

## The Conch- Katrina NakamuraFINAL.mp3

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:00:05] Hello, my name is Julie Kuchepatov and I'm the host of this podcast, The Conch. We are grooving along on our journey with this podcast, talking about seafood and the ocean. And most importantly, we're showcasing some of the incredible people working in the seafood sector, sharing their journeys, examining the challenges they face, and the triumphs they've achieved. Today we are so excited to have an amazing guest and friend joining us, Dr. Katrina Nakamura. Katrina specializes in responding to tough environmental and social problems in extractive industries. She is the CEO of Sustainability Incubator, which she founded in 2012, and where she works to transform the relationship between extractive industries and the planet by bringing the tools needed for aligned solutions. Welcome and thank you, Katrina, for joining me today on The Conch. Let's do this.

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:00:58] YAY.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:00:58] I'm so excited to have you on here finally. And that we've found time and the right kind of planets aligned to have you on here. So, I'm really excited to learn more about you and about your work. But I do know you quite well. We know each other well.

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:01:12] We are buds. It's such a delight, Julie, to spend time together in this way.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:01:18] It is a delight. So, I want to hear more about a focus of your work, which is on human rights due diligence in seafood supply chains. So, tell us about what that entails. What is that? What is human rights due diligence, and why do we need it?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:01:34] We need it because we're living in a time when we're striving for equality for all people on the planet. But there's a lot of law, so human rights due diligence is actually kind of a legal requirement for companies that are importing or exporting. It's rapidly becoming mandatory around the world. US, Australia, Canada, the EU, Norway, there's many countries that are already in progress with requiring what's called human rights due diligence. So, it's a due diligence and companies are familiar with that. What that means is they check on the product they're buying or the service they're purchasing and how it was made or where it's coming from so that they are aware of any kind of human rights issues and being accountable to them. The idea is then that we're not trading in human rights abuses. And so, the law part goes back to the founding of the United Nations. The countries of the world came together for abolition purposes. We don't hear that too much, but the original reason countries came together was anti-slavery. And so in 2011, there was a new updated agreement to say, hey, that old way we used to look at slavery and we have all of these labor rights conventions and laws and countries have all taken all that stuff up, but we still have this new twist on slavery. It's called modern slavery. There's a new layer of law which kind of gets at the business duty to respect human rights. So, this is where HRDD comes directly from this 2011 protocol. It's called, in short, the Palermo Protocol, but it's a consensus document from the UN Human Rights Council. So, all countries have sort of said, let's do it this way. Governments will protect rights with law and businesses have the duty to respect those rights in their supply chain. So, the service of HRDD that we offer is really true to that requirement. You got to know your supply chain. That means you've got to track your suppliers, know the facilities you're purchasing from, have a list of them with addresses and then get into the conditions in

those facilities. And the point of that is that businesses have this duty to see what might be contributing to labor violations, which are illegal in trade, and then to do what's needed to align with the law and make sure that the people in work making their goods and services are all in conforming conditions. And that's the kind of theory of change for rooting out labor abuse in supply chains. So HRDD.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:04:34] That was a great rundown. So, what are some examples of human rights abuses in seafood supply chains specifically?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:04:42] There are two types. People think about the extreme. So, like on tuna fishing vessels where people go missing at sea due to disagreements which can turn into murder or even malnutrition and lack of ability to get attention for an injury at sea. Getting caught with the hook and being far out at sea and not being able to get attention and the captain doesn't head back in so, you know, you can lose your leg. These things are just the kind of lack of basic workplace norms on a tuna vessel. Those things can be in some circumstances, forced labor. Even safety violations can fall under the legal definition of forced labor. Generally, it means captive, unpaid work. So, when people go fishing that are not from the same country as the vessel, they can fall into it where the broker takes fees upfront and there's debt then people kind of keep picking at their pay or withhold their pay, withhold their documents. That's all considered forced labor. So that's stuff when you have products made with it, the products become hot. They can be banned by the US government with a withhold release order. So that's one form. The other form is where you've got a rural area where say there are divers that are like going for, let's say, spiny lobster. I may give a real example. In Honduras, you get Indigenous communities like Miskito people who have been contributing to you know the spiny lobster we eat that we can buy from, I guess I shouldn't say, but you can buy from all the big supermarkets. But the conditions for the Miskito people in catching those lobster have become fairly extreme to the point where the divers themselves, because of really high mortality catching that spiny lobster, went to the Central American Human Rights Commission and then court and got a decision last year requiring people buying the lobster from them to provide better conditions. So, this is a second type because sometimes in a sector like seafood, the first buyer doesn't feel like they have any obligation to the producers, but in fact, they do. If they're buying the lobster and they're making requests where the divers have to go deeper, dive ten times a day, 15 times a day at 150 feet, 120 feet, and there's no barometric chamber, it can actually become a liability for the first buyer if they're not providing safe conditions. So, this is like a second type of forced labor that we're starting to see really matter in supply chains because that court decision was in favor of the divers last year. So, I hope that gave some sense of it.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:07:37] That makes sense because, so in the second example, just to be clear, it is a type of forced labor, but not in the way that we usually think about it, where they're working voluntarily, but they are working in conditions that are not safe, right?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:07:51] Yeah. And in that case, like, you have suppliers who are selling to North American supermarkets, right? And they end up sending their boats out too. So, it just gets harder and harder to get the lobster to go deeper and deeper. So, there's a certain breaking point. There's several dive fisheries around the world and even in aquaculture, divers like in salmon pens in Chile have really been sort of speaking up for themselves for the last decade and saying, look, we work in really unsafe conditions, our mortality rate's sky high, our disability rate's sky high, and there's no fallback for us if we get injured or, you know, somebody loses their life for the family. So, this has been a real

topic in Latin America for at least ten years, but it's just something that we don't tend to see or talk about. But it definitely falls under the category of what companies are supposed to know for human rights due diligence because when something flags up to a court case, then again, like a trade ban can come into play. So, this is sort of a legal way that the countries are standing up and protecting rights by using their trade laws now to enforce labor and human rights conventions. It's this new twist I was talking about since 2011, using trade and using supply chains instead of just using labor departments and inspections. So, it's a very interesting time, but it's all becoming pretty mandatory and it's very straightforward.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:09:27] This is really helpful. And you mentioned, you know, governments and holding companies accountable through trade. And in your bio, I read that you, quote, "work to transform the relationship between extractive industries and the planet by assisting businesses and governments to become responsive to shifting conditions." So, what are some of these shifting conditions? Is that what you mean when you talk about the Palermo Protocol or, you know, what are they and what are some of the responses that you've seen? Because this is not my expertise at all, but I can see like governments, you know, standing up for these divers, for instance, but then nothing really happens. So how does this all work and what are these shifting conditions and what are some of the responses? And you're a consultant to support these governments and companies coming in. So how does that work?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:10:13] Yeah. So, I'll give you a labor example again. But let's just mention climate first because as we talked about before we got started. You know, I live in Hawaii, and we just lost Lahaina, a community of people and a very important cultural center where I live too. Well, we could say climate change with a wildfire, but also just a series of systems that were unprepared, ill prepared and ready to help the people that were vulnerable when they were needed most. So that's what I mean by shifting conditions. Things change and you have to start looking at how land and water are managed and get to what in my past we've called co-management where people are really kind of understanding the stakes. With, for example, wildfires coming, there's a lot of factors that add up before you get to that kind of vulnerability with wildfires like in Maui, like in California, you have a lot of land development companies taking the water upstream. So, you just have a bunch of things that start to add up and the conditions change and then the business model or the way we live model can change rapidly or there can be some catastrophe like we just experienced here. But with labor, the whole thing is not just in seafood, but I've worked in logging, in mining and agriculture and other sectors too. But what's happened is, you know, in global trade, in a commodity sector like seafood, the people at the retail end are selling goods that were traded on price and availability. So, this is called distributed sourcing. So, the buyers at a big supermarket or a big distribution company, they're buying based only on two things: the price and can I get it now or can get it next Tuesday when my buyer needs it, right? So, it's been like that for a long time. And what happens is the pricing, there's a lot of pressure on it and you get things like COVID, or you get other things that just happen oversupply, like with shrimp right now, right? And then prices can drop, and they can drop below that level of cost. And so what's happened with labor is in a lot of sectors like seafood, the labor has been the only thing that could be kind of squeezed while fuel prices went up and, well, you know, costs kept increasing, you know, say like in shrimp aquaculture, the feed cost can be up to 80% of the cost of production. And then you get sometimes where the trade price, the global trade price, is lower than what it costs to produce the thing, right? So, there's still people making money in the supply chain, but what happens is it can exert this like backwards pressure on labor. So, we've seen this kind of I don't want to oversimplify, but basically a lot of sectors moved

to informal working conditions some time ago. So instead of hiring people and then their name is on the roster and they're getting registered with the government and paying their Social Security and all that, just informal hires, and lots of use of brokers and lots of bringing people from further and further away to remote areas to process fish or to, you know, catch crab and process crab. So, with informal working conditions, what we're going to see right now is where the kind of convenience and cost savings that global industry had with labor is starting to invert. So, things have gone to the point where we do have fairly widespread labor problems. I look for them. I find them. They go together kind of with informal conditions these days. So, we're going to have a, I think, pretty rapid shift in some sectors, including seafood, because the low-cost labor model of the past is not producing the same results it used to. It's now also producing a lot of liability and risk. So that's kind of what I meant by shifting conditions. You can have a model that worked ten years ago that suddenly hits a wall where if you have an import that you sold or you're buying and it gets a withhold release order from the United States and a trade ban, your supply chain gets stuck over labor questions and you can lose, I mean, \$1,000,000 overnight. You have to tell all your customers that the products that you've been selling or you're bringing in is made with forced labor and so labor, what used to be an asset, you know, low labor cost, has become less of an asset and may quickly become a liability. So what I am trying to do with Sustainability Incubator is get ahead of this. We can see these things coming and I've tried to work inside the industry and inside supply chains for almost 30 years now to kind of make the approach more durable and more sort of watching what's happening and more invested in relationships and the sources. So yeah, that's what I'm about and why I offer Labor Safe, which is HRDD or human rights due diligence service.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:15:33] So let's talk about that. You just mentioned the risks of a trade ban. There's shifting conditions, but is this risk of a trade ban and \$100 million loss and reputational risk, is that what's driving some of these changes to improve labor conditions? Is that what you're seeing?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:15:50] Yeah, there's two ends of it, and that's definitely one of the ends that's moving things a lot faster because again, 2011 there was a consensus document and many countries, including the United States, but I mean also Philippines, Indonesia, the ASEAN countries have been really fast moving on this have added law like trade law and forced labor law, anti-trafficking law. So, there's this additional law which is meant to kind of catch and change and sort of professionalize these sectors. So that's all kind of catching up. Yeah, it's kind of inevitable. It's not like, you know, we both worked in the environmental side of seafood sustainability for a long time, you and me, Julie. And there sometimes you're investing a lot in resolving some of these controversies and challenges like, you know, shark bycatch or something, but it can be harder because it gets trendy, you know, funding and priorities shift over time. But labor's not going anywhere. It's just getting more and more clear that countries are applying their existing laws and enacting new laws to be more cautious about how goods are made in the supply chain. So, this is really kind of firming up and it's kind of inevitable. That's why I chose to work on it because it's not one of those things that we can kind of just say we did with labor. You know, there is going to be new bindings and so sorry, I said there were two things. So, there's also more of just a bottom up kind of, you know, countries too that are producing and serving, especially western markets are also trying to professionalize and make sure that when they invest in economic development, like for the global seafood sector or other sectors, that they are taking care of their people. So, it's not only about the hammer, it's also about the carrot locally and trying to make sure that there are really strong regional economic hubs that are set up purely for low prices for western supermarkets, but also so there's a bit of a bottom up thrust behind this as well.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:18:09] Yeah, that's great. So, tell us more about the Labor Safe Screen that you mentioned and your work in screening for conditions in supply chains and training teams to act on these results. What are some of the things you're screening for? What does the screen look like? And then what are these trainings entailing?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:18:26] Thank you for asking. It's really daunting to talk about this sometimes for companies and even governments. Even I think the NGO space it seems kind of daunting. But because the service of Labor Safe is really a human rights due diligence service. The key words in there are actually due diligence. So, companies are very comfortable with due diligence. They do check out their suppliers when they're purchasing, and they do have to track things with their suppliers. They want compliance from their suppliers. So, what we do with Labor Safe is the first rung is compliance. Generally, I get hired when I'm working for companies to look at the relationship between, let's say, a supermarket or a big distribution company and their suppliers. And then we talk to their brokers, their facility managers, we talk to their human resources staff that are at the processing plant, or if we can get all the way back to the farms or vessels. And we want to understand kind of are they in general compliance with what this buyer has said that they want to purchase? So, you'll have a supermarket that has some human and labor rights commitments that we want to make sure that there is an understanding and a relationship there where the suppliers are able to deliver what the buyer needs, but also the buyer is sensitive to the realities of production. So, we look at that first and then the second rung is we're going to actually do the diligence and look in the supply chain. We look independently first at where the concerns are from the government's angle, from human rights authorities. What are they saying about that kind of supply chain? And then we work with the suppliers to get the facts and see what they're doing and whether they've got the kind of protective practices in place. And this is where training starts to come in because a lot of this is just capacity and looking at labor in this new way so they can kind of catch up to the legal framework that they're now living within, right? So, they might not have thought, like I said, that the divers that they're purchasing from have rights in their trade relationship. And now, you know, they'll learn that in training. What exactly does that mean to them, right? So, then the third rung is where we're not going to get to assurance until we've really looked and understood what is going on in production. There's a lot of great things we learn about in production. We do see how things are working together in the supply chain, and there's one of the questions we always ask suppliers is what are you most proud of? So, we get to do some showcasing in that relationship between the supplier, the producer, the human resources people, and the end buyer. They all get to learn what each other is doing and cares about, and so they get to share the good stuff. And addition, we're going to fix the things that might be uncovered, or you know, we might have found some things that need some discussion between the supplier and the producer, or they might need to talk to some local groups who have raised those issues. There may need to be a dialog to create that assurance. We do not deliver empty assurance. We do not write high level statements. We get to the relationship level in the workplace and then we're done. And so, the training part of this is that suppliers initially think we're just going to have them do this long checklist like other people ask them for that their buyers just going to give them more and more and more things to firefight, more and more and more boxes to fill that it has to go to their special hire, that they've got to fill all these document requests for buyers or NGOs. But we don't do it that way. So, in training, what we do is we're building their own internal capacity to understand what human rights due diligence is and to deliver it to this customer and to other customers. So, we have like a tiered level in our training, like Six Sigma, kind of, you can keep going if you want to. You can just do the initial stuff that makes you compliant with your buyer if you

want, or you can go a little bit further and get that capacity in-house so that you're ready to show human rights due diligence for your product to any of your customers. And then further, we do spend most of the time talking about what does it mean to respond, what does that look like? And we have to get really real about that and break it down to things they can do in the course of their business. So, this isn't an aspirational model. It's very, very nuts and bolts. We get down to what they can do in their locale with what they're purchasing and those relationships they have. Labor means a lot to all of these companies. It's often one of the biggest costs of the business, right? So, we're not adding some new thing. We're tweaking and optimizing their response to what they already do so that they're ready externally to show their human rights due diligence, but they also are investing in their supply chain and those relationships.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:23:37] That's a great explanation. Thanks. What are some of the responses? I realize it depends on what the issue is, right? But what are some of the responses? Because I guess the reason why I'm thinking about this is it depends obviously on, you know, let's just talk about like tuna that's caught by a long liner somewhere out in the deep ocean by a vessel that never comes in to port. What happens if some infractions or abuses are uncovered in that type of situation? What are the potential responses that a company could have?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:24:09] Oh, this is a good one because I work a lot on tuna. So, one of the things that really was bugging me last summer was there is still guys in the Pacific at scale, I mean, in the thousands who are still on the same vessel they'd been on since before COVID. Yeah. And I mean thousands because when I tracked out, I saw that the only Pacific island that was offering vaccinations was Marshall Islands to foreign crew. So, the fact is like 90% plus of the tuna vessels in the Pacific, really globally, but I know I can say this with assurance about the Pacific, the issues that happened for foreign crew most have to do with how they got into the job and how they're supposed to get back out. So almost universally, they're working through brokers, usually with a language difference between the flag of the vessel they're on and where they come from. So, what can happen? For example, preferentially, a lot of companies in the Pacific end up with a lot of Indonesian and Filipino crew. And if you have like Indonesian crew members, but the captain and the vessel owner don't speak Bahasa and they don't speak English or Chinese or Korean or Japanese, whatever the language is on board, you're going to have some misunderstandings, but the risk comes in for these tuna crew members when they were recruited in Bahasa by an Indonesian agent and then they get to work and the conditions and the pay are different than what they agreed with the broker. And sometimes fees are taken so they can end up, you know, finishing their work term might be three years. So, imagine they've already committed to be three years on the high seas without going home once, right? But things can happen, and they can end up, you know, their passport and so on are held by the company so they can be on the boat longer than their term and unable to really kind of get that assistance if they're on the high seas. So, to your question, the main thing is to sort of not buy it when people just say, oh, yeah, they're fine, they all have a grievance mechanism. This is not true. I just have to be really bold about this because we see a lot of silver bullet solutions in this space, and no, they don't have a grievance mechanism. We still have guys that have been out there since pre-COVID. We have to get really real about this. But what can be done? So, what we do, for example, is when you start to ask about the contracts and you start to look at the contracts and you get the broker contract, you can see if the crew are penalized for asking to go home. It's often written into the contract. So, there's so much work to be done just on improving and shoring up kind of the contract side of tuna fishing for fishers that we find plenty to do for companies because often these guys come in and they do have like what would be

considered an illegal contract or sometimes no contract that actually puts the whole supply chain at risk, especially the end buyer. So, we tend to work a lot on those agreements because the easiest way to look at labor and this sort of question mark around it, is to ask yourself, okay, if you've got fish moving from A to B to C in the supply chain, then you've got people moving from A to B to C. Wherever you got fish, you got people. So, then we ask, okay, how do these people get to this place? How did they get to this high seas tuna vessel and how are they getting out again? Which ports did they go through? What kind of conditions did they have when they were brokered? What are their end conditions? What's their exit strategy in that contract? So that's what I meant about getting really real. If you peel it down to just the facts about how people move and get to work and get home again, there's so much you can improve without causing really a lot more work for people. And it takes the risk level down to a very low level. Just working that through, we're going to continue to see distress calls and media reports about tuna fishing. We're going to continue to see that for some time. We're going to see it in some other sectors like shrimp because they really do rely so much on informal labor and the costs, the pricing in those sectors like skipjack traded for almost three years under cost and shrimp's got really low prices right now. So, whenever we see the global markets pushing prices down below cost, we know we're going to have labor problems at scale. We will probably see more companies offering this kind of service like we do where we get right down into the nitty gritty of how the labor is being managed on vessels on the high seas. It makes a huge difference to people's lives when they have a secure contract, and they know when they get to go home and they know how much they're going to be paid and they know that they're not going to have fees because the captain doesn't like them. You know what I mean? So that's how we work.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:29:25] That's a really, really important piece of work. And I'm glad that you said that about, you know, as long as we have these global commodities like tuna and shrimp that are trading at under cost, there's no way these people are being treated fairly. There's just no way.

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:29:42] It doesn't go together. A lot of it's math. But we really love silver bullets and golden fleece. Well, we do. It's all that at-scale talk about fixing all this stuff with one global grievance mechanism. I mean, it's not real. It's, it sounds good because I think we see, unfortunately with sustainability, a lot of it gets kind of like to the obscure high-level reporting that sounds good, but it's really a head in the sand approach. The one thing that's fundamentally different about human rights due diligence, is it represents a complete change from the past of corporate social responsibility. So, CSR in the past, each company could make up their own kind of way, and there's some respect in that. You really could differentiate companies and say, hey, that one's doing all this stuff and this one is lagging and not really doing too much unique stuff. But human rights due diligence is like a yardstick. It just says we need everybody to have equal rights and we're going to look for these really basic things that are fundamental and universally enforced, like contract or even a verbal agreement that both sides agree, and that people are paid as agreed and they're not captive in the work. These are in the law universally. So human rights due diligence is not something that folks can kind of just make up their own version. You know what I mean? You sort of just have to do it. And I think we're seeing that because, like I said, it's just becoming mandatory in so many countries. Yeah, I'm hopeful.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:31:14] Well, that's good to hear and shout out. I mean, it's so silly to say that, but those people that are out in the water pre-COVID, what is happening?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:31:24] Yeah. And the thing is, it's because it's very built-in like it costs a lot of money to move guys from A to B, So if you're bringing a crew from Indonesia and you have to fly them to a port in Mexico and then you have to take a tuna vessel there, like I'm now describing what we do here in Hawaii, like they have to go pick up the crew in a foreign country or a foreign port so it can cost like \$10 to \$12,000 to the fishing vessel company to just go pick up a crew, right? So, when you've got people kind of left at sea, sometimes the company is like it's so much cheaper to keep people there, but it's so transgressive. It's also completely illegal. This is where the economics of extractive sectors sometimes become at odds with the individual, right, and with the law from that individual's country or the law of the flag state of the vessel. So, we just have to make sure there's alignment and we have to remember that the law isn't a static thing. It's changing all the time. There's a lot of new law around this and companies are obliged to work within the legal framework. What we really need to see is that the tuna RFMOs like, WCPFC take up a labor measure because it's just ridiculous that they don't have any because we don't have labor department, say, from Indonesia they can go monitor conditions on a Korean vessel on the high seas. We don't even have a Korean Labor Department that can do that, right? So, let's say still the Indonesian crew member, when they do go to port, they might need assistance, they might need medical assistance, they might have been unpaid for two years so far. They might need some other kind of assistance. We need to get that assistance in place in ports.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:33:08] So RFMO, just to clarify, that stands for a Regional Fisheries Management Organization, RFMO. Is there a correlation between environmental sustainability or lack of environmental sustainability and forced labor?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:33:25] Well, this is an interesting question that I get asked a fair amount, and sometimes my own answer changes. So, it's not true that the long liners catching sharks are also abusing their crew, for example. You can't correlate direct practices like the size of the vessel with the abusive conditions because abusive conditions are people-to-people. And I've seen this because I've worked so much with fishing vessels in my life. You can have like a really bells and whistles shiny vessel with kind of a crap of a captain who's a crank and abusive to people, right? Or you could have the reverse. You could have a kind of a older looking vessel that's humble with just a terrific captain or vessel owner, and everybody's paid on time. So, we can't correlate the direct kind of bad practice equals bad practice, bad people. That's villainization and that falls on the, we call it the triangle, the victim, villain, hero. Like, if you hear people doing that, it's often because they want to be the hero. And so, you can just fix it by doing this one thing for environment. And it's also kind of co-opting. Sometimes environment tries to co-opt human rights like, well, but just stick it into conservation will be on top of it, so it'll be done. No. So I don't believe in the direct correlation, but I do see that with the way supply chains are managed from the inside and the way pricing works, there is an absolute correlation in externalizing these kinds of impacts from business, right? So environmental impacts from business, labor impacts from business. There has been a kind of a pressure on especially distributors to kind of shed those impacts. So, they're asked by their supermarket customers or import customers to say everything's good. So, they say everything's good. And then the pressure from the market to say everything's good pushes back. So, then the distributors buying stuff that they know there's some issues, right? They know they're buying on price; they know they're buying under cost, but they have to kind of like shed equally the environmental and the social problems so that everything looks good. And so that's where I think they're correlated is in this kind of story the market tells itself about what it's buying. I think it would prefer to just kind of have one giant certification for everything, even if it's not real.



**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:35:52] Yes, I would agree.

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:35:56] Yeah, that's deadly because then you're not only shedding these things as though they're not real for people but you're also stopping the incentive to go look. You see what I'm saying? And that's, I think, is doubly exploitive of the people and the fish in the sea.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:36:11] Well, that makes a lot of sense. Thank you. Because I also have heard and something that I don't believe is, for instance, that, you know, there's a high incidence of drug trafficking on vessels that are also illegally harvesting fish. So, I think there is trying to be an argument that there's a correlation between illegal activities across the board. So, I was curious what your thoughts were on that.

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:36:34] Well, there are, so Interpol, I always look to them. I always look to the authorities who define these things so they will link human and drug smuggling. They will link IUU fishing sometimes too, but they also blame white collar crime. There was a day where people were like aww those bad fishermen. But these days, the real authorities in these spaces, especially Interpol, they're talking about the executive office and they're saying, no, it's the expediciencies, the decisions that are being taken in the boardroom or in the accountant's office or the lawyer's office or the crisis firm's office that are burying these risks. And sometimes we only find out about them when shareholders sue later because there was some kind of controversy or something and they were told everything was good. They are linked, but not necessarily at the frontline, but sometimes in the way the business is being done to maximize its profit and minimize its costs.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:37:36] Gotcha. So, I'm going to change the topic a little bit. You also are an implementer of Fishery Improvement Projects. Are you implementing some now or is that a thing that you did in the past and are not focused on?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:37:50] I'm involved with FIPs. I've had some longtime customers who are hosting FIPs, and I do support those FIPs and I also have a couple that where the entire supply chain is involved, so if it's very special like that, I will get involved with FIPs, but I'm still kind of pursuing an older idea of FIPs, where the companies really were investing in the fishery and showcasing those investments and trying to make their fishery better. FIPs have changed a lot as well, but yeah, I still am involved.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:38:21] I want to establish what a Fishery Improvement Project is just for people that they don't know. But it really what sounds right, the project to improve a fishery and it's kind of a time bound thing, there has to be money attached to it like a budget, there has to be a work plan. It has to be assessed in a way that tells you what needs to be done and then, again, like a work plan to do it and money to supplement it. That's pretty much what it is, right?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:38:50] Yeah. So, at the beginning, I mean, if I may associate myself to back when FIPs started. I worked at SFP and then WWF and SFP both kind of claimed the FIP thing. So, from the beginning it's always been a kind of a conservation organization partner to supermarkets kind of phenomenon. But the original idea was, at least where I worked at SFP, was that companies would invest in their supply chain. So, I've always been about that, right? That's like my whole career, I mean in this area, I've got other parts to it, but I've tried to work with companies that were investing in their supply chain for durability, right, for the environment and people. So, I love the idea and I was, I

think among the first to go, you know, service the companies that wanted to do a Fishery Improvement Project, right? So, they would get together with their suppliers. We would assess the fishery against the MSC standard. We'd say, okay, it looks like there's these places where it could be stronger, but also not just what does it look like from that perspective, but also what do you guys working on? Like what do you think is important? Because when you ask fishers what they see, they tell you what the changes are, where they need support, where they need a tagging study, where they need to change their gear, you know, where they need more support of the port. So, I was involved with FIPs in that I would call now old school way the first ten years, but they have become a lot more kind of market oriented, meaning they're almost, I would call it almost exclusively a compliance tool for supermarkets that have a commitment to buy fish that looks like it's MSC certified, but it's not MSC certified yet. So, there's another version of FIPs, which I would have originally seen is the WWF way, which is the thing only exists to get the fishery closer to MSC certification, Marine Stewardship Council. And so this project is 100% about that and it's like an onramp to that certification. So, I've always seen it as a bit more than that but in many parts of our market it's only that.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:40:55] That's great. And I do also ascribe to that it is a tool to improve fisheries, not a tool to become MSC certified. So that is my also take on that. Then all of this just to set the stage for my next question, which is working with you, you and I kind of joined together with you leading the development of a report on women's influence in Fishery Improvement Projects. And so, I'm curious, what did you learn and what surprised you about this report for this analysis and survey?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:41:26] I loved it. Here we are, thinking ourselves fairly strong babes, right? Everything changes when you put a gender lens on, right? I had no idea that we were going to see things that we didn't see before and that they'd be fantastic things. So, what we did, Julie, is we wanted to understand about how women are exerting influence in fisheries and in particular to drive things forward. So, we were looking at, you know, does it make a difference how many women are involved or how are they working to achieve progress towards sustainability, right, especially we were thinking about environmental sustainability when we started. So, we looked at FIPs, right? So, I built a database of all the FIPs and then we sent out a survey request to all of the providers. And then we got our responses, and we asked a bunch of questions just basically about who are the visible women, what are they doing? Who do you consider influential and very simple and very empirical. And we got some incredible responses. And what changed my sightline fundamentally from their responses was that across the board, the women who were seen as being the most influential for progress were the ones who were in it at the frontline. I mean, many kinds of roles, but in particular the women, for example, who were fisheries observers and bringing their observations at sea back into the decision making. The women who were representing a co-op and going to like national committee and then bringing back not just news but skills and, you know, bringing everybody up along with her. These kinds of roles that women were playing and using the FIPs in completely innovative, unthought of ways kind of blew me away. I'm in FIPs, I hadn't seen it without specifically putting a gender lens on it. So, I'm very honored to have had that opportunity because it showed me all of these powers that women have been applying in these very kind of almost quiet ways. And I want to stress that because we also saw that the women who are having success were also fenced in and there were barriers all over the place that weren't helping unleash the innovation but were actually kind of stymying it. So, we heard from the respondents where they saw some barriers as well. And those are really important to change because those that were changing the game, literally changing the fishery, were having this success where other FIP's weren't. Like, you know, one of our big takeaways,

Julie, was that the FIPs that self-identified as women-led were having this improvement on the governance of the fishery that the other FIPs were not. That was very striking. Most of the FIPs on fisheryprogress.org, the platform, if you look at their score changes since they began on governance, fisheries governance, which is principle three of the MSC standard, there isn't much change. A lot of them just haven't made changes there. But the women led FIPs in our cohort had made progress and it was just a kind of a night and day difference that, again, we would not have seen without applying that gender lens.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:45:01] I think that's a really good point and I should mention, you know, this paper, we want to get it published. It's in peer review and so definitely we'll keep the audience and SAGE's observers up to date on what's happening with it. There's a lot of thinking right now kind of in the community about what to do about stalled FIPs, stalled Fishery Improvement Projects, and how to kind of kickstart those and jumpstart those. So, I think this is a paper that will really be able to help almost lead that discussion to like, hello, why don't we put some effort around supporting, you know, these women playing these roles which previously, you know, are not being supported. They're being almost hindered in a way and maybe we could kickstart some of these stalled FIPs. So, I will definitely keep everybody posted on that. So, I ask this question of pretty much everybody that comes on the show considering, you know, your great answer and your great work on the Women's Influence in Fishery Improvement Projects paper, SAGE is about promoting gender equality in the seafood industry. As a woman who's been working in this industry for, like you said, around 30 years, if not more, I would love if you could share one or two aspects of the industry itself and its culture that you consider contributes to inequality. And what are some of the things the industry can do to lessen these inequalities?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:46:22] Oh, fantastic question. Well, okay, I've been watching your vertical trajectory this last year with SAGE, and I think you're like an embodiment of what happens when a woman is a leader and is supported in being a leader. Because I think what we've seen is barriers where women are maybe the more competent person in the group because of their training or background or skills or their proximity to the topic, maybe they came from a community or a work background that is very pertinent to the topic. Often, I've seen it over and over again, it's happened to me, women are sidelined and their contribution to the conversation and to the plan to the decisions is underweighted relative to the men in the room. And this has consequences. It holds things back. The power is real that women have. We just looked at it in an empirical paper. It was fun to measure it, but we can see that there are these sorts of forces and I think partly it's because the nature of these sectors, these extractive sectors, is so aggressively about, I don't want to call it exploitative, but it is about getting the most for the least in some ways out to the end user. So as women, sometimes we really want to fix things and the funding, and the approach is more about we'll just say it's fixed. And we do see sometimes in our sector this approach where the women's contributions might be actually more practical than tactical in the sense of let's actually take the two steps, we need to fix this thing or address this thing instead of the one step of just saying it's fixed. But we see the elevation of men who will just say it's fixed, you know what I'm saying? And then sometimes the suppression of women's voices who are saying, but wait, we could do it this other way and we can really fix it. I think that we have held back the progress, the durability, not just for companies, but even the sustainability part. I feel like it's pretty short changed because it's missing this kind of, fire, this optimism, this stick-to-itiveness, this strategy that women bring. We can see it in the leadership of the organizations at the NGOs, and we can see it, of course, in the sector. And that's changing but it needs to change a lot.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:48:58] Yeah, I think so, too. I think you're right. And what you basically describe is uplifting the voices, right, of people into these leadership and kind of strategic discussions and not only uplifting these voices, but also acknowledging that maybe we do need to go the extra step instead of just one step, right? So, we're friends and you mentioned that you've been following SAGE's trajectory and we're really about uplifting and amplifying voices in the seafood industry and so I would love to give you the opportunity to uplift and amplify someone. So, who would you like to and why?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:49:32] I have an angel. I have a colleague named Angel Ysik. She's from Mindanao in the Philippines. And she is all that. And Angel has been working at the front line in her community, but also around the world to, well, she does a few things. One of them is training in ending gender violence and another is really being there at the front line for producers and doing the hard work of interviews and listening and understanding their concerns so that when steps are taken, for example, in the labor things I've described today, they're not taken based on what we think fishers want or what we decide they're experiencing or what markets need but actually coming from the people in work who need to make money as well. So, Angel is really gifted. She's a Filipina and everybody should hire Angel and I would love to lift her name. Thanks for the opportunity.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:50:31] Awesome. Yeah. So, we will definitely link to something that shows us where to find Angel's work. If it's online. I would love to be able to link to that and if people more information about what she's doing and why she's your angel. What's next for you and the Sustainability Incubator and how can we find you online?

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:50:51] I have a website called Sustainability-Incubator.com so you can find us there. And I'm on LinkedIn. You can find me there as well. And we're still doing a lot of work here on shrimp and tuna. So that's kind of taking up a lot of time. So sometimes we work kind of confidentially inside the supply chain, so you might not hear of us, but it doesn't mean we're not working to improve conditions throughout these two parts of our seafood sector. Where I'd like to go is I want to get back a bit to my roots with the Sustainability Incubator and be of service to decision making on land and water, like again with Maui and the wildfires, it's just critical that we start to bring our perspectives together and manage things in a more durable way together is just critical. We're starting to see how fast things can change. So that's where my heart's going, and I'm thrilled to have your time and I've been fanning your flames so congratulations SAGE team.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:51:53] Thank you so much, Dr. Katrina, for joining me today on The Conch and I just can't tell you how excited I am to A. finally have you on the podcast and B. have you share your expertise, which is really, really vast and really great. Thank you so much for your time and for all you do to support these people that are, you know, working in some crazy conditions, some inhumane, oftentimes, conditions to bring us seafood. So, thank you.

**Katrina Nakamura** [00:52:19] Mahalo Julie, Thanks, Crystal.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:52:25] Thank you for tuning into The Conch podcast. It would be amazing if you could take just two seconds to leave a review and share this podcast with your ocean loving friends. Thank you.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:52:38] The Conch podcast is a program of Seafood and Gender Equality, or SAGE. Audio production, engineering, editing, mixing, and sound design by Crystal Sanders-Alvarado for Seaworthy. The theme song "Dilation" is written

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