



CRWRC

CHRISTIAN REFORMED
WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

Living Justice, Loving Mercy



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Phonsavan, Xiengkhouang Province, Laos

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Prayer:

-Many people have been praying for our five year permission from the government. We are grateful it has been approved. Praise God!

-Five children died of diarrhea recently in one village where we work. Pray for swift action by the village and health workers to stop this outbreak.

-Pray for safety and stamina for CRWRC staff as we begin working in remote villages.

-Pray for good cooperation with new villages.

Permission for Five Years

We are pleased to announce that the government has approved our permission to work in this province for five more years! On Friday, May 8, we held a signing ceremony at a hotel with over fifty guests from the government.

In his speech, Mike Fennema (CRWRC Country Director) addressed some of the lessons we've learned from the twenty communities where we work. For example, women are more interested in adult literacy classes when they learn that everyone has a right to an education. As a result, women have begun to participate in the village development committees to have a voice in their village's development.

In addition to continuing work in the current 20 villages, we have also selected ten new villages to partner with for the next five years. These villages are located in one of the most remote areas of the Xiengkhouang province: beyond the reach of roads, over a wide river with no bridge, and many hours from the nearest hospital. When we first started working in the original 20 villages five years ago, many people were skeptical that it would even be possible to work in such remote places. A Lao proverb says that if you like the easy

way things will be difficult, but if you like the hard way you will see good results (Mak gnaai dai nyaak, mak lambaak dai dii - ມັກງ່າຍໄດ້ຍາກ ມັກລຳບາກໄດ້ດີ).

While it may be difficult at first, we hope that in five years we will see these new communities transformed by their cooperation and effort.

Improving Children's Health

Last year when we evaluated the CRWRC Xiengkhouang project, we realized that the health of mothers and young children hasn't improved much. As result, we decided to focus our health program on mothers and children specifically. In February we spent time getting accurate data on children's weight and height. We interviewed mothers with children under two years in every village to learn about vaccination rates, nutrition, and other key knowledge, attitudes, and practices.



Most mothers we interviewed don't have any trained medical care before, during, or after delivery. Traditional practices during pregnancy are mixed, with some positive ones like good rest and nutrition for the mothers right after delivery, and some negative ones like the fact that few children are fed well after they stop drinking breast milk. Consequently, 28% of children are underweight for their age and 64% suffer from stunted growth from malnutrition.

Nancy Tenbroek, a CRWRC expert in mother and child health in Bangladesh, visited our project for two weeks to train health workers and help us create an effective health plan. Her visit inspired and equipped us to improve the health of mothers and children Xiengkhouang.

Isaiah 65:17-25 paints a picture of God's kingdom in which "there will no longer be an infant who lives for only a few days or an old man who doesn't live a long life." (GWT) This is why we do what we do. This is our hope and prayer for the people of Laos.

Thank you for your support and prayers!

James and Sarah