

## Qualitative study of gender norms and farming systems in Malawi

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Published by International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

December, 2023

The [Sustainable Intensification of Mixed Farming Systems Initiative](#) aims to provide equitable, transformative pathways for improved livelihoods of actors in mixed farming systems through sustainable intensification within target agroecologies and socio-economic settings.

Through action research and development partnerships, the Initiative will improve smallholder farmers' resilience to weather-induced shocks, provide a more stable income and significant benefits in welfare, and enhance social justice and inclusion for 13 million people by 2030.


Activities will be implemented in six focus countries globally representing diverse mixed farming systems as follows: Ghana (cereal–root crop mixed), Ethiopia (highland mixed), Malawi: (maize mixed), Bangladesh (rice mixed), Nepal (highland mixed), and Lao People's Democratic Republic (upland intensive mixed/ highland extensive mixed).

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>EPA</b>	Extension Planning Area
<b>IITA</b>	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SI-MFS</b>	Sustainable Intensification of Mixed Farming Systems Initiative
<b>WP</b>	Work Package

## **Introduction**

These questions will be used as a guide for men, women, and youth focus groups in SI-MFS treatment EPAs in Mzimba in the Northern region; Dedza and Kasungu in the Central region; and Balaka, Mangochi, and Zomba in the Southern region.

## Part 1

### General discussion points on farming system for all focus groups (men, women and youth)

1. What are the crops grown and livestock reared in the community?
2. How do men and women get access to land here? And to resources such as inputs? Is it different for men and women? Why?
3. Who controls the land in this community? Men? Women?
4. Do farmers inherit their land? If so, from whom? Do men and women both inherit?
5. Do farmers here buy land? Rent land? Does it differ for men and for women?
6. Who in the household makes the decisions about what to plant and where to plant it?
7. Do men and women plan and work together on the farm? Or do they each have separate activities and separate plots of land?
8. If there are separate plots, are women supposed to work on men's plots? And do men work on their wives' plots?
9. Who owns the livestock and makes decisions about whether to sell them?
10. Who cares for the livestock – finding food for them or caring for them when sick? Does this vary according to the type of livestock?
11. Who manages the planting of crops?
12. Who manages the harvest of crops?
13. Who manages the storage of crops? Selling or storing for food?
14. Is crop residue fed to livestock? Is their manure used on farms? Who manages the livestock manure?
15. Who manages the labor requirements on farms? Is hiring labor common or is most labor provided by household members?
16. In this community, are there farms that have practiced?
  - a. Maize-legume intercropping
  - b. Maize legume rotation
  - c. Doubled up legume
  - d. Conservation agriculture
17. Are these practices common or rare?
18. What are the advantages and disadvantages of:
  - a. Maize-legume intercropping
  - b. Maize legume rotation
  - c. Doubled up legume
  - d. Conservation agriculture

19. Where do farmers obtain inputs (seeds, fertilizer, etc.)
20. What are the main constraints or challenges to farming here? (get at least their top 3)
21. How do farmers manage or address these constraints and challenges?
22. What agricultural activities demand the most labor? And time? And when are these demands? Throughout the year?
23. What would prevent or discourage farmers from the practices listed above? (a-d)
24. Are there new crops/practices/innovations that farmers here are particularly interested in? and why?
25. Where is the closest market?

## **Gender specific questions around norms to be asked to each focus group**

- 1) Is there a specific division of labor for farm work according to gender in this community? Such as – men do all the farm clearing, women do the planting and weeding, etc.?
- 2) In the household is there work that only men do? And only women do?
- 3) Are there jobs outside of the household that only men do? And only women do?
- 4) Which agricultural decisions do men and women make together, if any? Who has the final say about what will be done on the farm? For crops? For livestock?
- 5) Are there decisions for the farm or for the household that only men make? Are there decisions that only women make?
- 6) In households where men and women make decisions together, how are women in those households perceived by other women and men in their community? And how are men in those households perceived by women and men in their community?
- 7) Who makes decisions about who does domestic work (e.g. cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood) and care for household members (young, sick, and/or old)?
- 8) If men help or do domestic work such as cooking and cleaning, what would the reaction in the community be?
- 9) Do men and women have separate incomes?
- 10) Who makes decisions about what to spend income on?
- 11) Who is responsible for purchasing farm inputs?
- 12) Who is responsible for paying household expenses? Such as school fees? Cooking ingredients? Clothing?



13) Who markets any crops sold? Do men and women both travel to sell crops or buy inputs?

## Questions for youth focus group

- 1) How do youth access land and other resources?
- 2) Do youth aspire to farming? Or do they want to pursue other livelihood activities? What and why?
- 3) Do youth struggle to get access to land and livestock?
- 4) What crops do they see as the most preferred and why?
- 5) And livestock?
- 6) Have they practiced any of the SI interventions? And if so, what is their opinion about them? What are their advantages and disadvantages?
- 7) What do they see as the main challenges to engaging in farming or agriculture-related livelihoods?
- 8) What do they see as the main challenges for youth?
- 9) What are their aspirations for the future?

## Part 2. Key informant's interview

These questions will be asked to agricultural experts at EPA

### Interviewee data

Name and title:

Institution:

### Experience

1. What is your experience with implementing or researching SI projects?
2. Which interventions have you worked on? What was farmers' responses to them?
3. Were the responses to these SI interventions different for men and women? Were any interventions directed specifically towards men or towards women? How did they take gender differences into account during implementation?
4. Were the projects *designed* to address gender and other aspects of social differentiation?
5. What lessons were learned from addressing gender and social differentiation?
6. Can you describe some successes in SI in Malawi? Some successes in improving gender-equitable outcomes?
7. What are the main challenges to SI? And to integrating gender into the project? *[probing question: did you notice any site- or region-specific challenges? If yes, which ones?]*
8. What do you think are the main challenges to women's participation in agriculture in Malawi? *[probing question: did you think there are site- or region-specific challenges? If yes, what are they?]*
9. How have projects that you have been involved with addressed these specific challenges?
10. Do you think there are innovations in improving the benefits of agriculture to women?

11. Have you been involved in projects that have targeted youth?
12. What was the focus of those projects?
13. What are the main challenges to youth's participation in agriculture in Malawi?  
*[probing question: did you think there are site- or region-specific challenges? If yes, what are they?]*
14. What have been some successes in improving youth participation and realization of benefits in Malawi?
15. Are there any other social aspects than gender and age that may limit participation in agriculture in Malawi, in your opinion? (e.g., ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.) If yes, which ones and why?
16. What are the main challenges to addressing social inequities in agriculture in Malawi? *[probing question: do you think there are site- or region-specific challenges? If yes, what are they?]*
17. Overall, how would you describe the progress (or failure) of SI in Malawi?
18. Are there specific innovations you think should be out scaled? And why?

Thank you. Your time is very much appreciated, and your views have been very helpful in understanding the successes and challenges of integrating gender equality, and social inclusion approaches in sustainable intensification implementation in Malawi. Before we conclude this interview is there anything else you would like to share?



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