

'On the ship, you can do anything': the impact of international cruiseship employment for i-Kiribati women

Sophia Kagan

[https://doi.org/10.33318/jpacs.2016.36\(1\)-3](https://doi.org/10.33318/jpacs.2016.36(1)-3)

ABSTRACT

Kiribati is a remote, small island country with a long history of male temporary migration as a mechanism for relieving unemployment and facilitating remittances. This article looks at a unique case study of female i-Kiribati migration and is based on interviews with a small sample of i-Kiribati women who worked on international cruiseships between 2009-2012, thus providing interesting insight into first-time migration experiences of women from a remote island country. The findings suggest that while the experience did not generally lead to observable changes in their ability to manage remittances, nor in gender relations between husband and wife, employment on the ship did nonetheless have strong reported benefits in terms of independence, skills development and confidence of the women interviewed. These findings corroborate existing literature showing while entrenched gender norms rarely shift directly due to women's migration experiences, migration does contribute to the women's empowerment through increased agency and ability to make decisions, both during and after their migration.

Key words: *temporary migration, Pacific, Kiribati, gender, women's empowerment, cruiseship employment*