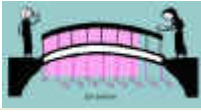


## WE HAVE BEGUN!

June 2006



Thank you everybody, for all your financial support, especially the Swift family (stay tuned for more about their very generous donation). As you can see by the bridge graph we are ALMOST there!



Before we could start construction the villagers and bridge builder held a small Buddhist blessing ceremony at the site. Prasat Char village is renowned for having very traditional beliefs.



The first job was to build a shelter where the materials are stored and where the bridge builder and his two offsiders sleep.



The reinforcing iron arrives.



Preparing the foundations. Everything is done by hand. No concrete mixers out here.



The formwork goes up for the supporting columns. We've been very impressed with the "professional" job the bridge builder is doing.



The columns are poured. Fortunately, there is virtually no water at the moment and with luck we will be finished before the wet season comes when most of this area will be covered in water.



Pay day. It was a very rewarding feeling paying cash to the villagers for their hard work. We've tried to employ the poorest families to work on the bridge.



Some enterprising villagers have opened a small shop near the construction site and business is booming.



This little girl is already benefiting from the new bridge - her parents are the ones who have opened the shop. On the first pay day they made US\$20.00, which is a small fortune here.



The reinforcing for the retaining wall.



The concrete is mixed by hand then carried bucket by bucket.



Bucket by bucket the formwork is filled up with concrete.



The retaining wall is taking shape.



More materials arriving.



Mixing concrete in bare feet. It didn't occur to us that the villagers had no shoes that would be suitable for this kind of work.



A trip to the market fixed that problem. Ten pairs of rubber boots and some gloves for US\$10.00.



The women (with their new gloves) work just as hard as the men on the construction sites.



Sowana, our "human resource manager" and my Cambodian sister. We really rely on her help.