Banana Republic

A simulation

Objective
To successfully handle the challenges of running a country in the developing world.

Advanced Setup
One Excel Master Spreadsheet named for each team – this is where the teacher keeps track of the data, which is projected for the entire class to see.

Each Minister (except the Prime Minister) receives a printed out spreadsheet for their own recordkeeping – they must copy down data from the teacher's master sheet, or from cards as they are read.

Preparing the class to play

1. Divide class into teams of 4 students.
2. Each team elects its officials
   - Prime Minister (PM) – chairs "cabinet meetings" and draws cards for the team. The PM is also the official voice of the team – the teacher will only communicate directly with the Prime Minister, and the PM's word is binding.
   - Minister of the Interior (MI) – tracks data relating to development including resources and productivity.
   - Home Minister (HM) – tracks events affecting the nation.
   - Finance Minister (FM) – tracks income, expenses, and loans.
3. Each team chooses a name & color for their country
4. Teacher enters names on the master spreadsheet (one spreadsheet per nation/team)
5. Beginning balance is a number
6. Game play is explained
   - Rules
   - Round procedures

Playing the Game
ROUND ZERO
Teacher displays the map. PMs confer with their cabinets and, one team at a time, PMs announce their country's name, color, and home square (this square is free). Teacher marks on the OHP with corresponding color marker and an "H" to designate "Home". Subsequent squares can be marked with an X or \.

- Minister of Interior records the level of resources acquired, and notes that all systems' development levels are at "Undeveloped" (except military, which must be basic in order to function)
- Home Minister notes the acquisition of first land square.
- Finance Minister notes the beginning balance of the team at the top of the column marked "Final Balance." This number is based on the team's total points accumulated in 'C layer' times $50,000 per point.
- PM reports beginning balance to teacher
- All data is verified and checked
- Process is repeated for each team

ROUND PLAY

Each round consists of four components: drawing cards, holding cabinet meetings, making acquisitions or decisions, and holding a second cabinet meeting.

Drawing Cards

1. The PM comes to the front and draws a card for agriculture, minerals, and fishing, reading the results aloud to the class.
   - MI records resource levels and income
   - HM records events in each industry
   - FM records income totals
2. Ministers report data to teacher, who records it on the master data sheet.
3. System costs are then calculated (by the teacher – automatically), along with productivity; ministers note appropriate data
4. Finally the PM draws a fate card and reads it out loud. Its consequences are recorded by appropriate ministers.
5. All cards are returned to the correct decks and the next PM goes.

First Cabinet Meeting

Once all teams have drawn cards and recorded their results, they have three minutes to consult and make decisions about what land acquisitions, system upgrades, or loans they may want to take that round.

Acquisitions and Decisions

After the consultation period is over, each PM announces their decisions to the rest of the class. Results are recorded by the teacher on the master spreadsheet and each minister records the data on their respective sheets.

Second Cabinet Meeting

The round concludes with two minutes for teams to discuss their plans for the next round, compare and verify data, or discuss whatever they need to discuss.

Notes

- In order to maintain control of the square, basic infrastructure and basic military expenses must be met. Basic military assumes the role of a legal system.
- After 5 rounds, loans are available (plus interest of course)
- After 10 rounds, for each $50 million or fraction thereof in debt, a revolution card is added to the mix
- System upgrades are available. When a system is upgraded the productivity of each square within your country increases. All systems must be upgraded at the same pace. For example, if your country is unimproved, you cannot upgrade the education system to “Hi-Tech;” all systems must be upgraded to “Basic” before any system can be upgraded to “Advanced.”
- When a country advances to a new level of development it draws from a new set of fate cards.

	Unimproved	BASIC	ADVANCED	HI-TECH
Military	Level 1	$1 million per square Level 2	$5 million per square Level 3	$10 million per square Level 4
Education	Productivity .9	$1 million per square Productivity 1	$5 million per square Productivity 2	$10 million per square Productivity 2.2
Infrastructure	Productivity .9	$1 million per square Productivity 1	$5 million per square Productivity 2	$10 million per square Productivity 2.2

Legal system	Productivity .9	$1 million per square Productivity 1	$5 million per square Productivity 2	$10 million per square Productivity 2.2

Play notes for teachers and observations:
The military is a cost with no apparent benefit
The first two levels – struggle, must take out a loan
Third level – breeze – maybe make fate cards steeper or cut productivity factor in half?
Fourth level – what's the point? Make harder fate cards! Space programs, spend billions of dollars on things – maybe make commitments to climate change treaties an option (cut # of resources in half, for example)
Military – level can be increased as high as you want, increases protection from invasion (# of extra dice perhaps, if a Risk© type dice throw is what's used to determine conflict outcomes). # of armies=level of mil. If you lose the dice throw your military is downgraded – have to pay to re-upgrade it.
All of the amounts seem fine until level 3 – then it becomes sort-of ridiculously large. Need to be able to do something with the money (either that or I got lucky and survived the first two levels)
-color transparencies with maps
-when someone pays for upgrades, force military upgrades
-costs/rewards need to be bigger at higher levels – you're dealing in billions of dollars

a. MANUFACTURING – a x5 factor per square - Any square can be upgraded to a manufacturing square – however, it can only become so if an advanced education system, advanced infrastructure, and advanced legal system are in place
b. HITECH – a x10 factor per square. Any square can be upgraded to a hi-tech square – however, it can only become so if an excellent education system, excellent infrastructure, and excellent legal system are in place