

# Trust In Education Newsletter

## DAM IT

Pictured below is a dam project currently under construction in



Lalander. In the Spring, the dam will prevent the snow run off from flooding land farmed by over 50 families. TIE was asked to pay the cost of rebar, concrete, wire and a "technician", who was paid \$300 to supervise construction. The word from the site is that they "won't need a technician next time:"

This was a perfect project to fund. It was their project, they did

the work, they learned new skills, the number of families impacted was large, and it cost \$1424, less than \$30 per family. This project was funded as part of a larger grant provided by the Los Altos rotary club. Thank you Los Altos Rotarians!

I learned very quickly that the best way to determine what villagers need is to ask them. At first they were surprised we asked. Now they listen carefully for the magic words, "put it on the wish list." Making it to the "wish list" is one step away from funding.

In developing the "wish list" we and they engage in a complicated cost/benefit/prioritization budgetary process that strives to allocate resources fairly. There are three buzz words used in evaluating humanitarian aid programs- transparency, accountability and verifiability.





The easiest way to achieve all three is to include the villagers in the process. It's also an excellent way to raise our approval rating.

We believe strongly in the bottom up approach to economic development. Top down, trickle down dollars often don't make it to the bottom and incur substantial overhead costs while working their way down. Whoever is engaged in

the war for hearts and minds would be well advised to apply more resources to the bottom rungs of the ladder. That's where the overwhelming majority of hearts and minds live.

I share what I've learned, only because readers are interested in more than factual reports. Besides, someday one of you may be President. Why not? The upcoming election is proof positive that the road to the Whitehouse is wide open.

***Matt Van Etten, a TIE volunteer, wades in to lend a hand or perhaps supervise. You be the judge.***



Enjoy tonight's debates and the weekend

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