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New platform raises awareness on the plight of migrant women

Ahead of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence (GBV), a [new platform](#) brings the public closer to the stories of women who migrate, detailing how they endure multiple forms of intersecting violence.

[Women and Migration](#) is a collaborative storytelling project about the journeys migrant women take, and what happens once they reach their destination.

Migration patterns have significantly shifted over the last few decades with increasing numbers of women leaving their home countries for safety, refuge or to seek better opportunities elsewhere. As the 16 days of activism against GBV approach, it is imperative that light is shed on the stories of these often-forgotten women who have had to endure so much only to face further hardship as they try to rebuild their lives.

Professor Floretta Boonzaier, who formed part of the research team, shared: "Zoning in on the narratives of women who have migrated and the precarity of their positions in the countries they migrate to is important for showing how, globally, women endure multiple forms of intersecting violence. This violence takes many forms from structural and systemic violence to physical and symbolic violence." Boonzaier is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Co-Director of the Hub for Decolonial Feminist Psychologies in Africa.

She and the international team of researchers collected testimonies from more than 100 women worldwide to shed light on how gender affects migration, and to highlight the resilience of those who seek a new life far from home.

These stories were grouped into eight case studies from around the world that cover each stage of the migration process, from the often dangerous journeys women take, to their acceptance or rejection by their destination country and their eventual resettlement or return.

Shedding light on the struggles of women close to home in South Africa (SA) Boonzaier and Ivan Katsere's (a UCT PhD candidate) case study explores [how more and more women are leaving southern African countries like Zimbabwe and Malawi to seek greener pastures in SA](#). When they arrive, however, they are faced with xenophobia, violence and a daily struggle to make enough money to survive.

The case studies also include the experiences of [many teenage girls in Ethiopia who flee the strict confines of their rural homes to seek independence and a fresh start in the big city](#). Life isn't easy in Addis Ababa, but they find community and resilience in one another.

Another focuses on the [many irregular migrants to the EU who are driven out of their country of origin by corruption that makes daily life a struggle](#). But that corruption follows them en route in the form of bribery, violence and sextortion.

According to Boonzaier much greater advocacy is needed to address and end the violence against women migrants. "Right now they receive little to no support and protection. By shedding a light on their plight we hope to raise awareness so that they can one day be free from the abuses they face as they struggle to rebuild a life they lost."

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