

Who are the Deli Malay?

Around 2 million Deli Malay live along the eastern coastline of North Sumatra, Indonesia. Deli villages are clustered along the coast, and often include not only Deli Malay people, but also people of other ethnic backgrounds such as Javanese and Minangkabau.

Languages



Most Deli Malay speak both their own Deli Malay language, and Bahasa Indonesia, the Indonesian national language. Younger Deli are usually literate in Bahasa Indonesia, as this language is used in primary

and secondary schools. However, many Deli Malay have minimal formal education, often leaving school by the age of 12.

Livelihood

Most Deli Malay support themselves by fishing in the Straits of Malacca between Sumatra and Malaysia. Deli fishermen go to sea daily in wooden fishing boats. In urban areas, many Deli Malay work as laborers, while those living near arable land may farm small plots of rice, fruit or vegetables.

Due to environmental degradation and non-sustainable fishing methods, independent fishermen

have begun to struggle. Fishing conditions also vary seasonally. Employment among the Deli Malay

is erratic. Unemployment is especially high among young, unmarried men. The Deli need to diversify their sources of income if they are to provide food, education and health care for their families. Most Deli Malay are very poor.



Culture

The Deli Malay are friendly people, always ready to entertain visitors and to share whatever they can. They value harmonious relationships, and will go to great lengths to avoid confrontation. The Deli Malay live in close-knit communities, with extended families often living in the same house or in close proximity. Deli Malay families are often large, with 5 or 6 children.



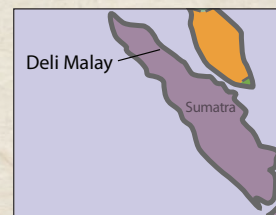
Most Deli live in wooden houses raised on stilts over the coastal swamplands. Electricity is generally available, but access to clean water is still lacking. The rivers are often used not only for bathing and washing clothes but also for defecation.

Beliefs

Islam came to the Deli Malay in the 15th century. Today, Islam is central to Deli ethnic identity. Yet many Deli Malay combine Sufi Islamic practices with traditional customs handed down through the generations. Animist beliefs and magical practices are an integral part their culture.

Fewer than 50 Deli Malay follow Jesus. Most of these decided to follow Jesus in order to marry people from other ethnic groups. Many have since had to move outside the Deli community.

For more information about the Deli Malay, visit: www.apeopleloved.com/deli-malay



Population: 2 million
Location: North Sumatra, Indonesia
Languages: Deli Malay, Bahasa Indonesia

Prayer Points

Pray for indigenous fellowships of Jesus-followers to be established among the Deli Malay.

Pray for godly leaders from among the Deli Malay, who will be key 'insiders', bringing the light of Jesus to their own people.

Pray that followers of Jesus who live in Deli communities would build relationships of mutual respect and trust with their Deli neighbors, and that they would find opportunities to share the Good News not only through words, but also through practical service.

Pray that followers of Jesus around the world would begin to pray regularly for the Deli Malay.

Pray that the Deli Malay and other people groups in Sumatra would begin to practice sustainable fishing methods, so that the ocean can continue to be an adequate source of income for the many families that depend on it.