**Focus group question guide**

As this is a focus group, the direction of the discussion will depend on what participants talk about. This is therefore a guide with questions and prompts that will be useful.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Start time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

End time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Village/sub-location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

GPS Points: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Number of participants: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Men-only/women-only: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Note taker’s name(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Interpreter’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Names of participants: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Time taken to Zomba or Blantyre: walk \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ bus \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cycle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Time taken to nearest market: walk \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ bus \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cycle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction (15mins)**

Welcome participants, provide participant information sheet

Have everyone introduce themselves, including members of research/facilitation team

Introduce purpose of the FGD

Explain instructions/FGD process to participants:

Place emphasis on one person speaks at a time

No answer is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’

Participants do not have to speak in a specific order and may interject with points that they think are relevant

 Receive consent from participant (participant consent form)

**Seasonal calendar**

What is their position in their household?

Number of people in their household. Adults/children.

Participants will be asked to draw a seasonal calendar for agriculture and food security.

This will include weather, planting for various crops, harvest for various crops, the hungry season, *dimba* use and income generating activities across a 12-month period. From this prompt questions will included:

* What crops are grown and when is land cultivated, seeds planted, and crops harvested?
* Are the main planting and harvesting seasons the same for all the villagers? Why?
* How do residents decide the amount of crops to be sold / consumed?
* What crops are stored and how many months do they stay fresh for?
* What months are farmers self-sufficient in terms of food? How do you obtain food in the other months?
* How has the agriculture and food calendar changed compared to 5 and 10 years ago?
* Why do you think this has changed over time?

Answers to questions will be written on the calendar.

**This calendar will be referred to for the rest of the focus group.**

**Food security questions (on behalf of household)**

* During the last 12 months, was there a time when, because of lack of money or other resources:
* To your knowledge has anyone in your household….. and if so who?
* *You were* worried you would not have enough food to eat?
* You were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food?
* You ate only a few kinds of foods?
* You had to skip a meal?
* You ate less than you thought you should?
* Your household ran out of food?
* You were hungry but did not eat?
* You went without eating for a whole day?

Ask how many in the FG are Y/N to above questions and what circumstance, time period, frequency, refer to calendar, why?- discuss any interesting differences

* How do people manage at those times of the year when there are food shortages?
* Are all residents equally affected by food security? Which people in the community appear to be most vulnerable? Why? Does it impact men, women and children equally?
* What factors do people think cause food shortages at particular times of the year?
* Does anyone get help from aid/government? What type of help, from who, for how long?
* What has the impact of climate changes and shocks been on food security?

**Social capital**

* Are there community groups in the community? What are they ? How does one becomes a member. What benefits are there to the group? Are any of you part of the community groups? How active are you in groups? Members, leaders. What roles do they have? Are women able to join community groups? Are there separate groups for women? Would you say anything about the group has changed over time?
* Do you interact with other communities working together? In what capacity/why not?
* Can you trust people in the community as a whole? Why/why not. Change over time.
* Are you able to rely on family for help, how, why not? Has this changed over the years?
* Are you able to rely on friends for help. How/why not? Has this changed over the years?
* What NGO operate in the community? What NGO, what are they doing? How long have they been here? Do you participate in them? Has any of that changed over time? Do women interact with NGO? Above questions but about government projects and government aid?
* How have these changes (if any) impacted the community as a whole and your households?

**Social capital and Food Security**

* Coping mechanisms when you do not have food 1) before harvest 2) after harvest and 3) during planting season?
* What people/groups/organisations can you rely on when you do not have food 1) before harvest 2) after harvest and 3) during planting season?  Can both men and women ask these people/groups/organisations? Prompt about family, friends, community groups, NGOs, government ect. Has this changed over time?
* For each person/group/organisation that is listed, who in the household is responsible for going to that person to ask for help?
* Does being part of any of the groups you previously mentioned influence your ability to obtain food? Which ones and how?  Are men and women able to use these groups in the same way?
* Have the people/groups/organisations relied on for food changed over the past 5/10 years?
* What impact does NGO or government food aid have on community relations? Good/bad? Why?
* What impact does long term government or NGO projects have on internal community relations? How/what are the impacts? Why?
* Does aid impact people helping each other generally and in terms of food security?
* Do people who received food aid treated differently to those who don’t? If so in what way?
* If food aid shared amongst others?

**Social capital ranking exercise**

* The social capital mentioned will be written on a post it notes and participants will be asked to rank them based on improving food security: pre harvest, pre planting and after a climate shock.
* Participants will be asked to explain the rankings.