

Healthy and active aging towards an inclusive society in Lao PDR

(Building Age Friendly Communities)

Presented by

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The overview of Lao P.D.R

- 1. Lao PDR is a landlocked country,**
- 2. Total of land area 236,800 kilometres square,**
- 3. Lao population is 6,492,228 million, women 3,237,458 million**
- 4. Labour force is about 3,6 million**
- 5. Aging population is 422,276 peoples,**
- 6. older person with disability is 28,958**
- 7. Life expectancy 65 years,**
- 8. women live longer than men, life expectancy is 67 years**

Legislation for action on health and welfare

1. Law on health treatment
2. Law on hygiene education
3. Law on social security
4. Social Welfare Strategy 2011-2020 .
5. Decree on social welfare
6. Decree on older persons
7. Decree on Community based health insurance
8. Decree No 156/PM on the Approval and Declaration of Application of the National Policy towards the Elderly in the Laos PDR.
9. Decree No 238 / PM on Association and foundation
10. National social protection plan

Mechanism for action

1. National Committee for Elderly was established in 2005 with The Deputy Prime Minister as President.
2. 17 Provincial committees and district for elderly also were established .
3. Elder people association
4. Set up groups of elderly friendly at the villages

Some good practices

Following up our national strategy plan

We have promoted health care for older peoples by providing facilities to do exercise consistently, regularly in proper and safe circumstances, advising them to reduce smoking, drinking, avoiding gambling and not to harm their physical and mental wellbeing.

In health treatment we have also promoted first aid at home and then communities or family members can take them to the nearest hospital when necessary. We have also provided hygiene education to older persons in the community for the prevention of disease and promoted free yearly physical checks and training volunteers for providing services to those who are in need of assistance in case of illness.

There has also been promoted income generation programs for older people to get more income for supporting their families by employment promotion for older people doing light work according to their capacity and requirements.

Some good practices

We have established groups for handicrafts involving the weaving of textiles, making Laos skirts and animal raising at the village communities where one help another in a friendly ways.

Program on livelihood improvement

We have set up savings funds in the villages by contribution in order to give credit to those who want to run small businesses at home. With lower interest rates this fund is also used for welfare when elder persons have a problems with their health. We found that this activity has improved the lives of older people greatly.

At the local communities and villages, the older people have an important role in leading the traditional practices including Buddhist religious events, wedding ceremony, festivals or new house celebration as well as being role model for and educating the teenagers in the communities.

Some good practices

- The Celebration on international day for older peoples is held annually with more than 2 000 older peoples participation;
- Many activities were introduced to elder persons such as Providing health care education, health checking free and walking for health, singing and dancing

Key challenges for action on ageing

1. Lack of comprehensive legislation on aging such as law,
2. The mechanism to promote elder people at the district and villages have not yet been established in all villages
3. The community base insurance system has not yet been established in all provinces and districts.
4. The facilities to promote older people to do exercises are not sufficient, especially in remote areas.
5. Awareness raising about hygiene education and disease prevention in societies is not yet enough and widely
6. Social workers as well as volunteers are insufficient to provide services for elder persons in case they need an assistance

key challenges

7. The knowledge and experience staffs who work and deal with these issues is insufficient, especially at the provincial and district level
8. Financial support to implement these activities is also insufficient when compare with the need of development for older peoples.

The way forward

1. Review national policy on elderly, create decree on elderly
2. Continue to extend or establish the mechanism to promote elderly people at the district and village level.
3. Continue to extend the social security system including of community base insurance into the provinces and districts that have not been yet established.
4. Continue to provide facilities to promote older people to do exercises, especially in community of the remote areas
5. Continue to up hold awareness raising on hygiene education and disease prevention to societies where it does not presently exist.
6. Train more volunteers as well as social workers to provide services for elder persons

The way forward

6. Up grade the knowledge and experience of staff who work in this field at all levels and to implement the action plan on aging.
7. Within financial constraints, provide a budget to implement the activities relating to older people.
8. Promote a caring society to the public and private sector and seek their involvement in the implementation of programs which enhance the role and function of older persons within society. This includes encouraging families have to pay more attention to older persons in health care and social services.