



COFFEE COOPERATIVE 

FAIR TRADE PRODUCER PROFILE

KNCU, Tanzania

“Without our cooperative and selling to the Fair Trade market, our life would have been very terrible. Our cooperative and the Fair Trade buyers give us hope and courage for we are able to earn a higher wage and better provide for our families.”

—**Mathew Matoli, Member,**
KNCU Member

KNCU (Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union) is Africa’s oldest coffee cooperative. The indigenous farmers of the Chagga tribe cultivate rich arabica coffee on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa’s tallest mountain. The minerals of the volcanic soil help KNCU growers to produce among the world’s finest coffee. Originally founded in 1924, KNCU and all coffee cooperatives were abolished by the Tanzanian government in 1976. The farmers reinstated the cooperative in 1984, and now include over 90 local coffee cooperatives.

KNCU became Fair Trade certified by Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO) in 1993. Farmers participate in the co-op democratically, and each year they elect delegates from among the co-op members to implement policies and programs.

With Fair Trade revenue, KNCU has been able to:

- **Establish an education fund.** Members voluntarily contribute to an education fund, which is used to build and operate schools for farmer’s children, and fund their education.
- **Build a credit system.** KNCU formed the Kilimanjaro Cooperative Bank (KCB) which enables producers to access loans and a number of savings and credit services.
- **Take Control of Exporting.** The cooperative founded a Coffee Export Marketing Department in order to sell the majority of their crops directly.
- **Promote Sustainable Agriculture.** KNCU’s farmers do not apply chemicals, and have invested in an organic production program to transition to organic certification. Farmers also receive training on sustainable agriculture techniques, such as using local plants for insect and pest control.

Quality Recognition:

SCAA Cupping Pavilion. In 2004, KNCU was awarded the highest quality marks for Tanzanian coffee, receiving two scores of 90.19 for their Kilimanjaro coffee samples.



ABOUT THE COOP

Date Established: 1924

Number of Members: 80,000

Annual Production: 600 Containers

ABOUT THE COFFEE

Varieties: Keint, Bourbon

Elevation: 850-1,500m

Processing: Wet processing and sun drying

Cup Characteristics: Fine acidity, full flavor

Harvest Season: Jul-Jan

Export Season: Aug-Jun