



Iyenga FCS

**Mbozi District,
Songwe Region,
Southern Tanzania,
Tanzania**

Partner since: 2017

Traceable to: 193 Members

Altitude: 1675 - 1900 MASL

Varietals: Bourbon, Jackson Bourbon

Processing: Some coffee is home-milled and delivered in parchment, others are brought in cherry. Both are hand-sorted before pulping, fermented in water for 10-12 hours, washed, then moved to drying beds for 7-10 days

Harvest: July August September November December January

Booking: October November December February March April

Arrivals: February March April May June



Founded in the wake of the Tanzanian Cooperative Act of 2003, today the Iyenga AMCOS (Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Society) has 193 registered members, and collects from just over 500 farmers. These are smallholders; most with 1-2 hectare farmers, and none with more than 5. Most members are within a short walk of the washing station, the furthest farm being 10km away. Still, during the harvest the group organizes trucks and motorbikes to pick up cherry and make sure that all is pulped within 8 hours of harvest. If you visit during the harvest you'll find the pulper running from 4pm -8pm, right around sundown. It's a government-granted Penagos UCBE 500, an eco-efficient machine that conserves water – which is critical in this area. Access to water is one of Iyenga's biggest challenges, especially during the dry season. Conversations during the annual meetings include ideas for damming a local river or creating a rain-water reservoir.

Iyenga's elected board has a reputation for capable management, as evidenced by their collection services and pulping standards. They have proven their ability to work towards long-term goals, and have taken on quality as their next objective.

And because of this, Iyenga is starting to build a name for themselves based on quality – in 2019 they won the Taste of Harvest Competition with their AA and PB coffees. One of our projects with them now is to expand drying bed capacity, a bottleneck in quality production, and necessary for our goal of increasing drying times.



Tanzania is a country rich in history, culture and resources. In East Africa, only Kenya has more wealth. But these numbers hide the incredible disparity you see between rich and poor, north and south, estates and smallholders.

Only 7% of Tanzania's harvest makes to the US – compared to 37% which go to Japan – and most of what arrives is in the form of block lot 'Tanzania AA' or 'PB'.

Block lots are bought from auction and blended to customer specification; 75% of Tanzania's coffee is sold through auction in this way. The alternative to the auction is the Direct Export Channel, which came under fire from recent (2018) governmental reforms.

The reforms were aimed at eliminating the grey area between three parties: farmers – organized into

Agricultural Marketing Co-Operative Societies (AMCOS), mills, and exporters who are confined to operate at the auction level. In practice this cut off investment, cut short agricultural extension programs, cut out the direct export channel – reducing options for farmers and buyers alike.

So, after 9 months these reforms were reversed, and the direct export channel is open again. But this is just the most recent in a decade-long roller-coaster that's hampered Tanzania's ability to compete for larger parts of the US specialty coffee menu.

Lower production, aging plants, lack of irrigation, dwindling markets all sparked the TechnoServe-backed KiliCafe organization; an association of northern smallholder groups founded in 2001. The KiliCafe effort is credited with turning around coffee in this area, and it has successfully reinvigorated quality. But political forces, including corruption, caused this to collapse right around the time Crop to Cup started sourcing in the area.

In the South we are looking primarily at Mbeya and Mbinga. Both are two-days drive from the capital and port city of Dar es Salaam. Both are large, rugged areas dominated by smallholding coffee farmers. And both are in a fluorescence.

In the early 2000's cuppers started noticing the variety of flavors coming out of the South. Compared to the North, where volumes are dominated by large estates, the South is home to diverse terroirs and profiles. Over the next two decades this interest has encouraged AMCOSs and exporters alike to get more involved, increasing both quality and production.