

MATY Ndaou (KAYAR) - TRANSCRIPTION (EN)

00:00:00

Julie: I'm going to explain a little bit about what we're going to do with the images, and I'm going to ask you to give your consent. Is that okay? Because it's important for us to make sure that you agree to talk with us.

Reporter (male): It's recording.

Julie: Oh, ok. So, let me explain. We are journalists. We are investigating on the situation of the fishery, the impact of the factory here in Kayar, and the overall dynamics and concerns, of the women fish processors, especially. So, it is important for us to record you. We'll use the camera during this interview, and we may use part of the interview in a video or several videos, which can be put online, on the Internet, broadcast on television or on the radio, everywhere in the world. So, I'd like to ask you if you agree to be filmed and recorded.

Maty Ndaou: Ok, I agree.

Julie: Now, can you tell me your name and your activity?

Maty Ndaou: My name is Maty Ndaou. I am the president of the women fish processors, here in Kayar.

Julie: I am Julie. How long have you been doing this?

Maty Ndaou: It has been a long time. I was 13 years old when I started working. I was 13 years old. So it's been a long time, and now I'm 63.

Julie: Tell me about your work. What does it consist of?

Maty Ndaou: Fish processing. This work creates jobs, really. Because processed fish products are richer. It's richer food, really. Because there's a lot of protein. And these products are shipped all over the world. Because here, we have an international agreement to ship to France, Italy, Spain, everywhere. In Asian countries... Our products are shipped all over the world, even in the region here. Braised fish especially stay here, in the region. Braised fish are shipped to Togo, to Benin... Fish processing is really varied and rich. Really. Processed fish can even cure illnesses. Because, for the food of the small children, we take the ketiak, we ground it into flour and we mix it with other ingredients to make the paste to feed our children. So, processed fish is very nutritious, really.

Julie: Ok. How many people work in the fish processing industry, here in Kayar?

Maty Ndaou: 325 people were working here. But there is a shortage. We have no more work. We are becoming poor because we have no more work. 325 women used to work here. But since the

shortage, only a quarter of them, really. Because there is no more fish. Because fishing boats take a part of it, pirogues take another part, and the fishmeal factory buys from them. The factory is our rival. Because when we work, if I go to the port in order to buy fish, as soon as I get there, I ask: "How much is it?" and they tell me: "It's for the Barna factory." Everywhere, it's for Barna. They take the product and they process it. And with their processing technique, if you want one kilo of fishmeal, you have to process five kilos first. Five kilos of fish. Five kilos of raw material to get one kilo of fishmeal.

00:05:27

And this fishmeal is not for the people, no! They export their product and they sell it for poultry, pigs, fish... To feed them. And we remain poor. Why? They destroy our sea to feed livestock, and our body really lacks animal protein, because, as I told you, fish contains lots of protein. So, really, we don't even have enough to eat. We have nothing. Even for thiéboudiène, we have nothing. The Senegalese dish. So, really, that's why I told you that there were 325 workers, and now, there are less than a hundred. Because all the women have given up. They stay at home, or they go and find another job because they have no more work. Our job is already threatened. We don't work anymore. We are suffering, really. Because they are heads of households, they do a lot at home, but now they can't. Our job is threatened, so we become poor. Because a person who doesn't work doesn't have any money to feed her family.

Julie: And what do you think would be the solution to this dramatic situation?

Maty Ndaou: The solution is to close the factories. To close the factories and see what happens. Close the factories and stop the fishing boats. Stop the licenses. Freeze the licenses and stop the fishmeal factories too.

Julie: Why stop the licenses?

Maty Ndaou: Because fishing boats catch small pelagic fish, which we have to process. Really. They catch the small pelagics and go and sell them in Europe. You see? Even our sea is threatened. The sea is threatened. I told you earlier that fishing boats were causing havoc. As for the small pirogues that are with us, they are the ones who go fishing and what they bring back is bought by the fishmeal factories. So we stay like that.

Julie: But does the factory buy at a different price?

Maty Ndaou: Of course! Their price is higher!

Julie: How much higher?

Maty Ndaou: If we pay 5,000 for example, they pay 10,000, because they have more money than we do. Really, fish processing has fallen apart.

Julie: And here, this place, what is it?

00:09:51

Maty Ndau: This is an improved facility. Selling before producing. We produce to order. If people come and order salt-cured dried fish, or dried emperor fish, or any other fish requested, we'll buy fish from the port and process it here. These are two different jobs. Because this is a cooperative, a GIE, but over there, it is individual. There are two cooperatives there, two GIEs.

Julie: GIE? I don't understand that word.

Maty Ndau: GIE.

Other man: Economic Interest Group.

Julie: Ah, ok.

Reporter (male): Can we put the keys down? Because it's making noise.

Julie: Really?

Reporter (male): No problem, don't worry. I just noticed it.

Julie: Sorry, ok, ok. So, over there, it's individual. And here, it's... Alright, ok. Has it been around for a while? Because it looks new.

Maty Ndau: What?

Julie: This has been around for how many years?

Maty Ndau: It works well. But, since then... Here, we take fish from the port, but since December, we have received orders, so we went to the port but we haven't seen any fish yet. We have to wait for the boats to arrive so we can buy the goods. We currently have 5.5 tons of orders. But we have to wait for the boats to arrive before we start working.

Julie: Alright. And I suppose the economic impact of the fish shortage affected everyone? It affected many families. And we hear a lot about young people leaving.

Maty Ndau: Illegal immigrants? Of course. A lot of young people are leaving. Really, this is astounding. We can't find any fish. We don't have food anymore. That's why they leave illegally, to find money for the family. Because we can't stay like this. We don't work anymore. Because the mother, sometimes... If they go to sea and they don't catch any fish, then, the mother... "Mom, I didn't catch anything today." So the mother will take care of the daily expenses, the mother will buy clothes, the mother will buy school supplies. The mother even gives clothes to her husband. So the women are very tired, here. All the women. Even to go to the hospital, the mother will manage. The mother manages everything.

Julie: But women don't leave. Women stay here. Why? Why don't women leave as well?

Maty Ndau: Women leaving illegally? Some women, some girls are leaving. Girls are leaving, because mothers cannot leave. They cannot leave, no.

Julie: Why?

Maty Ndau: Because their husbands live here. They can't leave. Because if you have a family, if you have children here, only the girls will leave, but not the mother, no. It is forbidden! This is family! There are even other people who come and ask for help to sustain another family. Really, the mother manages everything.

00:15:00

Julie: Do you have children?

Maty Ndau: Of course.

Julie: And do you have daughters?

Maty Ndau: Yes.

Julie: How old are they? Are they grown up or are they still in school?

Maty Ndau: I had nine children. But now, I only have seven. Two have passed away. Now, I have seven left. Four boys and three girls. My three daughters are already married and gone from home.

Julie: They don't work in fish processing?

Maty Ndau: No. One lives in Touba. Another lives in Kare. The third one too. She is staying with her husband, on the other side, in another neighborhood. The four boys left. They all have left.

Julie: They don't live in Senegal anymore?

Maty Ndau: No, they have left. They don't live here anymore. They are... How shall I put it? They all live in this country...

Julie: Is it in Europe?

Maty Ndau: No. Yes, they live in Spain.

Julie: In Spain.

Maty Ndau: Yes, in Spain. They all live in Spain. And that's good for me! I have no strength left. And the sea doesn't bring me anything. Now, they are the ones who sustain the daily expenses. But not all the women. Not all women! Because it's difficult. It's really difficult.

Julie: And how did you feel when your first son left?

Maty Ndao: I couldn't sleep. He stayed in the pirogue for a week. One week. And one day, I heard the phone. He called me. He said, "We have arrived, Mom!" Thank God. My son himself took care of transporting the others. You know? Now, the four live there. What can we do? We have to find solutions, because it's really hard. We can't find fish anymore, so we must find solutions to feed ourselves. We need to find solutions for our lives. That's life.

Julie: Thank you. I'll just ask my colleague if he has a question.

Reporter (male): Yes, I have. I want to insist on a couple of points that I don't think she really wrapped up in her responses. I would like you to ask her if... Did you ask what this place was?

Julie: Yes.

Reporter (male): Maybe ask why there's so little activity right now. I know she said that they were waiting for the boats but there is less activity now than there was before. But maybe start with: "Why is there so little activity right now?"

Julie: So, regarding where we are now, why is there so little activity here now?

Maty Ndao: What?

Julie: Why is it so empty? It is completely empty. Why isn't there more activity?

Maty Ndao: Here or there?

Julie: Here.

Maty Ndao: The boats have not yet arrived. We are waiting for the boats to come. We are waiting for the boats to come. We have a client. A fishmonger who works over there at the port. If there is fish, he will put it in refrigerators and bring it here. Because here, we process fish. Good quality raw material. It has been an improved facility since 2014. So here, we work according to the go-forward principle. Do you know the go-forward principle?

00:20:08

Julie: No. Please explain.

Maty Ndao: The entrance is the door. Then, receipt, storage, curing... No, salting first, and then curing. We follow the go-forward principle to get a good quality product. Even the team that has to work, they wash their hands first then they wear those gloves. First, they take a face mask from these red boxes, before they touch the fish. Here, we provide quality work. Because quality starts with the product, the raw material. And the premises here must also be clean. The salting boxes are here. We process the fish, and after processing it, there will be a lot of blood here. But

after we process it, because tuna has a lot of blood, but once we are done processing it, everything will be clean. We wash everything. We wash everything so that everything is clean. Even the equipment that we work with has to be clean. So, that's the go-forward principle. It's a matter of cleanliness, even for the employees who work here. It's all a matter of behavior. We also have a quality control, who takes care of the quality of everything. So here, it's not the same as anywhere else. And the DITP gave us the agreement. An international agreement. Every year, the agreement is renewed.

Reporter (male): Is there less activity here now than before, when it opened, for example, in 2014? Has there been progressively less and less activity here? And when you answer, always look at Julie.

Julie: As if I were the one asking.

Maty Ndau: No, there is no less activity. I told you that the tuna boats haven't received licenses yet. The Minister must grant licenses to the tuna boats, the boats that bring in the tuna. They are all up there so they have to be licensed first before going to sea. Once they get their licenses, then we will have a lot of fish here. Five boats have already applied and are ready. So we are waiting for the boats to come and buy these fish to work. There's no problem here. Because the fish that we have to process here is brought by the fishing boats.

Julie: But is there already activity here? I mean, you're already at work, you've already processed...

Maty Ndau: Of course. Last week, we even sent 2.5 tons of finished products to France.

Julie: And so you get the fish from the big boats?

Maty Ndau: Yes, these are the boats that keep the fish cold.

Julie: Yes. But are these foreign boats?

Maty Ndau: No. They are Senegalese boats.

Julie: But the big boats with the capacity to...

Maty Ndau: No, big boats prey mainly on small pelagics. Small fish. Especially the rich boats. The small pelagics are caught by the big boats. Small pelagics are processed there, but here, we do not process small pelagics. Can you see the difference?

Julie: You process tuna.

00:24:56

Maty Ndau: Tuna, emperor fish, pike, barracuda... We process fine fish. The big fish.

Julie: How has your work evolved since 2014? Has it gone up, has it gone down, has it remained stable?

Maty Ndau: Since 2014, it has really gone down. Even in 2023, because they haven't granted licenses yet. We are waiting. We still haven't worked here in 2023 since we are waiting for the boats to come, but the boats haven't come yet.

Julie: Ok, now I understand. So, Senegalese boats have applied for licenses?

Maty Ndau: Yes.

Julie: Now they don't have appropriate licenses.

Maty Ndau: Right.

Julie: Try to get that to stop. Did you have another question?

Reporter (male): I did. I wanted to come back to another question that you already answered. There is something I would like to know, regarding the factory. We can see the economic consequences, on your job and on the industry as a whole. We can also see the food consequences. But do you take it as an insult that the fish that was once meant to feed the Senegalese, is now used to feed animals? Apart from the economic and food consequences, does it hurt your mind?

Maty Ndau: Of course.

Reporter (male): And keep looking at Julie.

Maty Ndau: Of course, it hurts my mind. Among the consequences of the factory, there is also illness. Nausea, stomach aches, heart problems. It has really destroyed the environment. Really, it makes me sick. The factory makes us sick. We deplore the establishment of this factory. Not only it destroys our fish, but it causes diseases, really. The factory has even altered our water! It has altered our drinking water. You see? Because they were always told not to dump their wastewater into the lake, but they still dump it. Just yesterday. They are still dumping their wastewater into that lake. This is what altered our water.

Julie: What did they do yesterday?

Maty Ndau: They dumped their wastewater into the lake. They really don't care about the people of the village, because they have a lot of money. They corrupt people. They corrupt people! They give money to anybody. They corrupt people. We really deplore the existence of this factory.

Julie: Can you still drink the water?

Maty Ndau: Not anymore! We buy mineral water to drink. We buy water to drink, because it's too dangerous. Yes.

Julie: Do you know if anyone from the government has ever come to visit the factory and see what they are doing?

Maty Ndaou: Sometimes they refuse to enter the factory. Sometimes they refuse to enter the factory.

Julie: The government?

00:29:54

Maty Ndaou: The government gave its approval. The government gave its approval. But before giving the approval, an environmental impact study had to be done. But now they won't do it. What they do is pay. We gave them a document but they didn't accept it. You see, here in Senegal, if you give money, they'll give you any document you want. So, is this rightful?

Julie: But how do you know that they have paid?

Maty Ndaou: Even here in the village, he gave a lot of money. When we came back from court, do you know what he said? "I had given two briefcases. Now, I have given three!" Two briefcases of money. Now, he has given three!

Julie: Who said that?

Maty Ndaou: Him! Diallo Barna. Diallo said that. Even the Spaniards who owned the factory, they went away and left the Barna factory. And now he has changed the name of the factory to "Touba Marine Protein". See? He has only changed the name to "Touba Marine Protein", to mislead people.

Julie: I'm sorry, I don't know enough to understand. Is Diallo Barna a person?

Maty Ndaou: He is a person!

Julie: Ok, he is a man.

Maty Ndaou: Diallo Barna.

Julie: Does he still run the factory there?

Maty Ndaou: Yes. He lives in Thiès. Why didn't he put the factory in Thiès? There is room in Thiès, but he came here. Before building anything, he brought a lot of money. Really, he fights with his money. He always fights with his money. Thus, he's always right! He has the power. Money has the power.

Julie: But you are also serving the cause, against...

Maty Ndau: Sure.

Julie: Ok. And what do you hope for, regarding this cause? What do you want to see?

Maty Ndau: I want the factory to close. I just want the factory to close. Really, that's our hope. Really. Because it bothers us. There are many sick people. It degrades the environment. Really, with his money. God is great.

Julie: You said earlier that processed fish was used to make paste to feed the children.

Maty Ndau: Right.

Julie: And on the other hand, fishmeal is used to...

00:34:12

Maty Ndau: It's not the same. Here, the sisters, do you know about it? The sisters come and take the ketiakh. They remove the bones and feed the children. They weigh all the children, then they give them the paste to feed them. We weigh the children, then we feed them. It's not the same as feeding animals! It's not the same as feeding animals. Animals! You know, processed fish, especially braised/dried fish, called ketiakh in Wolof, contains a lot of protein. A lot of protein. That's the reason why. Alright?

Julie: Alright. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.