



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:  
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

## Gender in Cassava Leaves Value Chains – An Exploratory Study of Tanzania

KAROLIN ANDERSSON

*University of Copenhagen, Dept. of Food and Resource Economics, Denmark*

### Abstract

When agricultural value chains are being commercialised, empirical evidence shows that distribution and production relations may change between men and women in terms of control and access to markets, resources and benefits of production. Commercialisation, including introduction of new technologies, may alter the intra-household division of labour and the bargaining positions of household members, consequently affecting their income and nutrition and food security.

Cassava is an important staple food in Africa and cassava commercialisation has been identified as a viable pathway for improving economic opportunities and food security amongst low-income populations. Cassava leaves is widely consumed where cassava is produced and nutritionally important due to their micro-nutritional advantages, low price and high availability. Yet, despite high attention to cassava in the scientific community, value chain analyses invariably focus on the tubers alone.

This study was conducted in collaboration with International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It explores the market structure for cassava leaves, who benefits from it and how. In view of ongoing cassava commercialisation in Tanzania, it explores the value chain with a gendered perspective. By drawing on qualitative and quantitative data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires and observations during three months in Mkuranga District, Tanzania, the study seeks to understand constraints and opportunities for value chain actors and to examine information flows and dynamics between actors along functional nodes of the value chain.

Production, consumption and marketing of cassava leaves was widespread in Mkuranga District. Production and retail were dominated by women, whereas male participation was higher in wholesale in large volumes in urban areas. Processing was manually performed by women. Value added activities were limited and despite high urban demand, cassava leaves were perceived as a last resort food. Women's increased market participation was impeded by limited business skills and low financial capital, confidence and education. Issues were grounded in social gender roles and norms and perceived to limit further value chain development. External support and engagement by government, research institutions and organisations was limited.

**Keywords:** Cassava leaves, gender, Tanzania, value chains