

NomadSed: A board game on sustainable land use in drylands under global change

Learning, research, and collaboration by playing



Foto: A. Künzelmann

In this board game, up to six players step into the role of a nomadic herdsman. The goal is to build the capital in terms of sheep. To do this, players need to decide on pasture movements to find enough forage. This decision not only depends on local pasture conditions but players need to consider events such as price changes and long term strategies. They deal with multiple challenges that occur in drylands: Eventually cooperation with neighbours becomes necessary or sheep have to be sold.

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This game was developed in a coproduction of the Helmholtz- Center for Environmental Research (UFZ) with the collaborative research centre 586 Difference and Integration (SFB) and the University of Arts Berlin (UdK).

The conceptual lead was taken by project E10 of the SFB Sustainability of (Post-) Nomadic Resource Utilization Under Global Change - Conceptual Understanding Through Ecological-Economic Modelling, headed by Prof. Karin Frank, with Dr. Birgit Müller und Romina Drees (all UFZ und SFB).

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Current cooperation partners:

- Vétérinaires sans frontières (VSF), Germany, info@toge.v.org

For whom was the game designed?

- Students (age 10+) in the context of environmental education
- Scientists within interdisciplinary research projects on land use
- Stakeholder in the context of environmental management and development projects

Playing the board game can mediate insights into dynamic relationships of the environment and human livelihoods. This supports the dialogue on management decisions that are linked to real experiences by nomadic herdsman (see scientific background for details).

How is the game used?

- In moderated sessions of up to 1.5 h length
- During school lessons, workshops, public events or conferences
- With age and topic specific event cards
- Supported by illustrative material for debriefing



Foto: G. Baumann

A herdsman in front of the High Atlas, Morocco

Where can I get it?

This game can be borrowed for educational purposes in an easy transportable version. It has a design patent and is currently checked for commercial production.



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