Development of Human Resources and Implication of Aging Societies.

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OVERVIEW OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LAO P.D.R)

The Lao P.D.R has a land area of 236,800 square kilometers and a population of 5,2 millions. It is a landlocked country bordered by 5 countries, China to the North, Myanmar to the North-West, Cambodia to the South, Vietnam to the East and Thailand to the West.

About two thirds of the country is mountainous which creates transportation difficulties while at the same time producing many rivers and vast hydro-power potential. Lao P.D.R is a tropical country, whose climate is affected by monsoon rains from May to December alternating with a dry season from October to April.

The mountain and plateau districts are home to the 68 minority ethnic groups.
The government divides the Laotians into 3 ethnic groups: the LAOLOUM, who occupy the lowland plains and the Mekong river valley and constitute some two-third of the total population; the LAOKANG (LAOTHEUNG), who occupy the high mountain slopes, comprise about 22 percent of the population and the LAOSOUNG, who occupy the high mountain tops over 1,000 meters and constitute about ten percent of the total population.

In 1991 a new constitution was adopted ,which separated the legislative ,executive and judicial powers and provided a legal framework for a market based economic system. The constitution makes reference to social protection referring to public health services, medical services for the private sector, protection for war invalids, families of those who gave their life for the country, families of distinguished persons retired civil servants, arm-forces and polices . It also refers to the rights of workers to receive assistance in the event of loss of capacity to work because of invalidity or old age.

The Ministry of Labor and social welfare was created in 1993,from the transfer of some existing departments from the other Ministries, and the creation of other departments, including the Department of social security, which is responsible for the payment of pensions and benefits, and the department of the pensions, which is responsible for the determining the rate of pension, and issuing a pension approval notice and identify card.

Lao P.D.R is one of the least developed nations. In 1994 it ranked 133 out of 173 countries in the UNDP Human Development Index, with a per capita GDP around US$ 350 in the year 2002.

Health:
-Life expectancy at birth: 51.7 years
-Infant mortality rate :93/1,000

-Under weight children under 5 : 40%
-Maternal mortality rate :650/100,000 live rate
-Access to safe drinking water : 44%
-Access to sanitation facilities : 18%
-Population per mid-level medical professional : 1.501 persons
-Population per hospital bed : 640 persons

Education:

-Adult literacy rate : 57%
  -Female : 43%
  -Male : 67%
-Net school enrollment:
  -Primary : 786,300
  -Secondary : 113,900
  -Tertiary : 46,300

Population:

Number of population
By age and sex(2000)

(unit:person)

YEAR	Female	Male	Total
0-14	1,123,704	1,176,333	2,300,037
15-59	1,303,348	1,278,121	2,581,469
>60	154,746	146,285	301,031
Total	2,581,798	2,600,739	5,182,537

The number of age people of Lao P.D.R. in the year 2000 is about 301,031 persons including pensioners worked for the government .

The situation of the elderly people in Lao P.D.R.

-Usually the Lao elderly people lives with their relatives at home . In 1990 the Ministry of health was set up a special committee taking care for the old poor people and reserved 10 beds for them at MAHOSOT Hospital in VIENTIANE Capital, at the some time some provinces was build the fund.

-In 25/07/2001, the Lao government was set up the National Committee for Elderly (NCE).
-The purposes of the construction of the NEC are:
  -To extent the government's policies to the elderly people ;
  -To et up the plan and gathering data information of the elderly people;
  -To protect and assist the elderly people by aging and promoting both state and private sectors, the communities and also the families in contributing better assist and take care of these people.

The NCE is under the responsibility of the Ministry of labor and social welfare and it have Involved organizations such as Lao Women Union, National Construction and Edification Committee ,and Ministry of Health.

The NCE have the secretariat office in the department of policy , pension and old Age in the central level.
For the provincial level the Labor and social welfare Department are the focal points .

The cooperation between NGOs and International organizations.

-Help Age International(HAI) Canada;
-Help Age of Thailand;
-Humanitarian organization Asian Countries;
-Others.

Some figures of the disease of the elderly people.

For the women:
-Dorsarthose;
-Rheumatism;
-Paralysie;
-Diabete;
-Hypertension arterial;
-Palpitation;
-Acouphenes;

Social welfare and health services of the elderly.

-Pensioners worked with the government organization receive the pension at the department of social security in the central level and at the provincial social security division in the local level. They get also the benefits such as : health care benefit, child allowance .invalidity, and funeral benefits.
-The old poor people get the health care benefit with the hospitals ,on presentation of a certificate from the chief of the village showing they are entitled to the treatment because they are poor.

Collaboration between the ministry of labor and social welfare and the ministry of health:

To look after the health care services of the pensioners ,the department of social security ,ministry of labor and social welfare work closely with the state hospitals in all provinces.