CQI Final Report
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Mindanao Productivity in Agricultural Commerce and Trade (MinPACT)

Improving coffee quality, knowledge and value for the growth and development of the Philippine coffee sector

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Acronyms used on this report
BCAA Barista Coffee Academy of Asia
CQI Coffee Quality Institute
DA Department of Agriculture
DTI Department of Trade and Industry
ICP In-country partner
MinPACT Mindanao Productivity in Agricultural Commerce and Trade
PCBi Philippine Coffee Board Inc.
PCC Philippine Coffee Council
In support of USDA/MinPACT program goals to increase the income of coffee farm families, increase availability and sustainability of services to value chain actors, and support the development of the Philippine coffee sector, in partnership with ACDI/VOCA, CQI designed and executed a comprehensive plan to elevate the coffee sector to understand and strive for international quality standards, increase supply of quality coffee, achieve higher premium prices paid to producers, and build a representational coffee institution. CQI’s three-year program activities included:

I. Strengthening the Philippine Coffee Board to be a cohesive organization representing Philippine coffee interests in domestic and global markets, and developing in-country partners to support current and future coffee improvement initiatives. This included providing support for their annual Coffee Summit.

II. Developing coffee laboratories to build the capacity to evaluate coffees using internationally recognized standards and protocols.

III. Training coffee tasters to build a national body of skilled cuppers to assess the quality of coffee using internationally recognized standards and protocols. This included basic cupping training and CQI’s Q Arabica and Q Robusta Grader training.

IV. Supporting ACDI/VOCA’s technical extension work and building content for training manuals and bulletins for coffee producers. This included sector analysis and recommendations, agronomic and post-harvest handling consultations, and authoring a quality practices and standards guide specifically for the Philippines.

V. Creating market linkages and awareness of domestic and international coffee trade. This included two national coffee quality competitions, trade events and roaster-quality control training for the roasters and coffee shops.

**The Way Forward**
Perceivable changes based on program impact show that across the value chain people are talking about how to produce, harvest, process and market coffees based on quality and (green) market value. There is an increased knowledge that they can control the final product quality can create trade opportunities based on cup quality.

CQI believes there is an opportunity for the Philippines to make a new “first impression” by reintroducing itself to the global market, as well as an opportunity to take advantage of the growing demand from local market for domestically produced coffee. This new look prioritizes being a global leader in producing Fine Robusta coffees as well as advocating for producing high value Specialty Arabica coffees. As a coffee origin, the Philippines unique strengths are abundant natural resources and distinctive micro-climates, a large population with huge economic potential, a long history of coffee cultivation and great academic institutions.

With efforts applied from all sectors -- universities, government agencies, trade associations, producers and producer groups, roasters and retailers, traders and the private sector -- the way forward should include concentrated work in the following areas:
1. Adopt international standards for robusta and arabica coffees and disseminate this through the entire value chain;
2. Continue to train cuppers;
3. Support a trade association to enhance the reputation of Philippine coffee for domestic and international consumers;
4. Identify micro-climates producing Fine Robusta and Specialty Arabica coffees and encourage seedling production and planting;
5. Support cupping competitions and programs that reward quality and create awareness of high value coffee among roasters and buyers;
6. Communicate with producers about opportunities, standards and market driven opportunities for differentiated, high value coffee; and
7. Discovery of high quality coffees through partnering with national research efforts, such as Cavite State University’s National Coffee Research and Development Center.

Executive Summary
Association and partnership development with the Philippine Coffee Board was productive. PCB’s completed, early in the project, planning that allowed them to hone their mission and vision and align their capacities alongside strategic objectives. Post-project they have plans to continue their annual summit, host regional coffee competitions, and produce coffee seminars and farm tours. A tripartite ICP agreement was signed with CQI allowing them to grade coffee. They were instrumental in the organization of the project’s Q Grader training, and critical to the development of the two national coffee competitions.

The Barista Coffee Academy of Asia, as well as their associated trade company Equilibrium, successfully completed SCA lab certification for their Manila and Davao labs. BCAA is also one of the trusted actors in the Philippine environment and are predicted to be future leaders; they are now collaborating with producers on quality control and value-added sales for the domestic market.

Cupper training reached diverse sectors including: coffee laboratories, schools, government agencies, trade associations, social organizations, producers and producer groups, roasters, retailers, import and export trade, and universities. MinPACT had a notably robust training schedule with over 19 cupping courses in three years. In the end, 220 individuals received training with 146 ultimately taking CQI’s rigorous Q Course. At project completion the Philippines has 67 licensed graders: 36 Q Arabica Graders and 31 Q Robusta Graders, far exceeding the project’s original targets. These Q Graders are now in the position to represent quality production and standards across sectors and provide producers with feedback to trade their product on cup quality and value. Also, they can provide professional services for the industry and drive a specialty coffee-based trading structure.

CQI provided technical guidance and support to the ACDI/VOCA team, building content for training manuals and bulletins as well as delivering train-the-trainer activities. CQI consultants Dan Khun, Daniel Mulu, Joel Shuler and CQI Technical Director, Mario Fernandez, contributed to the project’s technical manual: Arabica Coffee: Good Agricultural Practices in Arabica Coffee Production and Post-Harvest Handling. Overall, adopting internationally recognized coffee standards for Fine Robusta and Specialty Arabica coffees is still a critical issue here, but as groups such as PCBi, BCAA and the private sector drive international standards, national adoption may follow.
The green coffee quality competitions proved to be excellent capacity building events for the entire sector. The competitions saw strong support from the private sector, with a high rate of participation by producer groups and local Q Graders. CQI deployed five high impact Coffee Corps volunteers as competition judges, all experts in arabica and robusta quality, coffee markets and trends. Ten local Q Graders were recruited into the competition to screen samples as well as learn from the international panel. Many key groups learned how to plan and manage a reputable green coffee quality competition. Several groups, including PCBi, BCAA and PCC, are now in the position to move ahead with regional and/or national competitions.

In 2017 and 2018, CQI supported MinPACT stakeholders at the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Expo in the USA. Activities in both years included promotion on the show floor as well as a CQI curated public cupping for a targeted list of international buyers and trend spotters. This kind of event can be easily replicated for trade events in Europe and Asia under the leadership of PCBi, BCAA or another agency.

Roaster and quality control training programs targeted coffee roasters and coffee shops in Davao and Manila, focusing on best practices for improved market as well as perspective and knowledge of why this is necessary to drive sector development. Quality control and roaster training is an opportunity for organizations like PCBi and other public sector programs to provide practical, skills-based training for the retail coffee sector.

I. Association Strengthening and In-Country Partner Development

CQI was tasked with working with the PCBi in their endeavor to become a lead organization for the Philippines coffee sector. This work included a strategic planning workshop with the board of directors in year one, follow up support in year two and three, and notable coffee experts to be speakers at their annual Coffee Summit.

**Philippine Coffee Board, inc**

In 2016 CQI led PCBi’s board through a series of exercises to refine the group’s purpose and goals. These focused discussions were rooted in past experience but pulled them in the direction of how to involve the entire sector in the development of differentiated coffees based on improved quality. A barrier to their success may be lack of trust for this agency, which was beyond the control of MinPACT. However, the board was dedicated to developing as a long-term actor in the coffee value chain. In the end, the group refined their vision and mission extensively and wrote specific priorities. These priorities formed the basis for an actionable plan with priorities based on real objectives, goals, strategies and a plan to drive work.

PCBi reports that post MinPACT they will continue to organize an annual coffee summit, host coffee competitions and seminars, publish their bi-annual guide, and host farm tours. Also, they have started their own nursery, with seeds coming

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PCBi ratified their new vision and mission on June 11, 2016 at Commune Coffee in Manila</th>
<th>PCBi Vision: Developing Fine Robustas and promoting Specialty Arabicas</th>
<th>PCBi Mission</th>
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<td></td>
<td>To establish the Philippine Islands as the world’s preeminent supplier of high quality <em>Fine Robusta</em> coffees and to create a world class promotion program for <em>Specialty Arabica</em> coffees.</td>
<td>To unify the fragmented Philippine coffee industry into an engine of economic growth.</td>
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from selected gene banks and created a network of coffee members, called the Philippine Coffee Network. All of these future looking activities were addressed in their 2016 strategic plan. Additionally, they have expressed the desire to continue to work with CQI on Q Grader education in the Philippines, organizing Pre-Q, Q Grader and retake classes.

**In-Country Partnerships**

CQI and PCBi signed an agreement in 2016 to be CQI’s In-Country Partner (ICP). CQI considers an ICP to be a neutral body to the local coffee industry, able to collaborate on and promote transparency of green coffee grading and uphold Q coffee grading standards. CQI requires an ICP to maintain integrity in its implementation of coffee grading protocols, have professional level communication skills, adequate administrative and record-keeping systems and staff, and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of samples presented for grading. Long-term, an ICP serves not only as the primary point of contact for CQI, but also as a leader in national quality improvement initiatives, marketing programs, and the support of national cupper training and education efforts.

CQI and PCBi agreed that another local agency was needed to process coffee samples, as PCBi lacked a coffee laboratory. A resulting tripartite ICP agreement was executed to include the Barista Coffee Academy of Asia (BCAA) to act as the agent to grade Q Coffees on behalf of CQI and PCBi. CQI agreed to waive all Q Grading fees for the duration of the MinPACT program.

At the conclusion of the MinPACT, the CQI-PCBi-BCAA agreement still stands, and CQI considers both agencies capable of fulling their roles. This tripartite agreement may serve to bridge the trust gap between the private sector and a national representative organization as BCAA is not only well known and trusted, but also a participant in the Department of Trade and Industry’s (DTI) newly formed Philippine Coffee Council (PCC).

In regard to Q grading coffees, both PCBi and BCAA report producers struggled with coffee grading service fees (Q Coffees). BCAA director, Cherry Cruz reports that, “The administrative fee (levied by local agencies, not CQI) is high for farmers and cooperatives to pay. They want more information provided to them on top of the grade and assessment of their coffee. They needed more recommendations to address the defects found in their coffees.”

CQI’s permeant infrastructure allows continued support for these organizations to provide coffee assessment services (grading) to producers and processors, if they desire. The Q Certificate can be used in the future by coffee owners in the Philippines to promote specialty grade coffees domestically and for export.
PCBi Coffee Summit 2016 and 2017

CQI supported PCBi at their 9th and 10th annual Coffee Summit by providing recognized coffee industry experts to further the discussion on national development, quality standards and adoption of national standards, cupping, and production/processing to improve quality and create differentiated coffee for domestic and international markets. CQI speakers including Ted Lingle, who spoke on 1) developing Fine Robustas and promoting Specialty Arabicas and 2) Experimental learning in Asia: The Yunnan Coffee Exchange; Dr. Mario Fernandez delivered a presentation on regional profiling, geographic indicators, denominations of origin and other strategies to differentiate a region’s coffee; Joel Shuler examined CQI’s Q System as a tool to aggregate coffee value and develop relationship coffee; and Samuel Gurel spoke on 1) market demand for naturals, honeys and Fine Robustas and 2) tools for community development change.

This involvement resulted in a deeper, industry-wide understanding of factors that contribute to the knowledge of the modern practice required to add value to coffee, including modification of acceptable drying methods, farming and post-harvest handling, access to and quality of processing equipment, centralized trade support and generating market pressure for standards. As well, the 2016 summit resulted in a multi-agency working group to oversee the first annual green coffee competition.

During the 2016 summit, CQI’s technical director concluded that pressure to adhere to quality standards will largely come for buyers. The investment to train buyers, for example Kalsada and Frog Kaffee, should continue along with Q Grader training to augment the knowledge and therefore demands of coffee buyers. Since the Philippines is a net importer of coffee by a large margin, there is a huge potential for doing this by increasing the barista culture and raising the bar on internal consumption. Importantly, the current drying practices in the country (accepting coffee up to 15% moisture) are highly hazardous and unacceptable. Steps need to be taken to stop this bad practice immediately.

II. Coffee Laboratory Development

Respected and authorized coffee labs are a critical component to build the capacity of the coffee sector to evaluate coffees in a professional manner as well as encourage the discovery and trade of quality-differentiated coffees. An appropriate coffee lab environment provides objective, consistent lab analysis and is an integral part of grading and evaluation of specialty coffee. Developing these environments is critical and CQI has historically partnered with the Specialty Coffee Association on their lab certification program.
During the course of the MinPACT project, the BCAA, as well as the associated trade company Equilibrium, successfully completed work to achieve SCA lab certification for their Manila and Davao labs, for 12 students per location.

BCAA and Equilibrium have showed an extremely high capacity for organization and follow through. Their top-notch administrative staff enabled the project to efficiently deliver 19 CQI cupping training courses during the life of this project. This example of a private sector group building the physical and human capacity to create professional cupping lab environments and feedback mechanisms to producing groups is commendable. BCAA and Equilibrium appear to be trusted actors in the Philippine environment and are predicted to continue as strong leaders.

BCAA has gained the reputation of being at the forefront of quality coffee education. They said “While the school has initiated CQI Q Grader training classes as early as 2015 (pre MinPACT), the take up was slow simply because the Q Course was not yet familiar to the local industry. With the collaborative efforts and classes which BCAA had with MinPACT/ CQI, coffee players have “warmed up” to the Q and now the market is open to more of those classes. More importantly, a lot of Q Graders are now out in the market making it easy for BCAA to continuously work on propagating quality coffee courses from green grading & buying, sensory evaluation, and all things specialty coffee. The local Q Graders are helping us develop coffee quality awareness. Our challenge is to continuously raise the bar of coffee education in the country.”

Equilibrium, with their base in Davao, reports that, through the CQI-ACDI/VOCA-MinPACT project, “We now identify partner farmers and work out both green buying as well as diving deeper into more collaborative education efforts with some of them. Right now, the company has signed contracts to purchase our green coffee from local robusta and arabica farmers. As of this year we have successfully replaced some imported arabica varieties with locally available arabica coffees which have very close flavor profiles, which is a major achievement. We see the major challenge is to make local prices of green coffees competitive within the acceptable quality level compared to imported varieties. The challenge for us as a roaster and coffee distributor is to continuously strike a balance between supporting local farmers and importing green coffees. As of the moment, we have already provided farming implements and training to two cooperatives in Mindanao. This is to sustain our collaboration with them and at the same time be sure of quality harvest and green coffee deliveries.”
III. Cupping Training: Introductory Level and CQI Q Grader Training

A critical step to develop a national strategy around quality standards, differentiated coffees and to positively impact coffee production, is to establish a national trained body of cuppers who are able to assess the quality of coffees produced in the Philippines. This quality assessment, in turn, can be connected directly to production and processing outcomes as well as trade and market growth.

Cupper training reached diverse sectors including: coffee laboratories and schools (4%), government agencies and trade associations (6%), social organizations (4%), producers and producer groups (31%), roasters and retailers (25%), import and export trade (18%) and Universities (8%). This program had a notably robust training schedule and CQI coordinated 19 cupping courses over three years, training 220 individuals; 146 ultimately took CQI’s rigorous Q Course. At project completion the Philippines has 67 licensed graders: 36 Q Arabica Graders and 31 Q Robusta Graders, exceeding the projects original targets by over 100%.

From CQI’s perspective, the way the industry has responded to Q Grader training has been with professional enthusiasm and dedication. The project’s training schedule allowed student’s access to retake tests, which really helped many achieve their goals to become a Q Grader. The distribution of Q Graders across sectors shows a strong representation from the producer sector, local roaster/retailer as well as trade and commerce. This is a key link to establishing

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<th>CQI Q Grader Training Results MinPACT 2016 -2018</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Start Q Graders</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Q Arabica</td>
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<tr>
<td>0 Q Robusta</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Total</td>
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Figure 4: MinPACT Cupping Training across all sectors

Figure 5: MinPACT Q Robusta Graders only, by sector

Figure 6: MinPACT Q Arabica Graders only, by sector
domestic and export seed-to-cup market linkages. These 67 Q Graders are now in the position to represent quality coffee production and standards across sectors and provide producers the feedback needed to trade their product on cup quality and value. Also, they can provide professional services for the industry and drive a specialty coffee-based trading structure.

Of note is the Philippine’s response to Fine Robusta coffee. A defined robusta strategy starts with trained cuppers; 31 trained robusta professionals puts the Philippines far out in front of other robusta origins, including Uganda (12), Vietnam (18) or Brazil (0). These program’s activities brought many influential robusta traders from Europe and S. Korea, starting a young robusta trade relationship. Traders and quality control experts from Switzerland, USA, S. Korea and China were able to link directly with producers during the Q trainings and competitions and were very impressed with the cup quality (flavour, aroma, clean cup) of the robusta samples.

IV. Technical Support and Consultations

CQI provided technical guidance and support to the ACDI/VOCA coffee team during initial phases of the project (2016-2017) building content for the program’s training manuals and bulletins as well as train-the-trainer activities. Each trainer is expected to train additional community resource people in the field to pass the coffee information on to farmers and cooperatives. CQI consultants Dan Khun, Daniel Mulu, Joel Shuler and CQI Technical Director, Mario Fernandez, contributed to the project’s technical manual: Arabica Coffee: Good Agricultural Practices in Arabica Coffee Production and Post-Harvest Handling.

Dan Kuhn | Arabica Coffee Production: Seed to Harvest (Train-the-Trainer)
Knowledge of arabica coffee crop establishment and management is limited in Mindanao and there is a need to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of core aspects of starting and maintaining an arabica coffee farm/plantation among coffee stakeholders. For this train-the-trainer event, participants were selected from cooperatives, government and universities. Subjects included varietal selection, nursery establishment and management, crop establishment and maintenance, and general good agricultural practices for coffee production. The technical content developed for this seed-to-harvest training was incorporated into the manual published by ACDI/VOCA: Arabica Coffee: Good Agricultural Practices in Arabica Coffee Production and Post-Harvest Handling.
Daniel Mulu | Coffee Harvest, Post-Harvest Handling and Processing (Train-the-Trainer)
A train-the-trainer event on specialty coffee harvest handling/processing in Bukidnon and Kapatagan included quality production, post-harvest handling best practices, processing practicum (washed, semi-washed and sundried natural), standard equipment facilities (pulping, milling, grading). Activities included harvesting for specialty coffee processing, post-harvest best practices, standard tools and equipment, storage and transportation as well as a drying system (raised African drying tables). A construction design process was developed and documented. The technical content developed for this training was incorporated into the manual: *Arabica Coffee: Good Agricultural Practices in Arabica Coffee Production and Post-Harvest Handling.*

Joel Shuler | Philippine Coffee Standards Report
Green coffee standards have evolved in response to quality demands by green coffee buyers, mainly to ensure a homogenous commodity product as coffee trade expands. However, more recently several standards have arisen to do just the opposite and separate higher quality coffees from the commercial standard, based either on the presence of superior quality attributes or sometimes guarantees regarding their means of production. Regardless of purpose, most green coffee standards comprise similar aspects including physical count, sensory analysis, moisture content, sampling, packaging/labeling, and guarantee for hygiene/absence of toxicity.

CQI delivered a comprehensive *Philippines Coffee Standards Report*. This July 2016 report detailed a summary of current national, trade, and international coffee standards. It also provided a summary of current coffee-related standards in the Philippines and recommended modifications to PNA/BAFPS 001:2012 with justifications within the context of defining a higher quality coffee segment that is

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*Figure 8: CQI Harvest, Post-Harvest and Processing | Train-the-Trainer. Students practice floating and sorting cherries for post-harvest processing.*

*Figure 9: CQI Harvest, Post-Harvest and Processing | Train-the-Trainer. Students learn how to construct raised drying racks for coffee.*

*Figure 10: CQI consultant Joel Shuler conducts a practical green grading exercise with students in Bukidnon, based on SCA green grading standards. Students learn to identify defects and correlation to causes such as milling, insect or poor storage.*
commensurate with the demands and expectations of the international buying community for such coffees. The majority of standards reviewed in this report are voluntary, search and experience standards. It is noted, however, that credence standards are playing an ever-increasing role in the coffee industry and incorporation of one such standard is listed among the recommendations.

This content was incorporated into ACDI/VOCA’s sector advocacy work as well as the manual: Arabica Coffee: Good Agricultural Practices in Arabica Coffee Production and Post-Harvest Handling.

V. Market Linkages:

National Coffee Competitions; Trade Events; Roaster/Quality Control Training

Green Coffee Quality Competitions
CQI, in partnership with the PCBi, helped design and implement two consecutive green coffee quality competitions to develop and promote the production of high quality Specialty Arabica and Fine Robusta coffees. This capacity building event saw strong support from the private sector with high rate of participation by producer groups and local Q Graders. CQI deployed five high impact Coffee Corps volunteers to be competition judges over the course of two years. These international judges are green coffee buyers and experts in arabica and robusta quality assessment as well as international markets and trends. Ten local Q Graders were recruited into the competition to screen samples as well as learn from the international panel about how to manage a reputable green coffee quality competition. This included how to implement competition rules, sample management, +roasting, managing time and ensuring a fair and transparent competition.

The year one (February 2017) competition was a successful inaugural event and well received by the local industry. PCBi, in cooperation with Cavite State University, ACDI/VOCA and other stakeholders, were the lead agency in the design and execution of this competition. PCBi employed a respected local agent, Robert Francisco, to work with CQI to ensure the first year’s competition was planned and executed to international standards. Official rules and regulation were published by ACDI/VOCA. About 80 samples were submitted, and the top six winning coffees received national and international promotion. Top scoring (#1) coffees were:

- Arabica, 85.75, from producer Adelina Tarinao, Dalwangan, Malaybalay, Bukidnon region X
- Robusta, 83.42, from producer Cecilia Aringo (Imelda Terino), Bagong Silang, Maramag, Bukidnon region X.

The top winner producers were awarded with a trip to the SCA event in Seattle and were presented at a public cupping session. Stakeholders and producers were able to meet with interested international buyers. Because this kind of quality based green coffee competition was unknown to the Philippines, it was

Figure 11: Local Q Graders and CQI international judges worked together to screen samples and grade the coffees during the first national green coffee competition, which was held at Cavite State University.

Winning coffees were featured at a public cupping session during the SCA Expo in the USA.
very important the first year be transparent and fair to allow everyone to understand the purpose and impact of this kind of quality-building event – and embrace it in future years.

PCBi’s Pacita Juan reports that producers now use the 2017 inaugural competition as a reference for quality coffee production. Also, a sub agency of the DA that distributes coffee processing equipment via the Coffee Enterprise Program validated the competition program success because three of the seven winners were program recipients.

Year two (March 2018) was the “second generation” of this event, improved with lessons learned in 2017. Improvements included revision of rules, sample collection protocols, judge selection and competition format. This was a positive step to make this kind of industry endorsed green coffee competition and promotion event respected with public and private sectors. 100 Samples were submitted, and the top six winning coffees received national and international promotion.

Top scoring (#1) coffees were:

- Arabica, 87.06, from producer Oliver Oliem, Caliking Atok, Benguet region CAR14
- Robusta, 85.96, from producer Rodolfo Aciong, Urzadan, Cayus, Llocos Sur region R0107)

The top winner producers were also awarded with a trip to the SCA event in Seattle and were present for the SCA cupping event. Pacita Juan, PCBi’s board president said that, “This single event instantly elevated quality standards for our coffee. There is a sense of order here that was missing before. Producers were excited to participate because size or location did not matter. Indigenous people who participated even won in the natural category despite their lack of water and electricity in their towns. The orientation about different processing methods gave all the producers hope that their coffees could score despite what they thought were unfavorable conditions”

The 2018 event was incorporated into the DTI’s national coffee strategy and consequently the newly formed Philippine Coffee Council (PCC). PCC’s involvement included the formation of a working group to participate in the updated competition design and planning, refining and publishing the rules, and event participation. This second year saw much more interest from the private sector, as evident by the level of involvement via PCC’s working group. BCAA’s Cherry Cruz was the lead point of contact for the group and hosted the competition at her Manila coffee lab; PCBi’s new executive director, Robert Francisco, was the key point person for the activity and once again ensured the event’s logistical success. 2018 also had a deeper bench of local Q Graders helping with event execution and serving as judges alongside the international judges.
In 2018, CQI international judges all agreed the quality of the 100 samples submitted was excellent, with a noticeable improvement over the 2017 coffee samples. The judges also reported increased coffee scores across the board (as compared to 2017) shows farmers are experimenting with change and improving farming practices and post-harvest handling processes.

In fact, some of the judges noted the quality of the robusta was “some of the best we have ever tasted” and head judge Samuel Gurel noted that, “as head judge for this competition for the last two years I saw an extremely dramatic improvement not only in the coffees submitted for this competition, but also in the skill of the local Q Graders.”

**Trade Events**

In 2017 and 2018, CQI supported representation of MinPACT stakeholders at the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Expo in the USA. Activities in both years included promotion on the show floor as well as a CQI curated public cupping for a targeted list of international buyers and trend spotters. These cupping events are an effective tool to introduce international coffee buyers to the Philippines as an origin for unique arabica and robusta coffees. In partnership with CQI, a targeted guest list brought the right people into the room to taste these coffees. Each year there were about 50 people in attendance and 25 active cuppers tasting the coffees. This kind of event can be easily replicated at coffee events in Europe and Asia under the leadership of PCB or the Philippine Coffee Council.

**SCA 2017**

CQI hosted a delegation from PCB in the CQI booth on the show floor. The delegation who attended the 2017 Global Coffee Expo were keen to understand more about the specialty coffee sector outside of the Philippines, and how this impact can affect domestic coffee production, consumption and business. Representatives from the DA and DTI, PCB, a few producers and the private sector had opportunities to talk with buyers, roasters, retailers, NGOs, producer groups, equipment and machine manufactures. The message of “quality drives price and interest” was this event’s educational theme and was not lost on this group. The general reception to coffee information coming from the Philippines was enthusiastic and sincere; there is high degree of interest in this origin for several reasons, including emotional, historic, developmental

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Gloria Pedroza from NKG Quality Control in Switzerland was a 2018 competition judge. Ms. Pedroza is an internationally recognized expert on both arabica and robusta coffee and has influence in the robusta market in Europe, which is accepting of quality and value differentiated robusta coffees.

She remarks that, “The quality of the samples of coffee (for the 2018 competition) was excellent and I was particularly impressed by the quality of the robusta coffees. In my opinion, the quality of these samples is comparable to some of the best robusta I have tasted, and this showed me that the Philippines has a potential to produce excellent robusta. It was interesting to see the diversity of coffee profiles due to different processing methods; the highlight for me was to see the quality that can be achieved. From my perspective as a green buyer, robusta from Philippines has a good chance to be sold as Fine Robusta in the international markets.”

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**Figure 14:** PCB board member Nicki Matti at the CQI booth during the SCA Expo in Seattle, 2017. This was the first time that the Philippines were represented at this important coffee industry event.
and even for novelty. All parties seemed to understand the clear opportunity for all sectors to benefit from this level of national interest.

The project’s strategy of implementing a quality driven coffee competition and then targeting these coffees to be featured at an event went very well. Having producers at the event also proved to be very important as it helped the buyers connect not just with the coffee but with the people behind the coffee. The overall reaction at the cupping was extremely positive, with the robusta garnering much praise. Several micro-roasters are interested in samples and purchasing coffees in support of this project, and one large US roaster (Farmer Brothers) requested samples.

**SCA 2018**

Once again, CQI hosted a public cupping, but this year the Philippine delegation had their own booth. This public cupping session was the second year where Philippine coffees were available to be tasted and promoted. The SCA cupping was filled to capacity and there were many positive comments made about the coffees.

Mario Fernandez, CQI Technical Director, supported this project early in (2015) with a technical training trip to Davao and consultations with the ACDI/VOCA coffee team on good processing practices. After the 2018 SCA cupping he reported that, “Based on my previous experience with Philippine coffees, I was expecting the robusta samples to be very good and I was not disappointed. I think Philippine robusta can be counted among the best in the world, as Ted Lingle has long insisted. However, it was the 2018 arabicas that surprised me. Compared to all the Philippine arabicas I had cupped before, the ones on the table this year really impressed me with their sweet and mild profile.”
The end result of the Philippine presence at the 2017 and 2018 SCA Expo is the Philippines is no longer an “undiscovered” origin but rather a “new” origin that needs to be explained to the global coffee community. Organizations such as PCBi, DTI, DA and PCC have experienced what it takes to have a strategic presence at a global coffee trade event. It is important these kinds of trade events are connected to quality improvement initiatives and coffee quality events, such as regional or national competitions. Even though exports from the Philippines are currently minimal, the strong domestic demand, along with outside interest in the Philippines’ market, (e.g., Toby’s Estates), will benefit producers who are adopting best practices and adding value to their green beans.

Roaster and Quality Control Training

To build a greater understanding of specialty, differentiated coffee markets, and support growth of the coffee sector in the Philippines, it is critical to improve overall roasting practices for the domestic market. This roaster and quality control training program targeted coffee roasters and coffee shops in Davao, with some effect in Manila as well. The training program focused on best practices for coffee roasters to prepare coffees for an improved market, as well as perspective and knowledge of why this is necessary to drive sector growth and development.

CQI used staff and Coffee Corps volunteers to train local businesses in roaster operations, basics of green coffee evaluation, roasting theory and practice, quality control and product development. Businesses and organizations trained include Coffee for Peace, Mt. Apo Coffee, FROG, PCBi, Commune Coffee, Yardsick, Toby’s Estate, Ephemera Traders, BCAA and Equilibrium.

CQI real-life/real-time roasting workshops accelerated learning through doing, and at the same time underscoring the idea that quality coffee can be improved (or destroyed) at the roasting and operations level. The CQI trainer noted that “roasters here seemed to have trouble with their equipment and may be totally unaware of how to remedy those issues.” Quality control androaster training is an opportunity for organizations like PCBi and other public sector programs to provide practical, skills-based training for the retail coffee sector. The specialty coffee market in the Philippines will continue to grow and having continued access to this kind of technical training will allow groups like Coffee for Peace and

“The robusta coffees from Philippines, which were processed by the Natural and Honey methods, were diverse and interesting. The brightness in the cup was a vibrant attribute, with bitterness at a low ebb. The flavors ranged from cocoa to dark chocolate to caramel to malt and fruit enzyme flavors of citrus and jackfruit. With attention to the plant cultivar and fine tuning of the processing technique, we would have some great tasting robusta coffees from the Philippines.

The arabicas were delightful in the cup, expressing delicious sweet brightness couched in flavors of tropical fruits, caramel, citrus and brown sugar. The finish was soft, sweet, bright and lingering.”

Sunalini Menon, Coffeelab Limited, Bangalore
Sunalini attended the 2018 SCA cupping event.

Figure 18: CQI 2017 Roaster training at FROG Kaffe in Davao. Local roasters and café owners learn best practices and quality control to produce a high-quality product for their market. These roasters are an important component to building knowledge, quality and value of Philippine coffee.
local coffee shops to become sector leaders in spreading knowledge about Philippine grown coffee – coffee that is clean, free of defects and has unique flavor profiles.

“It was inspiring to see roasting and producing communities co-evolving in a coffee producing country like the Philippines. Because the Philippines has such a strong and developed roasting industry, domestic demand for home-grown coffees was palpable, and an authentic palate language seems to have developed along with the quality improvements. I believe that international sales will add another necessary bump to demand for the developing specialty coffees of the Philippines.

I also believe that elsewhere in Southeast Asia, developing the technical skills and palates of domestic roasting and retail markets should be of equal importance when considering the overall health of the coffee sector. I see local roasters (Q Graders) inspired to pay for quality Philippine coffee and promote the best local coffee transparently, and to sell them locally. This co-evolution of production-consumption is unique to Southeast Asia and should be supported when development projects are involved. Southeast Asia has the opportunity to grow into the world’s strongest shared value chain region for coffee because of the terroirs available to develop, and economies moving in the direction of specialty consumption.”

Charlie Habegger
Project volunteer for the 2018 competition and coffee green buyer for Blue Bottle, known for their outstanding sourcing practices, meticulous coffees and cafes in the USA and Japan.