# Marketing Channels for Underutilised Indigenous Fruit Tree Products: The Case of Baobab Pulp on Seed in Kenya

George Kaimba[1,2], Muendo Mutuku Kavoi[1], Dagmar Mithöfer[2]

[1]*Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Kenya*
[2]*Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Life Sciences, Germany*

## Abstract

Underutilised indigenous fruit trees have become part of the income generating opportunities for local communities living in arid and semi-arid lands of developing countries. The baobab tree is a good example of an underutilised indigenous fruit tree in Kenya that provides fruits and vegetables. In the past decade, the tree has generated much attention owing to its enormous nutritive attributes. Despite the high nutrient and polyphenol content, coupled with acceptance as food ingredient by the European Union (EC 2008) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA 2009), the tree and its products remain underutilised in Kenya. This is due to limited empirical research on the tree, especially the marketing structure of unprocessed baobab fruit and pulp in Kenya. This study therefore analyses the determinants of collectors' participation in different marketing channels using 270 baobab collectors in three counties in Kenya. A multinomial logit regression is employed in the empirical analysis. The results show that baobab collectors participate in the domestic markets through three main channels, namely: assemblers, rural wholesalers and urban buyers. The majority of the collectors traded via the assemblers and rural wholesalers. Price and non-price factors classified under a) human capital factors such as gender, age, number of children, marital status, number of trees, collection point, selling experience, other incomes and number of buyers known; b) transactional factors which include price of baobab, wage rate, transport cost, packaging costs distance to market, product form and price awareness in other markets; and c) institutional factors such as access to credit, which all significantly influence collectors' marketing channel decision. The main policy recommendations include improving road networks to reduce on transport costs; capacity building to sensitize and promote awareness of the importance baobab of products in order to increase its demand domestically; improve institutional services in order to promote baobab collectors' access to credit, marketing information and training.

**Keywords:** Kenya, baobab pulp, malnutrition, market development, marketing channels, poverty reduction

**Contact Address:** George Kaimba, Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, Fac. of Life Sciences, Marie-Curie-Str.1, 47533 Kleve, Germany, e-mail: kinyuakaimba@jkuat.ac.ke