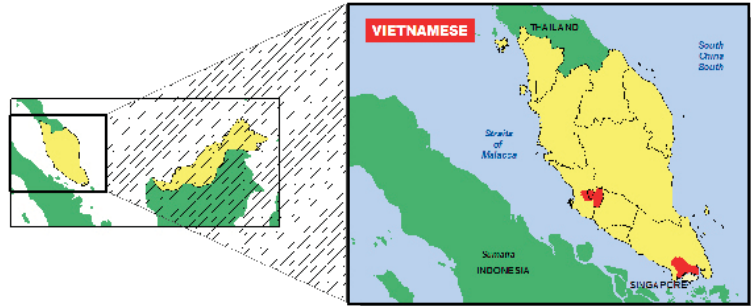


VIETNAMESE



Population	Major Religion	Language
80,000	Buddhism/Animism	Vietnamese

Who are the Vietnamese?

Vietnamese migrant workers are an important component of Peninsular Malaysia's foreign workforce. Partly as a security measure related to terrorism dangers, the Malaysian government determined early in 2002 that recruitment of foreign workers would be carried out on a Government-to-Government basis. At that time the foreign workforce was listed at around 800,000 with only a handful being from Vietnam.

Since then, a number of MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding) have been signed or are still being negotiated with several countries including Vietnam. The MOU with Vietnam was one of the first to be negotiated and since its signing, the number of Vietnamese workers has grown rapidly. The agreement allows up to 200,000 Vietnamese workers to come to Malaysia each year. Although the broad terms of the agreement allow these workers to stay up to five years with possible extensions of an additional five years for those deemed as being "experienced" in areas of more acute needs, most are coming on two or three year contracts. The Vietnamese government grants licenses to labor-export companies to recruit and train these workers. The manufacturing and construction sectors in Malaysia already are using many such workers. Although the numbers are quite dynamic, a 2003 estimate for Vietnamese (mostly Kinh) foreign workers was 80,000.

What are their lives like?

For many of these workers, their living conditions are dependent on their employers. Large employers in all sectors provide housing and transportation in fulfillment of some of the requirements under the government agreements. Even so, housing is often crowded and lack sufficient basic amenities. Working conditions can include long hours and be physically demanding. Isolation in their job site or living quarters

sometimes occurs. Separation from families back in their home country is a hardship facing all foreign workers whether unskilled or professionals.

What do they believe?

The Kinh of Vietnam are the majority people group in Vietnam and the group from which most of these workers in Malaysia came from. They have a mixed religion that includes Buddhism as well as ancestor worship and animism. Urban dwellers may be more influenced by Buddhism while rural dwellers may be more influenced by ancestor worship and animism. The migrant workers probably reflect the same influences depending on their background.

What are their needs?

Foreign workers need good access to all the normal social services plus some specialized services related to their separation from families and their isolation in a foreign culture. Since most of the Vietnamese work in larger companies with high visibility, they may be less likely to be unfairly exploited than some of the other migrant worker groups.

Malaysian believers and some faith-based organizations have already found ways of ministering to the needs of these immigrant workers through English classes, Bible classes, legal assistance, and other supporting activities. These efforts are not only aiding the workers, but are broadening the vision of the Malaysian family of God to new opportunities.

Their greatest need is for the Good News. Pray that these workers will hear and respond to the Truth while they are in Malaysia.