

# **Emerging conditions and transformations of Fishery women's entrepreneurship in Japanese coastal communities**

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# Background

- Fisheries women groups (FWG) in Japan were created within the FCA (Fisheries Cooperative Association) in the late 1950s.
- Their membership consisted of volunteers and their actions were to support fishing families.
- Later they developed more entrepreneurship activity with the use of local seafood (eg. processing, fish restaurants, organization of festivals, etc.).
- However their numbers of groups and members decreased probably due to the unpopularity of volunteer activity and marginal and less lucrative .
- Young women chose to work in other industries.
- So the groups continue to suffer from a lack of young labor.

# Recent transformations?

- Young women seem to be more interested in developing their own economic activity within the communities.
- New activities seem to be more economically profitable than in the past.
- The case study of *Akoya Hime company* in Uwajima, Ehime prefecture will illustrate these first transformations.
- The young leader of this company is searching to improve its management to support the development of the community by involving the other local fishery women's groups.

# An overview of Akoya Hime business



# Akoya Hime case study

- Famous pearl farming area
- Sales of pearls declined
- Women's group of FCA decided to transform its activity



In 2005, 19 members of FCA Fisheries women's group decided to establish a processing group.

In 2007, the small group became a corporate cooperative.



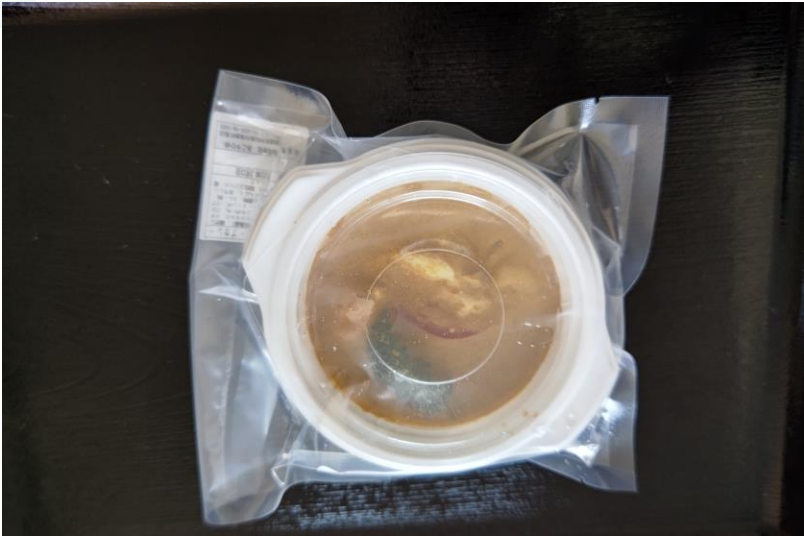
# Evolvements of the activity

In 2014 it became a joint stock company

- Construction of the processing plant including a restaurant and experimentation facilities for tourists or students.
- Young people were employed



# There products





# Current Situation



# Current Situation

- *Hiroko* is trying to make tough business decisions at times, while still keeping in mind the passion for the community and the local fishing industry that her mother Tsukimi has cherished.
- *Hiroko* is consulting and supporting fisher women's groups of FCA in other areas of Ehime prefecture.



# Discussion

- Young women in their 40s are gradually emerging as entrepreneurs in the local fishing industry and community.

However,

- 1) Hiroko often earns respect from other women groups, specifically older women, but men often do not listen to the voice of young women.
- 2) She could join the FCA as a recognition of her contribution to the well-being of the entire community, but this still not allow for women.

Japan's fishing communities must have a bright future, and we must acknowledge and profit from the changing conditions and changes in the communities, such as the one in this instance.

**Thank you very much**