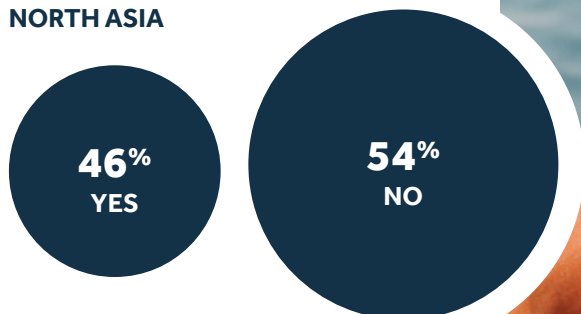
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SOUTH EAST ASIA

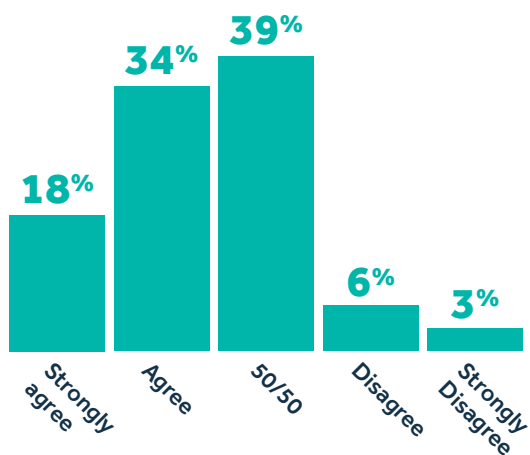


NORTH ASIA

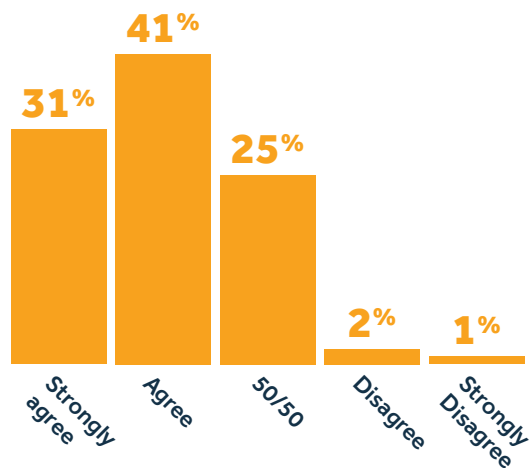


I AM CONFIDENT TO HAVE A DISCUSSION WITH A FRIEND OR A CREW MATE WHO MAY BE DISPLAYING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

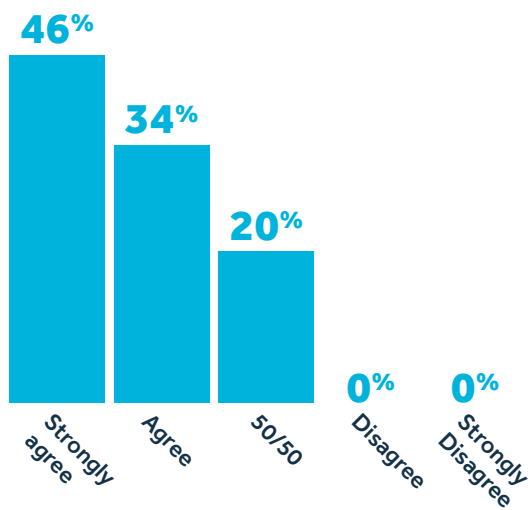
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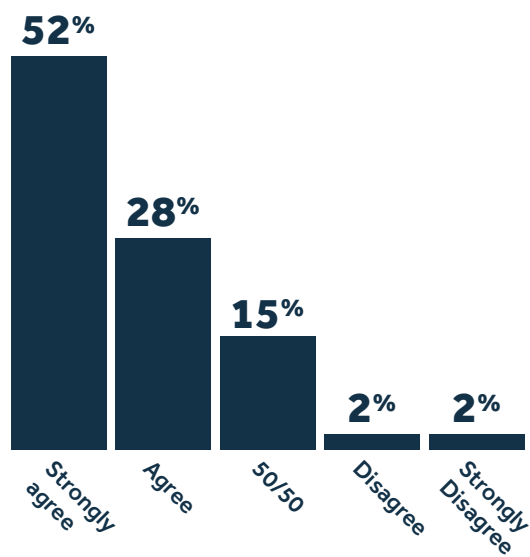
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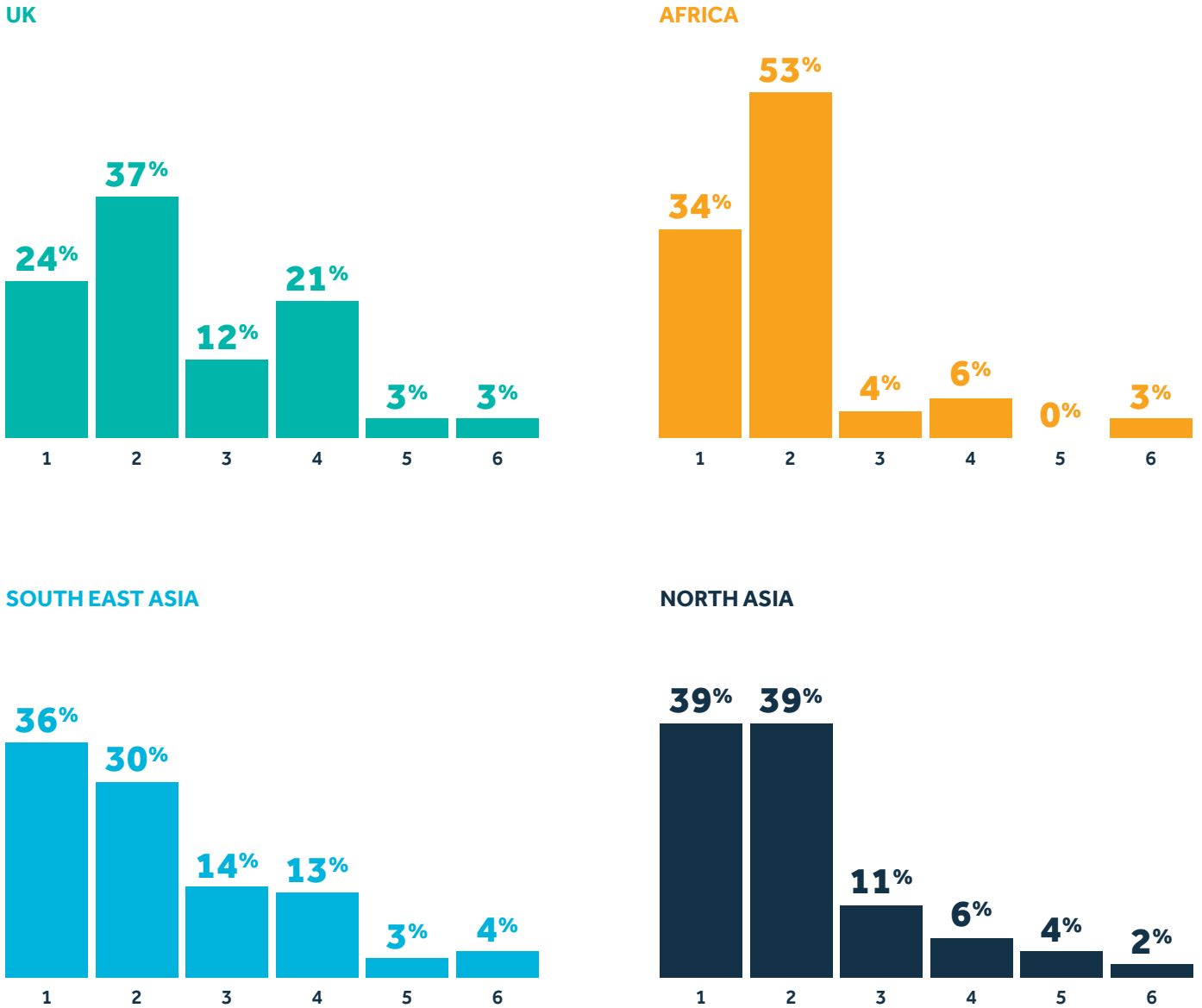
SOUTH EAST ASIA



NORTH ASIA



I'VE HAD A CONVERSATION WITH A FRIEND OR CREW MATE WHO HAS DISPLAYED SOME SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH



KEY

- 1. Yes.
- 2. No.
- 3. I've considered having such a conversation but was not convinced I had the skills.
- 4. I've considered having such a conversation but was worried the person might be offended.
- 5. I found the situation too uncomfortable, so I just let it be.
- 6. I opted to discuss it with someone else, hoping that they would address it.

Cadet mental health comparing two years of statistics

It is clear that the cadets polled at the 2023 conferences saw wellness and mental health as a priority for their future career and the data shows that the majority also feel confident they can recognise early warning signs in themselves and in their fellow crew. This has to be a positive for their future employers.

Attending the conferences, I observed firsthand that this generation of cadets have very strong views when it comes to promoting good mental health and they are also not at all hesitant to voice their opinions. It is clear these future seafarers are not only receptive to promoting positive mental health but have a high level of acceptance towards those suffering at the other end of the spectrum.

But it is when we delve down and compare this 2023 data with that gained at the 2022 conferences that we see clear regional differences.

It is good to see a marked improvement in awareness among the Indian and African cadets. I would speculate that this might well be in part because this is now a part of their training programme and also because companies employing these seafarers are taking the initiative and providing focused training.

Worryingly however, we also see self-awareness amongst South East Asian cadets dropping by almost a quarter (44.8 per cent to 27 per cent) and their confidence in the ability to talk to others about their mental health also dipping (from 53 per cent to 46 per cent).

This has to be of concern to the maritime industry as the Philippines is a major supplier of labour.

Interestingly, almost half of all the cadets polled from across all the regions say they have been in a situation where they have recognised some signs and symptoms of poor mental health in their own lives in the past and/or have had a conversation with a friend about their mental health.

This is a significant number and highlights the fact that many young cadets go through a low phase in their mental health even before embarking on their career. However, there is a positive – it is clear the majority can identify these signs in themselves and feel comfortable speaking about it.

Bearing these statistics in mind, it is important that the maritime colleges and the wider industry do not overlook this and should offer training that teaches coping mechanisms and makes the cadets aware of resources available should they need help. This will be invaluable to both the cadets and their future employers.

As this was the first conference in the UK there cannot be any comparison with 2022, but it was heartening to see that the UK cadets showed a strong level of awareness about poor mental health and were confident about talking to fellow crew or friends if they spotted signs and symptoms.

While South East Asia appears to be in the most need of an increased level of wellness at sea training, I believe that all the regions would benefit from adopting training that not only builds awareness but also gives access to valuable tools that can help with an individual's mental health and that of those around them.



Dr Deepti Mankad:

Professional Development Trainer
& Consultant, MINDSPEAK

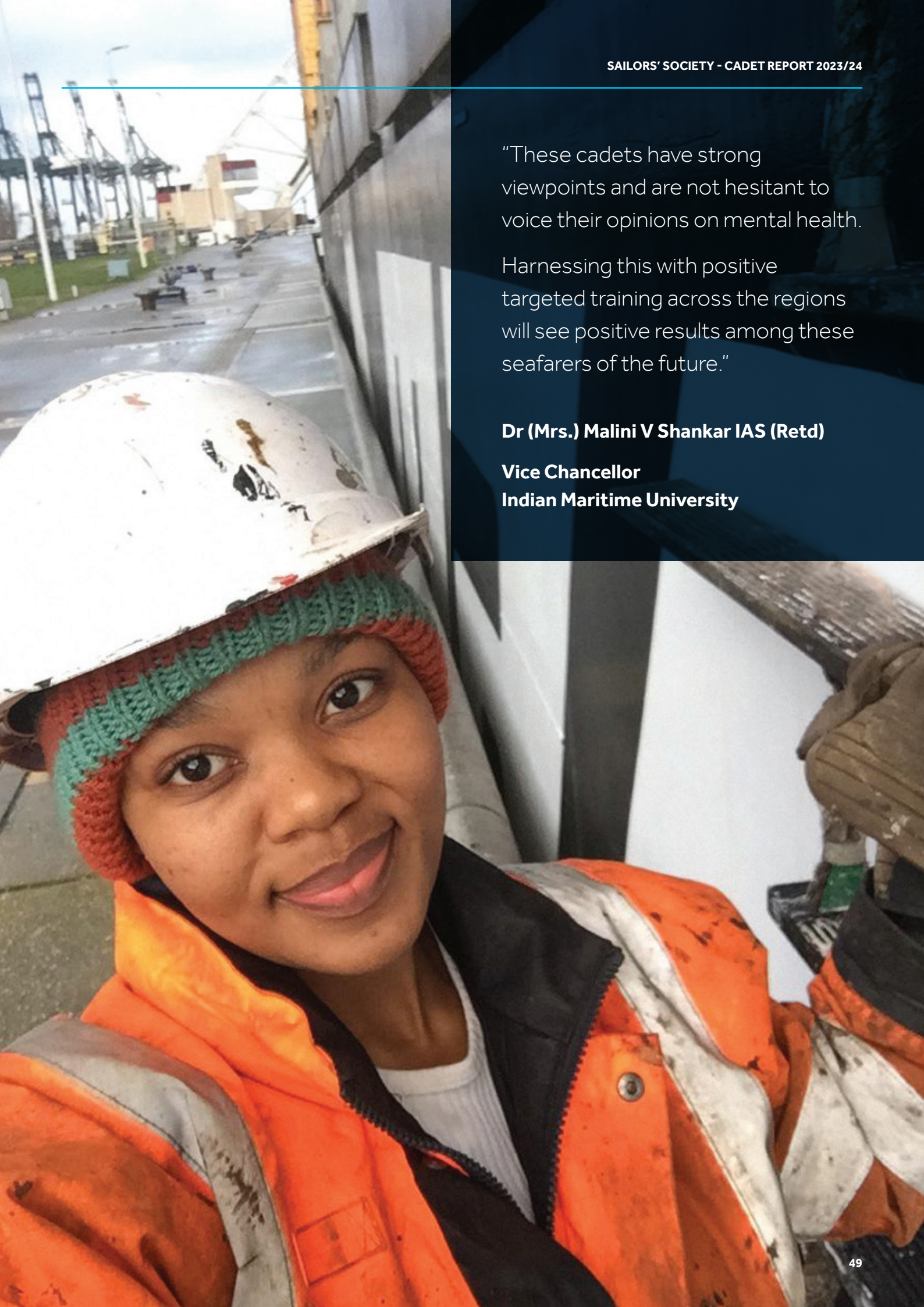
Regional Coordinator, Sailors'
Society Wellness at Sea

"These cadets have strong viewpoints and are not hesitant to voice their opinions on mental health.

Harnessing this with positive targeted training across the regions will see positive results among these seafarers of the future."

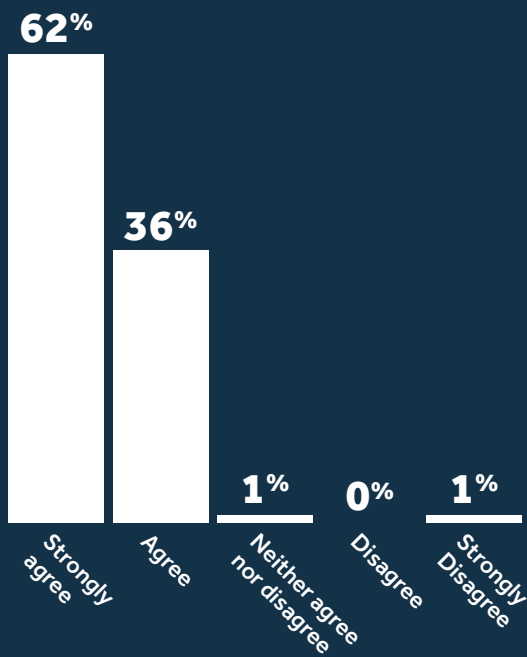
Dr (Mrs.) Malini V Shankar IAS (Retd)

**Vice Chancellor
Indian Maritime University**

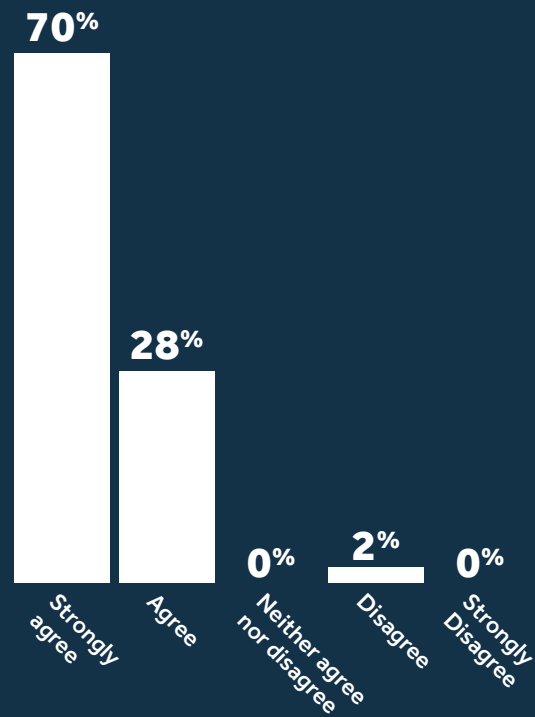


General conference feedback

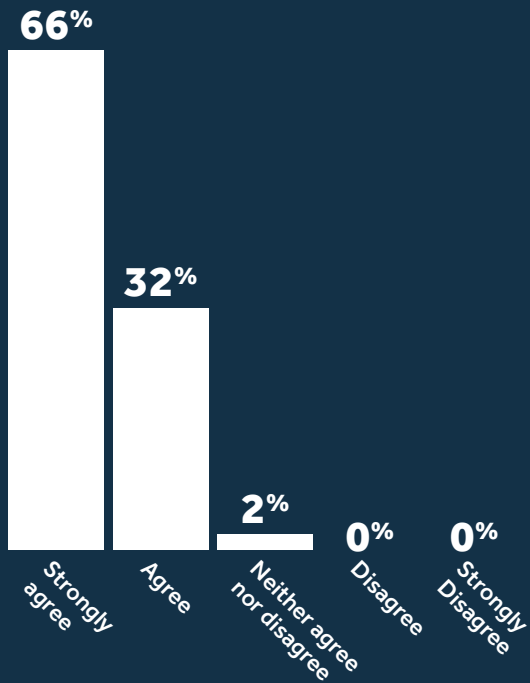
I FEEL THAT I HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WELLBEING FOLLOWING THIS CONFERENCE



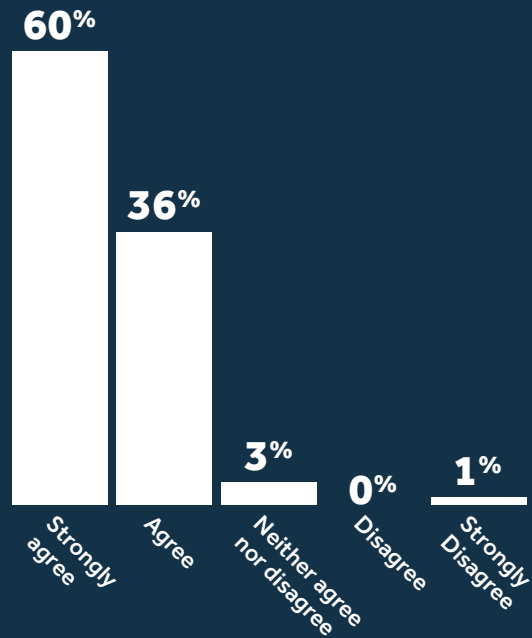
I WOULD RECOMMEND THIS CONFERENCE TO OTHER STUDENTS CONSIDERING A CAREER IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY



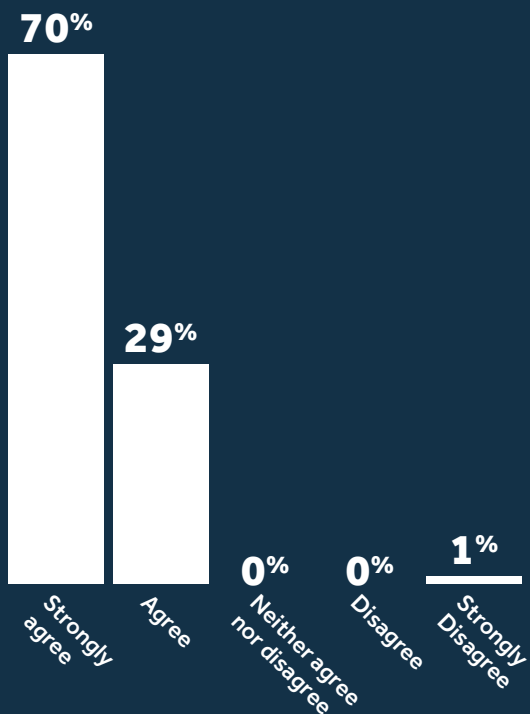
THIS SEMINAR HAS BETTER PREPARED ME FOR A FUTURE CAREER AT SEA



HAVING ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE, I NOW KNOW WHERE I CAN GO FOR WELLBEING SUPPORT IF I NEED IT



I THINK THAT WELLBEING SHOULD BE A MANDATORY ELEMENT OF MARITIME TRAINING



In conclusion

This report gives us an unrivalled opportunity to understand a little bit more about the hearts and minds of the class of 2023 – the new generation who will soon be leading the industry. And, for me, one word summarises the data we collected and the Wellness at Sea cadet conferences themselves – that word is hope!

While not explicitly the theme of the 2023 conferences, the notion of hope unintentionally became a constant in our discussions, whether in North or South East Asia, in Africa or the UK. And it paints a picture of a future brimming with potential.

There was real hope in the personal narratives shared at our conferences by seasoned maritime experts. Tales of individuals ascending from humble beginnings to positions of leadership and financial stability, like the story shared by a female captain who rose from an uncertain beginning in a rural tin shack to be a leading figure in the industry today. They exemplify opportunity and progress.

These testaments serve as powerful reminders that the maritime industry can be a beacon of hope for aspiring young minds and it's a message we need to amplify, loud and clear.

And this hope certainly resonated with the soon-to-be seafarers who participated in our virtual events. They showed infectious optimism towards their chosen careers. Yes, they acknowledged

the industry's shortcomings, but they saw themselves as being the agents for positive change. These Gen Z seafarers have a clear idea of how things should be and they are not merely standing shouting from the sidelines. They have a real intention to actively contribute.

Their enthusiasm and proactive spirit speak volumes about the transformative potential this generation holds. It's a refreshing change from what can be a slightly jaded older generation and it fills me with immense hope for the future of the industry.

But, while hope permeates the data we collected from the conferences, this doesn't exclude the need for change.

The industry needs to note a clear shift in the priorities for these Gen Z seafarers. Wellbeing, strong relationships and ethical treatment are no longer peripheral concerns. They are now central to their career aspirations.

This necessitates a decisive shift within the industry. Shipping companies cannot afford to cling to outdated notions. We



Johan Smith
Head of Wellness, Sailors' Society

must prioritize these aspects alongside traditional objectives, recognizing them as crucial anchors for attracting and retaining top talent.

If this is achieved, then the optimism within this generation, coupled with the proven potential for personal advancement and the need for a shift in focus towards their essential priorities, points towards a promising future for maritime.

2024 will see our fourth year of cadet conferences supporting this new generation of seafarers and becoming partners on their journeys. Through these cadet-focused conferences and the reports that result from them, we provide a unique window into the Gen Z seafaring world. We are delighted to be able to share this with the wider industry, giving unrivalled knowledge that will help shape the future of maritime for the better.

Sailors' Society has been around for more than 200 years and we have supported many generations of seafarers and will continue to do so. We are ready to play our part in that hopeful future – are you?

WITH THANKS TO OUR 2023 MARITIME SCHOOLS' CONFERENCES SPONSORS

UK



TRINITY HOUSE



AFRICA



SOUTH EAST ASIA



NORTH ASIA



TECHNICAL PARTNER:



CADET CONFERENCES 2024

NORTH ASIA

Thursday, August 22

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Saturday, October 5

AFRICA

Thursday, September 19

UK AND EUROPE

Wednesday, November 6

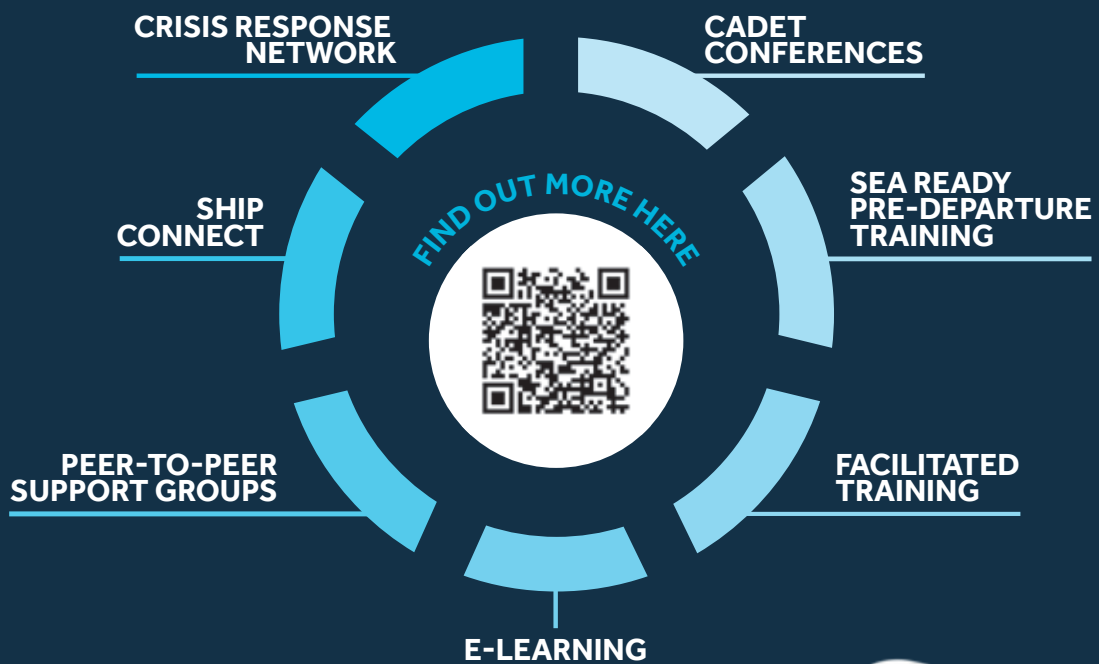
"Stepping aboard the conference felt like stepping onto a different kind of vessel – one dedicated to navigating the uncharted waters of seafarer well-being. As a young cadet, I was eager to learn the tools to not only weather my own mental storms but also become a beacon of support for my future shipmates. And let me tell you, this conference equipped me with a treasure chest of invaluable resources."

2023 conference attendee



Our services

Our award-winning Wellness at Sea programme provides the tools to help seafarers, and their companies, to thrive throughout your career at sea.



WELLNESS AT SEA - PROGRAMME SPONSORS





We work with shipping companies, maritime schools and unions all over the world, supporting cadets, seafarers and their families.

To find out more about Sailors' Society's Wellness at Sea, please contact our Head of Wellness Johan Smith at jsmith@sailors-society.org



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