

## The Flow of People Matters

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the flow of people matters  
wherever people are  
north or south  
the flow of people never stops  
人口流动很重要  
无论人们生活在何处  
南方抑或北方  
人类从未停止过流动  
mafambiro evanhu anokosha  
kwese kune vanhu  
kuchamhembe kana kumaodzanyemba  
mafambiro evanhu haamiri

the flow of people matters  
people flow to pursue life  
but who knows what it looks like  
人口流动很重要  
人们流动是为了追求更加美好的生活  
但谁知道结果会怎样呢  
mafambiro evanhu anokosha  
vanhu vanofamba vachitsvaga raramo  
asi kana pane maguta ungasimukirei

the flow of people matters  
people flow with family left behind  
but can they bring bread back to the family  
人口流动很重要  
人们流动而家人留守  
但他们一定能满足家人的期盼么  
mafambiro evanhu anokosha  
vanhu vanofamba vachisiya hama nevadiwa  
asi vanozokwanisa here kuunza maguta mumusha

the flow of people matters  
people flow to help themselves and help the locals too  
but why is it always tough for locals to accept?  
人口流动很重要  
人们流动有利于自己也有利于当地  
但为什么当地人接受流动人口却如此艰难呢  
mafambiro evanhu anokosha  
mafambiro anobatsira ari kushanya nevashanyirwa  
asi sei vagari venzvimbo vachiremerwa nekutambira vari kushanya?

the flow of people matters  
people flow to chase their dream  
but the dream might always be a dream  
人口流动很重要  
人们流动是为了追求梦想  
但梦想有时或许永远只是梦想  
mafambiro evanhu anokosha  
vanhu vanofamba kuzadzikisa chishuwo  
asi dzimwe nguva chishuwo chinotadza kuzadzikiswa

the flow of people matters  
some are joyful, some frustrated  
but still people are flowing  
人口流动很重要  
有的人因流动而欢呼雀跃，有的人却心情沮丧  
但人们仍然还要流动  
mafambiro evanhu anokosha  
vafambi vamwe vanofara vamwe vachisuwa  
asi vanhu vanongofamba

the flow of people matters  
whenever people appear  
past or future  
the flow of people never stops  
人口流动很重要  
无论人们生活在何时  
过去抑或将来  
人类从未停止过流动  
mafambiro evanhu anokosha  
pese panowanikwa vanhu  
makare kana neramangwana  
mafambiro evanhu haamiri

## The Flow of People Matters: A Background

The poetry of *The Flow of People Matters* was originally written by Jixia Lu, as an effort to reflect the imagination and the facts of people's flow in the globalization context. Without any experience of writing poetry, this was a courageous decision. After receiving feedback on the first draft, she invited Tawona to join in the editing and make the piece more like a poem.

Two colleagues worked directly together for the first time. Tawona's poetic sensitivity and Jixia's scholarly sharpness contributed towards the poem's improvement, as the two negotiated how to respect the original meanings while offering additional skills and suggestions to the development of the piece. During the immersive discussions, both tried to remain wary that creative control can be a huge challenge in the collaborative and creative process. Thus, Tawona always encouraged Jixia to express what she wanted to tell the audience and then he helped to edit with his poetry skills, for example, the length of the sentence, the choice of word, the order of the lines and stanzas. We read the poetry respectively with our own languages and this process let us feel the meanings of the poem from the heart.

We discussed what language revealed to us (including changing the poem completely from the 'movement' of people, to the 'flow' of people) and how this affected the whole process. Finally, the selection of "flow" but not "migration" in the poetry is due to the original meanings of the word situated in Chinese context. "flow" can better reflect the situation of people's move from one place to the other, historically and dynamically. And so the title changed from "the *migration* of people matters" to "the *flow* of people matters".

It was a learning (some call this knowledge exchange) and enjoyable process when we worked together. We always humbly and honestly exchanged our ideas for any word or line that we read, trying again and again with different options until we were satisfied with them. Often, we were silent, which were also the important moments for us to struggle to find what to say and think about 'better' words. Gradually Jixia began to hone her sense of the intangible aspect of poetry writing, knowing when it sounds and feels right, and Tawona learned the complexities of Chinese. Reading and thinking together, during the editing process, we could see the piece evolving with each meeting.

This final piece is a result of risk-taking and collaboration – the initial risk taken by Jixia of writing poetry for the first time, and the subsequent collaboration with Tawona. Along this intellectual and artistic adventure, two colleagues meet as scholars and poets, at the uncertainty of a new beginning. Each brings their own skills and experience, and together they start to find something new. They find the resources of their learned languages, and share many stories both professional and personal, both intellectual and the everyday. Ultimately, they emerge themselves transformed, from the process of transforming an initial draft into a finished poem with a new title, and now expanded into a triptych with Chinese and Shona versions now incorporated. It is a glimpse into the dusky place where the light of different professional disciplines cast shadows of the artist, the academic, the poet. It is an intertwining of various textured and coloured threads and strands, a weaving of possibilities. It is a heart and mind adventure of finding a language of co-creation.