

GUESS WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW?.....WE'RE BUILDING A SCHOOL/COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE!

Its very exciting - we've decided to construct our own building at the village which is going to be used as an English school and a Community Education Centre.

- We have been given *free use of a piece of public land*, with approval from the village and commune authorities.
- We have one of the villagers lined up to be our first English teacher, he has been living in a pagoda with the monks in order to study English. He is extremely keen and went from house to house collecting donations to buy a light and a battery and along the way also collected the names of *more than 100 children who want to attend* our school. Remembering how poor the people are, the fact that *they willingly donated money to buy the light* shows us that they are also extremely keen on the idea.
- We have *already started construction*. (See photos below.) I expect it will cost us about \$3,000 USD and, of course, I am happily taking donations to help build it. *Please :-)*
- Unlike the bridge, where we paid the villagers for their work, with the school we are asking the villagers to donate their time. They are happily doing this. The reason we want to do the work for free is because, like the bikes, *we want them to feel that this is THEIR centre and take pride in it.*
- To supplement the teaching we will now be able to take volunteers who will be able to come and help teach the kids English. (So if you were thinking of visiting we'd be happy to have you!)
- *I really believe that the way to break the poverty cycle is through education and income.*
- Accordingly, our Centre won't just be used to teach English. We are also going to use it to *teach the adults* all sorts of things such as:
 - why clean water is important,
 - adult literacy,
 - better agricultural practices,
 - better animal raising practices,
 - health and nutritional issues, etc.
- We will also use the centre to showcase such things as rain water collection, keeping water wells clean and hygienic, toilets, etc.

Donations

Building a school is much more of a long term commitment than anything else I've done so far. It means that we will need constant funds in order to pay a teacher, buy books and stationery and maintain the building. The cost is not excessive by any means, but it is ongoing so ANY donations, no matter how small are greatly appreciated.



It's a fact of life that if the children want to get a good job when they grow up then they MUST be able to speak English.



Clearing the land.
The villagers happily worked in the rain.



Even the children were happy to get in and help despite the atrocious conditions.



My good friends, Aline, from France, and Sowana.
Aline is one of our greatest supporters.



No heavy equipment here - just pure muscle.



There's a definite good "vibe" about the school.



They have to deal with many "creepy crawlies" while clearing the land.

This scorpion had the stinger on its tail removed.



Another child helping out.



This is me giving some of the children their first lesson. They are very enthusiastic and quick learners.



By the way.....
As you can see our bridge has a lot of water under it now.