

Costa Rica

**educational board game
about the life journey of a coffee farmer**



FAIRTRADE
ČESKO a SLOVENSKO

Educational game **Costa Rica**

Objective: Participants will get an overview of the situation of coffee farmers in Costa Rica. They will realize that they have to deal not only with physically demanding work, but also with external factors that they have little chance to influence. In particular, the current international trade environment and climate change.

Abstract: Welcome to the province of Alajuela in northern Costa Rica. The people here grow Arabica coffee. You too have a dream of possessing your own coffee farm to support your family well. You'll need good luck, but it will also take a lot of physical effort. Global economic circumstances and the effects of climate change will have a major impact on your progress. Can you move closer to your dream?

Key question: Can you make a decent living growing coffee?

Age: 8+

Number of participants: 3+

Time: 30 to 45 minutes

Materials:

- ★ Game rules (Appendix 1) - print on A4
- ★ Cards with level characteristics (Annex 2) - print on A4
- ★ Climate cards (Annex 3) - print on A4 hard green paper, cut out each card and shuffle
- ★ Business cards (Annex 4) - print on A4 hard blue paper, cut out cards, shuffle
- ★ Game board (Appendix 5) - print ideally on heavyweight paper in a larger A3 format
- ★ Dice and pieces



This game is inspired by several particular coffee growers in Latin America and their personal stories. The cover image for the game and on the board is Don Aladino Varrantes Arce, a Costa Rican fair-trade coffee farmer from the cooperative Coopesarapiqui. Together with his brother, he owns 9 hectares of land that they inherited from their father and have taken care of since 1985. Don Aladino grows over 3 tonnes of coffee a year. He lives in the municipality of Aguas Zarcas in northern Costa Rica. He says: "You have to love coffee and growing it" and he himself is a good example of such an attitude. He works from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day. He never takes a holiday. He loves his work and his coffee.



The game can be very frustrating at some stages, even right from the start. Unfavourable CLIMATE and BUSINESS cards can significantly affect the course of the game for one or all players. If, in addition, the progress has been aided by physical performance and is partially lost by the intervention of the card, players may become disappointed. This is completely fine - the objective of the game, apart from simply moving forward, is the personal experience as a grower of being affected by accidental circumstances and, despite considerable physical effort, losing a part of the earnings.

Appendix 1 = Game rules

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

This game can be played in a variety of groups. Optimum is 4-8 players. The more the better in terms of spreading different physical tasks among players so that the game does not drag on. In a larger group, it is possible to play in teams or print the game more times for multiple playing groups.

PRINCIPLE OF THE GAME

All players start on the UNEMPLOYED level. They progress through the playing field at a pace determined by fortune (the dice), but they can support[GE1] it with their own diligence, i.e. physical exercises. Every ten squares they gradually strengthen their social status to the levels of TEMPORARY worker, EMPLOYEE, FARMER, CO-OP MEMBER, FAIRTRADE and PARTNER.

LEGEND TO THE LEVELS

It is important that the players understand the differences between the levels during the game. The moderator may read out the characteristics of all seven levels before the game starts, or the player who reaches the next level first reads its characteristics for all. The level characteristic cards are in Appendix 2.

BEGINNING THE GAME

Place the shuffled CLIMATE and BUSINESS cards face down on the game board in the marked spaces. All players place their pieces on the START (UNEMPLOYED level) space. The moderator reads from the card the characteristics of that level (or, if they choose, all other levels). Players determine who will play first (e.g. roll the dice, play rock, paper, scissors, etc.). At the start of each round, the first player turns over a CLIMATE card that will be valid for that round for all players.

GAME PROCEDURE

At the beginning of each round, the CLIMATE card is turned. The first player turns over the CLIMATE card, which determines the climate for all players in that round. The following procedure is then followed for each player:

- ★HOD THROW THE DICE: a player rolls the dice and advances 1-6 spaces.
- ★PUSH-UP: if the dice says less than 6, the player may earn their advancement up to a max of 6 by using pushups. One square is worth three pushups (or agree on a different value, according to the age and fitness of the players). So if they roll a 2, they can do up to 12 pushups (4x3) and advance up to 4 more spaces. There is room for your own efforts, but also for tactics. Using the number of pushups, you can adjust how far you reach in the turn. You can get to the BUSINESS square and play the card, or you can deliberately avoid it.
- ★CLIMATE CARD PROCESSING: Now consider the CLIMATE card in your turn, which is valid for the entire round for all players.
- ★PIECE ADVANCEMENT: According to the dice roll, the push-ups and the CLIMATE card, now make your move with the piece.
- ★BUSINESS CARD: Have you arrived at the BUSINESS card within your turn? Turn it over and read it aloud. The BUSINESS card is usually only valid for the particular player.

GOAL OF THE GAME

The aim of the game is to make a good living for your family and to become a coffee farmer at the highest possible level. The first player to reach field 60 (PARTNER) wins. Keep in mind that each higher position is better than the previous one because it guarantees more security in livelihood. Even if you are not the first to reach the winning field, you can still be happy that at least you have improved your living standard.

Appendix 2 = Level characteristics

00: UNEMPLOYED

You're on square one. As an unemployed person, you have no source of income for your family. You struggle daily for bare survival. Try your best to get into a better position as soon as possible. You'll have to work hard and you'll also need fortune by your side.

10: TEMPORARY WORKER

You are looking for a job on a coffee plantation. You'll usually be hired to harvest or clear the land of weeds. However, your work is usually just seasonal and you have no guarantee of income. You don't know what will happen next year. You have no social insurance, you're earning just enough to survive.

20: EMPLOYEE

As an employee, you already have a good relationship with a particular plantation owner. He employs you for the whole year. You live on the plantation with your whole family, and you also work off-season, e.g. looking after the land and preparing it for the next season.

30: FARMER

You've saved up enough for your own plot of land! You are now living off your own crops. Your loneliness and weak bargaining position make you prone to being exploited by the buyers, who are giving you a low price for your coffee. It's hard to feed your family and provide children's education.

40: CO-OP MEMBER

You have teamed up with other farmers in the area and formed a cooperative with them. By selling together more coffee, you can negotiate a better buying price. The cooperative also built a central warehouse and bought a truck. You can afford to pay the staff. But your production won't improve.

50: FAIRTRADE

Your cooperative has become Fairtrade certified. You are guaranteed sufficient prices and the whole cooperative gets a Fairtrade premium. The cooperative pays for expert technicians who advise you on the production and the fight against the effects of climate change. And it's been used to build a school!

60: PARTNER

You're in the final. Thanks to Fairtrade, your cooperative grows high-quality coffee and has contacts. You're able to find direct buyers who pay a high price for your excellent coffee. You can make a good living, develop your business and provide a good education for your children.

Appendix 3 = Climate cards

Usual and optimal weather. No changes from the rules.	Usual and optimal weather. No changes from the rules.
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Storm season. Strong storms bring uncertainty. In this round, the player rolls the dice as usual, but the value is divided by two (rounded down).	Yay. Climate change is causing extreme weather. Unfortunately, there was a tornado in your area. Everyone returns to the nearest business square. (And they play the business card).
Climate change has caused a long-term drought. Fires are destroying crops. Did you have a fire? If the player's dice in this round shows an odd number, they go back 2 spaces. An even number means normal progress.	The rains have caused devastating floods. Did a mountain stream overflow its banks in your area? In this round, each player does rock, paper, scissors with the player on the left, and whoever loses goes back 1 square. Then the player rolls the dice.

<p>Extremely favourable weather - excellent ratio of sunshine to rainfall. All players in this round advance by double the number rolled. At the same time, they can do push-ups to add more squares up to a maximum of 12 (the value of 1 square is still the same, i.e. 3 push-ups).</p>	<p>Unexpected frosts. In this round, all players just do push-ups and do not roll the dice. Anyone who does not do at least 3 push-ups does not advance.</p>
<p>Ideal weather. In this round, all players may roll the dice twice and employ the higher roll.</p>	<p>Extremely heavy rains and landslides. Half the fields are destroyed. All players move back by half of their total reach (odd numbers are rounded up).</p>
<p>Extreme drought. The value rolled on the dice must be supported by 5 squats for each square. Also, each extra square is worth 3 push-ups + 5 squats.</p>	<p>The drought and heat have helped the overpopulation of the coffee parasite broca. In this round no one can boost their progress with push-ups.</p>
<p>Planting of tall trees for shade has paid off. All players advance 3 spaces ahead.</p>	<p>Excessive rainfall. A fungal epidemic disease has wiped out the efforts of the last season. All players return to the beginning of their current level.</p>
<p>Extremely favorable weather led to an abundant and bountiful harvest. All players advance to the beginning of the next level.</p>	<p>The sun is burning too intensely. Coffee is overripe and losing quality. In this round everyone's roll value decreases by 1.</p>
<p>Weather is like a seesaw, nothing is predictable. In this round, each player rolls the dice, but they pass on their points to another player of their choice (1 player can receive points from multiple opponents). Each player gives away the value of their dice roll but may do push-ups to advance.</p>	<p>Extreme rain, wet and muddy everywhere. The work is arduous. Each point rolled must be supported by 3 push-ups, and each extra square up to a maximum of 6 is worth double value - 6 push-ups. In this round, whoever does not do push-ups, does not move forward.</p>

Appendix 4 = Business cards

<p>Exceptionally abundant coffee crop in Brazil, prices are down. Go back to the beginning of your level.</p>	<p>A gift from international NGOs allows you to advance to the top of the next level.</p>
<p>A prudent investment in equipment doubles your dice roll this round.</p>	<p>The government has introduced new agricultural subsidies. You advance to the beginning of the next level.</p>
<p>Wild speculations in the stock market have caused the price of coffee to plummet. Go back to the beginning of your level.</p>	<p>Due to a serious illness in the family, you must sell the land. If you're a FARMER or a CO-OP MEMBER, go back to the beginning of the level of EMPLOYEE. If you are in FAIRTRADE, the card does not apply to you because the team will take care of you. Lower levels are not affected either.</p>
<p>On your farm, fungal diseases are spreading among the coffee trees. Go back to the beginning of your current level.</p>	<p>Your organic farm is teeming with life and has attracted the first school field trips. Progress to the beginning of the next level.</p>
<p>On tall trees that you let grow wild, parrots have nested and the farm has become a magnet for tourists. Proceed once more by as many fields as you rolled the dice.</p>	<p>Your peeler broke - stop for 2 rounds. If you're a CO-OP MEMBER, you're just waiting for 1 round because the team will provide you with a new one. If you're in FAIRTRADE, the card doesn't apply because the team will immediately provide you with a new one.</p>

<p>The cooperative distributed seedlings of coffee trees to its members. All those who are at least at the CO-OP level advance 2 fields ahead.</p>	<p>Fertilizers have become more expensive. All players return 2 spaces back.</p>
<p>Great offer from Monsanto: GMO-free coffee tree seedlings. Decide to move 8 spaces forward, but in the next 4 rounds you won't be able to join FAIRTRADE. This card doesn't apply to levels lower than FARMER.</p>	<p>A large investment bank has bet on the high price of coffee, rocked the markets, and you go back 3 fields.</p>
<p>The economic crisis has resulted in lower consumer interest in sustainable goods, and big chains have withdrawn 50% of their Fairtrade coffee orders. Everybody at the FAIRTRADE level goes back 10 fields; the others go back 2 fields.</p>	<p>The development of a global pandemic has reduced consumption and increased the cost of production. Go back 6 fields. But if you're in FAIRTRADE, you can use its supporting tools and only go back 2 fields.</p>
<p>The civil war caused by the bad economic situation in the country caused traffic to be blocked. You go back 2 fields.</p>	<p>You got a visit from the local gang. He took your chickens and food supplies. If you are not at least at the COOPERATIVE level, when the cooperative will help you, you go back 3 fields.</p>
<p>Injury. You fell off the mule when bringing the harvest to the village. You stop for the next 2 rounds, and because it hurts, you must stand up and hold both arms above your head.</p>	<p>Fairtrade premium! If there's at least one player on the level FAIRTRADE, everyone in your village uses the bonus resources of the Fairtrade cooperative, and you advance 1 space.</p>
<p> There are few seasonal workers, they are more expensive and you can't afford to pay them. You must pick the coffee yourself. Do 5 push-ups/squats or go 5 fields back.</p>	<p>When clearing the land of weeds you've been bitten by a snake. You'll recover but you have to wait for 2 rounds.</p>

<p>The local cooperative fixed the road from the village to the town. Everyone advances as many fields as there are players in the game at the level of CO-OP or higher.</p>	<p>The Fairtrade team donated village land to build a small hospital. Everyone moves forward 1 space.</p>
<p>A card only for players at the level FAIRTRADE: You were visited by an agricultural engineer from the Fairtrade cooperative and given advice on making compost. Go 2 spaces ahead.</p>	<p>The local buyer will only give you half the buying price for your coffee. If you're not at least at the CO-OP level, you move back 3 fields. If you are at the level CO-OP or higher, the card does not apply to you.</p>
<p>Will you build hives on the land? The bees will pollinate your coffee trees and you'll have more sources of income from selling honey. But it takes effort to build. If you do 10 squat-and-jumps, you can move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p>Are you going to plant more trees on your property? Coffee will ripen more gradually then and birds will come, and you won't have to work in direct sunlight. But it takes effort in planting. If you do 10 squat-and-jumps you can advance 4 squares.</p>
<p>Can you revive the disappearing creek on your property? You'll help biodiversity and you'll feel better. But it takes effort. If you do five squat-and-jumps you can advance 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You're having a good day, you've done a good job. Roll the dice again. You can also boost this second roll with push-ups up to a maximum of 6 squares, i.e., 12 altogether.</p>
<p>A neighbour asked you to help with the coffee harvest. It was tiring, go back 1 field and move the player on your right 1 field forward.</p>	<p>The truck carrying the dried coffee rolled off the hill into the valley. Unfortunately, someone lost a part of the harvest. Is it you or your neighbour on the right? Play rock-paper-scissors with him. Loser goes back 3 fields.</p>
<p>A drug gang stole 60 bags of coffee from a warehouse. Was it your coffee, or your neighbour's on the right? Both roll the dice and whoever rolls the lower number goes back 3 spaces.</p>	<p>You need to fix the coffee drying racks. If you're in FAIRTRADE, you get help from the cooperative. If you're not, you go back 2 spaces.</p>

<p>There's a jaguar roaming near your property. You have to scare it off or it will eat your goat and chickens. You have to clap your hands 20 times or go back 2 fields.</p>	<p>Do you have any organic produce? Roll the dice, if you get a one, move 2 fields forward. But if you're in FAIRTRADE, you are more likely to have some organic produce - you move 2 fields forward in case of rolling a one, a two, or a three!</p>
<p>The neighbour on your left has wrongly accused you of stealing tools. Before it gets settled in the village, you both wait for 1 round.</p>	<p>A special order for your cooperative! Can you handle it? If everyone at the CO-OP level or higher does 10 squat-and-jumps, they can move 3 squares ahead. This card does not apply to lower levels.</p>
<p>You take good care of your land and armadillos have settled in. Czech television is making a documentary about them and you get a reward. Move 1 field forward.</p>	<p>Great news! Coffee from your farm has received an international quality award. Roll the dice again.</p>
<p>Growing coffee on your land is no longer profitable due to the drought. Until you switch partially to growing sugarcane, you wait for 2 rounds. But if you're in Fairtrade, the cooperative will help you and you wait for only one round.</p>	<p>The local Fairtrade cooperative has introduced free health checks. If there's at least one player at the level FAIRTRADE, you proceed 1 field. If no one is at the FAIRTRADE level, you retreat 1 field due to medical problems.</p>
<p>You meet a lot of interesting people at the National Coffee Growing Conference. Go forward to the nearest BUSINESS field and grab a new card.</p>	<p>Brazil reports a favourable climate, and a large Arabica crop is expected. Overproduction has caused coffee prices to plummet on the stock market. You go back 10 fields.</p>
<p>An exceptionally unlucky season. Machine breakdowns, lack of interest from buyers. You can only keep your position if you put in a huge effort. Do 3 push-ups for every field you've covered this turn. If you don't, you return to the beginning of your level.</p>	<p>The buyers want to destroy the coop; they're offering double the buying price. If you're at the level CO-OP, you can sell them your coffee. The cooperative will miss the coffee and will go out of business. You return to field 36, and the other CO-OP members to field 30. And you take a new BUSINESS card.</p>

<p>Monkeys have taken up residence on the farm and are distracting the pickers. You wait for 1 round.</p>	<p>Your children have brought a wounded sloth from the nearby forest. You nurse it back to health. You move forward 2 spaces, but the next round you wait.</p>
<p>Thanks to environmentally friendly farming, forest frogs have returned to your farm. Go 2 fields forward.</p>	<p>You've been disturbed all night by the howlers, you can't do push-ups in the next round.</p>
<p>You don't use agrochemicals on the land and the hummingbirds are coming to the trees for nectar. You can watch them during the noon hour with a cup of coffee. Advance 1 field.</p>	<p>The cooperative bought young mules and transport got faster. If you're at least a CO-OP member, move 2 fields forward.</p>
<p>The overpopulated rattlesnakes are hiding between coffee trees. The gatherers are frightened and the work slows down. In the next round you can't do push-ups.</p>	<p>The neighbor's cows have broken through the fence and trampled your farm. Next round you're stopped.</p>
<p>You've got bright, hard-working kids. They want to go to college. Scholarships will cost you 4 fields back. But if you're at the level of FAIRTRADE, the cooperative will pay for your expenses from the fairtrade premium, and you stay in your position.</p>	<p>Overproduction of coffee in Brazil and Colombia has reduced the buying price of Arabica coffee on the New York Commodity Exchange. Only an extraordinarily large harvest will help you survive. As long as you don't throw a five or six in the next rounds, you're still standing.</p>
<p>The buyers have divided the territory between them in the mountains and have been offering you low purchase prices for a long time. You can't make a living from it, so you took a usurious loan from them 3 years ago. It's time to return it. Return to the level of the last player in the game.</p>	<p>You live in the mountains and make your living by growing coffee. You like to drink coffee too, preferably on the terrace of your little cottage overlooking the wooded valley. Isn't it beautiful? Move 1 field forward.</p>

START

00
UNEMPLOYED

C

**CLIMATE
CARDS**

B

**BUSINESS
CARDS**

10
TEMPORARY

20
EMPLOYEE

30
FARMER

40
CO-OP MEMBER

50
FAIRTRADE

60
PARTNER



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