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### Migration: 2017 The New York Times Asia-Pacific Writing Competition

New York Times

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2017

**The New York Times Asia-Pacific  
Writing Competition**

**Migration**



**The New York Times**



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# Secondary Schools

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**Canadian International School of Hong Kong**

Maya Prakash

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**United World College of South East Asia**

Diya Shahnaz Kraybill



**Winner**

## Can People Still Achieve a Better Life Through Migration in 2017?

Canadian International School of Hong Kong

Maya Prakash

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According to ABC News, in less than a month, Bangladesh has seen more than 400,000 Rohingya Muslims fleeing a military crackdown in Myanmar stream across its border, the largest and fastest mass migration Asia has seen in decades. As a 9th grader, in the Canadian International School in Hong Kong, attending a Model United Nations conference, I found myself in the position of being a hard line, pragmatic delegate of Bangladesh, defending my country's position of not accepting illegal immigrants for the purposes of preserving internal security. I steeled myself to not sympathise with the migrants and argued my case with reason, logic and law by my side. I must have echoed the general consensus in the room as I was awarded the best delegate in my council. And yet, I accepted this with a heavy heart as soon as I stepped out of the role. My moral voice tugged incessantly at my conscience. I know well that Rohingyas can achieve a better life through migration to Bangladesh. As a start, they can be saved from death. And next from starvation, sickness and oppression.

Simply having law on its side, does not absolve Bangladesh of its moral duty in helping save close to half a million lives. To its credit, it has already done so by allowing the Rohingya Muslims in. And yet, its interior Minister wants to shut the valve now with the argument that these migrants can be recruited by international terror organizations and threaten Bangladesh's security. So, should they be allowed to be butchered? Who should fight their case and on what basis?

This ethnic minority of Bangladeshi origin settled in Myanmar in 1871 as migrant laborers, and were later rewarded with governmental posts because of their support of the British Colonialists. Post colonial Myanmar refused to recognize them and

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today an unprecedented 'ethnic cleansing' is taking place by forcing the Rohingyas out of their own country. The bordering countries of Bangladesh and India have declared them to be 'illegal migrants' and not 'refugees', stripping them of their right to asylum. The title 'illegal migrant' has such negative connotations that we fail to see them as humans; we see only the fears of security or jobs that will be taken away.

The pragmatic approach has ensured that nations are completely desensitised towards these desperate migrants. In such a scenario, it is hard to conceive that Rohingyas would eventually be fully integrated into Bangladeshi society to lead a better life.

As Atticus Finch, everyone's favorite father figure from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, once said: "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." If the Rohingya migrants --and indeed migrants all over the world today-- are to have any hope of leading a better life, the UN delegate in me must try to climb into their skin and walk around in it.

## Runner-Up

# Migrants and the Battle for Acceptance

United World College of South East Asia

Diya Shahnaz Kraybill

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It is without question that the migrant crisis has become a primary focus in the global consciousness; with thousands of migrants embarking on what are often life-threatening journeys each day in hopes of safety, liberation and a brighter future.

There are a variety of factors which drive human migration. Whatever the impetus -- be it economic, social, political or environmental -- all migrants long for a better quality of life within their newly adopted homelands.

This leads me to the question: is it possible for migrants to forge a better life overseas? Ten years ago, the answer may have been yes. However, in today's political climate, with the rise of demagogic leaders, xenophobic sentiments and, in turn, growing resentment towards the acceptance and integration of immigrants within society, migrants are finding it increasingly difficult to realize this dream.

Demonization of immigrants for short-term political gain is becoming increasingly common among world leaders, perpetuated by far-right politicians such as Viktor Orban, Donald Trump, and Norbert Hofer. Orban, a driving figure for the alt-right, not only in Hungary but across Europe as well, has not been shy about voicing his opinion on the migration crisis, stating that "The best migrant is the migrant who does not come." Such views are no longer limited to extreme right-wing politicians, with Orban's views largely supported by the governments of Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic. For politicians, it is easy to steer public anger away from their own shortcomings through the use of immigrants as scapegoats. Trump's oft-repeated soundbite, "They're taking our jobs," referring to Mexican immigrants, is a leading example. Politicians use statements like this in order to gain the favor of the public; however, they disregard that these callous actions lead to extreme harm to the lives of migrants within these nations. Politicians portray immigrants as objects of fear and condemnation, rather than championing their acceptance and integration within communities. The climate of xenophobia these politicians create makes integration into society all but impossible for today's migrants.

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The pronouncements of politicians are increasingly being echoed in hateful rhetoric among their citizens. Migrants face growing resentment from those who feel left behind by the effects of globalization and abandoned by their governments. Migrants force citizens to come face to face with the realities of globalization, causing anger and resentment rooted in fear. Feared and blamed irrationally for “stealing” jobs, suppressing wages, and exhausting government resources, migrants struggle to be accepted. Pushed to the margins of society, migrants fail to realize the promise of a better life.

While many are turning against immigrants, a few progressive nations are choosing to oppose this trend -- the most prominent case being Europe’s leading country, Germany. Angela Merkel has continued to stand behind her decision to open Germany’s borders to one million refugees in 2015. Additionally, Germany has taken several pivotal steps towards integrating migrants in regards to education and the workforce. Armed with an education and sufficient job training, Germany’s migrants are no longer treated as outsiders, but instead, achieve the equality and respect they deserve.

The migration crisis is not disappearing. The decision of politicians and nations either to uphold a climate of anger, hostility, and resentment against migrants, or to go against the current political narrative, will ultimately be the driving factor in determining the degree to which immigrants achieve a better life in society today.





# Tertiary

Winner

**Singapore Management University**

Averill Chow Mingni

Runner-Up

**National University of Singapore**

Teoh Xin Yi





## Winner

### New Homes, Better Lives

Singapore Management University

Averill Chow Mingni

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I am a child of first-generation economic migrants. I lead a better life than what I would have led in my parents' native country, Malaysia. There, corruption, racial discrimination, and fickle education policies cause confusion and opportunity scarcity, especially for children of minority races like myself. My parents may have earned us a better life through migration in 1990, but that was more than twenty years ago.

Today, anti-immigrant sentiments are at an all-time high. One reason why President Trump was elected was his promise to build a border wall to keep migrants out. One reason why the British voted in favour of Brexit was to stem the free movement of labour from qualifying EU countries. One reason why the Swiss village of Oberwil-Lieli paid a fine of nearly USD290,000 in lieu of accepting 10 refugees was because the residents thought the refugees "wouldn't fit in". I believe that nobody enjoys feeling like an outsider. Anti-immigrant sentiments would create xenophobic environments and discriminatory policies for immigrants, removing any possibility of better lives.

But this is the mistaken belief of a privileged youth in the stable, prosperous nation of Singapore. Concerns about anti-immigrant sentiments may pale in comparison to the push factors of migration. For migrants fleeing Iraq, living in a tented camp in the German Duisburg forests is undesirable. Yet, it is better than risking their lives everyday. For the sons of the late Iraqi Mr Androus, who died of gunshot wounds while shopping for his family, concerns of anti-immigrant sentiments are insignificant compared with survival.

Does this mean that only migrants fleeing death and danger achieve better lives abroad? This semester, while on student exchange in Switzerland, I found that the answer is no. Speaking with students privileged enough to study in one of

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the world's most peaceful and expensive countries, I realised that migration is still attractive for natives of booming economies. While the world may see China as an economic giant, my Chinese friends find the censorship and human rights violations unbearable. Rui, aged 25, wants to have more than two children without paying fines of at least five times her annual household income. Migration could also mean finding a community supportive of the migrant's sexual orientation, religion, or aspirations. Even for natives of thriving nations, there are reasons for migration that would make life abroad significantly better.

Moreover, what counts as a 'better' life differs from person to person. It seems unlikely that a safer, wealthier life can be achieved by moving from The Netherlands to Chile. The Netherlands is ranked 31 positions higher than Chile on the United Nations' Human Development Index. But people can and do migrate for the most precious human quality of all – love. Faye will leave The Netherlands to join her lover, Carlos, in Chile. For Faye, a life with Carlos would be a better life indeed.

People can achieve better lives through migration in 2017, even if outsiders cannot see what is better in their new home. Our differing opinions and value judgements are exactly what make us human.

## Runner-Up

# Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

National University of Singapore

Teoh Xin Yi

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The Chinese call San Francisco the “old gold mountain”.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the golden mountain gleamed from afar. Thousands of East Asians abandoned their ancestral homelands, falling into debt just to stow away in the dingy underbelly of a smuggler’s ship.

All were drawn by the premise of a promise – that they can make better lives there.

Alas, they would find that the gold mountain was but a mirage.

Have these delusions dissolved in the 21st century?

People leave their homelands for many different reasons. For one, the well-off can opt to move to another land to pursue leisurely or monetary interests. The uprooting that I’m concerned with is not so simple a matter; migrants in 2017 face ever-mounting challenges as they strike out to new lands.

Many of us would agree that home is the light of the Pharos in the stormy sea. So why would anyone want to leave home?

Sometimes, your motherland fails you. She has fed you all her life with the cream of her crop, but one day her milk dries up. Maybe locusts have swarmed over the crops, or the rain has failed and the drought has sapped all life from the land. There are hunger pangs and skin on bones. Or maybe your homeland is invaded and where your neighbours were once friends, they are now foes. There are enemies with flailing fists and trembling teeth. The dying went on and on and on...

Home is a place you loved with a helpless rage, but now it is gone. When all that is left are the corpses of memories strewn over the street you grew up on, it’s probably time to leave.

Where to?

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Maybe the European Union would be a great choice. It's a little colder, but a lot richer.

Or maybe even just next door to India? After all, the Tatmadaw cannot be found there.

The UN Human Rights Charter states that freedom of movement between borders is a human right. But no human promises salvation in the after – only God has. Hell is empty and all the devils are on earth.

Frankly, I doubt that migrants expect welcome mats to line every door they walk to. Still, I doubt that the migrants expect to spend years in a Nauru, suspended in an indefinite wait.

Still, just as how Japanese set up Buddhist altars beside ramshackle huts with makeshift tools, migrants of today can find their footing in a new land.

I acknowledge that there is a cost: the cultures and economies of the old world will crumble, and nations will prop up walls in their ever-growing suspicion.

Regardless, there are payoffs. Migrants are ultimately immigrants, and few would deny their grit and entrepreneurial brilliance. Few can deny the need for young blood in developed countries that are characterised by an ever-shrinking birth rate, lest risk a demographic crisis.

Even if the gold has run dry, a godless foreign desert is better than the blood-soaked home.

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## Singles Day in China Draws New Suitors: Foreign Sellers

By AMIE TSANG and CAO LI LAST UPDATED: 5:02 AM ET



Preparing to fill Singles Day orders at Mel.com's 100,000-square-foot warehouse in Shanghai. About 95 percent of the site's stock is from international brands. ERIC LELLEU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

HONG KONG — Over the last year, A2, an Australian milk company, made an unexpected discovery: A sharp increase in domestic sales came from Chinese bulk buyers, not Australian mothers.

To bridge the 4,000-mile gap between its continent and the doorsteps of its newest customers, A2 began selling its products in two of China's biggest online marketplaces — Tmall, part of Alibaba, and its rival JD.com. Six months later, A2 is part of the frenzy of discounting that is Singles Day, China's annual shopping festival.

The event began as a celebration of single people, held on a date that said it all: 11/11. But it has long since moved

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The New York Times



# **Shortlist of Entrants: Secondary Schools**

# Impossible is Impossible

Arturo Eustaquio Memorial Science High School  
Normela Patricia F. Burigsay

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It is a beguiling thing, to pack your bags and zip up all your problems away as your hastened footsteps lead you to foreign soil. Migration is the act of moving to another place or country in order to work or live there, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. This act enchants the people and fills their ears with promises of prosperous lands, opportunities, and a better life. But are these still possible nowadays?

Seeing as how countries at present experience catastrophic situations such as civil warfare, terrorism, poverty, and corruption among others, an attractive solution that arises inside the minds of people trapped within a broken nation would be migration. Although moving to another country, one of which is more stable than that of your own, would seem the best possible solution, there always exists the possibility of rejection, of heads being turned away, eyes being averted, and ears turning deaf at the sound of the desperate pleas of immigrants. Another bitter reality would be the reluctant acceptance of a country to immigrants, where in there would be a high probability that these immigrants would be treated unfairly and would be subjected to discrimination and other horrendous abuses. So where is the light at the end of the tunnel for these immigrants? I believe that it would be found in other countries, for the world is not just composed of corrupt governments and broken lands and nations that selfishly barricade their shores. There are countries such as Sweden, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, and Germany that accept immigrants with arms wide open. These countries are dubbed to be economically stable, have good job markets, and income equality as said by Deidre McPhillips of US News (2017).

I am certain about the possibility of a better life being achieved through migration as evidenced by the aforementioned countries being beacons of hope and light for immigrants. A good illustration for this possibility is best explained through OFWs or Overseas Filipino Workers who are considered heroes in the Philippines to both their nation and their own families. These Filipinos look for jobs abroad and often end

up being domestic helpers, caregivers, and the like. They make sacrifices such as moving away from their families and working their fingers to the bone in order to financially support and quench their families' needs. This then proves the possibility of achieving a better life through migration in today's world since OFWs are still helping the Philippines' economy and families at present. For a little of something is better than nothing at all, for a trickle of water would be an overflowing river when one has been caged to a life in a desert. This can be compared to Filipinos who had suffered from poverty but are now enjoying a stable life due to a certain family member's sacrifice to go work in another country.

The impossibility of betterment is impossible so long as there is a nation that still nurtures its people into morally upright and socially responsible beings. Countries should not barricade their shores for selfish reasons because each nation should go hand in hand if we want to see a better world, for we cannot survive alone. Migration does not only better the lives of one family, because migration can bridge the gap between nations as it gives an opportunity to share our cultures, our ways of life, our ideas, etc. that when the day comes we could all unite and collectively strive to achieve peace and development for the world and the future generations. Improvement can be done anywhere may it be through migration or through staying in place. It can be done tomorrow but it should be done today.

# Are We Moving Backwards?

Canadian International School Singapore

Marie-Claire Jalaguier

---

The main driving force behind migration is the desire to seek a better life when the country of origin can no longer provide the opportunities or a stable living environment for a migrant or refugee to succeed. According to the World Economic Forum, someone is displaced every three seconds. The turmoils, conflicts, and disasters in 2017 have displaced millions of people, forcing them to leave their jobs, schools, families, friends, and essentially their lives.

500 million people are expected to have to move within the next five years due to climate change threats. The overwhelming effect of climate change can be devastating and result in the displacement of thousands of 'ecological migrants'. Every single person plays a role in the environment, from the everyday tasks like turning off the lights to the implementation of policies aiming to limit the emission of greenhouse gases. The fact that one person's actions toward the environment can impact another person across the planet reminds us that we are all connected.

Now more than ever, nations need to aid the global community by welcoming migrants and refugees and successfully integrating them into society. Thus allowing them to have equal access to all opportunities. Unfortunately, the rise of anti-immigrant rhetoric has shifted public perceptions across the world, resulting in the tightening of borders and immigration policies in order to limit the influx of migrants and refugees. With the increase of conflicts and climate change disasters and the decrease of tolerance, **can people still achieve a better life through migration in 2017?**

Following the news over the past year, the obvious answer would be that it is not possible for migrants and refugees to achieve a better life through migration. This is attributed to

the increased difficulty of integrating into a society when anti-immigrant rhetoric influences some to hate rather than learn and respect. Not only is it difficult to integrate into society but many also do not have access to education and job opportunities to enrich themselves and contribute back to society and the economy. We are moving backwards. Even as globalization draws us together, our world leaders are dividing, not uniting. At a time when diversity and differences should be celebrated, we are shutting our doors to those who appear different. We move backwards when we do not let the young girl who dreams of curing cancer go to school. We move backwards when we do not give the man who wants to feed his family a job. We move backwards when we forget that most migrants and refugees do not voluntarily choose to leave their lives behind to start over in a completely new and foreign environment.

When people achieve a better life after immigration, not only does it improve the quality of their lives, but benefits their new community as well. The impacts of successful integration include diversity of cultures and new innovative skills and knowledge to benefit the economy among numerous other reasons. We cannot move backwards.



# Migration Through Two Lenses

Canadian International School Singapore  
Jai Vijayan

---

In August of 1986, my father first set foot in the United States of America - soon to be his home. Neither the people in the plane nor those in the airport cared for the color of his skin, treating him the same as any other person. To his university, it did not matter that he worshipped Hindu gods. The American dream was his; it is for all races and ideologies. Of course, the US is not the only nation which receives immigrants - most countries also do, and are dealing with it in different ways. While migration can positively affect people, it also impacts the countries being migrated to, both positively and negatively.

Being a child of Indian immigrants, my stance on this question is obvious - I am in favor of the majority of immigration. I know not a world without its benefits, like my parent's education and my international mindedness. Today, education is a major reason for migration. This positively affects me because it allows me to easily fraternize with other cultures and opinions, which could curb issues like racism and ignorance. For example, my family and I are familiar with the cultures of India, America, and Singapore - our current place of residence. I have friends from places such as Jamaica and the Czech Republic. I think about our cultural differences open mindedly, and with respect. With this mindset, cruel historical events like American slavery or European colonialism would not have occurred.

The effects of migration on the receiving countries must also be considered. The 21st century has seen large swarms of Middle Eastern people immigrating to Europe, subject to much xenophobia. Such feelings might be justified. In Sweden for example, crime rates in migrants including rape, murder, and theft are rising above average. This is not the aforementioned peaceful cultural exchange. However, these people did not make the choice to leave their country - they were forced due to oppressive governments and poverty. If it is not their own choice to leave their country, and their migration has little positive effects, then the ultimate solution should be for foreign powers to improve the conditions in their country of origin. In America, another migration issue is illegality. Mexican illegal immigrants

are coming into the US without proper documentation. A lack of documentation means sufficient taxes cannot be payed, and illegal immigrants enjoy the fruits of other people's tax contributions, so I believe illegal immigration should not be happening. While immigration is a fundamentally good concept, its implications must be good hearted and legal to keep it that way.

To summarize, people can still achieve a better life through migration in 2017. Its positive effects include accepting other cultures and learning about other opinions, which can prevent unnecessary conflict. There are some negative effects, including crime and tax evasion, which harm the population of migrant receiving countries. This gives me reason to believe that problems relating to refugees must be solved through improving their country of origin, and that migration cannot be done illegally.

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# One Country, Two Peoples

Dulwich College Shanghai

Jay Yu

---

The vendor's shop consisted of a ragged blanket spread across the steps of the subway entrance. On it lay painstakingly handcrafted models of everyday objects. Such ad hoc commerce is common in Shanghai, where entrepreneurial migrants offer an array of affordable curios, festive toys, romantic gifts, and refreshments. Curiously, I picked up an intricately crafted model bicycle, an unlikely work of art made entirely from repurposed copper wires.

- You made these yourself?
- It's all I can do these days.

Something about his gentle expression and weather-beaten face intrigued me. After a friendly conversation, I teased out his story. He had left the farm to do construction in Zhengzhou, Henan. Twenty years ago, he came to Shanghai, but today construction jobs were scarce. I asked why not head back to Henan. He said new construction there had all but stopped. Besides, he was getting by here. When business was good, he made more than he ever did breaking his back. Though he struggled to make rent some months, he still managed to send money to support his family.

I asked how he liked his work. He snorted and gave me a hard stare, but then his eyes softened. You really don't know? I shook my head- I grew up in Melbourne. He said that as a street vendor, he was treated little better than a beggar. Worse was the suspicion of all things Henanese. Once he lost a sale because the customer's wife shouted to his face, - you can't trust him - they're all thieves! Sometimes, he would pretend to be from Shandong, betting that locals could not distinguish the accents.

Further complicating life, the vendor lived in legal limbo.

Under the hukou system, he was registered for life in his home village. Moving meant forfeiting access to social services and being shut out of most jobs. Street vending was tolerated but not permitted, and enforced capriciously, so he always had to be on the alert. I asked him why he stayed. He laughed. He said that despite the hassle, he enjoyed a better standard of living, as he flashed his smartphone. Besides, his friends were here. He had a life here.

Suddenly, a blue light flashed in the distance. A young man leapt from a nearby minivan and whispered: Chengguan - city patrol. Alarm flashed across the vendor's face, before fading to resignation. -Sorry, I have to go. It was great to meet you. In seconds, the minivan sped off, leaving no trace of the makeshift shop that was there just moments before.

The model was a treasure and a bargain, and the sale probably paid for the vendor's meals for several days. We both benefitted, but something did not sit right. How could such a socially marginalized life be better? Rural poverty had to be that much worse, yet a better life can still be a hard life. What was missing was basic dignity. I realized that real progress will only come when we begin to recognize each other as people.

# Assimilation: The Key to a Better Life

Hong Kong International School

Aaditya Bhasker

---

“Criss cross applesauce” flashed on the bright screen of my phone.

“Lol what’s that,” I typed on my screen before pressing send.

“Smh it’s a preschool nursery rhyme,” my friend replied.

“Dude I haven’t heard of this before. Seriously, what is it?” I texted back.

“What did you do during your childhood man?” he typed.

“Where have you come from?” another friend teased.

The culture shock hit me hard. Having studied in a well known school in Mumbai, I considered myself quite savvy with the latest trends. Migrating to Hong Kong made me realise that I was missing many small things such as pop culture references, knowledge of American history, and apparently, certain nursery rhymes. My friends explained these things to me. I tried to adapt but hold on to my roots at the same time. It was tough to re-invent myself. I realise that my struggles are nothing compared to the hardships endured by migrants, but I understand their emotions and what they are going through.

According to a 2015 United Nations dataset Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision, the number of international migrants - “persons living in a country other than where they were born” increased to 244 million in 2015. Out of this, roughly 65 million are forcibly displaced persons; 40 million (60 per cent) are internally displaced persons while 21 million (35 percent) are refugees and the balance are asylum seekers. The displacement of these people could be the product of a humanitarian issue such as the Rohingya Muslim extermination crisis in Myanmar, war such as the one in Syria, or climate change – be it flooding in Bangladesh, expanding deserts in northwest China, super hurricanes hitting the North American Atlantic coast, or coral bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef.

Jobs, housing, and safer living are a few of the things that migrants benefit from. But while they have better living conditions, they might not always be happy with their new lives. Unfamiliar language, religious dilemmas, racial differences, loss of cultural context: these factors make a huge impact on a person’s happiness after migration. Assimilation is the key to enjoying the better life that a migrant has achieved in a new country. Then the question arises - what should the price of assimilation be? Should you give in completely, or hold on to your roots?

People can and do have better lives through migration. They might not always be happy with where they are when they first move; while they might now reside in a new country with affordable housing where they can drive cars, their heart might still visit the old haunts and expansive streets of their hometown, quietly remembering what was and is not. Hope is what gets migrants through this hard time. The journey of a migrant has its ups and downs in the beginning, but the end is what makes it all worthwhile. The risks they have taken and the sacrifices they have made bear fruit when they savour freedom of expression, give their children a better life, and secure the safety of their family. Someday they will call their foster country home. I should know. Hong Kong is slowly making its way into my heart; for now it is home.

# Can People Still Achieve a Better Life Through Migration in 2017

International School of Hyderabad

Nidhi Thati

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**Can people still achieve a better life through migration in 2017?** The answer is yes. Migration helps people to have better jobs, be accepted for who they are, escape from climate change, and have a better life. There are about 230 million migrants in the world today, and it will keep growing. Many nations are also tightening their borders against migration, though. What is the impact of millions of people migrating?

**Migration could have saved the 400,000 people who died in Syria last year.**

We can save millions of lives through migration. There are starving and poor children in Syria, and they could have been safer if they moved to a safer country. In places like the Amazon Basin, it is difficult to sustain life. 500 million adults even said that climate change would force them to move away from their home country! I believe that migration is a ray of hope for those who are stuck in a situation from which they cannot free themselves.

**Migration lets people follow their own path.** Being able to follow your own religion is a human right, but some countries don't even let people do that: people are persecuted for being who they are. In countries like Iran and North Korea, people are persecuted based on their religion. Luis Mancheno, who is originally from Ecuador, was granted asylum in the U.S.A. There are millions of people like Luis, and migration helps them to have a better life and to be themselves.

**More opportunities.** This is one of the leading factors that drive people to migrate. In the US, over 40% of high-tech companies were founded by immigrants or their children. There are many people in the world who are intelligent, but don't have opportunities, and migration helps people live up to their full potential.

**A damper on migration.** Although migrants benefit tremendously from migration, many nations are taking steps to ensure the security of their borders to stem the flow of migrants. In the US, President Trump campaigned for his election to the presidency by promising a wall between the US and Mexico's border line. This is unfortunate, because think of all of the people whose life, family, and economic stability depended on moving to a different country. Think of all of those people who don't find opportunities in their country of origin, but are among the brightest minds in the world today. It's not only the US who has tightened borders, though. Many countries in Europe are tightening up against migration; like the UK, Italy, and Slovenia. How does this affect migration?

**Can migrants still have a better life through migration, even if nations are tightening up?** In many cases, migrants are discriminated against by people in their countries of destination. I believe that although tightening up against migration stems the flow of it; migrants can always try to go somewhere else. Migration can completely change someone's life, and **nobody should be denied the chance to a better life.**





Mudit, 5, plays at "Bubble Up," a public art installation by Japanese artist Shinji Ohmaki, with his parents Titli Patnaik, left, and Sandeep Patnaik. Sandeep, 35, employed by a Mumbai-based bank, relocated with his family to Hong Kong for work in 2012. They will soon return to India, approaching the end of Sandeep's five-year work assignment. When asked if he would like to stay, Sandeep said, "I like Hong Kong more than India. It's a lot more convenient, a lot more safe."





# In This Changing World of Ours

Kaohsiung American School, Taiwan

Anthony Shen

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When you hear the word “migrants” or “refugees,” what is the first thing you picture in your mind? The photographs of the people discreetly leaving Syria on precarious little boats in the Mediterranean? The thousands fleeing from the harrowing wars in Afghanistan? While both of these terms are used interchangeably, the word “refugee” is used to specifically for people displaced because of war, persecution, or in recent years, climate change. Both are searching for one thing in common- a better life. However, they are finding it harder and harder to get in today’s society.

In the past, migration has been a defining occurrence in many of history’s most important events, discoveries, and settlements. However, in the highly populated modern society, wealthier countries are beginning to oppose this movement, complaining of wasted resources, increased crime, and a host of other reasons. In recent months, after years of ever-increasing migrant movement from countries in the Middle East towards Europe, these countries are beginning to close their borders off to these people. It has become increasingly difficult and dangerous for migrants to find a safe haven in all this opposition.

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the number of international migrants has increased in every continent over the last decade. Because of an increasing inequality gap between wealthier countries, the manifesting effects of climate change, and the protective policies that countries have started to adapt (The executive order 13769 comes to mind), people attempting to move out would face a barrage of barriers, stranding them or even pushing them back.

Modern society is split between people who are tolerant of migration, and those who acutely oppose it. Some Eastern European countries and the United States are tightening their borders. As this gap between the rich and poor grows wider and wider in the future, it is unlikely that countries would be ever willing to accept migrants anymore. There are innumerable accounts of these people stranded in countries or borders,

sometimes even risking their lives to cross into countries such as the United States. While in 2017, there are countries in Europe still willing to accept migrants, and a fair amount of non-governmental organizations and individuals supporting this trend, the future holds uncertain.

As migration would bring more and more economic difficulties to wealthier countries, such as rising unemployment, and having a larger and larger proportion of government spending being diverted to refugee management, it would eventually reach a breaking point where a country would finally decide to stifle the flow of refugees into their country. This has already happened with some Scandinavian countries like Sweden, traditionally considered open countries a few years ago. Countries would also grow more and more protective as their own citizens start to confront climate change and a shrinking youth population.

It is too early, in this uncertain world, to judge how humanity would turn out by the end of the 21st century. The problems we have created in the last few centuries are taking their toll today. However, one thing is for certain. Unless humanity alters its perception and action towards migrants, the future would likely hold a lot worse for all of us.



## “The Grass Is Not Always Greener”

King George V School

Blake Askew

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Ian Askew departed for the bright lights of Hong Kong in 1994 from a humble mining village in Northumberland, England. He was 27 years old, a bachelor and had just finished his degree in civil engineering when he was given the opportunity to work in Hong Kong for 3 months on Kowloon Station that was under construction. He waved goodbye to his father, mother and brother as he boarded a Cathay Pacific flight to south-east Asia.

He had graduated from Imperial College two years earlier and joined a design consultant called Ove Arup as a civil engineer. He was drawn to Hong Kong at an early stage in his career by a sense of adventure and the opportunity to work on some of the largest construction projects on the planet. At this time of boom, it was possible to gain a far greater level of experience than would have been possible if he had stayed in England. The British government in Hong Kong was rushing to build the new airport and associated railways before the handover.

Twenty years later he's reflecting on the changes that he has seen in Hong Kong and within his industry. The handover of sovereignty in 1997 was a momentous event. While daily life did not change there has been a progressive move away from using English as a working language, particularly when dealing with government. It is certainly more noticeable that the young people are frustrated with their life opportunities including the ability to purchase a home of their own. Trouble may lie ahead for the Government. Overall the energy level of Hong Kong has not abated and the territory continues to evolve with a Beijing backdrop.

Ian Askew is active in the British Chamber of Commerce where he has exposure to many visiting dignitaries from the UK Government, Hong Kong Government and global industry leaders. In 2018, he will become a Chairman of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers. The previous expatriate chairman was more than 10 years ago. He may well be the last non-Cantonese speaker to fill the role. He does not view this as a positive.

Leaving his parents as they age is tough at times. Every time they are visited they have notably aged and are less mobile. The pollution, comparatively cramped living conditions and constraints on quality of life, are prices to pay for a higher disposable income as a director of a major construction company.

Does he see his long-term future in Hong Kong? Probably not. Eventually he hopes to return to England to enjoy a higher quality of life in his own home with its large garden, wildlife and garage to work on his classic cars.

“The grass has been greener in Hong Kong but sometimes you just want a bigger lawn” ~ Ian Askew 2017



# Nothing But the Truth

King George V School  
Lia Brookhart

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*“Don’t lie to me.”*

*I gape at him, disbelief written on my face. The summer heat dissolves as dusk overtakes Lake Washington, where my family is vacationing. Goosebumps tingle my forearms as I stand dripping wet on the weathered dock, chin raised defensively.*

*The Seattle lifeguard leans forward. “Where are you from?” he repeats.*

*“Africa,” I insist again. “I live there.”*

*“No, you don’t.”*

*The lifeguard turns to the girl beside me. “Your sister says she lives in Africa. Tell the truth.”*

*“I’m not her sister,” my friend replies, bemused by his assumption from our similar mixed complexions. “We’re friends.”*

*“Don’t you know it’s wrong to lie?”*

It has been two years since that conversation, and since then my family has moved from Tanzania to Hong Kong. Yet, something continues to bother me. I have grown accustomed to people asking about my origins, but never has the conversation ended with my being called a liar.

Born biracial in Australia to American parents and growing up in Shanghai, Seattle, Tanzania and Hong Kong, I have always been a minority who has never completely fitted in.

I recall sitting self-consciously at the back of my new Tanzanian classroom, staring at the students filing in and trying to fathom why there were so many “white” kids in my African class. Just when I thought I might be able to fit in I realized that I was once again a minority, the lone American amongst Europeans.

However, not belonging has given me awareness of other migrants and realization that we are defined by our differences. I have come to like being a minority. It is what makes me me.

Nevertheless, those I encounter rarely understand who I am. Some hazard guesses from my American accent and Eurasian visage, but are dismayed that I am not simply American, European nor Asian. Few look deeper to see me.

Although my life sounds messy, I am privileged because I’m not running from anything. My parents’ backgrounds have granted me American citizenship, though I have lived there only a fraction of my life. My passport welcomes me into nearly every country with my biggest hassle being a long line at the visa desk.

How could it be that I am considered American while some who have grown up there are not? Where are they from? I may lament the condescending questions I endure from people who do not understand me, but I have never feared arrest and deportation to a country I have never known.

Our world is a melting pot with many immigrants, but my body is already pre-mixed with these juxtaposed ingredients. Migration has gifted me a rich life of diverse experiences sprinkled with a little pain, which equips me to be a better citizen of my country and planet. Migration unites the world by opening minds to our actual human commonalities. Perhaps, someday, people may understand that a tan-skinned girl swimming in Lake Washington can be exactly who she says she is—not a liar.

# Where Do I Belong?

King George V School  
Cherry Chu

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As she saw her son growing taller and taller day by day, Fang Shi-shi knew she had to do something, immediately.

Unwilling to see her son growing up in a small, rural village like she did, she decided to leave the place she had lived for her entire life. She left along with her son, to meet her husband in the cosmopolitan city: Hong Kong.

“I knew there was no future for him in that tiny village in Taishan – I could foresee it. I knew we had to leave, we just had to,” Fang said. “Hong Kong is just so much better – the schools, hospitals, tall buildings – things you can never see in that poor village.”

However, life was not that easy living in such a competitive city, as one would have imagined. “At the moment, my biggest wish is to live in public housing,” said Fang.

Unfamiliar with the migration policy in Hong Kong, Fang has failed to obtain a Hong Kong Identity Card, and therefore is not eligible to work, leaving all the financial pressure on her husband, a minibus driver with an income of less than HKD\$10,000 per month.

Nevertheless, Fang Shi-shi is just one of the millions of “new immigrants”, where stories like hers take place every day.

Three years ago, when Fang first arrived in Hong Kong, her husband lodged in a room of 9 square metres. When Fang and her son stepped into their “house”, she was stunned and shocked. There was not a stick of furniture apart from a broken bed.

“\$10,000. We only have \$10,000 per month. Amongst other bills, the housing rent alone already costs \$3,000, not to mention all the other unpredictable costs,” said Fang.

Fang couldn’t stand being jobless anymore. In January, she finally applied for a one-way permit, but this document seems to take forever to process. And during this time, not only can she not enjoy the benefits of being a Hong Kong citizen, she would also have to exist as an “invisible person”, without any recognition of her identity.

Fang’s son, Little Ming, has just started P.3 in September. Like many parents in Hong Kong, Fang has signed him up for as many extracurricular activities as she is able to afford.

Despite seeing her son endure this tormenting education system, Fang stays determined. “I believe every single parent is the same as me – who wouldn’t want their child to live a better life? This is the only way for him to go to the best secondary schools, the best universities, and get the best jobs,” Fang said, “I’m just doing this for his own good.”

Yet, we hear quite a contradictory story from Little Ming. “I dare not complain about anything to my mum, but I really hate living here – homework, tests, exams, tutorial classes,” said Little Ming, “my classmates always call me a ‘mainlander’ and laugh at my accent. I wish we could go back to Taishan, back home.”

# Still Yearning to Breathe Free

King George V School  
Leuven Wang

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For my parents, who grew up in the poverty of China's Cultural Revolution, migration seemed like the only means to a better life. Their desperate political and economic environment promised little change and few at that time could have foreseen the reforms and growth that came after Mao's death. It is no wonder that Western nations experienced an influx of Chinese immigrants in the 1980s after the government loosened immigration restrictions. Many of these immigrants settled down, thus forming an entire generation of migration success stories. In 2017, this dream is still present in millions of people and despite the shift in public perception towards migrants, it is still achievable.

Some might point to rising anti-refugee sentiments in Europe, evidenced by the increasing support for candidates championing anti-immigration laws, as proof of the increasingly difficult process migrants face. In the US, a similar vibe is present as citizens are concerned about crime and having to compete with immigrants for jobs. Following President Trump's "America First" approach, a new proposal in Congress aims to halve the number of legal immigrants favoring those who speak English. When confronted with this, I think of the aforementioned Chinese immigrants, many of whom spoke little English at the time of their arrival.

Undoubtedly, the past few years have shown an unkindness towards immigrants not seen in many years. But the true extent of this is exaggerated. One study found that 63% of Americans believe that immigrants strengthen the country, in contrast to the public's view in the 1990s during which the same percentage were under the impression that immigrants were a burden. In addition, as much as 60% of Trump supporters state that undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay if they meet certain requirements. Congressional proposals like the one mentioned earlier have been introduced in the past, and they have all failed as this one is expected to, due to opposition from both sides of the aisle.

And while some may still believe that immigrants are out to take jobs, this is a necessity. Multiple think tanks have concluded that immigrants will play a vital role in the work force of the future. They estimate that without new immigrants, the working population in the US would drop by 4%. Doesn't this ultimately prove that we need immigrants just as much as they need us and that there is a place waiting for them?

And even for refugees and those displaced without a home, a better life is always possible. This is exemplified by Noujain Mastaffa, a young Syrian refugee who made the crossing to Europe in a wheelchair. Once living less than 100 miles from an ISIS stronghold, she is now attending school in Germany and dreams of going to university one day – just as any normal teen would. Having completed a perilous 3500-mile journey through danger, Noujain is a great case of how far one can come in this world and that through the power of will and hard work, the tired, the poor, the huddled masses, the wretched refuse and all those yearning to breathe free can still achieve a better life in 2017.

# Can People Still Achieve a Better Life Through Migration in 2017

Lahore Grammar School  
Hiba Nasir

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Migration shall remain, forever, a temporary solution. It is an incomplete remedy, an incomplete act: for a better life. Believing that you can just cross a border and begin anew, forgetting your native land, is, but a short-termed illusion; a bright color of hope, fading away over time.

“That’s the funny thing about trying to escape. You never really can. Maybe temporarily, but not completely.”

- Jennifer L. Armentrout, Onyx

To understand this claim in depth, we can turn to the example of Rohingya Muslims, “the world’s most persecuted minority”. The minority group is currently subject to ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Myanmar and is thus fleeing to neighboring Bangladesh for refuge.

While they are provided asylum in Bangladesh, the question is: for how long? And how far?

Crossing the border, alive, is a challenge itself. Recently, two dozen refugees have drowned while attempting to escape in a boat. Others are persecuted before they reach safety or die of fatigue. Even upon reaching Bangladesh, they have no guarantee of being given sanctuary. By being driven from their homeland, they are being robbed of their rights. By running away, they succumb to the forces of opposition, who in turn relish their victory. Migration does not put an end to the problem. It simply sedates it.

For instance, turning to climate refugees, it has been estimated that up till now 36 million people have been displaced due to climate change, alone. Their shifting to new accommodation does not solve the problem. While those 36 million have found new homes, many others will be driven out as more natural

disasters hit. The cycle will go on. As we settle one another appears. In fact, it has been estimated that by 2020 the refugee number will rise above 50 million.

Hence, migration does not kill the root of the calamity. It will only provide temporary balance. As we settle the current refugees, more will be born. Our main aim should be not to clear the mess formed, but to tackle the source of the chaos itself.

We cannot think of migration as the answer. We must acknowledge it as one step along the way. Fleeing is NOT the happy ending. Returning with a solution is.

In the case of the Rohingya Muslims, accepting them into new lands is not the cure we should look for. Putting an end to the discrimination and ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, is. The Rohingya should not lose faith. Instead of accepting the ideology of escaping and surviving in foreign lands, they should demand to be given protection in the land of their forefathers, their home. We cannot afford to let the tormentors of this minority group get away with their actions; to let them think that ethnic cleansing is an approved aspect, for which there will be no questioning. If the world fails to react to such cruelty, it will go on to sabotage the lives of many others, victims to horrendous acts of discrimination.

All in all, migration is just one step along the way to a better life. It is a simple state one achieves before being restored to his or her former land, this time with the promise of a better lifestyle.

## Seeking a Better Environment in 2017?

Maryknoll Convent School

Lin Yuen Chee Joanne

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Migration has been a heated term in different societies, especially the more developed, around the world. Quite some people allege that migration is a way in search of true happiness and genuinely better life. In the face of this practice, can people still achieve a better life through migration in the year 2017?

From my point of view, I disagree that people can still achieve a better life through migration in 2017. I had thought of migrating to the U.S. before, however, in 2017, mainly two significant issues happened, leading “tragedies” to the citizens of the United States. So, I would not migrate and would stay in Hong Kong for the time being. One of the issues is about Trump being the president of the United States and the other one about the hurricane that hit Puerto Rico, an unincorporated territory of the United States located in the northeast Caribbean Sea, this September.

After Donald Trump became the president of the United States of America, he, representing his country, had withdrawn from the Paris Agreement on June 1, 2017. If the U.S. stops contributing to the Green Climate Fund, the hardships and confidence accumulated by people concerned to tackle global warming problem could be diminished or could have a lower efficiency due to what Trump had decided. The former president, Barack Obama, said of Trump decisions, “Even as this Administration joins a small handful of nations that reject the future, I am confident that our states, cities, and businesses will step up and do even more to lead the way, and help protect for future generations the one planet we have got.” Children of another generation could have the chance of living in a cleaner world, and I think people, especially Trump, should have the responsibility to provide a better environment to his citizens, but not all related to business. Therefore, it may not be suitable for people to migrate under the climate change while wanting to achieve a better life in 2017.

That the upshot brought by the hurricane, Maria, harmed the people living in Puerto Rico goes without saying. Flooding, crippled communications, decimated buildings and the damage to dams put downstream residents at risk of catastrophe. People living there find it nearly impossible to sleep with the high

temperatures. They do not have a generator or a fan. Children are desperate. Besides, the lack of power in Puerto Rico means there will be even more pain for its economy that is already reeling from a decade-long recession. With no power, even more people will leave the island to find better opportunities on the mainland and will further drain its workforce. This makes the place unsuitable for people to earn a living with scarce resources. Moreover, Trump did not offer a pathway for dealing with Puerto Rico’s debt, which filed the biggest government bankruptcy in U.S. history earlier this year. With the collapse of U.S.’s economy and the damaged living condition in Puerto Rico, people cannot even survive in that place and have no security living there. For that reason, choosing to migrate in 2017 is not the right choice to be made at the moment.

In my opinion, if people moved in to the United States of America, they could have a hard time there. However whether that place is suitable for them, for example businessmen, lies in the way one perceives. I am confident that if one does more research about the place one wants to live in, he or she can have a better environment in 2017.

# “Migration: How to Maximize Its Possibility”

Nada High School  
Satoshi Yanaizu

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Born in Japan as a child of Chinese migrants, sometimes I find myself unable to identify myself as Japanese. For most people here, the national identity means far more than an emblem in a passport: it is a token of intimate cultural bonds with their Japanese ancestors, a qualification that I will never come to fulfill. The prevalent antagonistic views against migration in Japan rest on this premise that migrants wreak havoc on traditional “Japanese values”.

The rising anti-migrant sentiments throughout the developed world also derive from concerns over cultural transformation. The research conducted by Harvard Kennedy School concluded that cultural backlash is the pivotal driver behind the surging appreciation for populist, anti-migrant political parties. Their nostalgic narratives, notably President Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again”, embody the dissatisfaction of some natives that their ways of life have been ignored and eroded by migrants. It is more crucial than ever to hearken to those voices. That’s what democracy is all about.

Still, human migration constitutes an indispensable aspect of our modern lives. The OECD estimates that migrants account for 47 percent of the increase in the workforce in the United States and 70 percent in Europe for the past 10 years, filling important niches in fast-growing industries like IT sectors. The list of benefits of migration goes on: remittances for developing countries, an increase in tax revenue, and scientific advancement. Without their knowledge and diligence, our economic system and institutions would be untenable.

Recently the world has witnessed more forced influxes of people pursuing so much more than economic gains. As the civil war in Syria becomes calamitous, the number of displaced people reached the record-breaking 65.3 million in 2015. Climate change also manifests itself as the imminent cause for migration with rising sea levels and destructive natural disasters like hurricane Harvey. We should demonstrate international solidarity in this face of global hardship. No single country alone has ever been responsible for climate change or conflicts that caused this ongoing refugee crisis. The fruit of globalization comes with this common responsibility of the international community to support refugees and prevail humanity.

Instead of misguiding citizens through the provocation of hostility towards migrants and refugees, governments should pave the way to coexistence while addressing the anxiety over migration’s cultural implications. We need policies to tackle institutional discrimination that alienates migrants economically and socially and portrays them as suspicious strangers. The migrants should express their willingness to integrate into local societies, to participate in community gatherings, and to help their neighbors.

Cooperation at the individual level is a small yet prominent step for mutual understanding and cultural integration.

Migration represents an enormous opportunity for those who desire a better life. My father immigrated to Japan in hopes of enhancing his academic career in engineering. Globalization has enabled more people than ever to embrace such hopes. It is high time to move toward an inclusive society that regards migrants as an essential driving force for a prosperous future.

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Thomas Pernin, 37, his daughters Yasmine, 8, left, and Layla, 10, remove clumps of palm oil washed up on a beach on Lamma Island in Hong Kong. Having migrated from France in 2015, Thomas feels it is “super critical” to promote environmentally-friendly habits at home. He hopes that his daughters will be sensitive about the environment and learn by participating in cleanup events like this.





# Home away from Home

Raffles Institution

Xuan Zihan

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When I first arrived at Singapore Changi Airport from Shanghai, tugging my equally tall luggage behind me, my parents reassured me with comforting notions of assimilation. Yet I still remember, returning from my first day of school, my palms so clammy and cold. I didn't understand a single word of the lessons conducted in English, the nation's lingua franca, but the most unintelligible gib-ber-ish I have ever heard. The seven-year-old me sank into an abyss of desolation.

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For all the myriad destinations migrants are heading to, one universal goal aligns the narrative: the opportunity to seek a better life.

Yet, from language barriers to employment difficulties, surviving in and adapting to a new environment are acutely harsh experiences. Sociopolitical "progress" in the cataclysmic year of 2016 has not helped: with xenophobic sentiments brewing worldwide due to Brexit, the election of an intolerant U.S. president, and the rise of alt-right groups, it is becoming increasingly untenable to imagine an easy transition into a life abroad.

All these concerns raise a significant doubt on an axiom previously taken for granted: **Can people still achieve a better life through migration in 2017?**

The easy, and seductively nihilistic answer is, no longer. With the backlash against globalization, many developed countries are now (regretfully or otherwise) shutting their borders, curtailing labour flow, and discouraging free movement of aspiring individuals. Sceptics cite the overburdened economy of Germany as the prime example to illustrate how uneducated migrants face a bleak future with dismal pay. Further, for those fleeing domestic conflict and environmental degradation, their end-goal may not be a paradise, as ecological migrants relocated to the barren Miaomiao Lake village in China and the Rohingya population leaving Myanmar in perilous journeys to the unknown can attest to. Granted, for many refugees worldwide, the prospects of securing a bright future may seem bleaker than ever.

Recently, however, socially conscious countries and corporations are retaliating against the toxic tides of close-minded racism and xenophobia. Accordingly, migrants can still expect a decent improvement of the quality of life, although whether the promise becomes a mirage is path-dependent. Reassuringly, in Sweden and elsewhere, young migrants may be able to tap into the country's need for labour amidst ageing populations. Further, as in Nadine Gordimer's fictional short story *The Ultimate Safari*, migrants escaping from civil war can at least enjoy temporary peace and provisions in nearby territories.

Gradually, welcoming attitudes towards migrants are returning to mainstream discourse. But more importantly, let us recognize that it is not merely the destination that the migrants are after; rather, for generations, the possibility of migration has provided those teetering on the brink of defeatist desperation with a source of hope, solace, and respite, as they embark on arduous quests in pursuit of a better life. A chance to re-create and envision a meaningful tomorrow, on a blank slate, in a home away from home.

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Ten years later, I have become used to the local culture of the lion city, profiting from the premium educational system. Yet, I remain a foreigner only partly integrated. The hurdle towards citizenship, the ultimate reward of migration for many, is a tough one to leap over. Still, in tenacious spirit, and away from birthplace, I pray for acceptance and fight, just as the 300 million migrants around the world do, for a life worth living.

# Fleeing, Fighting, Fearing: Migration a Choice and Necessity

Raffles Institution

Weng Jin Kevin Tong

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Since it was first defined, migration has always been characterized by the search for a better life. Whether it be “pushed” by war and poor living conditions, or “pulled” by the lure of better job opportunities, humans are conditioned to seek what we believe is best for ourselves. Of course, within this broad definition, people migrate for vastly different regions. In the 20th century, with the ubiquity and affordability of air travel, migration became commonplace. Technology allowed us to move halfway around the globe in a matter of hours whilst keeping in touch with relatives back home. Furthermore, the rise of transnational companies meant that people followed their jobs to distant countries. It was generally observed that migration more often than not led to a better life. It was an informed choice, and tended to be a choice that paid dividends.

While voluntary migration has remained a trend, the past few years have seen an uptick in the number of people forced to migrate as a result of unfavorable circumstances in their own countries. Groups have been forced to flee from war or the looming specter of persecution. According to the UNHCR, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide reached 65 million at the end of 2015, a record high. This has been driven by political instability resulting from the Arab Spring as well as civil wars in the Middle East, among others. The migrant crisis has gained worldwide attention, especially with regard to Europe, where many migrants have risked their lives to make the perilous crossing of the Mediterranean Sea from the Middle East. The UNHCR estimated 1 million migrants arrived in Europe illegally in 2015, with 3771 lives lost at sea, and these numbers are rising year-on-year. Even more recently, we have seen the idea of “climate refugees” become a distinct possibility, as the radical changes that climate change brings threatens to displace many from their homes. For these people, migration has very much become a necessity rather than a choice. They do not have a choice, because to stay is to die or at least suffer.

Migration may not promise a better life, but it certainly could not be much worse.

In 2017, as in every other year, it remains indubitable that people can achieve a better life through migration. Whether the migrants are young men and women searching for better job opportunities or families fleeing war and human rights violations, other countries can give them the chance to improve their quality of life. However, this might not always be the case. For Syrians moving from refugee camp to refugee camp, or Rohingya Muslims trapped in no man’s land between Myanmar and Bangladesh, migration has not yet brought them the bright future they might have envisioned. Nonetheless, migration is, and will always be, a beacon of hope - hope for a better life, a better future, and a better world.



# “We’re Gonna Make the World Great Again”

Renaissance International School Saigon  
Chan Gyu Choi

Can people still achieve a better future through migration in 2017?

Alan Kurdi was a young boy from Syria, whose family was moving between various cities in Syria to flee from the ISIL. Hoping to have a brighter life away from violence and hatred, Alan and his family headed to Greece on a small rubber boat, designed for holding 8 people, along with 15 other refugees. The boat capsized after five minutes leaving Turkey, causing several migrants to drown to death, including Alan, his brother, and his mother.



Alan lying dead on the Turkish shore

7 days ago, it was the second year anniversary of the death of Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian refugee who was found as a lifeless corpse while trying to reach Greece in 2015. Alan’s death was captured by a Turkish photographer, causing a dramatic increase in awareness of the migrant crisis that is affecting millions worldwide even at this moment. After two years of the iconic photograph which shook the whole world, is the situation any better for migrants compared to the past?

Well, the short answer will be ‘No’. The crisis in Syria and its neighbouring regions is worse than before. Civilian casualties are rising every day, is more than 11 million Syrians have been killed or forced to flee their homelands. The problem is not limited to Syria. Several million from Africa are seeking a brighter future in Europe, thousands of Rohingya people from Burma and Bangladesh are begging for humanitarian support in Southeastern Asia, and the list goes on indefinitely. The UNHCR, UN agency for refugees, estimates a total of

65.6 million people around the world forced away from home, and 22.5 million refugees among them. What is happening to our world?

The boat-riders risk everything: money, their own lives, the lives of their family and their homes. Syrians are forced to leave their beloved homes, vast plains, and mountain ranges for nothing but a safe and secure life; something that the rest of us take for granted. Some might say it is nation’s rights to refuse refugees in their territory, but the lives of 11 million human beings should not depend on a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question.

Even during this turmoil, President Trump issued the executive order 13769 followed by the executive order 13780, lowering the number of refugees to be admitted in the US, banning refugee administration from the 7 major Muslim majority nations: Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Meanwhile, “Hatred, racism, and extremism have no place in this country”, says the German chancellor Angela Merkel,

‘MAKE AMERICA SAFE AGAIN!’ says Mr. Trump. Well, I would like to end with a quote from Nour Machlah’s speech<sup>1</sup>, 25-year-old Syrian architect and a public speaker living in Europe.

“You want to be rational? Stop the war. Stop the war in the countries.”

Do not cry “havoc” and let slip the dogs of war. Do not fight chaos with chaos. When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> “Short Part of My Speech in the European Parliament Talking about Migration Crisis.”

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# Has the American Dream Become a Mirage?

Renaissance International School Saigon  
ByeoRi Song

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“Sometimes I wish I could ask America when, exactly, it made its mind up about us... there is still a chance to... live, as it's more commonly known, the American dream.”

Mira Jacob, the author of *The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing*, appealed to the public in “Here's What I'm Telling My Brown Son About Trump's America”. Jacob is Indian American and a well-received woman in her career. In the letter, she represents the minorities that are often rejected and are facing the lonely fight. What made her raise her voice?

The term American dream was coined in 1931 by a historian James Truslow Adams, as “dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability to achievement.” Under this ambitious yet compelling word, the United States of America has been the home of immigrants and the place where successes miraculously happen.

In 2017, this dream of millions of people has been called into question.

As of 2015, there are 43.3 million foreign-born residents in the USA, comprising 13.5% of the whole population. The group came from diverse backgrounds; about 100 years before, the majority were from Europe whereas, recently, they are mostly from the Middle East, South America and Africa.

Regardless of when and from where they moved, they are all living the same hopes. However, they are soon disillusioned and realize that the immigrants are victims of discrimination and legal disputes, and left in danger of deportation. Their situation became worse as the newly elected president Donald Trump is willing to force stricter regulations on immigrants.

Despite the strong opposition, Trump administration plans to terminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) - a program that allows a certain level of amnesty for the illegal immigrants that arrived as a child. One of the reasons for closing the border is misunderstanding and fear. Jacob shared her thoughts on this complicated history: “When it came to stripping us of our rights, most forms of harassment would be hidden under the benign umbrella of Better Safe Than Sorry.”

Concerns about the economy are another factor; however, there

have been steady proofs to contradict the point. According to the Partnership for a New American Economy, immigrants contributed a great sum to Social Security and Medicare in 2014. Moreover, statistics show that they increased the GDP of U.S. by \$2 trillion in 2016. Even the jobs are being complemented by the immigrants since their occupations tend to differ from the U.S.-born American workers.

Towards the end of the sincere letter, Jacob comments that “America does not yet know how to love and value its people...” Then she reminds her son not to forget the love even when learning the truth might be disappointing. Whatever the future actions may be, one thing the nation should remember is that it is the blood, sweat and tears of the dreamers that truly make America great.



# South Sudanese Refugees Go Down in Flames

Renaissance International School Saigon

Won Jun Yang

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Prior to South Sudan's independence in 2011, its civilian population had experienced more than two decades of brutal civil war, but as of 2017, they are faced with another emerging humanitarian and refugee crisis.

South Sudan successfully acquired its independence in 2011 with generous support from the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), hoping to consolidate peace and security. As a consequence of the civil war, at least 2.5 million people died because of food shortages and drought. Needless to say, significant parts of the country's infrastructure have been devastated, including schools, hospitals and clinics, and, most importantly, shelters for the civilian population. Notwithstanding monetary aid from the United States, Sweden, and the Netherlands (top 3 donors) for social and economic recovery in South Sudan, everything went down in flames after December 2013 when a conflict between the South Sudanese government and rebel groups began.

South Sudan's president, Salva Kiir, condemned and sacked his former deputy, Riek Machar, who now leads the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO), for attempting a coup d'état. Following the breathless tension between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Government (SPLM-IG) and the SPLM-IO, classified as the anti-governmental forces (AGF), the outbreak of violence in 2013 led to a gruesome displacement, with over one million South Sudanese people displaced to neighbouring countries and seeking refuge. What is worse, 800,000 individuals were compelled to flee from their homes – they were internally displaced, living lives of life-threatening poverty.

In 2014, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) was reached and signed by the government of the Republic of South Sudan and the SPLM-IO with the primary aims of pursuing a peaceful political reconciliation followed by intensified regulations to ensure that the rates of casualties and displacement were reduced. This agreement was recognised as a great historical moment that suggested the undeniable fact that international communities could collaborate to influence political and developmental interventions in South Sudan.

Nevertheless, the violence erupted again in July 2016 between the same forces for control over a production of oil – there were mass killings along with ethical segregation and refugees.

Consequently, 1.7 million South Sudanese had been internally displaced, and 200,000 innocent souls had migrated to the neighbouring countries, where countless cases of persecution and prejudice against them are continuously reported. The United Nations experts urged for threats of the migration to be expanding in scope and complexity.

South Sudan's humanitarian needs for the refugees are gigantic. A total of 65% of the population live below the absolute poverty line, and 50% is illiterate. They will continue to be victims if the world does not cooperate to settle this dispute. Truth be told, the youths also directly experience the chaos with the sound of horror, bringing about a massive downstream impact on their mentality. What should be given more weight in this battle of proper governance and political ideology? The future of the South Sudanese refugees is in our hands.

# Migration

## Shelter Community School 1

Asiya Ishaq

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Horror ceases my mind every time I hear the word 'migration'. It brings many overwhelming memories back. Based on my experience, I would define migration as 'the run' not a 'movement'.

I know no difference between internal and external migration because wherever I go, I have to prove that I am me. There are situations when I have to keep my status (refugee) a secret so that people befriend me and see the real me before judging me. And it works!

Mankind has the right to go wherever nature guides his feet. Being a migrant is not easy, especially when the word illegal is attached to it. Who leaves their home just to be called illegal and burden on nations? The world was not created with boundaries. Oceans, mountains and deserts are designed as bridges —not walls for separating families.

People flee their countries due to various reasons which can be resolved through unity. By banning them, nations are turning a blind eye on problems like war, poverty, discrimination, corruption etc. The issues that the migrants are facing cannot be swept under the carpet. By imprisoning refugees around borders, we are creating a huge pressure cooker, which if it explodes, will be more drastic than an atomic bomb!

I became a refugee 10 years ago, at the age of 9. I am one of the million children who were neglected. However, I was lucky; with the support of NGOs and other organizations, my family and I were able to overcome our traumas. What about those who are still out there, trapped in the dark; those who lose their limbs in bomb blasts; those who lose their families yet are not accepted by nations? How many stories are dying each day without being discovered? What will happen when the survivors begin demanding answers to their situation which are caused as a result of the foreign strategic policies of the world?

When nations reject refugees, they are ignoring burdened survivors and neglecting minds with conflicts, minds that yearn to see humanity. Depriving migrants from their rights compels them to choose the path of violence. A vulnerable child locked in a society where he/she sees nothing but blood stains and tears of grief will eventually become insensitive and will choose guns over other toys.

By educating and loving them, we are not only reducing the refugee crisis but also building a community that will contribute in transforming the world, which will eventually lead to positive multiplier effect, as both Mother Nature and mankind will be at peace.

There are many people out there helping in making migrants' lives better and you might be one of them. Mother Teresa once quoted, "We sometimes feel that what we do is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop."

It does not matter which year it is or it may be, as long as there are peacemakers in this world, there is hope for a better life.

# Migration Woes

Singapore School Manila  
Thea Lim

Migration is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as the movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions. However, in the year 2017, it is quite difficult to say that people can still achieve a better life by doing so.

Countries are continuously finding ways to tighten their borders. One of the reasons as to why this is being done is the global refugee crisis. Thousands of Syrian refugees have fled to countries like the United States and the United Kingdom in order to be free from the war and conflict being experienced in their country. Despite wanting to help those that are in need, these countries are finding it more and more difficult to do, for the safety of their own countries.

With a newly elected president in the United States, illegal immigration was one of the issues President Donald Trump promised to tackle during his campaign. Travel bans have already been implemented in order to have more control over the refugees that enter their country. He also promised in his campaign to build a wall between the US and Mexico to ensure people do not illegally cross the border. As for the United Kingdom, Brexit is an on-going decision to be made. It covers several issues related to their country, but immigration is one of the key features of the advocates' campaign as well.

Discrimination is something found, once again, evident in the United States. Again due to the President's promise on tackling illegal immigration. The most common deportation of illegal immigrants that have been reported is among Mexicans. And because of this, even those that are not illegal immigrants, are being labelled as so. Students in schools are even being bullied, being called names just because they have come from a different country.

People tend to migrate to first world countries, such as the United States, to achieve better lives. Access to higher wages, higher education, better health facilities, and more job opportunities are a few of the many reasons why people migrate. But with the current issues being faced in those first world countries, the possibility of being looked down on is higher than actually obtaining a much better life.

Over time, migration is something that is becoming more difficult to act upon. With tightened borders comes new laws and a possibility of higher taxes and visas. This then further narrows down to who is able to afford or who is willing to face great challenges and problems to do so.

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# An Insight into Economic Migration: From the Midst of the Developing to the Borders of the Developed

Singapore School Manila

Valerie Simone S. Tantuachut

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It's said that migration is the key to people's success and happiness, and it's especially seen in developing countries. When your life is down and the place you live in is doing you no good, you pack your things, leave for a developed country and never look back. It's that simple. Except it's not.

As of 2015, there were about 244 million people living outside their home countries as immigrants, with roughly 157 million coming from developing countries such as Mexico, India and China. Up to this day, the rate of migration from developing countries to developed countries is steadily increasing.

Because of the heavy flow of migrants going to developed countries, these countries have put up immigration policy restrictions that only allow a certain number of immigrants to stay permanently. This means that the applicants are screened very thoroughly, and only the best are accepted. These people are usually the educated, having skills and talents that are demanded by society.

The migrants who leave are usually doing it for their own personal benefit: to gain access to better health facilities, technology, and work. Even the low-wage occupations pay higher than some of their professional jobs back home. But when looking at it from the perspective of the country they left, it's a tremendous loss.

The term brain drain has been coined for this situation. Because of the country's still-developing status, it desperately needs skilled professionals to help in society. Unfortunately, because most of their educated employees are migrating, the country faces a "shortage", resulting in an economic struggle wherein the country doesn't have enough people to fill positions for jobs that require well-trained professionals like engineers and doctors.

This is much like what Ethiopia is facing. With 75 percent of its skilled professionals from the last 10 years going to other countries for better lives, the country faces a hindrance to its development and struggles to attract their people to come back.

But do not think that all migrants have it good. In a case study conducted by the International Organisation for Migration and the Gallup World Poll back in 2013, it was found that migrants are happiest only when they move from a developed country to another developed country, while migrants moving to and from developing ones are still likely to be unsatisfied with their lives. Additionally, migrants who move from developing to developed nations are in the middle of that boundary.

If migration is the key to people's success and happiness, then the only doors it can open are the ones of the privileged. While more and more doors are opened for them, the people at the bottom whose needs are barely met by their struggling countries are locked out and have no means of opening theirs. They who are *desperate* for a better life can't even get it to budge.

In the end, it all comes down to the uneven distribution of wealth and power which only the ones who already have it can obtain.





Wendy Tam, an immigrant from China, spends time with her infant, Ethan, who is eight months old in Boston's Chinatown on Nov. 6, 2017. Tam works part time as a pharmacy assistant and devotes the rest of her time to caring for her child, while her husband works full time at a restaurant.





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# Hong Kong's Foreign Domestic Workers

South Island School  
Teddy Kwok

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Can people still achieve a better life through migration in 2017?

Historically, in Hong Kong, the debate over immigration has forever been dictated by the media and policymakers. Their combined influence promotes the idea that immigrants are catalysts to various problems in society, which is used in order to justify their marginalization and exploitation. Given that domestic workers in Hong Kong are subject to abuse and economic deprivation, this discussion will be broadly applicable to the foundational issues currently fuelling the global migrant crisis.

Presently, the crux of this problem lies in the draconian policies that shackle 340,000 foreign domestic workers. Among many other things, these policies prohibit migrants from obtaining permanent residency and exclude them from the state's minimum wage laws. Whereas skilled immigrants are welcomed with policies established to protect them, punitive policies for domestic workers perpetuate a cycle of poverty and victimization. A core component of this problem is the overwork epidemic currently affecting Hong Kong's migrant workers. The blurred boundary between life and work is largely attributable to the absence of a cap on working hours for domestic workers, as well as to the "live-in" and "two-week rule", which mandate, respectively, that foreign domestic workers live with their employers, and that they depart from Hong Kong within two weeks if they are let go or quit. Given Hong Kong's infamous unaffordable housing market, foreign domestic workers are forced to share space with their employers in what are already appalling conditions. Meanwhile, the "two-week rule" discourages domestic workers from voicing objections to their treatment, for fear of losing their jobs. When domestic workers do choose to report employer abuses, the application period lasts for months; migrants cannot work during this period, and must pay for both housing and food. By ensuring that employers who exploit their domestic helpers rarely face repercussions, the government indirectly legislates this vicious cycle. In 2013,

the high-profile case of Erwiana Sulistyarningsih – a foreign domestic worker in Hong Kong who suffered horrible abuse at the hands of her employer - brought this issue much-needed global attention, which ultimately led to the imprisonment of her employer.

The life of an immigrant is defined by hardships, fear and uncertainty. For a tragic number of immigrants the world over, a higher standard of living is far fetched. I would suggest that this reality is not only ethically indefensible but economically disadvantageous, given that the successful integration of migrant workers has proven to be economically beneficial to several host countries. In fact, over the past decade in Europe, migrant labour has accounted for a 70% increase in the workforce. In order to effectively curb this issue, drastic measures must be taken to ensure that immigrants are being granted access to the fundamental rights that the majority population are guaranteed. This "human imperative" supersedes in importance any economic concerns that developed nations might have. The lives of millions are in the balance. In the absence of such measures, we will have failed the most vulnerable among us, and by extension, we will have failed ourselves.

# Africa's Curtain Call

Southville International School and Colleges

Miguel Dominico M. Alzona

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"Libya is not safe for us," said Awa. The 35-year old mother had traveled the breadth of the sub-Saharan desert from her home in Sierra Leone. In Libya, she had been attacked by a group of armed men who forced her to pay money. Coming across a report from the Public Radio International organization, she stayed in a detention center in Tripoli for five months before escaping to safety.

Rescued by humanitarian workers at the Libyan coast, Awa is one of millions of people migrating to Libya from every end of the African continent, each facing the same pernicious situation as her.

For two decades, Libya has been known as the starting point for African migrants wishing to leave the continent. *Fi Libya kull shay mumkin*, the motto goes. In Libya, everything is possible. People migrate to find jobs, to escape war and persecution, and to flee from famine and natural disasters.

Instead, the majority of the African migrants end up detained, normally taking months to finally gain access to their actual desired destination. In addition, Europe and its neighbors in the Mediterranean are currently trying to cut the flow of migrants coming from Africa, specifically from Libya, through joint naval patrols. Human Rights Watch has said that these "run roughshod over refugee and migrant rights".

In an open letter to European leaders on September 6 2017, Medecins Sans Frontieres President Joanne Liu wrote, "The detention of migrants and refugees in Libya is rotten to the core. It must be named for what it is: a thriving enterprise of kidnapping, torture, and extortion. And European governments have chosen to contain people in this situation. People cannot be sent back to Libya, nor should they be contained there."

As several nations of Africa continue to cope with climate change, flooding urban populations, political and economic instability, and ethnic abuses, the issue of migration is pushed to its limit. Immigration policies are getting stricter, yet no solutions have been brought up by governments. Without any subordination, millions of migrants will continue to face a tomorrow of hopelessness due to unprecedented violence. Where is the help? Is the future of 14 million Africans merely a heuristic prototype for the rest?

This same situation is present in Myanmar, where about 370,000 people have fled to Bangladesh and other neighboring countries from the Rakhine state due to the so-called ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya Muslims. Furthermore, the government has also forbidden any external aid from the United Nations, while Bangladesh has started to limit the number of Rohingya coming in. So why do we put them down for actions not by their own will? Society must know that if humans have rights at all, these migrants need to be served justice for the abuse of their own basic human rights, and not left to the hands of industrial discrimination and bigotry from foreign states.

"Hysteria and hypocrisy walk in the footsteps of refugees and migrants. The paranoia of wealthy countries is deeply ironic. Their carbon-intensive lifestyles are driving global warming, which is likely to become the largest single factor forcing people to flee their homes around the world," said Andrew Simms of the New Economics Foundation, back in 2003. Nonetheless, 14 years later, millions of people still face the dilemma of leaving their homes to walk into an uncertain and often terrifying future elsewhere. But with the evolving number of migrants across the world and the impact of climate change reaching its peak, migration proves to be a temporary and frightful solution for many facing its peril.

Today, approximately 14 million Africans are still trapped in their baleful cycle of life. Can we really still achieve a better life by means of migration today? In spite of all crises in the world, it's a far shot. However, we are begged upon to commiserate with these migrants; to empathize with their fates.

# The Elusive Dream of Migrants

Southville International School and Colleges

Akisha Julianne L. Cu

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Everyone has at least one dream or goal in life, be it the dream to become the next president, the dream to get accepted into a prestigious university, or even the dream to become the next renowned scientist. The thing we all have in common with our dreams is that they are the source of our motivation and hope to achieve our goals. Immigrants and refugees have the exact same purpose in mind when they migrate to better their lives. One of the reasons why we live in such a diverse and progressive society today is because of migration. However, as a result of political debates, terrorism, and national conflicts, migration has been one of the most controversial topics this year. Deportation processes and stricter migration policies have been made in response to this. Despite all of this, I believe people can still achieve a better life through migration in 2017 through opportunities and change.

Whether from practicality or preference, the decision to move to another country depends on the situation at hand. The conditions of one's native country and the desired country affect the lives of those migrating greatly. However, countries like Syria are still at war and conflicts among nations and terrorist groups are still on the rise. When placed in situations like these, it becomes harder to have the opportunity to improve one's life. While seeking safety and refuge in another country is a different situation entirely, the purpose to have a better life remains the same. According to the 2017 International Migration Outlook, 5 million people migrated permanently to OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries in 2016. This year has been the year open to the most change and improvement in our values and economies as we progress forward. Due to the recent circumstances of some countries, migration has reached its peak as people seek out countries that offer better education, work, and security benefits.

Immigrants either take or create opportunities. A 2016 study from the National Foundation for American Policy revealed that 44 out of 87 U.S. start-ups, which were valued at \$168 billion, were founded or co-founded by immigrants. These start-ups employed an average of 760 people per company. The constant flow of people from one place to another creates diversity not only in the aspects of our culture but also in the skills of our workforce. Due to this, migration has increased opportunities available which help better both the economy and lives of the people.

The way governments respond to the immigrant and refugee crisis, and their struggle to find an alternative and rational approach, are the reasons for the people's concern. However, this past year was the year that placed migration and displacement on the global political agenda. Countries are slowly finding their way through solutions and migration has now become a top priority not only for politicians but also for growing business leaders and entrepreneurs. Regardless of the negative light shone on migration and stricter migration policies, people continue to find humane solutions and fight for the rights of immigrants and refugees (i.e. refugee camps). Governments do have a point in the fact that there is no one hundred percent guarantee that whoever enters their country is not a "threat". However, that is the sole reason why there are background checks and limitations being processed when allowing immigrants or refugees in a country. Immigration is a two-way process that includes the legality of the method and the empathy of countries accepting immigrants and refugees.

Changes and resolutions are continuously being made as we become more open, empathetic, and accepting. Migration has become an integral part of our society today. We cannot allow discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes to be the causes of why people cannot achieve a better life through migration. There will always be a chance to pursue a better life, and setbacks like stricter migration policies and negative perceptions on migration are factors that can affect this. However, the hope, will, and empathy we bring to see change and a better future will continue to overcome the challenges of migration in 2017.



# Immigration: The New Colossus

Southville International School and Colleges

Vincent Romero

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Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. The haunting words of Emma Lazarus remain and ever endure within the Statue of Liberty, a symbol of freedom and peace amongst nations. Greeted by Lady Liberty herself, immigrants would be put at ease as they sailed into New York harbour and into a new life, one which promised health and prosperity for generations to come. For tens of thousands of years, people have migrated across continents in search of pastures new, but is such a prospect still achievable in the modern world?

According to data from the UN Population Division, the number of international migrants has skyrocketed from an already massive figure of 77 million in 1960, to a colossal 244 million just last year. With so many asylum seekers on the move, equally large amounts have died on their pilgrimages to open shores. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) recorded over 5000 migrant deaths on the Mediterranean alone.

People from all around the globe will risk life and limb, sailing across vast oceans through harsh weather, only to live through constant discrimination. The alternative is to live through famines and wars, through sicknesses and oppression. To live in the shadow of the four horsemen or to move to a strange alien world: the decision presented to the people living in such conditions is perhaps the most difficult one they will ever make. Is the choice to take the plunge into such foreboding waters made in vain? The World Migration Report: Migrant Well-being and Development, published by IOM, sought to shed light on the subject.

The report weighed up the gains and losses experienced from the perspective of migrants themselves. Based on responses to questions about financial situations, career security and overall satisfaction in life, data was gathered from over 22,000 immigrants in over 150 countries.

Findings suggest, unsurprisingly, people who migrate from wealthy countries to other wealthy countries, such as the UK to Canada, experienced higher rates of satisfaction. On the other end of the spectrum, those who relocated from less developed country to a similar one, such as Malaysia to Indonesia, are worse off in their new home. The same group has also been identified as least likely to find satisfaction in their lives.

All the statistics and figures in the world could be collected on such a pertinent topic, but it is impossible to quantify an aspect of life as abstract as happiness. Despite all that goes on in the world: religious extremism in the Middle East, acts of terror in the west, and the ever looming threat of nuclear annihilation, we are living in the most peaceful times in human history. Every day brings a new tragedy to light, but sensationalism has become the norm of today's news. Moreover, the phenomenon that is mass human migration is brought about by the constant spread of such information, possibly making refuge in the west look much more appealing than it is.

# Antagonism: The Plight of Migration in 2017

St. Joseph's Institution International School

Natasha Nair

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As wars are waged and climates change for the worse, the need for migration is more prominent than ever. According to the OECD, migration flows and immigrant populations have risen over decades, and the trend does not seem to be plateauing any time soon. Migration has undoubtedly improved lives by offering ideal conditions in most aspects: economically, employment and stability; socially, the recognition of human rights; politically, stable and incorrupt governance.

But there is one factor prevalent in 2017 that precludes many migrants from attaining that better life: psychologically, migrants seem to be less accepted and more marginalized than before. With closing borders and tall walls in their way, migrants face a different problem — the obstacle of antagonism.

In 2017, we are at the precipice of a paradigm shift (or rather a paradigm regression) as people question the benefits of globalization, and naturally turn to isolationism to combat the dangers of this more accessible and connected world. In their eyes, migration has not given them a better life, because aliens that permeate borders and leech off their resources have no place on their soil. Humans tend to retreat in times of uncertainty, to close their minds and borders when external forces threaten to attack. To construct walls to keep their problems out of the country.

These days, the socio-economic benefits of immigration are being increasingly overshadowed by growing fear and frustration. The troubling factor is that those who oppose migrants see them as a charity case, one that they are unwilling to support. Take a citizen with excessive pride in their nation, throw in a hint of trepidation that globalization will invalidate their patriotism, a dash of annoyance at their current government, and bake at the heat of a stressful economy. Then, as a final touch, present the perfect scapegoat: the migrant. You end up with citizens so blind to migration's economic pluses that empathy is not even on the table.

Then again, forget basic human kindness. If one is to adhere to survival instincts, then empathy is simply a hindrance. However, the fault of a closed mindset is not in the lack of empathy, but rather in the assumption that migrants are the sole benefactors of migration. The rate of migration has and always will be proportional to that of economic liberalization, so to protest the former and advocate for the latter is paradoxical at best.

The vilification of migrants is certainly not the only hurdle between them and a better life, but it's tough when a supposed safe haven becomes a pit of hostility. Migrants can handle the cost of leaving their homeland, but a "better life" becomes slightly harder to attain once you begin to bear the brunt of being a scapegoat.

Can people still achieve a better life through migration in 2017? Well, that all depends. Migration can still prevent poverty, illiteracy, and even death. It has lost neither power nor purpose, but it certainly faces an enemy reborn now rearing its ugly head: isolationism.

# Migration - A Temporary Panacea of Improvement

St. Joseph's Institution International School  
Gabrielle Sng

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According to the 2015 migration statistics courtesy of the United Nations, there are approximately 244 million international migrants — people living outside their country of birth, worldwide. Undoubtedly, this 41 percent increase from the year 2000 represents a paradigm shift in immigrational desire and mobility. However, at the same time, this figure which includes roughly 20 million refugees, also epitomises the devastation inherent in many countries as unfavourable conditions such as conflict and climate change force migration onto many hopeful civilians trying to escape these terrors. Consequently, these aforementioned trends construe the misconception that migration will surely bestow a better life on those who seek it.

While it is undeniable that migration brings forth the prospect of an improved quality of life to many, there is no definite guarantee for the actualisation of these prospects into reality. A variety of factors significantly affect the life of a migrant, of which many remain uncertain and unprecedented until they occur. As a result, migrants often find themselves engulfed in the negative repercussions of such uncertainty in our destabilising world.

Hence, it can be argued that migration only propagates the temporary betterment of one's life. When over 11 million undocumented immigrants decided to cross over to the United States years ago, the majority of them did so with the belief that it would grant their families reprieve from suffering. Unfortunately, they were unable to foresee the pain and worry the consequences of their actions would bring in the years to come. Today, under USA's 45th presidency, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program — also called DACA, has been cancelled, leaving over 800,000 people brought into the United States illegally as children with an expiration date on their legal protection. Furthermore, the eradication of DACA occurred alongside the crackdown of illegals in the country where any undocumented immigrant — regardless of circumstance, became susceptible to deportation. Since then, a barrage of raids and detainments towards illegals have subjected countless families to unfathomable heartache and anguish stemming from the forced familial separations while others live in constant fear of the very same. Given the difficult process of legal status and that anything can happen in this everchanging century, migration does not improve one's life if it is not thought out carefully because it could subject future generations to unnecessary struggles and pain.

To conclude, the opportunity for a better life via migration is possible but the attainment of it is a much harder process due to all the unknown variables stacked up against a migrant. It takes determination, strength and careful consideration to enhance a person's quality of life via migration. It even depends on luck because race and ethnicity — factors which unfortunately impact the treatment towards a migrant, are determined in the birth lottery. That being said, knowing how hard life can be for many migrants, it is important that we don't discriminate against migrants and that we reserve judgement towards them until we get to know them because who knows, the tables might turn on us one day.

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# Seeking Refuge: Is the Grass Always Greener on the Other Side?

St. Joseph's Institution International School  
Veric Tan

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Up the steep hills of McLeod Ganj, a saffron-maroon robed monk, named Tsultrim Tenzing, approaches a classroom to learn English. With his right hand, he reciprocates my greetings while prayer beads sway in his left.

As a boy, he traversed the Himalayas, without his yak-herding family, for 30 days and nights to find refuge in India. Now a man in his 40s, he has a heart content and satisfied. I was fortunate enough to tutor him in the English Language, possible only outside his home. Migration has allowed him to break the chains of oppression and lead a religious life unrepressed. Migrants, even today, arrive in Dharamsala in seek of refuge - a testament that a better life can be achieved in our time.

Just like Tsultrim's journey, migration flows, intensified by globalization, bring people into promised lands. Whatever the trigger for migration might be - political persecution, economic instability, unemployment, family ties - I believe it derives from the desire for a better life.

Perhaps, a better life can be achieved when there is social infrastructure that allows people to grow and achieve no matter their background. In Singapore, a fundamental principle leading to its prosperity, is the idea of meritocracy. The idea that one can be successful through hard work and personal merit. This levels the playing field so that all, with grit and persevering effort, can lead a path to a better life.

Yet while such a framework may be effective, the journey to success is not easy. It requires strong political determination and strategies to find a consensus that merit and hard work is paramount. Social mobility must also be prioritised to provide education and opportunities, allowing even the most underprivileged to escape poverty.

In 2017, the homogenizing forces of globalisation have strengthened amidst rife sentiments of protectionism. In this world, there may be a reduction in migration since we are living in a time with strong undercurrents in the development of the underdeveloped. As such, staying put may begin to be an option for prospective migrants to consider.

Even so, if immigrants manage to escape their original grievances, the 'Utopia' they seek may not always be ideal. Immigrants likely face discrimination in many aspects of life. Whilst in Dharamsala, I met the daughter of a political refugee

named Namgyal, who was born and bred in India. She had to sue the Indian government for her passport and rights as a citizen despite being eligible for naturalization. In this sense, basic rights and thus opportunities are not guaranteed.

Assimilation into a society is also not a given if xenophobia exists in a society; notwithstanding, stories of immigrant integration and success are numerous. It owes to the drive of human tenacity to survive and thrive, the same drive that had Tsultrim leave his home.

The opportunities are there, no doubt, but it remains to be seen whether immigrants have the capacity to carve out a better life.



# The Hunt for a Better Life.

St. Joseph's Institution International School  
Isabel Tan Su Yi

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With ever-increasing obstacles built and armored to stop migration, the hunt for a better life is more challenging than ever. Instead of working your way up the social ladder, in this modern age a better life is seen as having to cross border after border. Therefore, is achieving a better life still possible?

Yes, it is. With the impressive technology the world continues to create, migrating to a better place can be overcome due to the vast resources available to us. In this article, I will be tackling the different reasons why groups of people want a better life, the different ways they are able to achieve a better life and what 'better' truly means to them.

For many less economically developed countries, migration occurs with the purpose of finding better employment, more durable housing and a better education. Many young workers cross country borders in a search for a better job with a better pay, whilst families migrate to seek a better education for their children.

Although adapting to new environments is difficult, statistics indicate that immigrants living in the poorest states of the US are 36% less likely to fall into poverty compared to native Americans.

Immigrants from LEDCs tend to be more hardworking due to their past hardships, increasing the chances of success greatly. Additionally, another survey showed that 99% of America's population had sustainable access to drinking water and improved sanitation indicating the reliability of water and the good health that would be attained if immigrants moved to the US. Consequently, in a year like 2017, a better life can still be discovered via migration.

With over 617 million people over the age of 65, most elderly want to move away from the city into the countryside, seeking an area with little noise and air pollution. Japan tops the list with the highest elderly population in the world. 68% of the country is covered in forests, resulting in plenty of greenery and fresh air, and its well-known Japanese cuisine provides a nutritious meal that is low in saturated fats and is incredibly delicious.

However, the coasts are also seen as an attractive area for retired elderly due to the aesthetically pleasing views and little pollution. For example, Christchurch, Dorset, which is home to many English elderly. The immense majority of elderly migrate away from cities into the countryside to attain a better life, easily achievable in 2017 with the advanced transportation systems we have developed today.

The 21st century provides hundreds of opportunities to everybody and it is just a matter of taking it. Our planet features 150 million square kilometers of land, and thus finding your place that defines what a better life is is definitely possible. Whether that life is in the Amazon rainforest, New York City or the apartment next to your aunt's, I believe that every person is capable of achieving a better life. All you need to do is hunt it down.



A customer samples ginseng and herbs at a Chinese medicine shop in the immigrant-heavy Chinatown, where its businesses are a big part of Boston's economy, on Nov. 6, 2017.



# Can People Still Achieve a Better Life Through Migration in 2017?

St. Mary's Academy For Girls  
Alia Youjin Jahangir

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Migrations and seeking refuge is actually not a new thing. It had happened since the prehistoric days, done by our forefathers in order to search for a better living. In the modern days, migrations also happened because of the very same reason. However, as we all know, in the past couple of years, migrations and seeking refuge is a very trending topic to be discussed internationally. This is due to the sudden surge of numbers of immigrants and refugees seeking asylum in preferably, developed countries because their own country is in rubbles. This event made some nations tighten their borders and control the flow of immigrants being let inside the country. The need of control itself is needed due to the sense of being "invaded" by refugees in large numbers. In response to the same sense, the topic of life quality should be discussed through the question; "can people still achieve a better life through migration in 2017?" The following paragraphs will discuss about the stated question.

First of all, I would like to answer from the immigrants' point of view. According to [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk), migration is done to achieve better qualities of life, be it forced or willingly. Refugees are people who are forced to migrate due to reasons and usually did not possess any belongings nor a clear destination to settle in. For example, the Syrian civil war which started in 2011, resulted in 5 million refugees taking shelter in more than 50 different countries. For most of the refugees, it might be a live-changing experience since they get to set foot on another continent or a more-developed country, getting a marvelous living condition.

The second point would be discussing from the point of view of the citizens of the countries which welcomed immigrants. People in countries are afraid of the disruption of peace and dwindling resources caused by the large number of immigrating refugees to their respective countries. In my opinion, this is a very natural behavior for human beings that can't be changed. However to argue with the negativity mentioned before,

migration might not necessarily a bad thing. Take an example of Germany which is projected to grow its GDP by 1% by 2020 caused by the increasing number of skilled workers due to refugees. Besides impacting economically, immigrants can make a country more multicultural by bringing their culture to the country. Australia is one of the best country examples that benefits culturally from immigrants from all over the world. Having more cultures can promote the life qualities of the citizens directly by bringing in more types of entertainment, food, and social insights. For the country, the metrical benefits of a multicultural country can be seen by comparing the city liveability index provided by Economist Intelligence Units (EIU). A highly ranked liveable city will most likely be a multicultural city and will most likely attract more immigrants as a chosen city to live in. Thus bringing in more culture and a better economic advantage in the future.

To conclude, people can still achieve a better life through migration in 2017 due to the following reasons: more chance of survival and getting a better life by seeking refuge, increasing the economic advantage of the country that takes immigrants, and also increasing the quality of life of the citizens.



# Migration: An Engine of Innovation

Taipei American School  
Seung Hyun Lee

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Harrison Lee, an average worker from South Korea, works for the biggest company in his home country, Samsung. Every day, his life repeats in a loop: wake up, go to work, sit in front of a computer for at least 10 hours, go home, and wonder when he will get promoted for a better pay to raise his family.

A chance to break away from this imprisonment unexpectedly came when his boss gave him the opportunity to work for the company in a completely new environment: Taipei, Taiwan

3 years. That was all he had. After 3 years, Lee would be sent back to South Korea for the company to analyze whether this new venture in Taiwan was worth the price. But Harrison gathered enough courage to defy this fate. He quit his job at Samsung, arguably one of the most influential companies in South Korea and the larger tech world. Today, 21 years after his migration, Lee is named “the most successful Korean businessman in Taiwan” by Hankyung Economic News.

This is 2017, an era where globalization defines our growingly cosmopolitan society. In the book *The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman, the author argues that globalization is what stimulates innovation and helps develop the global market for international benefits. With migration, innovative ideas that may seem mediocre in one nation may save thousands of people somewhere across the world, bringing the two disparate nations together.

It is true that technology removes some of the necessity for migration by efficiently transmitting ideas through the internet. However, technology is a good imparter of data, not wisdom. Ideas are not ingrained into people. Information may cross oceans via cables and satellites, but it does not become knowledge until someone brings it there and teaches it to someone else.

With this exchange of creativity, migrants can develop their own new pathways away from their home nation, that can lead to a different variation of success. Before the spark of their idea and their dedication to show it to the world, no one would have thought for their success to exist.

Migration does not only benefit the individual; it also benefits society. The migration of people around the world helps fill in the Social Ingenuity Gap. The Ingenuity Gap, by Thomas Homer Dixon, argues that society along with its problems, is becoming more and more complex. This is true: over the past century, global conflicts became complex through differing perspectives of nationalities and culture. This is where migration interferes. Migrants, living in an environment where they lack certain knowledge, are the ones who break the shield that blocks cultural harmony. By challenging social conventions, they automatically expose people with naïve, isolationist thoughts to the world, helping the world progress through disharmony.

Migration helps individuals’ ideas flourish. Migration brings cultures together. Migration leads to the formation of new perspectives. Through these arguments, there comes one conclusion: in 2017, migration can lead to a better life, and a better world.

# Through Their Eyes

The Experimental High School Attached to Beijing Normal University  
Yize Qi

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“Why do your parents move to the United States?” I ask.

Shrug. Lip curls. Eyes roll.

“For a better life. I guess.” “And you?”

Fingers tap tap tap. Eyelashes down. Head slants.

“Promising future?”

“You?”

“New life after my grandparents pass away.” “No idea.”

“Better education.”

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Combine their voices – some careless, others thoughtful – and mix the sound. Then listen carefully, and trace the loudest words lingering in the air. Do not be surprised if I tell you they definitely are – a better life.

Why would someone abandon everything familiar and travel to the other end of Pacific Ocean? Why would someone put on an invisible mask and try to fit in a group they never belonged to? Because, deep in heart, they believe that a better life lies in future.

For immigrants, “achieving a better life” is their motivation, goal, dream, belief, everything. So, here they are, in a new land. Miserable, baffled, struggling to learn and forget.

In 2017, the question “Can immigrants still achieve a better life?” seems especially important. The living standard all over the world has improved, and the differences between countries seem to be diminishing. Is it necessary to leave home?

Let’s hear their answers.

She is from Philippian and now lives with her sister in the US. They work day to night cleaning and caring for other people’s kids. When the clock ticks the early morning around, they collapse onto the tiny bed, backs sore, heads ache. Toss and turn, toss and turn, she remains wide awake in her sister’s exhausting snore. Clutching the photo of her three adorable daughters in hand, she feels tears streaming down her face. How she misses home.

He is an aspiring young college student from China, and expects to prove his ability. However, his confidence dissipates as rejection letters pile his mailbox. In the end, he works in the coffee shop for living. The elegant hands trained for answering test papers now stained with oil, as confidence turns into self-denial and finally desperation. He regrets his decision. As the Chinese economy develops at an insane rate, why doesn’t he just stay home and accept his parent’s help?

Can people still achieve better life through immigration in 2017? They are not so sure.

But she definitely remembers the joy when receiving the first month salary—the largest sum of money she has ever earned. Her heart sings as she envisions her girls buying new clothes, and even, going to schools.

And he will forever cherish the day when a laboratory employs him as an assistant. He is too excited that he forgets the time difference and calls his parents right away. His mother cries and even his strict father chokes with sobs.

His kneels on the road and cries with them.

The hustles and bustles of the city seem to quench. Since all he hears is-

“We are proud of you, son.”

**“Can people still achieve a better life through migration in 2017?”**

Will they say so? “Yes.”

He nods. She smiles.

# The Love of a Migrant Mother

Victoria Shanghai Academy  
Leung Tin Yan Tanya

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A story of a migrant doesn't have to be filled with tales of war and struggle.

I'm half Chinese and half Filipino, born and raised in the bustling city of Hong Kong. Yet my mother still feels conflicted, feeling misplaced in a place that she wants to call home. She was fortunate enough though, no sad story, no wars, no rebellions that forced her out of her element.

What made her leave was something far more powerful - love. I've heard the story a million times over dinner, the story of how they met over two groups of friends, how they maintained a relationship over expensive long-distance phone calls, how they got married, and eventually; how she one day decided to leave her small town of Cebu for the world of Hong Kong.

It's no heart-wrenching refugee story, there's no big war that happened, no 'do or die' situations, but it is one of the more common causes of migration. From a daughter's perspective, I'd say that my mother had achieved a better life by migrating to Hong Kong; her life in the Philippines didn't allow for her to splurge on the shoes she wanted, nor connect to a stable internet to watch Netflix as she takes a break from the responsibilities of a mom.

But there's always another side to any type of migration. In this case, it was the racism that comes along with being brown-skinned, and the added sexism that comes with being a brown-skinned woman. If you were a brown-skinned woman in Hong Kong, you'd immediately be regarded as a domestic helper. You'd be treated as inferior to the white-skinned Chinese locals. Sometimes, they'd just shove you aside like a ragdoll as you see them hastily walk to the other side of the road; but sometimes, a shop owner would just charge you 5 dollars more because they think you're easier to trick.

That's just the tip of the iceberg here.

Until this very moment, I - as a daughter, a friend and a companion of my mother, am not sure of whether her moving to this city was an improvement or a downgrade. There's too many factors to count in. All I can say though; is that I'm thankful of her commitment and perseverance through the bad times, and-

I'm thankful that she's my mother.

# A Wish for a Better Life

Victoria Shanghai Academy

Alice Poon Yin Tung

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My family only exists because of migration.

My grandfather and grandmother from my father's side migrated from China to Hong Kong. At the time, China was at war and the Japanese had invaded the country. Both of them first migrated to Macau, where they met, then to Hong Kong to escape the war and for better living conditions. My grandmother walked from her hometown to Guangzhou when she was only 12 years-old, then travelled to Macau. My grandfather didn't even know where his parents had gone to, and it was assumed that they were taken by the Japanese soldiers for labour, and he was raised by his aunts.

My grandfather from my mother's side migrated from China to Hong Kong when he was just a teenager. At the time, China was still a poor country that was developing, so my grandfather migrated to Hong Kong to seek better opportunities and living conditions. He didn't have many job choices besides working at factories as cheap labour forces because of his lack of education; he didn't even complete his primary education. Yet, he was able to survive with his hard-working attitude, and ultimately met my grandmother one day and started to build a family.

I am very grateful for all the things my grandparents have done in order to give my family better lives. To imagine that they'd never left China in the first place, their lives would have turned out extremely different, and so would mine.

I honestly didn't know much about my family history until the recent years when migration and refugee crises had risen. But I cannot doubt the significant difference I see between the reactions of migration nowadays and decades ago.

Migrants now face increasing amounts of backlash and harassment for migration. Being labelled "illegal" and "criminals", feeling ashamed to speak their own language, living in fear of deportation or persecution can all take a psychological toll on a person.

In the past, many countries were still developing and needed manpower for economic opportunities. That was when

migrants became useful to countries; their jobs didn't require them to be well educated, all they required were people who were willing to do anything. Now, however, many countries have become industrialised, and countries need people with high educational levels, fluent communication skills and others, which many migrants do not have. The existing discrimination against migrants are present because they are seen as moving here to "steal resources" including jobs, welfare and land. But truthfully, many migrants only wish for a better life.

What I find ironic is that when Trump was elected president of United States in 2016, the Canadian immigration website had reportedly crashed due to the high amount of people visiting the site. If people wanted to migrate to Canada because of the fear for their futures, their hope for a better life and political system in another country, then why do Americans still heavily discriminate against migrants who simply have the same wishes as they had?

I believe that the opportunities that countries need have significantly changed throughout the past decades. In my grandparent's days, migrants only required determination and willpower in order to survive. In present days, only "skilled" migrants are able to get well-paying jobs, but it is clear that most migrants do not have the skills the countries need. Therefore, people may not necessarily achieve a better life through migration in 2017. Though, I also believe we all should have an open-mind about migration, welcome migrants with a warm embrace and make them feel at home, as many have lost theirs.



# A New Hope

Victoria Shanghai Academy  
Jasmine Li

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What would you do if you woke up one day and realised that there was nothing left for you in the only place you've ever known?

Fear of war, fear of poverty, fear of oppression. Courage to seek opportunities, courage to travel, courage to explore. These push and pull factors behind human migration are two sides of the situation, yet they are binded by the fact that they are driven by the same ideal: hope.

Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope has the capacity to drive a person insane. It has the ability to attract those who have lost everything, or those choosing to depart from what they have, to migrate to places across the world because they believe there is something better waiting for them at their destination.

Beneath the complex layers of possessions and relationships, all we have is who we are. After losing the things that matter to us on the surface, what remains is our souls. Whether we choose to accept our fate or to turn it around, the next chapter of our lives is entirely up to us.

Since the beginning of civilization, groups and tribes of people have relocated from place to place in search of better lives. Yet, migration does not always result in an improved quality of life, as evident in the countless daily news stories about refugees trying to live on nothing, or immigrants being isolated in society.

For people in positions of privilege, migration is a chance at a new beginning. After all, migration is just an opportunity to become someone different, someone new. To some, it is their chance to become doctors, lawyers, teachers, professors, scientists, journalists and most of all, dreamers.

However, what if migration does not promise better lives for migrants? For those who are less fortunate, migration is not a choice, but a necessity for survival. What if migrants who moved to a completely unknown land are unable to dream, simply because of systematic oppression, or a lack of aid for their transition from country to country? Migrants can only thrive if society accepts them and provides the sufficient tools to ensure smoother assimilation into society.

In 2017, migration is still a controversial topic. This is because it is a multifaceted issue, full of ambiguity without any distinct truths. Migration does not guarantee a better life, but it does provide hope, and for some people, that's all it takes to stay alive.

# A Temporary Solution for a Long-Lasting Problem

Victoria Shanghai Academy  
Sze Hang Lo

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If we must discuss the effectiveness of migration, it is crucial to first fully comprehend the definition of being a “migrant”.

Migration comes in different forms. The term “migrant” has been used interchangeably with “refugee”, “immigrant”, and on the rare occasion “emigrant”, albeit the fact that each word is a different facet under the umbrella term of “migrant”.

According to reporter Alexandra Zavis, the term “migrant” has been used broadly in news and media to refer to those who are relocating or moving for economic reasons. Meanwhile, the term “refugee” refers specifically to those who have fled the country under pressure of persecution or conflict, especially when the home authorities do not provide protection from these issues.

“Migrants may leave for any number of other reasons, including to find work, get an education and better themselves. The term can be applied to refugees, but not all migrants qualify as refugees,” she explained.

Thus the attainment of “a better life” truly depends on both the cause of migration; a better life for a migrant may refer to an advantageous job opportunity or boarding school, but through the eyes of a refugee, a better life is an increase in living quality, labour quality, and safety.

In the minds of many refugees, migrating is a balance of chances. Fleeing to a better country means being able to live in the safety of their own home, to feed their children, or even just being able to walk in the streets without the feeling of terror and fear. There are many benefits that come with migration;

However, the long-lasting effects of being a refugee cannot be ignored.

Reporter Brandon Stanton recounted his encounter with a refugee child in Lesbos, Greece, “The extent to which refugee children have been conditioned by their environment is heartbreaking. We wanted permission to take this young girl’s photograph, so we asked if her mother was nearby. Her eyes filled with the most uncontrollable fear that I’ve ever seen in a child. “Why do you want my mother?” she asked.”

Trauma and emotional stress is a common issue reported in refugees; a study conducted by EMPHNET in Jordan reported that 3-30 percent of Syrian refugees experienced clinical depression, and 50-57 percent reported to have experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

In the long run, migration is only a temporary solution to a more significant global problem. Migrants can achieve a better life, but only if an international effort is invested to help them. Perhaps it is impossible to ensure that every refugee is guaranteed a better life. However, it is crucial that countries are able to provide the economical and mental health support to as many refugees as they can.

# **Shortlist of Entrants: Tertiary**

# What Awaits the Immigrants?

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies  
JaeYeong Jeong

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I am a worker from a country under critical economic crisis, caused by a devastating war. I hope to lessen the burden of keeping food on the table. My answer is simple: America, the land of the free, and the home of the brave. After days of travel, I set foot on the bustling port of New York City. I'm ready to rewrite the first chapter of my life. This series of actions might have been the breakthrough solution for those who pursued new opportunities in the 1900s. But will the same logic apply for the immigrants in search of a new life in 2017?

While the main reasons for migration in the past years have been mostly economical, the cause nowadays is much more primitive: Survival. Climate change is driving people away from their homes; international conflicts from Ethnic Cleansing to Civil wars threaten citizens of bombings; Refugees cross the Mediterranean Sea on overcrowded rafts. Over recent years, "home" became inhospitable. But thanks to today's world's love of isolationism, the similar drastic boost in standard of living cannot be expected through immigration. The already embedded obstacles prevent immigrants from a "better life"

Living in a region and becoming accepted as a member of a society are two different things. The former can be done by physically being within the country's borders, the latter not so much. We live in an anti-international world. Rapid globalization shortened the distance between nations, but it did not soften the view on the "legal aliens". Through history, incidents like Anti-Polish Sentiment and segregation showed the spread of extreme Ethno Nationalism. The inauguration of the Trump administration was the zenith of this new trend, proven by the massive support (and votes) his America-First policies attracted. Many clung onto the idea of Mr. Trump's

wall. Consequently, the domestic view upon immigrants changed. The hate for the foreign went communal. They went from "Foreigners out to look for a new life" to "potential job-takers". Heightened xenophobia equals more uncomfortable stares from the neighbors, more radical racist groups, and more difficulty to adapt.

If it is physical dangers that harm the immigrants at home, mental dangers await them at their destinations. The chant preferably used by many racist rants perfectly demonstrates what the immigrants are exposed to for the rest of their lives. Racial slurs such as "Wetback" "Chink" follow every step they take, and the act of simply pulling the opposite ends of one's eyes scar them for life. "This is our country, not yours." Some say that the resistance of the old to the new is natural, but it doesn't make anything easier for the new.

Traditionally, migration was a way to restart. Away with the past mistakes, people tended to migrate when they needed a new sheet of paper to write their life on. Nowadays, with new and different obstacles awaiting them in the new frontier, it is all too vague to decide whether the immigrants indeed are walking towards a better life.



# They Got Better Off

Hong Kong Shue Yan University  
Ng Tsz Yeung

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As commonly recognised, Homo Sapiens began from East Africa. They travelled around, and finally, found the place where they can actually enjoy. They found their own rivers and crops, hence, their civilisations. They had their own occupation, most of them were farmers, the guys over the Aegea preferred trading, some fishing, hunting and gathering.

They got better off.

The history book flips to the Romans, who did nothing apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, irrigation, roads, the aqueducts, and most importantly, allowing immigration to the world's first Metropolis, Rome. Those migrants constructed one of the greatest empires in the world. Then, some of them got rich and left the dirty work to the newcomers and slaves, who got better than they were. The Romans, as a whole, certainly got better off, at least before they were licked by the Goths.

Then to the Renaissance, the discovery by Columbus, the "America". Land of the free, settlers, puritans, convicts, but not the Indians. Nonetheless, they farmed and yielded canes for sugar and cotton for clothes, then prospered in manufacturing and mining by immigrant workers. America, the furnace of culture, became the world's biggest power after the Brits, until now. They got immensely better off.

After three long tedious paragraphs of history, can the migrants now, 2017, better off? From the fall of 2017, I think it's plausible to claim that it's not only the question of they can or cannot, they are. If it is bad for their lives, they won't move at the first place, will they?

Whether they are the refugees from Syria or the Chinese

mandarins who put their family and all their asset in the western countries, lives will be better off for them. The mandarins, they can keep their family and money safe; the refugee, their lives, though some may say they lost their home, staying will cost both. Well, if they were tricked to do so, then the problem is the trickery, not the migration.

Through the history, the migrants are better off than if they were staying where they were. The only thing that matters is the reaction of the locals. In the past, migration often occurs when they are needed, so, at their time, often meant positive. But now, it became a dilemma between humanitarian crisis and domestic problem.

Like overselling airline seats, those passengers have to get on board, whatever airline it is, and the plane is full with no seats left. If that is a moderate airline, they probably give them another seat on another plane and it's finished. But if that's United, they are going to have some trouble.

That's why different countries have different situations regarding migrants. There is the United States, and there is Germany. Different policy, different capacity in receiving refugees. If they don't have a job, they become a burden, whether to welfare or security; if they have the locals' jobs, they will be hated. Only when they have their own job, the society will have less to talk about. You can't rule those snobs out.

# Can People Still Achieve a Better Life Through Migration in 2017?

National University of Singapore  
Erick Sombol Keow

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“The world is your oyster,” they said, “go out there and explore, the opportunities are boundless.” What a privileged statement that is. When you have lived a life of relative comfort and ease, you take these words for granted.

The migration of Man has been in existence for time immemorial. We have always been moving from place to place for various reasons. When my grandparents moved from China to Singapore, they wanted a better life, to escape the harsh realities and find solace in a hopeful land. Today, I reap the rewards of their undying determination and sacrifice.

In the recent century and especially today, we see migration on TV and social media regularly. But what we see differs vastly from the dinnertime stories we hear at home. We see people fleeing from war and a destitute life. We hear the cries of mothers and children being persecuted by soldiers, of ravaging seas and scorched sandy pavements.

From the great Middle Eastern refugee crisis, to the Rohingya ethnic cleansing that is still ongoing<sup>1</sup>, migration is for many people, their only hope for survival.

Unfortunately, the long and arduous journeys they endure do not always guarantee happiness. As the years pass, entry laws become tighter and access ever more stringent. In refugee camps, there is a severe lack of necessities such as nutrition and proper sanitation. Diseases are rife and access to medical facilities are lacking. Demand cannot be met because of many government regulations and red tape<sup>2</sup>. When one nation shuts its borders<sup>3</sup>, pressure mounts on other governments from their citizens to do the same. Refugees get stranded at these camps for years, their dreams of a better life being ever so out of reach.

However, not all is miserable. Reaching the refugee camps does at least give refugees the assurance of relative safety and peace of mind. In better managed refugee areas, like Za’atari in Jordan, there is even access to schools for the young<sup>4</sup>. There is undoubtedly a lot more that can be done to help refugees in transit as they await repatriation. Upon arrival to their new life, how much they benefit also depends on how well they are integrated into society.

Helping these people takes a communal effort but we can never fully understand the trauma that they face and the courage they had to muster. We think of them as job competitors or thieves draining natural resources<sup>5</sup>. We do not think of the child wanting to learn, of the desperate mother wanting to feed her child and the same hope for a better life that was burning in our forefathers.

When we see refugees as troublemakers and a strain, we are not doing justice to the real problems they face. Migration and its issues will be here to stay, but what will make their lives better is how we handle it. We need to bear in mind that for some of us, staying put is not an option.

1 <https://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2017/09/daily-chart-13>

2 <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/sep/11/business-refugee-crisis-employment-work-asylum-seekers>

3 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/28/italy-considers-closing-its-ports-to-ships-from-libya>

4 <https://www.dezeen.com/2017/07/20/building-peace-foundation-school-syrian-refugee-camp-zaatari-america-sinclair-architecture/>

5 <https://medium.com/integrating-immigrants-locals-through-experience/5-1-putting-it-all-together-97c1f09ea2b0>

# Can People Still Achieve a Better Life Through Migration in 2017?

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Climate change may not always be seen or felt but it definitely affects all of us in the entire world. Such consequence includes the migration of people in search of a better life elsewhere. Climate change not only affects the world economy of the most developed countries, it also has a significant impact on the poor people in the less developed countries. Hence, everybody is vulnerable to this negative occurrence.

In the rural countryside of the less developed countries (LDCs), climate change may be the result of reduced crop yields. Food production decreases gradually leading to malnutrition. This reduces their immune level system and thus make them more susceptible to diseases from malnutrition and shortage of food and water supply and infections with poor sanitation and water management. As a result, the people sought to move to another place in search of better amenities and facilities for them to continue surviving.

In Syria, they are facing threat in their daily life and live through constant struggle to find peace in a war that is subsequently occurring. Water scarcity, crop failures and livestock deaths are the driving factors that brought an estimated 1.5 million people to the cities from the rural areas. Food prices soared, contributing to economic and social tensions and leaving Syrians dangerously vulnerable to the subsequent war. As a result, many Syrian refugees are pleading to the media to offer help to them by taking the refugees in who are suffering from inadequacies and living in subsequent wars.

Melting of the glaciers is expected to have severe effects in other countries. Climate change also increases the probability of increasing rainfall and flooding. Even though the glaciers provide source of water for people living in arid climate, the people are forced to farm at higher altitudes to grow their crops, which in turn undermines water sources and leads to soil erosion caused by deforestation.

These factors contribute to the arrival of a number of refugees to find a place in a bid for survival. They mostly reach out to developing countries for example, America. Since then, the climate for refugees and immigrants coming to America has changed dramatically. People wanted to be a part of the country because this is where life of opportunities are open widely. America is viewed as a land of career opportunity where people are yearning for which they never had in their countries. Thus, they are diligent to pursue what they vision as the "American dream." Unemployment leading to economic disability draws more people to pursue their dreams here. Luis Mancheno, a Latino and an immigration attorney who was an immigrant from Latin America, who soon became a refugee is eventually an American citizen now. His name is mentioned as the model

New Yorker who has made a difference in the community, as quoted by Mr Mancheno, "My job is to give a voice to all the Luises out there, he said, "who are completely alone, completely resource less, and who are fighting a gigantic system that tells them that they don't have the right to a better life." He has helped to represent the people in immigration court, who are detained and facing deportation.

However, with the recent Trump's proposal on calling a ban for immigrants entering America which affects predominantly the Muslim countries mainly in the Middle Eastern region. This greatly affects the refugees in the Middle Eastern as they are banned from entry to America, following the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, the United States would not accept any Syrian refugees into the country.

Fortunately, there are most countries that have opened their doors and are most welcoming to take in the refugees and offering help. Justin Trudeau, Canadian Prime Minister says Canada will take refugees banned by U.S. In his reaction to Trump's ban of Muslims from certain countries, he tweeted "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith.

Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada."

Australia despite its firm and strictly enforced immigration policies, did take in 4,400 refugees from Syria and Iraq last year, and the government says it plans to increase that number.

But can these refugees still achieve a better life? Humanitarian aid has been offered by many countries in response to the Syrian crisis. The UN refugee agency UNHCR has helped through provision of cash for medicine and food, stoves and fuel for heating, insulation for tents, thermal blankets and winter clothing.

United States also contributed by providing emergency food assistance, shelter, safe drinking water, urgent medical care, humanitarian protection activities. Egypt has funded more than \$127 million since the start of the crisis to help 120,000 refugees from Syria meet their basic needs including food, healthcare and education, prevention against violence and protecting the vulnerable children and increasing self-reliance and livelihood opportunities for the refugees.

With the UNHCR hosting humanitarian aid and calling on many developed countries to help, refugees can still have the opportunity to live life better than in their previous circumstances.





Mrs. Xu, 55, and Mr. Zhou, 64, came to the United States in 2015 after waiting for over 13 years. Xu grew up in Guangzhou's Yuexiu District in the city, learning Russian in elementary and high school while Zhou lived in a village in Kaiping less than 100 miles away. When Zhou's father retired and his son replaced him at work as an operator at a container terminal, Zhou moved to Guangzhou, where Xu and Zhou met. The couple now live in an apartment in Boston's Chinatown while their 29-year-old son lives in China. The two celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary in November 2017.







# Can People Still Achieve a Better Life Through Migration in 2017?

University of Malaya

Raji Fatimah Omotayo

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People can indeed still achieve a better life through migration in 2017, even with all the tight immigration rules and closed borders. No matter if you are migrating between developing countries, or from a rich country to a developing country, or from a developing country to a rich country. Migration can generate numerous benefits, including increased trade, investment, knowledge, and technology transfers from diaspora contributions.

Over a third of immigrants in the US are skilled, and the same can be said in Europe. Governments that are more open to immigration help their country's businesses and economies. Their economies become more agile and adaptive; and they profit more, in terms of talent acquisition. Governments receive more revenue and citizens thrive on the dynamism brought by highly-skilled migrants. Not just the highly skilled migrants are important though. Unskilled migrants are a vital part of construction, agriculture and services sectors.

Earnings by migrants, which are sent back home to their families are above 441 billion US dollars, which is three times the volume of official development aid. Remittance from migrants to their home countries alone make up more than 10% of the GDP of those countries. More than 73% of worldwide remittance are received by developing countries, as a result. Research has also showed that migrants contribute significantly to taxes but receive far less benefits and services in return. Who, then, is really benefitting more?

Indigenous residents of the host countries may argue that migrants are "stealing" all of their jobs, but this is not the case. In fact, in the United States, immigrants have been founders of big companies such as Google, Yahoo, PayPal and eBay, thereby providing employment and boosting the economy. Additionally, over half of Silicon Valley startups and patents are contributed by skilled immigrants, even though they only make up less than 15% of the population. Moreover, jobs are actually being taken away by technology and robotics. An example is, Uber taking jobs from regular taxi drivers; that is simply technology making transportation faster.

Migrants are not a burden, as opposed to what people think. They have a lot to offer the host country, which should in turn, create an enabling environment for the migrants to achieve their goals and have a good life and adequate protection. Of course, difference in culture and language can cause problems in assimilation. Nevertheless, migrants can thrive, if only the hosts would be welcoming and help them adjust to their new environment. The relationship should be symbiotic.

Migration is a source of progress, instead of a hindrance to economic and cultural growth. At the end of the day, many people benefit from migration. The migrants get a better life, they contribute to the economy of their host country, and even help make life easier for their family back home.

# Migration: The World is a Melting Pot

Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya  
Celine Christina

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In the early 2000s, I was told by teachers about how great of a concept globalization would be. At that time, I was astounded by how the world would gradually lessen the borders between nations due to migration. Nonetheless, things are not as rosy as it seems now, since most prominent leaders from Western countries glorify xenophobia by stigmatizing the word “immigrant”.

When Caucasians migrate to developing Asian countries, they are mostly seen as overall superior, whereas people of color are deemed as “exotic” or sometimes even underestimated as individuals – unless they provide proficiency to the advantages of Western communities. This unadorned perception did fuel the colonialism era in the olden days. Should we – the participants of globalization – indulge in narrow-mindedness by building walls to “protect” our societies from the overflow of humanities, regardless of the injustices of the world?

In June 2012, Barack Obama established an American immigration policy named DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) that enrolled 800,000 people for the privileges of eligible work permit and deferred action from deportation. Referred to as Dreamers, these young adults enrolled in DACA have aspirations in a country that is the de facto leader of the free world. In September 2017, President Trump decided to end the program thus leaving the Dreamers in shambles, fearing that they will someday get deported. The most ironic thing is, these Dreamers believe that the U.S is the only home that they have ever known. Not to forget that Dreamers also pay taxes, as actual U.S citizens do.

Similar adversities also happen to other developed areas, such as England and Sweden. Not to mention the Middle East refugee crisis, of which people are mostly prohibited to

seek asylum in developed nations that have destabilized their home countries, such as Syria. In England, foreign students from world-class universities are still considered as temporary migrants, rather than permanent ones. Ben Bradshaw, a Labor former minister who opposes conservatism, said: *“It is shameful that the Government sees EU citizens living in Britain as ‘cards’ in a negotiation, rather than human beings.”*

An article from the NewYorker.com illustrates the trauma of Sweden immigrant kids who face deportation. With their families having been deported like criminals, these kids fall back into a psychological trauma, trapped into a culture unfamiliar to them. This kind of “alive, but barely living” situation resembles that of the Nazi survivors, in which people gradually expired.

With those alarming things mentioned above, it is unthinkable to find opportunities from migration in 2017. Despite the bleakness of current affairs, xenophobic world leaders need to remind themselves that the world is a melting pot. No matter how hard they try to drown themselves in protectionism, isolationism, or extreme nationalism, migration will keep happening and barriers between nations will slowly fade. Don’t people remember about the fall of infamous Berlin Wall and Soviet Union? Eventually, people will realize that exclusivity between nations is never the answer. To that end, collaboration in facilitating migration is absolutely indispensable among world leaders.

# 2017

## **The New York Times** **“Word (World) of Yours”** **Writing Competition**

# Thank You

We would like to give a special thanks to all the teachers, students and judges who took part in this year’s competition. Without your support, the competition would not have been such a success.

The Judges:

Adam Kershaw

Brandon Kirk

Joe Ritchie

Patrick Boher

Philip Traynor

Yolette Nicholson

Photographer:

Alastair Pike

Writing Advisor:

Yew San Cheah

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## Notes

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## Notes

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