

# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact Office

2020 UN Women Asia-Pacific WEPS Awards Regional Awardee Profile



## Coca-Cola Far East Limited



**Jonah de Lumen-Pernia**  
Franchise Operations Director  
of Coca-Cola Philippines

### Coca-Cola Far East Limited

**Country:** Philippines  
**Employees:** 5,001-10,000  
**Industry:** Beverage

**Website**  
<https://www.coca-colacompany.com/>



### Supporting Micro and Small Enterprises in the Philippines

Micro and small enterprises like sari-sari stores play an important role in growing the country's economy and developing communities in the Philippines. Majority (above 80%) of these sari-sari stores are owned or run by women and are usually operated out of these women's family homes.

In a study conducted by Coca-Cola Philippines through AC Nielsen showed that income from sari-sari stores contributes significantly to the overall household finances. The same study noted that women earning an income are more likely to invest in the education, nutrition, and health of their children—which in turn plays a significant role in breaking the cycle of poverty for their family, and for the community.

In response to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals on empowering women, the Coca-Cola Company implemented the 5by20 global initiative to economically empower 5 million women by 2020.

In line with this, Coca-Cola Philippines launched the Sari-Sari Store Training and Access to Resources (STAR) Program in 2011 with the goal of empowering over 200,000 women in micro-retailer businesses across the Philippines. In March 2020, the program surpassed their initial goal, reaching over 200,000 women.

**“At Coca-Cola, we believe that investing in and empowering women not only benefits the company, but more importantly, benefits their entire society and our shared future.**

**- Antonio V. Del Rosario, President of Coca-Cola Philippines & Vice President of Coca-Cola Franchise East (PH, VN, KH) ASEAN and South Pacific**

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## Empowering Retailers Across the Country

The STAR Program aimed to empower these women retailers, who often have no business background, by providing business and life skills training, access to business resources, and access to mentoring support. This is in line with WeEmpowerAsia's Women's Empowerment Principles—namely promoting education, training and professional development for women.



*Watch the testimonial video to learn more!*

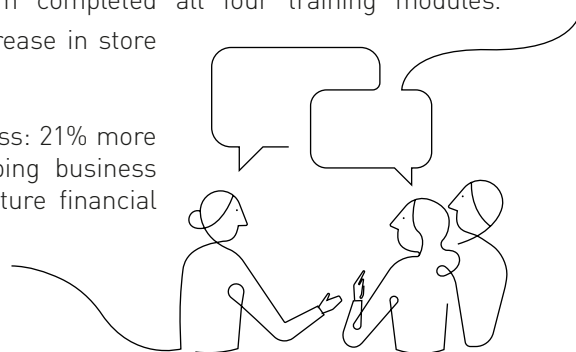
Women retailers-turned scholars who participated in the nationwide STAR Program had weekly four-hour long training sessions. Over the course of 12 weeks, women learned about basic entrepreneurship and gender sensitivity, specifically practicing gender-based values and entrepreneurship skills, planning a business, managing a business, and accessing resources. Training sessions combined classroom learning reinforced with activities and applications on their current business.

To conduct these trainings, Coca-Cola Philippines partnered with the Technical Skills and Development Authority (TESDA), a government institution with a network of training facilities in almost all provinces. The company also partnered with micro finance institutions (MFIs) based in different regions in the Philippines, who provided access to resources such as small loans and business support for the women retailers. Women scholars were encouraged to become members of these partner organizations and linked with local women's circles for access to peer mentoring and continuity of good business habits.

Government processes posed a challenge to the timelines of both the company and their partner institutions, but through the creation of a technical working group led by experts from both Coca-Cola Philippines and TESDA who worked closely for national planning, target setting, convergence Program monitoring and evaluation to inform the decisions made by the National Steering Committee of the program. The National Steering Committee also governed the inter-agency management and coordinating system which was key to addressing communications and operational gaps between Coca-Cola Philippines, TESDA, and partner institutions.

Coca-Cola Philippines' strategic partnerships led to the STAR Program reaching 17 regions, 81 provinces, and 778 cities in the Philippines. Based on an impact evaluation study conducted by IPSOS and commissioned by Coca-Cola Philippines, nearly all women in the STAR Program completed all four training modules. Women retailers reported 17% increase in business revenue, 12% increase in store income, and 20% increase in store inventory.

The women also used what they learned in the training for their business: 21% more women began applying percentage mark-up, while 16% began keeping business records. Most of all, 32% more women feel confident about their future financial stability.



## Sustainability through Program Graduates and Adapting to COVID-19

In the spirit of true women empowerment and enablement, the sari-sari store owners who graduated from Coca-Cola Philippines' STAR Program continued to organize amongst themselves, eventually becoming a formal organization called the Philippine Association of Sari-Sari and Carinderia Owners (PASCO). To date, PASCO has 7,000 members who participate in the organization's advocacy work on national policy regarding their trade--which is traditionally seen as part of the informal economy of the Philippines.

Since the program's implementation in 2011, the program design has adjusted to the different needs of women retailers. Business coaching modules, business start-up planning for repatriated women overseas workers, and upskilling for women artisans were added on top of the existing program training. To support women retailers during the COVID-19 pandemic, the STAR Program will transition to a digital and online version called iSTAR.

**“The ripple effect of helping women achieve economic empowerment will contribute to a viable solution towards breaking poverty cycles, creating sustainable families, communities, and businesses.”**  
- Jonah de Lumen-Pernia, Franchise Operations Director of Coca-Cola Philippines

### Women's Empowerment Principles



High-Level Corporate Leadership



Treat all Women and Men Fairly at Work without Discrimination



Employee Health, Well-Being and Safety



Education and Training for Career Advancement




Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices




Community Initiatives and Advocacy



Measurement and Reporting

 [asiapacificwepsawards.org](http://asiapacificwepsawards.org)

   [@unwomenasia](https://www.instagram.com/unwomenasia)  [linkedin.com/showcase/weprinciples/](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/weprinciples/)

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