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Analyzing Horticultural Value Chains from a Feminist Livelihoods Perspective

The Case of African Indigenous Vegetables in Kenya

Date: Thu, 11 February 2016
Start: 18:00
Venue: Seminar room, ICDD

International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD)
Kleine Rosenstraße 1-3
Kenya is confronted with a paradoxical situation of malnutrition: on the one hand hunger is still prevalent within the Kenyan society with 24% of the population being undernourished; on the other hand an increasing number of the population is suffering obesity and “hidden hunger”. In order to overcome hunger and malnutrition in Kenya recent studies emphasize the relevance of African indigenous vegetables (AIVs) – they inherently have the potential for more diversified and sustainable ways of food production and consumption: Firstly, they are easy to grow with low levels of inputs. They can mostly be harvested within three to four weeks. Therefore, AIV production is particularly advantageous for resource-poor households. Secondly, AIVs contain high concentrations of vitamins and micronutrients, such as vitamin A, iron and zinc and, thus, contribute significantly to nutrition security.

There is a trend of accelerating commercialization of AIV production, which partly comes along with value chain modernization and upgrading. The modernization of AIV value chains is portrayed as a panacea for food and nutrition insecurity. The overall effects of value chain modernization, however, have to be critically assessed from a gender perspective.

This presentation discusses first results of the HORTINELA Subproject entitled “Gender Order: Embedding Gender in Horticultural Value Chains to Close or Reduce the Productivity Gap”. The results are based on field research conducted in the urban, peri-urban and rural areas of Kenya. The presentation starts with conceptualizing value chains as socially embedded. In the second part, the presentation discusses recent trends in horticultural production in Kenya. In the third part, the presentation scrutinizes the shifts in gender power dynamics at different nodes of the AIV value chain and draws conclusions from a feminist livelihoods perspective.
Dr. Gülay Çağlar is leading two subprojects within HORTINLEA at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: subproject 7b “Meal Cultures in Market Trends and Consumption Habits” and subproject 10 “Gender Order: Embedding Gender in Horticultural Value Chains to Close or Reduce the Productivity Gap”.

Her research focus is Qualitative methods in Social Sciences, International Political Field Research, Gender Studies, Global Governance, International Political Economy and the Role of Economic Political Consulting, Feminist Economics.

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