



The Gender Empowerment and Multi-cultural Crew  
(GEM) Project Report, 2015 – 2016

For the ITF Seafarers' Trust

Dr Kate Pike<sup>1</sup>, Emma Broadhurst<sup>2</sup>, Dr Minghua Zhao<sup>3</sup>, Dr Pengfei Zhang<sup>4</sup>,  
Amos Kuje<sup>5</sup>, Nancy Oluoha<sup>6</sup>



**This project was kindly sponsored by the ITF Seafarers' Trust**

---

<sup>1 2 3 4</sup> Southampton Solent University, UK

<sup>5 6</sup> Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency

## **Executive Summary**

The Gender, Empowerment and Multi-cultural Crew (GEM) research project was sponsored by the ITF Seafarers' Trust and began July 2015. The project was officially launched at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in September 2015 and was initiated to examine seafarer's welfare, focusing on gender issues arising from multi-cultural crew environments. The key aim of the research was to extend knowledge surrounding these areas and to ultimately help create a safer working environment for all seafarers, in particular women and ethnic minorities and encourage their participation and retention within the industry. This ambitious project is the first of its kind to examine seafarers' welfare issues in three uniquely different maritime nations including the UK, China and Nigeria, drawing on experiences from both men and women.

The research was conducted in several ways. The on-board experiences of cadets were captured by two surveys before and after their first sea time through unique access to data from Southampton Solent University's (SSU) Warsash Maritime Academy (WMA), Shanghai Maritime University, China and Nigeria's National Maritime Academy. Stakeholder interviews with a wide cross section of the maritime industry were conducted in the three research countries, highlighting good and poor practice and identifying welfare issues currently preventing women from continuing with their training, leaving the industry early or not entering it at all.

The following phases of the project included extensive coding and thematic data analysis, and dissemination of the research findings to those who have the greatest potential to bring about change within the industry; including policy makers, maritime educators, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) recruiters and cadets.

Whilst recognising the many positive employment opportunities created by the shipping industry, this research aims to improve the welfare and working conditions on-board for all crew by empowering and supporting women who may be experiencing discrimination and harassment. It has identified gaps in current knowledge and has gone some way to addressing these. It develops knowledge in these areas and raises awareness of the broader issues surrounding multicultural crews, so that women seafarers can be supported in dealing with them and in playing a fuller role on board ships and within the wider maritime industry.

The research findings were instrumental in the development of a set of global recommendations for the industry and on a national level for the countries involved in the research; the UK, China and Nigeria. The recommendations are broadly based in the areas of education, training and mentoring, recruitment, raising awareness of the industry and welfare support. It is hoped that some of the recommendations will be taken forward allowing these research findings to be further developed.

# Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	4
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	5
<b>2.0 RESEARCH METHODS</b> .....	8
<b>GEM PROJECT : CHINA COUNTRY REPORT</b> .....	15
<b>1.0 BACKGROUND</b> .....	15
<b>MAIN FINDINGS</b> .....	17
<b>2.0 SHIPPING AWARENESS</b> .....	17
<b>3.0 RECRUITMENT</b> .....	20
<b>4.0 MULTI-CULTURAL CREWS</b> .....	24
<b>5.0 POTENTIAL GENDER ISSUES</b> .....	25
<b>6.0 TRAINING</b> .....	33
<b>7.0 CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	36
<b>8.0 PROMOTING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN SEAFARING: RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	37
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	38
<b>GEM PROJECT: NIGERIA COUNTRY REPORT</b> .....	39
<b>1.0 BACKGROUND</b> .....	39
<b>2.0 SHIPPING AWARENESS</b> .....	44
<b>3.0 RECRUITMENT</b> .....	45
<b>4.0 MULTICULTURAL CREWS</b> .....	47
<b>6.0 TRAINING</b> .....	61
<b>8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	63
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	64
<b>GEM PROJECT: UK COUNTRY REPORT</b> .....	66
<b>1.0 BACKGROUND</b> .....	66
<b>MAIN FINDINGS</b> .....	72
<b>2.0 SHIPPING AWARENESS</b> .....	72
<b>3.0 RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND CAREERS IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY</b> .....	75
<b>4.0 MULTICULTURAL CREW ENVIRONMENT</b> .....	77
<b>5.0 POTENTIAL GENDER ISSUES</b> .....	84
<b>6.0 TRAINING AND MENTORING</b> .....	96
<b>7.0 UK CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	100
<b>3.0 GEM PROJECT CONCLUSIONS (all 3 research countries)</b> .....	101
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	107

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The GEM team would like to sincerely thank our project sponsors, the ITF Seafarers' Trust for making this research possible and for their kind support and flexibility throughout the project. The ITF Seafarers' Trust also hosted the GEM Conference in June 2016 at their premises in Borough Road, London.

Our thanks also go to all those who have been involved with the GEM research including the many maritime stakeholders across the UK, China and Nigeria and the cadets from Warsash Maritime Academy (UK), Shanghai Maritime University (China) and Nigeria's Maritime Academy and to the local teams in those countries who have supported us in some way, be it with data collection or administrative support. This project has been a huge, ground breaking international effort and it would not have been possible without the willingness of others to help us with their time, expertise and support.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The maritime industry is diverse and highly complex and is instrumental for the flow of trade across the world. It generates huge economies and provides direct and indirect employment for millions of people globally. However, only 2% of seafarers worldwide are women. Despite this, the global fleet continues to rise and there is an on-going shortage in the workforce (Howard, 2016) particularly officers and those with specific skill's sets such as engineers.

Whilst recognising that there is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality in maritime industry, gradual but encouraging progress is being made in this area, particularly over the last decade. Programmes, research and resolutions are now in place and being facilitated through organisations such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Transport Federation (ITF), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Seafarers Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN), among others. Research that has more recently impacted the gender and maritime discussion has been conducted by Dark, 2016; Kitada *et al*, 2015 and Thomas, 2004 among others. Additionally certain shipping companies are looking more closely at their inclusion policies both in terms of gender and multi-cultures.

Although it appears that things are moving in the right direction there is still not enough impact being made in terms of raising the number of women employed within the industry and making working conditions safe and appealing for them. The industry needs to draw on the gradual momentum and take a closer look at the range of challenges facing gender equality across all areas of the industry, from the marketing of careers at sea and public awareness of the industry itself to recruitment, training, on-board culture and management and enforcement of regulations. The GEM project sought to address these issues as summarised in the research objectives:

### **1.1 Summary of the key research objectives:**

1. A review of literature relating to the global women seafarers' community, the multi-cultural crew environment and the issues women encounter working within the maritime industry.
2. An examination of the views of male and female cadets from Warsash Maritime Academy (WMA), UK, Shanghai Maritime University (SMU), China and the National Maritime Academy, Nigeria during their training, before and after their first sea time.
3. An evaluation of the views of maritime stakeholders from the three research countries to establish opinion relating to seafarer gender issues and multi-cultural crews.
4. Dissemination of the findings of the research to an international audience through the media and various academic channels.

### **1.2 How this report is structured**

This report has begins with a general review of key texts surrounding the global issues of gender and multi-cultural crews within the maritime industry. It is followed by a section explaining the research methods undertaken for this work and applied to each country. There is an introduction to the key issues followed by the individual country reports with specific data findings from the UK, Nigeria and

China. Finally, the report makes conclusions about the research findings and comments on the common global recommendations from the three research countries.

If you wish to use anything from this report, the following citation is suggested:

Pike, K., E. Broadhurst, M. Zhao, P. Zhang, A. Kuje, N. Oluoha, 2016. *The Gender Empowerment and Multi-Cultural Crew (GEM) Project Report for the ITF Seafarers' Trust*. November 2016.

### **1.3 Background**

The review of literature focused on the key areas associated with attracting young people (men and women) to the industry, their training and recruitment, potential gender and retention issues and the multi-cultural environment that most seafarers will work in these days.

Public awareness of the shipping industry has become a major concern for those involved with it over the past few decades, particularly in light of the falling numbers of officers being recruited (Seavision, 2016). Despite the importance of shipping to both global and national economies and the flow of goods around the world, this once widely known and respected industry has become less visible to people who work outside of it. Although this is recognised as a global problem, it is particularly relevant to the UK which is known and respected as a traditional maritime island nation. Without awareness of the industry on a very basic level, young people will not be considering the shipping industry as a career choice. By highlighting the industry, the issues that exist within it can then start to be publicly discussed and addressed and will generate action.

Many factors contribute to this lack of visibility, including an increasingly more technology driven industry which is becoming progressively less people intensive. The shipping industry has many different sectors which are not particularly unified in the same way as the aviation or automotive industry is. Although the public are greatly reliant on the goods brought to them by ships, there is very little visibility of how the maritime sector impacts on their day to day lives. Much of what happens in shipping either takes place at sea where people don't notice it or takes place behind the fences of port installations. Lack of visibility surrounding the shipping industry and the generally negative public image portrayed through the mainstream media who tend to focus on shipping accidents and other high impact headlines, has also had a significant impact to the negative image of the industry.

There is a need for school children to learn about the industry so that they can select the right exam choices to be able to select maritime careers later on in life (these are the more STEM based options). Raising awareness of the industry is seen as a fundamental starting point and a necessity to helping more young people to consider careers in the industry and make the right exam and career choices based on this. In the words of Jessica Tyson, speaking at the GEM Conference and reported in the Nautilus Telegraph July (2016) *'We need to get the public to remember and be proud of an industry without which the world does not turn.'* Nautilus Telegraph July (2016)

Over recent decades the shipping industry has experienced a decline in the number of officers being recruited, particularly in traditional seafaring nations such as the UK and Norway. The decline can be attributed to a number of factors including, high attrition rates amongst cadets during or shortly after training (Caesar et al, 2013) and with senior officers, after an average seven years at sea for land-based jobs (Faststream, 2012). Additionally life at sea is no longer seen as high paid, safe or stable.

This trend is expected to continue as a vast number of officers are due to retire in the near future (Caesar et al, 2013).

The literature recognises that certain shipping companies and some male seafarers still have a reluctance to accept female seafarers on board. Some of this is based on historic and deep rooted stereotypes including the traditional belief that women on board are bad luck. Some shipping companies still hold the belief that women are stereotypically weaker than men and are therefore less likely to be able to carry out their designated roles (Thomas 2004). This raises questions as to the suitability of women to adapt to the harsh and sometimes difficult working and living conditions that are experienced on-board, particularly on offshore vessels (Thomas 2004).

A minority of shipping companies taking part in a study examining women seafarers, recruitment and retention (2004), expressed a fear of accepting women seafarers on board. In some instances, male seafarers even threatened to leave their job because of the hiring of a women seafarer (Zhao 1998). This reluctance was partly attributed to concerns about a female's suitability as seafarers (Thomas, 2004; Belcher et al 2003). In a later study by Kitada, (2010), negative perceptions were still held by some male seafarers who were concerned that they might be required to assist a female colleague with her duties. Findings published from study in 2013 examining the attitudes of Greek male seafarers towards their female counterparts uncovered that this was still thought to be the case (Theotokas and Tsalichi, 2013). However, the study showed that younger male respondents thought that female seafarers were competent enough to be on board which contrasted to the views of some older male seafarers (Theotokas and Tsalichi, 2013).

In order to combat this some female seafarers felt that they had to prove their abilities on board (Thomas 2004). In some cases, male seafarers were observed to overly protect their fellow female seafarers. Whilst this sentiment may have been made in benevolence, it can also be seen as discriminatory as it does not give female seafarers the opportunity to show their potential (Zhao, 1998; Kitada, 2010). Findings from interviews collected as part of Kitada's 2010 study into female seafarers detailed that all female respondents did not want to be protected by their fellow male crewmembers as they wanted to be seen as equal (Kitada, 2010).

The Seafarers International Research Centre and the Marcom project (1998) examined crew lists over a number of years and looked at multicultural crews and communication in the maritime sector. Communication was identified as one of the most common themes examined in relation to multinational crews and was also featured in studies by Progoulaki et al (2013) and Horck (2005). Reports have associated the safe manning of ships with communication skills, Horck (2005) and Storgard et al (2013).

The current global maritime labour market is characterised by seafarers of any nationality being able to seek employment. Highly organised international recruitment networks exist now that link ship owners, ship managers, crew managers, labour supply agencies, training institutions and seafarers all over the world. Crew composition is dependent on many factors including language compatibility and availability of skills. The decision to mix seafarers from different nationalities seems to be affected by the level of wages and the adaptability or 'ability to mix' of certain nationals. Several surveys by the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) at the University of Cardiff (Kahveci and Sampson 2001; Kahveci et al. 2002; Sampson and Zhao 2003; Thomas et al. 2003) have

revealed, for instance, that citizens of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea are normally found only in homogeneous and monoglot crew, probably because of their limited English language ability (ILO 2001). Additionally, when Russians sail in the company of other nationalities they do so usually in ones and twos, rather than in larger groups. The survey also shows that while Filipino, Polish and Indian seafarers frequently make up the large proportion of a crew, they are less likely to form whole crew. Recent research among Greek seafarers and shipping companies shows that Filipinos are most preferred and compatible nationality to for Greek seafarers to sail with (Theotokas and Progoulaki 2007). Indians, Filipinos and Poles are on the other hand, thought to be sufficiently proficient in English and can therefore mix more safely with English-speaking senior officers of other nationalities (ILO 2001)

Maritime unions around the world have reacted to help empower women within the industry. Whilst mission statements can be quite broad in their ‘... [commitment] to delivering high quality, cost effective services to members, and welfare to necessitous seafarers and their dependants and other maritime professionals’ (Nautilus, 2016 a), with goals ‘to promote respect for trade union and human rights worldwide’ (ITFglobal, n.d.). Both these examples demonstrate specific steps to address the issues of women that are struggling within the maritime industry. For instance, Nautilus has a Women’s Forum which helps and supports female members to engage in discussion related to their challenges within the industry (Nautilus, 2016 b). The International Transport Federation (ITF) International has a women’s department which is led by the ITF women’s committee and again helps women in the industry globally to address issues that they are facing in the workplace and to support and empower them. The ITF have set up the ITF Women’s network in order to do this (ITF Global, 2016).

Additionally both of these unions have invested in research to help with key issues relating to seafarers’ welfare, including the Health and Wellbeing Survey, 2015, carried out with ITF and the International Seafarer’s Association Network (ISWAN) and other associations (ISWAN, 2015); and Nautilus’s survey of its women members to understand issues concerning equal opportunities (Nautilus International, 2000). The ITF International notes that ‘Strong unions need women’ (ITF Global, 2016).

The World Maritime University Conference held in 2015 was aimed at encouraging women’s participation within the shipping industry and highlighting barriers to this participation. The Conference proceedings point out that despite the recent move of women into some of the top jobs around the world, the numbers are still highly male dominated and that there are large geographical differences at play (Kitada et al, 2015). The GEM research set out to further research and understanding about gender and multicultural crews and to address the key industry concerns and barriers which affect seafarers’ welfare and safety in the work place.

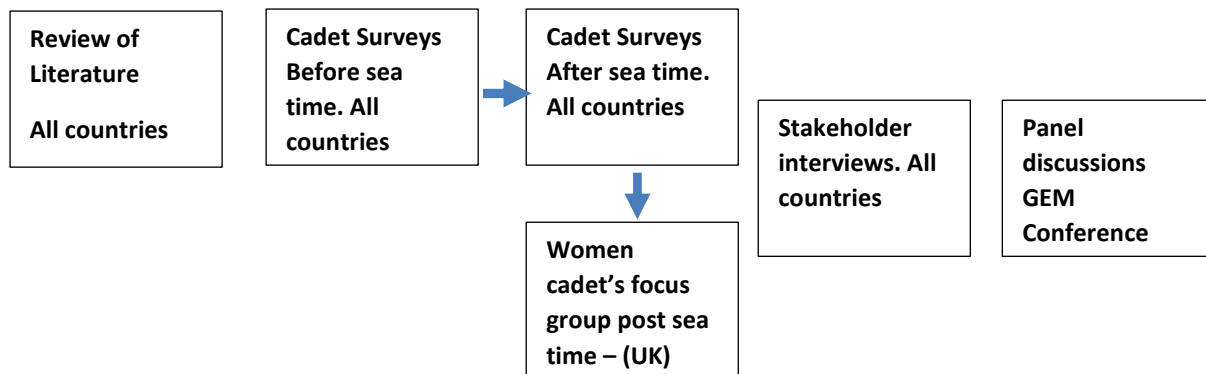
## **2.0 RESEARCH METHODS**

The GEM research was conducted using a mixed method, inductive approach, due to the project’s diverse nature and geographical scope. Three key methods were employed, including a comprehensive review of secondary data to develop the literature review on the topics of gender and multi-cultural crews in the maritime industry; A before and after survey of cadets from the UK, Nigeria and China during various stages of their training; and a series of semi-structured stake holder



interviews across the three research countries targeted at different sectors of the industry. Additionally in the UK, a small focus group was held with female cadets from Warsash Maritime Academy (WMA) to examine the issues raised from their survey data in more depth. Finally, the research was further validated through panel discussions which took place at the GEM Conference held at the ITF Seafarers’ Trust in June 2016. This research approach was applied where possible to the data collection in Nigeria, China and the UK. Diagram 1 summarises the research project’s methodology.

Diagram 1 GEM research methodology.



The GEM project develops and extends previous studies in the areas of gender and multi-cultural crews (Zhao 1998; Nautilus International n.d.; Thomas, 2004; Horck 2005; Chirea-Ungureanu 2011). The research uniquely contributes to knowledge in these areas with viewpoints from both male and female seafarers and maritime stakeholders and is the first of its kind in providing an international, comparative perspective on these issues from China Nigeria and the UK.

### **2.1 Selection of the research countries**

This research set out to reflect the global and diverse views of the maritime industry and extend knowledge on the issues women seafarers and multi-cultural crews. It was therefore important to examine uniquely different countries relative to their maritime culture, population, economic status and attitudes to women working within the industry. On the basis that China, Nigeria and the UK provided this diversity, and that their key maritime Academy’s/ Universities were willing to work closely with the lead partner, Southampton Solent University; they were selected for participation in this research. A brief summary of the key country differences which made research in these locations particularly interesting are briefly described as follows:

The UK is a traditional maritime island nation with London as the world’s leading maritime centre and home to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). Women in the UK are generally accepted within the industry and have little difficulty gaining sea time, but are still in the minority working in board and can face many challenges.

China has a homogeneous population of seafarers. A strong emerging maritime presence in the global economy presents many different challenges for its seafaring community and in particular women trying to enter the industry.

Nigeria is a developing nation with a strong traditional maritime presence and links to global trade. Although participation of women is encouraged, cultural challenges can be experienced by female Nigerian seafarers making it a difficult industry for them to develop a career within and to gain the necessary sea-time experience.

## 2.2 Training

The following training variations exist between the three research countries.

In the UK, cadets complete two training phases at sea. The first of these compulsory phases is approximately three months into the start of their cadetship, and lasts up to six months including a holiday period. The final sea phase starts approximately twenty months into their training, where the cadets will spend four months at sea. The sea phases are interspersed with onshore training which the cadets complete at their maritime institution. During the sea phases, cadets work on board international merchant vessels and usually with a mixed nationality crew.

Nigerian cadets also complete their sea training on-board commercial internationally operating vessels which have the potential to be crewed with multi-nationals. However, unlike in the UK, cadets in Nigeria complete all their land based training first before embarking on their sea training.

In China, the cadets complete their sea training on-board a training vessel that is operated and crewed by a maritime institution. This means that the cadets will not be on-board with any other seafarers apart from their fellow cadets and university staff. As a result, the cadets are not exposed to multi-cultural crews during their training. Table 1 summarises the key training differences between the research countries.

Table 1: Training differences between research countries

UK	China	Nigeria
Cadets are mainly sponsored by shipping companies.	Cadets have a phased alternating training programme of shore and sea-time, starting with onshore training.	Cadets carry out all their onshore training before undertaking their sea-time.
During their sea-time, cadets can be placed on a variety of vessels owned by different shipping companies.	Cadets carry out their sea-time on-board training vessels which are owned and operated by the University.	During their sea-time, cadets can be placed on a variety of vessels owned by different shipping companies.
Cadets have a 5 phased alternating training programme of shore and sea-	Cadets will not carry out sea-time with multicultural crews.	The cadets are assigned to vessels through organisations

time, starting with onshore training.		such as the Maritime Safety Administration.
Cadets may carry out their sea-time working with multi-cultural crews.		Cadets may carry out their sea-time working with multi-cultural crews.

### **2.3 Literature review**

An extensive global review <sup>7</sup>of literature published worldwide was undertaken for this research in order to highlight the main issues concerning gender and multi-cultural crews within the maritime industry. There was a focus on these topics in relation to the lack of women coming into the industry and their retention timeframe once recruited. The literature review helped to identify the gaps in knowledge and where the development of previous research would be of most benefit in terms of helping to raise the profile of these issues and ultimately in moving the industry collectively towards providing a safer working environment for women at sea. As such, the review was able to inform the development of specific data collection tools, specifically the cadet surveys and the stakeholder interviews.

### **2.4 Cadet surveys**

An anonymous questionnaire survey was used to capture a large number of responses from new cadets across the three research countries. This method used a self-completion questionnaire and assured anonymity for the participant by eradicating the need for an interviewer. This is considered particularly important when raising sensitive research topics (Phellas *et al*, 2012) such as those discussed in the GEM project. For the same reason, anonymity of the participants was assured both in the data collection and write up of materials and this is widely considered to increase the response rate and quality of responses provided (Barnett 1998).

The researchers felt it was important to survey male and female cadets before and then after their initial sea time training to understand how their views changed during this period. Particular focus was placed on their orientation phase at sea, to record issues that became apparent as a result of their gender and in relation to the multi-cultural working environment that they generally found themselves in. Although it was considered important to achieve maximum consistency of data collection for this project, this was not always possible across the three countries as a result of training variations experienced. For instance, in China cadets complete their sea time training on board training vessels that are run and operated by their maritime institutions. Therefore, the cadets do not sail on board with any multicultural crews. In contrast, cadets from the UK and Nigeria complete their initial sea time training on board commercially managed vessels which usually operate internationally, providing the strong possibility for those cadets to sail with crews of different nationalities.

Two separate questionnaires were produced, one for males and another for females due to the gender specific nature of some of the questions. Surveying the same group of cadets before and after their sea time was important for the research, although data was also collected in some instances from

---

<sup>7</sup> The literature review was undertaken using texts written in or translated to the English language; although some Chinese texts are referred to and specifically mentioned in the China Country Report.

cadets that had not completed one of the surveys. It was thought that the information provided would still provide value, even if it was not directly comparable.

In the UK and China the questionnaire surveys were issued on paper and explained prior to completion in a classroom situation. In Nigeria, due to the nature of the cadet’s training schedule and their geographical distance from their University, an online questionnaire, using Sphinx software was considered the most appropriate tool for data collection. Online questionnaires have the capability to reach a wide range of participants, thus eradicating potential geographical barriers which would otherwise be experienced in trying to reach the Nigerian cadets. In addition, the use of online questionnaires have been a successful method for data capture, and again particularly of data of a sensitive nature (Rhodes *et al* 2003). Rhodes *et al* (2003) states that, ‘*Preliminary research suggests that people share information and experiences electronically that they might not disclose using traditional survey methodologies*’. It should be noted that the nature of the Nigerian training programme time table is less structured which accounts for the low number of ‘after sea time’ responses from cadets there, many of whom were unavailable at sea during the time allocated to that part of the data collection. Table 2 shows the number of male and female cadets surveyed before and after their sea time from each of the research countries.

Table 2. Number of male and female (M/F) cadets surveyed in the UK, China and Nigeria (2015/2016)

	<b>UK</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Cadets (Pre-Sea Training)</b>	40 M	39 M	93 M	172 M
	8 F	19 F	13 F	40 F
<b>Cadets (Post-Sea training)</b>	47 M	47 M	5 M	99 M
	9 F	16 F	0 F	25 F
<b>Total</b>	<b>87 M</b> <b>17 F</b>	<b>86 M</b> <b>35 F</b>	<b>98 M</b> <b>13 F</b>	<b>271 M</b> <b>65 F</b>

Analysis of the cadet surveys was conducted separately by counting responses and looking at comparative results. The use of computer software was discounted for the analysis of this research to allow the researchers to get closer to the data and consider the nuances of the country specifics relating to this topic (Morse, 2006). The analysis produced a range of statistics indicative of the preconceptions held before the first time away at sea and some qualitative data from their thoughts and feelings following their sea time.

## **2.5 Focus group (UK)**

Following the ‘after sea time’ survey with UK cadets from WMA, the women cadets in the group were asked to participate in a focus study to explore and develop some of the key points raised in their survey responses. This took place in an informal setting and was recorded by the researchers for accuracy of transcription. Five female cadets took part in the focus group which was 71% of the total number of females in the January 2015 cadet cohort. Much of the information gathered from the focus group has been discussed in the ‘Potential gender issues’ section 5.0 of the UK country report.

## **2.6 Stakeholder interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with maritime stakeholders including: Policy makers, MET trainers, recruiters, shipping companies, NGOs, current women seafarers and ex-women seafarers. An average of approximately 4 people were interviewed from each of these categories, although this varied from country to country for reasons that have been described in the individual country reports. Interviewees were asked specific questions tailored to the range of their likely experience relevant to their background and research category. All the interviewees were assured anonymity and with permission the interviews were digitally recorded to allow for accuracy of transcription. Approximately 92% of the UK interviews were conducted on the phone and the others were carried out face to face. In Nigeria and China, nearly all the interviews were conducted face to face as this is a cultural expectation in these countries.

Thematic analysis was used to assess the interviews, focusing on key themes to emerge from the data. Table 3 shows the number of interviewees from each of the research countries by maritime sector.

Table 3 Number of interviewees by category from the UK, China and Nigeria (2015/2016)

<b>Interview category</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Total</b>
Policy Makers	3	1	2	6
Serving women seafarers	5	0	2	7
Ex-women seafarers	4	0	4	8
MET	4	8	3	16
Recruiters	4	0	2	6
Shipping companies	2	4	2	8
NGOs and Charities	3	0	2	6
Maritime Cadets	0	13	0	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>70</b>

## **2.7 Panel discussions**

The GEM Conference held on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2016 facilitated five themed panel discussions with industry experts from various sectors of shipping which broadly mirrored the research categories examined in the project. Participants included industry influencers, educators, career developers, seafarers and maritime NGOs. Each chaired panel discussion lasted 45 minutes and involved three invited

participants. Three questions were put to each member of the panel team and were then discussed in turn. To facilitate further exploration of the panel themes, the audience were invited to participate in the discussion following the questions in the last 15 minutes of the session. During this time they were invited to put their questions and comments to the panel and the GEM team. Some of the discussion from the panel discussions are incorporated within the UK report and the recommendations are also summarised in the 'Global recommendations' section 3.0.

## ***2.8 Presentation of results***

Following this introduction chapter, the data findings are presented in separate country reports. This is followed by recommendations of a global nature and conclusions drawn from all three countries. Anonymised quotes<sup>8</sup> have been used, with permission, in the presentation of the interview and survey findings to help illustrate key points.

---

<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that where quotes are used, they are written verbatim and as such may contain poor English, spelling and grammatical mistakes.

## GEM PROJECT <sup>9</sup>: CHINA COUNTRY REPORT

### 1.0 BACKGROUND

In China, seafaring has long been an exclusive territory for men. Women were not allowed to attend a new ship's launch, or even touch it because it was believed that women would bring bad luck to the ship and the crew. This old tradition was challenged in the early 1950s when Mao and the communists came into power bringing in a new ideology which promoted equality between men and women. Mao has a world-known saying on gender equality, '*(T)he time has changed. Now, men and women are equal. Whatever men can do, women can also do*' (*The People's Daily*, 1965). Following this, women began to enter into occupations and professions that were traditionally considered a man's world. These included professions such as mining, iron and steel making, lorry driving, and seafaring. In the early 1950s, maritime colleges opened their doors to women. The first group of female cadets began to sail along the Yangtze River and then at sea in late 1950s and throughout the 1960s. In 1969, the country saw its first woman captain in command on large ocean-going vessels. The mid-1970s witnessed the heyday of the Chinese women seafarers and in 1976, *Fengtao*, the world first and only ocean going ship crewed all with female officers set sail for Japan attracting a huge amount of media attention and admiration from around the world (Xie, Lina, 2015).

China has been experiencing a sea change since the late 1970s. The open door policy and the market economy introduced by Deng Xiaoping fundamentally changed the social, economic and cultural landscape of the country. Many of the values held high in Mao's time have been abandoned and Mao's famous promotional remark on gender equality, as noted above, no longer attracts attention. Chinese women have quickly withdrawn from many of the occupations where they had previously advanced into during Mao's time under the planned economy. Shipping, maritime education and training (MET) facilities closed their doors to women and in 1995, China bid farewell to the country's last woman captain when Captain WANG Jialing retired from the Yangtze. This apparently closed the chapter on Chinese women's sailing history in commercial shipping (*Chongqing Morning News*, 2016).

In 2000, one MET institution, Shanghai Maritime University (SMU) changed this course and reopened its doors to women and started to recruit female cadets the Women's Cadet Programme (WCP) in China was introduced which has now been operating for 16 years with an annual recruitment of female cadets between the ages of 18-30. Until very recently, the WCP at SMU has been the only maritime course open to women in China, with recruitment confined to Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, a region in the country's east coast.

In line with the key thematic research questions set in the GEM Project and adopting the same methods in primary data collection (semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire survey), the research team started the exploration with some key questions in mind. How does this Programme run and how have these female cadets been trained? What happened to these young women when

---

<sup>9</sup>. This report is written by Minghua Zhao and Pengfei Zhang with substantial contribution from Lijuan Zhao from Shanghai Jiaotong (Transport) University who conducted many of the interviews jointly with the research team or by herself and she has played a main role in helping analyse the qualitative data, from Janjun Wu Shanghai Maritime University SMU) who was in charge of the questionnaire survey of the cadets and of the arrangement of the contacts and interviews for the project in Shanghai, and from Emma Broadhurst who provided the statistical computation and preliminary analysis of the questionnaire survey with the cadets in Shanghai. Kate Pike provided editorial assistance and compilation within the main report.

they complete the course? What are the main issues they face during their training and employment? What are the prospects of their career development? How to encourage, empower and promote women’s participation at sea in China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### **1.1 Research Methods**

The research team conducted a thorough literature review on Chinese women seafarers, in Chinese and in English, and found the existing knowledge on the subject matter very limited. In Chinese, most publications are from media reports, small articles carried in newspapers and magazines including those on line. There seems very little systematic study conducted in China on women seafarers. In English, a small number of publications on Chinese women seafarers are found but they were nearly all authored by the two scholars in the team from SSU. Both Zhao’s and Zhang’s work has touched upon the Women Cadets Programme at SMU (Belcher, 2003; Zhang & Zhao, 2015) in their studies, but neither provides a thorough examination of the programme and the female cadets’ sailing experience has not been discussed at all.

Given the knowledge gap identified in the literature survey, the study on Chinese women seafarers in the GEM Project has therefore have to be exploratory by nature. The research site selected for the study is Shanghai. This is because that the SMU is the only MET institution in China which is officially allowed to recruit women cadets for navigation training.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted in primary data collection, as in the other two research sites: Nigeria and the UK.

In total, 121 cadets participated in the questionnaire survey. They included males and females, between the age of 18 and 24. The cohorts includes 58 (F19, M39) without training experience at sea, and 63 (F16, M47) who have sailing experiences on training ships, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Cadets covered in the survey (2015/2016)

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Cadets (Pre-Sea Training)</b>	19	39	58
<b>Cadets (Post-Sea training)</b>	16	47	63
<b>Total</b>	35	86	121

The research team conducted 26 in depth interviews with women cadets and seafarers, male and female maritime lecturers including some in senior positions, managers of shipping companies (two Chinese and one joint-venture) and government agencies in charge of seafarers training and regulation, as shown in Table 2. All these interviews were carried out in Chinese at offices except one which was conducted in a restaurant at the request of the interviewee who preferred not to have the interview in his office. Table 3 shows the distribution of these interviews according to gender and sector.



Table 2. Individuals contacted for the interview (2015/2016)

	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Total</b>
Maritime cadets	11	2	13
Maritime lecturers & members of university senior management	5	3	8
Shipping/crewing managers		4	4
Government agency		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26</b>

The focus of these interviews was clearly on women seafarers. A small number (4) of shipping managers, from three companies, with crew recruitment experiences also participated in the study. They were all male, well reflecting the gender-biased nature of the industry where the male is dominant not only in number but even more so in senior positions. It is also important to note that, in the eye of the government agencies, many issues concerning the ‘human factors’ in maritime studies are still considered ‘sensitive’. A number of government departments and seafarers trade unions at both central (Beijing) and municipal levels (Shanghai) were contacted for interview. The requests were politely declined except only in one occasion when one senior official in charge of maritime safety and crew affairs in the city agreed to talk to the research team, ‘but not in my office.’ The interview was eventually conducted in a restaurant, as noted above.

The Chinese government has strict procedures in place for officials to receive and talk to ‘foreigners’. Usually, there is no problem if ‘technical’ issues concerning science, technology, economy, finance, history, fine art and so on are on the agenda. Many officials welcome interviews of this nature and they are usually open in sharing experiences, observations opinions in the interview. Issues concerning social science such as ‘seafarers’ welfare, work and employment conditions’ ‘seafarers rights’ and other ‘human factors’ tend to be a minefield. Most officials would simply shun away from the interview; many would just make an official announcement.

Despite this, the research team have succeeded in gathering a large amount of rich data about women seafarers in China. The rest of this report will focus on the main findings from the Chinese data collection.

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

### **2.0 SHIPPING AWARENESS**

China has always been a maritime nation with its coastline of more than 32,000 km, of which 18,000 km is mainland shore and 14000 km is island shore and more than a hundred large and small bays and more than twenty deep-water harbours (GOVCN, 2013). The country has a long history of ocean shipping dating back more than a thousand years when it commenced trade with ancient Korea through Shandong Province via the Yellow Sea route (Chang, 2002: 116). In the Ming Dynasty (1368-

1644), Admiral Zheng (1371-1435) led his fleet of 200-strong ships and 27,000 seafarers, and commanded expeditionary voyages to Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa from 1405 to 1433 (Yamashita, 2006: 14). Some commentators even claim that it was the Chinese, not Columbus, who discovered America in the year of 1421 (Menziés, 2012: 96).

Unfortunately, ocean shipping in China declined as a result of the *haijin*, a state policy banning maritime activities, imposed during the Ming Dynasty and again at the time of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) (Wang and Ng, 2004: 381). As a result, in modern history, China was considered primarily as a land power, and seafaring as an occupation received very little attention (Erickson et al., 2012: XIII).

Modern industry introduced China to capitalism at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the demise of the Qing Dynasty (1911). Commercial ocean shipping was developed rapidly as a result in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with Shanghai as the centre. The sector enjoyed a short period of recovery and prosperity during the First World War and in the 1930s but suffered another big setback during the Second World War and the country's Civil War (1946-1949). In 1949, before the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), most Chinese ocean vessels had either escaped to Taiwan or been destroyed or seriously damaged, with only a small number of river vessels left in mainland China (Heine, 1989: 9). In 1950, the PRC merchant fleet consisted of only seventy-seven ships of 1,000 gross tons (GT) or over and most of these were unseaworthy (Muller, 1983: 58).

Shipping in China has developed phenomenally since then, in particular since the early 1980s when the country has adopted an open-door policy. During the past decade China's influence on global maritime activity has multiplied. Now, China has emerged as the world's largest shipbuilder, one of the world's largest ship-owners and as a key contributor to the global labour market for seafarers. China also plays a significant role in port development and ship recycling. It is difficult to exaggerate the enormous impact of China, which has gained a dominant role on the international maritime scene in the 21<sup>st</sup> C. According to UNCTAD's annual review of maritime transport report 2015, by the end of 2015 China had registered 3941 ships. By ownership China has 4966 ships and is now the largest ship owning country in the world.

In seafaring, China is rich with maritime labour and has been recognised as having the largest number of seafarers, potentially the largest seafaring labour supplying country for the world fleets in international shipping (BIMCO, 2015). It is these seafarers that operate China's ocean-going ships, which together with many vessels of many other countries, carry over 90% of the international trade and raw materials such as coal, iron ore, oil and soya beans into China and manufactured goods such as shirts, shoes, iPads, televisions, refrigerators, washing machines into other parts of the globe. An important part of the Chinese working class, these ocean-going seafarers make significant contributions to the rise of China as a strong maritime nation.

Ironically, however, while the government has set up strategic plans to develop China into a maritime power by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2012-2017) (HU, 2012) with this ambition widely acknowledged by the world, such a high shipping awareness demonstrated at the top state level does not seem to have effectively trickled down to the grassroots. In China, the general public's awareness of shipping, especially concerning the recruitment of seafarers, is actually quite low, as illustrated by our findings in the following.

During the interviews and cadet surveys, women cadets were asked why they decided to study navigation (which is the only maritime course open to women, as noted elsewhere in this report). The

majority reported a clear low awareness of shipping when they as high school graduates made decision to study in maritime universities. Many of them said they applied with the SMU to take nautical studies was *'just a coincidence'*. Some thought the course was just to study *'general technology'*. Some others thought a maritime major was *'to educate military soldiers'*. There were also some students choosing the maritime course because they wanted to have one more choice in case they failed with other applications, but actually they knew nothing about the course and little about shipping. As an example, a thirty-year-old female third officer who was enrolled in 2006 (Int. 02) commented that, *'When I was filling the application form for undergraduate entrance, I did not know that nautical study was to educate and train seafarers. I thought it was just a technology university so I could learn some skills for my future career. I was very surprised that I would be trained as a seafarer after I joined the University and talked with others'*. While the 'ignorance' may well also be a marketing issue, it clearly indicates the low shipping awareness in the country.

Another 21-year-old third year female cadet who was enrolled in 2013 confessed that to apply with maritime studies was just to secure a position in the University in order to stay in Shanghai, a metropolitan city popular with many young people. *'I come from Fujian province. My grades were not very good in my previous examinations. It would be a risk for me if I applied with some other competitive universities or popular courses. The threshold entrance of nautical study in Shanghai Maritime University was not high, and another advantage was that I could continue to stay in Shanghai if I could study here.'* (Int. 12).

One 29-year-old female training third officer who was enrolled in 2004 stated that her choice was made by her parents who also had no idea about nautical study and seafaring. *'As a matter of fact my choice was made by my parents who also did not know what nautical study was. The course recruits student much earlier than other courses each year, therefore even though you fail this application you still have the opportunity to choose another direction. My parents suggested me not to leave this option blank, so as a double safe I put Shanghai Maritime University in the form and then I came here.'* (Int. 20).

It is interesting to note, however, that there seems a significant connection between Merchant or Military Navy and the cadets. For example, of the 58 pre-sea cadets, seventeen (29%) noted that they had connections to either the merchant navy or the military navy through families and friends. This included one female cadet who had connections to the Military Navy through her *'...father and grandfather'*. A further female cadet said that *'...One of my father's friends is an officer [in] the merchant navy'*. Whilst one male cadet has implied that they did not hold any direct connections to either of the navies, they have indicated that they have *'...A friend [that] is engaged in the [maritime] related industry.'*

### 3.0 RECRUITMENT

#### 3.1 Motivation

Why do these young women join the nautical courses? What have they experienced in terms of encouragement or discouragement from their families, friends or other societal forces, in their decision making?

We found, significantly, the majority of the female respondents reported that they had not come across with discouragement from becoming a cadet, from their families and friends because of their gender. Many actually recounted encouraging experiences when asked why they decided to study navigation. Their experiences are particularly associated with personal interest, their family's association with the sea, and parental support or encouragement from other relatives.

The following quote from an interview with a female cadet, who joined the SMU WCP in 2013, illustrates the importance of the personal interest in some cadets' decision making process. *'I am a bit different from most girls. I have no interest to become a teacher, or doctor. When asked what course to take after the university entrance examination, I came across the maritime course leaflet and got attracted. Navigation is a very unique course and I have excellent eyesight and I am tall – all match well with the standard required. My parents agreed and they selected the course for me (One female cadet who joined the SMU Women Cadets Programme in 2013' (Int. 08).*

The family's close association with the sea has also impacted on cadets' selection of the maritime course in the university. *'When I was a little girl in kindergarten, my parents always took me to swim in the pool at the SMU pool. By the time I reached milled school, I had an opportunity to attend a lecture on navigation given by my cousin who taught in the maritime university and her husband an ocean-going seafarer. So, I wanted to sail at sea for many years before I have the opportunity to stay here at SMU' (Int. 21).*

Similar experience was also reported by one women whose father works as a manager in a shipping company (No.5) and another woman whose father has sailed on commercial ships (Int.11)

In China, parents play a vital role in helping their children with course section in colleges and universities. The cadets confirmed this. Many of them reported support and encouragement from parents when *'selecting which course to take and which university to apply with after the national higher education entrance examination'*, as demonstrated earlier.

However, it is also remarkable and ironic to note that many of the parents who advised their children to take the navigation course at SMU were actually ignorant about the course. One lecturer who joined the course in 2006 and has stayed to teach the course recalled, *'My parents had little idea of this course. They didn't expect students graduated from this course have to drive a ship at sea. They thought it was about marine technology. I did not know that I will have to go to sea until I was well into the course'.* (Int. 02)

For some female cadets it seemed 'accidental' that they joined the course. This was primarily attributed to their 'ignorance' of shipping. In China, maritime universities have a tradition and a privilege of recruiting students well before most other universities. This also applies to the country's military colleges which are well-known for their high standards. The tradition of 'cherry-picking' can

be traced back to the 'good old days' in the 1950s-1980s when seafaring was a highly sought-after and privileged profession and the training of seafarers involved semi-military methods. Such a tradition continues in spite of the tremendous social-economic changes in China, including the decline of seafarers' status. The apparent 'cherry picking' recruitment model can be misleading. This may explain some cadets' comments on their decision to join the course as 'accidental', 'out of ignorance' (Int. 20) and 'a mix-up of *Yin* and *Yang* (*yincuo yangcha* in Chinese)' (Int. 13).<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that the Chinese cadet survey also indicated that a minority of applicants came across with direct discouragement from family, friends and from the media. This discouragement was experienced by both men and women cadets. One reason mentioned for this was the perceived low status of the seafaring occupation. 'Poor salary' particularly as an intern was also given as a reason by six cadets for the discouragement they received in relation to their cadetship. Spending time away from home with little access to communication channels and online access was a further reason provided. *'Feeling too far away from home without mobile signal'*.

### **3.2 Employment Opportunities**

Nearly all the women involved in the China data collection expressed a strong wish for opportunities to go to sea on 'real' ships in 'real' commercial shipping. Unfortunately, such opportunities are rare for Chinese female cadets at the end of their training.

For the female cadets at SMU, *'graduation means no ships to sail'*. This reality was clearly stated by all the women seafarers interviewed, both cadets and lecturers. Difficulty in finding a ship to sail is the fundamental reason why *'female cadets do not go to sea' in China. Many cadets recalled unpleasant experiences when they contacted shipping companies for jobs. 'I have been to all the job fair where cadets meet shipping companies and apply for ships to sail. I asked every company there. None of them wanted me. They just reject you by saying, 'sorry, we shipping does not recruit women.'*' (Int. 07). *'After attending the job fair last week, I felt having had a bad cold shower. Virtually, all the companies made it clear in their advertisement 'for men only'. Despite this, I came up and asked them if they would like to consider my application, they just said, 'Female cadets? Impossible!'*' (Int. 13). *'Sailing is actually my dream. I do want to go to sea. But, we females have no chance. That's why I have decided to apply with maritime agencies.'* (Int. 08).

The university is fully aware of the problem and has tried hard to help find ships for the female cadets to sail before their graduation, with little success. One senior manager, a main driver of the Women Cadets Programme at SMU, shared with us his observation, *'It is extremely hard for our female students to locate jobs with shipping companies. In 2000, when we recruited the first cohort, these girls and the University received a good deal of media attention. We hit the headlines of many newspapers. But, this has all died down. But the time when they were graduated, in 2004, I realised it seemed so hard, almost impossible to break the old tradition. People were talking high sounding words. But, they closed their doors to our female students. The problem is here, with the shipping companies'*. (Int. 10).

---

<sup>10</sup> In [Chinese philosophy](#), **yin and yang** (also *yin-yang* or *yin yang*, 陰陽 *yīnyáng* "dark—bright") describes how opposite or contrary forces are actually complementary, [interconnected](#), and interdependent in the natural world, and how they give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. Of the male and female, men are considered '*yang*', and women '*yin*'.

One woman lecturer with sailing experience with Maersk pointed out, *'It is a norm for [Chinese] shipping companies to refuse to recruit women seafarers. This is blatant discrimination against women. But, no company would say so in their advertisement. Some company may state in their advertisement that they would take women. In practice, they kept the posts only for men'* (Int. 20)

We interviewed senior managers of four maritime companies, including two shipping management companies, one crewing agency and one shipping company. The ships they owned or managed have never been crewed with women seafarers. None of these companies have any plans or intention to recruit women (Ints. 16, 18, 19).

Amongst the graduates from the first 2-3 years, several female cadets found piloting jobs. They were happy because they had ships to sail, even though the voyage was always brief. Their employment history was brief. *'One woman got injured when climbing up the ladder during a ship board operation. The company was scared of being taken to court. They took her off the ship immediately and then dismissed all the other female pilots. They stop taking any of our female students from the Programme since then. The prejudice is just too hard to die'* (Int. 10). Since 2004, a small number of female cadets have graduated from SMU and have found sailing jobs. Their employers included a handful foreign and Chinese state shipping companies, the SMU's own training ships, some government management and inspection ships and one science exploration ship. Most of these women stayed on board for 12 to 18 months. Most stopped sailing shortly after they became qualified as the Third Officer, because this certificate would enable them to apply for 'decent' jobs which are land-based but still in the maritime sector. It indicates that these women intend to stay with the maritime industry, on land, not at sea.

So far, China is likely to have only two female second officers and one First Officer. These three women seafarers, with two female third officers are all with SMU as maritime lecturers. The woman with the FO certificate is working on her PhD in maritime studies at the same time. She informed us, *'It is likely that we five are the only women seafarers who continue sailing at sea in China'*. (Int. 05).

### **3.3 Career Prospects**

When cadets were asked how long they anticipated serving at sea following their cadetship, 27 cadets provided answers. As shown in Table 3, only a small minority of cadets (5) detailed that they planned to serve as a seafarer for their entire working life. This included one female cadet. In contrast, the large majority of cadets indicated that they expected to complete between two and ten years' service at sea. This included 17 cadets who said they planned to operate on board for less than two years. Significantly, as highlighted in the table, 13 out of this total were females. Another 16 cadets indicated their intention to sail on board for no more than five years. Three male cadets said they would sail on board for more than five years but less than ten years. Equally, only one male cadet highlighted that they planned to serve as a seafarer for up to twenty years. One male cadet illustrated that they did not anticipate going to sea following the completion of his cadetship, stating "0".

Table 3. The Intended Years at Sea after Completion of the maritime Courses (male and female) 2015/2016

Total	Male	Female	Intended Years at Sea
5	4	1	All career life
1	1	0	20
3	3	0	5-10
17	4	13	Up to 2
1	1	0	0
<b>27</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	

Upon concluding their career at sea, some cadets (4) indicated that they planned to relocate into a similar industry onshore. A male cadet detailed that in the future they planned to be *'engaged in shipping-related onshore work'*. Another male cadet added that they would *'...find a job related to navigation on the shore'*.

Regarding the women seafarers, the survey findings largely concur with the interview findings. As already discussed, nearly all the women who have sailing experience reported a sailing history of less than two years. They offered a range of reasons for this, including: Leaving sooner than they wished because of the shipping companies' negative attitude and behaviour. For example, as previously noted, the women seafarers who sailed as pilots for a company have been taken off the posts only because one of them had an injury during the operation aboard. Apparently, the accident was considered as a demonstration of women's 'weakness' and 'incompetence', hence used as an excuse to punish all the women pilots.

Marriage and child care are also concerns for female cadets who chose to sail only for a short period of time after graduation from the nautical course. One female maritime lecturer with the Second Officer's certificate shared her thoughts and feelings. *'I admire the previous generation of women seafarers. Some of them worked all the way up to top positions, such as WANG Yafu and ZHANG Xinzhi, both became Chief Engineers. But, neither of them married nor have they got children. Although women seafarers like them with such high position were only a hand full, I admire them a lot. Actually, tears would almost come to my eyes whenever I thought of them. They would make me think of my own future if I develop career at sea'* (Int. 03).

The same concern was also expressed by another female lecturer who holds a First Officer certificate, *'Your family life would certainly be affected if you continue to work at sea and to become a captain. Yes, many of us have this kind of concern.'* (Int. 05).

## 4.0 MULTI-CULTURAL CREWS

Few Chinese cadets surveyed had experienced working on board multinational-crewed ships. Our interviews only found one woman who sailed briefly on a cruise ship with positive experiences, as discussed in previous sections. Despite this, questions were asked to examine their attitude towards multi-cultural crew. When asked 'Have you heard about any issues relating to multicultural crewed ships?' nine (16%) out of the 58 cadets (male and female) from the pre-sea cohort said that they had heard about issues relating to multicultural crewed vessel. It has been detailed by one male cadet that "Crew members come from different countries, different cultures. I am not sure if I can get used to the environment". A further male cadet mentioned that issues can arise '*As a result of differences in communication and living habits, to get along with seafarers from other countries can be an issue*'. Therefore the need for mutual understanding and appreciation on board has been highlighted by one cadet.

It was found that most women participating in this study, cadets and maritime lecturers alike, were positive when asked if they would like to sail on multinational crewed ships. Many said that they would like very much to have opportunities to '*go to sea working together with seafarers from other countries so that we can improve our English and experience different cultures*'.

### 4.1 Key issues

When asked further, 'Would you have any concerns working on a multicultural crewed vessel in the future?' ten cadets (17%) detailed that they would have concerns about working on board a multicultural crewed vessel in the future. This number included six female cadets. One male cadet stated that these concerns were in relation to a number of different aspects on board including '*different culture and inconvenience in communication, different opinions, and having difficulty in working and spend daily life together (with seafarers of other nationalities)*'. Variations in custom were highlighted as a potential issue for two male cadets. It was noted that '*different customs arouse different difference easily*'. One female cadet said that she would have concerns sailing on board a multicultural crewed vessel in the future due to the '*equality between men and women*'.

#### 4.1.1 Communication

Communication between crew members has been identified as another potential issue when working with multiple nationalities, suggesting a lack of confidence in English language skills. The management on board was raised as another issue that may be evident on board a multi-culturally crewed vessel, with a female cadet suggesting that this issue could be evident for officers overseeing operations on board. The cadet has stated that '*...you can watch someone doing one thing, but can't observe all the time*'.

Potential '*language barrier*' was cited by cadets as the biggest issue that may be presented by a multi-cultural crew working environment. When asked 'have you heard about any issues relating to multicultural crewed ships?' Nine cadets said that they had. This included two female cadets. One of the female cadets highlighted the common occurrence of multicultural crews, stating that '*it's normal that officers come from flag state and others from southeast Asian countries like Philippines etc.*'. One



male cadet mentioned that issues can arise *'As a result of differences in communication and living habits to get along with not harmonious'*.

#### **4.1.2 Hostility**

When asked 'Do you think female seafarers might face hostility from other nationalities (or their own nationality) because of their gender?', only a small minority of cadets (7%) felt that female seafarers could potentially face hostility on the basis of their gender. This point included the views of two female cadets. One cadet considered the problem was caused by cultural differences. The other cadet believed that the low numbers of female seafarers was provided as a reason for potential hostility (1). One female cadet has stated that *'they may think female seafarers are less useful'*. Additionally a male cadet said *'Some people think that women can't afford to work quite a bit, she needs help'*. Another male cadet noted that women could potentially face hostility as they *'...think the woman is in an awkward position on the ship, and it's not safe'*.

#### **4.1.3 Perceived Cultural differences**

The cadet survey asked, 'What do you think would be the biggest potential issue faced on-board with respect to multi-cultural crews?', *'cultural differences or misunderstanding'* between crew of different nationalities was regarded as a significant potential issue when considering operating on board a multicultural crewed vessel. Potential differences resulting from food and eating customs were also highlighted. Additionally, *'different lifestyles and different values'* were viewed as another issue. One cadet noted that as a result of cultural variations and customs, some crew members may *'...deal with affairs with different attitude[s]'*. Subsequently it has been suggested by two female cadets that issues may arise in relation to adapting *'...to everyone's culture'*.

On board management was raised as a further issue that may be evident on board a multi-culturally crewed vessel. A female cadet suggested that this issue could be prominent for officials overseeing operations on board. The cadet stated that *'...you can watch someone doing one thing, but can't observe all the time'*.

## **5.0 POTENTIAL GENDER ISSUES**

### **5.1 Traditional values/ Stereotypes**

In China work roles were traditionally apportioned according to gender. Women usually worked inside home and men outside. A deep-rooted sense of Chinese people was that the home was the centre of female labour, such as cooking, washing and childcare. 'Men ploughing and women weaving' (*nan geng nv zhi*) was an appropriate description of the traditional Chinese family. However, this gendered division of labour had been primarily shaped by Confucian values and social philosophy, which was the *'dominant cosmology and familial ethic for more than 2000 years'* in China (Das & Gupta, 1995:191). The philosophy advocates *'men's power and dominance over women'*, and women's subordinate status in social and culture life. This Confucian philosophy was challenged by Mao with the establishment of the Communist New China (1949) at which time women were encouraged and empowered to take jobs in the traditionally men's world, as discussed earlier in this report. However,

the advancement of the market economy since the early 1980s have seen some restoration of the old ideas, values and practices concerning women's role in society and family life.

According to the survey and interviews with the cadets and other women seafarers, a traditional viewpoint that women should only undertake certain roles on ships now persists. These include roles in cooking, housekeeping, nursing and so on. When female cadets were asked 'do you believe this is an acceptable viewpoint in today's society?'; a small minority of cadets (16%) deemed that women's traditional roles stated to be suitable for a woman to complete on board were still appropriate in today's society. One cadet reiterated the idea of the traditional stereotype, stating that *'(T)hese jobs belong to women.'* The difficulties in changing these traditional and deep rooted stereotypes have been highlighted.

Another reason provided as to why one cadet believes the traditional on board working roles for a women are still relevant in today's society, is due to how women have been viewed. The cadet has stated that *'People tend to look up to men and look down to women.'* This implies that in some instances women may not be viewed or respected as equals to their male counterparts.

## **5.2 Women seafarers and families**

Women have been regarded to have the competency to perform in roles on board that were not traditionally perceived to be suitable for them. One cadet stated that *'(W)omen are competent as deck officers'*. Furthermore, women have been considered to possess the ability to complete more roles than they are expected. Some interviewees also suggest that it is difficult for women to develop a long term career at sea because of traditional values and stereotypes. Traditionally women are given special family responsibilities which are conflicting with their duties on board. For example, as one 30-year-old female second officer commented in her interview, *'I have a child who was just one year old when I was still working onboard. The difficulty for me was this: every time before I joined a ship I had to negotiate with my parents, so that they would come to look after my child for a few months. I needed to choose a time which was convenient both for me and for my parents. Otherwise I would have had to give up sailing entirely.'*(Int.01).

Another 30-year-old female third officer who finally gave up the career of seafaring commented, *'Before, I had a tutor who joined a ship shortly after her wedding. She had been criticised by a lot of people. Both her colleagues and neighbours talked a lot behind her. They say that she should stay at home, and she should focus on her family not a ship. Some people even advised her that her primary duty was to have a baby, not to working at sea'* (Int.02).

The pressure to get married is another reason for many male and female cadets who had to give up seafaring. During interviews three cases were reported where female seafarers had to give up working on board because of the pressure to get married. For example, one female cadet who was promoted to third officer failed to go back to sea. The reason being her boyfriend wanted them to get married immediately, but she insisted that she needed to work on board until she was promoted to third officer. She finished her cadetship and was promoted as desired, but her boyfriend did not wait for her. She felt very sad and was under much pressure from family and friends. Following this experience she made the decision never work on board again.

Women seafarers in China have always suffered from traditional attitudes, for example, that women are not suitable for seafaring. Sometimes these attitudes lead them to give up their seafaring career because of this. As one 30-year-old female second officer commented in her interview, *'It would be ok when you are studying maritime course. Sometimes you might even be praised for this kind of courage in the University. However, when you really chose the profession after graduation people's attitude towards you may change immediately. They would question your plan and even ask 'Why do you want to work on board as a girl? Don't you even know that all people on board are men?'* (Int.01)

Another traditional attitude held towards women seafarers in China is that women on board may cause unexpected and unwanted rumours and gossips. For example, a 30-year-old female third officer stated, *'When I joined a ship I did not know I was pregnant. When I knew that I was having a baby I had to sign off and returned. My colleagues and neighbour always used this teasing me, such as "you came back with a baby! Who does it belong?" I knew it was just a joke but I still felt very uncomfortable because it addressed unnecessary attention. It has also become a concern for ship management. If the crew are men it should be ok because nothing special would happen, but if there is a woman onboard the issue may become sensitive, for example, if there was a baby on board how could they explain and deal with that.'* (Int.02).

It is important to note however that in spite of this, equality between males and females has been noted as one reason as to why some cadets feel that the traditional roles for a woman on board are no longer valid in today's society. One cadet noted that, *'Women and man are equal and they can be capable for many difficult jobs'*. It has been implied that in some instances the notion of appropriate suggested jobs for men and women have been eradicated. A cadet has stated that *'There is no specific line between man's job and women's job.'*

### **5.3 Adaptation of behaviour and appearance**

Eight women cadets felt that they had to adapt their appearance or behaviour whilst on board. But four other female cadets reported that they did not change their appearance or behaviour on board, because *'there was no need adjustment'*. For many female seafarers, they may have to spend more time on making up or other preparation before they take duty. For example, as one 32-year-old female training chief officer commented in her interview, *'.. many male seafarers, they may only need to get up 15 minutes before their duty. However, it is not possible for me. I do not want to come to the bridge with uncombed hair and dirty face. Although there is no requirement, I need to present a proper look when I am on duty. Therefore, I always get up 30 minutes earlier than my colleagues under the same circumstance to make sure I have sufficient time for making up. This is a ship and we need to present out best'* (Int. 05).

In China, and most of Asia fair skin colour is considered beautiful and an important attribute of femininity. This is widely accepted in Chinese society by men and women, and especially by young women. Such a social expectation could form a pressure on women working on ships as the nature of their profession determines that they have to expose their skin to the elements of nature when sailing at sea. Fear of getting skin darkened especially in the facial area is always a concern. Several women with seafaring experience reported they had to take particular care to protect their skin. One female lecturer with a Third Officer certificate shared her experience of this during her research interview. *'In the summer, you had to do chipping and painting on the deck under very strong sunshine. The boys*

*were OK as they didn't care much if they would get sun-tanned or even sun burnt. We girls were different. We had to care a lot. We had to fully cover ourselves with overalls, gloves and hats, fully equipped, to protect ourselves from the beating of the sunshine. We took particular care of our hands, with gloves and loads of cream and lotions. But, of course, you can't fully keep your hands nice and soft as you wish. We had to be realistic and practical'* (Int. 21).

These women seafarers are distinctively different from those sailing in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Unlike their 'elder sisters' sailing in Mao's time when the dominant ideology promotes *'there is no difference between men and women'* and wearing foundations or lipstick would be criticised as behaviour of bourgeoisie, these women represent a new generation of women seafarers in China in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. They enjoy seafaring but also take particular attention to keep their femininity. The following media report on a 'model' woman seafarer further illustrates this point, *'Shi Zhengping is a typical fine young lady from Shanghai. She brings a lot of stuff with her when joining her ship, snacks, fruits, Vitamins, facial masks, creams and lotions you name it. But, she never allowed herself to be lag behind when labouring on deck, chipping, painting, cleaning the hall and so on. I met her on board of her ship in high summer. She was fully covered with the overall, safety helmet, and gloves. It was boiling hot. Her full attention was on the job following closely to the instruction from the boatswain'* (Hu Rongshan, 2006).

#### **5.4 Allocation of tasks**

Whilst on board during the cadetship, the women were expected to play the *'supporting role'* while more physically hard or *'more dangerous'* tasks would be allocated to the men. One male lecturer commented in his interview, *'While sailing at sea, we deliberately allocated light tasks to the girls. Sometimes, we would rather just let them observe the operation. Take fire fighting for example, the boys would need to get fully equipped and their kits each would be about 25 kilos. How can we ask the girls to do the same? We only ask them to simulate in the bridge. We had two girls aboard. One to play the Captain, the other play the deck officer, both holding walkie-talkie. They just play the commanding role. It would be OK. .... Life boat drill can be dangerous with injury and even loss of life. The risk would be just too big for girls. So, again, we would just ask them to command, rather than to conduct the operation. It is even a dangerous task for boys. How can we ask girls to do it!'* (Int. 14).

All the five female maritime lecturers that were interviewed hold an officer certificate. They are therefore required to sail at sea regularly to validate their qualification as seafarers, otherwise they have to revalidate their certificate by passing exams which are usually more difficult and time consuming. They reported such experiences as noted above and admitted that they had been *'well looked after'* by their male counterparts during the voyages. In fact, they expressed mixed feelings about the experience. On the one hand, they appreciate the kindness of their male colleagues. At the same time, they also wish that they would be allowed the opportunity *'to do what a real seafarer should do'*. One female lecturer said, *'We are of course women. But, we really want to take all the responsibilities the real seafarer should do on board of ships. For explore, if I am an AB, I should do all the job the AB should do. I hope we would be given this opportunity'* (Int. 01).

#### **5.4.1 Working with female seafarers**

In the meantime, it has been noted that some male cadets may feel uncomfortable working with a female seafarer. This was mentioned in relation to the high standards of their personal presentation which they must adhere to whilst in the presence of females. Some of the answers demonstrated that men might not feel that they can be causal in terms of their appearance whilst women are on board. This may make them feel *'uneasy'* or *'uncomfortable'* on board. Some (two) cadets did not have any concerns about working with a female seafarer on board in terms of their attitude or behaviour because they considered them to be equal.

Additionally, under half of the male cadets surveyed (46%) had concerns about working alongside a female seafarer. Five cadets believed that these preconceptions were largely in terms of the need for men to help the women when they were on board. One male cadet said that *'It is a virtue to respect and help women'*. Another male cadet added that *'It's the instinct to help women as a man'*. While such kind of gentlemanly value and behaviour shows men's respect for women, it also indicates men's unintentional underestimate of women's capacity and ability. This implies gentlemanly behaviour, rather than anything negative towards women. Whilst it was not actually stated by the cadets, providing assistance to females on board could potentially be associated with a female's perceived low physical strength and the unintended deprivation of these women's opportunity to receive adequate training.

#### **5.5 Isolation**

Seafarers work and live in a confined space that is constantly mobile and moving around the world. They are very likely to suffer the loneliness of emotional isolation. In addition, seafarers on the high seas are very much isolated from what is going on outside their own small world. The situation of isolation and of being confined to a ship also discourages their interest in the day-to-day events of the distant place. Enjoyable working and living conditions are vital elements in encouraging them to overcome social isolation and separation from their families and to spend a longer time at sea. On the contrary, poor employment conditions and heavy working load significantly exacerbate the sense of loneliness and isolation among Chinese seafarers and impair their health and mental well-being.

The research found that isolation is an issue with some women seafarers who had sailing experiences, especially when they were placed on board as the only female member in the crew. They would find it hard to cope or feel pressured. One 30-year old woman lecturer who has worked on board a Chinese commercial ship as the only female officer said she found it difficult to develop friendship with other crew members. *'Usually I was the only female on board, so it was not a surprise that I always drew too much attention from other male colleagues. I tended to think that it would be not suitable for me to stay close with anyone, otherwise other people might think we had a special relationship. Therefore I had to keep a distance from all other colleagues. After my duty I tended to stay alone and I would never come to any other male seafarers' cabin and I never invited other people to my cabin. I did not want to make any unnecessary rumours or gossips. On land I am totally different. I love to making friends and staying together with them. So I would like to say that I tended to feel lonely on board'* (Int.01).

All the pre-sea cadets, male and female, were asked if they would expect female seafarers to feel isolated on-board because of their gender. Only one male cadet did feel that this might be the case.

In contrast, five female cadets said they believed it was possible for female seafarers to feel isolated on the basis of their gender. The interaction between men and women on board was highlighted as a potential reason for this. It was suggested that the things men and women have in common, especially in regards to their conversational topics can vary. One cadet argued that due to the masculine nature of the sector, female seafarers should be mentality prepared for this. In spite of this, some pre-sea cadets felt that female seafarers would not feel isolated on board on the basis of their gender as they will interact with their fellow male seafarers. One male cadet said that *'...Men will be very happy to make friends with the crew'*. There is of-course equal potential for male seafarers to feel isolated. One male cadet said that this could be *'the same as the male seafarers'*.

For women who have sailing experience and the companionship of other women crew member(s), both cadets and lecturers, they show a clear feeling of 'sharing' 'and closeness'. When asked if loneliness or isolation was an issue during her time at sea, a female cadet with a combined total sailing time of 12 months said with a hearted laugh, *'Feeling lonely or isolated? Oh, no. We had four of us girls together. We were so busy and with so much to do and we actually had no time to feel lonely or isolated. But, sometimes you did feel a bit bored. But, that was different, wasn't it?'* (Int. 21)

The increase of the number of women on board would improve social connectivity and enhance their overall working and living experience at sea. One woman, who has employment history as First Mate on Maersk ships also talked about her experience when sailing on a Ro-Ro between Shanghai and Singapore. *'The crew was small. It felt like a family because only several of us on the ship. We were all very close to each other, just like a family.... I worked on this ship for 18 months. There were always other women seafarers on board, sometime more, sometimes fewer'*. (Int. 20).

Having other women seafarers in the crew is therefore likely to be a most important factor contributing to her overall positive experience. It is worth noting however that despite having other women on board one woman seafarer reported that *'sometimes you did feel lonely or isolated.'* But, she believes that the isolation was due to the *'nature of seafaring'* regardless of the individual's gender identity *'because you were long confined to a small mobile space without much contact with land, your family and friends'*, as one cadet noted in the survey.

Compared with women placed on board of cargo ships, there is less reporting of isolation of seafarers on board passenger ships because of the different working and living environment experienced there. These ships carry a large number of passengers and a much larger crew of male and female seafarers. The journey between ports is much shorter. The society on board is therefore closer to the main stream society ashore. As a result, social connectivity is much easier compared to that on cargo ships. One woman's experience on board a Russian cruise ship illustrates the point. *'I had very positive experience on that ship. Many passengers were from Russia. I talked to them and we sometimes swop small gifts to each other. I didn't feel isolated at all.'* (Int. 05).

We must note that isolation has always been an important issue for seafarers due to the nature of the profession and working at sea. With the structural changes in shipping in the last 30 40 years, such as the reduction of the crew size, the intensified multi-nationalisation of the crew structure, less central and more secure ports and the associated welfare support for seafarers from city centres, the increasing of the length of the duty tour (especially for seafarers from developing countries), it is no surprise then that isolation remains a serious problem faced by seafarers everywhere. This is

regardless of gender and in spite of the advancement of technology such as mobile phones and the internet. However, the fact that only a small number of women work at sea and many of them are likely to be the only female member of the crew, makes isolation a more serious concern for this part of the workforce.

### **5.6 Harassment**

Sexual harassment remains a sensitive topic when discussed in China. Most of the women cadets and lecturers said in the interview that they have not had problem in this aspect. However, a small number (4) of women reported experiences concerning harassment. One refers to the 'mysterious' missing of women's underwear in the training ship's communal laundry. *'It happened during my training at sea. There was an area set aside for us girls to air our laundry. At least twice, my underwear went missing. Very strange. We reported this incident and we were then give a cabin to air our laundry. It never happen again afterwards because we just lock it up'*. (Int. 02)

During the voyage, commercial ships sometimes pick up conversations via 'wireless', the radio exchange between seafarers working on board of nearby fishing vessels. These conversations are sometimes heavily charged with derogative language against women. The women who reported such 'incidents' said that they found such conversations 'vulgar' and 'offensive'. One said, *'I suspect that they deliberately targeted at us with such dirty language. Their vessels were so close to ours and they must have seen us girls on board'* (Int. 05)

The survey also picked up some apparently isolated cases of harassment when cadets were sailing on board vessels. At the question 'Whilst on-board did you ever witness any harassment made to a female cadet by a fellow male cadet?' Four male cadets reported that they witnessed instances of harassment towards female cadets. One of them observed, *'(A) male intern always make phone calls to a female intern'*. One female cadet noted that she had either encountered or witnessed harassment made to herself or another female cadet whilst on board, although she did not chose to expand on this incident.

Nevertheless, more women also reported positive experiences at sea when interacting with male cadets or seafarers. Some reported, when coming across with seafarers on fishing vessels via wireless), *'(T)hey can be really nice, chatting with you, passing useful information and so on. It helps when you get bored when in bridge'* (No.21). In the survey, one post-sea cadet said, *'(The) four female cadets on the ship were our classmates we respect each other.'*

### **5.7 Perception of Ability**

In the survey, the pre-sea cadets were asked if they would 'feel confident socialising with seafarers of the opposite gender whilst on-board'. Only two male cadets said that they would not feel confident socialising with female seafarers whilst on board. Significantly all nineteen female cadets stated that they felt confident socialising with male seafarers whilst on board.

The cadets were also asked if they believe that women may not be suitable for seafaring. A small minority of cadets (16%) felt that the traditional roles associated with women staying at home and bringing up children as her main job, to still be applicable and appropriate in today's society. This

included two female cadets. One cadet reiterated the idea of the traditional stereotype, stating that *'These jobs belong to women'*. The difficulties in changing these traditional rooted stereotypes has been highlighted. Another quote made in response to this questions highlights inequality between men and women, *'People incline to look up to men and look down to women'*.

In spite of this, equality between males and females has been noted as one reason as to why some cadets feel that the traditional roles for women on board are no longer valid in today's society. One cadet has noted that *'Women and man are equal and they can be capable for many difficult jobs'*. It has been implied that in some instances the notion of appropriate jobs for men and women have been eradicated. *'There is no specific line between man's job and women's job'*.

Women have been regarded to have the competency to perform in roles on board that weren't traditionally perceived to be suitable for them. One cadet stated that *'Women are competent as deck officers'*.

### **5.8 Interactions with Male Cadets and Seafarers aboard**

The survey asked the cadets 'if the male seafarers treat female cadets differently?' The majority of them believed that male seafarers did not treat female cadets differently. This was expressed as equality between men and women. A male cadet stated that cadets, *'Treat others equally'*. The element of respect has been discussed with a male cadet who acknowledged that women are *'...worthy of respect'*. The female cadets were noted to have the ability to *'...overcome psychological and physical difficulties'*. This is important when considering the low proportion of female seafarers that are currently operating within the seafaring community.

However, a minority of 12% of cadets felt that females were treated differently by their fellow male cadets. One reason given for this was due to the low proportion of female seafarers on board. One male cadet suggested that female cadets *'do not possess the required physical strength'*. The same cadet also felt that *'it was questionable as to whether females are capable of working on board'*.

When asked 'Do you think women have to try harder than a male seafarer when doing the equivalent job?', eighteen cadets (31%) said they believed women may have to try harder to complete their duties in comparison to their male counterparts. This included three female cadets who believed that they themselves would personally have to try harder. One of the main reasons for this was over concerns about a female's physical ability to complete the role, as noted by eight cadets. One male cadet said, *'...the women's strength is small'*. Another male cadet added that *'...The physical aspects of men is stronger than [women]'*. However the data shows that not all women were thought to have to try harder.

The cadets were also asked their opinion about whether some duties on-board were perceived to be more suited to men due to their physical nature. More than half, (53%) of the cadets thought that this was the case. This number included thirteen female cadets who believed some jobs to be more suited to men. In explaining why, many believed that *'Men are physically stronger'*.

On the question regarding the positive or negative 'stories' about women seafarers 'that you have heard?', most cadets reported that they have heard positive 'stories' about women seafarers sailing at sea, eight making reference to their female lecturers. A small number of the cadets referred to



'negative stories' they have heard concerning 'a woman who can't do heavy work,' 'a female pilot who fell into water', 'some women seafarers who had sexual harassment', and 'issues with relationships between men and women.'

When asked 'What then would be the three biggest issue for women working on-board?' harassment was mentioned by three female cadets who said 'Males' were the biggest potential issue they believe female seafarers faced whilst on board. A male cadet mentioned 'Hard and irregular work'. And another male cadet mentioned fatigue as a potential issue. Opportunities for promotion were mentioned by a male cadet who noted that it may be 'Hard to promote in position'. Another male cadet said that female seafarers may potentially experience issues arising in relation to their career development. It was also suggested that female seafarers could potentially face 'Worries from parents'. However, it could be argued that so could male seafarers.

It was implied that female seafarers could potentially face challenges in relation to their future relationships due to being at sea with three female cadets highlighting the 'lack of partners'. Loneliness was also mentioned as one of the key issues facing female seafarers on board. 'It's lonely for only female'.

## **6.0 TRAINING**

### **6.1 Gendered Courses, Tuition Fees and Expectations**

The SMU has been recruiting 18-30 female cadets every year since 2000. All the students must pass the national university entrance examination with the required scores before joining the course in the Merchant Marine College. As degree students for BSc, both the male and the female cadets are required to study here for four years and the courses include both campus based study and the ship based training.

A closer look at the details of the courses the cadets take shows that they are vastly differentiated by gender. The male cadets take a standard navigation or marine engineering course and for those who successfully complete the course they expect to receive BSc in Navigation or BSc in Marine Engineering. For the female cadets, in addition to the standard units required for Navigation study (Marine Engineering is not open to women even at SMU), the female cadets are expected to take 12 more units in International Shipping Management. At the '*satisfactory completion of all these courses, these girls will be awarded with a BSc in Navigation*'. (International Shipping Management). This supports the findings of an earlier study on the SMU's Women Cadets Programme, which was conducted shortly after the introduction of the course (Hu & Hu, 2001:13). The doubling of the course content was intended by the university to give the female cadets more advantage on the future job market, because the special career prospect of women seafarers after graduation, they may not be able to find a job on board because very few shipping companies would like to recruit them. To solve the problem and give these girls more advantages, the University allow and encourage them to take more courses and they will have two degrees after graduation, one degree for navigation officer and the other for shipping business (or others) so they will be more promising for their future careers.

The tuition fees paid by female cadets is 5,000RMB/p.a. which is double the amount paid by their male counterparts (2,500RMB/p.a.). This differentiated tuition fees are actually caused by the university's gendered expectation of the cadets regarding their career prospects after graduation. The 'boys' are expected and indeed required to go to sea after the training and they receive government subsidies (2,500rmb/p.a.) that are designated to support seafarers training. They are therefore charged at 50% of the standard rate of the tuition fees. The female cadets are charged at the full rate, because they are not expected nor required to go to sea after the training and hence no right to receive the subsidy.

It is clear that the gender differentiation in the cadets' courses and tuition fees is introduced by the university out of a gendered expectation of the cadets' career prospect. Why then? *'Because we always have a fear that these girls may not be able to find ships to sail after graduation,'* explained a member of the senior management at the university. He continued, *'We recruited these girls. But, we have been fully aware of the difficulty for women to find sailing jobs when they finish with us. We know very well that shipping companies are always reluctant to take girls and place them on board vessels. We had this concern from the very start of the programme, back in 2000. So, we decided for female cadets also to take other courses while they take courses in navigation. We have only one intention. We want to make sure that these young women can find jobs after graduation. We hope they can find ships to go to sea. But, we also prepare them with additional education and training, so that they can find jobs ashore if not aboard'* (Int. 10).

To reduce the potential double burden of the dual courses, some 'very technical units' such as electrical engineering and marine mechanics have been taken from the curriculum for the female cadets. At the SMU, the curriculum for female and male cadets is called 'female curriculum' the 'male curriculum' respectively. The 'male curriculum remains largely the same since 2000; the 'female curriculum' has subjected to change constant change since 2000. This is because, as one senior official at the Marine College explained, *'This is because we have to follow the demands of the market (for women job seekers). We feel we have a big responsibility for these young women. We can't afford for them to take these very innovative courses but then find no jobs after graduation'*. (Int 15).

Fundamentally, the aim of the university has always been *'for the female students on the course to be able to drive a ship when aboard and to be able to manage shipping business when ashore'* as identified by a study in 2002 (Hu & Hu, 2002:13).

All the current female cadets and those already graduated from the programme, appreciate the good will of the University. They work hard and their performance has been as impressive as the male cadets, if not better. This is consistently recognised by all the lecturers contacted for this study. However, the different curriculum and the gender expectation seem to have negative impacts and implications. Some female cadets complained that although they work hard and their test results are good in both subjects, they feel strained with the double burden and they feel that they do not have a thorough control of the knowledge and skills in either because of the absence of the 'very technical units' in their curriculum. Some women reported negative experience and feelings when applying for jobs. *'Apparently, we have the advantage of having taken 12 more units during the course. In fact, we have a broader framework of knowledge; we don't have the deep knowledge and skills in either. For example, at last job fair, the boys who have taken the full course of the nautical programme were*

*clearly in a more advantageous position than us girls. The companies preferred to offer them jobs' (Int., 09).*

## **6.2 Stereotyping**

Some interviewees made the observation that traditional stereotyping also exists within the training environment provided for cadets. For example, the majority of the female cadets stated that they were treated differently, 'protectively' both in campus training and during the training on board ships. Even these women themselves accept this kind of special treatment because they also agree that they are weaker and cannot conduct some duties requiring heavy physical strength. They were usually assigned with 'safer' or 'easier' jobs while their male colleagues took up more dangerous and heavier tasks. As one male lecturer from SMU in charge of students' on board training commented during the interview, *'We have to treat female cadets differently and assigned them with light tasks. For example, in firefighting drills male students need to wear firefighting equipment which are more than 25 kgs. It is not suitable to let a girl wear such heavy stuff and carry out the duties. Also, during boat drills, any small mistake can cause human injury or death. Frankly speaking I dare not assign dangerous duties to a female cadet.'* (Int. 14).

## **6.3 On board Hierarchy and Training**

Compared with ships in the West, Chinese ships are known for their low hierarchical structure due to the egalitarianism promoted by the Maoist Chinese government under the planned economy (Zhao et al, 2004). Relevant to this study, however, is the fact that very little reference has been made to the 'ship hierarchy' by the research participants. This is predominantly due to that the two ships where the cadets received their training are on board the SMU's training vessels. Indeed, nearly all the women with sailing experience have not sailed on 'real' commercial ships in the 'real' world. One of the training ships is a general cargo ship trading between Shanghai, Japan and Russia, the other a container vessel engaged in the liner trade between Shanghai and South Korea. Each of them carries a crew of 22 seafarers. Although they are actively engaged in trading, the primary purpose of the two ships is for cadet training.

Most of the cadets, male and female, are not used as 'real' seafarers. They are placed on board to shadow the 'real' or experienced seafarers and they are expected to apply what they have learned from the shore-based nautical courses to practice use aboard. For every female, there are usually 20 male cadets. Most are from the same class or the same year so they know one another reasonably well during the campus-based study and training. These cadets are always led by one or two lecturers who teach them the nautical courses. The lecturers are responsible *for 'all aspects of the cadets' training and life during the sail'*, as reported by the cadets in the interviews.

All the 'real' seafarers with experience are men. The cadets viewed these seafarers as 'masters' who are there to teach them the hand-on skills or, as one cadet said during the interview, *'to teach us how to drive a ship'*. Lectures are also delivered during the voyage as part of the on-board training. This suggests that the cadets also spend considerable time amongst themselves and with their lecturers, as on the campus.

Overall, positive memories were reported by the women seafarers when referring to their ship-board training during their study with SMU. *'We played pukka together'. 'We chatted with each other'. 'We played pingpong together', 'I missed those training days at sea'* (Interviews 07, 08, 09, 16).

Virtually all the cadets considered the training at sea *'a best time of my experience.'* This is primarily because the female cadets were always placed on board of the training ship in a group with their male class mates around. So they felt the social environment was *'largely the same as on the campus'*. Most cadets had positive experiences and reflect positive feelings when recalling their training during the university years, on campus and on the training ships, as already noted in previous sections.

At the SMU, and in most Chinese maritime universities, for lecturers to promote to associate professorship or professorship, the applicant would need a minimum of two years sailing experience at sea. This explained why the female maritime lecturers contacted for this study all reported of a sailing history of 'two years'. They have sailed at sea, in order to get promoted in maritime teaching and research. It is interesting to note, however, that these female maritime lecturers always encourage their female students to go to sea after graduation. Additionally, they encourage them to *'continue to sail and aim high. Remember your goal is to become China's new generation of women captains,'* as they told the research team how they inspired their students during the training, on campus and on board ships. If they cannot realise their dream themselves, they want very much for it to be realised by younger women in future.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The Shanghai Maritime University is the only maritime university which has officially opened its door and recruited women to study nautical courses in China. The University is under the administration of Shanghai Municipal Government, which is more open, liberal and efficient when compared with most other Chinese cities. This grants the University an advantage of a certain degree of flexibility and autonomy in decision making, including recruiting women cadets, against the national mainstream which has banned women from joining maritime colleges and universities, until very recently when this report is being drafted (to be discussed later in this section).

The Women Cadets Programme at the SMU can be said successful in that it has trained more than 300 women seafarers for China in the past 15 years. Although only a small number of these women have sailed at sea, most make very good use of the knowledge and skills they have gained from the nautical course and contribute themselves to the shore-based sectors of the maritime industry. Those engaged in maritime teaching are particularly important as they, as women seafarers themselves, set positive role models for future female cadets inspiring and encouraging them to develop career at sea. Unfortunately, most female cadets do not get the opportunity to sail in the real commercial world or to develop career at sea, primarily because of prejudice and discrimination of the shipping companies but also because of societal forces such as traditional values and expectation from friends and families, as discussed in detail in the above sections.

We believe that persistence is important for success. Gender equality at sea is at once a matter of principle and practice. In principle, women are entitled to the same rights as men in the maritime industry in terms of training and employment. In practice, women cadets as an enormous rich human resource have the potential to help solve the shortage of officers at sea for the world commercial fleets including those owned or registered with China. Indeed, at the time when this report is being drafted, we receive encouraging news: Shanghai Maritime University is no longer the only MET institution that recruits women cadets in China. Indeed, a number of female students who have passed the 2016/2017 National University Entrance Examination have joined the aforementioned WeChat-based 'Chinese Women Seafarers Network' (run by one of our research team member) reported that they are on their way to more maritime colleges and universities in the country. While there will inevitably be challenges ahead, this indicates a spark of progress ahead for Chinese women who dream to sail at sea.

## **8.0 PROMOTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SEAFARING: RECOMMENDATIONS**

We believe that fundamental changes must be introduced at various levels and by various key stakeholders in China and beyond in order to improve the situation and to boost the Chinese women's prospect at sea. For this purpose, we make the following recommendations:

Maritime universities like the SMU should clarify the objective of the nautical course for women from the outset. Despite the good faith, the dual objective of *'training female cadets and turn them into graduates who can at once sail at sea and manage shipping on land'* as stated in the existing course introduction can cause confusion and can be misleading. Cadets need to have clearly defined and sharply focused course objectives and contents to stay firmly on track and aim to become future seafarers. The female cadets should be treated the same as the male cadets without any discrimination.

Measures must be introduced to ensure that shipping companies stop discriminating against women in recruitment and employment of seafarers. This can be done by introducing changes in policy and practice. Best practice from other companies or countries, such as placing women seafarers aboard in groups rather than as a single women crew member, can also be used to educate shipping managers, crewing agents and other stakeholders and to enhance their awareness of gender equality in shipping.

What is more, the government should develop a strategic plan in education and training of seafarers as a whole, with gender-specific policies on recruitment and employment of women on board of ships. The Chinese central government has just announced a new university recruitment policy which bans the use of wording of gender discrimination, such as 'Male Only', 'Not suitable for women', in any marketing and promotional materials such as courses descriptions. The policy will take effect from the academic year of 2016/2017. This is a positive move; efforts must be made to ensure effective implementation in practice.

Resources should be provided in supporting existing and future women seafarers. Their number is small and they are scattered far and wide. Throughout the study, we found there was a shared and strong demand for connection and networking amongst the women participated in the research. They cherish their shared identify and they want very much to form a group so that they can help and

support one another, and to have their voice heard collectively. To meet such a demand, the research team have helped set up a 'Chinese Women Seafarers Network' via WeChat, a free instant messaging service application developed in China, a powerful app which can connect individuals across digital platforms through a network. This Network is informal at the moment, but develops quickly and started providing advice to women who are interested in going to sea.

Finally, key stakeholders including the government agencies (such as the China Maritime Safety Agency, shipping companies and crewing agencies, seafarers trade unions, women's organisations and the maritime education and training institutions must join the forces and work together to form a coherent front in promoting gender equality and women's participation at sea. A joint working committee with representatives from these institutions can be set up for this objective, although a strong political will, wisdom, and innovative ways will be needed to articulate this with the Chinese government whose support is necessary for the formation of such a committee.

## REFERENCES

- BIMCO, (2015), 'BIMCO/ICS Manpower Report 2015', [https://www.bimco.org/Products/Shop/Manpower\\_report\\_2015/Manpower\\_report\\_2015.aspx](https://www.bimco.org/Products/Shop/Manpower_report_2015/Manpower_report_2015.aspx), accessed on 20 July 2016.
- Chang, Y. (2002) 'Sino-Korean Maritime Co-operation', in Lee, T.W., Roe, M., Gray, R., Shen, M. (eds.) *Shipping in China*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Chongqing Morning News* (重庆晨报), (2016), '15 Years: Story of the First Female Captain at Changjiang', 4 Jun 2016, <http://news.hsdhw.com/348256>
- Das, Man Singh, Gupta, Vijay Kumar, (1995), *Gender Roles and Family Analysis*, M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1995 - Dual-career families - 238 pages
- Erickson, A.S., Goldstein, L.J., Lord, C. (2009) *China Goes to Sea: Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspective*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.
- GOVCN. (2013) *The Overview of China*. Available at: [http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-08/11/content\\_271116.htm](http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-08/11/content_271116.htm) (Accessed on: 27 February 2013). [in Chinese]
- Heine, I.M. (1989) *China's Rise to Commercial Maritime Power*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Hu, Jitao, (2012), 'FIRMLY MARCH ON THE PATH OF SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS AND STRIVE TO COMPLETE THE BUILDING OF A MODERATELY PROSPEROUS SOCIETY IN ALL RESPECTS - Report to the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China', 8 November, [http://language.chinadaily.com.cn/news/2012-11/19/content\\_15941774.htm](http://language.chinadaily.com.cn/news/2012-11/19/content_15941774.htm), accessed on 19 July 2016.
- Hu, Rongshan, (2006), 'Dream to be Ocean-going Captain', *Sailing at Sea* <<航海>>, no.6, pp.5-7.

Hu, Y. Hu. R, (2002), 'The First Group of Women Captains in New China', *Sailing at Sea* <<航海>>, no.63 pp.10-13.

Li, S. (2010) 'Retrospective of Seafarers' Development in New China', *China Water Transport*, 11, 14-15. [in Chinese]

Menzies, G. (2012) *1421: The Year China Discovered the World*. London: Bantam Press. Muller, D.G. (1983) *China as a Maritime Power*, Boulder: Westview Press.

*The People's Daily*, (1965), 'The Time Has Changed, Men and Women Are Equal', p.1, 27 May, <http://weiboribao.net/archives/117433>

Porkert (1974). *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine*. MIT Press. [ISBN 0-262-16058-7](https://doi.org/10.7554/9780262160587).

Wang, F. (2005) *Organising through division and exclusion: China's Hukou system*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Wang, G. and Ng, C.K. (2004) *Maritime China in Transition 1750-1850*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

XIE, Lina, (2015), 'Women Seafarers Shinning as Morning Stars' ('寥若晨星的女船员们'), Ports Network(码头网) , <http://c.blog.sina.com.cn/profile.php?blogid=ae239a9f890000dr>

Yamashita, M.S. (2006) *Zheng He: tracing the epic voyages of China's greatest explorer*. Michigan: White Star Publisher.

Zanger, Jules (1996) 'Food and beer in an immigrant society', *Society*, 33 (5), 61-63.

Zhao, M. Feng. T. Shi, X (2004), *The Political Commissar in Chinese Ships* <<海洋上的社会：中国商船政委与船员的航海生活>>, Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Publishing House.

Zhao, Minghua (2003), 'China's shipboard commissars take on welfare role', *The Sea*, November/December Issue, <http://www.sirc.cf.ac.uk/Uploads/The%20Sea/166%20nov-dec%2003.pdf>.

Zhao, L. Pu.Y. (2005), 'Opening the Doors of Women Going to Sea'(开启女性航海之门), *China Waterborn Transport* <<中国水运>>, pp.50-51.

## **GEM PROJECT: NIGERIA COUNTRY REPORT**

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

Nigeria occupies an area of approximately 923.768sq km of land mass. The country is north of the Atlantic with some littoral states along the Atlantic Ocean (see Figure. 1). Nigeria has a maritime area of about 46,500sq km with an exclusive economic zone of 210,900 sq km and 823km of coast line. The inland waters measure 8,575 kilometres which includes two major rivers, the Benue and the Niger (NIMASA, 2009, p.1). In 2014, approximately 5,495 vessels called at the Nigerian sea-ports which amounted to 146,486,333 gross tonnage.

Nigeria is surrounded by French-speaking countries and shares a border with the Niger Republic in the North. In the West, the country has a border with the Republic of Benin and in the East with Cameroon. In the Southern part of the country lies the Atlantic Ocean (NIMASA, 2009, p.1).



**Figure 1: Map of Nigeria. (Source: Magellan Geograoghix, 1992)**

The geographical location of Nigeria has provided the country with unique geo-physical features which supports both inland and ocean-going maritime transportation. Nigeria has good inland transportation primarily along the Rivers Niger, Benue and other smaller rivers which provide great avenues for transporting both goods and persons. Nigeria’s border with the Atlantic Ocean provides the opportunity to participate in international ocean transportation to and from Nigeria. The country relies heavily on maritime transport for its outbound and inbound international sea-trading. Maritime transport is regarded as the engine that drives Nigeria’s economy and its sea-ports are known as the ‘gateway to the nation’s economy’ (Ajayi 2011). Nigeria’s major export is crude oil and gas which accounts for about 95% of the country’s annual trade. Many of these exports (45%) are destined for the United States of America, China, India and European regions (NIMASA 2009, p.2-3).

The country’s gross domestic product is between 80-90% and its principal exports of oil and gas is at about USD76.0b free on board (FOB), raw hide and skin at about USD3.1B free on board and prepared foodstuffs, beverages and tobacco at about USD1.6b free on board (The Economist 2014, p.189). The country’s principal imports include industrial goods, capital goods, transport equipment, spare parts and food and beverages.

Nigeria is a member of various international organisations including; the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Harbour Authority Commission (IHAC), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Nigeria has signed the Abuja Memorandum on Port State Control and was represented at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (NIMASA 2009, p.2).



### **1.1 Legal Services**

The legal services that are mostly provided for seafarers are regulated based on the Coastal Shipping and Inland Water Transport regulation, otherwise referred to as the Cabotage Act, 2003. The protectionist regulation requires that vessels operating within the Cabotage waters of Nigeria give first employment rights and consideration to qualified Nigerian seafarers. However, foreign seafarers could under the same regulation be granted waivers to work on-board Cabotage vessels, only where qualified Nigerian seafarers are not available. Maritime safety, labour and marine environment are regulated under the enabling act, establishing the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA Act, 2007). Section 27 of the act concerning Maritime Labour specifically provides for the training, registration, investigation and regulation of the maritime labour standards in relation to crewing, welfare, wages and working conditions on-board vessels. The Nigerian Merchant Shipping Act, 2007 empowered the Agency to establish seafarers' services and provide administration of seafarers' employment (MSA, 2007).

Nigeria ratified the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006 (MLC, 2006) in June 18th, 2013 (Kajo, 2014, p.8). The country has also executed the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Standard of Training, Certification and Watch keeping (STCW). It was intended that the implementation of these international regulations would help provide decent working and living conditions and training for seafarers. These regulations are a further boost to encouraging young Nigerian females to undertake seafaring careers. Specifically, as the regulation 4.3 of the MLC, 2006 on Health and Safety, in relation to harassment and bullying on-board ships has been amended, and the action should further contribute to improving gender tolerance on-board ships (International Labour Convention, 2016).

## **1.2 GEM project findings for Nigeria**

Limited published information is available in Nigeria surrounding seafarers and gender issues. Therefore, this Report is primarily based on data collected from cadets before and after their sea time and the stakeholder interviews.

### **1.3 Interviews**

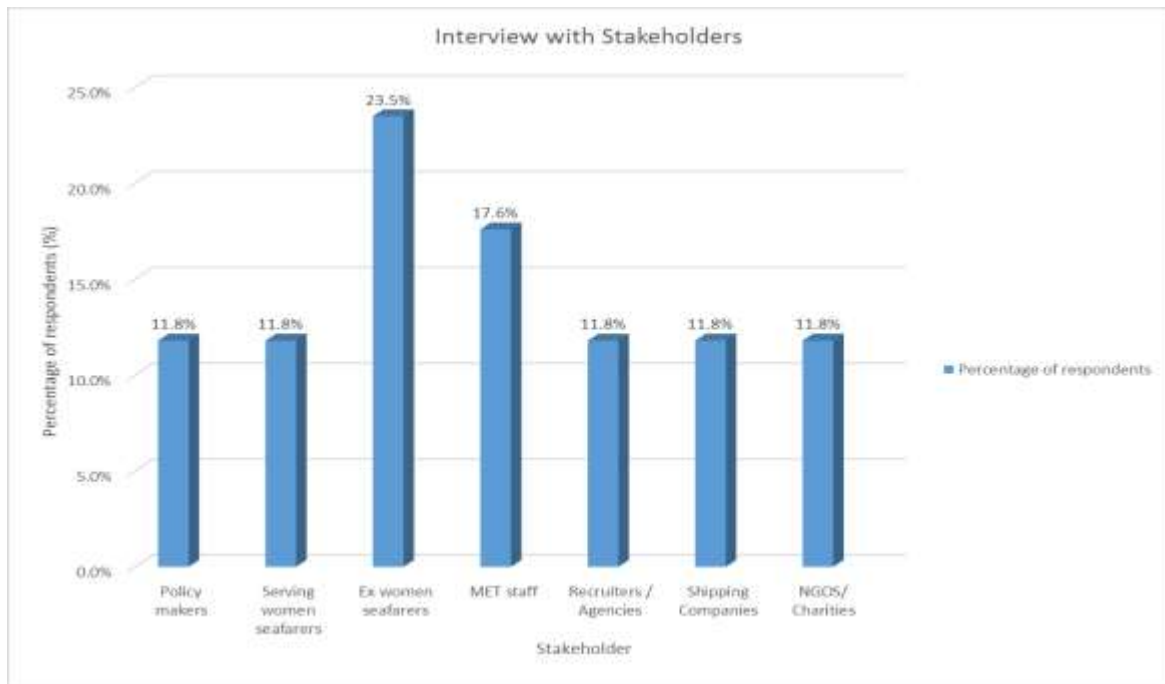
The Nigerian interviews were conducted in two cities including Lagos and Port-Harcourt. These cities are premier Nigerian sea-ports and are currently the hub of maritime activities.

All the Nigerian interviews were conducted at the interviewees' offices or the office of the interviewer. Information explaining the research and a request for permission to interview was made prior to the interviews being conducted. All the interviewees had worked with or had come into contact with cadets.

<b>Interview Category</b>	<b>Interview Number</b>
Policy Maker	1, 2
Serving Women Seafarer	3, 4, 7
Ex-Women Seafarer	5, 6, 8
MET	9, 10, 11
Recruiters / Agencies	12, 13
Shipping Companies	14, 15
NGOs/Charity	16, 17

**Table 2: Interviewees (Source: GEM field interviews, 2016)**

A total of 17 interviews were conducted in Nigeria with maritime stakeholders from the following categories: policy makers, serving and ex-women seafarers, the maritime education and training staff, recruitment agencies, shipping companies and non-governmental charities as demonstrated in Graph 1 and Table 2.



**Graph 1: Interviews with different maritime stakeholders**

#### **1.4 Cadet Surveys**

Table 1 illustrates the number of cadets surveyed before and after their sea time. Three out of the five male cadets that completed the after survey had previously completed the before survey. The respondents surveyed varied in age ranging between nineteen and thirty-one years old. All the cadets surveyed were of Nigerian nationality.

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Cadets (Pre-Sea Training)</b>	13	93	106
<b>Cadets (Post-Sea training)</b>	0	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>111</b>

**Table 1: Nigerian Cadets surveyed (2015/2016)**

## **1.5 Demographics**

### **1.5.1 Courses**

The cadets surveyed before their sea time were undertaking cadetships in deck (34%), engineering (65%) and nautical science (1%).

### **1.5.2 Vessel**

During their sea training, the cadets worked on a variety of vessels types. Some of the cadets carried out their training on more than one vessel. For example, two cadets had sailed on board an Anchor Handling Tug Supply Vessel (AHT). These two cadets also sailed on board a Platform Supply Vessel (PSV) during their training. Other vessels that cadets trained on included an LPG gas tanker and a ROV maintenance, construction and survey vessel.

### **1.5.3 Qualifications**

Some of the cadets indicated that they held basic safety certificates, most of which are mandatory and are in-line with the International Maritime Organisation's Standard of Training Certification and Watch keeping (STCW '78) (Okonna, Ushie and Okworo, 2014,p.379). Certificates of engine room and deck watch keeping were also held by some cadets.

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

### **2.0 SHIPPING AWARENESS**

Shipping awareness in Nigeria varied. Despite the country's heavy dependence on shipping trade, not much is known about the industry. Before conducting the surveys and the interviews, two individuals in the locality of Apapa port area were approached to gauge their view on shipping. One of them in his late sixties remarked '*... we were kids and use to take a walk to ports where ships berth, there were no barriers and security as it is today.*' The other man in his mid-forties, said '*... it is difficult getting to the port this time as there are so many security. Even if you get inside there is no guarantee that you will be allowed in the berth. The news we hear about shipping has a concentration on negative rather than positive development. For example, piracy, or ships that is sinking and kidnaping for ransom e.t.c. make more headlines ... and I think in my view this affect career interest*'. These two views demonstrate how shipping awareness within the local communities surrounding the ports have diminished over time. The level of awareness has been influenced by negative reporting as opposed to positive developments. In relation to careers, responses to the survey and interviews demonstrate that the low level of knowledge about shipping can detrimentally impact the take up a career in seafaring.

## **2.1 General information about the shipping industry**

Based on their own personal interest for the seafaring profession, some interviewees implied that if you wanted more information about the industry it was there to find, but you had to make an effort to look for it. Interviewee 5, an ex-woman seafarer said, *'..... If you are interested in being a seafarer you search for information and get it.'* Interviewee 3, a serving woman seafarer, felt that there was not much information regarding seafaring, and what was available was aimed a male recruits. The interviewee in question ended up receiving careers advice from a cousin who was studying to become a marine engineer. Interviewee 10, an MET staff member concluded that there is not enough information readily available *'...Presently, I do not think there is sufficient awareness in Nigeria as regards careers at sea.'* This aside, Oluoha (2015, p.34-36), feels that the policies of international agencies and the union's activities do contribute to awareness raising of seafaring careers in Nigeria. This acknowledged offers a potential way to start addressing this issue.

### **2.1.1 Family and friends connections**

Twenty-three cadets had a friend or family connection to the Nigerian Navy (defence) or the Merchant Navy. These connections demonstrated how some respondents can be influenced in taking up a seafaring profession through hearing about it first hand from someone close to them.

## **3.0 RECRUITMENT**

There was no career advice given regarding entry into the shipping industry. Presently, career advice can be obtained from maritime Institutions and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA, 2009). Most female seafarers had only been offered advice about potential challenges or issues women may face while on-board, by other female seafarers. The need to have an open approach to discussing these potential issues by Maritime Training Institutions and Shipping Companies were widely conversed.

### **3.1 Concerns about going to sea**

Cadets were asked what their concerns about going to sea were. Some concerns about going to sea were expressed by the cadets including sea-sickness, issues relating to multicultural/multinational interaction, welfare, safety, security, employment agreement, workload/stress, harassment, discrimination and isolation. Eighteen cadets mentioned that multicultural interaction on-board would be of concern to them.

About twelve cadets did mention that poor welfare provision on-board may have an effect on their working and living condition on-board. Twelve crew referred to the issue of Isolation of been away from families/friends as a result of long time workings. On harassment, only one cadet was specific about it. Eight cadets identified the employment agreement as one area that they were concerned about.

### **3.2 Recruitment challenges**

In most of the country Nigeria licenses private recruitment agencies, which can provide seafarers with either fixed or temporary contracts. Female gender representation at all levels in seafaring careers is low in Nigeria and is associated with a lack of information, guidelines and best practice within most shipping companies. These challenges can make young female seafarers more vulnerable and inevitably this means lower entry and representation into the profession. This issue prompted interviewee 7, a current seafarer, to comment on how entry levels for women into the industry could be improved, '*.... if young girls are being enlightened on their career they think already they want to go into [a maritime career] ..... but if we can encourage [.....] it's a promising career that they can gain from I think that would help a lot to build the gap.*' Interviewee 15, a shipping company officer, felt that seafaring opportunities are far more open to men, '*..... I think generally in the industry the opportunity may not be in favour of women so definitely the male have more opportunities for career progression than women*'.

A minority of the cadets (14%) had been discouraged from undertaking a cadetship. Significantly, this only included one female cadet, who had been discouraged on the basis of her gender. She said it was '*...Because people feel the work is too hard for women is a men job ...*' However, despite discouragement the female cadet informed people who discouraged her that she would try her best. Interviewee 16, an NGO's/charity, knew of a woman seafarer who said that some of her family members are still discouraging her from going to sea because of her gender despite her completion of the course.

#### **3.2.1 Sea time**

Difficulty in securing a placement on board was one reason why some male cadets had been discouraged from undertaking a cadetship, particularly when considering '*...the difficulty in securing the mandatory one year sea time for cadets.*' One cadet was discouraged '*...because of the hard times it takes finding a vessel that can train me as a cadet*'. Another cadet said that '*...The number of cadets passing out each year is increasing and the number of vessels are not enough to train them.*' A cadetship was referred to as '*...a complicated system whereby one has to pass through difficulty earning his Seatime before moving to the next level.*' This implies that there are generic issues in getting the necessary training at sea which is likely to become more of an issue in the future if the number of cadetships increases.

The length of time spent away from home was given as a further reason as to why some male cadets were discouraged from undertaking a cadetship. For example, '*The period of time being away from family and friends*'. One cadet has stated that '*...Some Family members thought it will require me to be away for a long time.*' A further cadet has added that they '*...feared it would take me away from home for long periods of time and deprive me of quality time with my family, but, now, it's more important to me to be able to support them.*' This response implies that whilst the cadet initially held concerns about the length of time being a seafarer would mean being away from his family, he recognises it is a sacrifice worth making in order to support his family.

### **3.3 Career Prospects**

The length of time the cadets anticipated being a seafarer following the completion of their cadetships varied. The majority of cadets (65%) planned to work on board for more than ten years. Of these, twenty-four cadets (23%) two of them female, said that they planned to work as a seafarer for all their working lives. In contrast, seventeen cadets (16%) said that they were intending on serving as a seafarer for less than ten years. This included seven cadets who thought they would be an active seafarer for no more than two years after their cadetship. Interviewee 3, a serving woman seafarer, said that seafaring was her passion at the moment and would serve as long as she could.

After serving on board, the Nigerian cadets thought that many future career paths were possible. In total 126 responses related to this were provided. The responses included being self-employed or establishing their own businesses; working within the maritime sector onshore or becoming a maritime lecturer. After serving at sea, Interviewee 3 said, *'...I want to build like an organisation where we can empower young women especially female seafarers and look at help from other shipping industries that will encourage and then help them build a career in seafaring and then fund there, give them scholarships to encourage them those that parent can't afford and are from less privileged homes'*.

## **4.0 MULTICULTURAL CREWS**

Nigeria is the eighth most populated country in the world, with approximately 162.5 million people (Chigozie 2013a). The country can be considered to be both multi-cultural and multi-ethnic with over 300 different tribes being recognised (Chigozie 2013b). Nigeria's official language is English, although other languages spoken in the six geopolitical zones by the major tribes includes; Ibo, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani, amongst others (Central Intelligence Agency n.d).

### **4.1 Positive assumptions**

11% of cadets (1 of them female) held assumptions about sailing with multicultural crews. Both positives and negative preconceptions were detailed. On the positive side, one cadet thought that working with a multicultural crew *'...will help to create good interrelationships and also build insight of how they do their things and knowing the culture when mingle amongst each other'*. Another cadet added that *'...It will enable a cadet [to] understand cultural differences across the cultures and blend in with time.'*

### **4.2 Negative assumptions**

On the negative side, the potential for racism was acknowledged by three cadets. One of these said that *'Racism and discrimination have a tendency of developing in multinational crew if not tackled with proper care'*. It was further noted that *'Individuals are different and as such there could be some kind of difficulty in developing coping mechanism with such people due multicultural, personal and social belief pattern.'*

Three cadets mentioned possible language barriers when sailing with multicultural crews. For example, *'THERE WILL BE SOME CASES OF COMMUNICATION BARRIER BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, ESPECIALLY SEAFARERS FROM LESS ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES'*.

Cultural variations have been acknowledged and one cadet noted that multicultural crews have *'Difference language, difference lifestyle and behaviour.'* Another cadet stated that *'There will be many challenges due to the different cultures.'* A further cadet has added that *'THERE MUST ALWAYS BE CULTURAL DIFFERENCE BUT ALL OFFICERS AND RATINGS SHOULD LEARN TO RESPECT EACH OTHER IRRESPTCIVE OF WHERE YOU CAME FROM AND WHO YOU ARE.'*

#### **4.3 Nationalities preferred to sail with?**

Cadets were asked about the nationalities that they would prefer to sail with. Based on situations they had heard about or experiences they had, 4% (out of the 106 cadets surveyed) thought that there were specific nationalities that they would prefer to sail with. One cadet stated *'...Filipinos. This is because i trained in the Phillipine and had discovered that they are very friendly and accommodating.'* Further reasons given for preferring Filipinos, American and the British included *'...Because, I have lived among them and have gotten to understand them [...] better. Most especially the Filipinos, because I spend substantial amount of time and years with them.'* English speaking nationalities were mentioned as preferable because *'...there would be a better understanding of communication and a clear issue of intructions.'* Interviewee 3, a serving woman seafarer said she liked working with Indians, Indonesians and Americans because she felt these nationalities encourage females by training and supporting them, bringing out the best in the female cadet.

Following their sea time, 20% of the cadets said they would prefer to sail with people from the Philippines. An example provided included *'...because they are very hospitable, obedient and good attitude'*. A male cadet said that they liked to sail with Croatian crew because *'...because they are friendly and accommodating.'*

#### **4.4 Key Issues associated with multi-cultural crews**

22% of cadets detailed that they had heard about issues relating to multicultural crews, including two female cadets. One of the main issues referred to was the difficulty in communication, including language barriers on board. Issues arising from religion and differences in beliefs were also noted as well as discrimination. In one instance, a cadet said, *'Discrimination espacially those from Europe discriminates those from Africa because of the colour, and i beleived this should not be allowed to continue, it has a negative effects on the seafarers especially of Africa origin.'* One cadet indicated the extent to which discrimination could be exhibited on-board based on nationality stating that *'A second engineer refuse to allow a cadet to learn instead use an ordinary seaman (os) because of nationality difference.'* Interviewee 4 (a serving seafarer) said that that they had experienced issues associated with, *'.... background and communication'* linked to multicultural crews. Difficulties associated with communication and using English as the common language on board was consistently mentioned as an issue. Interviewee 1 suggested that the English language training for multi-national crews should be in place.

In more practical terms Interviewee 14 (from a shipping company) mentioned issues of catering for a multi-national crew. Both Interviewee's 14 and 15 were of the view that prior knowledge of crew's



nationality before going to sea is vital and may potentially help to alleviate problematic cultural differences at sea. Finally, interviewee 5 felt that there would be no problem with multinational crew *'... if you have the training I think you can all work together as one.'*

#### **4.5 Communication**

Inadequate communication between crew members on board was considered a key issue associated with multicultural crews. 80% of the cadets said that they had faced issues of communication whilst operating alongside multicultural crews because of their poor English skills.

One cadet mentioned that despite Nigeria being a multi ethnic nation, English was widely spoken and understood however, some crew members could not speak fluently, for example, *'MY FIRST CREW UNDERSTOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE BUT I HAD TO LISTEN ATTENTIVELY AND WATCHED THEIR LIPS WHILST THEY SPOKE. SIGN LANGUAGE BECAME PART OF ME AS WE USED IT OFTEN IN THE ENGINE ROOM.'*

The absence of a common shared language could lead to the *'...Inability to learn effectively when of dissimilar languages.'* according to one cadet. Miscommunication and misunderstandings have been highlighted as other subsequent issues that can arise from communication breakdowns on board. On cadet said *'...where crews on-board speak different language[s] [it] will bring misunderstanding among them, for smooth sailing all crew should communication with the same language.'* Another cadet mentioned the lack of effective communication being responsible for endangering the safety of the vessel, *'When people don't understand each other it will lead to big problem and if they are not free with each other the safety of the vessel is at stake'.*

It was noted that some crew members would rather communicate in their own language (which potentially was not English). One cadet said *'The more [of a certain] nationality from a particular country they tend to communicate easily with themselves in their local dialect.'* Interviewee 1, a policy maker supports this and believed that the language barriers associated with multicultural crews can lead to isolation of crew members. This is particularly the case when crew of the same nationality withdrew from others who do not speak their language.

However, there was one cadet who said that they did not find language barriers to be an issue on board as, *'EVERYBODY SPOKE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, SO LANGUAGE WAS NEVER A PROBLEM'.*

#### **4.6 Cultural variations**

Different cultural behaviours can have a positive effect but may also sometimes cause conflict within a multi-cultural crew environment. Cadets were asked about their thoughts and concerns regarding multi-cultural crews before their first sea time. One cadet noted that *'...All cultures have their own standards and values and have much to offer'.* Another cadet acknowledged that multicultural crews will have *'Different cultural lifestyle, different culture behavior, and different intellectual'.* Variations in religions, traditions and food were also mentioned. A female cadet spoke about the culture variations that exist and how they can impact on the way women are viewed. The cadet commented that *'THE BIGGEST ISSUE MAY BE OF THE FACT THAT OUR DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL DOMAIN AND THE BELIEVES WE HAVE OF BEEING IN THE MIDS OF FEMALES DIFFERS ALOT FROM ONE CULTURE TO ANOTHER'.*

The after-sea time survey showed that all the cadets completing the survey had sailed on board a multi-cultural crewed vessel. None of these cadets held any previous concerns about sailing with a multi-cultural crew prior to their sea training. One cadet commented that he *'... realized that we are all humans, only the skin makes us different'*. When asked to comment on the positive experiences of sailing with a multi-cultural crew, three of the cadets said they had witnessed sharing of cultures, team work, learning of new cultures and the experience of having a good Captain on board. One cadet stated that *'EXCHANGING IDEAS AND WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM WAS ABSOLUTELY SPLENDID INSPITE OF THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES'*. A further cadet added that *'They tell me more about their countries and try to know your own country.'*

Only one cadet shared negative experiences about working on a multi-cultural crewed vessel which included instances of racism, unwillingness to demonstrate duties and been given unappropriated jobs to do. The cadet said that, *'They usually have racism in them. They normally don't want to show me the important aspect of the job. Always giving me rating jobs to do, and when I come closer they give me extra jobs that won't help me in my career.'* One male cadet said that they had encountered issues socialising due to *'Most of them, especially those i don't work with do not give me the oppurtunity to socialize with them.'*

#### **4.7 Discrimination**

Instances of discrimination and abuse were mentioned and one cadet noted cases of racism. Another heard of circumstances in which crew members were subjected to racial abuse. This cadet said that *'...Some people think they did not receive protection from their crew when racially abused in other shores.'* This instance suggests a lack of cohesion within the crew. *'...When people don't understand each other it will lead to big problem'*. This highlights the need for good teamwork and efforts to facilitate strong communication on board to enable effective running of the vessel.

#### **4.8 Perceptions towards women**

25% of Nigerian cadets (27 cadets out of the 106 cadets surveyed) thought some nationalities may find it hard to work with a female seafarer on the basis of their gender. This included three female cadets. One reason mentioned for this was due to women being regarded as a distraction on board for male seafarers.

##### **4.8.1 Religious and cultural beliefs**

In some cultures and religions, traditionally men were perceived to hold a higher status in comparison to females. Therefore it is not always considered appropriate for men and women to mix, especially within the workplace because, as one cadet says, *'...some cultures and religions forbid it for men and women to mingle thus may create a kind of rift between males and females.'* Some nationalities may find it difficult to work on-board with women seafarers due to variations of how women are treated in different cultures and within different religions.

##### **4.8.2 Physical strength**

The responses demonstrate that in some instances female seafarers may be looked down on due to their gender. It has also been suggested that some people may view *'... femininity as a weakness.'* One cadet felt that female seafarers are not suitable for the job because they do not possess the same

strength saying '*...They may not be of the physical attributes like height or strength required for certain task and may be considered as weak or not suited for the jobs.*'

#### **4.8.3 Hostility and bullying and sexual harassment**

14 cadets (13%) believed that female seafarers may encounter hostility on the basis of their gender. One female cadet thought that hostility could arise '*Because they think women's place is in the house to look and fed for her family, or they'll think what a man can do, we women can't do.*'

Some cadets have thought that female seafarers may encounter unwanted attention from their male colleagues, which in some cases may be viewed as sexual harassment. One cadet stated that potential hostility could be '*...due to sexual interest from male seafarers.*' Two cadets believed that bullying could be an issue female seafarers might face while on-board. Other potential forms of hostility referred to included fighting between the crew and discrimination. One cadet thought that '*Because discrimination and for others they feels superior to their fellow seafarers even the same nationalities.*' However the cadet who sailed on board with a female seafarer during their sea time said that they did not witness or encounter any discrimination or harassment made towards a female seafarer by a male colleague.

#### **4.9 Summary of the key issues associated with multicultural crews**

In summary, several potential issues have been identified when operating with a multicultural crew. Of these, communication is considered to be a major challenge on board including the potential for language barriers to develop resulting from multiple languages being spoken on board. Following their sea time, 40% (2) out of the five cadets surveyed felt that language barriers was the biggest issue when working with a multicultural crew, with another cadet stating '*...language.*' One of these cadet commented '*LANGUAGE BARRIER WHICH LED TO NOT UNDERSTANDING THE INFORMATION PASSED..*'

Racism was identified as another challenge on board a multicultural crewed vessel. Food was another issue raised in relation to working within a multicultural crew environment, where if the chef is not of your nationality, the food they cook may well not be to your liking.

## **5.0 POTENTIAL GENDER ISSUES**

In a study by Oluoha, stereotyping was found to be institutionalised to an organisational level in the maritime training institutions and maritime organisations. However, there are misconceptions that most sea jobs are meant for men (Oluoha, 2015). The national Nigerian policy on women was passed into law in the year 2000 guided by the convention on all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the 1999 Constitution. The development of the National Gender Policy started in 2006 with the approval of the Nigeria Federal Executive Council, while its implementation started in 2007. The aim was to create a fair society devoid of any form of gender discrimination, and to harness the potential of various social groups irrespective of sex or socio-economic circumstance; and to promote fundamental human rights and good health, socio-economic and political well-being of all citizens. Nigeria is yet to have a specific policy promoting women's participation in the maritime industry or

for gender equality within the maritime transport industry. Women tend to only undertake certain roles such as cooks, stewardesses and nurses on board ships.

There was consensus amongst the interviewees on the key issues faced by women at sea in Nigeria. Most policy makers were of the view that a whole range of issues around gender in seafaring exist.

Cadets were asked, '**What is the biggest issue you think females might face while on-board?**'

The following sections discuss this.

### **5.1 Sexual harassment**

Generally, it is commonly believed that although legislation concerning gender exists, not much has been done to provide and enforce the protection of female seafarers against discrimination, equality, harassment and abuse on-board vessels. Interviewee 2, suggested institutional changes are necessary in order to improve implementation of legislation, while interviewee 1 pointed out the ineffectiveness of current gender legislations to protect women from different forms of abuse, saying '*... harassment is there all the time when you have male and female. It may be physical, it may be verbal, all can be seen when you have the combination of the two genders in a working condition*'.

Sexual harassment was regarded as one of the key issues facing female seafarers on board. Cadets identified '*Sexual advances from their male counterparts*' as a key concern when undertaking sea time. One cadet thought that female seafarers could also face '*...Sexual abuse by there male superior*' and another mentioned the '*...fear of being taken advantage of.*' A female cadet felt the biggest issue that women might face on board was '*... sexual assault*'. Although it was noted by one cadet that sexual harassment is a potential issue in '*every sector and industry.*'

Following their sea time it was interesting to note that three out of the five returning male cadets highlighted harassment as the biggest issue female seafarers could face on board, with one specifically mentioning sexual harassment. The cadet said '*Maybe sexual harassment since most men have being away from their family for a long time*'.

### **5.2 Discrimination**

Discrimination was highlighted as another potential key issue facing female seafarers. It was thought that some '*may be discriminated against by some gender biased crew members*'. Sexism was identified as a form of discrimination which female seafarers may be subjected to. One cadet mentioned the potential challenges on board related to the '*...Attitude[s] of members of crew that might have a negative prejudice towards woman.*'

### **5.3 Families**

Working at sea away from home and family and friends was another issue identified by cadets. This was expressed in terms of '*...missing their loved ones*'. One female cadet added that she believes the biggest issue facing women seafarers is '*Married women leaving their families for too long*'. Another said '*...Not staying with there family must especially the married [ones] which should take of there children*'.

### **5.4 Isolation**

Seafaring is a heavily male dominated profession which means that women seafarers are nearly always in the minority on board. 38% of cadets felt that female seafarers had the potential to feel isolated on board due to their gender. One cadet said that some female seafarers may *'...feel the job is not suited for them as it comprises mostly of men'*. Another cadet noted that *'...over the year the seafaring career has mostly be occupied by the male counterpart so [if you] find a female in the midst of a crew filled with male [it]may be a form of isolation for her..'* They added that if there *'...were to be lot female on board it would strike a balance ...'* suggesting that a higher ratio of women to men on board could potentially lower the risk for isolation.

Isolation was also viewed in terms of the level of interaction between crew members. One cadet noted that *'It is because in most vessel female are few , this can really make them feel isolated if there is no good relationship between the crew members.'* Another cadet said *'...Men and women think and converse differently'* And due to being in the minority, *'... a female seafarer might not have another lady to talk about feminine stuff.'* However it is evident that some male seafarers do choose to socialise with female seafarers. One of the cadets said *'Everyone wants to hang out with women at least. She will be much more of a better companion. There is always going to be that attraction. So they have no slight chance of isolation'*.

It has been implied that some women seafarers may choose to withdraw themselves from the social environment on board to take the attention away from them. One cadet said that *'they [women]may feel isolated because they wouldn't want to create an impression about them[selves] as flirts if they mingle a lot with their male counterparts.'* And another cadet said that female seafarers might isolate themselves *'...In order to avoid sexual harassment, and unkind and cruel words from fellow crew'*. Worryingly one cadet added that this can be a measure to avoid *'...assaults'*.

It was suggested that due to the recognised nature of the industry, female seafarers should already be prepared for life on board and therefore should know what to expect. Another cadet suggested that being on board was like being in one big family which nshould prevent women from feeling isolated. For example, *'Once we are on board we are one family, we watch everyone's back and make sure everybody is safe and healthy with respect.'*

The mentality of a woman seafarer was also noted in conjunction to isolation, with an emphasis on attitude. One male cadet stated that *'It totally depends on the individual if she decides to socialize or isolate herself'*. Another added that *'In the case of being isolated it's a personal decision that anybody could make'*. One female cadet did not think females could feel isolated on the basis of the gender stated that *'It's left for a female seafarer to feel isolated if they choose to, but as a crew, they will want to carry each other along, so I dnt think they will be isolated'*. Interviewee 6 thought that isolation could be made worse if you are a female seafarer. Although, interviewee 3 did not feel isolated *'...Not for once, I conscientiously told myself not to.'*

Although women seafarers appear to be at high risk from isolation at sea, it was noted that male seafarers can also experience this. As one cadet put it, *'Anyone can feel isolated irrespective of gender.'* Following their sea time, only one male cadet detailed that they had felt isolated, *'Because, [I]am not told about what job is to be done. I only realize that the job has already been done by my working crew while I was busy doing ratings job.'*

### **5.5 Traditional values and stereotypes**

It was recognised that *'...Many countries have passed gender equality bills and this makes it unlawful to discriminate against women.'* Women now work in jobs that were not previously available to them, for example *'...IN PUBLIC OFFICES, HOLD POLITICAL OFFICES, THEY ARE IN THE MILITARY, AND EVEN PRESIDENTS IN SOME COUNTRIES'*.

The following question was asked of cadets: **There is a traditional viewpoint that women should only undertake certain roles on board ships. These include cook, stewardess (housekeeping), nurse etc. Do you believe this is an acceptable viewpoint in today's society?**

Only a small minority of cadets (12) felt that this view point was still valid in today's society. Significantly, all thirteen female cadets said that they did not consider this viewpoint to be relevant anymore and it was suggested that women are no longer considered to be restricted to a domestic role such as looking after the family and home. For example, *'Nowadays women too want to contribute to the welfare of the family not only doing the kitchen job but to improve in other fields too.'*

It was noted that *'In a technological advance and civilized society this [gender] should not be an issue, respect should be given to who its due. We know seafaring is a risky occupation but a well trained seafarer is capable of handling issues whether male or female. [.....] Every woman should be allowed to choose whatever occupation she pleases.'* Another cadet said that *'Everyone should be give[n] a chance to proof him or herself, if a female trained as engineer, the she should be allowed to work in the engine department because that's what she chooses to do and will love doing it. Who knows? she might be d best Marine Engineer ever produced.'* As a result, it was noted that *'there is no limit to what a woman can do in this generation of ours'*.

One male cadet thought that women now have aspirations to participate actively in other aspects of life such as contributing to the financial welfare of the family by engaging in employment. The traditional roles for both men and women have been changing over time despite the slow progress in some areas of female employment. These days there are fewer careers determined on the basis of an individual's gender. A female cadet said that this is *'because times have changed and men also undertake such roles as mentioned nowadays and females also train as marine engineers and ship captains, fields that were considered male dominated.'* In addition, a male cadet said that *'...there is no job reserved for males or females.[ J]ust as we have male engineers,[ ]we have female engineers and just as we have female cooks, so also are there male cooks.'*

The cadets generally thought that women were able to carry out jobs well beyond the traditional expectations of them. One cadet said that women are *'...proving their strength in various fields that demand even the strongest of men such as politics, law, wrestling, weight lifting, and engineering.'* Another cadet said that *'Women possess potentials that can be tapped in the technical aspect of seafaring and these skills of women should not be limited to just cooking, or nursing. I do not believe in the limitation of a woman capacity'*. One important factor that has been considered to aid women in their goal to overcome traditional viewpoints is the belief in their own capabilities. A cadet said that *'When a woman trust herself that she can go beyond measurable circumstances, she will do whatever it takes to prove it right. They are capable of becoming and doing whatever they wish for.'*

In some cases, it is even thought that women can perform better than men. One of the cadets thought that *'...what a man can do, a dedicated woman can do it better'*. Another cadet supported this saying, *'... and in today's society some women even do greater jobs than men.'*

Some cadets raised the argument that if female seafarers were not seen to be capable of carrying out various duties on board such as deck or engineer cadet training, then they would not be accepted onto cadet programs in the first place. For example, *'We have female who intends to captain a ship and female engineers too so if female are denied of these profession because of their gender difference it therefore means that the nation should not have enroll them in cadetship programme, more so some of these female are even more competent than their male counterparts in their different department.'* A further cadet said, *'women now study courses like nautical sciences and marine engineering so what will be the aim of such study if she ends up in the ghaly doing kitchen work?'*

### **5.6 The cruise industry and its suitability to women**

Cadets were asked, **'Why do you think the majority of female seafarers work in the cruise and passenger ferry sectors?'** Many cadets felt that the cruise sector was a safer option for female seafarers because of the greater numbers of people on board cruise ships and the higher percentage of women. This represented the concept of 'safety in numbers'. Other responses indicated that there was a less stressful and more manageable workload within this sector which maybe more suitable for women. This was partly attributed to the length of the voyages for cruise ships which are often far shorter than other merchant vessels.

### **5.7 Perception of ability**

Issues relating to the suitability of women seafarer's being able to cope with work on board were raised. Mention was made of women not being able to cope with the *'Stressful work'* that is encountered on board and their *'lack of endurance'*. Women being shown a lack of respect and their perceived reliance on men to carry out some of the on board duties of women, was also mentioned.

Cadets were asked, **Do you think that some duties on-board are perceived to be more suited to men due to their physical nature?**

78% of cadets thought that this was the case, included nine of the women cadets. Specifically this could be the case when considering *'...certain activities such as lifting of heavy material either during loading or offloading, or activities such as mooring.'* And *'...jobs [ ...] such as general ship maintenance,[ ]mooring,[ ]major mechanicals work that involves tying and untying'*. One female cadet noted that *'...most of the work is energy sapping, example pulling heavy mooring ropes, Chipping and painting'*. Other duties considered to be more suited to male seafarers included *'Works like hotworks, cargo cleaning, manhole, heavy metal lifting just to name a few are more for the men because of the physicality it requires'*. And additionally *'There are some heavy machines that need to be transported in an enclosed place which must be done by the male seafarers, climbing of ladders and many more. These task are not ideal for female seafarers'*. A further cadet added that they believe men to be more suited to *'...bunker transfer, opening of valves, and loading and unloading.'* The Engine room was also considered to be a working environment that may not be suitable for female seafarers, particularly in terms of heavy machinery *'...where you may overhaul the main engine, purifiers, boilers, generators and other machineries.'*

Physical strength is often biologically more assertive in men. One cadet mentions that *'Hormonal differences make many men physically stronger and more agile, than some women and many task*

*require strength and agility.'* Another added that some duties could be considered to be more suited to men *'...because of [the] male human anatomy system which is the reason why some duties should be exclusively carried out by male only.'*

In spite of this, one male cadet disagreed saying, *'The academy let us to understand that, since you can make it here, you can make it there regardless of your gender. This is just about making up your mind to be a seafarer'*. Another example was *'Since they are earning equally, equal duties should be shared.'*

Cadets were asked, **Do you think female seafarers have to try harder than a male seafarer doing the equivalent job?**

Twenty-six male and five female cadets thought that this would be the case. As before, the physical ability of women was noted as the main reason why female seafarers may have to work harder on board. One cadet thought that women seafarers *'...will face a lot of challenge[s] because of her gender.'* which included a lack of respect from their male counterparts. For example, *'they had been look[ed] down on that they are incapable to work with the male, that the male will over stress their self because of the female'*. It was suggested that *'Men most often find tasks not much troublesome unlike women who most times need assistance'*.

Perhaps due to the physical gender differences, one cadet mentioned issues with female cadets relying on the male seafarers to carry out some of their duties on board. An example provided by one cadet was *'...It is evident in my school that while the males study hard the females relax a lot believing that the male will do the school activities for her.'* Additionally another comment included, *'...they do not bother to try.'*

However, in some cases it was thought that female seafarers were more than capable of doing their job without having to work harder. For example, *'...both male and female seafarers have [the] same capabilities'*. One cadet added that *'We are all created equally with each having strength and weaknesses. A certain man could be stronger than a certain woman and vice-versa. Woman these days have gone beyond all measures proving themselves equal to any task as the men.'* One cadet referred to legislation surrounding seafarers' welfare saying, *'...don't see any reason as to why female seafarers will have to try harder than male seafarers because there is no law or rule in the maritime sector that states female seafarers should try harder than the male seafarers in doing the equivalent job onboard.'* A cadet has further added that they *'...so far they have not any law or undertaken by the IMO on female searferer working more or less than the male counterpart ..so i believe in seafarering there is no gender difference ..'*

Although some responses indicated that women were not considered to have to work harder, particularly as they have undergone the same training and qualifications as their male equivalents, it is clear that in some cases they do have to put more effort in to achieve the same outcomes as their male counterparts. Five female cadets thought that they would have to try harder on board. One female cadet has suggested that she will have to work harder in order to earn the respect of her fellow male crew on board, *'So as to be respected by the crews and to show them that what a man can do, a woman can do it better and even more'*. Another female cadet said that she would have to try harder on board as she believes women do not possess the same energy levels as men do. She said, *'Because they have the energy and most of them are smarter so as a woman I need try more to meet up'*. This quote implies that the cadet feels that she will have to make up these suggested shortcomings. A male



cadet who did not sail with female seafarers said that they did not believe women should work at sea. This cadet stated that he *'STILL BELIEVE[D] WORKING AT SEA SHOULD BE RESTRICTED TO MALES ONLY...WORKING AT SEA IS NOT TOO IDEAL FOR FEMALES...'*

**Following their sea time, male cadets were asked Did you ever feel that you had to offer assistance to female seafarers in order to help her complete her work duties?**

40% of male cadets who did not sail with female seafarers felt they would have had to offer assistance to female seafarers in order to help them complete their work duties. They said *'Yes if I work with any because I know men are [...]stronger than women in terms of strength so ofcourse I will'*. They also said *'For the job to move well, we must be happy with each other. And for that to be achieved, I will try to offer my assistance to any of my crew both male and female.'* The cadet who sailed on board a vessel where female seafarers were present did not feel that they had to adapt their behaviour whilst working alongside female seafarers.

Another cadet said that when working with a woman seafarer *'...There is a need to be patience as some task involve strength and weights handling intelligence which may take time for female seafarers to develop due to hormonal difference.'* One comment made was that *'...some [of the] heavy duty in the engine department that will preferred to be carry out by male due to the work load.'* One male cadet thought that they might be required to undertake duties that a female seafarer could not manage and *'in most cases female cadet would want to leave difficult and challenging jobs for the male cadet and at end of the day ..they would receiving equal amount salary and benefit with uneven distribution of work load ..'*

It is clear that there are very mixed feeling about women's ability to work at sea, ranging from a sense of equality to an expectation that men would have to compensate for women on board or that women would have to work harder in order to manage at sea. These strong mixed feeling have the potential to cause conflicts within the working environment making it a less attractive place to work with the possibility of compromising safety.

**5.8 Adapting behaviour on board**

A male cadet felt that whilst working with a female seafarer they would have to show *'...modesty and respect'*. Another cadet added that whilst they do not believe they will have to adapt their behaviour or attitude when working alongside a female seafarer, they do believe that they might have to adapt their workload. This is attributed to the cadet feeling that *'...[S]he may get to do less work or no work at all.'* These responses suggest that there is still the notion that female seafarers are assigned less duties, particularly the more strenuous ones, compared to their male counterparts. This can be seen as reflective of the traditional viewpoint that females are considered to be the weaker gender to males.

**5.9 Interactions with Male Cadets and Seafarers aboard**

Despite the majority of cadets stating that they did not think women had to work according to their traditional roles any more, thirty-nine male cadets thought that that female cadets were treated

differently by their male counterparts, with one suggesting that this was a consequence '*...of backwardness in thinking and chauvinistic nature of our society*'.

It has been implied that female cadets have been treated differently as a result of their gender and the perceived differences in personality traits between men and women. One cadet has stated that '*...Well they [male seafarers] treat them softly with tenderness because it's natural. They are always female. No matter how badly they think they are becoming like men. They will always be female and be handled with care.*' There is an indication of a gentlemanly duty to take care of the female cadets, including offering help.

The theme of care and assistance continued with a cadet feeling that women seafarers should be helped and motivated, '*...care and assist them [female cadets] at work because female are rare in this career, so will treat them differently to motivate them and encourage other that are aiming for such opportunity.*' The aspect of respect was also explored and one cadet stated that '*They are females so you have to show a little more respect*'.

However there were some male cadets who believed that women should not be going to sea. The cadet has stated that '*...MEN BELIEVES THAT WOMAN ARE TO BE THEIR WIVES THEREFORE SHOULD STAY AT HOME OR BETTER STILL ON LAND DOING SOMETHING OUTSIDE THE SEA*' which suggests the belief in only traditional roles for women still exist.

Despite this, some cadets believe that female cadets are not treated any differently by their male counterparts. One cadet said that '*To the best of my knowledge I feel the female cadets are not treated differently because we are all seafarers in the making*'. And another comment, '*...we are all equal when it comes to our professional life*'. A female cadet added that she did not believe she had been treated differently '*...because we are all professionals*'.

Female cadets were asked, **Would you feel confident socialising with male seafarers whilst on-board?** Interestingly all thirteen female cadets said that they felt comfortable socialising with male seafarers whilst on-board. Interviewee 6 an ex-women seafarer, believed socialising with the male cadets in areas such as recreation and some sort of sports, brings out the best from them.

All the five male cadets surveyed following their sea time said that they had felt comfortable socialising with females before they embarked on their sea training and went on to state that they have attended mixed school where the opportunity allows them to socialise '*...The school I attended is a male and female school so I had a lot of opportunities talking to seafarer women and everything was fine*'. '*...Because they keep good company and always want to share your problems with you.*', according to one of the cadets, '*SOCIALIZING IS WHAT I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED. I SOCIALISED WITH MALES AND FEMALES ALIKE*'. It is also interesting that one cadet said '*At school, we are been allowed to socialize with female cadets to share knowledge during group works and assignments. So, it didn't become a new thing to me.*' Following their sea time 80% of the male cadets surveyed said that they would feel comfortable sailing on board with female seafarers in the future.

### **5.10 Gender representation**

Overall cadets thought that there should be a higher number of males to females operating on board, although the current number of women seafarers should be increased. This could be reflective of the

large male dominance currently within the industry. The average consensus from cadets was that male seafarers should account for between 60 to 80% of the total number of personnel on board, meaning that the remaining 20-40% should be comprised of female seafarers.

Despite the large majority of cadets who provided a specific percentage for this question, some suggested that the number should be based on an individual's ability to carry out the role rather than on an individual's gender. For example, *'Ideally, any percentage is okay, as long as every personnel on-board is fit for his/her job.'* Another cadet said that personnel on board should be comprised of *'The most qualified candidates [...] without giving preferences on gender basis.'*

Following their sea time, the ideal percentage of women on board had dropped slightly to between 20 -30% of personnel. However, one cadet did not believe women should be on board at all. This cadet said *'WOMEN SHOULD NOT BE AT SEA AT ALL...ZERO PERCENT OF WOMEN AT SEA'*

However despite the cadet statistics, policy makers felt strongly that raising the number of women seafarers globally is important. Interviewee 1, thought that more trained female seafarers should be employed *'...it's very important to raise the number because there are many qualified female that have gone for seafarers training and they are not employed..., it will be good to raise the number even if it is ten percent'*. Interviewee 2 believes an increase would give women a sense of belonging and help to improve the under representation of female seafarers in Nigeria. Interviewee 6 thought that increasing the number of women seafarers would help to prevent loneliness and isolation *'...the whole idea is that you don't have to feel like you are just a lone ranger.'*

The number of female to male cadets on-board is likely to reflect the number of on shore-based training institutions where the numbers of women to men remains low at new entry level. Interviewee 9, an MET trainer said that he only had a one woman to thirty men in a nautical class the previous year.

### **5.11 Supporting women on board**

Interviewee 1 was of the view that the special needs of women seafarers' on-board ships should be reflective of the planning, building and operation of the ship to ease gender challenge. Aside from the condition provided by the MLC, 2006 on the specification of on-board accommodation, Interviewee 2 added that the experience of men and women working together will help to eliminate misunderstandings. Generally, the view that the unions give some level of confidence to their members was affirmed by some of the interviewees. They do a great deal to advocate and ensure the fair welfare of their members. Interviewee 1 believed that representation at the union level could provide help and support in addressing female challenges on-board. Interviewee 7 (a serving seafarer) had benefitted from information and ideas that had been disseminated and shared in this way.

From a policy view point, Interviewee 1 was not sure of the effort shipping companies are making to prevent potential issues faced by women seafarer although it was felt that shipping companies and owners have a role to play in this. *'Equality by encouraging companies and ship-owners to try and treat women equally.'* Based on prior experience it was also suggested that the crew should be briefed prior to a women seafarer coming on board so that they were more prepared for the situation. Interviewee 15 said *'...when our crew are joining and then we know female and male will be on-board we [tell them...] that it's not going to be one gender crew and once the awareness is there we'll also go down*

to tell them and let them know the challenges they may have and the need to [...] accommodate the women.....’

### **5.12 Positive and negative experiences of female seafarers**

Before their sea time, some of the cadets explained that they had heard both positive and negative stories relating to women seafarers. Some of these are detailed below.

#### **5.12.1 Positive experiences**

Cadets detailed positive experiences that they had heard about involving female seafarers. Examples of these include *‘The female seafarer in a mixed crew helps to [make] the crew feel normal like they are with females and not males only. The female seafarers on-board helps to balance the crew. And female seafarers improves good socialization on-board.’* Another example of a positive experience was *‘I was told by my instructor (a Lady C/M) at the University of Cebu-Maritime Education and Training Center about the caring attitude of her fellow crew members to her and it was really encouraging that they treat her for whom she is and not discriminating her for being a female seafarer on board the same vessel with them.’* Positive examples of where a woman has become a Captain or Chief Engineer was also shared. Female seafarers were additionally recognised for *‘Creating a conducive working environment’*.

#### **5.12.2 Negative experiences**

Cadets also provided examples of negative experiences that they had heard about involving female seafarers. Some of these were about discriminatory behaviour towards female seafarers including bullying and harassment[t]. For example, *‘... some female seafarers were discriminated against, in fact , to some Manning agencies, they are the last option for recruitment . this ought NOT to be.’*, *‘The crew have sex with a female seafarers, because a female cadet did not allow two of the crews have sex with her, they take move against her and they drop the girl and low wages even when their jobs are equivalent to male folks’*. Another example included, *‘MY INSTRUCTOR ON[C]ES TOLD ME THAT, SOUTH AFRICA FEMALE CADET WAS RAPE,KILLED AND THROW OVERBOARD BY GERMANY SEAFARER, ITS NOT ADVICE ABLE FOR A FEMALE CADET/SEAFARERS TO WORK INTERNATIONALLY.’* Further negative experiences include *‘...Some female seafarers in deck and engineering may not be equally competent in certain task because they had not been involved in such during training for gender reasons.’*, *‘Sexual harassment from senior officers, misunderstanding and fight due to female crew on board, and partial treatment of male and female crew member dispute on board’*, *‘They sometimes distract male seafarers sexually from their work and hence accident is bound to occur.’*, *‘Quarelling among mates onboard because of the female safarer,dating while on-board which leads to preferential treatment i.e. dating an highly ranked officer.’* and *‘Insubordination due to privilege granted to a female by the captain.’*

There were no comments made, either about positive or negative experiences involving female seafarers following their sea time.

### **5.13 Reporting Culture**

81% of cadets said that they would feel comfortable reporting an incident if one was to occur whilst they were on board. Of those that answered yes to this question, nine were female cadets which was

encouraging. The general census amongst cadets was that they would feel comfortable reporting an incident on board to a senior member of personnel including the Chief Engineer or Captain.

In some cases, it has been suggested that a cadet may only chose to report an incident if they think it's beyond their control and it's something they are unable to resolve for themselves. For example, *'If my effort to resolve it with my colleague is not yielding, I will seek the assistance of my supervising officer.'* A female cadet also said that *'If the problem is one i cant personally handle, i will report to the third officer, who i consider to be my immediate superior ..depending who i have the issue with'.*

## **6.0 TRAINING**

### **6.1 Joining the Merchant Navy**

A number of influences for joining a Merchant Navy cadetship training programme were provided by young Nigerians. The cadets were primarily influenced by their need for knowledge, gaining new skills and experience. Some were driven by passion for the Merchant Navy itself and some were driven by their love of the seafaring adventure and viewed it as a way to make good money and contribute to society, as well as to travel and explore.

In Nigeria, it is important to note that there are a low number of women seafarers who eventually complete their sea training or even graduate because of poor female representation or mentoring at various maritime institutions. This can also be attributed to poor working conditions on-board vessels (Chiazor-Anishere, 2015). A number of female Seafarers/Cadets feel discriminated against in relation to training and selection opportunities into institutions and organisations or on career progressions. Many females are disqualified from the medical fitness and physicals for their inability to cope with the stress of regimentation. There is the issue of lack of motivation from mentors or other female seafarers to assist them in career choices whilst commencing training at sea or after completion of sea training.

### **6.2 Gender bias from trainers**

Only a small proportion of the cadets surveyed (3%) thought that they had encountered gender bias from their trainers. Significantly, all thirteen female cadets stated that they did not feel that there had been any gender bias from their trainers.

### **6.3 Sea training**

Before embarking on their sea training, over half of the cadets (58%) were aware as to how many people would be on board their vessel. 42% of cadets said that they would know the nationalities of the crew and officers on board their ship before they embarked. A large percentage of male cadets (62%) said that they were unaware in advance as to the number of women that would be on board their vessel. Encouragingly only a small percentage of female cadets (23%) said that they wouldn't know whether there would be any other female seafarers on board before they joined their vessel.

Nigerian Cadets have showed interest in working on different vessels. The vessel types ranged from oil tankers to container ships. The majority of the cadets have indicated interest of training on mostly oil tanker vessels as preferred platform. However, one cadet showed interest of getting sea training

on a dredger vessel. A small number of cadets that were not sure of specific vessel they were going to work on simply indicated that it could be *'any vessel of 500 gross ton and above'*. A minority of the cadets do not know type of vessel they would like to have their sea-training and simply state Sea-Truck as the preferred company they would want to be on-board.

Thinking about their experience, two male cadets (40%) felt they would have benefited from additional training regarding the issues that can be encountered when operating with a multinational crew.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The findings highlight that women are still under represented in seafaring despite an increase in the intake in Nigeria. Despite the development of shipping in Nigeria, the awareness about the contribution of the sector is low. Cadets, policy makers, serving and ex-seafarers all referred to the low level of shipping awareness in Nigeria.

The research notes that the connection between local communities around sea-ports in Nigeria had easy access to sea-ports in the early part of 1960. However, the current threat to ships and sea ports has led to increased security around the ports. This development has contributed to the lack of awareness about shipping.

The research examined potential issues that have negatively impacted on seafaring careers in Nigeria. Issues ranging from isolation, harassment, discouragement from entering the profession and stereotypes were common issues that female cadets have either experienced or are aware of. Furthermore, issues in relation to prejudice, culture and discrimination have repeatedly been mentioned as negative contributors to female's interest in seafaring.

Data collected showed that issues raised by cadets were not given adequate attention by most of the shipping companies. This was observed during interviews with policy makers, shipping companies and ex-women seafarers.

The study showed that Nigeria is a multicultural country. A number of cadets currently undertaking seafaring training come from different ethnic backgrounds. Most of the cadets do not see cultural diversity as a problem to their seafaring interest because of their passion and love for the profession.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations reflect issues highlighted within the research and suggest that strategies are required in order to encourage more participation of women into seafaring careers in Nigeria. The recommendations take into consideration the business of shipping companies, their policies and standards, regulations and the constraints that were expressed during the interviews.

### ***Industry awareness***

On awareness of the shipping industry, it is believed that knowledge of rights, obligations and accountabilities to and from any one individual female cadet and the shipping companies is vital. It is therefore necessary for companies to develop policies and strategies on how to disseminate information to every crew member on-board and ashore on gender policies.

### ***Regulation***

Shipping is highly regulated. At national level, organisations and institutions such as the Maritime Administration and safety agencies, MET, ship-owners, unions, NGO's, recruiters, judiciaries and international maritime agencies should be able to effectively implement, national and international policies and regulations such as national gender policies.

### ***Training***

It is important to develop a curriculum and to teach new entry and serving seafarers about, gender, empowerment and multicultural crews. The need is to improve knowledge of the working public and academia. The aim is to translate the knowledge into the understanding of potential issues of the negative impacts and consciousness of the implication of individual action.

There should be a working condition that recognises and addresses the potential issues arising from an individual gender. This should be in addition to the details in seafarers' individual crew contract of agreement and article of engagement.

All Seafarers' working conditions (collective bargaining agreements and individual contracts of employment) should incorporate standard gender policies and practices. These policies and practice should form part of the shipping companies' health and safety policies. As part of the International Safety Management systems, all-inclusive shore staff and seafarers should be given mandatory orientations, practical briefings and feedback reports from all seafarers prior to and after shipboard operations on the company's on-board gender policy.

### ***Support***

The majority of female seafarers interviewed observed that not much has been done by both society and the shipping companies to ameliorate the complaints they often raise when faced with the challenges of sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination on-board. Some of them understand that male isolation at sea and the urge to satisfy their desire could contribute to harassment. However the challenge could be addressed by constant communication and feedback mechanisms between the companies and the crew on board. Secondly, there is the need to be open by establishing policies and guidelines concerning male to female relationships on-board by having a designated trained officer to provide counselling and boundaries of on-board gender relationships.

### **8.1 Future recommendations from cadets**

Based on their experience, the cadets provided a number of recommendations on how life for them could be improved on board. Two cadets mentioned improvements to the internet access on board in order for crew to communicate with their family and friends more easily. Other cadets mentioned improvement in communication with the crew that they worked with. 'Every national should be able to speak English fluently.' This was supported by another cadet who said '...Respect for Maritime English'. Allocating time on board for crew to socialise together was a further recommendation; and another cadet thought that there should be '...Equal treatment [for the crew] and respect for MLC.' And safety in all aspects of the ship operations was mentioned by a further cadet.

### **REFERENCES**

Ahutu. R. (2005). *Ahmed Tijjani Ramalan and the Maritime Labour Industry*. Lagos: Functional publishing company.

Ajayi, M.K., 2011. ROLE OF NPA CANNOT BE IGNORED-MD NPA. Nigerian Ports Authority [online], 20 June [viewed 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016]. Available from: <http://www.nigerianports.org/news.aspx?id=225>

Central Intelligence Agency., n.d. The World Factbook Africa:: Nigeria [viewed 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016]. Available from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>

Chiazor-Anishe,J., 2015. WISTA to sponsor more girls to become seafarers. Retrieved June 2016.....

Chigozie, E., 2013a. Interesting Facts About Nigerian People and Culture. *Answers Africa* [online], 11 June [viewed 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016]. Available from: <http://answersafrica.com/nigerian-people-culture.html>

Chigozie, E., 2013b. Nigerian Tribes: List of Major Tribes in Nigeria. *Answers Africa* [online], 17 June [viewed 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016]. Available from: <http://answersafrica.com/nigerian-tribes.html>

Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette (2010). *Regulations to the Merchant Shipping Act, 2007*. Lagos: The Federal Government Printer.Vol I

International Labour Convention, 2016. Maritime matters: Approval of amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as adopted by the Special Tripartite Committee established under Article XIII of the convention. In: International Labour Convention. 105th Session of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, May-June [online] [viewed 8th November 2016]. Available from: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_482033.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_482033.pdf)



Kajo,D.(2015).*NSDP at Work -The voyage: In house Journal of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency.* Vol 1 Jan-March, 8-11.

Kajo,D.(2014). *More NSDP Graduates emerge with Distinctions and Praises. The Voyage In house Journal of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency.*Vol 2, No1 Jan-March, 47-48.

Magellan Geograohix., 1992. Map of Nigeria [digital image] [viewed 10 August 2016]. Available from: <http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/nigeria.html>

Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, International Labour Conference, 2016.

Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) (2009). *Appreciating the activities of Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency.* Vol.1

Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency Act 2007. Lagos: Abuja pep Editions Ltd

Nigerian Merchant Shipping Act (MSA), (2007)

NIMASA annual Cabotage Record, 2015).

Oluoha, N. (2015). *Women in Seafaring: A case study of Nigeria.* Unpublished MSc dissertation. Greenwich Maritime Institute, University of Greenwich.

Okonna, K., Ushie, B. C., & Okworo, G. (2014). Effect of Gender on Academic Performance of Maritime Trainees in Nigeria Taught with Web-based Resources. *Internal Journal of Asian Social Science*, 4(3), 379-382.Available at <http://www.aessweb.com/pdf-files/ijass-2014-4%283%29-379-382.pdf>.Accessed.7 /3/2016.

The Economist Pocket World in Figures 2014. London: Profile books Ltd.

# GEM PROJECT: UK COUNTRY REPORT

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The UK is a traditional maritime nation in which shipping and seafarers play a crucial role in the country's economy and trade of goods. 95% of all the UK's imports and 75% of its exports come by sea (Polden, 2013; Harborough District Council, 2015). The total land mass of the UK consists of 243,610 km<sup>2</sup> (World Atlas, 2016) and 12,429km of coastline (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016), with an estimated 391 ports (World Port Source, n.d), 120 of which are classified as commercial ports (UK Major Ports Group, n.d).

In 2013, it was estimated that the shipping industry in the UK directly contributed £3.0 billion to the UK's economy (Oxford Economics, 2015). In 2015, the UK imported goods worth US\$629.2 billion (World's Richest Countries, nd (a)) and exported US\$465.9 billion of goods worldwide (World's Richest Countries, nd (b)). Findings from the Annual Sea Inquiry study show that of the total shipping revenue, 68% came from freight (41% container and dry cargo, 20% wet cargo and 7% on passenger vessels) and 32% from carrying passengers (25% cruises and 7% ferries) (Oxford Economics, 2015).

The UK has a population of approximately 61.8 million people (in 2009), with 83.8% living in England, 8.4% in Scotland, 4.9% in Wales and 2.9% in Northern Ireland (Beaumont, 2011). This was expected to increase to 64.8 million by 2016 (Beaumont, 2011). In 2013, 133,900 people were employed in the UK's shipping industry (Oxford Economics, 2015). 20% of this total, approximately 26,780, were British ratings and officers with 8,034 people working on shore (Oxford Economics, 2015). The remaining 99,086 people employed in the UK shipping industry were foreign citizens (Oxford Economics, 2015).

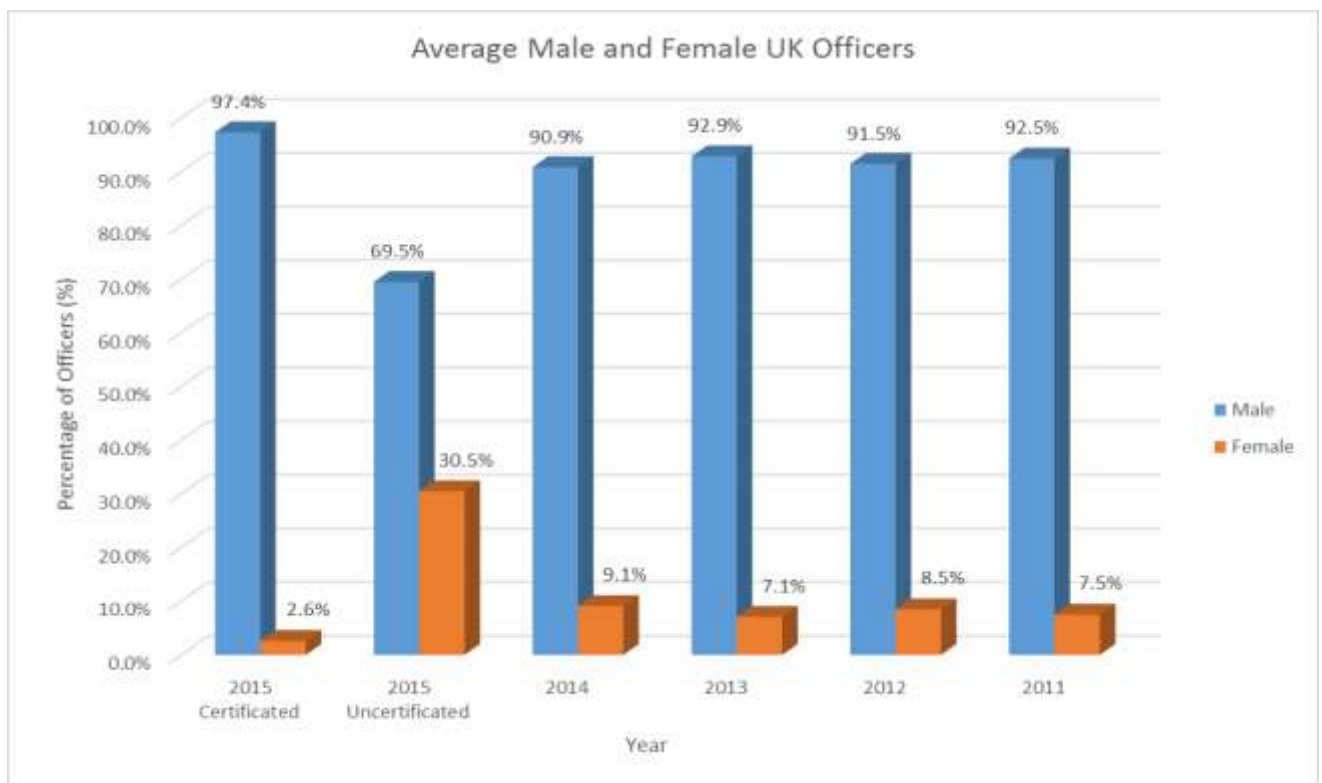
Women have always been a minority in the UK shipping industry. Statistics published for 2011, demonstrate that women only accounted for 7.5% of UK officers (Department for Transport, 2015). In 2015 women represented only 2.6% of UK certificated officers (Graph 1) (Department for Transport 2016). However, in the same year, 30.5% of UK uncertified officers were female (Department for Transport 2016).

In 2014, there were 450 female UK officers, amounting to 9.1% of the total UK officers for this period (Department for Transport 2015). In 2015, there were 365 female UK certified officers and a further 370 UK uncertified officers (Department for Transport 2016). The downward turn of UK women officers in the Deck and Engine sector presents a worrying trend. However, there has been an increase in male officers, both in the deck and engine sector between 2014 and 2015 (Department for Transport 2015 and 2016).

The proportion of female seafarers classified as ratings in the UK was a slightly higher average in comparison to those working as officers. In 2011, women accounted for 30.6% of UK ratings (Graph 2) (Department for Transport 2012). Statistics published for 2014, highlight women making up 24.9% (1230) of UK ratings (Department for Transport 2015). This figure was seen to increase to 28.4% (1615) female UK ratings in 2015 (Department for Transport 2016).

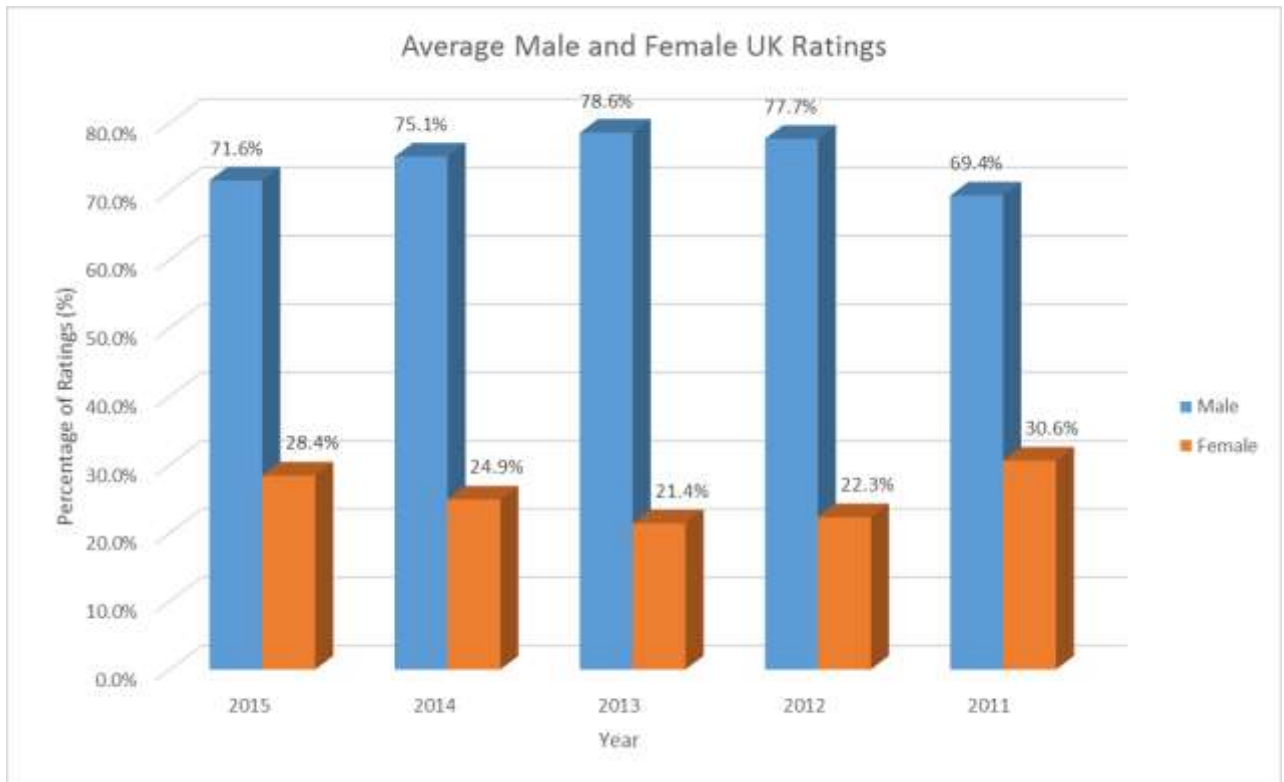
The majority of UK women officers and ratings work in the hospitality sector within the shipping industry, primarily on board cruise ships (Graph 3 and 5). The numbers of female officers in this sector

has increased by 2.9% since 2011 (Department for Transport 2012 and 2016). The percentage of female officers in the technical sector has also increased by 1.3% since 2011 (ibid). Similarly, the percentage of female officers operating within the engine room has more than doubled from 0.5% in 2011 to 1.1% in 2015 (ibid). The percentage of women deck officers has also increased between 2011 and 2014, from 2.7% to 5.1%, but then decreased to 3.8% in 2015 (Department for Transport 2012, 2015 and 2016).



Graph 1: Gender distributions of UK Officers (Source: Adapted from Department for Transport 2011-2015)

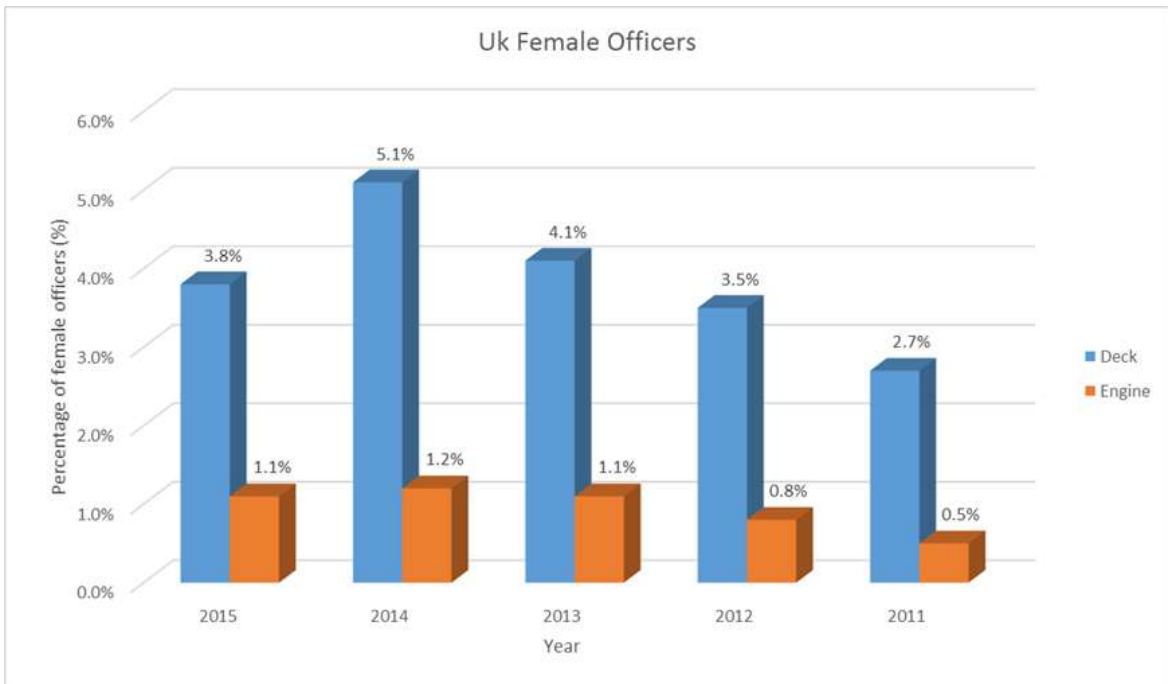
However, the hospitality/other sector, mentioned in graph 5 have experienced a decrease in the percentage of female ratings of 0.1% between 2011 and 2015 (Department for Transport 2012 and 2016).



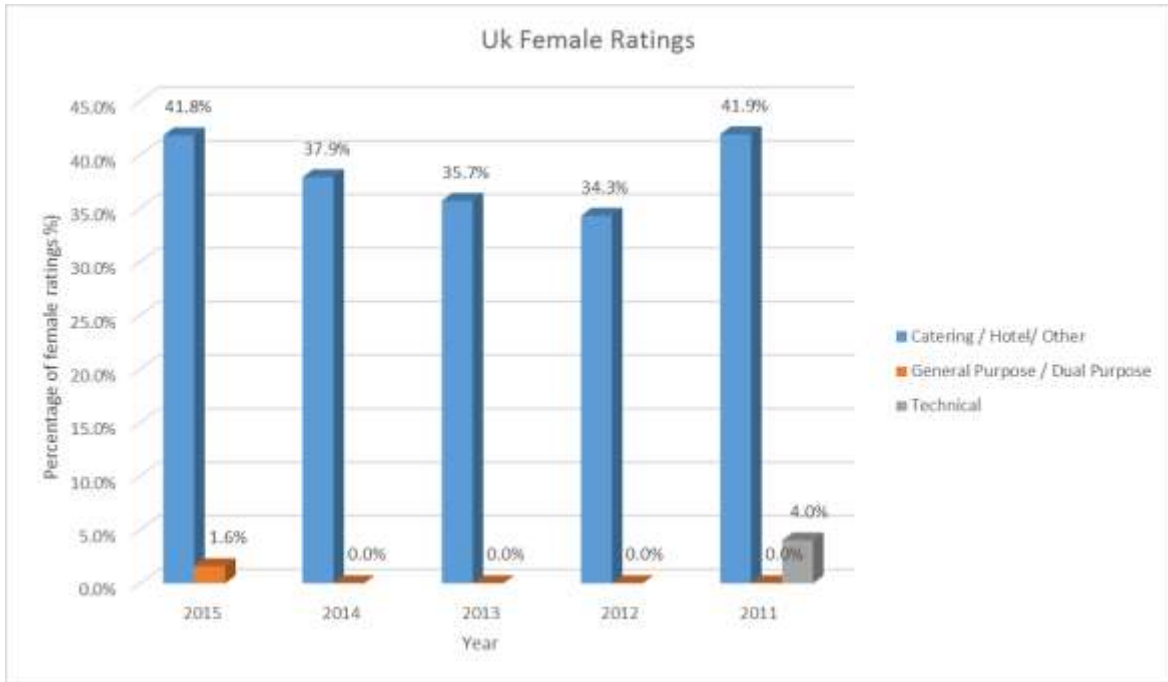
Graph 2: Gender distributions of UK Ratings (Source: Adapted from Department for Transport 2011-2015)



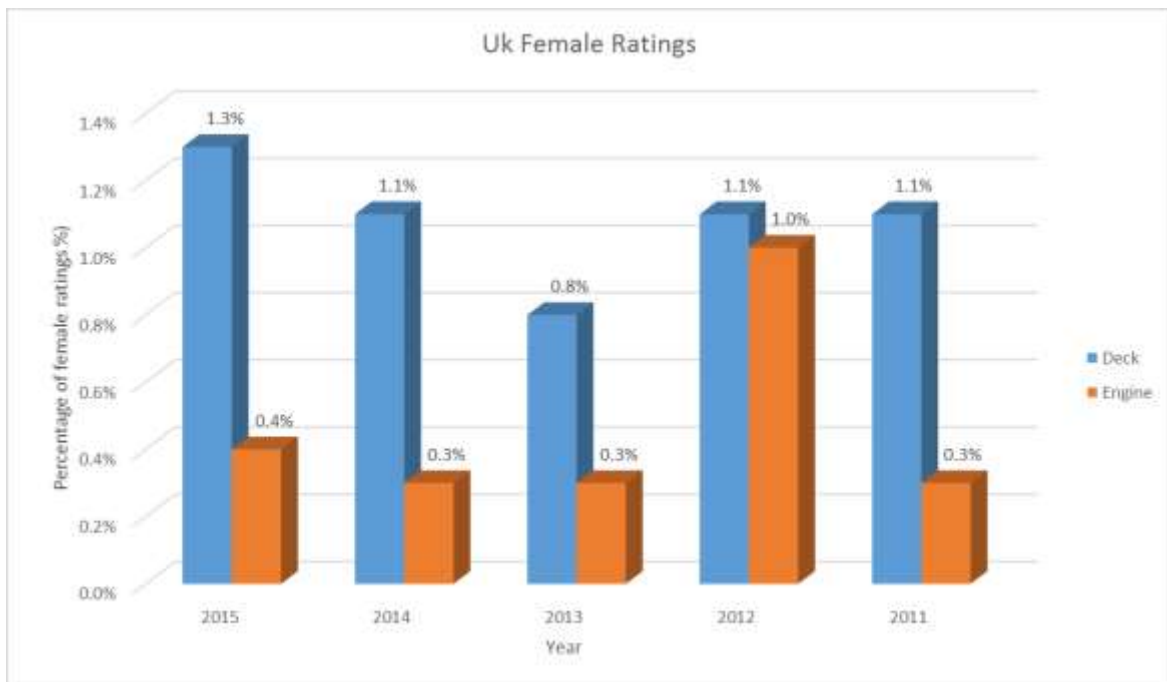
Graph 3: UK Female Officers working in Technical, Hospitality and Other sectors (Source: Adapted from Department for Transport 2011-2015)



Graph 4: UK Female Officers working in Deck and Engine (Source: Adapted from Department for Transport 2011-2015)



Graph 5: UK Female Ratings working in Hospitality, Other, General Purpose, Dual Purpose and Technical sectors (Source: Adapted from Department for Transport 2011-2015)



Graph 6: UK Female Ratings working in Deck and Engine (Source: Adapted from Department for Transport 2011-2015)

## 1.1 GEM project findings for the UK

This report combines data findings for the UK from a number of sources participating in the GEM research which included the cadet surveys before and after their first sea time, stakeholder interviews, a female cadet focus group, historical data from WMA and the panel discussions from the 2016 GEM Conference (also see the 'Research Methods' chapter).

Anonymised quotes<sup>11</sup> have been used from several of these sources to highlight key points throughout the report. Individual interviewees were allocated a number referring to the category that they worked in. The interviewee number is used when quoting or referring to particular interviewees' comments. Table 1 shows the work category, interview number and how many male and female interviewees participated in the UK interviews.

Table 1 Interview category and number

Category	Interview Number	Male	Female	Total Male/Female
Policy maker	1,2,3		3	3
Serving Women Seafarer	4,5,6,7,8		5	5
Ex Women Seafarer	9,10,11,12		4	4
MET (1)	13,14,15,16	3	1	4
Recruiter	17,18,19,20	2	2	2
Shipping Company	21,22	2		2
NGO/ Charity (1)	23,24,25,		3	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>

## 1.2 Demographics

Table 2 shows the number of male and female cadets from WMA, UK that participated in the pre and post sea-time surveys. The numbers answering after their sea time are slightly higher as they also included 8 additional cadets returning from different sea time trips who did not complete the 'before sea time' survey. Their responses were still considered valuable to the research, despite the lack of direct comparison. Out of 47 male responses, 22 had sailed without women on board. Out of the 8 responses from women cadets 5 had sailed with other women on board which is higher than the global average. UK cadets usually sail with multi-cultural crews from all over the world. Only 6 cadets said they were sailing with an all British crew.

---

<sup>11</sup> The quotes have been used verbatim and as such may contain poor English and grammar at times.

Table 2. UK Cadets surveyed before and after their sea time (2015/2016)

	Female	Male	Total
<b>Cadets (Pre-Sea Training)</b>	8	40	48
<b>Cadets (Post-Sea training)</b>	9	47	56

### 1.2.1 Courses

Of the pre-sea training cadets at WMA 34 (71%) were on the Deck programme (Foundation degree and HND), 13 (27%) were on the Engineering course and 1 cadet (2 %) was on the Marine Operations course. The cadets were predominantly British (85%) with the remainder from Brunei, the Seychelles, Nigeria and America. Following their sea time, 8 additional cadets completed the survey. Again, they were predominantly British (95%).

### 1.2.2 Vessel Type

During their sea time the cadets had worked on a range of vessels, mainly container ships (25%) cruise ships (12%), off-shore vessels (9%) and Buoy tenders (9%). Other vessel types included tankers, ro-ro freight and ferry, bulk carriers, fleet auxiliary, RFA, bulk cargo, pax, research, pipe layer, platform supply vessel and a tall ship.

## MAIN FINDINGS

### 2.0 SHIPPING AWARENESS

Lack of shipping awareness amongst the general public is a global issue and raises concerns for the sustainability of recruitment into certain sectors of the industry. Shipping awareness is of particular concern in the UK where currently there is no mention of the industry within the national curriculum and because skills gaps and shortages of officers are emerging. The GEM Conference panel discussion relating to shipping awareness confirmed that the industry is far less visible nowadays, and highlighted heightened port security, health and safety measures, and in the UK the massive decrease in the once worlds' largest Royal Navy which supported hundreds and thousands of dock yard workers and ship builders, as some of the key reasons for this decline. It was these workers who had lived in our communities that were identified by the panel as *'ambassadors of our industry'* (GEM Conference, 2016).

With a view to addressing shipping awareness, a panel member at the GEM Conference said, *'we need to find a way to carry that forward into every day appreciation. That's actually a significant challenge, particularly when people who influence, by that I am talking about career advisors, teachers and parents, influence tomorrow's work forces aspirations, think that as an industry Britain stopped doing this kind of thing in the 60's and 70s.'* Shipping awareness issues are discussed in light of the research findings below.



## **2.1 Shipping awareness and concerns for recruitment**

Recruitment into the shipping industry was highlighted as one of the concerns associated with the lack of shipping awareness. Int.17, a recruiter said, *'I still think there will be tremendous shortages of crew in general, because I think one thing that hasn't been discussed is jobs at sea is a career which isn't well advertised .... it is about how we are educating people around careers at sea. We see tremendous shortages of seafarers in particular pockets of experience. For instance within the gas sector, there are huge shortages of LNG, LPG, oil and chemical seafarers and that's men, let alone females.'*

The general lack of awareness of the industry seems to manifest itself very early on where opportunities to raise the idea of careers in shipping are not being discussed. Int. 17 went on to say, *'At [..] a really basic school level, it wasn't a career option that had been highlighted. A panel member from the GEM Conference discussion on 'Shipping Awareness' also raised this point, '[There is] Not enough information available at high school level when we need to be able to put shipping in their minds. Seems to be more aimed at University level but at this point they may well have other careers in mind.'* However, information about careers in the Merchant Navy is generally easier to obtain in the UK today than it was 10 or 20 years ago, even if it is not aimed at school level. Int. 9 said, *'.... if you want to go to sea you can use your intelligence and find out.'* This perhaps suggests that it is still not as readily available as it should be, but at least the information exists, particularly if you search on company and academy websites.

## **2.2 Maritime connections (prior to becoming a cadet)**

There is evidence in the UK that awareness of the maritime industry and the career opportunities it provides are initially being acquired through a family and/ or friends connection with the industry. This was illustrated by the cadet surveys where out of the 48 cadets who responded, 27 had a family or friend's connection to the Merchant or Royal Navies. For 16 of the cadets, this was a direct family connection such as a father, brother or grandfather. Int.17, a recruiter concurred saying, *'the female seafarers that I deal with ... they come from a line of seafarers. Their father would have been at sea. They have history or heritage with the seafaring community. It is not often that I will work with a female candidate who just decided to go to sea.'*

## **2.3 Was information provided aimed more at men than women?**

Several references from interviewees who had started their career in the industry some 20 years ago refer to the previous lack of advertising aimed at women. (Int.21) said *'I think advertising in the past has focused on men, perhaps because there were more men at sea and you got more pictures of men at sea and that sort of protracted the perceptions. But actually I would say nowadays you get a much more balanced view in the media and a lot more pictures of women doing jobs at sea. I'm not sure if that attracts many more women but I think there is more visibility of it.'* Int. 9 agreed with this view and Int. 11 said, *'[the information] was aimed generally [at men and women] ...'*

## **2.4 Reasons for becoming a seafarer**

The UK cadets had many different reasons for becoming a seafarer and embarking upon their training. The good salary and travel were equally highlighted as a key attraction, followed closely by their love of the sea. Other reasons included the good level of training associated with a cadetship and the high standard of qualifications, as well as career progression and exciting job challenges which were not office based or a 9-5 life-style. Int. 11, a woman seafarer mentioned the *'excitement and diversity of a different work environment'*. Other female seafarer interviewees said that the career had looked interesting or that their love of water helped them to make this particular career choice. Int. 9 said, *'I did not want to work in an office. I wanted a job where I could use my brain and my brawn.'*

## **2.5 Any discouragement from becoming a seafarer?**

Amongst the 2015/2016 WMA, cadet cohort, there did not appear to be any stigma attached to starting a career at sea. Only one female cadet said she was discouraged from this choice, but even this had a positive edge. *'I've been told by some people I've come across that it's a man's job. But all sailors I've known have told me to go for it.'*

The UK interviewee responses suggest that the discouragement of women seafarers tended to be more common in the past. One ex women seafarer, Int.9 reported that in the 80's her career teachers discouraged her from going to sea. *'They were saying why do you want to go to sea? Females don't go to sea and if you want to go to sea really go and be a nanny on a cruise ship. So they were totally unsupportive at school.'* This apparently extended to her training college where, *'People at the training college who were of the opinion that there was no place for a women at sea. We were like Jonahs'.*

## **2.6 Summary**

When examining the lack of general awareness surrounding the shipping industry, it is apparent that more needs to be done to help men and women consider careers in this industry. As the majority of UK cadet surveys illustrate, most people entering the Merchant Navy tend to have a connection to it through a family member or friend. Information about the industry is not widely available anywhere else unless it is specifically requested. In the past, information about the Merchant Navy was heavily male targeted but this is gradually changing in the UK with more marketing at maritime training schools directed at women and men. However, progress is still required to provide information to young people at school level and in promoting the industry generally. Poor communication to young people about the industry creates barriers to entry into the maritime industry.

### **3.0 RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND CAREERS IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY**

There have been many changes to recruitment within the Merchant Navy over the last few decades, with a move away from direct recruitment by the shipping companies to recruitment through agencies. Another significant change in the UK is that shipping companies currently take far fewer cadets than in the past. A panel member at the GEM Conference speaking about the current recruitment trends said, *'The main topic that we are seeing at the moment coming through from a recruitment perspective is on gender in this area. If done properly, this can be really beneficial to a company. They are going to be widening their talent pool, making sure they are going to get different perceptions than you would from a totally male board ..'* This and other recruitment and retention factors relating to the maritime industry are discussed below.

#### **3.1 The importance of raising the numbers of women seafarers**

The interviewees that were asked about the importance of raising the number of female seafarers thought that for various reasons, this would add value. For example, *'Firstly, because of the opportunities it could provide and the earning power associated with that. ... it is a tremendous career opportunity, so why would you deny that to women? And secondly from a development point of view seafarers do bring in a fair amount of dollar earnings into countries where the dollar has a great deal of power and therefore give them earning power to the women seafarer and to the wider family that she will be supporting.'* (Int. 3) The representative balance was highlighted as another reason for raising the number of women seafarers. For example, *'I do think it is important because the global number of women who now have the potential and ability to go out to work has increased and therefore that should be mirrored across all industry sectors.'* (Int. 2).

#### **3.2 Women positively targeted in maritime jobs**

The maritime industry is a complex market for the recruitment of women and it has been suggested by UK recruiters that there is a current industry drive to achieve greater recruitment of females. Interviewees have also mentioned that, *'...from an attraction perspective women can get paid slightly more'*. (Int. 17)

There are various other drivers which can increase the number of women in shipping, for example, *'... if you have a woman for the job, companies will like that – they want to get more women into shipping, they want more women to be seen in senior positions to act as role models for the future, I think that is industry wide at the moment.'* (Int.17). Int. 18 highlights diversity and the skill's gap as two reasons why certain shipping companies may want to recruit more women. She says, *'I have actually placed a lot of females into their companies and brought a lot of females from sea into their offices .....*' (Int. 18).

### **3.3 Ethical recruitment**

Shipping companies have differing view-points about recruiting women into the industry. There is often a focus on the company's inclusion and diversification policies which can encourage them to be *'... extremely good and actively promote women in [skill's gap areas such as] engineering ... it will always be the right person gets the job. They like to diversify the candidates as much as they can, so they will actively promote it .....*' (Int.18, a recruiter).

In contrast some shipping companies may use the recruitment of women in a less positive way, for example, *'... we have clients who are keen to see any females in this industry .. to help [them] tick the diversity box ... she wouldn't have been the right person for this job but they were willing to look at her because she was female.* (Int. 18). Int. 17 also highlights the potential for negative behaviour in terms of recruiting saying, *'It is giving preferential treatment on a pay scale, preferential treatment to somebody who may not have good technical skills as a male counterpart for instance, but she will get preference because she is a female, because the client will want to have better statistics for females in their businesses, which is a pressure which a lot of the ship owners, in particular the operators face'.* Clearly this is an unwelcome situation where the importance of filling certain diversity criteria becomes more urgent than the quality of the candidate being put forward for the job.

One of the GEM Conference panel discussions on 'Shipping awareness and recruitment' sums this situation up, *'A lot of companies that we are talking to are saying ... if you do have a woman for this that would actually be great. So it can actually be positive discrimination towards women for this. However, it depends how it is seen from employees from within the company. [There is a danger that] If you are bringing in a woman it is seen to be a case of positive discrimination [...], it can be seen as, well, this person is here as a tick box exercise, otherwise there could have been better people for the job here because of gender.'*

The industry should be aiming for equality in the work place for men and women. Most shipping companies understand this and will bench mark the market averages versus their own actual numbers around male, female ratios and will carefully consider how they look to others outside their organisation. Int. 17 said, *'... [it] is not the ship owner's fault that the availability of candidates are predominantly male and I have got plenty of evidence of ship owners who have key strategies aimed at targeting female seafarers because they want to up their percentages from a gender quality perspective'.* Int. 19 supports this further by saying, *'What we certainly do see is that there are a number of companies who are .... extremely hungry to achieve female former seafarers ashore, and so it's a fantastic career path for a woman to take as she is incredibly employable ashore when the time is right to come ashore.'*

It is clear that this is not a straight forward issue and that a healthy balance must be struck in supporting and helping women into the industry, meanwhile ensuring that the best person, with the right skills for the job is employed, and not on any other basis.

### **3.4 Investment in crew**

The GEM Conference panel discussion on 'Shipping awareness and recruitment' raised the issue of valuing and investing in the crew. There was a general view that this did not happen nearly enough and that short term contracts and training costs were partly to blame. *'Unfortunately we aren't placing enough value on the crews that we have ..... A lot of it is short term contracts and it is difficult to invest in people when you are given that sort of employment. The cost implications in investing in training and placing value on people and crews are probably the biggest investment that companies make. Yet they chose to place little value and it is cost cutting on all corners.'* Another panellist felt it was important to invest more in the crew because, *'these are ambassadors of the industry.'*

It was pointed out that about 50% of operational expenditure is spent on staff costs. One panel member pointed out that ironically, *'The person who is responsible for filling these roles (HR) is probably the lowest paid job in the office. It's an under-valued, low status, low paid role relative to other people in the shore side office. .... this is one of the key areas where we can devote time and resources to improving the status and the qualifications of people in people management roles.'* This was supported by a comment from another panel member who said, *'... To actually nurture and look after an asset ..... The underpinning loyalty, the owning of people's well-being and welfare, as a sector, we have [a long way to go with that].'*

Areas where investments could be made in relation to the crew were identified as, training, food, safety and career progression to promote the industry in a more positive light. As one panellist pointed out, *'Cost cutting has very negative implications to the investment of people'*. Another Conference panel member pointed out that recruiting is expensive. *'If you are going to invest and attract the talent you need, then doesn't it make sense to have the conditions to retain what you have actually invested in and worked so hard to achieve? Recruitment is very difficult and different to retention. I think we have issues with both.'*

### **3.5 Summary**

The research shows that interviewees felt it was important to raise the number of women within the industry to allow them access to the market in this sector and the salaries that go with it. From the UK recruiter's perspective it is evident the shipping industry is making more of a move to recruit women and help broaden diversity within their companies. However it is important for companies to consider the best skilled labour for recruitment and be aware of the pitfalls of recruiting to fulfil inclusion policies. The research highlighted the need to invest more in the crew generally as they are crucial to the business and in turn will go on to promote the industry.

## **4.0 MULTICULTURAL CREW ENVIRONMENT**

Multicultural crews are the norm in the Merchant Navy and certainly when UK cadets go to sea. Cultural diversity provides strengths as well as challenges that need to be thoroughly understood in order to provide an efficient and safe way of working on board. At its best, a mix of cultures on board can broaden horizons and promote social acceptance, tolerance, raise standards, knowledge of other

cultures and education, and generally provide a more balanced environment. Int. 2 (a policy maker) noted, *'A really good multi-national crew is actually when you have got so many different cultures on board the vessel that it is not clear what the predominant culture is. The predominant culture actually becomes the culture of the ship.'* However, bringing people of different nationalities and cultures together can also create challenges and tension which is often associated with lack of awareness or tolerance.

#### **4.1 The positives of working within a multi-cultural crew environment**

The positives of working with a multicultural crew were explored during the GEM panel discussion on this issue. The benefits of a multicultural crew were considered far ranging, from economic participation in the global economy, through to learning English as part of personal development. The competencies that different people bring from different cultural backgrounds were also highlighted and the way that this can enable companies to meet their different business needs and deploying different people for different expertise.

This was summarised by one of the panellists, *'It comes to the culture. All of a sudden we realise we are different and it's not a bad thing to be different, it is just appreciating each other and playing to each other's strengths and if industry grasps that then we will be miles ahead of ourselves'*

Before they left for their sea time, UK cadets were asked if they had any preconceptions towards multicultural crews. 2 female and 9 male cadets answered yes to this question. Positive examples include: being able to try new food, making new friends, flexibility and mix of strengths.

Following their sea time the cadets were asked about their positive experiences involving multicultural crews. 39 cadets responded and many positive experiences were detailed about working with multinational crews. The examples below demonstrate the broadening of cultural horizons and multinational mixing at its best. *'Enhanced my language skills'. 'The BBQ's. The engine room ratings were hard workin and always willing to help. I learnt a lot about the culture and life-styles of other countries'. 'Helping each other during watches'. 'Indian cooks made v good food' 'Talking with each other about our homes and lives in different countries'. 'local knowledge of ports + city useful with language barrier'.*

*'karoke with the Filipino crew'* And finally, *'the working and personal relationships between different nationalities were very positive and healthy. This makes the working of the vessel very efficient and good'.*

#### **4.2 Key issues faced on-board in relation to multinational crews**

Before their sea time, the cadets were also asked ***'What do you think might be the biggest potential issue faced on-board with respect to multi-cultural crews?'***

There were 66 responses to this question including the differences in languages and the associated language barriers mentioned by 12 cadets (18%). Different cultures and ideologies (11%) and potential communication difficulties (8%). Other issues mentioned less frequently included, different work ethics, segregation, possible misunderstandings, religion and different levels of training.

Following their sea time the main issue that cadets experienced with multi-national crews was communication difficulties (discussed further in Section 4.4). This broke down into the following categories, Language barriers when explaining (16%), Language competence (13%) and effective communication (11%). For example: *'The standard of certain national qualifications makes certain nations not desirable as officers due to the corruption of their educational system. This can lead to jealousy when they observe young British officer cadets and officers achieving officer rank due to the high standard of British training'. 'Eastern European coming across as aggressive with their use of English dialect' 'miss-understanding could lead to confrontation between other multicultural crew members'. 'hard to get a point across or for them to teach you' 'Tendency for nationalities to only/mainly bond with crew of fellow nationalities. i.e. Filipinos sitting separate to British crew in mess room'. And, 'Speaking non-English when discussing matters they didn't want me to hear. Otherwise ok'.*

The interviewee responses were similar to the cadets, identifying communication, cultural differences, the potential of isolation, fear of jobs being taken and food as the main issues associated with multi-national crew, in order of impact. Some examples of these included, *'Competence in English language communication is the highest factor, ... ultimately it is the highest compromise to ship safety.'* (Int. 11). In relation to safety and communication, Int. 12 (ex-woman seafarer) said, *'Everybody panics in their own language'*. Int. 10 felt that, *'... understanding other nationalities and cultures – find a way to work.'* And this was further supported by Int. 14 who said, *'Background, attitude towards women, fear of taking jobs'* (Int. 16) *'Worry of jobs being taken away'*.

#### **4.3 Nationalities preferred to sail with.**

The cadets were also asked **'Are there any specific nationalities you would prefer to sail with?'**

15 males answered yes. Predominantly the nationality that they would prefer to sail with was British, followed by Scandinavians and other Europeans. Some of the reasons provided for this included, *'Have heard of and witnessed professional attitudes more generally.'* And *'British - no language barrier to prevent learning. Sailing standards better than countries ...'*

Following their sea time cadets were asked, **'Based on your experience, are there any specific nationalities you would prefer to sail with in the future?'**

41% (24) of cadets answered this question. Following their first sea time cadets still primarily felt that they would like to sail with other British people or other English speaking nationals for ease of communication. Similar shared understanding and sense of humour were important as well as not being the only one of your nationality. The standard of training was noted several times as an additional important factor in sailing with certain nationalities, which clearly has safety implications. The examples from the UK surveys below demonstrate these points. *'British- shared sense of humour. Phillipinos - friendly, happy people'*. And *'British, Norwegian, German because of higher standards of training received'*. And *'I would rather be with many different nationalities than be the only different one. I would also like English speaking officers to a good standard in order to understand the training'*. Finally, *'British or any English speaking nation Europeans who speak English Easier to communicate'*.

Following their sea time female cadets were asked, **'Would you feel comfortable working with a multicultural crew in the future, on the basis of your gender?'**

There was an encouraging response to this question. 6 females answered yes (66% of total females). For 2 female cadets this question was not applicable because they were working with an all British crew. Most of the female cadets were of the opinion that *'My gender shouldn't be an issue'*

#### **4.4 Multinational crews and communication**

Cultural understanding and communication can have a profound impact on board a multi-cultural crew environment. What may be acceptable in one culture is not necessarily the case in another and this may lead to misunderstandings, safety issues and unacceptable behaviours. In relation to communication issues and multi-national crews, Int.21 said, *'... One [of the key areas] is operational - and risks associated with that in terms of safety and environmental performances... and the potential for misunderstandings.'*

Int. 2 highlights the issue of using English as the working language on board. *'Yes, the lingua franca should be English, but in reality is that truly comfortable if you are off work, off duty, to have to speak in that language which is maybe your third language? I think the natural thing when people are off duty in the mess room relaxing would be to revert to a language that they feel comfortable with.'*

Int. 22 notes that, *'You have to make quite sure there is limited potential for any double meaning or misunderstanding as possible.'*

Before their sea time cadets were asked, **'How do you think communication between crew members may be affected when working on multicultural crewed ships?'**

Significantly, only one cadet felt that there would not be any communication issues on board a multi-culturally crewed vessel. The examples below are indicative of the general response to this question. *'Language barrier which makes effective communication a lot harder over radio devices and telephones causing a potentially dangerous situation'*. And, *'It may be difficult to understand accents or unknown gestures'* And, *'In emergencies people may revert back to native language'*.

Following their sea time the cadets were asked, **'Did you have any issues with communication whilst operating alongside a multicultural crew?'**

57% of cadets answered this question. The communication issues reported in most cases mirrored the responses in the 'before sea time' survey. The cadets often found it difficult to understand what was being said and needed to have the conversation repeated. Similarly they often found it difficult to make themselves understood. The following are examples of some of the communication issues experienced. *'miss-understanding between other crew members due to different languages spoken'*

And *'in the engine room (noisy environment) misunderstandings made tasks last longer'* And *'... Socially sometimes difficult to have in-depth conversations'*.

One British cadet sailing with a Filipino, Latvian, Polish, Irish and English crew said the, *'Standard of English to qualify to work on a British flagged ship is relatively low and the assessment of it is equally as lapse. For this reason a Russian 2nd off + Polish chief mates English was very poor and barely at the standard for a ship which has English as its operational language'*



#### **4.5 Isolation**

Isolation has been associated with multicultural crews was highlighted by several of the interviewees. Int. 3 said, *'Typically there is this splitting into cultural groups'*. Int. 21 supports this with the comment, *'.... the opportunity for social interaction is often, but not always, reduced. People don't speak the language of the others, they don't share the same interests and so you have increasing isolation.'*

Int. 2 highlights what can happen if you are the only one of your nationality on board, *'Then if you are literally just one on your own of a different culture ..... it is much more difficult for people to appreciate and make you feel part of a team. It's no different for a women being with a whole lot of men. It's because you are different.'* Int. 1 agreed and follows on to say *'Yes, Isolation can drive people to leave. It is difficult, especially when you are young.'*

In relation to isolation, but not solely related to multicultural crews, Int. 2 mentioned that if it became usual for different crews just to go back to their cabins at the end of the day as soon as they have finished their shift, then isolation is much more likely to occur. Int. 2 goes onto say that it is the senior management that need to create the right environment on board to address issues such as isolation. *'I think it is more about the predominant culture on board and the willingness of people at the top to create an environment which is inclusive for everybody – and I do believe it comes from the top.'*

#### **4.6 Mix of nationalities on-board**

The mix of nationality was considered important for smooth management of operations on-board. According to Int. 17, *'This isn't a scientific fact and ship owners won't admit it, but certain nationalities don't blend with other nationalities. And when ship owners are hiring they are very conscious of nationality on board their ship. Not only from a flag perspective, but if their Captain was Russian they would require their lower ranking officers and juniors to be of a specific nationality'*. The additional complexity that this can add if you are a female seafarer was also highlighted.

Int. 21 (A shipping company manager) commented about the cultural mix on board his ships. *'we found that having all Indian crews on ships didn't work for us because of the hierarchical system. It was difficult to have anything other than sort of top down authority. So we moved to Filipino crews and Indian officers which seem to work much better.'* He admits, *'...other people have tried other different mixes, other people have found that they made single nationality crews work.'* Int. 17 acknowledges that, *'Looking at what nationalities work with other nationalities, ..... it is very important from a ship owner's perspective.'* Another shipping company manager (Int. 22) said *'So what we found was that by integrating some of the Chinese seafarers into the ships with senior Indian and Filipino seafarers, they got a better understanding of how the company functioned and what would be expected from them.'*

Different nationalities have different cultural expectations meaning that some will work better than others together. One of the GEM Conference panelists mentioned that different cultures can sometimes have different skills and strengths and that, *'Different management companies will have different sourcing strengths. Also certain trades tend to lend themselves to different nationalities a bit more.'* (Int.19) which presents another consideration for shipping managers.

#### **4.7 Multi-culture and cultural values**

Different cultures may additionally have different behavioural expectations from different genders. Int. 14 explains, *'[On board a] ship there might be people from certain cultures that see a female through the lens of their own culture rather than through a multicultural [perspective] ..... so who's values do I judge it by, do I judge it by their value or by my values and that can cause confusion with people ...'* Int. 17 provides a bit more detail, *'... in more developing economies where the female role is with the family for instance, how they would react to a female in a higher rank than them when they think they should be having babies, cooking dinner – you do see that.'*

Int.21 supports this and points out the difficulty in obtaining the right balance saying, *'Different cultures have different values and ideas of what would be acceptable behaviour. An awareness of cultural boundaries for all crew members is important, as is establishing a social and work balance on board. This is often a fine line and hard to judge'*. Int. 17 points out how additionally difficult this can be for a woman seafarer saying, *'.. for a women, it is not only that they are not a man, it is also what nationality they are, so there is an added complexity.'*

##### **4.7.1 Cultural treatment of own nationality women**

The interviewees spoke about the potential issue of different cultural treatment of women from the same nationality as their male seafaring counterparts. For example Int. 3 explained that even if women from certain countries have equal rights in terms of employment in a particular country, they may not have the same equal status in the familial environment, meaning that the females in the community are not treated in the same way as males. She goes on to say, *'That then being brought into the multicultural environment on board ships, it may not be overt, but it can have very definite negative implications for women on board ships. Sometimes particularly if the women is from their own culture.'*

*'So if they [male seafarers] were, ..... facing a women seafarer who is from a Western European country, they may react to her slightly negatively but then she will soon put them right, but somebody from their own country or from their own culture, it's terribly ingrained the behavioural patterns, I think that is possibly an issue.'*

#### **4.8 Cultural differences towards relationships with women**

Awareness of cultural differences and how these may influence people's perceptions about what is acceptable behaviour, was raised by Int. 1, 7 and 11.

The consideration of age and experience was raised in terms of understanding different cultural reactions. Int 1 said, *'When you have the cultural barrier with that as well and they are young and don't have the social skills/ life skills to try and deal with it. For example, the Iranians won't speak to me, they will only speak to men, but I am old enough and long enough in the tooth to go – that's your culture, I'll accept it'. But that's come with time. When you are 22 you don't have those skills.'*

Int. 1 said, *'You are never going to change people's cultures and in some respects it would be wrong of us to try and do this. So I still think that it is about trying to get the girls on the right ship that is suitable and allows them to develop and communicate and feel safe.'*

#### **4.8.1 Discrimination**

Some interviewees mentioned discrimination. Int. 1 spoke about a specific incident, *'I am aware that we have 2 cadets ..... 2 Nigerians girls who could not get sea time to do their training. People just would not take them. .... I hate to say it but we have the female element and the poor girls, there seems to be a discrimination against African girls as well.'* In relation to multicultural crews and discrimination, Int. 21 said, *'I think that might depend. I would not say it's down to a multinational crew, I think gender issues on board could be attributed to cultural perceptions or beliefs but I wouldn't say it's necessarily down to multinational. Multinational may assist because it gives a spread of views.'*

Cadets were asked before their sea time, **'Do you think some male seafarers from other nationalities/cultures may find it difficult to work with female seafarers because of their gender?'**

28 cadets (58%) answered Yes to this question; 22 men and 6 women. 17 cadets (35%) answered No 16 men + 1 women

Some examples of the issues male cadets felt women seafarers may experience from men on board included:

*'muslim religion has women classed as different to men'* And *'some cultures don't see women as equals'; 'Because of cultural differences within different societies. In some foreign cultures, women are not expected to work'. 'Gender equality is not as developed in some nations and therefore women may be looked down on or mistrusted with duties.'* Finally, *'Some male seafarers still have the idea of this being a man's job'.*

4 cadet responses referred to the possibility of sexual harassment, which was summed up by this statement, *'Sexual harassment, Bullying all because it is believed that the maritime world is for men ....'*

Cadets were asked, **'Do you think female seafarers might face any hostility from other nationalities (or their own nationality) because of their gender?'** 46% of cadets answered yes to this question (19 men and 3 women). Some examples included, *'Even in our other country, some women face hostility/ sexist behaviour due to their career choice.'* And that this is, *'More obvious at sea.'*

#### **4.9 Do shipping companies do enough to prevent these issues?**

Interviewees raised some interesting points in relation to whether shipping companies are doing enough to prevent issues relating to the multicultural crew environment. For example, Int. 19 felt it may be dependent on the size of the shipping company. *'I think the larger Corporates try very hard, I suspect, and I think that the companies that use decent sized manning agencies to look after particularly their training or cadet contracts ... but I think probably the average privately owned shipping company probably doesn't address these issues as much as those larger Corporates.'* Whereas Int. 3 felt that some shipping companies, *'pay lip service that's how I would see it. .... The actual specifics ... when something goes wrong, what do you have in place? That is lacking.'*

Int. 2 thought that shipping companies in the main know what they should be doing to create a safer environment saying, *'I think there is more awareness now of general things you should put into safe guard everybody and I say that in broader way.'*

#### **4.10 Summary**

The research suggests that multi-cultural crewing strategies tend to favour the skills and expertise that come from traditional maritime nations, perhaps introduced into them from an early age and from a history of seafaring from within the community and culture. Complexities associated with a multicultural crew have been highlighted such as different cultural beliefs. These raise questions about whether we can impose a rationale on board about what is a social system and whether or not management of multicultural crews really takes these complexities into account. Many positives of increased value from bringing people from different back grounds and cultures together were also emphasised. The research suggests that some of the key challenges maybe addressed by education, awareness raising and enforcing a culture of tolerance on board.

## **5.0 POTENTIAL GENDER ISSUES**

The complex and diverse nature of the shipping industry means that there are many issues at play relating to gender equality both on shore and at sea. Nationality and the on board hierarchical structure, age and management will also come into play. Some shipping companies are much more aware and proactive of the potential problems that could take place and go a long way to develop inclusion and welfare strategies in trying to provide a safer environment for seafarers to work in. However, there are many nuances to the difficulties women may face at sea and these are discussed in the following section.

### **5.1 Summary of the top key issues facing women seafarers**

The top 3 issues facing women seafarers identified by UK interviewees included: Harassment (sexual and bullying), retention in the job relating to family issues, and discrimination. Some examples of these included, *'Sexual harassment'* (Int. 1), *'Chauvinism by men'* (Int. 5), *'Maternity'* (Int. 6), *'Balance between career and life choices.'*(Int. 7), *'respect'*, (Int. 17) and *'Family aspect. Harassment and women feeling vulnerable, feeling outnumbered'* (Int.25).

The cadets were asked before their sea time, **'What is the biggest issue you think females might face whilst on-board?'**

There were 52 responses to this question and the biggest issue facing women on board was identified as sexual harassment (19%). This was mentioned in various forms, for example: the fear of being taken advantage of, rape, and men automatically thinking women are interested in them. Sexism was mentioned next (12%) then loneliness, isolation and segregation (8%). Other issues raised included gaining respect, concerns about sexist banter and inappropriate comments and being seen as incapable.

Following their sea time the list had changed slightly for the better, but sexual harassment had become a reality and was mentioned 5 times (16%), sexism 3 times (9%) and 'old school seafarers' who were associated with more traditional viewpoints and stereotypes of women working on board, mentioned twice (6%) and discrimination also at 6%.

## **5.2 Women in the minority**

The Merchant Navy has always been strongly male dominated. Being a minority, whether as the only women working on a vessel, or the only one of a certain nationality can make you different and potentially vulnerable to harassment and bullying and feelings of isolation. This means if you are a woman on board, you are likely to be under a constant spotlight. This is summed up by (Int. 7) who said *'If you are a minority, you slightly get put under a magnifying glass ... so everything you do will be looked at and judged'*. The following sections discuss other aspects associated with being a minority.

### **5.2.1 Behaviour**

Some women seafarers may feel that they have to check their behaviour on board. Interviewees have referred to the need for women seafarers to have a constant awareness of how they behave and how this behaviour might be interpreted by others they work with. This is particularly the case when working within multi-national crews who will view certain behaviours according to their own cultural references. Attracting the wrong kind of attention is counterproductive, unwelcome and could potentially create problems. Int. 17 felt *'female behaviour on board tends to have greater consequences'* (Int.17).

(Int.3) a policy maker said, *'A lot of the issues that are arising, arise because simply they [women] are such a minority on a number of vessels.'* A ship owner, (Int. 21) supported this, saying *'... as you get to much lower concentrations of women in the work place, I think the tendency for the wrong kind of behaviors and attitudes is more likely to persist.'* Int. 2 commented that behaviour can change for the better when there are greater numbers of women on board, *'When there are other women around they can be treated as a normal group who can contribute and people don't bat an eyelid because it is strange on that ship to have a women.'*

There was mixed opinion regarding whether women seafarers felt they needed to alter their appearance or behaviour to fit in on board. Int.2 said, *'If the women is the only person on board the vessel that they are serving on, then I think there is a real perceived pressure on the part of the women, that they feel that they have to fit in and that they have to be one of the blokes.'* However, in contrast Int. 9 (an ex-woman seafarer) said *'... a few of the females that I sailed with they used to actually put darts in their boiler suits to make them more curvy ...'*

Female cadets were asked, ***'Did you ever feel that you had to adapt your appearance or behaviour whilst on board?'*** Three out of the nine female cadets responded Yes to this question. One said, *'Appearance especially ... comments about my gym clothes ( I wore a jumper on the way to the gym so not to draw attention to wearing a vest!!!) & about my civilian clothes.. Practically a different wardrobe!!!'*. However, the majority of female cadets (66%) said there was no need to adapt their appearance or behaviour on board.

The male cadets were asked after their sea time, **‘Did you ever feel that you had to adapt your behaviour whilst working alongside female seafarers?’** five male cadets out of the total number who sailed with a female seafarer said Yes. For example, *‘[I had to] Be more respectful/ watch [my] language’* And, *‘I had to check all the work we were sent to do together as she wouldn’t do it properly 95% of the time’*.

### **5.2.2 Lack of senior role models**

The lack of senior role models for women at sea was identified, arising from being in the minority on board. This problem was highlighted by a female seafarer and member of the ‘Gender’ Panel discussion at the GEM Conference who commented, *‘ ... where I find being a minority a difficulty is a lack of senior role models who are women. .... It is difficult to be what you can’t see’*.

### **5.2.3 Trying harder**

Before their sea time the male cadets were asked, **‘Do you think female seafarers have to try harder than a male seafarer doing the equivalent job?’** 31 male cadets were less inclined to think that women seafarers would be treated differently on board or would have to try harder to do the same job. For example, *‘I wouldn’t expect a women to feel like she has to work harder than her equivalent male co-worker. If she can do the job correctly than there’s no issue’*

Following their sea time female cadets were asked, **‘Did you feel that your work duties were assigned based on your gender?’** only 1 said yes and another answered *‘occasionally’*.

This may suggest a better acceptance of women seafarers amongst the younger generation and from the UK. However, 6 male cadets thought that women seafarers would have to try harder to do the same jobs as men. *‘Because shipping /marine industry are [perceived] as male dominated. I would imagine that many people doubt them so they have to work harder’*

Interestingly 6 of the female cadets answered yes to this question. The responses indicated a certain resignation to the male dominance of the industry and having to try harder to make an impact within it. For example a female cadet said, *‘aside from being less physically strong, some men still view seafaring as a male world.’* And, *‘Of course, I will have to try harder. This is a rare career for a woman, and it’s hard for me to seek advice from a women who’s a seafarer as I don’t know any woman who is. I’ll just have to try my best and be more focus on what my goal in my life is - to be a female captain.’*

Following their sea time only 2 male cadets (out of the 22 that sailed with women) said Yes to this question and 32 male cadets said that the women seafarers did not have to try harder. Encouragingly, the number had also decreased for women with only 3 women saying they had to work harder than men to do the same job.

### **5.2.4 Female company**

A member of the ‘Gender Issues’ panel discussion at the GEM Conference said that *‘At the end of a hard day, sometimes you just want to let off steam and talk to another women, so as a minority straight away that is an issue’*. Int. 2 rationalised the social normality of having a more balanced number of women in the work place, *‘When you are in an environment, let’s say on a cruise ship where*

*there are other women with you, where a group of women and men can go out together, somehow social norms of a normal population kick in.'*

Int. 17 recognised the importance of support groups for women saying, *'The community of female seafarers is very small and they don't tend to have many forums to connect to one and other. I imagine that is one of the biggest reasons for prejudice and why women probably just deal with it in silence and don't tackle the issues head on.'*

### **5.3 Ratio of men to women**

Interviewees and cadets were asked their opinion about what they felt the ideal ratio of men to women would be on board. Very mixed responses were provided, relating to fairness, management and whether ratios should be discussed at all. For example, Int.1 (a policy maker) referred to, *'The UN figures say that everything should be 50:50'* whilst acknowledging *'... I think 50:50 is unrealistic in the merchant shipping world.... I think the best you would end up is an 80:20. If we could get 20% of seafarers being women, I think we would be doing pretty well.'* However Int.21 (a shipping company manager) felt *'Probably 50-50, because that would be a better representation of the genders in the world.'* Int. 2 (policy maker) felt discussing ratios would be getting into the realms of *'social engineering'* saying, *'I would more prefer if we created an environment of tolerance which actually changes the culture set. We should respect anybody for who they are and what they stand for and what they are about.'*

Int. 22 from a shipping company felt that, *'it is quite difficult to generalise in terms of ratio ... [but] if you are going to have a ratio, I would like 100% in either direction. But I would rather you didn't mix them [men and women], not if I have to manage them, and particularly not on board'*. He goes on to say *'.... my preference would be to sail with an all-male crew, because it is easier to manage. It brings in all sorts of issues when you add in women seafarers into the mix. Particularly if you are away long haul and away on shore leave and so on for long periods of time. Sexual tension increases as time goes on and that then leads to the potential for issues to come to the surface.'*

The cadet survey asked a similar question, **'Ideally, what percentage of males to females do you think should make up the number of personnel on-board a ship?'** Again, a range of divided responses were provided.

Nine cadets answering this question felt that ratio was unimportant and the best person for the job is what mattered most. *'Whoever is best qualified and experienced, gender should not play any part in choosing of crew. There should not be any set percentage otherwise you will inevitably start positively discriminating against better qualified people'*. However 8 cadets felt that a 50:50 split would produce the best equality and 3 that felt a 30/70 split in favour of men would be best.

### **5.4 Physical jobs more suited to men?**

The question **'Do you think that some duties on-board are perceived to be more suited to men due to their physical nature?'** was asked to cadets before their sea time.

46 cadets answered this question and 33 (70%) of this total (28 men and 5 women) thought this was the case. One said, *'men are capable of completing majority of tasks due to them being stronger than women so it makes sense for them to complete these duties.'*

In contrast 12 men and 2 women cadets answered no to this question. One cadet said, *'Gender shouldn't matter, if you are qualified then you should be able to do all the same jobs, if you can't then your in the wrong job.'* And, *'Heavy lifting. Some women can lift more than I, but some can't. Crew should play to their individual strengths.'*

Female cadets were asked, **'Do you have any concerns that you may not be able to meet all the physical work requirements whilst on board?'**

Only two females (25%) held concerns that they might not be able to meet all the physical work requirements expected of them on board. These included the comments, *'Only because I'm not fit'* and *'Right now I couldn't secure cargo etc. but over time your abilities & strengths change.'*

Following their sea time female cadets were asked, **'At any time did you have to ask for help from a fellow male colleague in order to complete a duty?'** 6 (67%) answered Yes to this question which is an increase on their initial expectations about this. Their responses mainly related to heavy lifting where they needed assistance.

Following their sea time the male cadets were asked, **'Did you ever feel that you had to offer assistance to female seafarers in order to help her complete her work duties?'** 7 male cadets said Yes, but the majority said no.

### **5.5 Age, rank and experience**

The research findings demonstrate that age and length of experience can play a part in an individual's treatment on board. Interviewees suggest that in a rank orientated seafaring career the longer you have served and the older you are can have a positive effect on how you are treated on board. However, a participant in the discussion about gender issues at the GEM Conference said, *'... I find the age and experience doesn't [relate to] the rank. I might be a very lowly ranking but I am not a 20 year old person, so I don't tend to get any grief on board ships ...'* Additionally, Int. 7 said, *'I think there are issues, particularly if you are younger. You are going to have issues with how people perceive your authority'*. This comment was supported by Int. 4. *'...the majority we do have [cadets] are 18 – 20 year olds so the perception of them isn't what it should be.'*

Another panel member talked about the poor treatment of cadets in relation to age and rank saying, *'What I find offensive is actually the treatment of cadets. .... I think you should judge people on merit regardless of where people are in their training status, this is nothing to do with gende[r]; this is just the culture .... I don't like to be treated as an idiot just because I am starting out somewhere. Again this is the age and rank thing'*.

#### **5.5.1 Abuse associated with lower ranks**

Some specific cases of abuse attributed to lower ranks were mentioned by interviewees in the UK. One ex-women seafarer (Int. 11) said she had *'been privy to this [abuse] happening particularly within in the lower ranks'*. Additionally, Int. 17 said, *'It was the Captain on board [.....]. he is the top ranking officer on board, if there are any complaints it goes to him, [.....] so how are you meant to fairly treat a case where the person you are complaining about is harassing you?'* This is further supported by Int.



22, *'It becomes different by rank. If the only female seafarer was a Captain, this wouldn't be a problem. If the only female seafarer is a first ship cadet then there is a problem. It is very structured on board. So the more senior you are, in theory the less problems you have on a gender base, because nobody is going to try it on with the captain. But a fairly significant percentage would try it on with a first ship cadet.'*

## **5.6 On board environment for women**

Interviewees commented on the working environment for women on board. Int. 21 said *'your concerns and fears as a manager are perhaps too often realised because the ship is an isolated workplace and it's not easy to supervise ... It does make it a much harder work environment for women to operate in.'* Int.1 said, *'Having worked on ships and turned out at 2 'o clock at night to do inspections, it's not safe and it's not comfortable and it's quite threatening and it's important to make ship owners try and find a secure environment for these girls to go to sea.'* Int. 21 agreed saying, *'I don't think you should underestimate about how hard it is for women to be at sea, because it is a very sort of isolated and predominantly male environment; however you look at it, the percentages of women are low.'*

### **5.6.1 Isolation**

Isolation was raised as an issue in the working environment on board a ship. There is a sense that over time a seafarer's life has become less sociable for various reasons. Ex-woman seafarer, Int. 9 said a seafarer's life used to be, *'... very very social; the whole way of living on the ship was social, not like today.'* She continued, *'People [now] they are in their cabin and they go in the cabin when they finish work and they put on a DVD, their music, they don't mix anymore. So you know the isolation to me has got worse.'* A panellist from the GEM Conference also spoke about current conditions and isolation on board saying, *'I think all seafarers are vulnerable to isolation, the very unique conditions on board ships but being a women on board, without necessarily having that support network there makes them more vulnerable to that issue.'*

In the survey before their sea time cadets were asked, ***'Do you think female seafarers may feel isolated on-board because of their gender?'*** 54% answered Yes to this question (2 females and 24 males) and 7 said no. One male cadet suggested isolation for women at sea was possible, *'because of the ratio of male to female and the sheer fact that being a seafarer is a lonely job sometimes ..'*

Following their sea time the number of females who said they had felt isolated had risen slightly to 3. One female cadet said she *'felt that I couldn't join in with the crew for fear of them being inappropriate'*. However, encouragingly the majority of UK cadets from WMA did not experience isolation during their first sea time.

## **5.7 Sexual harassment and bullying**

There is a certain vagueness surrounding the definition of bullying which many women at sea will face, particularly where certain behaviours are not considered illegal, but none the less can be demoralising and sexist. Int. 3 states, *'Serious assault, for example is illegal and therefore a much clearer line of*

*action is already established in how to deal with it. However, less easy to sort out is cases of sexual innuendo, or irritating behavioural patterns that may stray into the boundaries of bullying, but only just ..’.*

This grey area may for some fall into the realms of humour, but for others may cause distress and harm. It can potentially lead to problematic value judgements being made if reported. The way certain behaviour on board is interpreted contributes to this grey area and depends on one’s individual and cultural moral compass. This can vary in relation to an individual’s own line of tolerance and when it is felt this has been crossed. Both these points can vary significantly within a multicultural crew environment. A panellist at the GEM Conference agreed stating, *‘There is a bit of sexism and casual harassment that happens ... this sort of behaviour should not happen and needs to be reported and dealt with shore side because that culture isn’t going to change unless you hold people accountable for it. Also physical relationships between men and women on board is a thing that does happen ... and it can damage the females career not greatly so for the men’.*

### **5.7.1 Expectations of harassment**

Some of the interviewees had a certain expectation that women seafarers would at some time in their career experience harassment. *‘... if you have a female Captain, she has had to go through cadet level up to Captain and she almost certainly at some point through her career would have had sexual harassment issues to deal with; however, she has dealt with them. I think it is inconceivable that she wouldn’t have at some point.’* (Int. 22). A certain amount of this expectation has been attributed to human nature as this quote reflects. *‘..... If you put men and women into a confined environment, with limited opportunity to mix with the opposite sex on a regular basis – you are going to get what you are going to get ...’* (Int. 22). Int. 21 (Shipping company manager) agreed saying, *‘I would suspect if you asked any female cadet who’ve had some period at sea or close to their qualifying sea time, have they suffered some form of abuse harassment or bullying during their time at sea? The answer would be yes.’*

The question then arises as to how this behaviour should be managed, particularly when different cultural mixes of crew are on board with different viewpoints and social boundaries.

Female cadets were asked, **‘Whilst on-board, did you ever encounter or witness any form of harassment made to yourself or another female cadet by a male colleague?’** 5 female cadets out of 9, said they had. Examples were given, *‘... on my second ship the 2nd Engineer would give a little too much attention, came to my cabin too much’.* And, *‘Verbally lots of crass comments, innuendos, especially when crew had been drinking.’* Only 4 male cadets said Yes to the same question and their responses all related to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and lack of respect. Examples include, *‘Young Phillipino sailors making prank phonecalls to girls cabins + knocking on doors late at night.’* And *‘Groping + Inappropriate behaviour at crew social events.’* And, *‘Chief cook forced himself on her’.* Although the cases recorded by male cadets were not the norm, they are still too many to ignore. More disturbing were the 5 female cadets who mentioned incidences of harassment. This was in contrast to their expectations before they went away to sea, where only three women seafarers thought the key issues they faced on board were not being taken seriously and men not being used to working with women at sea.

## **5.8 Reporting incidences**

Some shipping companies encourage a 'reporting' culture on board, designed to make it an easier environment for employees to report any grievances they might have. However, it is evident that even with a very supportive reporting culture in place not all cadets and crew will make use of it, even when serious issues arise. Examples from interviewees identify some of the following issues concerning this. *'Being on board, .... up to 3 – 6 months at a time ... your life can be made a misery if you decide to log a complaint about somebody. The woman will suppress her feelings and she would rather not complain, then she knows she has got an easy life and she can get on with her job and she doesn't have to leave.'* (Int. 17). Int.22 said that when considering whether to report an incident a women may feel that she will, *'perhaps not be listened to and maybe action wouldn't be taken and she would still have to work with him afterwards and then the situation would be worse. Potentially she felt some physical loss of safety; it might get worse than it already was. And then the company might think of her as the trouble maker for causing it. Whether this is right or wrong, this is about perception – it's very hard.'*

Cadets were asked before their sea time, **'If you had a problem on-board relating to your co-workers, would you feel able to report this?'**

8 females and 21 males answered this question. Encouragingly 97% answered that they would feel able to report issues on board.

Following their sea time, they were asked **'Did you have to report an incident whilst on board?'** 4 males and 2 females answered yes. When asked if these incidences were then adequately dealt with, 2 males and 1 female said yes. Of those saying no, one said, *'No, was told I was [lying] so rang my company who sorted it.'*

Int. 22 said offered a personal story about his daughter who suffered harassment at sea which demonstrated how difficult some people feel it is to report incidences. *'I think the company [my daughter] was working for did quite a lot. The fact was that she then was not prepared to go through the process was a different question. They certainly had the procedures in place to deal with these things.'* This is an important point in that regardless of whether the shipping company has a good reporting culture in place; it is still up to individuals to make the report. This is not something that everyone would feel comfortable doing, particularly as they have to continue to work in that environment until they reach port.

## **5.9 Management of incidences on board**

When considering the management of incidences at sea, Int. 21 said, *'... Good ship-owners and ship managers will have processes in place. .... It's about having more visibility, more transparency and more recognition that these things should not be buried away when they do happen. They should be raised as issues and discussed and brought forward, so that action can be taken firstly to stop any further progression of whatever is taking place at the time, but also to make people realise that this won't be tolerated.'*

Int. 1, 11 and 21 referred to a culture where incidences at sea should stay at sea. For example, *'... monitoring and reporting of issues are critical; not bearing bad news is a trait which exists. If anything happens on board – it can be 'what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas,' kind of thing. If you don't tell the superintendent then it would be ok, but that's not the case and not acceptable.'* (Int.21)

The importance of good management on board was highlighted by the panel discussion on gender at the GEM Conference. It was said, *'There is an awful lot of discrimination on board, sexism every day. If you don't respect your leader your base line is gone completely. I think that comes down to company ownership and leadership as well. .... As a cadet you can report, but if the person at the top is not strong enough to deal with it and isn't supporting those issues, then a lot of it will be silent and will [not be dealt with]'*.

Certainly there is a feeling that the shipping companies that recruit seafarers through agencies should do more to improve the on-board environment to help women feel safer working at sea. One ship owner was given advice himself when deciding who to work for, *'.... pick the biggest company because they will look after you'*. (Int. 22). The same interviewee talks about his own shipping company and their policy on promoting from within the company to ensure that their culture is part of the working ethos. *'.... we will always promote from within ....'* This is seen as a way of instilling their policies and procedures on board and exerting more control over that process.

### **5.10 Training for senior officers**

The onus to set a standard of non-tolerance towards harassment and bullying at sea should ideally be shared between the shipping company and the top management on board. Ultimately the duty of care is vested in the ship's top management who has to deal with issues that are reported. A modern ship where multi-cultural crews are the norm and women can sometimes be working on board has very different issues to contend with than even perhaps a decade ago. In order to adequately address these issues, senior officers must have the correct skills, particularly the so called 'soft skills' where pastoral care is concerned. Int. 17 said, *'We [have many] guys who are very excellent seafarers or engineers, they are technically capable, but when it comes to every day line management of women they go to pieces. You know when it starts to be the pastoral and the emotional and that kind of thing .....*' Int. 1 concurs, *'... these men [senior officers] are just not trained to deal with these situations.'* Interestingly this was followed by, *'[but] I do think they [the captains] are much better trained on the cruise ships to deal with female cadets. And it is a nicer environment for the girls.'*

These findings were also borne out by the GEM Conference panel discussion and are discussed in more detail in the training section (Section 6.0).

### **5.11 Enforcement of regulations**

During the interviews, the policy makers were asked about the regulations surrounding gender issues at sea and the MLC. The IMOs' guidelines for Masters and senior officers and the pastoral care of victims were mentioned. The consensus was that current legislation generally does go far enough, however the enforcement of the regulations can be questionable. Int. 1, said *'I think probably the legislation is robust enough. It is how it is implemented. When you are on a ship on the high seas, it is very easy for those laws to be ignored. Who enforces them?'*

Int. 2, said in relation to whether the MLC goes far enough *'.... it's not going to be an overnight thing. But it sets a tone which we have never had in the industry before. ... The building blocks have been put in place and we now need to see how robust those foundations are.'* Int. 21, in answer to the same question said, *'Probably not, at the end of the day it's how things are implemented.'* Int. 1 agreed with the idea about how legislation is enforced saying, *'Who actually enforces that legislation that protects*

*those girls? It is a bit of the old adage of ‘what goes on behind closed doors’. They are completely isolated. If the Captain is not minded – he’s their guardian, but sometimes they are the worst offenders.’ One of the panellists at the GEM Conference also agreed saying, ‘When they [women] go on board to get their sea time, they are very isolated and they have found ... that legislation is irrelevant once they were out at sea because there was just one woman on board the vessel.’*

### **5.12 Lack of respect**

Lack of respect from the crew was considered a big issue for women seafarers of a senior rank. Int. 17 said, *‘If you want to succeed or become a Captain or aspire to become a Chief Engineer or work your way up the ranks you need to gain the respect of your peers and the people beneath you on board. So lots of female seafarers struggle with promotion from a respect perspective.’*

Int. 9, an ex-woman seafarer recounts, *‘.... he was actually Iranian. So that was a double issue, that was against me, .... in the fact that first of all [I] was a female, ... and second, in their way of thinking females were not esteemed and he didn’t want to do a job and I was the senior cadet and I asked him to do something ...’* In relation to promotion Int. 17 said, *‘...lots of female seafarers struggle with promotion from a respect perspective. They are able to breeze through the exams the breeze through collecting the sea-time [but]I have had countless reports where females struggle – this isn’t just gender, it is nationality specific as well.’*

### **5.13 Raising a family**

Some women seafarers actively make the decision not to have children. This was noticed by a recruiter, Int. 17 who said, *‘It is interesting how a fair proportion of female seafarers that I have in my network in their 40s and 50’s don’t have children. .... So on that one, we do see female seafarers staying at sea for the same amount of time as men ...’* She goes on to say, *‘or maybe one or two who have had children but then they haven’t gone back to sea.’* Int. 11, an ex-woman seafarer supports this last statement by saying, *‘When I met [x] I knew that I did not want to stay at sea and be married because I just knew that that wouldn’t work out..... bearing in mind that you are at sea for anything up to four months at a time, unless that person was with you at sea it’s very difficult to maintain a relationship ...’*

Finally Int. 1 thought that, *‘.... it’s this attitude of ‘why am I going to invest in a female because all they are going to have babies. Commercially I understand it, but it is a women’s god given right to go and have a child if she wants it, it doesn’t mean to say that she can’t have a career as well.’*

### **5.14 Traditional values, stereotypes and superstitions**

Shipping is a well-established and heavily male dominated industry which is known for its traditional values and sometimes associated with the ‘old boys network’ which can exclude women or objectify them. Examples highlighted by the interviewees included naked ladies being body painted as an attraction at NOR shipping in 2015 (Seanews, 2015), and reference to some maritime business being

conducted in strip clubs as well as verbal innuendos being made to female staff, and other forms of sexual harassment.

The UK cadets were asked in the survey before their sea time, **‘There is a traditional viewpoint that women should only take part in certain roles on-board ships. These include cook, housekeeping, nurse etc. Do you believe this is an acceptable viewpoint in today’s society?’**

This was not the majority point of view held by WMA cadets, with only one male cadet answering Yes to this question. The following examples sum up the general opinion: *‘In any position the person occupying it should be there purely because of their ability and experience’*. And *‘Women can do men’s jobs in today’s world no matter how hard it is.’*

### **5.15 Women in the cruise sector**

The cadet survey asked male and female cadets, **‘Why do you think the majority of female seafarers work in the cruise and passenger ferry sectors?’**

42 cadets answered this question and primarily spoke about greater numbers of women on board and made reference to the more comfortable and safer working conditions on board cruise ships. For example, *‘more women seafarers, home comforts, shorter trips.’* The cruise and passenger sector of the industry were associated with better conditions for women and more appropriate career choice for female seafarers where it was easier for them to be employed. This industry sector was also associated with safety. For example, *‘more people around to talk to in case of any issues so perhaps provides additional security ...’* and *‘safety in numbers ..’*. Interestingly one cadet said, *‘It’s a more modern society with less prejudices within the company itself. The hardened seafarers tend to work within the other sectors & many have antiquated or different attitudes.’*

### **5.16 Cadets and female seafarers**

Before their sea time experience the cadets were asked to, **‘Detail any positive experiences involving female seafarers on-board that you have experienced or heard about.’** Examples of positive experiences made by male cadets included, *‘Outgoing female cadets that are driven to overcome the sexism on board tankers. Very professional in fact more professional in some respects to other male seafarers.’* And, *‘More relaxed working environment when women are in command.’* And *‘Lightened ships morale’* There were 8 (out of 9) positive female responses, most concurring that women on board were *‘Treated the same as everyone else’*. There was an overriding sense that women were *‘treated equally as they were as hard as the crew with a good work ethic their gender is irrelevant’*

The cadets were also asked to **‘Detail any negative experiences involving female seafarers on-board that you have experienced.’** These responses generally mentioned incidences of a sexual nature or of verbal abuse, for example, *‘I have heard that some female cadets had to be switched on to different ships after crew members made unwelcome advances’* and *‘They might feel being isolated or even bullied’* and *‘Sexually assaulted, crews giving them a hard time; pushing them around’*

Following their sea time the negative experiences involving women seafarers had changed a little. There were only 2 negative responses from men including, *‘The female cadet I sailed with refused*

*point blank to get her hands dirty and refused to take part with some things as she was 'female' And, 'complained a lot, didn't do any overtime, moaned about why she hadn't been promoted, and above all was incompetent'*

There were two responses from female cadets (out of 9) following their sea time. One implied problems of a sexual nature and the other about being spoken down to, *'4th Officer [was] repeatedly spoken down to & given menial tasks by Staff cap/safety of both [of whom were] British - encountered the same myself, reported it to TM'*. This is a marked difference to the before survey for female cadets where 8 out of 9 mentioned only positive experiences.

### **5.17 Socialising with women seafarers**

The cadets were asked **'Do you feel confident socialising with female seafarers whilst on board?'**

39 (97%) males answered Yes to this question and all of the female cadets felt that they were confident enough to socialise with male seafarers whilst on board. When the male cadets were asked if they would feel comfortable sailing with women seafarers in the future, this number had dropped slightly to 79%.

The female cadets were asked, **'If you go on-board another ship in the future, would you feel comfortable potentially being the only women on-board? (Female only question).'** 7 females said Yes and the remaining two said that they were unsure.

### **5.18 Any advice you would give to future female seafarers?**

An interviewee from a shipping company (22) felt that it was very important to give advice to young female seafarers and that in fact it would be irresponsible not to provide advice about the types of situations they may find themselves in when they first go to sea. Advice from interviewees among other things, focused on being aware of situations that may arise on board, standing up for one's self and being aware of how to behave appropriately. For example (Int. 21), *'..it's about being aware, understanding what the risks are, not stepping back from that, but having a positive attitude and ensuring that your behaviours and behaviours of others are appropriate.'* And, Int. 11 *'It isn't just about how to deal with a situation; it is about how NOT to get into a situation in the first place..'* Int.19 said, *'I would say go in very clearly with your eyes open'*. Int.17 highlighted the importance of standing up for yourself as a female seafarer, *'speak up'.. .... As females we are increasingly protected and have the same rights as men. So we just need to speak up and highlight these issues.'* *'... unless we have people who are willing to stand up and speak about it we are not going to move forward.'* Int. 14 emphasised the importance of being you, *'... be yourself, don't try to be one of the lads.'* And this was echoed by Int.11 who said, *'Go for it, it can be the best years of your life. Work hard, play hard and stand up for who you are.'*

The responses indicate that giving advice to future women seafarers is important. There is much emphasis on standing up for yourself and being yourself and on the importance of not accepting inappropriate behaviour.

### **5.19 Summary**

The research on potential gender issues has highlighted many problems associated with women seafarers being the minority. This can present as vulnerability that shipping owners and managers need to be aware of and importantly, equipped to deal with. The onus is also the senior officers on board, in particular the Captain to promote a no-tolerance culture towards harassment and bullying and to be adequately prepared to act on any gender related incidences that are reported. This may require repeatable training and a willingness to discuss and share best practice in this area.

## **6.0 TRAINING AND MENTORING**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The need for good education, training and mentoring was raised many times during the research and by the GEM Conference panel. Emphasis was placed on ensuring high training standards and incorporating welfare and diversity issues to help prepare cadets for their sea time and to help senior management deal with gender related issues on board. Int. 3 noted how training has changed for cadets over the last 30 years, *'.. when I started 32 years ago at ..., most training institutes did not allow girls to study at their training institutes. That's changed dramatically across the world. So now at least they can get the training. The next step is to get them the on board training [sea time], that's the big problem and for men as well, but even more for women.'* The following section discusses training and mentoring in light of gender issues and the modern seafarers' life.

### **6.2 Where is training most required within the industry?**

During the panel discussion about training and mentoring at the GEM Conference the question of where training is most required was raised. One panellist thought it should start *'As early as possible, at children's age, that we need education for the people ...children are more adaptive to new ideas.* The panellist mentioned that she thought more girls should be encouraged into engineering and STEM subjects to help increase the number of women studying maritime subjects, not only as seafarers but also in other maritime sectors. Another panellist supported this and went further to say, *'At the beginning, starting life as a seafarer, talking about education from the classroom. Then finding their way on-board and then even after, to maintain what they have learnt.* Developing this topic the panellist talked about the concept of *'Informal or formal mentoring'* and also emphasised the importance of *'Training and re-training [as] particularly important to women seafarer's*

### **6.3 Multicultural crew training**

Cadets were asked before their sea time if they received, **'Advice or training on issues that may be experienced on-board in relation to multicultural crews?'**

66%, (41) cadets answered this question and 27 said that they had not received any advice or training in relation to the issues that may arise as the result of working with multi-national crews. 5 said this question was not applicable to them as they would not be sailing with multi-national crews during



their first sea time. 14 cadets (34%) said that they had been given advice or training in relation to working in a multi-cultural environment, much of which was associated with the importance of clear communication, tolerance and respect for culturally different ways of working. Some responses included examples of the advice and training such as *'A short video on multicultural differences before coming to college.'* And *'just to respect their culture and If I have a problem with what they do/ say just speak to them calmly about it.'*

#### **6.4 Concerns about going on first sea time training**

Nine cadets said they had concerns about going on their first sea time training. Seven were men and two were women. Only two concerns were raised by more than one cadet; these included questioning whether their training had provided them with enough knowledge to adequately equip them for their sea time and the other was concerns over the food on board. Other concerns mentioned in isolation included being the only female on board, being away from home for a long period of time, working with different nationalities and the work ethic, the condition of the vessel, fatigue, solitude and not having a social life.

#### **6.5 Training and the role of shipping companies**

The GEM Conference panel discussion on 'Training and mentoring' raised the question of the role of the shipping company with regard to training. One panel member said that it was, *'Down to how companies manage their people. Without good people policies and practices in place, people aren't going to be prepared in the right way for the role.'* Some of the points raised in relation to responsibility included the management of people's introduction to a career at sea and the on board training. The support that individuals should receive on board was also mentioned, and the placement of cadets on their sea time and whether they should join ships in twos or with someone who shares the same language. The need for cadets and new seafarers to have someone on board with whom they could identify and report to was also discussed. One panellist felt that this was, *'all down to the shipping company's role to prepare people and to manage their people in the right way.'* It was felt that if new seafarers were not prepared enough, negative consequences would occur and, *'that people won't want to return to sea after their first sea voyage.'*

Another panellist emphasised the importance of realistically preparing cadets for their first sea time saying, *'a realistic job preview pays you huge dividends in terms of securing the employment of individuals. If they do not have a realistic understanding of the work they entering into, then the shock value of when they actually enter into it is going to be significant and may actually cause them to abandon that career.'*

##### **6.5.1 Sea time**

One of the GEM panel members pointed out that there were many cadets worldwide that were not able to get sea time and this is expanded upon in the country reports for China and Nigeria. However UK cadets, male and female from the Warsash Maritime Academy did not find difficulties securing their sea time. The panellist felt that, *'They [the shipping companies] should give them [the cadets] the opportunity for training. Of-course for the female cadets, it is even more difficult to be on board a ship ... The reason why they are not taking the female cadets on board is because mainly they don't have the experience, they don't know from the past, so they are afraid of taking those females cadets...'*

#### **6.6 The role of support networks**

The role of women's support groups and networks was discussed at the GEM Conference. They were considered very important given the low numbers of women in the industry and to provide support for women in finding their own way to develop their careers. One panel member said, *'So the role of support groups is about ... enabling [women] to learn from people who have negotiated their way through their career or the company to find a way of being successful but maintaining their own integrity.'*

### **6.7 Mentoring**

The beneficial role of mentoring for young seafarers, both men and women starting their careers was also widely discussed at the GEM Conference and the interviewees. One panel member asked, *'But why are organisations not realising this huge potential where we could do something?'* Others agreed and noted that mentoring is not something that has to be provided by the shipping company, it could also come from someone else with the right skill set. *'I think we should look at this more broadly, not just has your company got this? have you got access to somebody who has got that skill set? Or a skill set that you actually need and you want to know how you can actually get that so you can move forward because there are those people out there.'* One panellist mentioned how, *'mentoring is a great anti-hierarchical of the shipping company and at the ship level is very important for the retention of women seafarers and plays a great role in narrowing social and cultural differences on board.'* It was noted by Int. 3 that mentorship programmes do not have to cost anything but could make all the difference in providing a female seafarer with somebody to bring their problems too and somebody who would have the experience to guide them with decision making and support. New cadets have the potential to feel very vulnerable. Having a mentor could mean, *'[if] you are not sure about your judgement, ... If you [have] ... somebody who is on the ship who knows the clarity of the lines of action to be taken I think that would be good.'*(Int. 3). Int. 22 also noted the importance of a mentor saying, *'I think it is important for young female seafarers to have .... Advice from a senior female seafarer who has actually gone through all of this.'*

Another panel member mentioned a role called the 'Sea Daddy'. He explained, *'New joiners to the ship get allocated a Sea Daddy and that person helps them settle in and know the routine, get to know different bits of equipment, how the processes work .... Then that joiner goes onto a Sea Daddy list and in a number of months time they in turn will be doing that for another new joiner.'* Potentially the Sea Daddies form of mentoring could be used for early on board training and potentially in the role of an official mentor.

Finally, Int.19 raised the idea of crew stability and the benefits it can provide for the smooth running of the ship and in terms of mentoring. *'So I think you'll probably get a different answer if you are dealing with crew members who are permanently employed by their company. I think they are much likely to be engaged to care about things in so much as mentoring and training log books and so on for their junior colleagues if they are permanently employed rather than if they're not. Especially in the top management.'*

### **6.8 Training for senior officers**

As discussed in the 'Potential gender issues' (Section 5.0) of this report, training for senior officers has been raised as a way to help the management of gender issues on board, particularly where adapting to women working at sea can sometimes be problematic.

Int. 7 raises the importance of this saying, *'You have to remember that everybody is important. ... It comes down to leadership. You will only be as good as people on the bottom ... They have got to feel that they are as important to you or the team to make sure you get the maximum out of them. .. At the same time, you can show people the tools, but you can't make people lead'*.

The GEM Conference panel discussion on 'Training and Mentoring' noted that there are some shipping company policies designed to train senior officers mentioning that this may include, *'Not only gender, but diversity and multi-cultural issues ... preparing their workers to work in a multi-cultural environment .... This kind of training has to be repeated from time to time to remind them [the seafarers] that these are the policies of the company and this is the code of conduct that this company is asking you to follow and if you misbehave this is the consequences, it has to be clear.'* This again reinforces the onus on shipping companies and senior officers to make a safer working environment for all on board, but especially for women in the minority.

### **6.9 Summary**

The data findings demonstrate that training and mentoring are highly regarded as a potential solution in addressing not only the operational needs of the crew (both men and women) but also the pastoral duty of care which should be provided by more senior staff on board. The opportunities and value placed on providing experienced mentors for cadets and new crew were also highly promoted. In line with these views, it is recognised that a behavioural change is needed on board and that duty of care should be the predominant ship culture enabling young crew and particularly those in minority groups, to work in a safe and supportive environment.

## 7.0 UK CONCLUSIONS

The GEM results for the UK emphasised the need to highlight maritime careers to women, to address specific training issues in relation to gender and multicultural crews and to take a close look at the recruitment process that is progressively being driven by the needs of shipping companies to fulfil diversification and inclusion policies.

Although lack of shipping awareness is a global issue it is particularly relevant to the UK where the numbers of officers recruited and certain skills sets such as engineering, are in decline. Increasing the awareness of careers within the industry at an early age was an idea promoted by some of the interviewees.

There is evidence to suggest that the numbers of women entering into the shore side of the shipping industry is gradually increasing and may continue to do so in the future. However, there is less predicted growth for women going into seafaring careers, and several recruiters have suggested that the 2% global female seafarer total will remain stagnant for at least the next 10 years or so unless there are radical changes within the industry starting at grass roots with awareness raising of shipping aimed at school children.

In comparison with their Chinese and Nigerian counterparts, female UK cadets were less inclined to worry about adapting their behaviour and appearance on board and overwhelmingly expected fair treatment, even though this was not always borne out during their sea time. UK cadets were generally well supported by their shipping company sponsors and tended to be more likely to get sea training. However, serious gender issues were still highlighted by the research, with 5 out of the 9 WMA cadets mentioning some kind of harassment during their first sea time. However, it was evident that the younger generation of officer cadets in the UK, both male and female appeared to have an accepting and tolerant nature towards women at sea and multi-nationalities, which is encouraging for the industry.

Positive assistance within the recruiting process was highlighted by the UK interviews and increased pay being offered to attract women into the industry was noted. However, a recruiter interviewee felt that we would not see the level of female seafarers rising in the next decade but may possibly see some regional splits of this going forward, with numbers potentially rising from certain regions.

### **3.0 GEM PROJECT CONCLUSIONS (all 3 research countries)**

The GEM research has generated a keen interest from all over the world, and has demonstrated an appetite to bring about cultural change within the industry to empower, attract and to retain more women in maritime careers. The research has identified gaps in current knowledge and has gone some way to addressing these, improving understanding and raising awareness of the broader issues surrounding multicultural crews, so that women seafarers can be supported in addressing those issues and in playing a fuller role on board ships and within the wider maritime industry. Some very specific differences were identified between nationalities; differences which primarily originate from cultural and traditional values, economic status and political ideologies. These unique differences have been highlighted and discussed in the individual country reports. Nigeria and China culturally hold more traditional views about women being on board and women in Nigeria can find it especially difficult to get sea time. In China obtaining sea time for women cadets is currently not possible due to the attitudes of the shipping companies there, although significant political change is currently happening. The UK presents fewer issues for cadet training, and once on the programme cadets tend to get sea time training, whether they are male or female.

The findings also show that despite greater awareness, increased discussion and new initiatives on gender issues within the maritime community, there is still a long way to go in order to achieve a better gender balance and equality among minorities at sea.

#### ***3.1 Shipping awareness***

Attracting more women into the industry is seen as the initial step in a long chain of cultural and behavioural changes required in order to create gender equality within the shipping industry. Raising awareness about merchant maritime business, particularly to young people at school age, was considered a vital first step in encouraging more women (and men) to enter the industry. This was emphasised in all of the countries where research was conducted, and is also noted to be a global issue. Lack of public awareness of the shipping industry needs to be addressed at the country level as well as industry-wide.

#### ***3.2 Women as a minority***

Women make up a very small global minority of the shipping industry, both on the shore side and particularly at sea. Only 2% of the global seafaring workforce is made up of women, with the majority of those working in the passenger sector (cruise and ferries). Shipping companies can be unwilling to take women on, sometimes due to financial reasons such as having to adapt to gender-specific accommodation but sometimes because they are aware of the potential issues associated with mixing women and men on board and their reluctance to take those on.

Being in the minority, the onus is on women seafarers to check their own behaviour and develop awareness of how they come across in the company of men, particularly when working within a multicultural crew environment. Sometime this can lead to increased social isolation on board due to a reluctance to stand out or a desire to avoid unwanted attention.

The research highlighted incidences of abuse and discrimination of women at sea, which may have a link to women's vulnerability from being in the minority. The insidious nature of discrimination and harassment needs to be addressed and simply not tolerated on board. The responsibility to establish

the right on-board environment and one which will make women and other minorities feel safe and valued whoever they are, resting with shipping companies and senior officers.

### ***3.3 Age and rank***

Despite some significant progress being made by some shipping companies and senior officers to address issues of sexual harassment, abuse and bullying, the research findings across all 3 countries have identified these as the key issues that women seafarers will face. These forms of abuse have associations with the ship's hierarchical structure, with abuse tending to occur mainly within the lower ranks and younger age demographic. Although not the key focus of the research, some interviewees pointed out that these problems are not unique to women seafarers, but also to some vulnerable men and ethnic minorities on board.

### ***3.4 Training and mentoring***

Training at all levels was considered vital and the role of mentoring was discussed widely. Some shipping companies and the ship's senior officers want to instil a good, safe working environment on their vessel. Owners and senior officers have a duty of care to create a safe and inclusive culture for all their crew. In particular, the ship's Captain will receive reports about incidences, and needs to be adequately prepared to handle these. In cases relating to gender issues, some Captains may simply have less experience of having women on board. It is therefore important that senior officers, particularly the Captain, are equipped with the correct knowledge and skills to adequately address gender-related issues should they arise. At the same time, it is equally important that any incident on board is reported, and encouragement given for doing so. Immediate and appropriate action is required following the reporting of an incident, as this may be vital to the safety of an individual and will also demonstrate to the crew that the rules will be firmly enforced.

The GEM research has also questioned whether the industry is going far enough to prepare cadets for a seafaring life. Throughout the research, lack of training and mentoring were frequently mentioned as contributing to the issues surrounding gender and multi-cultural crews. However, training and mentoring were also highlighted as important potential solutions in providing support for cadets and young seafarers during their first phases of sea time. Although some shipping companies have mentoring on their vessels, many shipping companies operate without a formal mentoring scheme. Mentoring between new cadets and more experienced officers can be extremely valuable. This role should incorporate the transfer of knowledge and the provision of a 'listening ear' for the new recruits when issues arise at sea, which might be hard for them to deal with as less experienced sailors. In light of the research findings, where younger people with less experience tend to be treated with less respect than older, more experienced and higher ranked individuals, mentoring can offer a particularly good way of overcoming these issues. Knowing there is someone you can talk to and get advice from on board can make all the difference in combating isolation and vulnerability, improving safety (personal and operational) and potentially going some way to improving seafarers' retention rates.

### ***3.5 Multi-cultural Crews***

It was evident from the cadet surveys, particularly the data collected after sea time, that most of the cadets did not think that the multi-cultural crew environment contributed to gender issues. The issues raised tended to relate more to safety than gender discrimination: language barriers were mentioned, including being able to communicate effectively with people of other nationalities; social aspects were

also highlighted, such as potential isolation of minority ethnic groups and certain nationalities forming cliques together and reverting to their own language. It was recognised that certain cultures will have different expectations and tolerances of certain behaviours and this may affect their outlook towards women on board. Cultural hierarchies and traditions (particularly in relation to women) were noted in this regard. Although cadets did highlight the different nationalities that they would prefer to sail with, it was acknowledged that everyone is different and should be treated as individuals. The interviews (which took place with more experienced maritime stakeholders) highlighted further gender-related issues concerned with multi-cultural crews, as well as the need for shipping companies to closely consider the on-board cultural mix in order to achieve the best working environment. Some interviews with shipping managers and recruiters indicated that this was something that does happen, and is vital in achieving optimum working conditions.

### ***3.6 The shipping industry in 10 years' time?***

Some interesting thoughts were shared from the interviews and panel discussions on where the industry might be in ten years' time. These primarily concerned the developments in technologies and a shift in the global supply of seafarers. The industry will have to adapt to meet the challenges and needs of the ever-evolving market place and the people employed within it. The training needs of the workforce will also have to adapt at all levels and to develop new skill sets where they may be required. Discussions highlighted that this will involve much more in the way of inter-disciplinary training to meet new technological advances and keep up with the modern working environment in the maritime industry. The role of the modern seafarer may well require more skills that are traditionally associated with females (sometimes referred to as 'soft skills'). Ensuring the implementation and enforcement of current legislation is also paramount to making the industry a safer place to work.

## **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE GEM PROJECT: INDUSTRY WIDE**

The GEM reports for Nigeria and China have proposed recommendations that are relevant to the unique cultural and political environment of that particular country, although as noted, the UK recommendations are of a more generic nature and could be applied globally. Therefore, the following recommendations are those selected from the research findings that have a global relevance, and could be applied to the shipping community generally and implemented in countries around the world.

### ***Industry awareness***

The research has found that instilling an early awareness of the industry is vital for highlighting these careers as a viable career option for boys and girls, so that they can make the industry-appropriate choices with regards to exam subjects at school. This is especially relevant to girls, who are often less inclined to select STEM subjects (specifically maths and a science) that would help them to take up cadetships.

### ***Training for senior officers***

The research shows that the onus is on the shipping companies and senior officers to establish an environment on board that will help women and other minorities feel safe and valued. Investment in leadership development for senior management should be provided in order to deal with the modern welfare challenges on board. It is recommended then that ships' Captains and other senior officers are provided with, and have on-going access to, training to help them to adequately respond to any gender-related issues that may arise at sea, particularly where they may not often be sailing with women. There needs to be a move away from the culture of 'what happens at sea, stays at sea.'

### ***Mentoring***

The need to better prepare cadets for their sea time was a key issue raised by the research. This included specific training to manage expectations relating to gender, and the multicultural crew environment which the majority of seafarers will work in. The idea of mentoring cadets (male and female) in an official capacity was valued by the interviewees and panel members who discussed this. Mentoring was seen as one way of helping to support cadets and ameliorate some of the potential difficulties they may face during their first voyages at sea. It is therefore recommended that the industry should be encouraged to adopt and facilitate mentoring as part of its on board culture.

### ***HELM and adequately preparing women and men for sea***

There is a need for the industry to co-ordinate efforts and find a balance between adequately preparing women for sea and deterring them with 'bad news' stories. Equipping women with the right knowledge to be able to deal with certain situations if they arise is important. They need to be aware of their rights and who to report to if a situation arises. HELM courses and similar training go some way to raising awareness of gender and multi-cultural crew issues, but it is recommended that they are examined further to ensure that seafarers are adequately prepared for their time at sea and that specific issues of gender and cultural diversity are being addressed. Input from cadets returning from their sea time would make a valuable contribution in this area.

### ***Sea time for women***

It is vital that sea time training is provided for all men and women training to be cadets. Helping them to find jobs following their cadetships also requires shipping companies to re-think their current strategies for employing women. This is of particular concern in China, where currently no women are newly recruited on board vessels, and also in Nigeria, where sea time is often very difficult for women cadets to obtain.

### ***Ethical recruitment***

There should be a requirement for shipping companies and owners to ensure that appropriate recruitment is taking place, particularly concerning the placement of cadets and the mix of nationalities on-board. Although it is important that the ratio of women to men on board is generally increased, the recruitment of women should not become a tick-box exercise to fulfil inclusion policies. Although the research has demonstrated that there are incidences of this happening, it does not appear to be the norm. However it is important for shipping companies to be constantly trying to improve their social inclusion policies whilst maintaining the balance of recruiting for quality and skills,



whether the candidate is male or female. Ethical recruitment and investment in employees is an essential part of enabling the best working environment to be achieved at sea.

### ***Women's networks and support groups***

The community of female seafarers is very small and they don't tend to have many forums with which to connect to one and other. In a heavily male-dominated industry such as maritime, women are likely to remain a minority, even if numbers do significantly increase. Support groups and networks aimed at women in the maritime industry, such as the global operation Women in Shipping and Trade Associations (WISTA), can provide valuable support and female company when in port in another country, or through the events that are regularly run on a national and regional level. IMO's new Programme on the Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector (IWMS) is also doing good work to encourage 'IMO Member States to open the doors of their maritime institutes to enable women to train alongside men and so acquire the high-level of competence that the maritime industry demands.' (IMO, 2016). These initiatives should be further supported and encouraged more by the industry and highlighted to the groups that are most likely to benefit from them.

### ***The Role of the Unions***

The unions that provide support and help to empower their members within the maritime industry, have a unique and important role to play in addressing gender equality and human rights at sea. Some good initiatives mentioned in the introduction are already being facilitated to help women within all sectors of maritime whilst promoting the industry to others. The impetus from these initiatives should be carefully monitored and developed as necessary. Support should be extended to act on changing circumstances within the industry and as and when new evidence emerges from reliable data sources.

### ***Sharing and highlighting best practice***

The research suggests that some shipping companies have conducted much work in trying to provide a safe working environment on board and maintain a culture of tolerance and diversity. However, some companies do not succeed at this. In trying to move the industry forward, dialog between shipping companies on the potential gender and multi-cultural issues they are encountering, and the measures taken to resolve them, could promote a better way of working – particularly with the sharing of best practices. To some extent, irrespective of the vessel type seafarers are sailing on, the welfare issues will often be similar. Therefore a forum to discuss and share best practice amongst shipping companies could help learning in this area and improve working practice. With more transparency in the organisational culture and ethical standpoints, this is an area that needs to be addressed with modern values.

### ***Legislation***

Going forward, the industry needs to look closely at how maritime legislation (particularly the relatively recent Marine Labour Convention (MLC)) is applied in the future, with a view to addressing potential barriers to enforcing this. The industry needs to consider whether current legislation goes far enough and how best to support the implementation of it.

## Areas for further research

- Study of best practice of mentoring programmes which could be applied on board (this may involve learning from other industries).
- Investigation of the training requirements for cadets before sea time, to ensure they are appropriately equipped to work in a multi-cultural crew environment and to deal with gender related issues (both for men and women).
- Ongoing study to monitor the effectiveness of the MLC in relation to gender issues. How can its implementation be most beneficial and does it go far enough to address the key concerns?

## Finally

The research has highlighted an appetite for cultural change within the industry to help make it a safer and non-threatening environment, particularly for women to work in. The challenges of the modern maritime work place demonstrates the need to re-think training at all levels to help instil an inclusive work environment that does not tolerate any forms of abuse. This has highlighted the importance of mentoring for new seafarers, who will be the future ambassadors of the industry. The industry and governments need to convince young people to seek a career in the maritime sector, by providing an environment free from harassment and discrimination. As one of the GEM Conference panel members said, there needs to be *'...recognition that a ship is not just a unit of productivity. A ship is a social system.'*

We hope that the findings from the GEM project will provide further impetus for the cultural change that is required within the industry to bring about gender and ethnic equality, and equip the decision makers with the information to act on this. The maritime industry needs all sectors to work together to meet the challenges it faces. As another panel member from the GEM Conference said: *'Translating that into action requires bold and forward-thinking administrations, and women to break that century old socio-cultural pattern.'*

For further information about the GEM project and to download this report, please visit, [www.solent.ac.uk/GEM](http://www.solent.ac.uk/GEM)

Information about the ITF Seafarers' Trust can be found on this link.

[www.seafarerstrust.org](http://www.seafarerstrust.org)

## REFERENCES

Barnett, J., 1998. Sensitive questions and response effects: an evaluation. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, [online] 13 (1/2), 63-76 [viewed 18 July 2016]. Available from: <http://search.proquest.com/docview/215867065?accountid=13969>

Beaumont, J., 2011 Population. *Social Trends*, 41 (1), 11-29 [online] [viewed 5 June 2016]. Available from: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/st.2011.2>

Central Intelligence Agency, 2016. The World Factbook Europe: United Kingdom [viewed 6 June 2016]. Available from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uk.html>

Chirea-Ungureanu, C., 2011. Getting along at sea-some aspects related to culture matters as perceived by Romanian Cadets during their on board training. In: *Proceedings of IMEC 23 The International Maritime English Conference*, 10 -14 October. Nautica, pp.150-164.

Department for Transport, 2016. Seafarer statistics: 2015 tables [viewed 12 May 2016]. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/495309/seafarer-statistics-2015.zip](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/495309/seafarer-statistics-2015.zip)

Department for Transport, 2015. Seafarer statistics: 2014 tables [viewed 12 May 2016]. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398585/seafarer-statistics-2014.zip](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398585/seafarer-statistics-2014.zip)

Department for Transport, 2014. Seafarer statistics: 2013 tables [viewed 12 May 2016]. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/275635/seafarer-statistics-2013.zip](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275635/seafarer-statistics-2013.zip)

Department for Transport, 2013. Seafarer statistics: 2012 tables [viewed 12 May 2016]. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/82983/seafarer-2012-tables.ZIP](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82983/seafarer-2012-tables.ZIP)

Department for Transport, 2012. Seafarer statistics: 2011 tables [viewed 12 May 2016]. Available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/9017/seafarer-2011-tables-xls.zip](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/9017/seafarer-2011-tables-xls.zip)

Harborough District Council, 2015. Flag hoisting to say 'thank you seafarers' on Merchant Navy Day. [online] *Harborough District Council*, 25, August [viewed 7 June 2016]. Available from: [http://www.harborough.gov.uk/news/article/677/flag\\_hoisting\\_to\\_say\\_thank\\_you\\_seafarers\\_on\\_merchant\\_navy\\_day](http://www.harborough.gov.uk/news/article/677/flag_hoisting_to_say_thank_you_seafarers_on_merchant_navy_day)

Horck, J., 2005. *Getting the best from multicultural manning*. BIMCO 100 years & GA, 2005, Copenhagen, Denmark, May 23 [online] [viewed 18 February 2015]. Available from: [http://www.he-alert.org/filemanager/root/site\\_assets/standalone\\_pdfs\\_0355-/HE00465.pdf](http://www.he-alert.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/standalone_pdfs_0355-/HE00465.pdf)

International Seafarer's Association Network (ISWAN) 2015. *Women Seafarers' Health and Welfare survey* [online]. Available from: <http://bit.ly/1NwhbCg>. [accessed: 12/10/17].

ITF (International Transport Worker's Federation) n.d. *Women* [online]. Available from: [www.itfglobal.org/en/cross-sectoral-work/women/](http://www.itfglobal.org/en/cross-sectoral-work/women/) [accessed: 10/10/17].

ITF (International Transport Worker's Federation) 2016. *Our people* [online]. Available from: [www.itfglobal.org/en/cross-sectoral-work/women/about-us/our-people/](http://www.itfglobal.org/en/cross-sectoral-work/women/about-us/our-people/) [accessed: 12/10/17].

Morse, J., 2006. Biased reflections: Principles of sampling and analysis in qualitative enquiry. In: Popay. Ed. *Moving beyond effectiveness in evidence synthesis: methodological issue in the synthesis of diverse sources of evidence*. London:HAD. Pp.53 – 60 233

Nautilus International, 2016 a. *Home* [online]. Available from: <https://nautilusint.org/en/> [Accessed: 10/10/17].

Nautilus International, 2016 b. *Nautilus Forums* [online]. Available from: [https://nautilusint.org/en/who-we-are/participation/nautilus-forums/#nautilus\\_women](https://nautilusint.org/en/who-we-are/participation/nautilus-forums/#nautilus_women) [Accessed: 12/10/17].

Nautilus International., n.d. *Bullying, discrimination & Harassment Survey 2010*. Nautilus International [viewed 14 January 2016]. Available from: <https://www.nautilusint.org/media/169246/Bullying-Discrimination-Harassment-survey-2010.pdf>

Nautilus Telegraph 2016. *A GEM of an idea to attract more women seafarers*. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Nautilus International, (formally NUMAST) 2000. *Bullying and Harassment* [online]. Available from: <https://nautilusint.org/en/what-we-say/campaigns/bullying-and-harassment/> [Accessed: 12/10/17].

Oxford Economics, 2015. *The economic impact of the UK Maritime Services Sector: Shipping*. Report for Maritime UK. Oxford Economics [viewed 7 June 2016]. Available from: [http://www.britishports.org.uk/system/files/documents/shipping\\_the\\_economic\\_impact\\_of\\_the\\_uk\\_maritime\\_services\\_sector.pdf](http://www.britishports.org.uk/system/files/documents/shipping_the_economic_impact_of_the_uk_maritime_services_sector.pdf)

Phellas, C.N., A. Bloch and C.Seale, 2012. Structured methods: Interviews, questionnaires and observation. In: C. Seale. *Researching society and culture*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage, pp184.

Polden, J., 2013. UK Shipping Ports. In: *Our Maritime Blog*. 10 May 2013 [viewed 6 June 2016]. Available from: <http://www.portinfo.co.uk/port-information/our-blog/186-uk-shipping-ports>

Progoulaki, & Roe, M. WMU J Marit Affairs (2011) 10: 7. doi:10.1007/s13437-011-0003-0

Rhodes, S.D., D.A Bowie and K.C Hergenrather, 2003. Collecting behavioural data using the world wide web: considerations for researchers. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, [online] 57 (1), 68 [viewed 18 July 2016]. Available from: <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA96210714&v=2.1&u=southampton&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=db10b25338f60af6729419189d47a43c>

Seanews (Turkey), 2015. *Nor-Shipping to restrict use of female body for marketing*. 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.

Seavision, 2016. *A bit about us*. [online]. Available from: [www.seavision.org.uk](http://www.seavision.org.uk) [accessed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016]

Thomas, M., 2004. 'Get yourself a proper job girlie!': recruitment, retention and women seafarers. *Maritime Policy & Management: The flagship journal of international shipping and port research* [online], 4 (31), 309-318 [viewed 20 February 2015]. Available from: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0308883042000259828#abstract>

UK Major Ports Group, n.d.) The UK Ports Industry [viewed 7 June 2016]. Available from: <http://ukmajorports.org.uk/about/the-uk-ports-industry/>

World Atlas, n.d. *Geography Statistics of United Kingdom* [viewed 7 June 2016]. Available from: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/unitedkingdom/uklandst.htm>

World Richest Countries, n.d.a *Top Uk Imports from the World* [viewed 6 June 2016]. Available from: <http://www.worldsrichestcountries.com/top-UK-imports.html>

World Richest Countries, n.d.b *Top Uk Exports to the World* [viewed 6 June 2016]. Available from: <http://www.worldsrichestcountries.com/top-UK-exports.html>

Zhao, M., 1998. *Women Seafarers in the EC: A preliminary Report based on Germany and UK Case Studies*. Cardiff: Seafarers International Research Centre [viewed 11 February 2015]. Available from: <http://www.sirc.cf.ac.uk/Uploads/Publications/Women%20Seafarers%20in%20the%20EC.pdf>