

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Way Forward

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Conclusion and Way Forward

In East and Southeast Asia, the proportion of older persons are increasing, and the number of older persons will double in 20 years from 2015 in most of the countries except Japan. The quickly increasing elderly population will necessarily create the demand for long-term care.

In 2015, 8.7 million older persons in East and Southeast Asia needed care. This number would nearly double in 2030, and triple in 2045. This care need might be difficult to be supplied by family members. The number of older persons who live alone has been increasing, especially in provinces with massive outmigration of young people.

The care industry has been growing in the region and the workforce is increasing substantially. However, compared to the health sector, the social work sector is still underdeveloped. In Japan and the Republic of Korea, since the start of the public long-term care insurance system in 2000 and 2008, respectively, the increase of long-term care workforce is apparent, although the numbers are always considered in shortage. For China and Southeast Asia, the workforce engaged in the social work sector is increasing but in absolute shortage. The role of domestic workers is limited in Japan and the Republic of Korea, but they will certainly play a role in China and Southeast Asia in the future. The O2O business model⁴ has developed rapidly in China and is already offering a considerable amount of long-term care services. To cope with the sharp increase of care demand in the region, systems providing quality service should be created using new technology.

The stigma for long-term care facilities might not be persistent in the face of surging demand. In some countries, hospitals provide long-term care; in others, social welfare facilities might evolve to cope with the care demand of older persons.

Data comparison among countries would shed light on the existing challenges. Rapid increase of care need, which might be aggravated by the increased number of lone-living older persons in rural areas, should be addressed with a system providing long-term care, which would need quality care workers, appropriate care facilities or other means. Policy dialogues within the region should be encouraged.

⁴ Online to Offline, provision of domestic work through mobile phone and Internet.

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