



Who were these young women, why did they take this life-altering decision, and how did they convince their families to let them leave on their own?

the British Museum, Te Papa and Berlin. Manos always proudly talked of his rich Māori and Cretan heritage. His parents' war time love story was captured in a book by celebrated New Zealand writer Patricia Grace.

So, that is how 267 young women from the island of Crete came to New Zealand between 1962 and 1964 under a government visa scheme that aimed to provide domestic workers for hotels and hospitals. What kind of impact did breaking free from their traditional societal norms and encountering a new culture have on these unchaperoned women and how did it transform their lives? These questions served as a guide in exploring the multiple migration experiences of these women, which formed the central focus of a project funded

initially by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. The project also compared the differences in migration experiences between those who chose to settle in Aotearoa, those who returned to Crete and those who migrated, for a second time, to Australia.

It was evident that World War II had a devastating impact on the people of Crete especially in the mountainous region of Chania. This was largely due to the severe punishment inflicted by the Nazis as a response to the support given

by the local Cretan population to the British, Australian and New Zealand forces. The Cretans suffered greatly for their loyalty, with their fathers and brothers being systematically rounded up and either shot or imprisoned. Their homes and personal belongings were

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destroyed, leaving women and children desperate for food and necessities in a heartbreaking situation.

The daily struggles that these young women faced offered little respite from the pressures of life with limited exposure to childhood joys and burdened with the responsibility of supporting their families. Consequently, many of them yearned for a better life and chose to migrate. The stories they heard from the Greek diaspora had a profound impact on them, awakening their adventurous spirit and prompting them to reject the prescribed rules imposed on women in their local society.

In preparation for their working lives in New Zealand, these women received basic instruction in special training centres in Greece prior to their departure including basic language and domestic skills. Most of them came in groups but dispersed upon their arrival in New Zealand to different work placements, including hospitals and hotels, and often experienced isolation because of their poor language skills.

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