

Participants make a village map.



Participants identify key barriers to wholeness.



“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another (John 13:34).”

Aimee returned to Ratanakiri province with Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation Director, Kanhchana, and fellow LCMS missionary, Gena Nelson. The goal was to equip a volunteer local committee (created at the last training) to be facilitators of Christ-centered community development in Davyleng village. Since Gena attended the Community Health Evangelism (CHE) training last Fall, it was a good opportunity for her to see it in action. The two-day training started with a question: what does it mean to be well? Through participatory discussion, the group defined wellness as physical, spiritual, and relational wholeness. Next, participants listed out barriers to holistic well-being, including malnutrition, lack of unity, lack of knowledge of good health, poor hygiene, domestic abuse, and alcoholism. Using leaves from the village, each person voted on the issues they felt were most significant (see pic above right). Alcohol abuse was deemed to be the most pressing issue. In response, we discussed the connection between belief, behavior, and consequences. Following much discussion and deep thought, participants could see the impact of sin in their lives and that of people in the village. Aimee shared that through faith in Christ, we are freed from sin and have been transformed and made new. The foundational message of CHE is that true wholeness is found in Jesus and we serve others in response to God’s grace. In order to understand the community more clearly, we also facilitated a village mapping activity (see pic above left). Using a large, white paper, participants drew houses, the school, sources of water, noted which families had small businesses, where children play, and even where the man with leprosy lives (outside of the village). Later this year, we plan to return a few more times, providing further training to the local committee to address the community’s felt needs, and proclaiming God’s Word. By training these 6 volunteers and the local pastor, our goal is to equip God’s people to reach out to their community in mercy to facilitate transformational community development.

Praises: for a wonderful Holy Week at our local church; for J.P and Aimee’s separate recent trips to Hanoi.
Prayers: for an upcoming family retreat at the end of the month for two congregations of the CLC; for Aimee’s planning for a CHE conference in June; for the Khmer New Year, the most important holiday of the year, in mid-April; for Celeste’s preparations to take the SATs; for Celeste’s planning to take a summer job in the US.

Square Two
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