



CARE Australia - Rotary International

Mekong Challenge

24 November - 6 December, 2006

Rotarians and friends are challenged to participate in a 12 day adventure tour through northern Laos in order to raise \$50,000 towards the cost of a desperately needed bridge on the River Hung, Sayaboury Province.

In this project Rotary would be supporting CARE Australia. This partnership would be in line with the quest of our Rotary International President, Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar, to have Rotary join with other major aid organisations to achieve greater goals.

The itinerary for this tour, conducted by **Intrepid Travel**, is summarised over the page. The total cost will be \$5,500.00 per person. (Each traveller pays \$3,500 for the tour itself, and then makes a tax deductible donation of \$2,000, or gathers this amount from private fundraising activities.)

The tour, for those with a youthful sense of adventure and an indestructible sense of humour, will provide an unforgettable and extraordinary experience.

If the challenge presented by this adventure project appeals to you, please reply on or before Wednesday 13th April 2006 and you will be advised of the location and time of the information session.

Following the information session, those choosing to make the trip will need to confirm their booking with a non-refundable part payment of \$500.00.

IF you wish to support the project but do not feel up to making the trip, you may wish to redirect \$1,000.00 of your charity donations to this fully tax deductible project.

Reply to: Rotary Club of Kew, PO Box 101, Kew, 3101, or to Don McKinnon, Phone 9855 1121, Fax 9855 1145, Email dmckinnon@netspace.net.au



This is
the site
for the
bridge.

Please turn over

Brief Project Description

This project seeks funding to assist in the construction of a bridge over the River Hung. The bridge will provide year-round vehicular access to the people living in Sayaboury Province, Laos, and enable the continuity and support of CARE's Poverty Alleviation in Remote Upland Areas (PARUA) project

The 12,000 Prai ethnic minority people who live in the area are virtually cut off from mainstream social, economic and linguistic life in Laos. The Prai people are an impoverished ethnic minority group who live in one of the most remote and inaccessible regions in Laos. Its location is preventing the full development of the province and the region. Accordingly the area has been designated a 'Special Zone' as it is one of the poorest, most remote regions in Laos. It comprises nineteen villages with 1,934 families.

The site for the bridge is at the village of Khone Phiet bordered by steep, forested mountains on all sides (including a border with Thailand). The only entry point to the Province is over the River Hung which is flooded for 3 – 4 months of the year and inaccessible to vehicular traffic.

The need

The bridge will provide for the first time, year round vehicular access to the Samet-Saysana Special Zone in Sayaboury Province.

Importantly the bridge will provide regular income to the Prai people from the toll. It will also open up new income opportunities and therefore reduce the likelihood of plundering of the natural resources of the area

The bridge will also provide the increased international access between Thailand and Laos, as the proposed site is only 50 km from the Thai Border.



Our Mekong Challenge Itinerary

Our thirteen-day challenge starts at Tullamarine on Friday 24 November 2006.

Via Bangkok we fly to the Laos border and travel by long boat down the mighty Mekong River.

Days 4 and 5 see us take on a 4WD adventure deep into the mountains to visit the bridge site on the River Hung.

Back on the river we travel to Luang Prabang, the very beautiful, World Heritage listed, old royal capital of Laos. The markets of Luang Prabang you will never forget!

We travel on through traditional villages and meet the very friendly people of this wonderful country as we go.

We pass through some of the most magnificent mountain scenery in the world as we make our way to spend Day 11 in Vientiane.

The overnight train takes us back to Bangkok.

Day 13 sees us back home.

Those of us who wish to extend their trip will have the opportunity to make special arrangements with **Intrepid Travel** well in advance of this challenge.