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Careers in Science

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How did you choose your present profession?

I switched from quantity surveying to economics because I thought that as a quantity surveyor, I was likely to end up in a professional office making lots of money and that would be the end of me. On the other hand, I thought that as an economist, I would be able to make contributions to larger societal-level debates. I picked up my interest in fisheries and natural resources in Norway.

What are your biggest motivators?

The edge to make a contribution.

Who were/are your greatest mentors/heroes?

Scientific achievers in general and my dad; Sjur Didirik Flaam (Ph.D. Supervisor), Rognvaldur Hannesson (Ph.D. co-supervisor), Daniel Pauly, Gordon Munro, and Colin Clark.

Was there a pivotal event in your life that helped you decide on your career path?

It was a series of events: knowing at an early age that I wanted to pursue a Ph.D.; my decision to switch to economics; and finally, my decision to combine economics and ecology in my research.

Were you the first in your family to get a higher degree?

Yes!

What has been the biggest surprise in your life as a scientist?

How quickly hard work can propel one to achieve career success.

What would you recommend for students wanting to pursue a similar career?

Be focused, work hard, share with colleagues and never give up.

What do you like best about your profession?

The ability to determine your career path and the opportunity to inspire students and other people.

What would you say has been your greatest achievement?

Being able to teach a class in Norwegian after learning the language for only a year!

Are you optimistic for the future of the planet and if so why?

I remain optimistic even in the face of really scary climate and other natural resource scenarios. This is because I have faith in civil society keeping both governments and businesses on their toes so they do the right thing, ultimately.

What are your greatest fears for the future of the planet?

My fear is that civil society may be too slow for some of the challenges we currently face—for example, in dealing with climate change.

What's the one message you would like the next generation of scientists to hear?

Get involved! Communicate the results of your work to the public and policy-makers.

What Web sites, books, articles and other layperson references would you recommend for viewers interested in your work and particularly fishing subsidies?

Sea Around Us Project: www.seaaroundus.org/ 

Fisheries Economics Research Unit: www.feru.org 

World Trade Organization: www.wto.org/ (search for "subsidies") 

Books and articles:

Sharp, R. and U.R. Sumaila (*in press*). Quantification of U.S. Marine Fisheries Subsidies. The North American Journal of Fisheries Management.

Sumaila, U.R., and D. Pauly (2007). All fishing nations must unite to end subsidies. *Nature* (correspondence), 450: 945.

Sumaila, U.R., Khan, A., Watson, R., Munro, G., Zeller, D., Baron, N., Pauly, D. (2007) The World Trade Organization and global fisheries sustainability. *Fisheries Research*, 88, 1–4.

Abdallah, P.R. and Sumaila, U.R. (2007). A historical account of Brazilian policy on fisheries subsidies. *Marine Policy* 31, 444–450.

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