

REVIEW

An Ocean of Women: A Documentary about Sea Women (in two parts)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qm_0NQTuT7g (14 mins)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ICeBgeGTas> (12 mins)
 In Spanish (subtitles in English), Produced by GAC Vigo, a project funded by the European Union, Xunta de Galicia, Gobierno De Espana and Ministerio De Medio Ambiente Y Medio Rural Y Marino

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An *Ocean of Women* is a Spanish documentary produced by GAC (Grupo De Accion Costeira), a European fishery-funded organization that aims to stimulate the economy of coastal villages dependent on fisheries. It represents all the aspects of fisheries such as environment, cultural heritage, fishing industry and production. 'Equality of Men and Women' is one of GAC's projects. Under this, opportunities for both men and women to participate equally are identified in order to improve the working conditions of women.

The video records the experiences of various women from Galicia in Spain, who contribute to fisheries production. These women are engaged in various activities such as: setting octopus traps (which requires great physical effort, considering that, an empty net weighs about five kg), as shellfish gatherers, collecting clams and cockles on the beach; and as sea anemone extractors. Some are net manufacturers and goose barnacle gatherers.

In the video the women speak about their lives and livelihoods. We learn how for them, the sea, with all its risks, is a part of their lives, and how living off the sea requires great physical effort as well as mental concentration. Most people are not aware of women's active participation in the fishing industry. This video

spotlights their work and contribution in the sector.

The lives of these women are full of challenges. A primary challenge is to find the right balance between working at sea and attending to responsibilities at home—something that is usually resolved by adopting flexible working hours. The women take pride in the work they do, claiming that it is myth that women are scared to go out to sea or are unable to handle tough work.

One woman, Begona Gonzalez, proudly claims that she has been going out to sea for 20 years now and has no fear of the sea or of anything else in the natural environment. Sylvia Rodriguez, a sea urchin extractor, acknowledges that there are more men than women, out at sea. This, she feels, could be because men consider themselves stronger or simply because of tradition but it is important to note that the number of women going out to sea has been steadily increasing over the years. All the women feel that with the right training and opportunities, women can easily equal men. They say that they have encouraged their sons and daughters to learn more about fishing but express concern over the fact that the younger generation does not seem keen to take up fishing as an occupation. ♣



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Writers and potential contributors to YEMAYA, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable

fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.