Denmark Study Tour Report

June 2015  A fresh prospective on volunteering, coaching and club development

By Gina Rogers, Active Sussex
“I’ve learnt an incredible amount in just one week. To have the opportunity to see above the parapet of your day to day work and experience how others strive to achieve the same goals as you is invaluable.”

Gina Rogers
Sports Development Officer
Active Sussex
About this Report

Between May and June 2015 a team of sports development professionals from across the UK took part in an eight day study trip to Denmark.

The visit was funded by the European Union’s Erasmus Plus programme which is a competitive bidding process. It enables individuals and organisations to develop their education and understanding of practice in identified work strands within the European Union.

The funding application was submitted by the Black Country Consortium. The team of UK delegates was representatives from the CSPN, Dame Kelly Holmes Trust, Join In, Association of Colleges and Dudley College. We were based in two locations Vejle (central Denmark) and Copenhagen (East Denmark) hosted by the DGI (Danish Gymnastics and Sport Federation) who supports the development of Danish grass roots sport.

Author: Gina Rogers, Active Sussex.
Day 1
- Briefing of DGI
- Presentation of volunteer website
- Presentation of a voluntary campaign
- How DGI work with volunteers
- Club visit

Day 2
- DGI's cooperation with schools
- Presentation of Traenerguiden
- How DGI works with the training of volunteer coaches in swimming
- Visit to DGI regional office & local school
- Club visit

Day 3
- DGI feedback session
- Visit to DGI house (leisure centre)
- Farewell meal

Day 4
- Travel to Copenhagen

Day 5
- Free day

Day 6
- DGI Copenhagen and ISCA briefing
- Now we move campaign
- Move week
- CSP/Join In/AoC/DKH presentations

Day 7
- DGI social inclusion project presentation
- Move transfer and Move quality programmes
- DGI project visit and volunteer
Meet the Team

Our study tour was attended by:

Charlie Crane – CSPN
Gina Rogers – Active Sussex (CSP)
Rebecca Gracey – Black Country Consortium (CSP)
Adam Warden – Birmingham (CSP)
Sarah Gray – Dame Kelly Holmes Trust
Emily Lewis – Join In
Ian McCombes – Association of Colleges
Rachel Corns – Dudley College
Denmark v UK

5,668,743 population  
1.5 million members of DGI  
6,300 clubs affiliated to DGI but 16,000 in total  
106,000 coaches and volunteers in DGI

63,489,234 population  
151,000 clubs  
35.2% are active
Structure of Danish Sport

- **DGI** (Danish Gymnastics and Sport Federation)
  - 14 regional offices
  - 1.5 million members
  - 6,300 clubs

- **DIF** (Danish Sports Federation and Olympic Committee)
  - 61 federations
  - 1.9 million members
  - 9,287 clubs

- **DFIF** (The Danish Federation of Company Sports)
  - 8 regional divisions
  - 330,000 members
  - 8,000 clubs
Top Participation Sports
Members of sport clubs in Denmark by sport (as of 2013)

South East Age 16+ Once a week participation by sport - Apr 14/15
Who are DGI?

DGI is an independent not for profit sports and cultural organisation.

They emphasize the importance of sport and community building, self-empowerment and healthy living.

**Supporting the development of grass roots sport is at their core.**

400 people work for DGI across 14 regions.

Clubs pay a small fee to be a member of DGI and in return they receive advice, support and training.

They also have a team or officer dedicated to the development of a specific sport. Their 9 focus sports are:

- football
- tennis
- gymnastics
- fitness
- shooting
- triathlon
- badminton
- running &
- cycling

DGI can be likened to the CSP structure in England.

---

**DGI Strategy**

Their vision along side the Danish Sports Federation is to get 50% of Danes to become members of clubs and 75% to practice sport by the year 2025.

This means 600,000 more people practicing sport. A particular focus for DGI is on adults/seniors as 87% of children up to the age of 15 are playing sport already.

Four long-term objectives:

1. Strengthen sports clubs
2. Prioritise initiatives and performances with clubs
3. Phases of life - strengthen participation for all phases
4. Sports associations contribute to citizenship
DGI and Volunteering

The Danish Culture of Volunteering: Older people think it’s important, and a way of life. Young people want to further their education and some want to change their local community. Parents most often help out of necessity to provide sport offers for their children.

How does DGI Track the number of Volunteers? DGI has 106,000 coaches and volunteers on their register. They get this number by the club registering with the DGI Central register and declaring how many volunteers and coaches they have. Clubs register with the DGI and their individual federation of sport.

Volunteer Recruitment: Local clubs recruit their own volunteers DGI doesn't have a national volunteering site until recently. What works for them is clubs asking local people/participants/parents.

“The culture in Denmark is about asking face to face for volunteers.”

Their Version of Club Matters: They have developed what can only be described as a Danish Club Matters website.

www.dgi.dk/foreningsledelse

This website has only been around for one year and it is for volunteers, making it more fun to be a leader in a sports club. Their opinion is Volunteers don’t have time to take courses for advice and club management. This website is an advice site for development and operation of sports clubs. Most importantly to help sports clubs get more volunteers and motivate existing ones. It is not an online brokering system.
Website Traffic: Currently 3,000 clicks per day and there is no correlation to the increase in the number of volunteers due to the website.

The Website Provides: Accounting info, law, social media, comms and general running and development of a club. They have an 'ask the experts' where paid staff of DGI can answer questions, they will aim to respond to you within 10 days.

Observation: Volunteer centres and sport do not mix! Volunteer centres exist but they are not as developed as ours and DGI do not tap into this resource.

However DGI recognise it is challenging to be a volunteer especially if you have a lot of responsibility within a club e.g. a chairman or a treasurer. However data from a recent survey confirmed 45% of the population of Denmark would say yes if they were asked to volunteer. Less than 10% of clubs had a strategy for volunteers. So they started a campaign.
The Yes Campaign

**Aim:** To make volunteering more attractive and increase recognition for volunteers. Campaign ran from May 2014 - March 2015. Campaign included:

- Stickers – a large hand which was to be placed on the back of t-shirts the message is 'it’s great that you volunteer'
- Social media element
- Calls from DGI regional officers to local clubs

When they say yes on the website they aren't actually put into an opportunity.

There is a downloadable 'yes' kit including posters, flyers, and leaflets to help with an event or meeting. They haven't been able to track click rates or see how many volunteers were actually recruited into clubs.
We were lucky enough to visit two sports clubs during our visit, both with differing facilities but similar challenges.

**Firhoje IF – Rural**

Volunteers are the foot soldiers, the same people come again and again, and if you volunteer you will have to commit to even more – this club is trying to change this perception.

It is a small town with a population of 3,245 and 41% of the population are members.

"We are many and you are welcome to join in."

The club has 11 departments, with over 60 board members and over 100 instructors!

This club is working on better communication, so not one volunteer is doing everything, which makes it easier to recruit new volunteers.

The secret to recruiting volunteers is:

“Board members walked around the club and asked people who were there if they’d like to help. They also had a manned stand in the club with more information. They recruited 22 volunteers in one day! Ask three people to do it together rather than one – volunteers prefer to do things together.”
They ask at their summer event which is a showcase event and people are more inclined to say yes when they are enjoying the club’s facilities. It is important who is asking as if a well-respected board member is asking; the person is likely to say yes.

A particular success for the club was being able to raise funds by supplying volunteers for the local music festival. Around 30,000 people attended and 441 volunteers helped out. The music festival pays for these volunteers at £50 per volunteer, so the club can generate income from this.

**Reward and Recognition:** They say thank you.

> “Every fourth adult in Denmark is part of a board. People have influence of their own community. This is why they are the happiest nation.”

**Retention:** If volunteers do not want the same role for long periods of time the club will put them into a different role. Volunteers can easily move departments according to their life and responsibilities.

**Øster Starup Vester Nebel Idraetsforening – Rural**

Most volunteers are parents in the club and they upskill them to keep them involved and retained.

Drop out is at aged 13, this is a real problem as they don’t offer a high enough standard of football in particular. Participants either drop out or go to another larger club.
Retention: The club has a contract with the volunteers for 2 years and in return they will offer them free training and up-skilling.

Problem: If the child leaves the parent does tend to as well, which is a problem.

Club was formed 7 years ago. UK could benefit from merging of clubs. It's typical to have multi-sport clubs in Denmark. There are smaller one sport clubs but not many. To get better facilities you need to join up.
DGI Regional Office and Their Role

Sydostjylland

509 clubs
129,625 members
10,678 coaches and volunteers

7 unpaid board members elected by the clubs
18 paid staff members
173 coaches and volunteers to organise sport in this region
They do have a volunteer policy!!

Total income 22.5 million Danish krone
Clubs pay DGI to participate in all activities
8 million per year is given to paid members of staff
Total costs 21.5 million

DGI pays insurance for clubs

DGI Volunteer Policy

DGI has in house volunteers that are separate from clubs. They organise tournaments, and they are in direct contact with clubs.

These volunteers receive training and they advocate to clubs that they should have volunteer coordinators.
Club development

The DGI club development officer works with around 100 clubs every year. When starting a new relationship with a club he always asks:

- What are your current strengths?
- What resistance will you get?
- Action points and next steps

What are your clubs volunteer principles?

Togetherness
Personal development
Influence
Necessity

You have to link volunteer motivations to what your club can offer and what your overall aims are. Start small, give volunteers small responsibilities and grow from there. Do not overwhelm volunteers. His two most important tips for volunteer retention are:

1. Be specific about volunteer tasks
2. Recognition – giving personal thanks is the best recognition you could give

A Danish university did a national survey on volunteering and this is what they found out.

64% of 16-25 would say yes to volunteering but only if they were volunteering as part of a group.

“Strength in numbers”

What other percentage of people would say yes to volunteering?

- 56% 26-35
- 51% 36-45
- 50% 46-55
- 35% 56-65
- 21% 66-75
- 9% 76 and over

36-45 is the most difficult age to recruit volunteers. This is because family tends to be the priority and spare time is scarce.
Schools, Institutions and Clubs by June Simonson, Project Manager

Due to political reform in August 2014 DGI are working with schools to implement 45 minutes per day of physical activity.

Currently the minimum is two PE lessons per week; this is a huge change they are trying to implement. There is a conflict between teachers having to spend more time developing this and including physical activity in their lessons. Plus non sporty teachers find this concept harder to accept.

They are looking at bringing sport into academic subjects like maths. They think exercise can improve not only learning but well-being, social development and health.

DGI are working with institutions and local authorities to give teachers formal qualifications to include sport and physical activity in their lessons.
Similar to Satellite Clubs: DGI are rolling out a new project called Open School. Getting sports clubs to go into schools and deliver sport. This is difficult as club coaches are not available during the working day. However where is has worked is when they:

- Educate young trainers at the schools then the students go out to the clubs and coach children. They get new trainers and volunteers this way.
- Trainers also participate in the PE lessons helping to coach.
- Schools have activity days, where clubs can come in and showcase.
- Club activities during recreation time.
- Sport for socially endangered or vulnerable children - getting these children into the clubs, making the schools focused on it and employing people to target these children to help them transition into the clubs. Some clubs form special teams for those children.
- Schools being more aware of clubs in the surrounding areas.

Schools already use sports clubs facilities which help to transition participants into the clubs.
DGI Copenhagen

We were able to visit the DGI offices in a rural setting and also see how the DGI is set up in a city environment in Copenhagen.

As you will expect rural clubs have more space, better facilities, and most importantly are community led which keeps them so sustainable.

Meeting with staff from the DGI office in Copenhagen was an eye opener to the different issues inner city sports development faces.

- Lack of facilities
- Lack of space
- Deprived areas
- Marginalised communities
- Growth of private gyms

What DGI are doing is rolling out bespoke initiatives to target these people.

Street Soccer project – (similar to street games in the UK)

Street Soccer is based on competition, education and training to reach marginalised youth. DGI carry out weekly activities in their neighbourhoods in the city.

They have tried to recruit volunteers into the programme but have struggled to encourage many to volunteer.
Volunteers receive resources and help to deliver the sessions. It's doorstep sport, as typical Danish clubs are too formalised.

They have tried to recruit volunteers from people who are in the marginalised community.

**Street Agents**

Street Soccer works with **Street Agents.** These are typically members of youth clubs who have reached 18 and are now too old for the club. In some cases it is employed workers at the Youth Club. It is their role to encourage more players into the programme and to organise a 2 hour competition.

**Panna Agents**

Panna is one on one football in a small round circular pitch; this has proved popular in cities and areas with a lack of facilities. The circular pitch is five meters in diameter and participants have 3 minutes to score against each other.
#happymoves 2015

Sponsored by Coco Cola Happy Moves target young inactive people by offering three forms of activities during one session. These three forms of activity focus on three categories to suit every kind of participant:

Move play (sport option)
Sense play (balance or centration, activities like yoga or slackline)
Body play (strength and fitness like parkour or street gym)

By doing this they feel they are appealing to a larger market of participants. With limited facilities on offer activities must be run outside. They aim to put on 11 sessions across 3 months of activity. Sessions are free and they include a DJ to give sessions a party feel.

Drop off

In Denmark young people aged 16-19 drop out of sport and physical activity due to other priorities in life. 56% of girls and %72 of boys stop participating in sport or physical activity. Happy Moves is a way they are trying to tackle this problem by offering choice and informality.

They have tried to get volunteers involved to help run the session but have struggled to keeping them involved week in week out.
Volunteering at Happy Moves

DGI have tried to get volunteers involved to help run the session but have struggled to keeping them involved.

They currently use a website called volunteer bank frivilligjob.dk to try and advertise the opportunity but this approach has not been successful.

“Generally in Denmark recruiting volunteers via a website it not a common or successful approach.”

There are two roles at the event, helping to set up equipment and engaging participants in the activity.

Event volunteering is popular in the younger generation in Denmark as they want a more flexible approach. However DGI represent sports clubs and they struggle to compete against the private fitness centres who offer a flexible approach.

In the city traditional sports clubs don't match the needs of the young people today. It's not flexible enough; it needs to be on their terms.

In over three months the project has engaged 350 - 400 young people but this has reduced to a steady 50-70 on a weekly basis. They have a break of around a month or two between blocks. This is the first year this project has run in Copenhagen so impact has yet to be determined.

Another challenge is they are not hitting the 16-19 age group a lot of young people aged around 10 are attending, the session is currently at 4-6pm but they may move it to a later time in the evening to attract the older age group.
ISCA

ISCA – International Sport and Culture Organisation is a global platform open to organisations working within the field of sport for all, recreational sports and physical activity.

Created in 1995, ISCA is today a global actor closely cooperating with its 180 member organisations, international NGOs, and public and private sector stakeholders. Its 40 million individual members from 74 countries represent a diverse group of people active within youth, sport and cultural activities.

ISCA was created with the purpose of:

• Supporting cross-border understanding through sport and culture
• Promoting sport as a bearer of cultural identity
• Encouraging the broadest possible participation in sports and cultural activities for affiliated members
**Now We Move**

The campaign was launched in 2012 to get 100 million new physically active people by 2020.

Coca Cola have an international sport strategy and are heavily financing ISCA through this campaign to get more people active.

**Stakeholders are:** civil societies, sports clubs, funders, media, local authorities, ISCA member organisations, schools and colleges.

Purpose is to close the gap by 20% of physical activity, between the most and least physically active people in European countries by 2020.

**Deliverables are:** ‘Move Week’ – takes place every year around October and November. Stakeholders become ‘Move Agents’ and organise opportunities for people to get active during this time. ISCA have also developed videos, t-shirts, bracelets, posters, banners and movement pill boxes as part of the campaign.

**Other initiatives:** no elevator day, flash move (like a flash mob) cross borderer cycling, move calendar and move awards.

**Risk:** lack of EU funding and labour intensive submitting new applications each year.
My Key Learning

1. Club Ethos is Key!

We must turn our focus to sports clubs here in the UK. In Denmark it’s the core work of the DGI. Can we get clubs of different sports to work together more, facility share; write join bids, making the clubs stronger? How can we do this? By bringing them together at workshop and facilitating links for them.

2. Movement Pills

Are we marketing ourselves all wrong? Can we think outside the box and come up with innovative ways to market our hard to reach communities and target demographics with clever approaches like the movement pills. Toolkits are old news; can we package our marketing in these new ways? This also ties in well with our CSP trying to reach new people. Can this movement pill tie in with volunteering or mental health week?

3. Facilities

Danish rural sports clubs in small towns are better than our sports parks. They also act as a real hub of the community. They have coffee shops, bars, not to mention state of the art sports equipment. Denmark has recognised they are up against difficult competition from private gyms. Their sports clubs recognise this and include similar equipment to still attract local people in. They have used volunteer builders to donate their time to improve their facility. They treasure their club and are happy share their facility with all sports – they feel this strengthens membership and increases volunteers.

“Different initiatives come and go, some will be more effective than others and there will always be another campaign on the horizon to get more people active or to encourage more people to volunteer. Our sport structures are very different but our challenges are the same. But what Denmark really nails, is sports clubs. Their culture allows these clubs to flourish, offering a central venue for a community of all ages to come together, get active and to volunteer.”

Tip for volunteer recruitment:
Ask, face to face!