



ISEALI  
CYPRUS



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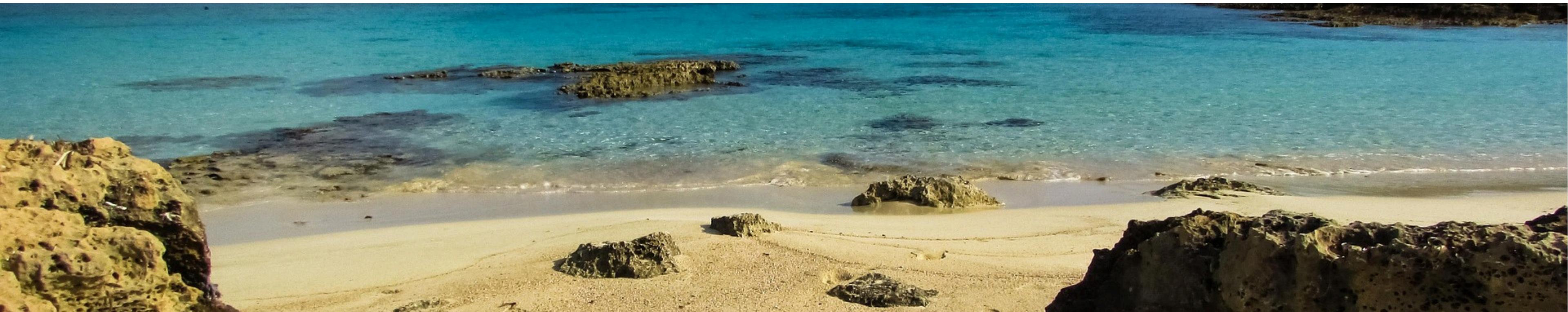
TALES THAT INSPIRE: SHARING  
STORIES TO PROTECT OUR SEA

Empowering Women in Cyprus to Connect with and Protect the Sea

# PURPOSE



- Encourage women to reflect on their personal relationship with the sea.
- Empower them to create and share stories that inspire marine conservation.
- Encourage Cypriot women to share their personal and family stories related to the sea.
- Highlight how storytelling can strengthen community ties and promote marine conservation.
- Inspire action to protect the sea by building on the wisdom and traditions of the past.



# IMPORTANCE OF THE SEA FOR CYPRUS



**Economic:** Tourism, fishing, marine-based businesses

**Cultural:** Festivals, folklore, traditional fishing practices

**Environmental:** Diverse marine ecosystems, critical for global health

## Current Threats to the Sea

Pollution: Plastic waste, oil spills, sewage runoff

Overfishing: Depleting fish stocks, harming biodiversity

Climate Change: Ocean warming, acidification, loss of species

 The sea has always been a central part of Cypriot life: not only for food and income but also for social and cultural identity.

 Women have played a quiet but powerful role in preserving these traditions.

 Today's challenge: environmental pressures and modernisation threaten these traditions, but stories can be a tool to preserve and protect them.

# IMPORTANCE OF THE SEA FOR CYPRUS



## Marine Ecosystem Services

The sea provides critical ecosystem services, including food production, climate regulation, and oxygen production (50% of the oxygen we breathe comes from the ocean). Coastal tourism and fishing account for a significant portion of Cyprus' GDP.

## Marine Conservation Strategies

**Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):** Designated zones where marine life is protected from human activity.

**Sustainable Fishing Practices:** Quotas and gear restrictions to prevent overfishing.

**Community Engagement:** Local participation improves compliance with conservation rules.



# WHY WOMEN MATTER IN COASTAL TRADITIONS

**Women have always been central to the survival of fishing communities**

Knowledge keepers of fishing methods and seafood preparation

Silent leaders in organising local events and festivals

Role models for younger generations in sustainability and conservation



# ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN COASTAL COMMUNITIES



Traditionally, women supported fishermen by mending nets and preparing food.

Some women participated directly in fishing, particularly in smaller coastal communities.

Knowledge of tides, seasonal fishing, and safe harvesting was passed down from mother to daughter.



*A women's cooperative in Limassol produces handmade jewelry from shells, combining art and sustainability.*

# THE ROLE OF CYPRIOT WOMEN IN COASTAL TRADITIONS



## Cultural Legacy

### **Women have traditionally supported fishing communities in various ways**

Preparing and preserving fish (e.g., salting, drying).

Passing down knowledge about seasonal fishing patterns.

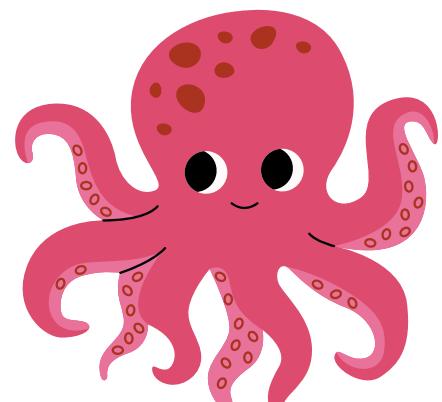
Maintaining fishing nets and repairing boats.

## Festivals and Traditions

Women have played a key role in organizing village festivals celebrating the sea (e.g., blessing the boats).

Songs, poems, and dances related to the sea often originated with women.

*In some Cypriot villages, grandmothers still teach younger women how to clean and cook octopus in traditional ways, preserving methods passed down for generations.*



# THE ROLE OF CYPRIOT WOMEN IN COASTAL TRADITIONS



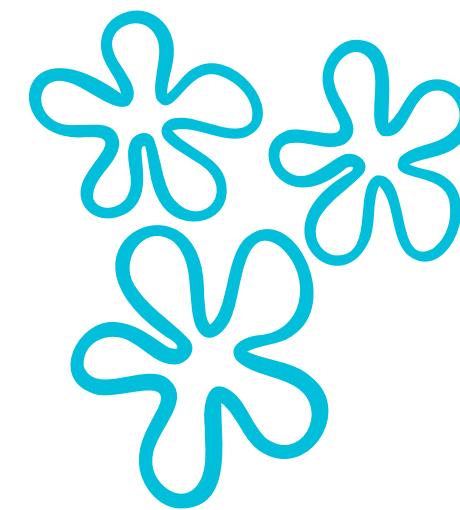
## Economic and Social Influence

Women have traditionally been responsible for managing the household economy, including selling fish at local markets.

They have often been the bridge between the fishing community and the larger society, promoting local products and sustaining fishing-related businesses.

Today, some women are leading cooperatives that promote sustainable fishing and marine protection.

*A women-led cooperative in Larnaca helps local fishing families process and market their catch while promoting eco-friendly fishing practices.*



# THE ROLE OF CYPRIOT WOMEN IN COASTAL TRADITIONS

## Sustainability and Environmental Awareness

Traditionally, Cypriot women have respected natural fishing cycles, understanding when certain fish should be left to spawn.

This wisdom aligns with modern sustainability efforts (e.g., marine conservation zones).

Women can lead efforts to teach younger generations about sustainable fishing and environmental protection.

*A group of women in Paphos started a beach cleanup program that also teaches young girls about marine ecosystems and pollution.*



# CHALLENGES TO PRESERVING TRADITIONS



## Environmental Challenges

Pollution from tourism and plastic waste.

Overfishing and illegal fishing.

Climate change affects fish stocks and marine biodiversity.

## Social Challenges

**Generational disconnect:** fewer young women involved in fishing traditions.

**Economic pressures:** industrial fishing replacing small-scale fishing.

**Lack of formal education** on marine conservation and traditional practices.



# STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR PRESERVATION AND CHANGE



## Why Storytelling Matters

Oral traditions have been a key part of Cypriot history for centuries. Also, personal stories create emotional connections and a sense of identity and when people hear a story, they are more likely to act than when they receive facts alone.

## What Makes a Powerful Story

**Authenticity:** Personal and emotional connection to the story.

**Relevance:** Linked to traditions, the sea, and local culture.

**Message:** A clear takeaway about why preserving traditions matters.

*A woman from Limassol tells how her grandmother taught her to weave fishing nets and how those same nets are now used in a local art installation raising awareness about overfishing.*

# STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR PRESERVATION AND CHANGE



## Types of Stories to Share

**Family Stories:** Stories about fishing trips, preparing seafood, and teaching sustainable practices.

**Community Stories:** How villages came together to protect the local fishing industry.

**Environmental Stories:** How pollution or overfishing has changed the sea and how the community responded.

**Inspirational Stories:** How a woman's personal actions led to positive change (e.g., restoring a beach, advocating for sustainable practices).



# EXAMPLES OF INSPIRING STORIES

## Personal Story

A grandmother in Latchi taught her granddaughter how to clean and cook sea bass using a recipe passed down through five generations. The granddaughter now runs a seafood restaurant that emphasises sustainable fishing.

## Community Story

In a small village near Ayia Napa, a group of women organised a campaign to stop illegal fishing in protected waters. They partnered with local authorities and fishermen to establish no-fishing zones.

## Sustainability Story:

A women's group in Limassol started a project to repurpose old fishing nets into reusable shopping bags, reducing plastic waste and raising awareness about marine pollution.



# INTERACTIVE SESSION – SHARING STORIES



## Small Group Discussion

Share a personal or family story about fishing, the sea, or coastal traditions.

Reflect on how this story connects to identity and culture.

Discuss how these stories could inspire action or preserve local traditions.

Let's use the **Experiences, Memories and Traditions Sheet**  
to reflect on the stories women carry on to the next  
generations.



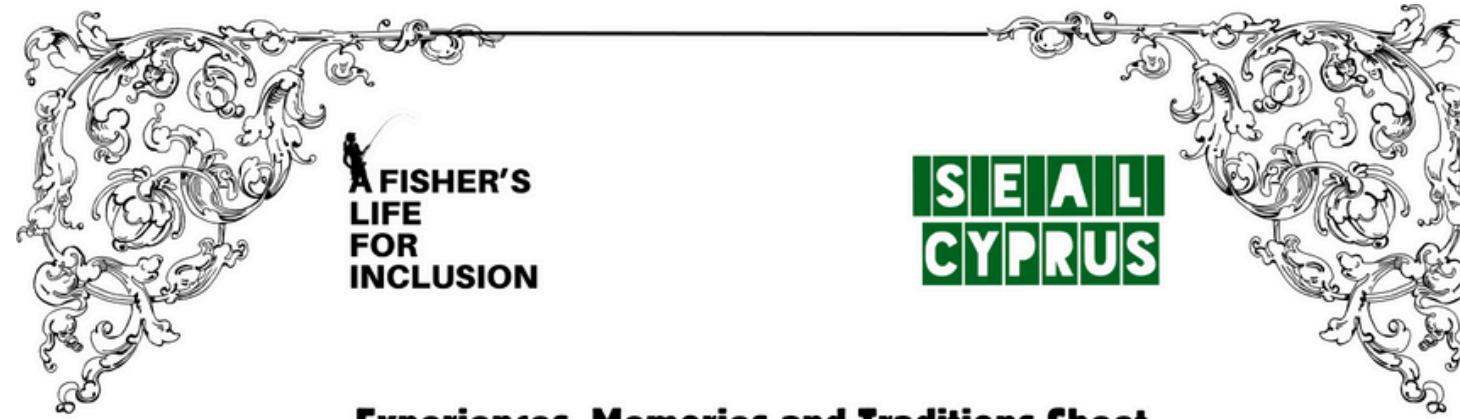
*What is your earliest memory of the sea or fishing?*

*How have your family's fishing traditions changed over time?*

*What lessons from the past could help protect the sea today?*

*What challenges does your community face related to the sea?*

# EXPERIENCES, MEMORIES AND TRADITIONS SHEET



# COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION



## Preserving coastal traditions through storytelling and community action

### Why:

- To protect and pass down coastal traditions by embedding them in the community's cultural framework.
- To strengthen community identity through shared stories and experiences.
- To create a sustainable legacy that future generations can build upon.

### Community as a Knowledge Hub:

Coastal traditions are not just personal stories; they are part of a shared cultural identity. Local communities have traditionally served as centres of knowledge, where skills like fishing, net mending, and seafood preparation are passed down informally through daily life and communal gatherings.

Bringing people together to share and record stories helps to keep these traditions alive.



# COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

**Preserving coastal traditions through storytelling and community action**



## **Intergenerational Exchange**

Encourage older women to teach younger generations traditional fishing techniques and seafood preparation.

Create intergenerational events where grandmothers, mothers, and daughters can engage in storytelling and practical demonstrations (e.g., how to salt fish or repair nets).

Build a sense of pride and responsibility among younger generations to continue these traditions.

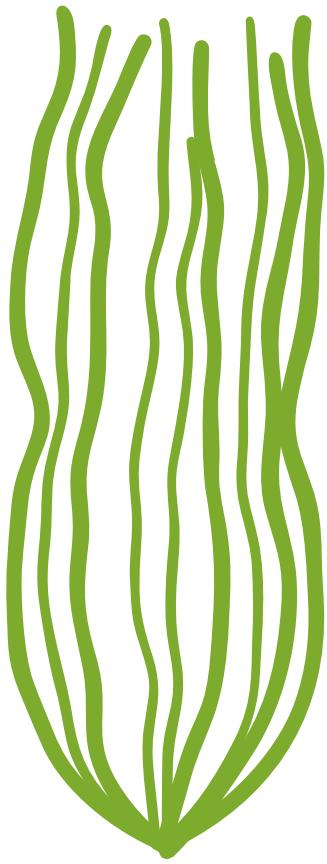
## **Why Preservation Matters**

**Maintains cultural identity:** the sea is not just a source of food but part of Cyprus' history and identity.

**Strengthens community bonds:** shared stories create a sense of belonging and pride.

**Supports sustainable development:** traditional fishing practices often align with modern conservation goals.

**Builds resilience:** a community grounded in tradition and shared values is more likely to withstand economic and environmental challenges.



# CREATING A LEGACY THROUGH STORYTELLING

## Why Storytelling is a Powerful Legacy Tool

### Oral Traditions Have Always Been the Heart of Cypriot Culture

Before written records, stories were how Cypriots passed down knowledge about the sea, fishing seasons, and safe practices.

Storytelling helped communities survive and adapt to environmental and social changes.

Fishing knowledge was historically passed down from mother to daughter, ensuring generational continuity.

### Emotional Connection to Traditions

Stories create a personal and emotional link between generations.

When young people hear stories from their grandmothers about fishing and the sea, they develop a sense of pride and responsibility.

Emotional connection increases the likelihood of passing on these traditions and protecting the environment.



# REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION



- What common themes emerged from the stories shared today?
- How have women's roles in fishing and coastal traditions changed over time?
- What challenges do you see in preserving these traditions today?
- How can storytelling inspire younger generations to care for the sea?
- How can the community work together to ensure these traditions continue?



# THANK YOU



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