

What's Fair Game

Learning about Cocoa Farmers



MATERIALS NEEDED

Cocoa beans (if available), an Equal Exchange chocolate bar, a lot of scrap paper, scissors, five calculators (one for each group), a copy of the “What’s Fair Game Cards” cut up, five copies of the “What’s Fair Group Accounting Record” cut up.

CLASSROOM NARRATIVE

WARM UP: You are going to be cocoa farmers. Do you like chocolate? What is your favorite kind of chocolate? What chocolate is made from? (Have an Equal Exchange chocolate bar nearby so students can read the ingredients if they don’t know them: milk, cocoa beans and sugar.) Where do these ingredients come from? (Milk comes from all over the world. Cocoa beans and sugar are grown in Africa, and South and Central America, where it’s hot.)

We’re going to learn a little bit about what it’s like to be cocoa farmers in the Dominican Republic.

ACTIVITY: Ask students to find the Dominican Republic on a world map and imagine what the weather is like there.

Divide the class into five groups of farmers. Tell them they are going to pretend they are all farmers growing cocoa beans. Tell them Group #5 is a farmer cooperative called CONACADO which sells its beans to Equal Exchange, a Fair Trade cooperative. The others are traditional cocoa farmers.

If cocoa beans are available, pass them around to each group and ask them to examine the beans.

DIALOGUE: What do you notice about the beans? How do they feel? What do they smell like? Did you know chocolate is made from cocoa beans?

ACTIVITY: Give each group a stack of scrap paper and scissors. Explain they will be drawing cocoa beans on the paper and cutting them out instead of really growing them. Encourage them to draw simple outlines of cocoa beans because speed is important in cocoa production. Tell them their job is to work together to draw and cut out as many beans as possible in one minute. Show them an example of the kind of cocoa bean they are going to grow. Give each group a few minutes to discuss how they are going to get a good crop this year.

TO PLAY: Give the groups exactly 60 seconds to draw and cut out cocoa beans. (You can give younger students more time if they are working slowly.) Ask each farmer group to count up the beans they have grown and write the total on their “What’s Fair Group Accounting Record.”

Then give each group one good and one bad “What’s Fair Game Card.” Go around to each farmer group, asking one student from each group to read their cards out to the class. Give or take away beans as required and ask each group to record the number of beans they gained, the number they lost, and the number they’ve ended up with on their “What’s Fair Group Accounting Record.” Tell them their final total is the number of beans they have managed to grow this year.

Explain that the currency in the Dominican Republic is the Dominican Republic peso, and that you are going to pretend the market price for cocoa is two pesos per cocoa bean.

Choose five students to pretend they are Cocoa Buyers. Have each Buyer meet with their group one by one and act out the transaction described in the “Buyer Instructions” while the other groups watch. Have the farmer groups write down on their “What’s Fair Group Accounting Record” how much they earned for their beans.

Have the farmer groups write down on their “What’s Fair Group Accounting Record” how much they paid in expenses last year and how much they earned at the end of the year after paying their expenses.

DIALOGUE: Encourage students to reflect on what they experienced in the game. Ask them:

How did it feel to play the roles they played?
What was fun? What was hard?

What did you notice about the growing season? About the buyers? About their Accounting Record? What role did luck play? What role did cooperation play?

What did you learn about being a cocoa farmer? What might be fun? What might be hard? What felt fair? What didn’t?

What did you learn about Fair Trade? How did it help the farmers?

Which farmer group would you want to be in?

Wrap up by telling students:

The world price for cocoa is often not high enough for farmers to live on. Sometimes farmers are paid even less than the market price because that’s what their buyers pay them. Sometimes farmers are cheated if they can’t read weighing scales, do math, or know if the buyer has tampered with the scale. Farmers are sometimes paid by check, even though they have no bank account. It can take weeks to cash the check. Sometimes farmers lose their land when they can’t get enough money for their crops. Fair Trade companies like Equal Exchange try to ensure that farmers have enough money to support their families, stay on their land, grow their crops in a way that is good for the environment, and strengthen their communities.



NAME:

DATE:

What's Fair Group Accounting Record

Group # _____

Farmer Group Members:

Number of cocoa beans harvested:	
Extra cocoa beans earned:	
Subtotal:	
Cocoa beans lost:	
Total beans harvested:	

Pesos we earned for the cocoa beans we grew:	
Pesos we paid to support our families and grow our crops:	
Pesos we earned after paying out expenses:	

Check one:

_____ This felt fair to us. _____ This didn't feel fair to us.

What's Fair Game Cards

Cut out these cards and give each group of farmers one good card and one bad card.

GOOD CARDS

<p>The weather has been very good and your beans have grown well.</p> <p>ADD 40 EXTRA BEANS</p>	<p>Your beans do not get any diseases this year.</p> <p>ADD 30 EXTRA BEANS</p>
<p>You buy natural pesticides in bulk with other farmers and save money.</p> <p>ADD 20 EXTRA BEANS</p>	<p>Your hoe breaks, but you mend it yourself.</p> <p>ADD 10 EXTRA BEANS</p>
<p>You share tools with other farmers and save money.</p> <p>ADD 20 EXTRA BEANS</p>	<p>Your beans do not get any diseases this year.</p> <p>ADD 30 EXTRA BEANS</p>

BAD CARDS

<p>A storm has destroyed half of your trees.</p> <p>GIVE BACK HALF YOUR BEANS</p>	<p>Your hoe breaks and you have to buy a new one because you can't fix it.</p> <p>GIVE BACK 10 BEANS</p>
<p>Your mother is ill. You have to borrow money to buy medicine.</p> <p>GIVE BACK 20 BEANS</p>	<p>Your hoe breaks and you have to buy a new one because you can't fix it.</p> <p>GIVE BACK 10 BEANS</p>
<p>Your cocoa beans are drying on the racks and it rains. Some beans spoil.</p> <p>GIVE BACK ONE QUARTER OF YOUR BEANS</p> <p>Exception: If group 5 gets this card, they give nothing back because they have a drying barn to protect their crop.</p>	<p>Some of your trees have caught a disease called black pod.</p> <p>GIVE BACK ONE FIFTH OF YOUR BEANS</p>

What's Fair

Buyer Instructions

Buyer Instructions

GROUP 1 Pay two pesos per bean. Say you will pay them by check, but if they protest, pay them in cash. Be civil and efficient.

GROUP 2 Take the beans and put them in your desk or bag. Then pay one peso per bean in cash. Treat the farmers rudely. If they complain, just leave with their beans.

GROUP 3 Pay two pesos per beans, but cheat them, paying for five less beans than they have. If they question you, be evasive and in a hurry. If they complain, tell them there aren't any other buyers for 30 miles. Take it or leave it.

GROUP 4 Pay them two pesos per bean but pay them with a check. If they complain, tell them there aren't any other buyers for 30 miles. Take it or leave it.

GROUP 5 Be very friendly. Tell them you are their Fair Trade Buyer and that you're so glad to get a chance to come down and see them again. You just love coming down to visit the farmers in CONACADO, the cocoa farmer cooperative who sells to your company. Remind them that you agreed to pay them three pesos per bean or more if the market price is higher so that they can make a good living this year and grow their crops in a way that's good for the environment. Check with them to see if they think three pesos per bean will be enough next year. If they need more, say you'll talk with people at your company and come back to make a new agreement before the next growing season starts. Then happily pay them the three pesos per bean. Talk with each farmer about their families and about the school the cooperative members are going to build this year for their children.