

# Disability Monograph of Lao PDR

From the 2015 Population and Housing  
Census



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## Foreword

Persons with disabilities are those people who have difficulty with seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care and communication. This definition is derived from the Short Set of 6 questions set by the Washington Group for data collection on census. Collecting data on persons with disabilities provides the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) with information on planning services for them.

By having statistics on persons with disabilities, it enables GoL to find the disparities between the situation of persons with and without disabilities. Whether persons with disabilities have equal access to education, health care, livelihoods, use of natural resources and being part of the communities.

Additionally having statistics on persons with disability enables GoL to address the issue of equity and equality. It also supports further research on the situation of persons with disabilities and how to address the challenges faced by them.

The main purpose of this Disability Monograph is to sensitise the society in Lao PDR about the situation of persons with disabilities. Statistics on persons with disabilities in particular is very useful for policy makers and planners in changing attitudes towards persons with disabilities as well as in developing equitable services for them.

The Lao Statistics Bureau, a department in the Ministry of Planning and Investment have published this Disability Monograph, whose data source is the fourth Lao Population and Housing Census conducted in 2015. The data will support any future Disability Inclusive Development in Lao PDR. We hope to continue to improve the quality standards of our data collection on persons with disabilities so that it we can also plan to provide good quality support services.

On behalf of the Lao Statistics Bureau and the Ministry of Planning and Investment, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all those of you who participated and contributed to this Disability Monograph and in particular to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for financial support, to Humanity and Inclusion for their technical support and to UNFPA for financial support on report printing and dissemination meeting.

Head of Lao Statistics Bureau



## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>CCM</b>	Convention on Cluster Munitions
<b>CDPED</b>	Committee for Disabled People and the Elderly at District level
<b>CDPEP</b>	Committee for Disabled People and the Elderly at Provincial level
<b>DPO</b>	Disabled People's Organisation
<b>ESCAP</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
<b>HI</b>	Humanity & Inclusion (formerly Handicap International)
<b>ICF</b>	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>LCES</b>	Lao Consumption and Expenditure Survey
<b>LSB</b>	Laos Statistics Bureau
<b>MoES</b>	Ministry of Education and Sports
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoLSW</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
<b>NCDE</b>	National Committee for Disabled People and Elderly
<b>NRA</b>	National Regulatory Authority
<b>PDR</b>	People's Democratic Republic
<b>PHC</b>	Population and Housing Census
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNCRPD</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UXO</b>	Unexploded Ordinances
<b>WG</b>	Washington Group on Disability Statistics
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>WHS</b>	World Health Survey

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## Executive summary

**Context.** Government of Lao PDR ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on 25th September 2009, which spells out the human rights of persons with disabilities across sectors. Several strategies, policies and action plans targeting persons with disabilities - one of the most deprived group - were consequently adopted over the past years in Lao PDR. Until 2015, little information about persons with disabilities in Laos was available as very few national studies had been conducted. Accurate disability data are nevertheless crucial to inform policy-making by government agencies, to plan needs-based programmes targeting persons with disabilities. In line with Article 31 ('Statistics and data collection') of the UNCRPD, calling the States Parties to collect disaggregated statistical data about persons with disabilities and use them to implement the UNCRPD provisions in their jurisdiction, nationally representative disability data was collected through the 2015 PHC. This Disability Monograph aims to provide national and local stakeholders with disaggregated disability data, but also tabulations comparing persons with and without disabilities on key social and economic characteristics.

**The 2015 Population and Housing Census.** This report used data from the 4th decennial Population and Housing Census (PHC) carried out in March 2015. Data collection for the 2015 PHC used for the first time the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability, which are recognized as an international good-practice for disability measurement in censuses and population surveys. The Short Set of Questions query respondents on whether they face difficulty in six core functional domains – seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care and communication. Persons indicating a difficulty in at least one domain were considered as having a disability in this report.

Key findings of the 2015 PHC revealed the following:

**Disability prevalence.** In total, 160,881 people (among population aged 5+) were found to have a disability and the overall prevalence of disabilities was 2.77 percent in Lao PDR. Higher prevalence was found in difficulties related to seeing (1.35 percent) and walking or climbing stairs (1.3 percent), followed by hearing (1.23 percent) and remembering or concentrating (1.2 percent), self-care (1.1 percent) and communicating (0.95 percent). Mild difficulties accounted for 67.16 percent, moderate difficulties for 23.08 percent and severe difficulties for around 9.77 percent of persons with disabilities. 56.56 percent of persons with disability reported to have several difficulties, some of them being interrelated to other. In terms of gender, there were similar numbers of males (80,766) and females (80,115) with disabilities. The prevalence of disabilities was quite similar for males and females for all degrees of difficulty. The prevalence of disabilities strongly increased with age - in particular mild and moderate disabilities - under the effects of aging and the appearance of disabling and neurodegenerative diseases. There was a very important gap between the mean age of the general population and the population with disabilities, as the latter is on average almost twice older (54.29 years against 28.52). Disability prevalence was higher in poorest geographical areas (3.33 percent in rural areas without roads, 2.86 percent in rural areas with roads, 2.48 percent in urban areas). Disability prevalence was also different among the ethnic groups as it was much higher amongst Mon-Khmer (3.51 percent) than amongst Lao-Tai, Hmong-lewmien and Chinese-Tibetan (respectively 2.5, 2.79 and 2.85 percent, i.e lower than or close to the national prevalence rate).

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