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Country Report

Lao People's Democratic Republic*

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Country Report

The Study Programmer for the Senior Social Welfare Administration (JFY 2007)
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INTRODUCTION

1. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a landlocked country, situated in the heart of Southeast Asia with a total area of 236,800 square kilometres, and bordered by China, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. Most of the area is covered with plateau and forests with the Mekong River of 4,000 km long running through the country consisting of four major cities namely Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Champasak and Savannakhet. Laos has a tropical climate with two seasons, rainy season and dry season, starting from May to September and October to April respectively.

The total population of the Lao PDR is 5,609 997 million people (2005 Census) of which 45% are under 15 years old, with an annual population growth rate of 2,8%, the highest rate in Southeast Asia. Life expectancy of women is 57 and 55 for men. Population density is one person per 23 square metres. There are 47 minority tribes, which are divided into 3 major ethnic groups, 55% is Lao Loum (lowland Lao), 27% is Lao Soung (highland Lao) and 18% is Lao Theung (midland Lao). Most of the population are Buddhist and Lao is the official language.

For Lao P.D.R, 2000 year, the Lao population have increased 5.1 million cover 5.10% of the 60 plus Ageing 2005 year, Lao population will be 5.609 997 million and Ageing will cover 5.26 % 2010 year, Lao population will be 6 million and the Ageing cover 5.44 %

Lao PDR is one of the least developed country in this regional and in the world, though its social – economic development in order to catch up the others friendly country in the world, the Party and government of Lao PDR, always pays close attention and care to the live and health of the Lao people of all ethnic minorities and at the same time there is the humanity policy to service

Therefore, according to the above situation, it is necessary for us to sit up suitable policy, programme and priorities systematically with appropriate activities to solve any problems which may occur with both negative and positive impacts to the society and the Ageing in the future.

SOCIAL SERVICES

BENEFITS FOR THE DISABLED, HANDICAPPED AND ELDERLY.

The government of the Lao PDR has focused on creating benefits for the disabled and handicapped in order to enable them to proudly live their lives in the society.

2. Special benefits such as free implantation of prostheses, a benefit for building a house, an allocated piece of land for family economic development have been provided for the special categorized disabled persons, aimed at reducing poverty gradually. In addition, these persons are regularly given a salary and invalidity benefit including the provision of a job for earning their incomes. In 2002-2003, there are about 18,004 disabled persons, 842 of whom are female; 228 are special categorized disabled persons with lost-working capacity from 81% to 100%; and the rest 17,7 are those with lost-working capacity from 41% to 80%.

3. There are now 65,000 handicapped persons. In 2002-2003, the government set guidelines with a view to better care for and improve their living condition as well as encourage and promote their participation in all socio-economic development activities like other people in the society. Here are some concerned documents and actions taken by the Lao government as follows:

1). The Government adopted and signed the Declaration on Full Participation and Equality of the Disabled in Asia-Pacific, on 14 December 1995, in Beijing;

2). Decree No. 18/PM, dated 27 January 1995, on the Establishment of National Commission for the Handicapped;

3). The government officially set up the Lao National Association of the Handicapped from the central to grass root levels, on 12 July 2001.

4). The government laid out an open policy on the cooperation with international organisations with a view to seize physical assistance such as equipments for the work of Lao handicapped, and allows Lao handicapped to participate in activities of international handicapped organisations.

BENEFITS FOR PENSIONERS AND STATE EMPLOYEES

4. In the past, the government of the Lao PDR issued a number of documents on benefits for the elderly, pensioners and civil servants and has unanimously and consistently implemented them throughout the country, such as Decree No. 194/PM and Decree No. 71/PM on providing a vehicle for those people who performed useful tasks and made great contributions to the nation. A benefit of accommodation both permanently and temporarily is also offered by transferring state-owned houses in which officials have lived over the past years on to their ownership, building new houses as organised village in a proper location and handing over the ownership to officials.

5. The government established the National Committee on the Elderly in 2001. The Committee has basically drafted the national policy on the elderly and a committee at the local level has been set up in 16 provinces and Vientiane City. Over the past years, the government in collaboration with the international organisation for the elderly in Asia-Pacific region has launched a pilot project on the home care at the Xaythany District, Vientiane City and pilot project to development of quality of life of the elderly in Phonhong and Viengkham Districts, Vientiane Province. Activities of such project are weaving, basketry, cultivation and livestock.

Through the evaluation for a certain period, it is seen that achievements have been made to some extent. The elderly have also received free health care services in each locality from the central to local levels, especially on the occasion of celebrating the Elderly Day on the 1st of October every years.

The government has adopted the National Policy for the Elderly and implement its. The aims is to:

- Encourage elderly to participate in socio-development.
- Improve family's condition in order to provide care and home care for the elderly both physical and psychology.

- Educate people in advance what will they face when they are become older.
- .To support and promote health care and lively planning for the elderly make Them healthy and happy live.

- Encourage families, society and new generation understand the elderly 's roles and how important are they. The National Policy focus on advocacy the societies, communities, government agencies and international organisations to participate in assisting the elderly.

6. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has set up and regularly developed the social security system in conjunction with the Party guidelines and policy as well as the real situation of the country.

The Ministry has deducted income tax of officials of line ministries, equivalent organizations, provinces and other government agencies, and has implemented a policy on Providing medical care and health examination benefit, childbirth benefit, maternity benefit and others for the government officials. The Ministry has also implemented the social security system for enterprise employees in order to ensure rights and benefits of employees and employers. The enterprise employees have been registered and 19,606 employees of 105 business units within Vientiane City have already registered to the system. Contributions for their insurance in a contracting manner have been paid to hospitals and administration.

PUBLIC HEALTH

7. Over the past ten years, the public health care system has been satisfactorily improved and developed, thus upgrading the health status of Lao people. However, there are diseases that threatening Lao people's health such as infectious diseases, malaria, diarrhea, tuberculosis, dengue fever, HIV/AIDS and others. Besides that there are non-spreading diseases such as drug addiction, cancer, diabetes, mental illness, road accident and others. Uncontrollable health problems and high infant mortality rate caused by poor health services are current challenges facing us.

Future plan

- The strategic plan for solving the disadvantages person and children in need special protection children, elderly, disabled .

- The national plan of action on combating commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking in women and children.
- To promote independent living of older persons within their own capabilities well as ageing in one's place as long as possible.
- Hold training workshops for the organization staff on the philosophy and approaches of home and community care.
- Develop and manage innovative, culturally appropriate, cost effective, sustainable and repentant older people.
- Produce training manuals, resource materials/tool kits etc. on home care and community care.
- Report the national policy of older people of Lao PDR to the staff official and increate the project development quality of older people to any local.
- Develop a national action plan on ageing year 2006 – 2008.
- Share/Exchange information, technician, lesson learned and experience from ASEAN Country ASEAN + 3 and other Country.

Thank you

