

LOCAL / DISTRICT POLICYMAKER

Julio

Peru

I am originally from this district, though I did my schooling in the big city. I went to university in Lima. I have seen many changes in the past years and see the area continue to grow economically. The new mill has employed a lot of people, including my son. I'm proud to be representing this place since I know it well and care about its future.



PLANTATION OWNER

Franco

Brazil

I have a large plantation of *pupunha* (palm) in Brazil. The roads are still pretty bad to get to market but they're getting better. We use an improved variety of palm - got it from a research organization. The market prices shift so much it makes it hard to plan. People from around here are always at my door looking for work.

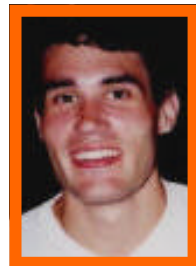


MINE WORKER

Paolo

Brazil

I'm from a nearby town but when the gold mining started I moved here right away to look for work. There aren't a lot of jobs and I have a family of 5 to feed (though we also have a small farm where we grow cassava). It's hard work but the pay is good. My family is glad that I'm young and hard-working and was hired by the company. The night life has improved around here since the mine opened.



INDIGENOUS PERSON

Pong

Thailand

I'm a Karen woman and my husband and I have a piece of land we grow food on. We don't have a lot of money so it's a hard life. We have children but they have moved to town. When we were little, that wasn't an option. When we get really sick, it's hard to get help but we have a good local healer.



FARMER

Robert
Cameroon

I am 44 years old. I live with my wife and three children next to the forests. We have a 3 ha farm of cassava and we also have some fruit trees in our yard. My oldest son left the farm last year to go to secondary school in the city. My two young daughters (14 and 16) don't study, there is so much work to do, especially now that this NGO has come with new ideas for our crops. They say they will make our crops pest resistant.



YOUNG PERSON

Sibillo
Peru

I am 22 and I am the youngest member of the family. I've worked with my parents since I was 10. I hate working on the farm. I would like to go to town and study, I want to be a teacher. I love story-telling and am starting a library in my village so other people can learn the joy of reading as well! I've just discovered the internet...



PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION

Petrus
Indonesia

I am the President of the Timber Producer's Association on a small island here. We are 50 members and their families in the association. Sometimes there is a lot of paper work and very little income for the members. We are not familiar with all the procedures that seem to change very often. I don't receive a salary and give the association my time for free.



WORLD BANK COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Peter
Indonesia

I am 56 and I am the World Bank country director for Indonesia. I have one son and one daughter, they study at the university in the USA. My wife passed away two years ago. I work for the eradication of poverty through loans. The focus areas in the country are governance and empowerment of local institutions. We are helping this country formalize and enforce the decentralization process.



MEMBER OF WOMEN'S GROUP

Jacinta

Thailand

I am the youngest member of the women's group in the watershed. I am single and the 5th daughter of my parents, I am the only one who has finished primary school, the rest of my brothers and sisters are out of the farm. They work in the city as maids and also sell fruit in the market. Sometimes I go visit them there.



NATIONAL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

Diogenes

Cameroon

I am 48 years old and the Director of the National Agricultural Research in Cameroon. We have one research station near the village of Akok. Our extension workers are doing well, but the budget got cut this year, making for some hard choices. Our vision for the tropical region of our country is to provide farmers with practical advice on uses for the resources they have.



PARK RANGER

John

Philippines

I am 35 and have 3 children back at home. I spend most of my time doing perimeter checks as a park ranger but I am the only one. Sometimes my salary is delayed for months, it is very difficult to get food around here, I don't see many people. This park is enormous, it takes two weeks and a half to go around its perimeter. When I get sick it is very difficult to get medicine, I am very isolated. I need to call the next town by radio and they take 3 days to reach here. Yesterday, a monkey stole my lunch!



FARMER

Francine

Congo

Each year, my husband and I clear another piece of land. It's incredibly hard work and I'm exhausted at the end of the day, but at least I can see the results. But the more we grow, the harder it is for us to sell. We don't really work with the other families around here. Everyone does their own thing. Sometimes it's hard to make sure we can get to market as the roads are very bad and it's a long way. For our children's sake, I know we'll manage.



EXTENSION WORKER

Benjamin

Mali

I'm 30 and I didn't expect to get a job right after college. People really value my skills but it's difficult to get to all the farmers who could use my advice. I don't have a family so at least I can work long hours. I wish there were more of us though! Some of the materials we have are out of date, but I do the best I can. It makes me happiest when I see one of the promoted species being used and making money for the farmer.



ROAD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agnes

Philippines

I am the Chair of a committee to figure out where the roads network should go in Philippines. Of course, everyone wants better access so it can be quite political. My daughter live with her husband in a town near the forest so I'm tempted to help them out! But I would never do that. I take my job very seriously. It's one of the great development challenges for the country.



CHILD

Cho

Indonesia

They call me Cho and I am 7 years old. I live with my family on our farm, I have 3 brothers and 2 sisters. My brother wants to be a teacher like my aunt but I like watching the birds and insects while my mother works in the forest. My friend Ratna can't play with me anymore because she has to help her family in the fields and she is always hungry.



COMMERCIAL BUSHMEAT HUNTER

Saul

Congo DRC

We've always hunted to put meat on the table but now I'm doing it for more than my own food. A few years ago I bought a truck and now I collect animals from other hunters, and sell the meat in town. I have a wife and 4 children, 2 of our children died as babies and last year our oldest son left for the city. New roads in the area make it easier for me to work with many hunters, but they tell me it is getting harder to find animals. The government says it's going to fine us for hunting this bush meat.



ASB GLOBAL COORDINATOR

Name: Own Choice

Country: Own Choice

I am the global coordinator for an international network of researchers and institutions tackling poverty and conservation in tropical forest margins. I have been the ASB Global Coordinator for the past 3 years. In the past 15 years, environment and development issues have become more difficult to tackle and our network has had to change with the times.



PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Janine

Cameroon

I am 25 years old, and I am a teacher. I teach a class of 35 children, from 7 to 10 years old. Sometimes, when it rains too hard, I can't get to the school for several days. I try to get my students to learn a lot so that they can have a good future, but many of them have to work in the fields and can't come to classes regularly. I would like to get married but want to wait until I meet the right person and not rush into it. Our government often can't pay teachers and I might have to leave to work in a factory in the city instead.



NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Esther

Peru

I am 47 years old and work for the national government in the Commission on Environment and Ecology. I have 2 daughters who live with my sister and her husband. To make good laws here, I'm having to learn a lot about tropical forest issues as I grew up in the Andes. Many people near the Amazon are subsistence farmers who also rely heavily on forest products for their food and income. There are also a lot of farmers who have come from the Andes, hoping to find more productive farms – there are a lot of conflicts between these two groups, and also with the major logging and plantation operations who evict farmers and take over their land. It's a challenge!



LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Paula

Peru

My name is Paula Rodriguez de la Vega. I live with my husband and baby daughter, on a small farm where we grow maize and beans. I am 32 years old and studied business before I got married and moved back to my hometown. In this area we grow coffee, and villages in my area have joined with several others to form a cooperative so that they can sell their beans directly instead of to a supplier. I work with an organization that is teaching community members about running a business, how to manage accounts, access markets, etc. Some of the villages are very difficult to get to with a vehicle, making it hard to transport the beans.



INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ludwiga

Brazil

I moved here 5 years ago from Sweden with my kids. It was a tough adjustment but the people are great! Facing poverty every day makes it clear how urgent it is for us to really tackle development issues properly. It's hard where people's needs conflict with environmental concerns - that's where we can help bring the two sides together.



CONSUMER

Bob

United States

I love McDonalds. I hear scary stories about where my burgers come from (of course the fries are fine!). I just don't have time to think about all of these things. I'm just a simple guy.



OWN CHARACTER

Name

Country

Make up your own character! It needs to be someone whose decisions make a difference at the tropical forest margins.



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