

**The Impact of Member-Initiated Reforms in Agricultural Marketing on
Members' Social and Economic Well-Being
The Case of Mamsera and Nshara Rural Co-operative Societies in Rombo**

By

A. M. Kalindi¹ and R. M. Tiruhungwa²

¹Department of Populaation Studies, University of Zambia

**²Department of and Law at Moshi University College of Co-operative
and Business Studies (MUCCoBS)**

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Abstract

There has been a 'breakaway' of some primary co-operative societies from marketing their coffee through the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union (KNCU) as was traditionally practiced because of the various problems they were facing with KNCU. These co-operatives have come up with new innovations for marketing their coffee and are apparently performing better than before the reforms. The main objective of this study was to assess the impact of these member-initiated reforms in Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Societies (AMCOS) on the members' social and economic well-being. In particular, the study sought to assess whether these agricultural marketing reforms have had any impact on the economic and social living conditions of the Mamsera and Nshara AMCOS' members. The study also examined the challenges that Mamsera and Nshara AMCOS were facing in connection with these reforms so as to determine the sustainability of the reforms. Consequently, the study sought to recommend ways in which co-operatives could effectively improve the agricultural marketing reforms and bring about sustainable rural development. The findings were generated from a survey of 60 randomly-selected coffee farmers who were members of the two selected primary co-operatives. Data were analysed using SPSS Descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, chi-square tests, were run in order to analyse the data while frequency tables, bar charts and other graphs were created in MS-Excel in order to facilitate interpretation of the findings. Through this study, it was found out that the two co-operative^s preferred the new agricultural marketing reforms because they were now performing better than before the reforms. The price of coffee had risen after the reforms and most of the farmers realized more money with greater profits at the end of the farming season than before the reforms. Generally, the social and economic livelihoods of most of the farmers and the co-operatives as a whole have improved to an extent that individual farmers were now able to fend for their families without difficult than before. The co-operatives are also doing better in that they are able to start and operate other businesses through the money they are realizing from the sale of coffee. There is' therefore, need for other co-operatives to emulate these co-operatives that had 'pulled away' from KNCU in order to improve their performance and overall profits.

Key words: Agricultural marketing, co-perative societies, member-initiated agricultural marketing reforms, co-operative union, social and economic well-being