

WORLD MARITIME SEAFARER PROFILES



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What does diversity in maritime mean to you? And how can the industry work towards a more inclusive future?

A lot of the time I'm the only 'non-man' on board my ship. At a time when I hadn't sailed with other women, I didn't really notice it. Nowadays, I do often have another woman or even a couple of women on board, which is nice - and you really can see the difference. Diversity is a bit like a 'chicken and egg' situation, I didn't think about it until I saw more of it. And then that encouraged me to see the benefits of it, and want to see more.

What would your top tips be for people looking to be more inclusive or create a more welcoming environment for diversity?

My top tip would be to listen to people when they bring you issues - even if you think it's something small, or you don't understand why that's upsetting them. If somebody says to you, 'this thing that you've said or done, has harmed me', they're not doing it to attack you. They're telling you that they want you to stop, and they're actually making the effort to ask you to support them and respect them. And on a more positive note, I would say, reach out to people. Even if it feels a little bit uncomfortable checking in on people, you're probably making a big difference to them, and it will be worth it in the end.

What is the best way to cultivate and manage a diverse crew?

Every time I think about diversity at sea, it always comes down to "diversity sustains itself". The more there is, the more you see the benefit. And I think it's a matter of engineering that diversity more and encouraging different people. You can get a more diverse crew by hiring more diverse people - it has to be a conscious, active thing on the behalf of companies. You also have systems in place to support people who have different needs or might experience certain kinds of discrimination. So it comes down to a structural change, and then a mindset change within workers.

What do you want for the future of shipping?

I probably just want more diversity. I would love to have more LGBT+ people, more women, more trans and non binary people. And it would be really nice to be on a ship which has a lot more diversity - and not just men. It feels a lot more homely when you have all different kinds of people and it's more likely that you're going to find someone that you get along with. Diversity also brings more 'mind-power' to problem solving because people look at the world in different ways and there's always more than one way to do things. I can't think of a single aspect on board that wouldn't be improved by more diversity. We're selling ourselves short.

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