



## STRONG WOMEN = STRONG COFFEE CASE STUDY

### Women's Leadership Creates Pathway to Peace

*Princess Kumala Sug-Elardo and Muslim women work together to lead transition from armed conflict to coffee business in Kandayok, Sulu Province, Philippines.*

Princess Kumalah “Lalah” Sug-Elardo, a descendant of Sulu’s two royal houses, returned to her hometown of Kandayok in Panamao, Sulu in 2008. Her involvement in the community began with building a local water line so that women no longer had to fetch water from 5 kilometers away while men were involved in rebel groups. Soon after, in 2009, she formed a women-led cooperative, People’s Alliance for Progress Multi-Purpose Cooperative (PAP-MPC). The cooperative continues to improve coffee quality and grow its reach, year after year, including areas such as coffee selection, processing, and developing their own roasted coffee brand.



#### Philippines Political Context

Civil armed conflict in the Philippines has been ongoing since 1969, exacerbating poverty, especially in rural communities. When Princess Lalah arrived in her hometown Kandayok, many communities in the area were made up of rebels from the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Living conditions included no water or electricity, which severely limited livelihood options. “Women convinced their husbands to leave rebel groups. Many sold their guns and used their money for coffee production,” Princess Lalah said. “Governments had been encouraging rebels to stop participating in illegal activities. But they only decided to surrender their guns when the wives showed them how coffee can be a profitable business,” she added.

#### Philippines Country Context

- **Population** (2017): 104,900,000
- **Poverty** (2015): 8.3% population at International Poverty Line US\$1.90/day.
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII)** (2015) : 0.44  
0=equality, 1= high inequality
- **World Risk Index Ranking** (2015): 3  
1=high disaster risk, 171=low disaster risk

#### References

**Population & Poverty:** <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/PHL>

**GII** measures human development & status by gender: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>

**World Risk Index** measures exposure & vulnerability to natural hazards: <http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/ireus/Internationales/WorldRiskIndex/>



## Summary

To date, the PAP-MPC cooperative has over 13,000 beneficiaries. Women form 85 percent of PAP-MPC's beneficiaries. The cooperative offers opportunities for improved livelihoods and meaningful involvement of women in coffee, while allowing families to find peace after years of rebel conflict. In just a year, the income of families in the community increased to PHP 15,000 (US\$288.46), up from zero in 2008.

Today, members of PAP-MPC each earn around PHP 160,000 (US\$3,076.92) annually. Through the assistance of PAP-MPC, farmers are able to send their children to school with 15 graduating from college, 140 from high school, and 320 from elementary in 2016 alone.

The cooperative has been able to participate in several trainings through partnerships. With the support of organizations like the Philippine Coffee Board, Inc. (PCBI), the cooperative trains farmers, mostly women, on proper harvesting and processing of coffee. Through the help of Great Women Project and ECHOsi Foundation, community members were trained to make baskets that served as coffee packaging. Additionally, through grants from governments and foundations, the cooperative obtained its own generator and coffee roasters.

To ensure financial sustainability for the cooperative and the market community, Princess Lalah started bringing the Sulu coffee to Manila markets in 2012. The same year, Princess also joined the Philippine chapter of the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA), which helped to open doors to more retail and wholesale markets. Through partnerships and networking, she has found many coffee buyers and benefactors. Both Princess Lalah and the cooperative have received several awards for their great entrepreneurship. The cooperative now has branded roast coffee, Sulu Royal Coffee. Looking ahead, Princess Lalah shares, "I have been working with the farming community in my hometown for 10 years now and we are continually finding ways to further improve the economic stability of farmers."

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To connect with IWCA Philippines Chapter, including Princess Lalah, please visit the Chapters page of the IWCA website: [www.womenincoffee.org](http://www.womenincoffee.org).

### PAP-MC Partnerships

- Philippine Coffee Board, Inc. (PCBI)
- Great Women Project and ECHOsi Foundation
- ECHOstore Sustainable Lifestyle
- Management Association of the Philippines (MAP)
- MAP Agribusiness and Countryside Development Foundation
- International Food Exhibition (IFEX)
- IWCA Philippines



The mission of the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA) is to empower women in the international coffee community to achieve meaningful and sustainable lives; and to encourage and recognize the participation of women in all aspects of the coffee industry.