



ROOTS OF
MALAIYAGAM

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

FACILITATION RESOURCE 01: ROOTS OF MALAIYAGA - A GAMIFIED LEARNING TOOL





A COOPERATIVE GAMIFIED LEARNING TOOL EXPLORING THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF THE MALAIYAGA TAMIL COMMUNITY

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PURPOSE OF THE GAME


"Roots of Malaiyaga" is a cooperative, story-driven board game designed as a transformative learning resource. It brings to life the untold and often overlooked history of the Malaiyaga Tamil community in Sri Lanka, spanning over 200 years of migration, labor, resistance, and cultural resilience. The game invites learners to explore this history through a lens of justice, empathy, and critical reflection. It engages players in historical understanding, encourages analysis of structural inequalities, and promotes transformative dialogue among diverse participants.




Deepen historical understanding of the Malaiyaga Tamil community, their journey, and systemic marginalization.




Develop critical thinking about colonialism, identity, power, and citizenship in postcolonial societies.



Encourage empathy, solidarity, and the recognition of multiple historical narratives.



Strengthen global citizenship competencies including intercultural awareness, civic engagement, and human rights understanding.



Provide a safe, reflective space for transformative dialogue on justice, dignity, and social change.

HOW TO USE THE GAME AS A LEARNING TOOL

1

Pre-Game Preparation

- ✦ Briefly introduce the community's background using visual timelines, short videos, or stories – or a community representative or a resource person.
- ✦ Create a safe space by establishing ground rules around listening, respect, and openness.
- ✦ Share the intention of the game: learning through collective exploration, not competition.

2

During the Game

- Each story tile opens a chapter of the community's history.
- Players collectively read aloud each tile, engage with the challenge, and decide how to respond (using points or reflective tasks).
- Encourage players to take on the perspective of community members, build empathy and see through diverse lenses than what they are used to.

3

Reflection Pauses (Optional)

Use these moments after each Era to debrief and deepen learning. This will also be specifically useful if you are playing the game one era at a time, completing in multiple sessions. You can use these as learning reflections for each session break, aiming to wrap up each session after completing one era.

ERA 1: THE ARDUOUS JOURNEY

- What forms of structural injustice stood out to you in the early era?
- How does migration under coercion differ from voluntary migration?

ERA 2: PLANTATION RAJ

- What does it mean to build identity under conditions of control and inequality?
- How do small acts of cultural resilience challenge dominant power structures?

ERA 3: INDEPENDENCE & DISENFRANCHISEMENT

- How can law be used to exclude? Can something be legal but still unjust?
- What does statelessness reveal about the meaning of citizenship?

ERA 4: REPATRIATION & LABOR STRUGGLES

- What emotions did you experience hearing about forced family separations?
- How can unions and collective organizing serve as forms of resistance and healing?

ERA 5: CONFLICT & VIOLENCE

- How did the community endure being caught in violence they didn't start?
- What does safety and security mean in a society where you are always questioned?

ERA 6: RECLAIMING IDENTITY & POST-WAR TRANSFORMATION

- What role does cultural expression play in reclaiming voice and dignity?
- How do communities move from survival to shaping their own narratives?

After completing the six historical eras, invite players to shift into visioning mode using the “Beautiful Future Cards.” This is a creative and hopeful transition that allows learners to reimagine the future for the Malaiyaga Tamil community, other marginalized groups, and themselves as active global citizens.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Set up the five Beautiful Cards on the play area.

Ask each player or group to take one card that resonate with them and spend 3–5 minutes reflecting individually.

Invite them to share what they envision based on the prompts in the card. They can respond creatively, in words, sketches, roleplays, or short group shares. Envision the future you want to see, connecting your current realities with those you may not see yet.

BEAUTIFUL FUTURE PROMPTS:

- 🌱 Imagine a future where schools and public spaces tell the full, honest stories of all communities, including Malaiyaga Tamils. What does a classroom or public memorial look like that connects learning, healing, and justice?
- 🌱 Visualize a local economy based on care, fairness, and dignity. What workspaces or opportunities exist for youth and marginalized workers? How are resources shared?
- 🌱 Imagine climate action that protects both land and people. What farming or labor systems support workers and nature? What is your role in this just green future?
- 🌱 Picture political participation as part of daily life—not just voting. How do different voices shape decisions? What systems ensure that all are heard?
- 🌱 Think of a future where Malaiyaga Tamil culture thrives. What stories, media, and arts are celebrated? How do you listen, support, or contribute to these expressions?



THIS FINAL STEP INVITES PLAYERS TO MOVE FROM REFLECTION TO IMAGINATION - AND FROM IMAGINATION TO AGENCY.

- What moments in the game were hardest to process? Why?
- How has your understanding of Sri Lankan history changed?
- What is your understanding of the concepts of Dignity, Resilience, and Community Power after playing this game?
- How does this history connect to other global stories of labor, migration, and identity?
- What does solidarity look like for you after playing this game?

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Allow emotions to surface. Validate discomfort as part of the learning.
- Encourage multiple truths and perspectives without forcing consensus.
- If players opt out of some challenges, invite them to reflect on why and support them to find alternatives, gain support or come to collective solutions.
- Use art, poetry, or journaling as alternative expression modes for those who prefer non-verbal processing.
- Highlight voices from the community; use audio clips, quotes, or guest facilitators where possible.

SUGGESTED SETTINGS

- Secondary and tertiary educational settings
- Community learning centers
- Teacher and youth facilitator training programs
- Peacebuilding and DEI workshops

FINAL THOUGHTS

This is more than a game. It is a doorway into a history that has long been erased or minimized. Facilitators have a vital role in ensuring the experience invites curiosity, compassion, and critical reflection. The aim is not only to learn about Malaiyaga Tamil history, but to explore what it means to belong, to be excluded, and to reclaim identity with dignity.

As the players journey through time and story, they are also invited to examine their own worldviews and consider how justice and solidarity can become part of their everyday commitments as learners, educators, and global citizens.