



Annual Review

2020-21



Message from our CEO



It feels strange to write the introduction to an annual review for an organisation that I have only recently joined but in doing so, it has helped me to understand all that ISWAN offers to the maritime sector. In a year dominated by the pandemic, ISWAN adapted well to the new working

environment and enthusiastically stepped up to meet the increased demands on its services from seafarers as they struggled with their own challenges. The credit for what has been achieved in this year belongs to my predecessor and the ISWAN team; my challenge is now to continue the work.

The pandemic has also proved to be a time for reflection and an opportunity to review services and working methods. ISWAN is currently developing its strategic plan and this will define our priorities in the years ahead. At its heart will be our continued commitment to supporting and promoting the welfare needs of seafarers around the world.

However, none of this has been achieved alone, ISWAN is enormously grateful for the sustained commitment of its funders who have enabled our work to continue and our colleagues in the other maritime welfare organisations that have collaborated so effectively with us. No single organisation can or should try to do everything on its own so I look forward to building on those relationships. The pandemic has yet to run its course and seafarers are still being asked to go above and beyond the call of duty, so ISWAN will do the same – supporting them in the best way we can. I hope you like the new format to our annual review; we are currently looking at the way we communicate the work of ISWAN to our members, those who use our services and the general public so would be glad of any feedback you may have.

Simon Grainge
Simon Grainge,
 Chief Executive Officer of ISWAN

A message from our Chair



This report covers ISWAN activities from April 2020 to March 2021 and, in looking back over that period, it is amazing to recall all that has happened. Our work was dominated by addressing the myriad problems that seafarers faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and I am

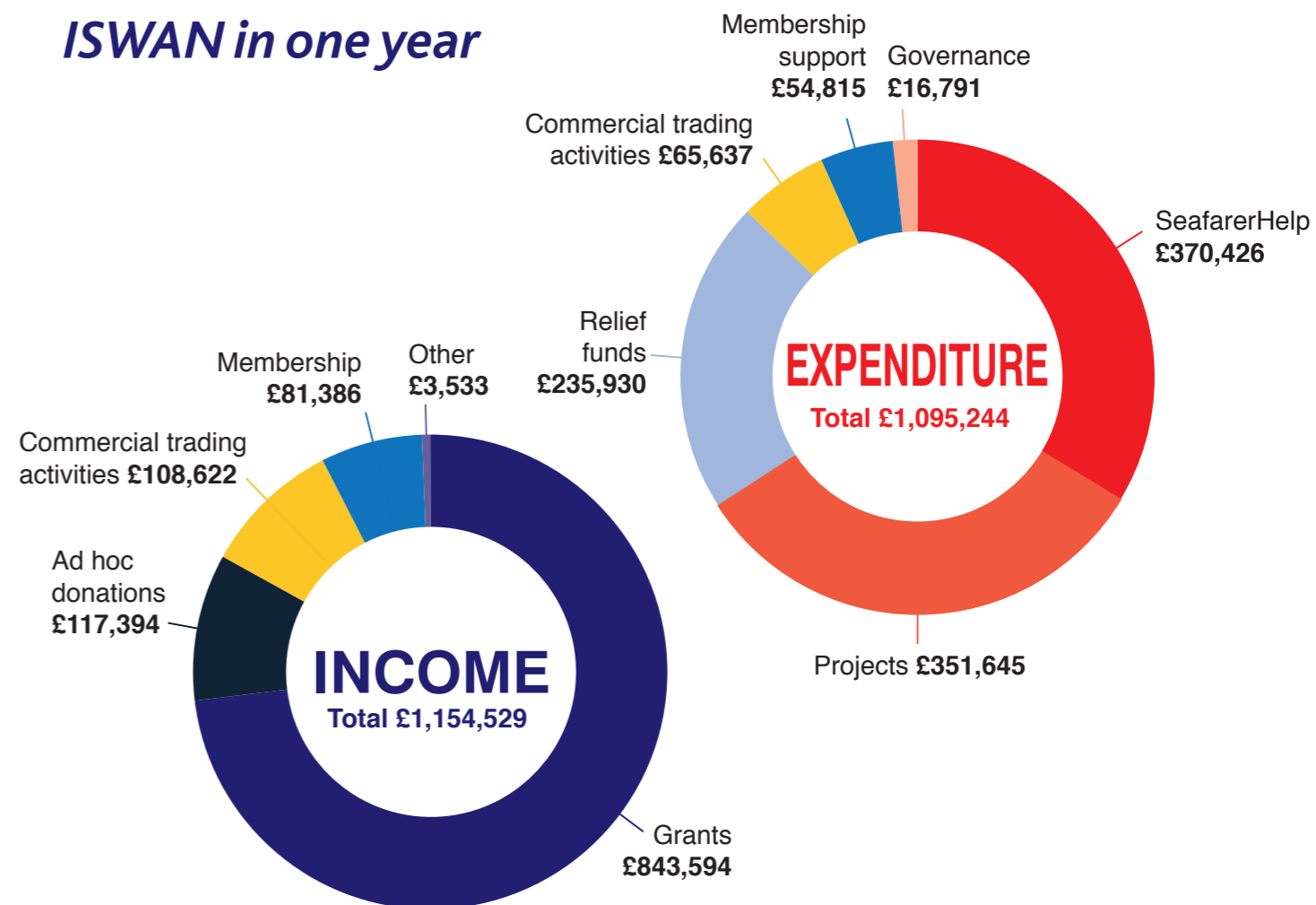
very grateful to the ISWAN staff for their effective response to that challenge. The immense hardship being faced by the world's seafarers was a constant reminder to us all of the importance of our work in providing support in any way we can.

The threefold increase in calls to our SeafarerHelp helpline and our work in repatriating and feeding seafarers demonstrates well the breadth of the demands we faced. Those increased demands were met by wonderful support from our major funders and a heartening increase in ad hoc donations from the shipping industry. Industry bodies, unions, welfare organisations, shipping companies and others came together to respond to the welfare needs of seafarers during the pandemic but it was very disappointing that the designation of seafarers as 'key workers' did not receive the full support of many of the world's governments.

Internally, the period was also a busy one and one of change. Early in 2021 the Trustees commenced a recruitment campaign to replace Roger Harris, the Executive Director since ISWAN was founded in 2013. Roger retired in May 2021 and led ISWAN during the period under review. We commissioned reviews of our commercial operations and a survey of seafarers in support of the development of our future strategy and also identified a new auditor. We welcomed six new Trustees to the Board thereby enhancing its available expertise, increasing its international diversity and improving its gender balance. I look forward to us all working together in support of seafarers' welfare in the years ahead.

Andy Winbow
Andy Winbow,
 Chair of the Board of Trustees

ISWAN in one year



33,646
 seafarers and family members assisted



US \$272,474
 granted via relief funds



75
 training sessions delivered



14,107
 downloads of health resources for seafarers on our websites



Our work this year

Summary of all of ISWAN's areas of work over the year:

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ISWAN Helplines



33,646
seafarers and family members assisted



6,873
new cases



20,334
calls and messages handled



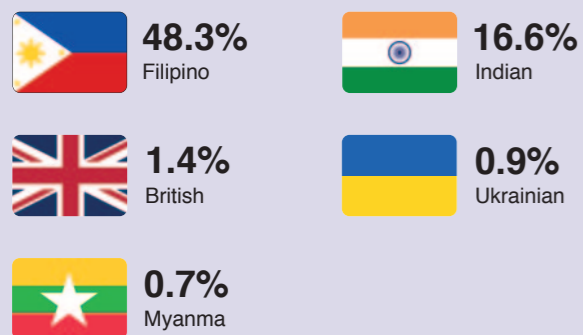
96
nationalities assisted



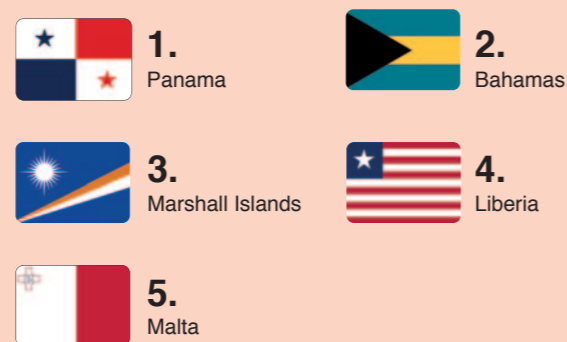
SeafarerHelp
The lifeline for seafarers

- SeafarerHelp is the **no. 1** free, confidential, multilingual helpline for seafarers and their families, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- ISWAN recruited four new staff members, including two counsellors in India and the Philippines, to enable the helpline team to cope with the overwhelming number of cases in these regions due to the pandemic and provide a local response

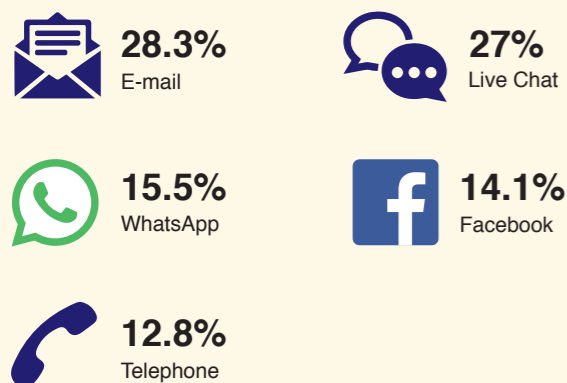
Top 5 seafarer nationalities:



Top 5 flag states of vessels involved:



Top 5 contact methods:



Top 5 types of query:



Seafarer Assistance is an independent and tailored emotional support service for the maritime industry. Each Seafarer Assistance helpline offers free, confidential, multilingual support and assistance for a company's crew, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We operate bespoke helplines for **9** companies (**5** new this year)

81% of cases dealt with in house

19% of cases referred

Calls initially **3.5** times higher compared to previous years due to the pandemic, then reduced to **1.5** times the usual number for the rest of the year

Double the usual number of calls relating to suicides or cases of seafarers with suicidal thoughts



Yacht Crew Help
the lifeline for crew

On 24th November 2020, we launched a new helpline for professional yacht crew. Yacht Crew Help is free, confidential, multilingual and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

- 75** new cases up to end of March 2021
- 99** crew assisted up to end of March 2021
- 1,818** visitors on Yacht Crew Help website
- 4,823** page views on Yacht Crew Help website

Regional Programme

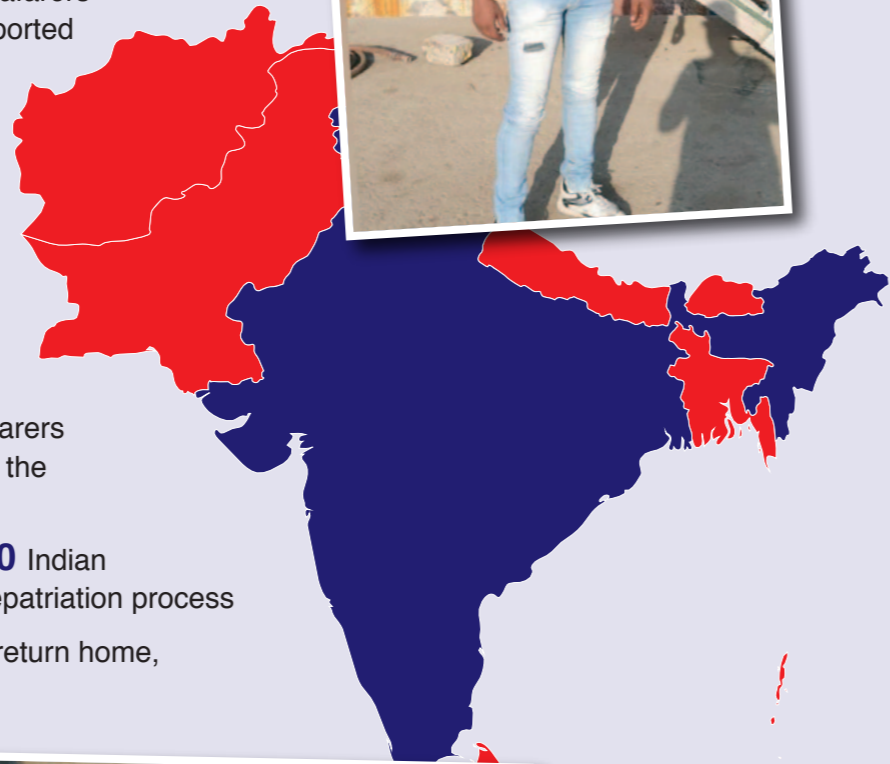
Our Regional Programme provides humanitarian support to seafarers and their families in three specific regions: South Asia, South East Asia, and West and Central Africa.

1,400 cases handled across all three regions.

India & South Asia

- **31** abandonment forms involving **333** seafarers submitted to the ILO/IMO Database on reported incidents of abandonment of seafarers
- **171** cases involving **242** seafarers deceived by fraudulent crewing agents
- Supported seafarers who were unable to sign off or join vessels, or were stranded during lockdown and unable to get home:
 - Worked closely with more than 15 Indian missions to help Indian seafarers and families with infant children board the Vande Bharat flight home
 - Guided and assisted more than **4,200** Indian seafarers and their families with the repatriation process
 - Helped a total of **1,874** seafarers to return home, **1,085** of which were in the UK

One of the crew members from MT IBA finally disembarking after four years abandoned on board – ISWAN supported the crew for their last two years on board and coordinated with authorities to bring them home



- Supported three Iranian hostages released by Somali pirates after nearly five years and five months in captivity and arranged grants to support their rehabilitation



In September, we were proud to be awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by The Nautical Institute

The award recognised the 'hard work, commitment and personal sacrifice' of ISWAN's regional and helpline teams in serving the needs of seafarers and their families worldwide throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

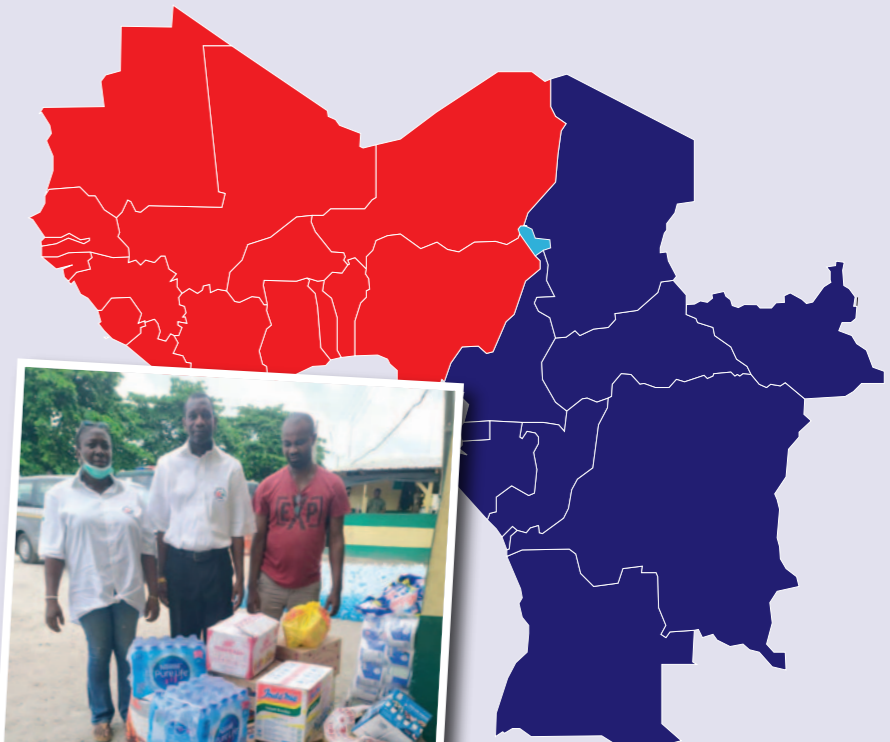
Philippines & South East Asia

- Food delivered on a daily basis to around **2,000** seafarers stranded in Metro Manila who were unable to return home after signing off their ships
- Coordinated with Apostleship of the Sea Manila to assist **500** seafarers' families and distribute vouchers to **25** families in need



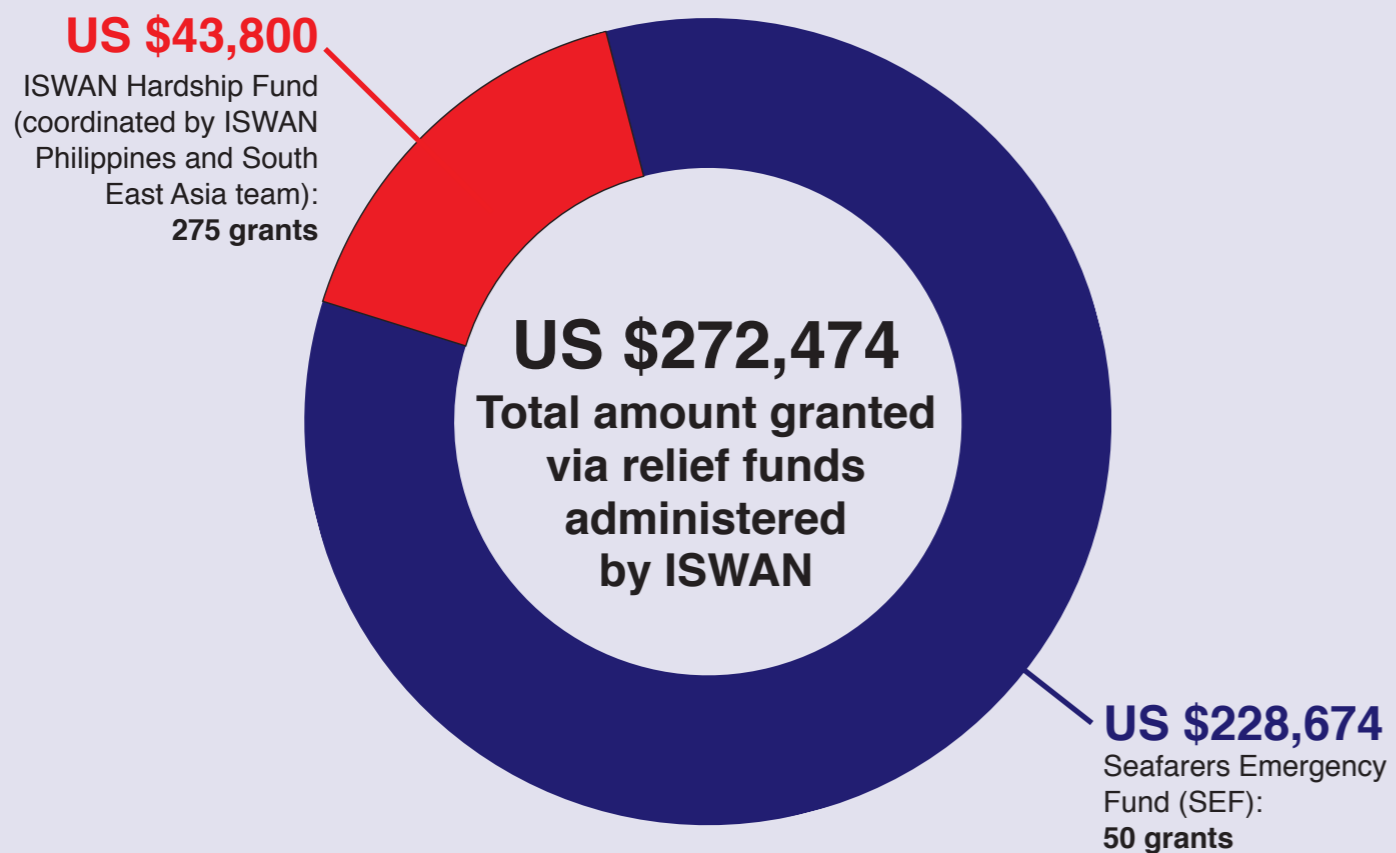
West & Central Africa:

- Spoke to cadets at maritime training institutes about non-registered agencies, piracy, mental health awareness and ISWAN's work
- Worked with local partners to help seven Sri Lankan seafarers return home when they were released by the court after being held in prison
- Worked closely with port welfare committee members in three ports to handle case referrals from SeafarerHelp



5,000 of ISWAN's Good Mental Health Guides were distributed across the regions.

Relief Funds



Rayees's story

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many seafarers have struggled financially as they try to find work. Rayees had been out of work for over a year due to health issues and the ongoing pandemic when he contacted ISWAN.

Rayees had been declared medically unfit after his last sign-off and had been undergoing treatment since. His wife was pregnant, and due to medical expenses for them both, Rayees had depleted his savings and was now worried about having enough money for his wife's delivery.

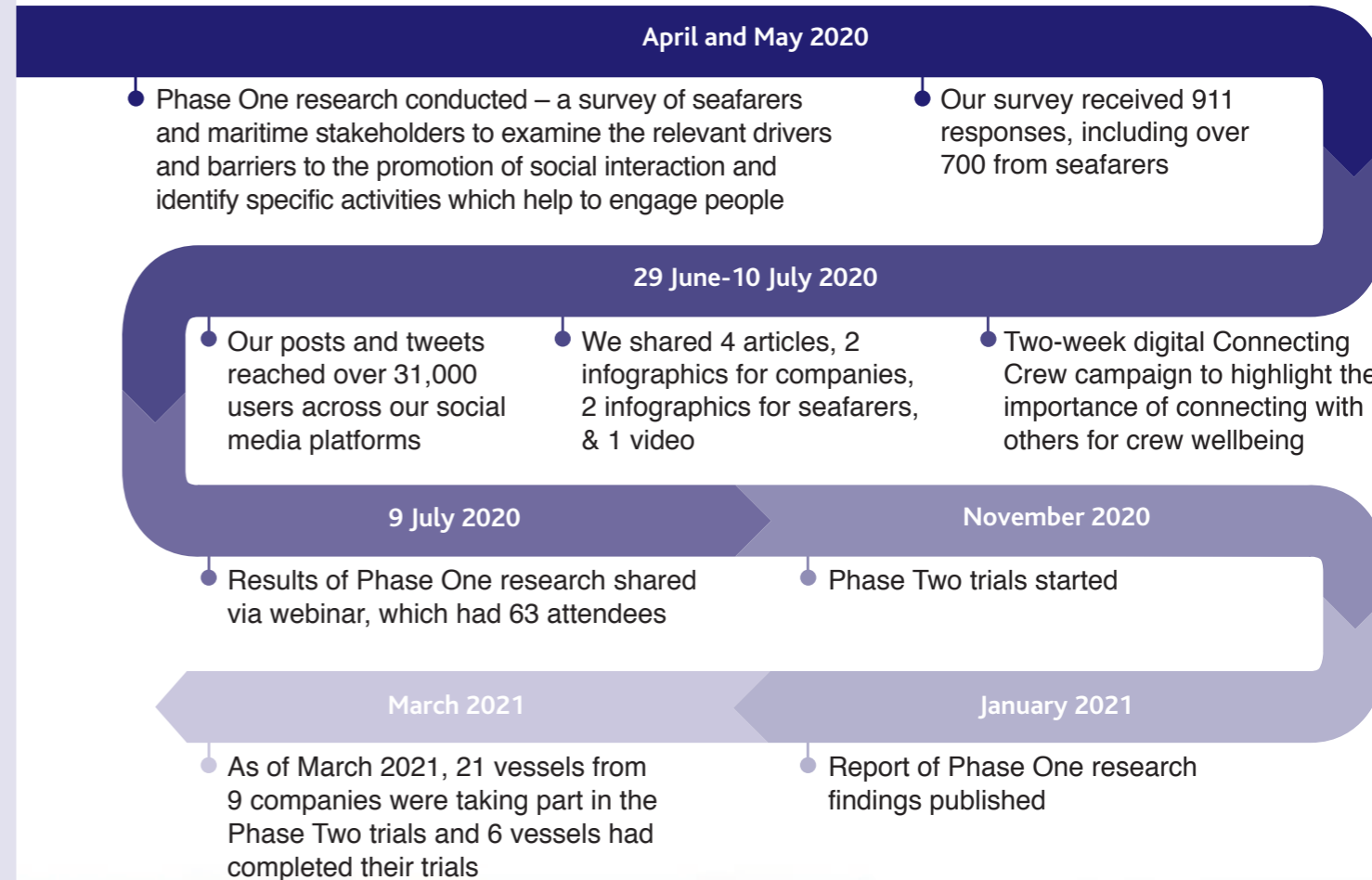
The ISWAN South Asia team suggested that Rayees contacted his union but the union was unable to assist due to COVID-19. Considering the urgency of the situation, the ISWAN South Asia team drafted a Seafarers Emergency Fund application on Rayees's behalf and submitted it for approval.

A grant was swiftly approved to cover Rayees's and his wife's medical expenses. Rayees sent us a video message afterwards: "Thank you so much for your wonderful support. May God bless you and your family."

A few weeks later, Rayees's wife gave birth to a healthy baby boy, and Rayees was finally able to join a ship shortly after.



Social Interaction Matters (SIM) Project



Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health Awareness Training

This training was designed specifically for the maritime industry by Consultant Clinical Psychologist Dr. Pennie Blackburn, who has worked closely with ISWAN for a number of years and contributed her expertise to much of our key work on seafarers' mental health. The training – which is suitable for senior officers, shoreside staff or anyone passionate about becoming a Mental Wellbeing Champion – adapts best practice for mental health awareness, early recognition of mental health problems and initial responses to concerns arising on board.

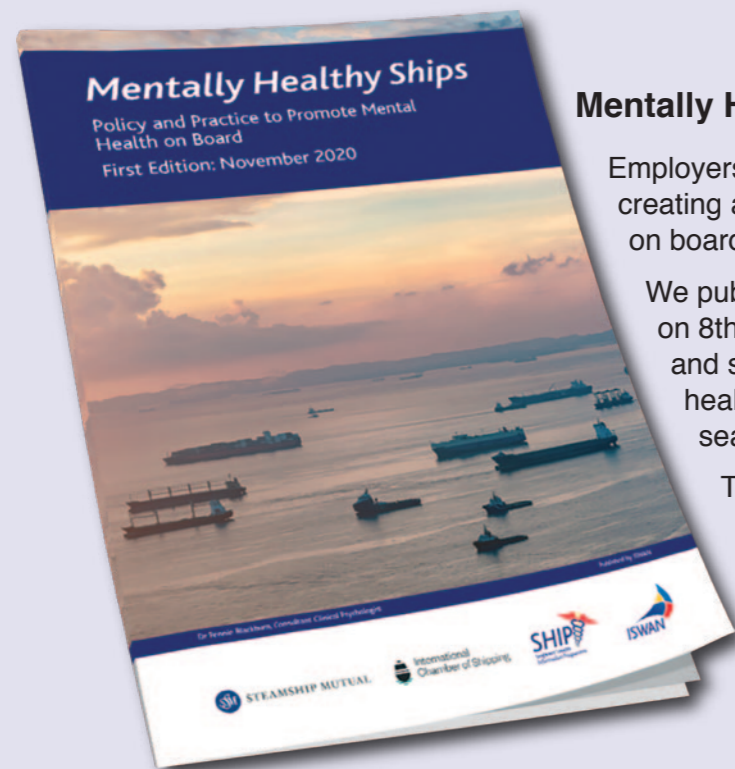
Faced with the challenges of the pandemic, we adapted this two-module training course to be delivered online. We have worked with a number of shipping companies to deliver mental health awareness training to their senior officers, crew and shoreside staff, and we held our first fully-booked open session in December 2020.

Feedback from the training:

"It was very interesting interacting with all these people from all over the world, great opportunity!"

"[I] liked how tightly it focused on seafarers, other training of this sort has mentioned seafarers a few times without delving deeper into the particulars of the environment of seafarers and why that poses additional mental health challenges"

75 courses delivered to shoreside and seagoing staff



Mentally Healthy Ships

Employers have a critical role to play in creating a mentally healthy environment on board.

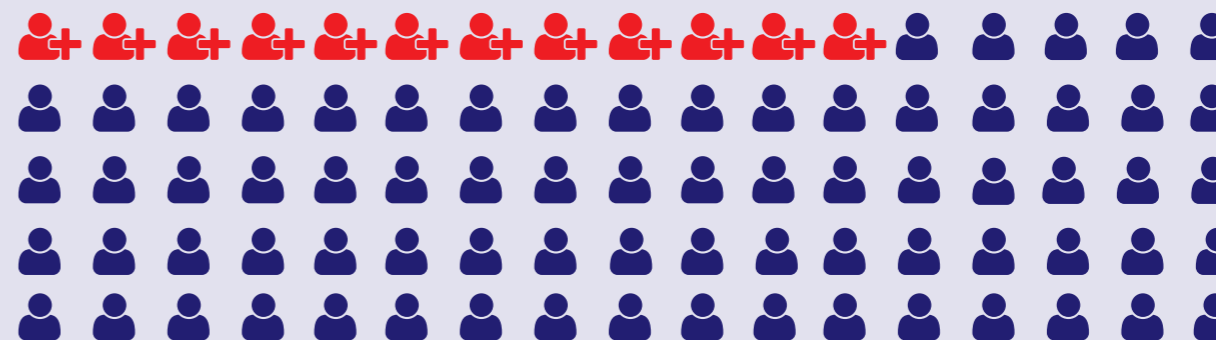
We published Mentally Healthy Ships on 8th December 2020 to help shipping companies and ship operators devise and implement mental health policies and practices to promote and protect seafarers' mental health.

The guide was written by Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Dr Pennie Blackburn, and made possible through sponsorship from Steamship Mutual.

Membership

ISWAN is a network of international organisations committed to improving the welfare of seafarers. Our members reflect the diversity present in the shipping industry today, from shipping companies to unions, insurance groups to welfare organisations. Our members possess a wealth of different experience and include key influencers in the field of seafarers' welfare.

We welcomed 12 new members this year, bringing the total to over 85.



International Port Welfare Partnership (IPWP) Programme

We continue to work with the UK Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB), whose Port Welfare Committee system influenced ILO MLC, 2006 4.4, encouraging the establishment of similar welfare boards at local, regional and national level.

The combined impact of the ongoing pandemic, travel restrictions and funding delays hampered the progress of an originally visit-orientated project.

Activities:

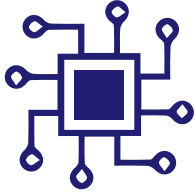
- The IPWP took into consideration the increased need for remote, sector-wide support and concentrated its efforts on creating a bespoke IT portal called 'Port Visitor' – a unique global software designed to help countries and ports create their own welfare boards and review the provision of seafarers' welfare and facilities
- Remote support provided to numerous local welfare boards including Richards Bay, Durban and Vancouver
- New National Seafarers' Welfare Board established in Canada



Photo: Members of the Richards Bay Port Welfare Committee attend a meeting at the Richards Bay Seafarers Mission

Our plans for the future

1



Improve our processes and make better use of technology to meet the changing needs of seafarers

2



Develop timely responses to the most prevalent issues identified through helplines, regions and membership to educate the sector and influence change

3



Raise profile and position of ISWAN as a catalyst for delivering change to improve the lives of seafarers and their families

4



Develop a truly international organisation that is financially and operationally sustainable



Thank you to our funders, partners and sponsors

Regional Programme



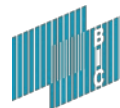
SeafarerHelp



Yacht Crew Help



Additional support





SeafarerHelp

The lifeline for seafarers

Do you have a problem with unpaid wages, repatriation, a welfare issue, or do you just want to talk to someone? If so we are here to organise help for you.

SeafarerHelp is the only worldwide helpline for seafarers and their families that is:

- Free
- Confidential
- Multilingual
- Available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year

Contact us:



Email us:

help@seafarerhelp.org



Find us online at:

www.seafarerhelp.org



Request call back:

+44 (0)207 323 2737



Skype us at:

info-seafarerhelp.org



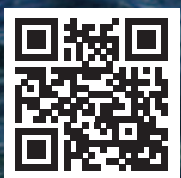
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Find us on:



SeafarerHelp is supported by:

**the
seafarers'
charity**

THE
TK
FOUNDATION

Service provided by:

ISWAN



Yacht Crew Help

the *lifeline* for crew

Feeling low?

We are here to listen.

Our helpline is:

- Free
- Confidential
- Multilingual
- Available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year

Find us here:



Contact us:



Email us:

help@yachtcrewhelp.org



Live Chat at:

www.yachtcrewhelp.org



Request call back:

+44 20 3713 7273



Find us online at:

www.yachtcrewhelp.org

Yacht Crew Help is operated by ISWAN



Would you like to support our work or become a member of ISWAN?

Please contact Georgia Allen,
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