

Wake up - the Lao Coffee Game - The council members

Description of the roles represented in the game

Vanhmani Keovilay- Farmer

Female farmer from Southern Laos

Vanhmani Keovilay owns a coffee garden, where she grows coffee for the household's income. Being a member of the local cooperative, she sells it part of her production. The rest, she sells to village middle buyers and sometimes also to the buyers of multinational companies. Her income from the sales of the coffee beans fluctuates quite a bit, because the coffee price is not stable and middle buyers' willingness to negotiate depends on the market conditions. Vanhmani Keovilay relies strongly on this income, however, her position in price negotiations is weak, since it is often the buyer who dictates the price. In this context, Vanhmani depends on a strong government and on the support of NGOs to strengthen her bargaining power.

A lot of the work in the coffee garden is still done manually, which makes the workflow slow and difficult. During high season, Vanhmani Keovilay thus needs additional labour force, so she hires both male and female wage workers to handle the workload. Apart from growing coffee, Vanhmani also produces vegetables on her 3 hectares of land and owns a few chickens to have enough resources. With agricultural production being her main livelihood pillar, Vanhmani relies on fertile soils, intact water circulation and decent climate conditions. In addition to her work on the farm, Vanhmani is responsible for the household and takes care of the children. Besides a good education for her children, Vanhmani's prospects for her future are to have a higher and more stable income and to have more support in domestic work, easing her overall work burden.

Main Interest: *Livelihood Outcomes*
Further interests: *Interconnectedness*
Health of Environment

Bounchanh Nanhthavong - Wage Worker

Male worker from Southern Laos

Bounchanh Nanhthavong has migrated from the neighbouring province to a village in the coffee producing region of southern Laos. Here, he works for large coffee farmers and the multinational company in their coffee garden on a daily basis, whenever labour is needed. The payment varies amongst the employers: private coffee farmers provide food and they pay higher wages than companies. However, as the payment is often based on the weight of picked cherries, working for multinational companies is more profitable, since there is more coffee to pick and therefore more money to earn in total.

Along with other migrant workers, Bounchanh Nanhthavong lives in a small compound at the outskirts of the village. They stay in huts they have built themselves, albeit without sanitation nor clean water. The food they eat has to be cheap and is often not nutritious – when it's provided by the employers, it is almost never enough. The employers provide Bounchanh with neither social security, nor a pension scheme or decent working conditions, and the payment of a minimum wage depends heavily on existing and firm governmental regulations. However, these regulations lack in many areas and even where regulatory mechanisms exist, they are often not implemented properly.

Even though Bounchanh works very hard, his income fluctuates strongly because it depends on the situation of the coffee market. He is worried that with his unstable income, he cannot provide for his family, even though his wife also works as a wage worker in the coffee sector. He misses his children a lot, who are staying in the hometown with their grandparents, and he only gets to see them after the high season is over and he returns home.

Main Interest: *Livelihood Outcomes*
Further interests: *Economic Attractivity*
Governance Capacities

Dora Schneider - Swiss Office for International Development in Laos

Female representative from Switzerland

For four years now, Dora Schneider is working for the Swiss Office for International Development (SOD). She studied international relations in Switzerland and moved to Laos a year ago. She likes living in Laos and really wants to make a difference in her position as a Swiss representative. Part of the Swiss Government, the Swiss Office for International Development, where Dora works, aims to contribute to food security and economic self-reliance of small-holder farmers. It further seeks to address environmental problems, tackle biodiversity loss, and strives to improve access to education and basic healthcare services.

As SOD representative in Laos, Dora Schneider's primary mission is to strengthen the cooperation and connection between Laos and Switzerland and to foster the implementation of the Agenda 2030. In Laos, the SOD Office runs various programmes that support small-holder farmers to diversify their products, to improve the sustainable use of agrobiodiversity, and to gain better access to agricultural land, forests, and means of production, as well as to markets, where they can sell their products. Furthermore, SOD supports Lao-Swiss research collaborations to gain a better understanding of how to best support the rural population in making a sustainable living. For her mission, Dora works closely with Swiss and Lao government offices. However, she is also interested in what NGOs and investors in the region have to say and where they need support.

Main Interest: *Interconnectedness*
Further interests: *Health of Environment*
Governance Capacities