



STRONG WOMEN = STRONG COFFEE CASE STUDY

RETURNING TO COFFEE FARMING BUILDS A FUTURE

Jennifer “Jhen” Rimando left her family coffee farm in Sagada, Philippines, to build a life in the city. But it was returning home to coffee farming that provided the opportunity to realize her potential as a business and community leader.

Jennifer “Jhen” Rimando has coffee in her genes; she learned from her grandfather who pioneered coffee farming in her hometown of Sagada, Philippines at an altitude of 1,600+ meters above sea level. As an adult, she moved away from coffee. “I got married at an early age. My husband earn[ed] a few pesos as a cab driver but it [was] not enough to make ends meet for us and our three children. With our health deteriorating because of traffic and pollution, we left the city and went back to where I started—at the farm,” reveals Jhen.

Jhen's farm, "Ola Farms Organic Arabcia Coffee Production" is a full service organization. Not only does her family work together to harvest, hull, and dry the beans, they also have roasting capacity, and sell both green and roasted coffee.

A natural visionary, with a focus on both business and community, Jhen has grown Ola Farms to also become an accredited learning site for agroforestry principles. Government agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, students, and even companies visit her farm school where she shows them coffee trees along winding paths and sometimes involves them in picking ripe cherries.

Jhen was happy with all the progress but her natural curiosity led her to learn more beyond participating in training provided by the government. In 2016, she went to Manila and passed the intense exam on Q grading, making her the first Q Grader in Mountain Province.

Seeking to connect and support others, in 2017, she became part of Women in Coffee, an advocacy program of IWCA-Philippines with the Philippine Coffee Board Inc.



Jhen with IWCA-Philippines President, Pacita Juan

Philippines Country Context

- **Population** (2018): 106,700,000
- **Poverty** (2015): 6.1% % population at International Poverty Line US\$1.90/day.
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII)** (2017): .43
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: <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=ee5978152b5c4cd2aaaaaf3a14d379c8&extent=-180,-86.3126,180,88.0275>

About Jennifer "Jhen" Rimando

Jhen's experience with Women in Coffee has led her to travel to various parts of the country to meet other women in the value chain, inspire them to go into farming where they can also earn money, and enlighten them that farmers can be entrepreneurs and Q-graders as well. Farm owners, educators, and even café owners have been impressed by Jhen's commitment to share her successes, mistakes, and even dreams. She has taught and inspired more women - who not only advance their own work, but connect to further empower other women as members of IWCA Philippines.

Jhen's spirit in balancing coffee and family With her children and the trees all growing fast, and more institutions asking for her time to be a speaker on coffee farming, Jhen balances love for family and her community. She always calls her family before and after giving talks and demonstrations. Even after traveling for hours by land and air, from North to South, Jhen is still all smiles.

"With Jhen, you'll notice the consistency and the sincerity. There's quality in her coffee, in her presentations, and her demonstrations. You'll also feel the sincerity,"

- feedback shared by a participant in one of Jhen's presentations.



Jhen educating men and women at an IWCA-Philippines event.

With three island group represented and strong participation throughout the value chain, the IWCA Philippines chapter has been actively increasing its reach and impact since its founding in 2012. The group has a close alliance with the Philippine Coffee Board Inc. and media connections, to support their work to build the business and coffee quality skills of women in coffee across the country. In 2019, the Chapter partnered with USAID Green Invest Asia to produce a groundbreaking report *"Women in Coffee: Analysis of women's participation and opportunities for growth in coffee value chains in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam"*. To connect with the IWCA Philippines Chapter leadership, please visit the Chapters page of the IWCA website: www.womenincoffee.org. The USAID Green Invest Asia report can also be accessed from the IWCA website, via the Research page located under the Resources menu.

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.