



Image | Small-scale coffee farmer Lakeh Petsy, Sogopegu village, Eastern Highlands Province

# Your daily cup of coffee<sup>®</sup> changing women's roles in PNG

By MDF

**W**e all love a cup of coffee. Every day an estimated one billion people sit down to enjoy at least one cup of this favourite caffeine hit. For the coffee lovers, it might be more than one cup a day.

But as you admire the white foamy fern on your familiar flat white or are just enjoying a simple cup of coffee at home, pause for a minute to contemplate how your coffee consumption is changing the lives of women in rural communities in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Consumers are demanding better-quality coffee, and as part of this, they want to know more about where it comes from. This is leading international coffee brands to invest in single-origin coffees and consider issues including farming practices, environmental protection, the prevention of child labour, gender equality and other social factors.

As with many industries in PNG, the coffee industry has been dominated by men since it was introduced in the early 1920s. Traditionally, men made up the majority of coffee traders, coffee buyers and coffee suppliers.

However, as demand for better, single source coffee increases at the international markets, there has been a corresponding increase in opportunities for women to be part of the production and trade of this important crop for PNG.

To meet this changing demand, the coffee

industry in PNG is seeing more women take leadership roles in managing coffee production, thanks in part to the assistance of the Australian Government and other agencies over the years.

Women in PNG have also recognised the importance of coffee and are now rising to break cultural norms and general expectations. They are creating change in their household and communities through farming and managing coffee, and sometimes generating more income than men.

Lakeh Petsy of Sogopegu village in the Eastern Highlands Province (EHP) has become a small-scale coffee farmer with about three hectares of coffee trees.

Like majority of the women in her village, Lakeh relies on farming to earn an income. Lakeh's husband is a teacher in the village elementary school. With her husband in class most of the time, Lakeh takes full responsibility for managing her family's coffee plantation.

"I manage the coffee pickers, drying and pruning process and also sell the coffee. I have taken on managing our coffee block and I have even assisted in starting a coffee cooperative in my village," Lake excitedly explains.

Prior to farming coffee, Lakeh's family brought home around K400 fortnightly. With three children in school, Lakeh and her husband could hardly save for school fees and other family needs.

## About MDF

Market Development Facility is an Australian Government funded multi-country initiative which promotes sustainable economic development, through higher incomes for women and men, in our partner countries.

We connect individuals, businesses, governments and NGOs with each other, and with markets at home and abroad. This enhances investment and coordination and allows partnerships to flourish, strengthening inclusive economic growth.

MDF is supported by the Australian Government. It is implemented by Palladium, in partnership with Swisscontact.

After attending several coffee training workshops facilitated by the Coffees Industry Cooperation and also by the Australian Government-supported Market Development Facility and the PNG Coffee Export, Lakeh decided to put into practice her new knowledge in managing coffee.

With extra time and effort invested into her coffee plantation, Lakeh is now seeing positive results.

“With coffee, I am now able to support my children as far as university. My lifestyle has improved, even my children’s lifestyle has changed. I have extra money and I have taken on four orphans in my village to look after,” Lakeh said.

“The community respects me and I feel important and not just a housewife in the village,” she added.

Coffee is slowly changing the general stereotype and tradition in PNG concerning a woman’s place in society and is now providing greater employment opportunities for PNG women.

Coffee processors and exporters in the main coffee producing centres in PNG also employ hundreds of women in various roles.

Another example is Foni Ame from Okapa district in Eastern Highlands, who works as a green bean hand sorter with coffee exporter PNG Coffee Exports.

Foni used to live in her village in Okapa with her husband and three children. Due to the death of her husband in a tribal fight, Foni fled into town with her children to live with her sister.

“I saw that no one would support me and my



Lakeh’s life has improved. Using her savings from coffee, she has built a bigger permanent modern house and no longer lives in her small village hut. Lakeh now has access to electricity from a new generator she bought, and she was able to help her son buy a new truck to help the family.

“As my standard of living improves as I make money from coffee, I too try to help others in my village, especially the women – my in-laws and my sisters. I share my knowledge with them, and I have seen that some are doing much better now, and I am very happy,” Lakeh says.

Thanks in part to the increase in demand for single origin coffee, women in PNG are involved in all stages of coffee production including planting, nursery and cultivation, right through to selling coffee beans at the market. Their role goes beyond merely participating in the process, to being involved in making the key decisions about coffee production and on income generated from coffee.

children when I was in town, so I got this job. It’s not easy but it is important that I can save something to pay for my sons’ school fees, and also for the basics that I need for the house, like rice, oil, salt and tea,” Foni said.

Foni invests what she can from money she earns from sorting coffee to pay for her sons’ school fees because she strongly believes that educating them will help them to earn good jobs in the future. Foni’s eldest is in high school and two younger children are in primary school.

Foni uses the money she makes in the coffee industry to support her family, as do many women in PNG.

Coffee is the second leading crop and is one of the main sources of income for over 2.5 million PNG citizens, with 90 percent of coffee produced in PNG coming from smallholders in villages across the country.

In recent years, PNG exported an average of 60,000 tonnes of coffee annually, which makes nearly six billion cups of coffee.

The coffee industry is leading to meaningful change for women in PNG.

So, each morning as you sit down to enjoy your cup of coffee, take a moment to think about where your coffee comes from. Is your coffee from a sustainable and ethical source, and, if so, recognise the role it is playing to increase awareness of gender equality and

human rights in PNG.

Your cup of coffee is contributing to changes in gender roles and as a result, women in PNG are now getting more recognition for their hard work.

The coffee industry in PNG is slowly taking a new turn, with more female farmers coming up in the market and trading space. PNG's women coffee farmers are now at the forefront – no longer in the background.

# Enriching PNG's cocoa industry

By PHAMA Plus

The PNG Cocoa Board is working with the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus Program (PHAMA Plus) to enhance opportunities for cocoa-growing communities in PNG to access niche international markets.

Through the support of Australia and New Zealand, PHAMA Plus has been in collaboration with the PNG Cocoa Board since 2015, providing training in innovative farming practices that maximise profitability and income and maintain a sustainable value chain to improve international competitiveness for PNG sourced cocoa.

Smoke taint is a by-product of traditional wood-fired kiln driers, a key issue the partnership is working to address. PNG is a longstanding producer of high-quality cocoa on the global market; however, due to smoke taint affecting the flavour of cocoa, PNG's fine flavour status was recently reduced (from 90 percent to 75 percent) by the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO).

This directly impacts the premiums paid for cocoa



and influences the value of trade from international niche and specialty cocoa buyers. Recently, 57 local farmers and their team leaders in Lower Watut, Morobe Province and Aitape, West Sepik Province attended training sessions delivered by Cocoa Board officers on the correct post-harvest practices to better understand key stages of primary processing of cocoa, including harvesting, transportation, fermentation, drying and storage.

Proper implementation of these steps is paramount to producing high-quality cocoa. This training follows the installation of solar and kiln combination driers in each region. Cocoa Board of PNG Postharvest & Quality Assurance Program Team Leader Kenny Francis said, "With the right guidance and support, these farmer groups have the potential to consistently produce high-end cocoa fit for niche markets."

PHAMA Plus continues to support the PNG cocoa industry and the ongoing work across the coconut and coffee sectors represents a multipronged approach to boosting PNG trade and prosperity.

## About PHAMA Plus

The Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Program or PHAMA Plus provides practical and targeted assistance to help Pacific island countries manage regulatory aspects associated with exporting primary and value-added products. This encompasses gaining access for products into new markets, and helping to manage issues associated with maintaining and improving existing trade.

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