

Migration: An Engine of Innovation

Taipei American School
Seung Hyun Lee

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.