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Portrait of Canadians Abroad: Vietnam

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Executive Summary

Unofficial estimates place 1,200 to 1,500 Canadians currently residing in Vietnam. Obtaining official estimates remains difficult in Vietnam, but the 2009 Census currently underway is expected to shed light on international migration statistics in Vietnam for the first time. The small but active Canadian business and social community exists primarily in the major urban centers of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Many are working professionals in a diverse range of fields, particularly in education, business and investment, hospitality, law and healthcare. With only a relatively modest number of Canadians living in Vietnam, it is reasonable to ask why Vietnam is a compelling case to be studied. The following outlines why Vietnam presents an interesting and important case study of the two-way human flows between Canada and Vietnam.

Only 30 years ago, the tide of migration was primarily a one way flow of Vietnamese refugees arriving in Canada in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. This is now changing as a small, but accelerating tide of both Vietnamese-origin Canadians and non-Vietnamese-origin Canadians explore the opportunities offered in one of the region's top performing economies of the last decade. Within ASEAN, Vietnam has been identified as one of the emerging priority markets in Canada's Global Commerce Strategy with negotiations of a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) currently underway. Understanding the patterns of Canadians in Vietnam, many of whom are active and influential participants in Vietnam's socio-economic development, provides a useful platform on which to build Canada's partnership with its future priority market.

Moreover, in the past five years, the Vietnamese government has been proactively implementing numerous policy changes to attract the knowledge and skills of 'Overseas Vietnamese' and foreigners to contribute to Vietnam's socio-economic development. It is estimated that approximately 500,000 Overseas Vietnamese return annually to examine opportunities for investment in Vietnam. So far, they have invested in nearly 3,000 projects and sent US\$7.4 B in remittances in 2008.² As Vietnam becomes an increasingly attractive 'land of opportunity' for both Vietnamese-origin Canadians and non-Vietnamese Canadians, how does Canada foster a continued sense of pride and belonging among Canadians living in Vietnam? How can Canada utilize the flow of

¹ Trang Nguyen, Post Graduate Research Fellow, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada and Vu Thi Hai Anh, Public Affairs Officer, Embassy of Canada in Hanoi. We would also like to thank Ms. Tran Hoai An for her research assistance. Authors can be contacted at trang.nguyen@asiapacific.ca

² Nhân Dân, 'President stresses importance of overseas Vietnamese affairs,' November 23, 2009. http://www.nhandan.org.vn/english/news/231109/domestic_p.htm.

Canadians working in Vietnam to help foster greater understanding and stronger linkages between Canadians and Vietnamese?

The methodology used for this study includes research, one-on-one interviews and a focus group conducted with Canadians living in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in August 2009 (see Annex I). The interviews highlight several important issues. Most interviewees voiced few concerns about their work and life in Vietnam, emphasizing more pointedly the opportunity, status and security they have as Canadian citizens living in Vietnam. A separation exists between networks of Vietnamese-origin Canadians and non-Vietnamese origin Canadians living in Vietnam, but increasingly there are efforts to bridge these gaps. A few key concerns expressed by interviewees relate to the recent citizenship law amendments in the Bill C-37 Act and the limited visibility of the Canadian ‘brand,’ high level diplomacy, and awareness of business opportunities in Vietnam. Those who hold single or dual citizenship identify strongly as Canadians, but to what extent that translates into a deeper sense of attachment and duty to Canada as they integrate more deeply into Vietnamese society remains to be explored.

Section 1 begins with a brief historical overview of the two-way migration flows between Canada and Vietnam. Section 2 highlights prominent Canadian individuals and organizations currently residing in Vietnam. Section 3 outlines immigration policies affecting Canadians living in Vietnam. Section 4 provides a brief overview of the issues and challenges faced by Canadians living in Vietnam.

Introduction

Vietnam is an ‘S’ shaped peninsula located in Southeast Asia bordering the Gulf of Thailand, the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea. It is a multi-ethnic country with 54 ethnic groups. Kinh Vietnamese comprise nearly 86% of the 86 million people living in Vietnam. Over the past 60 years, Vietnam has experienced significant political and socio-economic transformations that have heavily shaped two-way migration flows between Canada and Vietnam. This section begins with a brief overview of Vietnamese emigration to Canada starting in the 1950s then proceeds to examine factors propelling the reverse flow of Vietnamese-origin Canadians and non-Vietnamese Canadians to Vietnam starting in the early 1990s.

VIETNAM IN CANADA

Prior to the 1950s, very few Vietnamese resided in Canada. In the 1950s, Vietnamese students began trickling into French-speaking institutions on grants given by the Roman Catholic Church (Louis Jacques-Dorais). The student population continued to grow in the late 1950s after Canada helped establish the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia providing aid and scholarship opportunities to South Vietnamese students. As the war ended in 1975, a significant number of Vietnamese, especially Southern Vietnamese and Sino-Vietnamese, were forced or attempted to flee legally and illegally from persecution and socio-economic marginalization at the end of the Vietnam War. Between 1975 and 1981, several waves

of ‘boat people,’ totaling approximately 60,000, resettled from various refugee camps to Canada.³ Refugee flows continued into the late 1980s through various streams such as the Canadian Government’s Family Sponsorship Program and private sponsorship.

Immigration continued at a slower pace in the 1990s, dropping from 107,760 before 1991 to 41,865 by 2000.⁴ Since the early 2000s, the number of Vietnamese settling in Canada has declined with only 16,800 Vietnamese receiving permanent resident status in Canada during 2001-2008.⁵ While flows of temporary workers, international students and marriage migrants continue to compose the new wave of Vietnamese residing in Canada, those settling permanently and receiving citizenship have declined steadily. It is estimated that there are 160,000 to 250,000 Vietnamese Canadians currently living in Canada.⁶ Vietnamese in Canada compose the fourth largest Vietnamese diaspora (behind US, France, Australia) and the 10th largest immigration population in Canada according to the 2006 Canadian census.⁷

CANADA IN VIETNAM

Prior to Vietnam and Canada establishing diplomatic ties in 1973, Canada was a member of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam, starting in 1954, to oversee the implementation of the Geneva Accords between North and South Vietnam. Canada’s presence in Vietnam remained temporary and limited until after Vietnam introduced ‘Doi Moi’ (Renovation) market-based reforms in 1986.⁸ As Western economic embargoes were gradually lifted and Vietnam opened its doors to international development assistance and international investment, the movement of information, people and remittances between its diaspora and homeland accelerated.⁹ Canadian development organizations, followed by investors and firms, began exploring and setting up offices in the early 1990s.

³ Eric Richard and Louis-Jacques Dorais ‘Statistical Profile of Immigrants of Vietnamese origin in Quebec and in Canada: Comparison of 1991, 1996, and 2001 Data,’ *Review of Vietnamese Studies*, 3, 1, 2003:1.

⁴ Statistics Canada ‘Immigrant population by place of birth and period of immigration (2006 Census)’ <http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo24a-eng.htm>.

⁵ Citizenship and Immigration ‘Facts and Figures 2008: Immigration Overview: Permanent and temporary residents: Permanent Residents.’ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/resources/statistics/facts2008/permanent/10.asp>

⁶ Statistics Canada ‘Immigrant population by place of birth and period of immigration (2006 Census)’; Truong Thi Kim Chuyen, Ivan Small and Diep Vuong. ‘Diaspora Giving: An Agent of Change in Asia Pacific Communities?: Vietnam’ (paper presented at Diaspora Giving: An Agent of Change in Asia Pacific Communities, Hanoi, Vietnam, May 21 – 23, 2008) <http://www.asiapacificphilanthropy.org/conference>; Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, ‘Relations Canada-Vietnam,’ Government of Canada http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/vietnam/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/index.aspx?lang=eng&menu_id=7&menu=L.

⁷ Thanh Nien News ‘Overseas Vietnamese enjoy visa exemption,’ January 7, 2009 <http://www.thanhniennews.com/overseas/?catid=12&newsid=45207>.

⁸ *Doi Moi* political and economic reforms were adopted by the Vietnamese Communist Party in 1986 to move the economy from a central planning economic system to a market-oriented economy with socialist characteristics. See: Melanie Beresford ‘Doi Moi in Review: The Challenges of Building Market Socialism in Vietnam’ *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 38, 2 (2008): 221-243.

⁹ Ashley Carruthers. ‘Saigon from the diaspora’ *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 29 (2008):71.

The receding flows of Vietnamese people settling in Canada in the early 1990s coincided with the nascent flows of Vietnamese-origin Canadians and non-Vietnamese-origin Canadians traveling, working and (re)-settling in Vietnam. This switch, which has accelerated over the past decade, can be attributed to several broader economic and political drivers. Vietnam has been one of the top performing economies over the last decade with a real GDP growth rate of 7.3% per year between 1995 and 2005.¹⁰ The socio-political stability and economic growth of Vietnam has led to a gradual easing of restrictions on Overseas Vietnamese and foreigners visiting, working and investing in Vietnam. Many Vietnamese-origin Canadians maintain family connections and an affinity for their maternal homeland of Vietnam. While Canada encapsulates the ‘land of opportunity’ for many Vietnamese past and present, Vietnam is increasingly inheriting this symbolic title as it becomes accessible for Canadians to find good work opportunities and live a higher quality of life.¹¹

¹⁰ The World Bank. ‘Vietnam: Country Brief’ August 25, 2009. <http://go.worldbank.org/SJJ87WZ060>.

¹¹ Comments from interviewees August 2009.

Portrait of Canadians Abroad:

Vietnam

A. Canadian Citizens Resident in Vietnam

There are approximately 80,000 foreign-born residents estimated to be living and working in Vietnam constituting less than 0.1% of the total population.¹² Of the working foreign population in Vietnam nearly 74% come from Asia, 21% come from Europe and 5% are from other countries.¹³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam notes that of the 59,164 visas issued to Canadians in the first eight months of 2009, 87% were tourist visas while 8% were business visas. Unofficial estimates place the number of Canadian citizens currently residing in Vietnam at 1,200 to 1,500.¹⁴ On the Registry of Canadians Abroad Database (ROCA), the Embassy of Canada in Hanoi confirms there are approximately 300 Canadians registered. However, it is acknowledged that this figure is a gross underestimate because many Canadians do not register with ROCA. Currently the Canadian census also does not record the number of Canadians residing outside of Canada.

Accessing accurate statistics in Vietnam remains a major challenge. The main sources of statistics on migration into Vietnam include: 1) the Immigration Department of the Ministry of Public Security; 2) the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs; 3) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 4) international sources such as the International Organization of Migration and the World Bank. The General Statistics Office of Vietnam has not conducted censuses or surveys on international migration in the past. However, this is changing as the 2009 census will include questions on international migration for the first time. The Immigration Department under the direction of the Ministry of Public Security holds important information on immigration and emigration statistics in Vietnam, but access to this information remains very difficult and is not open to the public.¹⁵

Despite the dearth of quantitative statistics, interviews conducted with a diverse sample of Canadians working and residing in Vietnam provide critical insights on the main characteristics and trends of the Canadian population living in Vietnam.¹⁶ The following section breaks down into the analysis of Canadians living in Vietnam into two groups: Vietnamese-origin Canadians and non-Vietnamese origin Canadians. This division helps highlight the distinctive, yet at times overlapping motives and characteristics for Canadians residing and living in Vietnam.

¹² Vietnam News 'Waiting period shorter for foreigners' flat ownership certificates' November 14, 2009. <http://vietnamnews.vnagency.com.vn/showarticle.php?num=07SOC141109>.

¹³ The Ministry of Labour, War Invalids, and Social Affairs. August 1, 2009.

¹⁴ Based on unofficial estimates of the Embassy of Canada in Vietnam. 2009.

¹⁵ Dang Nguyen Anh 'Labour Emigration and Emigration Pressures in Transnational Vietnam' in *Migration in the Asia Pacific: population, settlement and citizenship issue*, edited by Robyn R. Iredale, Charles Hawksley and Stephen Castles (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2003):170.

¹⁶ Names and background of primary interviewees can be found in Annex I.

Vietnamese-Origin Canadians in Vietnam

Vietnamese-origin Canadians, also called ‘Overseas Vietnamese’ or *Viet Kieu*, are Canadian citizens of Vietnamese descent. Connections between ethnic-Vietnamese Canadians and Vietnam have generally been maintained through short visits, remittances and investments in family enterprises and real estate.¹⁷ A recent Citizenship and Immigration Canada study indicated that Vietnamese-origin Canadians have resided in Canada for a substantial period of time, between 13-16 years, before pursuing onward migration.¹⁸ The survey indicates that it is only in very recent times that there has been a sharper increase of out-migration among Vietnamese-origin Canadians. A study done by the Asia Pacific Foundation found that between 1996 and 2006 the out-migration rate of Vietnamese-born Canadians was negative, at a rate of -4.77%, implying that more Vietnamese immigrated to Canada than emigrated from Canada.¹⁹ Despite the negative net rate of out-migration, it is important to recognize the growing flow and interest of Vietnamese-origin Canadians returning and settling in Vietnam on a full-time basis starting in the early 1990s and accelerating the past decade. The following provides a brief description of the main trends and characteristics of Vietnamese-origin Canadians currently residing in Vietnam.

To begin understanding the complex patterns of migration among Vietnamese-origin Canadians, it is useful to understand the concept of ‘motherland.’ Motherland is considered the birthplace and ancestors’ homeland and it carries a significant place in the historical memory and identity of this group. As such, a divided sense of loyalty and responsibility shapes the identity and relationship that many Vietnamese-origin Canadians hold for both countries. Whereas for some Vietnamese-origin Canadians, particularly those who fled in the 1970s-80s, ideological differences and wariness of the one-party system hinders possibilities of a permanent return to Vietnam²⁰; for others, Vietnam represents a ‘land of opportunity’ where the ability to contribute to its socio-economic development is abundant and growing. The sense of responsibility to give back to the ‘motherland’ provides the impetus to return to Vietnam as the country integrates more rapidly with the international economy and political-social conditions stabilize and liberalize. Moreover, knowledge of the language, culture and family/professional networks, gives many Vietnamese-origin Canadians an advantage to access work opportunities. There are also Vietnamese-origin Canadians living in Canada who find the cultural and linguistic differences between both countries too great a challenge to successfully and comfortably integrate into Canadian society; thus they choose to return to Vietnam.

Of the interviewed Vietnamese-origin Canadians living on a full-time basis in Vietnam, all retain recognition as Canadian citizens. Most of these Vietnamese-origin Canadians,

¹⁷ Raul Hernandez-Coss ‘The Canada-Vietnam Remittance Corridor: Lessons on Shifting from Informal to Formal Transfer Systems’ *World Bank Working Paper No.48*. (Washington, DC, 2005).

¹⁸ Martha Justice ‘Exploring Onward Migration of Immigrants to Canada’ (paper presented at *Conference on Selected Profiles of Canadians Abroad*, Vancouver, Canada, June 16, 2009).

¹⁹ Victor Z. Chen. ‘Out and Return Migration of Canadian Immigrants Between 1996 – 2006: Evidence from STATCAN-RDH 20% Census 1996, 2001, 2006’ (paper presented at *Conference on Selected Profiles of Canadians Abroad*, Vancouver, Canada, June 15, 2009).

²⁰ Ashley Carruthers. ‘Saigon from the diaspora’ *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 29 (2008):70.

particularly post-war refugees, lost or renounced their Vietnamese citizenship and were not eligible for dual citizenship until recently as Vietnam did not officially recognize dual citizenship. On November 2008, the Vietnamese government amended its nationality laws allowing specific categories of Overseas Vietnamese to reclaim their lapsed citizenship.²¹ None of those interviewed have taken advantage of these amendments; instead they reside as temporary residents renewing their visas every 1- 3 years.

Vietnamese-origin Canadians return to Vietnam to pursue investment and business opportunities, to reconnect with family and friends, and to retire. The dynamic business environment, the inexpensive living conditions, the warm climate, the family connections and the familiar cultural environment are among the principle reasons that Vietnamese-origin Canadians choose to settle in Vietnam. All expressed a desire to use their Canadian education and work experience to contribute to Vietnam's socio-economic development. For many, Vietnam offers an opportunity to make a greater difference with their skills and knowledge than would be possible in Canada. Interviewees were generally skilled professionals from the areas of IT, finance, education, hospitality, health, retail & services and business administration. In applying their Canadian expertise in Vietnam, most acknowledged that their pursuits do not necessarily have a clear Canadian connection. All acknowledge varying levels of bureaucratic obstacles, transparency challenges and limited infrastructure that affect everyday business and living conditions. However, these conditions are generally accepted as part of the challenge and nature of working and living in Vietnam.

Another important factor for the nascent return of Vietnamese-born Canadians is the Vietnamese government's more proactive push to attract Overseas Vietnamese to contribute to their motherland through remittances and investments. In 1997, decree No.37-CP by the Vietnamese government articulated the mandate of a Committee for Overseas Vietnam under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support and build relations between Overseas Vietnamese and Vietnam.²² Since 2004, the Vietnamese government has introduced a series of legal changes to give Overseas Vietnamese the right to regain Vietnamese citizenship, to gain exemption from travel visa requirements, to access greater business opportunities, and to own property in Vietnam.²³ While it remains too early to assess the full impact of these changes on migration patterns of Vietnamese-origin Canadians, it is observed that these changes have contributed to greater receptivity attracting the return of more Vietnamese-origin Canadians.

In assessing the level of connection that Vietnamese-origin Canadians felt with Canada, divergent trends are noticeable. All continue to identify as Canadians and retain their Canadian passport without expressing immediate plans to take advantage of the recently introduced legislations. Half of those interviewed retain a strong connection to Canada

²¹ Agence-France Presse 'Vietnam to allow dual nationality,' November 14, 2008.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iuan6R35sCIRgTr-6hWunlwoxv-Q> For more information, see Section 4 on Vietnam's immigration and citizenship policies.

²² Official Gazette 'Decree No.37-CP of April 26, 1997 on the Tasks, Powers, and Organizational Structure of the Committee for Overseas Vietnamese Under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs'

http://vbqpppl.moj.gov.vn/law/en/1991_to_2000/1997/199704/199704260005_en/lawdocument_view.

²³ BBC News 'Vietnam's diaspora urged to return home' November 24, 2009

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8373580.stm>.

through annual trips, continued participation in elections, staying updated with Canadian current affairs and actively engaging in the Canadian expatriate community activities in Vietnam. On the other hand, others expressed a peripheral sense of connection with Canada as they became (re)-integrated into Vietnamese culture, language and traditions. In many ways they were staying ‘Vietnamese’ in substance, but ‘Canadian’ on paper. It is unclear how widespread the divergent sense of connection with Canada is among Vietnamese-origin Canadians living in Vietnam, but further examination of this issue may provide important insight into variegated meanings of Canadian citizenship.

Non-Vietnamese origin Canadians

It is estimated that non-Vietnamese origin Canadians make up a smaller percentage of the total Canadian expatriate community, but have a 50% presence in terms of registration at the Embassy of Canada. Many come as working professionals for short-term assignments between six months and three years. A limited number of long-term residents have lived in Vietnam for 10 - 15 years. Some 90% non-Vietnamese origin Canadians are based in the major urban centres of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. The diverse occupational make up of non-Vietnamese origin Canadians living and working in Vietnam include educators, business entrepreneurs, healthcare professionals, hospitality and tourism workers, lawyers, development specialists, researchers and diplomats, among others. Teachers make up a significant portion of the Canadian expatriate population, particularly those teaching English as a Second Language either at language centres, the Canadian-oriented international school, other international schools or Vietnamese institutions and colleges. The broader community also consists of accompanying spouses, young children, retirees and travelers turned residents in Vietnam.

An interesting trend among a large number of non-Vietnamese origin Canadians residents in Vietnam is that many do not intentionally plan to reside long term in Vietnam from the outset, but end up extending their stay upon arrival. It is common to find Canadians arriving as visitors, short-term contract workers, volunteers, and professionals who get involved in a series of projects and contract positions that extend their stay in Vietnam. Various factors account for this trend.

Similar to Vietnamese-origin Canadians, many non-Vietnamese origin Canadians view Vietnam as a rapidly developing country offering abundant economic opportunities where foreign language skills, technical/vocational skills and professional skills are in high demand. The fast paced and agile business environment offers numerous opportunities to grow small-scale projects and businesses in Vietnam. Thus, many believe their skills and knowledge can make a greater contribution and go further in Vietnam than in Canada. Second, inexpensive living conditions and a secure living environment for foreigners in Vietnam offer a higher quality of life than would be possible in Canada. The high quality and relatively cheap living costs, education institutions, and recreational facilities in urban centers provide an attractive lifestyle for young working families, retired couples and young professionals. Third, a number of Canadians marry Vietnamese spouses and choose Vietnam as their long-term home. Finally, the sense of adventure, the cultural immersion, the youthful lifestyle and warm climate in Vietnam provide a desirable alternative to their Canadian lifestyle.

It is interesting to note that there is a prominent French-speaking Quebec/Canadian community in Vietnam. With its French colonial history, Vietnam has attracted many French-speaking Canadians for business and education opportunities.

For some non-Vietnamese Canadians, the expatriate lifestyle amplifies the sense of being a ‘foreigner’ in Vietnam, yet it remains unclear to what extent that translates into a stronger sense of loyalty and attachment to Canada. Some Canadians are actively involved in promoting and strengthening the Canadian community through regular participation in cultural events, business missions and social activities. While Vietnam is viewed as their location for economic prosperity, Canada remains home and the eventual place for retirement. However, others remain only peripherally attached to Canada, as one Canadian remarked ‘part of being Canadian is not being strongly nationalistic or patriotic.’ Thus the urge to participate actively in the Canadian community is not strong; instead there is a more compelling desire to integrate and adopt the Vietnamese culture, customs and habits to integrate more fully into Vietnamese society.

B. Canadian Personalities and Organizations in Vietnam

The following section presents short profiles of prominent Canadian personalities and organizations currently based in Vietnam.

Personalities: Entertainment/Media

JOE RUELLE

30-year-old Joe Ruelle, known as ‘Dau Tay’ in Vietnam, is one of the most recognized faces in Vietnam. Ruelle, a native Vancouverite, began his travels to Asia after completing a bachelor degree in Theatre and Drama from the University of Acadia. Initially pursuing English teaching opportunities, his activities expanded in Vietnam as he began editing for a Vietnamese newspaper and working on several development projects with UNDP and UNICEF. Concurrently, Ruelle also began studying Vietnamese at the Hanoi University in 2004 in a bid to better connect with the local population and match the strong English competencies displayed by Vietnamese youth. In 2006, his enthusiasm for the language and culture led to the creation of a Vietnamese blog on Yahoo that provided humorous anecdotes and observations on the quirky mannerisms and habits of Vietnamese and foreigners. His witty style and strong command of the language made his blog an internet phenomenon among Vietnamese locals, attracting over three million hits by 2007.

His rapid success helped him gain a foothold in the Vietnamese entertainment industry where he has gone on to publish a book entitled *Toi la Dau* (I am Strawberry); appear in several television shows, including one series called ‘Emotional Men;’ and start up his own television production company in 2008 called Dau Tay Entertainment. While his blog stopped in 2009 with the closure of Yahoo 360, he remains one of the most sought-after celebrities in Vietnam. His fame and success in Vietnam has made him an integral part of Vietnamese popular culture. While Vancouver is still considered ‘home,’ he identifies more readily as a ‘Hanoian’ than a ‘Canadian’ given much of his professional success is attributed to his unique identity as ‘Dau’ in Vietnamese society.

BRIAN RING

Brian Ring, a Canadian-based artist living in Hanoi, typifies the ‘international citizen’ that has become increasingly characteristic in a globalized setting. Saskatchewan-born Ring, his German-born wife and their two children (one born in Germany, the other in Canada – both dual citizens) have balanced education, work and family between three countries: Canada, Germany and Vietnam. After having lived in Canada, Germany and South Korea for short periods of time, they have resided in Vietnam on a full-time basis since 1996. Finding an affinity for the lifestyle in Asia and good professional opportunities in Vietnam, Ring and his wife established a comfortable expatriate lifestyle in Hanoi.

Ring is highly involved in the flourishing contemporary arts scene in Vietnam. Ring has done several major solo and group exhibits, mostly in video and visual arts with the support of the British Council Hanoi; L’Espace, French Cultural Centre in Vietnam; the Goethe Institute; the Canadian Embassy; and the Hanoi College of Fine Arts Hanoi. In addition, Ring set up Hanoigrapevine.com, a website that provides comprehensive information about cultural activities in Vietnam’s contemporary arts scene to support Vietnamese artists and arts-interested people. The website, in both English and Vietnamese, covers cultural activities throughout major cities in Vietnam. Recognizing the importance of Hanoigrapevine.com as a bridging tool to connect the budding contemporary arts and culture to a mainstream audience in Vietnam, the Embassy of Denmark recently awarded a significant grant to further develop and expand the website.

Despite identifying himself as a proud Canadian citizen, Ring finds it difficult to call any particular place ‘home’ after having lived abroad for many years. In Vietnam, Ring remains closely associated with the German community because of support received from the German Goethe Institute for his arts projects. However, he retains a strong Canadian connection with one child presently studying at university in Canada and makes active efforts to return to Canada biennially to reconnect with family.

EMILY HUCKSON

Emily Huckson, born in Sault St. Marie, Ontario, has lived in Vietnam for over 15 years. After studying theatre at York University, she spent three years teaching in Japan then traveled to Vietnam in 1992 just as *Doi Moi* reforms were getting underway. Recognizing the dearth of pre-school facilities in Vietnam for children aged five and under, Huckson opened a small community-based non-profit school called Dynotots Preschool in 1995. Based in Ho Chi Minh City, it was founded on the concept of helping young children develop social skills and emotional intelligence in a safe environment. The school gained popular success and was incorporated into the Australian International School Saigon in 2007 with over 100 students registered.

During this period, Huckson also pursued her theatre interests by helping bring together a group of 60 amateur artists to form a British-style theatre group named ‘Saigon Players’ in 1994. The family entertainment for both kids and adults saw popular Western

fairytale modified humorously to fit the Vietnamese cultural context. Recently, ‘Saigon Players’ performed a major Broadway production bringing together five local arts groups and an international choir; additionally, the group did a popular cabaret-style show called ‘Missed Saigon.’ The performing act has gained local popularity because of its cultural bridging role between Vietnamese and expats through light-hearted mockery of mannerisms of both groups. Proceeds raised from performances have been returned to community charities and local orphanages.

For Huckson, Vietnam is the ‘land of opportunity’ that has allowed her to grow both her theatre and educational interests. The sense of adventure and challenge, the warm climate, and the business and personal growth opportunities offered in Vietnam are unmatched in Canada. Vietnam is now her main residence; she participates in the Canadian community in Vietnam through networking events and celebrations, as well as retaining an interest in Canadian politics. She notes thoughtfully that any Canadian expat will recognize that ‘they are more Canadian in their host country than they would ever be in their home country.’

BRIAN HALL

Brian Hall is the Chairman and CEO of Megastar, the largest operator of movie cinemas and distributor of foreign films in Vietnam. Born in St. Mary’s Ontario, he was raised in Brampton and received his Bachelor of Commerce from Queen’s University. Before moving to Vietnam in 2007, he lived in various Asian countries including Singapore and Thailand. While he is not actively involved with the Canadian community in Vietnam, he retains his connections to Canada through family ties and current affairs.

Personalities: Commerce

DON LAM

Don Lam was born in Vietnam and left at the age of 10 years old in the exodus of ‘boat people’ to Canada at the end of the 1970s. Arriving in 1979, he lived in Edmonton for a short period before settling in Toronto with his family where he pursued a degree in commerce and political science at the University of Toronto. In 1994, he returned to Vietnam to open an office for Coopers and Lybrand and stayed on for 10 years applying his business and finance expertise in a nascent financial services industry.

In 2003, he opened his own asset management, investment banking and real estate consulting firm in Vietnam called VinaCapital. VinaCapital capitalized on the burgeoning market for investment services in Vietnam and tapped into real estate, infrastructure and shares to help develop Vietnam’s financial investment market. Only five years old, VinaCapital is now the largest fund management company in Vietnam with almost US\$ 2.2 billion in assets under management. In addition to his business ventures, Lam is actively engaged in philanthropic poverty reduction projects. In 2006, he helped create VinaCapital Foundation, an independent NGO dedicated to reducing poverty among Vietnamese children and raising poverty awareness through medical and educational programs. To date, the Foundation has saved 1,000 children from congenital

heart disease, provided free medical checkups to 3,000 children in 10 poor provinces, and supplied several hospitals with over US\$300,000 of medical equipment, among other achievements.

Lam has lived in Vietnam for 15 years and now resides full time with his immediate family. He retains Canadian citizenship and actively participates in the Canadian community in Vietnam through the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. He returns to Canada annually where his extended family resides.

THOMAS W. TOBIN²⁴

Thomas W. Tobin is currently CEO of HSBC Bank (Vietnam) Ltd. Tom first joined HSBC in Canada in its commercial banking division and in 1990 was selected for the International Management program and posted to Hong Kong. Tom is a seasoned banking executive with extensive experience in emerging markets having worked in corporate and institutional banking, securities, personal financial services and general management. He has lived and worked in Asia for many years, in locations such as Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Brunei and Singapore.

Immediately preceding his responsibilities in Vietnam, Tom was Head of Personal Financial Services for HSBC in Singapore, Manager for the HSBC Hong Kong office and Senior Personal Financial Services Manager for HSBC in Brunei. Being appointed as President and CEO of HSBC in Vietnam in May 2006, Tom has successfully led HSBC to become the first foreign bank to locally incorporate in Vietnam as HSBC Bank (Vietnam) Ltd., from 1 January 2009.

Tom holds a Masters in Business Administration and is a graduate of the Wharton School's Advanced Management Program.

RALF MATTHAES²⁵

Ralf holds a double honours degree from Wilfred Laurier University, in Waterloo, Canada. Prior to coming to Vietnam in 1994, Ralf served as Aide de Camp to the Provincial Minister of Finance for Ontario, Canada for four years. In 1996, Ralf established TNS Vietnam, as a part of the TNS Global Group. TNS Global Group is one of the largest custom market research businesses and has been providing services for Fortune 500 companies, major local companies and donor organizations in Vietnam for over 11 years. TNS Vietnam the only ISO equivalent accredited research group in Vietnam.

Ralf's geographic responsibilities cover 10 offices of TNS Vietnam nationwide, as well as all research conducted by TNS in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. He is closely involved in all the public and social projects TNS Vietnam carries out and has worked with organizations in the country such as Asia Injury Prevention, UNICEF, DKT, MARD and The World Bank.

²⁴ HSBC Bank (Vietnam) Ltd. 'Executive Biography: Thomas Tobin' January 2009.

http://www.hsbc.com.vn/1/PA_1_2_S5/content/vietnam/pdf_app/pr/Thomas_Tobin_en.pdf

²⁵ TNS Vietnam 'Ralf Mathaes' 2006. <http://www.tnsp.com.vn/team-e.htm#>

PHAN THANH

Phan Thanh, a Vietnamese-born Canadian citizen, is a successful business entrepreneur who is currently President of Planergo Company and Director of the Overseas Vietnamese International Business Association (OVIBA) based in Ho Chi Minh City. Thanh came to Montreal in the mid-1960s with his brother and brother's family and studied tourism and management in Quebec. During his 10 years in Canada, he opened up several successful restaurants. In 1974, he returned to Asia to open a Singapore-based construction and import/export business, Plan Nergo, that later expanded region-wide to Hong Kong, Malaysia and Vietnam. As business conditions opened up during the *Doi Moi* economic reform in Vietnam, Thanh expanded his business, taking part in major construction and management projects including the New World Hotel Saigon. With increasingly accessible and abundant business opportunities, Thanh was drawn back to Vietnam because of family and nostalgia for his 'motherland.' Previously, Thanh traveled frequently between Canada and Vietnam, but for nearly 10 years he has resided in Vietnam on a more permanent basis.

Through his directorship with OVIBA and his influential business profile in Vietnam, Thanh has worked hard to bridge the gap between Overseas Vietnamese and Vietnamese citizens. He has facilitated cross-cultural and business exchanges to educate business people and youths on the business opportunities in Vietnam. In particular, Thanh's affinity to Canada has led him to develop a strong sense of responsibility to contribute to Canada. In this way, he remains connected to Canada with both his children currently studying in Canada; through participation at Canadian Consulate activities; and through support for business outreach opportunities with Vietnamese Canadians, particularly youth. His loyalty is divided between Vietnam and Canada, thus his desire to act as a cultural ambassador to help Vietnamese from both countries develop a greater understanding and appreciation of each other.

SAMI KTEILY

Sami Kteily is General Director of the PEB Steel Buildings Co. and President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (Cancham). PEB Steel Buildings Co. is a Canadian-owned and managed company, focused on producing pre-engineered steel building structures. Established in Vietnam in 1994, it was one of the first Canadian owned and managed companies to enter the Vietnamese market. Currently PEB Steel produces nearly 18,000 tonnes of steel in Vietnam and employs approximately 150 workers. PEB Steel currently has five factories across Asia in Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Born in Lebanon, Kteily earned his first degree in Business Administration from the American University of Beirut in 1978. He received training in the United Kingdom to earn his chartered accountancy before joining the Arthur Andersen auditing firm and the Abela Group of Companies. After a brief period working in Cyprus, Kteily and his brother visited Vietnam to pursue investment opportunities and opened up PEB Steel in 1994. During this period, Kteily's family emigrated to Canada where they currently

reside. While Kteily lives primarily in Vietnam, he travels between Canada and Vietnam frequently and holds dual citizenship in both Canada and Lebanon.

Despite his dispersed roots, Canada remains a strong element in Kteily's business pursuits and his identity. Through his leadership position at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, he has actively sought to unite the Canadian community through social and business networking activities. A strong proponent of Canadian businesses entering Vietnam, he notes that the Canadian brand carries quality, confidence and integrity, offering plenty of opportunities for Canadian businesses to grow and succeed. Kteily works actively with the Embassy of Canada in Vietnam and the Canadian Consulate to help promote Canadian business in Vietnam. While Vietnam has been his 'land of opportunity' where he has gained a prominent profile in the business community, Canada remains his 'home' where he identifies with values, people, culture and landscape and plans to return upon retirement.

Personalities: Education

HUYNH HUU TUE

Born in Hue, Vietnam, Professor Huynh Huu Tue came to Laval University in 1962 on a scholarship from the Colombo Plan. He received a PhD degree in information processing in 1968 and was appointed a professor in 1981. He is famous in the world for various scientific works including "Nonlinear Systems" published in Paris in 1972.

Returning to Vietnam right after 1975, Prof Huynh spent from one to three months per year teaching free of charge at different universities in Vietnam. At the invitation of Prof. Nguyen Van Hieu, Rector of the University of Technologies, a new university under Vietnam's National University in Hanoi, Prof. Huynh gradually spent more time teaching in Vietnam and finally retired early from Laval University and became the first overseas Vietnamese intellectual to become the head of a department (information processing) at a university (the University of Technologies) in Vietnam in June 2005. He received the "Glory Vietnam" award by *VietnamNet* newspaper in April 2007.

In 2007, together with other Vietnamese intellectuals including Prof. Dang Huu, he founded Bac Ha International University (www.bhiu.edu.vn), where he is the current Rector. The university envisions having a comprehensive range of programs of international quality, first focusing on two main fields of study: information and communications technologies, and economics/business administration. It has plans to build a modern campus in Bac Ninh Province and broaden its programs.

Prof. Huynh continues to contribute to the development of education in Vietnam, especially in the post-secondary sector through direct and indirect dialogues with other educators and the country's leaders, aiming at building a new student generation in touch with global scientific standards.

NGUYEN HUU LE

Dr. Le, a Canadian citizen, was born in Binh Dinh, Vietnam in late 1940s. He graduated from university in Australia in electrical engineering in 1972 but then changed his focus

to information technology and received his Ph.D. in communications in 1977 from Adelaide University (Australia). He joined Nortel in 1978 as a technical expert and 14 years later became Vice President of Global Marketing for Nortel. In 2000 he became President and CEO of Paragons Solutions Asia–Pacific in charge of Paragons Solution Vietnam and Paragons Solutions India. He started to work for TMA Solutions in Vietnam in 2001 and help develop the company significantly.

Formed in 1997 with 100% Vietnamese capital, TMA Solutions (www.tmasolutions.com) is the second biggest software company in Vietnam and the biggest in Ho Chi Minh City. TMA Solutions' services include software outsourcing, and human resources training for the information technology sector. It has six state-of-the-art labs in Ho Chi Minh City and four offices overseas in Canada, Japan, USA and Europe.

TMA Training Centre (TTC – www.ttc.edu.vn) was opened in 2001, initially for the company's internal training needs. In April 2008, it started to recruit external students (IT graduates or fourth year students) for four-month training courses on advanced IT topics and soft skills. TTC aims at training 5,000 engineers by 2015.

Personalities: Other

GRAHAM POTTER

Nicknamed 'Captain Canada,' Graham Potter is one of Canada's longest-serving 'social ambassadors' among Canadian residents living in Vietnam. Originally from Toronto, Potter came to Vietnam in 1993 to investigate trade opportunities while working for a small Canadian company. With a marketing and sales background, Potter worked for various foreign firms before joining Long Hai Security in 1995. Long Hai Security is the first licensed security services company to be established in Ho Chi Minh City with 3,000 guards. Potter has lived in Ho Chi Minh City on a full-time basis for 14 years.

In the Canadian expatriate community Potter is well known for his active involvement in setting up key Canadian business networks and social events in Vietnam, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the annual Terry Fox Runs, and the annual Thanksgiving Dinner, among other activities. While Potter no longer has voting rights in Canada, he stays connected to Canadian current affairs and political developments and returns to Canada on a biennial basis to reconnect with friends and family. His affinity to Canada and its values has been integral to his active promotion and participation in the Canadian community in Vietnam.

Organizations: Companies

MANULIFE

Established in 1999, Manulife was the first 100% foreign-owned life insurance company in Vietnam. Manulife is a Canadian-based firm located in Ho Chi Minh City that provides financial protection services and wealth management. After a almost a decade of operations, it has captured over 10% of the life insurance market share providing services to more than 300,000 customers in 12 cities and provinces with 5,500

professional agents and 300 staff. In addition to its life insurance businesses and products, Manulife has also been an active donor to community educational and charitable activities, giving more than 8 billion dong (\$443,000) since 1999. Recently, the company received the 2008 Golden Dragon Award for outstanding professional reputation and contribution to the Vietnam economy.

David Wong is the current Country Director for Manulife. Born in Hong Kong, he is a Canadian citizen from Toronto who has worked with Manulife for 20 years as a country representative in several countries. He is actively involved in the Canadian community in Vietnam as a member of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Manulife is an active participant in the annual Terry Fox Run in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Wong was recently awarded an Outstanding Contribution Award from the Minister of Finance in recognition of his outstanding management and contribution to the life insurance market's development in Vietnam.

TALISMAN

Talisman Energy Inc. is a major independent upstream oil and gas company headquartered in Calgary, Alberta. It operates in Canada and internationally, including in Vietnam where it is the only Canadian energy company. Currently, it operates Blocks 133/134, 46 Cai Nuoc and PM3-CAA (with Malaysia) as well as participating in the Truong Son JOC (Block 46/02) and Thang Long JOC (Block 15-2/01). Recently, it was announced that Talisman will invest \$1.1 billion to explore and develop two oil fields off Vietnam's coast. Talisman is currently sponsoring higher education scholarships for Vietnamese professionals wishing to pursue their Masters in petroleum-related fields at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Organizations: Business/Chambers of Commerce

CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VIETNAM (CANCHAM)

CanCham is a voluntary business association dedicated to strengthening social and business relations among its members. Cancham is headquartered Ho Chi Minh City, with a satellite office in Hanoi, and has 240 corporate members including Canadians, Vietnamese and other international community members. Since 2008, its membership has doubled as the organization has sought to create a strong community feeling among Canadians. Cancham is actively involved in creating business networking and education opportunities such as the combined Chamber networking nights, business briefing seminars and breakfast networking functions. Beyond its business promotion mandate, CanCham is involved in sponsoring and promoting Canadian and local community initiatives in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City such as the Canadian Thanksgiving Dinner and the Terry Fox Run. The current President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce is Mr. Sami Kteily and Executive Director is Mr. Patrick Wolfe.

More information on CanCham can be found at: <http://www.canchamvietnam.org/>.

Organizations: Social Networking

VIETNAM-CANADA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION (VCFA)

VCFA is a semi-autonomous organization under the umbrella of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO) set up to establish and promote friendly and cooperative people-to-people relations between Canada and Vietnam. The VCFA helps promote cooperation in the areas of commerce, culture and tourism, as well as coordinate with Canadian non-government and non-profit organizations working on development and humanitarian projects in Vietnam. Every year, VCFA is involved in organizing the annual charitable run to raise funds for cancer research and treatment. VCFA's 44 member Executive Board is headed by Dr. Nguyen Duy Quy.

CANADIAN SOCIAL CLUB

The Canadian Social Club in Hanoi is a voluntary association engaged in strengthening social relations within the Canadian community in Hanoi and surrounding areas. Members of the Canadian Social Club support Canadian activities such as Canada Day celebrations, the Terry Fox Run and monthly evening gatherings for the Canadian community. The Canadian Social Club is currently headed by long-term resident, Mr. Gilles Boutin. For more information on activities, please e-mail canada.vietnam@gmail.com

Organizations: Education

CANADIAN EDUCATION CENTRE NETWORK (CEC)

Founded in 1995 with support from the Government of Canada, CEC established its Ho Chi Minh office in 1998 as an independent non-profit company dedicated to promoting and marketing Canada as an international education destination. The Centre hosts education fairs, agent training and student consultations; provides assistance to Canadian schools interested in developing education partnerships in Vietnam; and lobbies government for policy changes in support of Canada's international education industry. Currently, Mr. Quang Nguyen, Director of CEC, noted there are few Canadian schools involved in Vietnam, but interest is growing. Some Canadian-Vietnam education partnerships that exist include the Saskatchewan Institute of Advance Technology, the Canadian International School and Maple Bear Kindergarten. CECN was closed as of Dec 31, 2009 due to difficulties in funding.

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (CIS)

Opened in August 2009 in Ho Chi Minh City, CIS is the first Canadian school in Vietnam that offers classes from Kindergarten to Grade 9 for both local Vietnamese and foreign students. The school curriculum is developed in partnership with the District School Board of Niagara and is taught by Canadian-trained and Canadian-based staff. All classes are taught in English, except for Vietnamese language classes, and promote Canadian education and values in the context of Vietnamese history and culture.

Students can gain credits toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) as well as enter international exchange programs. In its first year of operation, it has 160 students.

CANADA-VIETNAM EDUCATION NETWORK

CVEN/RECV is an independent not-for-profit organization based in Canada aiming at promoting the participation of Canadians in educational activities as a contribution to building capacity in education in Vietnam. It also aims at the promotion of long-term relationship and socio-economic and cultural exchanges between Canada and Vietnam. CVEN/RECV was created in May 2008 by a group of concerned Canadian academics and professionals led by Dr. Truong Vo-Van, Professor and Chair at the Department of Physics, Concordia University, who is currently its President. The network's Advisory and Organizing Committee includes educators from various universities in Vietnam and Canada, many of them of Vietnamese origins. The network organised the first Colloquium on Canada-Vietnam cooperation in higher education and research in Dec 18-19, 2009 at the Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City with more than 30 speakers and hundreds of participants. More information about the Network can be found at: <http://cven-recv.org/>.

VIETNAM CANADA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Opened in February 2009, the Vietnam Canada Vocational School is Canada's first wholly-invested vocational training project in Vietnam. Mr. Nguyen Hoai Bac, a Vietnamese-born Canadian business entrepreneur, spearheaded the US\$12 million vocational school project with the aim of helping Vietnamese students finish high school and train in specific industries to service the skilled labour market domestically and internationally, specifically in Canada and the US. The school is expected to train students in areas such as nursing, housekeeping, beauty care, trucking and other industries.

Mr. Nguyen Hoai Bac is a highly successful business entrepreneur in Vietnam who moved to Canada in 1989 in the late wave of boat people, before returning to Vietnam in 1992 to help a Canadian college seek educational partnership opportunities in Vietnam. In 1998, he settled in Vietnam on a more permanent basis as he began pursuing various business ventures in sectors including automobiles, construction, tourism, steel, home décor and education. He remains actively engaged with the Canadian community in Vietnam through his business ventures, his family connections and his engagement with the Canadian community activities in Vietnam.

Organizations: Development

WORLD UNIVERSITY SERVICES CANADA (WUSC)

Since 1991, WUSC has been focused on capacity building in post secondary education institutions, placing Canadian specialists in Vietnamese schools to teach English as a foreign language and tourism management. WUSC provides long-term and short-term opportunities for qualified Canadian professions to partner with Vietnamese

organizations to build skills, knowledge and capacity. Currently it runs three major programs including the Uniterra volunteer cooperation program to work on agriculture and rural development projects; Students Without Borders where post-secondary students are placed with local partners in Vietnam; and University and College Missions to develop exchanges between senior representatives of Canadian universities with institutions and governments in a developing country.

OXFAM QUEBEC VIETNAM

Oxfam Quebec is a non-governmental organization dedicated to supporting sustainable solutions to poverty and injustice in developing countries. In 1991, it opened its regional office to oversee development activities in Vietnam and Cambodia. Currently, its activities are focused in the rural areas in Northwest Vietnam and in the Central Highlands. It is currently supporting projects in three main areas including human trafficking, micro-enterprises and rice intensification. Oxfam currently operates on a budget of \$2 million with approximately 15 staff.

HEALTH BRIDGE VIETNAM

Health Bridge (formerly PATH Canada) is a Canadian non-governmental organization that aims to improve health of vulnerable populations. Established in 1993 in Vietnam, it focuses on technical assistance, capacity building, strengthening networks and development of resource materials in issues related to tobacco control, gender, Reproductive Health, HIV & AIDS, Cancer Control, Ecocities and Nutrition.

C. Summary of Vietnam's Immigration and Citizenship Policies

Immigration

The Immigration Department under Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security manages the immigration of people to and from Vietnam. The primary legislation that regulates movement of foreigners in Vietnam are: (1) Law on entry, exit and residence of foreigners in Vietnam issued by the Vietnam's National Assembly's Standing Committee on April 28, 2000; (2) the Decree with detailed regulations on the above mentioned law issued by the Vietnam's Government on May 28, 2001. Detailed information on laws, regulations and forms can be accessed via the website of the Immigration Department, available in Vietnamese and English: <http://www.vnimm.gov.vn/>.

Visas

Citizens from a limited number of countries are able to visit Vietnam visa-free, including: ASEAN countries, South Korea, Japan and Scandinavian countries. However, foreigners from most countries, including Canada, require a visa to enter Vietnam. There are two types of visas: (1) Single entry visa, valid for no more than 12 months; (2) Multiple entry visa, valid for no more than 12 months. Visas cannot be extended. When visas are about to expire, foreigners must apply for a new one. Foreigners entering Vietnam need to register their immigration purposes, time and address in Vietnam and have to act

according to the registered purposes. Any changes to any of the three elements have to be reported to the Immigration Department.

Temporary residents

Temporary residence certificates are issued at Vietnam's international border. A temporary residence certificate's time limit depends on the visa. Temporary residents must follow their registered purposes, time and address. Changes to any of these three elements have to be reported and registered with the Immigration Authorities.

Foreigners living in Vietnam for more than one year can apply for *Temporary Residence Cards*. Temporary Residence Cards are valid from one to three years. Foreigners carrying Temporary Residence Cards are exempted from visas for travel from and to Vietnam.

Permanent residents

Foreigners living in Vietnam can apply for permanent residence if they are fighters for freedom and the nation's independence, socialism, democracy and peace or contribute to scientific cause; they contribute to the cause of development and protection of Vietnam; they are wife, husband, child, mother, father of a Vietnamese residing permanently in Vietnam.

Permanent residence cards will be issued. Permanent residents have to present themselves to the Immigration Authorities once every three years and have their cards renewed.

Visa exemption for foreigners who have Vietnamese origins

In recent years, the Government of Vietnam has implemented a series of laws to ease travel and residency restrictions on foreigners with Vietnamese origins, including second-generation Vietnamese Canadians. Vietnam's Regulation on visa exemption for overseas Vietnamese was signed on August 17, 2007 and went into effect on September 1, 2007.

People who have Vietnamese citizenship or people with Vietnamese origins carrying foreign passports along with their spouses and children may be subject to the exemption of entry visa to Vietnam. A *visa exemption paper* is valid for a maximum of five years. It can be used for multiple entries, each time for no more than 90 days. It is to be used along with a foreign passport.

Overseas Vietnamese can apply for visa exemption papers at Vietnam's diplomatic representative offices abroad. To prove their Vietnamese origins, they need to present at least one of the following three papers:

- 1) A paper to show they are Vietnamese living overseas according to Vietnamese laws or international conventions to which Vietnam is a party, or papers issued before which can be used to deduce their Vietnamese origins; or

- 2) A guarantee of an Association of Vietnamese living in the foreign country where the applicant is living, or a guarantee of a Vietnamese citizen that the applicant is Vietnamese living overseas; or
- 3) A paper issued by a legal body of a foreign country certifying they are of Vietnamese origins.

Wife, husband or children of Overseas Vietnamese applying for a visa exemption paper needs to present papers proving the relationship.

Information and forms are available in Vietnamese and English at the website of Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://mienthithucvk.mofa.gov.vn>.

Work permit in Vietnam

According to Vietnamese law, foreigners working in Vietnam need to have a work permit which allows them to have a work visa. The Vietnamese Government has recently reinforced this legislation and become firmer with the applications and extensions of business visas. In order to get a work permit, one needs to have a work contract (for more than three months), and a university degree, higher degree, professional skills certificate or five year experiences working in the same area. Employer's support is also essential since there are many papers involved.

Detailed information is available at <http://www.business.gov.vn/licensedetail.aspx?id=1440&LangType=1033>.

Citizenship

A new Vietnam Citizenship Law was ratified by the Vietnam National Assembly on November 13, 2008 and went into effect on July 1, 2009, replacing the old version of May 20, 1998.

Citizenship by birth

Children born inside or outside of Vietnam may be granted Vietnamese citizenship if:

- Both parents are Vietnamese.
- One of the parents is Vietnamese and the other is stateless, or if mother is Vietnamese and father is unknown.

Children of a Vietnamese and a foreigner are eligible for Vietnamese citizenship if there is a written agreement between the parents on the choice of citizenship for their child at the time of registration.

Becoming a Naturalized Vietnamese citizen

Citizens of foreign nationalities and stateless people residing permanently in Vietnam may apply to be a Vietnamese citizen if they:

- a) have civil behaviour ability according to Vietnamese law;

- b) follow Vietnam's Constitution and laws; respect Vietnam's traditions, customs and practices;
- c) know enough Vietnamese to integrate into communities in Vietnam;
- d) have resided in Vietnam for more than five year at the time of application;
- e) have ability to make a living in Vietnam.

In certain circumstances, foreigners can apply for Vietnamese citizenship even if they have not met conditions c, d and e to be eligible for citizenship if they:

- a) are wife, husband, direct mother, direct father or direct children of Vietnamese citizens;
- b) contribute to the cause of development and protection of Vietnam;
- c) are to the advantage of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Dual citizenship

Dual citizenship is neither recognised nor banned in Vietnam. According to Vietnamese Citizenship Law, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam recognises Vietnamese citizens to have one citizenship which is Vietnamese, with some exceptions.

According to Vietnamese Citizenship Law, foreigners/Canadians applying for Vietnamese citizenship have to discontinue their foreign nationalities, unless there is an agreement of the State's President. This has been the case for certain sports persons who received their Vietnamese citizenship while not having to discontinue their American or African citizenship.

Although Vietnam does not recognize the foreign citizenship of person who apply for and receive Vietnamese citizenship, Canada may still retain the right to consider that person a Canadian citizens if they do not apply to discontinue their foreign/Canadian citizenship.

Overseas Vietnamese who have not lost their Vietnamese citizenship by Vietnamese law before the effective date of the Vietnam Citizenship Law (July 1, 2009) are still considered Vietnamese citizens. Within five year of the enactment of this law, citizens must register with the representative offices of Vietnam in foreign countries to maintain their Vietnamese citizenship. Otherwise their Vietnamese citizenship will be discontinued.

Vietnamese citizens will not automatically lose their Vietnamese citizenship when applying for foreign citizenship. Vietnamese citizenship will only be discontinued based on application.

The full 2008 Vietnam Citizenship Law is available in Vietnamese in this website: <http://vovnews.vn/Home/Luat-Quoc-tich-Viet-Nam/20092/105974.vov>

Ownership of real estate and/or housing in Vietnam

In Vietnam, land belongs to the state. People can own the right to use lands or own houses/apartments. The government has issued laws to allow Overseas Vietnamese and foreigners to buy houses in Vietnam (Law 34/2009/QH12, Decision 19/2008/QH12, Decree 31/2009/ND-CP).

Overseas Vietnamese can own real estate in Vietnam if they still have Vietnamese citizenship, or invest in Vietnam, or contribute to the country, or if they are scientists, cultural activists or those who have special skills required by Vietnamese organizations and are working in Vietnam. Other Overseas Vietnamese can own one house or an apartment if they are granted visa exemption card by relevant agencies and are allowed to reside in Vietnam for more than three months.

There are five groups of foreigners who can buy a house or an apartment in Vietnam: investors, businessmen whose business is operating in Vietnam, those who contribute to the country, those who are working in Vietnam and those who marry Vietnamese.

Taxation

Canada and Vietnam signed an agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income on November 14, 1997 which entered into effect as of January 1, 1999.

D. Interviews of Canadians in Vietnam

Interviews with Canadians residing in Vietnam indicate a general high level of satisfaction with their quality of life in Vietnam. The challenges pointed out by certain Canadian-born Vietnamese were not necessarily Canadian-specific, but conditions that also affected other foreigners and the Vietnamese population more generally. Those concerns included pollution, corruption, language difficulties, opaque bureaucracy, petty theft and traffic safety concerns. However, there were several concerns relevant to Canadian public policy toward Canadians abroad that were raised including: the implications of Bill C-37; limited Canadian public diplomacy by Canada in Vietnam and vice versa; limited means and funds to connect and strengthen the Canadian community in Vietnam.

There were some Canadians who expressed serious concerns about the implication of Bill-C37 retrenching the rights of their children's children to receive citizenship if they are not born in Canada. Some noted that despite their 'physical' separation from Canada, they still identified strongly as Canadians and were keen to pass along their Canadian heritage to future generations; however, they did not feel that was possible with the recent citizenship law amendments. Some reinforced the fact that they felt 'more Canadian' in Vietnam than they did back home; therefore, they did not feel that this amendment recognized the contribution and kinship of Canadians living abroad.

Many Canadians, particularly business entrepreneurs, expressed a sense of frustration about the limited information and knowledge within Canada on the abundant economic and political changes taking place in Vietnam. Many believed that Canadians were

missing out and outdated perceptions of Vietnam as a war-torn country or as an impoverished totalitarian country left many Canadian businesses and people out of touch with the rapid developments proceeding in the country; consequently leading many to miss the the substantial opportunities for partnerships and investments to be made with Vietnam. Many interviewees believed that Canada carried a positive image in Vietnam, but Canadian businesses, educational institutions and public institutions remained slow or reluctant to act on this goodwill and positive reputation. While Canada has identified Vietnam as among one of its emerging markets, they argued more remains to be done to create a strong Canadian business foundation and brand, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses, hoping to enter Vietnam. Some have lamented of the lack of a major trade mission with high-level ministers from the Canadian government, which they argue play an important symbolic role in getting Canada on the political, public and business radar.

As Vietnam becomes more competitive and develops a stronger commercial angle, some interviewees mentioned the need for Canada to develop a more robust public diplomacy effort to place Canada on the mental map of Vietnamese, but also Vietnam on the map of Canadians. While a small number of Canadians participate actively in the activities and events of the Embassy of Canada in Hanoi and the Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, others argue that Canadian visibility remains limited and that they remain disconnected from Canadian activities and events. Some have argued to move beyond a simple contact database and to develop a smart and interactive database/social website to stay connected to major Canadian events, as well as connect with other Canadians. In conjunction, some Canadians mentioned the opportunity to bridge the Vietnamese-origin and non-Vietnamese origin Canadians in a more solid manner to solidify Canadian presence, exchange knowledge and support investment and development initiatives in the market.

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Annex 1

Interviews took place between August 10 and August 21, 2009 in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with the following individuals in Vietnam and Canada:

Marie-France Bédanger
Gilles Boutin
Denis Bissonnette
Jim Delaney
Andre Dorr
Michael Emblem
Justin Fong
Allan Giercke
Brian Hall
Tib Hoang
Sami Kteily
Don Lam
Nguyen Huu Le
Alexandre Legendre
Linda Mogul
Quang Nguyen
Paula Neron
Brian Ring
Joe Ruelle
Phan Van Thanh
Bonnie Thibodeau
Joe Ton
Huyen Huu Tue
David Wong
Patrick Wolfe