Empowering Women for Food and Income Security:
The Case of Pigeon Pea in Malawi

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Outline

- Background and rationale
- Study design and methods
- Major findings and recommendations
- Next steps
Background and Rationale

• Background
  – GCFSI funded Studies in Malawi in 2014
  – Question “Where and how can multipurpose legumes be scaled for sustainable intensification of maize systems and what would the potential impacts be, in the medium term, across the food system?”

• Research Rationale
  – The decision to adopt or participate at post-farm levels of legume value chains, the ability to adopt, and the gains from participation are all influenced by intra-household gender dynamics.
Why Pigeon Peas?

• Multipurpose characteristics-pods, leaves, stems/shrub; Potential contribution to food, nutrition, & income security for poor households in Malawi;
• Biological nitrogen fixation (soil fertility gains)
• Yet adoption of the legume remains low-previous research has mostly focused on general barriers to adoption
• Little attention to intra-HH dynamics & gender roles influencing adoption/expansion decisions at the farm level; participation and sharing of benefits at later stages of the value chain.
Study Methods, Design and Location

Gender Analysis using the Gender Dimensions Framework (Rubin, et al, 2009b). Main Dimensions:

- Access to, & Control over Assets
- Practices and Participation
- Beliefs and Perceptions
- Laws and Customs

Semi-structured interviews & FGD

- Seed Systems Actors
- Pigeon Pea Farmers (152 W, 108 M)
- Farmer Owned Co-op (21 W, 8 M)
- Retailers & Local Processors (14 W, 5 M)
- Buyers and Traders (8 M, 2 W)
- Export Market Representatives (4 M)
## Major Findings & Recommendations: Farm Level

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<th>Gender Based Constraint/Opportunity</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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| Women play a limited role in farm management & investment decisions (crops to grow, area to allocate to each crop, how to plant, inputs to use) due to cultural norms that designate men as household heads, and are responsible for most important household decisions. | − Involve women (quota?) and men in trainings on farm management/ agronomic practices; incorporate training programs activities to support joint participation in household & farm management decision-making.  
− Support women’s direct access to and participation in markets                                      |
| Women’s access to markets is limited by cultural restrictions on their mobility and their limited access to or ownership of transportation assets (e.g., bicycles and carts). | − Organize women farmers in groups for the collective bargaining/marketing of their produce.  
− Educate/sensitize men and women on the benefits of women’s economic empowerment  
− Train group members on aspects of group functioning and management to achieve best outcomes.  
− Train group leadership on business management and marketing skills (e.g. negotiation, & weighing of grains) |
| Mobility restrictions also affect women’s bargaining power and the price they get for their legume.  |
| Men’s participation in markets increase income for men and alcohol consumption rather food security |
| Women have limited control over crop revenue (even for the crops they grow) because decision making over the allocation of crop revenue is the domain of men in their role as heads of household. | Identify mechanisms to foster more gender equitable decision making authority in the allocation of crop revenue or in control over crop revenue. |
## Major Findings & Recommendations: Retail and local processing

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| Women’s limited access to cash-earning opportunities limits the size of their business, and overall, their ability to make business related investments, such as hiring transportation and bulk purchasing. | – Invest in innovative approaches that will enhance women’s access to credit. For example, group loans; literacy training to build their capacity in loan application processes and to separate business expenditures from family consumption expenditures.  
– In conjunction with access to credit, train women on business management practices to increase loan repayment rates. |
| Women’s prescribed responsibility for domestic chores and the restrictions on their mobility limit business related travel and the time invested in their businesses—business hours and location. | – Investments in technologies that will limit time spent on household chores (maize millers).  
– Organize women retailers in groups, build trust amongst group members, and promote group transportation of merchandise from point of purchase to markets.  
– Education and training to encourage gender equitable sharing of household responsibilities/chores; and the benefits of women’s economic empowerment |
# Major Findings & Recommendations: Independent Buyers/traders

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| Women’s limited access to cash-earning opportunities limits the size of their business, and overall, their ability to make business related investments, such as hiring transportation and building storage facilities. | – Invest in innovative approaches that will enhance women’s access to credit. For example, group loans; literacy training for women to build their capacity in loan application processes and to separate business expenditures from family consumption expenditures.  
– In conjunction with access to credit, train women on business management practices to increase loan repayment rates. |
| Women’s poor negotiation skills (linked to their need to do business as quickly as possible to return to their families) puts them at a risk of selling at lower prices. | – Along with the literacy training mentioned above, women need access to training on business related skills. Collective efforts may be necessary to counteract domestic/cultural mobility constraints.  
– Education/training to encourage gender equitable sharing of hh responsibilities; and the benefits of women’s economic empowerment |
| Cultural perceptions of women as “weak” or “less energetic” than men—increases susceptibility to gender-based violence and vandalism | |
Exporters

• Market growth potential in Malawi constrained by input quality, irrigation difficulties, and transport costs.

• Women perceived to sell higher quality grain (no premium), but are limited in volume (impacting price).

• Women are perceived to be ‘weak’ negotiators, and therefore bad at business.
Next Steps: Small-Scale Processing of Pigeon Pea

- Creating livelihood opportunities—especially for women—through the introduction of small-scale pigeon pea processing (dehulling and splitting) technologies in rural areas.

- Linking small-scale processors in rural communities to retailers in urban markets (where there is a demand for pigeon pea).

- Anticipating a backward pull effect on the seed system for pigeon pea—increased demand for process legume—increased demand for dried grains from farmers—incentives to expand production through utilization of improved seed varieties (land being a limiting factor).

- Locally preferred seed varieties will be revealed.
How and Who?

- March 2016: Initial Assessment
  - Mapping of seeds systems; farm-level assessment; retail/market assessment
- Processing technology design—human centered design approach
- Local Partners
  - Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
    - Faculty—Agribusiness, Agricultural Extension, Ag. Engineering
  - Self Help Africa; ActionAid-UK?
  - Farmer groups producing pigeon pea
- Other partners: MSU Dept. of Agricultural Engineering
THANK YOU