

## **Gender, Migration and Remittances in Lesotho: On whose terms?**

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For most of the twentieth century, the vast majority of migrants from Lesotho were young men who went to work in the South African gold mines and remitted funds to their parents and own households back home. With the retrenchment of Basotho men from the South African mines in post apartheid era, migration has become more feminized in recent years. A feminization of migration is observable all over the world, and is changing gender roles in the households of origin.

This paper therefore attempts to investigate feminization of migration in Lesotho. Using the 1986-2006 Labour Force Survey conducted by the Bureau of Statistics-Lesotho, three broad areas are explored in the paper: the extent of labour migration over the three labour survey periods 1986 to 2006; the characteristics of migrant workers and how these have changed over time; and the economic ties that labour migrants have maintained with their households of origin. Findings reveal that female labour migration from Lesotho's rural areas has increased, driven largely by a rise in the proportion of women leaving their households of origin to work or to search for work.

Using a simple multivariate regression analysis together with descriptive statistics, the Researcher explores some possible reasons why there has been massive increase in female migration. Findings also reveal that over the period migrants have retained strong economic ties with their households of origin and that remittances remain an important share of income for these households.