**UNIT 46**

**Limnu Hand-out 2:  
MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS**

*Disclaimer: the facts in this scenario are entirely fictitious. Any resemblance with actual facts is mere coincidence.*

This hand-out will be distributed after the presentation of the Limnu Valley setting and the characters that will play roles in the scenario. You will play one of these characters. This hand-out allows you to see who the other characters are and what they have strong opinions about. Every player will also receive an identity card with more information about her or his role only at a later stage.

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| 1. Chief Elder (man) (‘Chief’) 2. Representative of weavers and banner-makers (woman) (‘Niece’) 3. Representative of Limnu Valley Potters (‘Biker’) 4. Representative of Limnu farmers (‘Shepherd’) 5. Representative of Mare farmers (‘Tourist’) 6. Performer (‘Singer’) 7. Festival organizer from Mare / horticulturalist (woman) (‘Hinda’) 8. Merchant (man) (‘Drummer’) 9. Youth representative (‘Filmer’) 10. Researcher (‘Pundit’) 11. Head teacher (‘Teacher’) 12. District Officer (‘Officer’) 13. Scribe (‘Scribe’) 14. External consultant (‘Stepper’) |

#### Meet your neighbours

#### Chief Elder (CE, ‘Chief’)

CE became an Elder in 1983 and Chief Elder in 1997. As CE, he is the main guardian of public life, ceremonies and rituals in Limnu Valley. CE chairs meetings of the Council of Elders and maintains contact with the district authorities in Talga City. Everyone calls him ‘Chief’, children included. He sincerely believes in the values and functions of inherited practices and traditional occupations of the Valley people. He is unhappy to see a declining interest in traditional practices among Limnu and Mare villagers, in particular among young people. He is worried about unemployment, and crop failures; he has come to realize that Limnu Valley is in deep crisis.

CE, who is less conservative than some of the other Elders, wants Limnu Valley to be transformed into a place that future generations will be happy to live in. CE is willing to accept change and transformation on the condition that traditions and practices that are valued will be preserved, albeit in modernized forms. Six months ago, CE and the Weavers’ Representative attended a workshop in the provincial capital about the implementation of UNESCO’s 2003 Convention with a view to rural development.

#### Representative of Weavers, Banner- and Costume-makers (RW, ‘Niece’)

RW has been weaving for many years and she is a respected designer of banners and traditional cloth. She also produces small pots in the workshop in her quarter. She lives as a single mother as her husband lives and works in the Mining District. She has been spokesperson for the association of weavers, banner-makers and costume-makers for a long time now. In this gathering RW may also represent the pot makers if the potters’ representative cannot make it. She is a key figure among single mothers in Limnu who all call her ‘Niece’.

RW considers the Council of Elders to be an antiquated institution – in spite of her good relations with the Chief Elder. RW is worried about the sometimes difficult position of women in the valley.

RW, and the members of her association, are not against developing new forms, designs and uses for their products if, indeed, buyers can be found for them. This fine weaver and designer believes that there should be employment for everyone in Limnu Valley and she hopes that one day her own children will not have to leave the valley because they cannot make their living there.

#### Representative of Limnu Valley Potters (RP, ‘biker’)

RP is from Mare and is one of the few professional potters in the valley; she/he is well known for often using a mountain bike to cover the distance between Mare and Limnu.

The potters are angry about the mass-production of fake Limnu Valley ware that is even sold on the Talga City market; they would like to find a way to protect their high quality produce, and to encourage people in the valley to use more local pottery.

The valley people buy imported table and kitchenware for everyday use, while using traditional pots only on special occasions. With the provision of water tanks, the large pots traditionally used for rain harvesting fell into disuse. Among the few (about ten) Limnu Valley potters there are only two or three who still can live from their handicraft alone. Firewood for heating the ovens will soon become hard to get.

With so many problems, it is not easy to attract new, young potters. RP knows, however, that traditional valley ware is of such a rare quality that, if new designs are developed and the traditional techniques preserved, one cannot fail to attract new buyers in and especially outside the valley. RP thinks one should not be afraid of adapting production processes and of producing new types of pottery for new uses.

#### Representative of Limnu farmers (LF, ‘shepherd’)

This farmer, who at a young age had to take over the care of her/his parents’ farmhouse (and who before that used to herd the family’s sheep), represents the largest professional group of Limnu. LF is much appreciated for her/his hard work, both on her/his land and in the village.

The degradation of the soil, the terraces and the irrigation systems, the fragmentation of the allotments and the changing climate are common problems experienced by all farmers. LF had disagreements with representatives of the research institute when they visited Limnu; she/he felt that they did not sufficiently take local circumstances and values into account. LF is happy to know that the researcher who was sent to the meeting by the institute is different.

LF does however understand that a slavish return to traditional practices cannot be an option – some of these are no doubt being abandoned for good reasons. Farmers, both more traditional and less traditional ones are happy to be represented by LF.

LF is worried about the state or absence of essential infrastructural facilities and is therefore quite happy that funds may soon be available for improving the road and for installing a modern drinking water system. Like many farmers, this expert attaches great value to the rituals of the Long Week and the yearly Festival of the Clouds, which is a joyful interruption of hard labour in summer for all farmers.

#### Representative of Mare Farmers (MF, ‘Tourist’)

MF comes from a farming family from Mare; her/his partner is a part-time potter. The men in MF’s family were specialized in making terraces and dry-stone walls; some still have the required skills. Some Mare farmers are still specialized in growing fruit on terraces north of the village. Some also do some hunting.

Mare has good coverage for mobile phones and it also has clean water from the spring. There the positive news stop: in Mare there is no shop, the electricity supply is unreliable and one quarter of the houses are abandoned. Most houses are scenic, but in bad condition. To be honest: some parts of Mare look spooky. Mare parents regret but also understand that after middle school many young people – especially women – try their luck outside the Limnu Valley. MF’s mother can tell long stories about what a lively and prosperous place Mare used to be when she was younger.

Some Mare farmers would like to restore the terraces and concentrate on producing high quality fruit and vegetables, others would prefer to develop ecotourism. MF is willing to support both ideas, and is especially supportive of ideas to promote tourism in Limnu Valley. MF knows that for either development Mare would need support from outside.

#### Performer (PF, ‘Singer’)

A gifted musician and singer, PF is one of the most solicited performers in Limnu Valley. She/he is famous for her/his vast repertoire and knows practically all Limnu Valley working songs. At a young age PF first learned pot-making and – not much later – singing, storytelling and *rutu* playing. Later on PF increased her/his skills by listening to other performers and by talking with them. PF earns more from his performances than from making pots but together it is not enough to support his/her family. PF lives with her/his mother. PF often accepts invitations by friends in the Mining District who ask her/him to perform in exchange for a free trip and lodging.

The traditional transmission of the performing arts was disrupted by the introduction of schooling. Young people, however, realize how important performers are for the festival and other valley ICH and are sad that there are no young singers, storytellers or *rutu* players.

The performers have been speaking of setting up a training system, but do not know what that should look like, nor how to teach improvisation skills. They understand Limnu Valley cannot sustain fully professional performers, but they think that better financial remuneration might help to make the idea of becoming a musician, singer or storyteller more attractive.

#### Festival Organizer / Professional Gardener from Mare (FO, ‘Hinda’)

FO, a young woman, lives in Mare, where she returned to work in her parents’ farm after a three-year course at the agricultural high school in the provincial capital. FO wants to make the family enterprise healthy and eventually she wants to have her own income

With her parents, FO concentrates on growing fruit trees, and plants for the production of dyes; she sells her dyes, which are constantly of high quality, to an Indian firm. She had a generator installed, which sometimes keeps people in Mare awake, and which has ‘Hinda’ written in big letters on it.

FO is a member of the association of organizers of the Festival of the Clouds, which has always consisted of 12 unmarried young people. She has been in charge of logistical arrangements for the parades during the last four festivals.

FO believes that not all traditional practices need or can be preserved and that living and working conditions should be improved first. Solutions will not come from the Council of Elders. She would like to see their role reduced. She is in favour of developing tourism, on condition that it would not impede agricultural development.

#### Merchant (MD, ‘drummer’)

MD is the only trader in Limnu Valley and is a much respected clay-drum player. He lives in Limnu where his wife owns and runs the only shop of the valley. For over 12 years he has been buying agricultural products, pots and some cloth in the valley, which he has sold in Talga District and beyond. MD has witnessed the decline in local agricultural production. There is hardly a Limnu inhabitant who has not profited from a free ride in his truck to Talga City. He sells his goods at fair prices. He had to give up selling pots, because of the large-scale sale of cheap fake valley ware.

He has many ideas about income generation for the valley. For him, a safeguarding plan needs to take a balanced position regarding property rights, traditional values and commercial interests. MD thinks that people in Limnu would have had access to clean drinking water and a decent road a long time ago had they not been represented by the Council of Elders.

MD studied the potential of Limnu Valley for ecotourism and believes that it offers what ecotourists are looking for: pristine flora and fauna; beautiful scenery; and intangible, tangible and natural heritage.

#### Youth Representative (YR, ‘Filmer’)

This young person, who worked in the mining town until his/her unfortunate accident, has been active in the village on many fronts after his/her return to Limnu. YR is a photographer and film-maker – usually called ‘Filmer’. YR is the only one allowed to record the Festival of the Clouds and is also an expert in making natural dyes. YR is one of the co-organizers of the festival and someone who loves the valley. YR would like to do more to help secure a prosperous future for the village.

While away from Limnu, YR had already realized the value of the valley’s celebrations, rituals and songs, the handicrafts and their beautiful products and above all the annual Festival of the Clouds. YR also realized how special these traditions are in the context of the country at large.

The youth of Limnu Valley are not organized in a specific way, but if there is one person in the valley who can speak for them, then it is Filmer. YR has clear ideas about the different problems that threaten the viability of the valley and its people. YR can also see threats to the continuity of the handicrafts and the social and cultural traditions of the Limnu. All these problems – YR thinks – are related, and should be tackled at the same time, for the well-being of the valley people.

#### Researcher (RS, ‘Pundit’)

The research institute won a grant from the ministry to conduct research on alternatives to traditional agricultural practices in underdeveloped areas. The institute is about to propose experimental farming programmes to test solutions to the looming food security problems in the north of Talga District (e.g. other seeds, alternative irrigation and soil enrichment methods and different planting cycles). Valley people have noticed that RS is not very talkative and thinks a lot, and call him ‘Pundit’.

RS, who is not from Talga District, is convinced that improved agricultural methods by themselves will not help to develop Limnu Valley: other sources of income are to be developed as well and infrastructure has to be improved. RS believes that some of the traditional practices of the Limnu Valley may be mobilized for its sustainable development and for the well-being of its inhabitants. RS requested that the institute includes social scientists in its interdisciplinary team to explore ways in which new agricultural methods could profit from and integrate traditional practices.

RS observes many problematic issues in the village that are not directly linked to ICH; she/he would like to see a combined safeguarding and development plan that seeks long-term solutions, addressing the need for self-sufficiency and economic development.

#### Head teacher (HT, ‘Teacher’)

The Head Teacher returned to Limnu eight years ago after a successful career outside the district. HT’s children live in the capital. HT is appreciated for her/his hard work in the school, where she/he introduces children to traditional vegetable growing (‘the Heirloom Seed Project’) in after-school classes and to Limnu stories and songs during class time. HT also records these when performers are invited to the school. HT promotes the local language, far beyond the limited time slots foreseen in the school curriculum.

HT is honestly worried about the social problems of the valley, in particular about the drop-out rate among children of some families. HT is convinced that group and family practices and traditions give persons their identity, an anchor place in this world and a place – however small – in the history of humanity. As many Limnu Valley traditions as possible should be safeguarded, for and by as many people as possible as that would reduce social problems more than anything else. HT is sometimes criticised for living in a nostalgic past.

#### District Officer (DO, ‘Officer’)

Limnu Valley falls under the District Authority of Talga City, which is responsible for implementing and monitoring national legislation and programmes in the district. Limnu Valley is a municipality with over 75% of the inhabitants belonging to one national minority, and therefore has a special status: in Limnu Valley, the Council of Elders can have a wide-ranging mediating role.

For DO, a civil engineer who has been seconded by the Ministry of Rural Development to Talga District, the main issues of concern are increasing poverty and diminishing harvests. DO believes more in creating jobs for the Valley people through, for instance, tourism than in beefing up agricultural production.

DO comes from outside the Talga District, but knows the Valley well by now. DO is straightforward and wants quick solutions. DO thinks the Council of Elders is profoundly incompetent where it concerns solving serious problems of any kind; its role should be ceremonial only. And, the valley should be administered like any other municipality. DO lives in an apartment on top of Talga City post office, where she/he has a large collection of valley pottery and textiles.

#### Scribe/Financial Administrator (FA, ‘Scribe’)

In her/his youth, FA lived with her/his parents in Talga City who ran the only Limnu restaurant to have ever existed anywhere. Since her/his parents’ return to Limnu, FA visits Limnu every now and then. After high school, FA followed a two-year course in school administration. Back in Talga City, FA worked first in the district administration, and is now financial administrator of the Talga City middle school. FA knows the valley and its problems well, if only because at any moment there are 40 to 50 valley children in Talga City middle school (this year there are 39).

FA will take notes, help the participants formulate their decisions and remind them of these at any moment, so that at the end of this gathering FA can make a presentation of the outlines for the solid safeguarding plan that will have been elaborated.

FA will take the floor when she/he has strong opinions that she/he feels may be useful for the discussions.

#### External Consultant (EC, ‘stepper’)

EC will assist the chair of this gathering while guiding participants – if they agree – through a multi-step approach to safeguarding that was developed by the UNESCO Secretariat.

EC, who was born in the capital, studied history and worked on different assignments in the field of culture and literature. EC visited Limnu Valley last year, on the occasion of the Festival of the Clouds. Six months ago EC facilitated a workshop about the implementation of the 2003 Convention with a view to rural development that was attended by the Chief Elder and the Weavers’ Representative. Before that EC attended a workshop at UNESCO Headquarters about the implementation of UNESCO’s Heritage Conventions.