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SOMBOUN KHANTIVONG: POPULATION POLICY OPTIONS
FOR LAO PDR. THESIS ADVISORS: KUSOL SOONTHORNDHADA, Ph.D.,
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The objectives of this study were to review the population situation and socio-economic development including the population plan in Lao PDR and to analyse policy options for solving problems before embarking on policy and program activities that reflect the national will.

The main concerns with regard to the population of Lao PDR are both quantity and quality in terms of the high proportion of young population, high fertility, high infant mortality and maternal mortality. The quality of population is a concern because health status and education are still low.

These problems will create a high demand for more housing and educational and health infrastructure, including more resources to improve it. This implies that population and development in Lao PDR are affected by each other.

Three options of population policy are suggested to assist the government in formulating and implementing policy including : Policy directly aimed at reducing maternal and infant morbidity and mortality by using birth spacing policy nation-wide; policy designed to limit fertility and to slow population growth by promoting family planning services and a smaller family size norm; policy indirectly influencing fertility by improving women's status, promoting three-child norms, using marriage law and reducing gender inequality.

However, before the government announces an explicit population policy, both quantitative and qualitative policy research should be applied for the improvement of population policy.