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“Solidarity in a competing world —  
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## Investigating the Value Chain of African Indigenous Vegetables in Kenya from a Gender Perspective

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### Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the African Indigenous Vegetables (AIVs) value chain in Kenya from a gender perspective. In East Africa women significantly contribute to horticultural production; they are particularly involved in cultivating, harvesting, selling and preparation of AIVs. There is a trend of accelerating commercialisation of vegetable production, which comes along with value chain innovation and modernisation. The global value chain scholarship emphasises the importance of value chain modernisation and upgrading for reducing poverty in rural areas. However, the overall effects of value chain modernisation have to be critically assessed from a gender perspective: On one hand women get increasingly integrated into commercialised vegetable production, but on the other hand – due to existing gender norms and power relations within the society – there is a risk of deepening gender gaps and inequalities throughout the value chain.

This paper presents first findings of the HORTINLEA subproject “Gender Order: Embedding gender in horticultural value chains to close the productivity gap”. The results are based on field research carried out in the rural, peri-urban and urban areas in Kenya. Qualitative methods of data collection such as semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with male and female farmers and traders were applied. Qualitative content analysis (with MAXQDA) was applied for data analysis.

Preliminary results show that women are the primary producers of AIVs but men are increasingly participating in AIV production due to increasing incomes because of commercialisation. This negatively affects women’s share and participation in AIVs value chain. Further, women are disadvantaged in marketing, due to gendered asymmetries in bargaining power and their roles in social reproduction. The paper seeks to discuss policy innovations for making AIVs value chains more inclusive.

**Keywords:** African indigenous vegetables, commercialisation, gender asymmetries, gender order, gender perspective