**Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: Social capital and food security in Malawi: temporal, spatial and gender considerations

**Researcher**: Ailish Craig

**ERGO number:**67813

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

**What is the research about?**

I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton. After visiting Malawi for my Masters, I decided to continue my PhD research in the Southern Region of Malawi. Food security is an issue in Malawi were over half the population are severely food insecure. Improving peoples access to food is difficult and research is needed to understand the complexities behind food access. Social capital has been linked with food security, but there is a lack of understanding of how social capital is related to food security. With little research on food security and social capital in Malawi, this research aims to understand how they are related whilst considering a temporal, spatial and gender variations. This research is funded by the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council via the South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership.

**Why have I been asked to participate?**

48-96 participants over the ages of 18 from across the Southern Region of Malawi will be asked to participate in the study. I aim to explore how social networks can be used to improve access to food. I also aim how the use of social network to improve food access may vary depending on the proximity to Zomba, the season and the gender of the participant.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

Participation will include 1 focus group with up to 5 other participants from your community who are the same gender as you. The focus group will last between 60-90minutes and will take part in an outside communal area in the community. The focus group will be ran by Ailish Craig, who is the lead researcher and up to 3 other researchers. The focus group will be in Chichewa. There will be no follow ups. The focus group will not be audio or video recorded, however, one of the research assistants will be taking detailed notes which will be typed up later. Photographs of the seasonal calendar and rankings will be taken. Photographs of the community may be taken for research purposes, but they will not have any people's faces in them.

The focus group will start by drawing a food and seasonal calendar. Using this calendar, we will have a group discussion about food access and social networks at different times in the seasonal calendar. Finally, you will be asked to rank the people and groups you can rely on to access food.

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

There are no direct benefits to you taking part in this study. The seasonal calendar and ranking of people and groups in your social network are methods from a broader type of method that specifically encourages rural participants to learn and reflect on the topic being discussed. The study will also help with researchers understanding of how social networks can be used to improve food access.

**Are there any risks involved?**

The topic of food access can be distressing and there is the risk of you getting upset. There is no obligation to discuss anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or distressed. You can decline any question and terminate the focus group at any time**.**

**What data will be collected?**

Qualitative data will be collected on views about social networks and how they can be used to improve food access at different times of the year. Data will be collected through focus groups with have written into notes. In the case of seasonal calendars and the social network rankings, photographs will be taken of the diagrams. No names or special category data will be taken, other than gender. Participants will be identified by their gender, age, community number and focus group number. For example, “Female, 25, Community 1, FG 1.”

Written notes will be typed up and stored on a password protected laptop. The paper copy will be stored in a safe until it can be shredded. Consent forms will be kept away from the written notes to reduce the risk of identification.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Data will be available to the lead researcher (Ailish Craig) and her supervisors. Typed up notes and photographs will be destroyed on completion of the PhD being awarded and the paper is published which will be no later than 26th December 2024.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. Let any of the research team know if you would like to take part.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw before the 27th January 2022 without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. You can withdraw by emailing Ailish Craig (ac14g14@soton.ac.uk) or WhatsApp (**insert Malawi number when I have it)**

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent.

The project will be written up into a chapter of the PhD thesis. The chapter will be published but you will not be identifiable. You will not get a copy of the results due to confidentiality, though a copy of the written-up report can be made available on request via email. All data provided will be deleted after the PhD is awarded and the paper is published. It will not be used in any other studies.

**Where can I get more information?**

For more information please email lead research Ailish Craig ac14g14@soton.ac.uk or contact on **(insert Malawi number when I have it)**

Alternatively, you can contact one of the research assistants (who speaks Chichewa.)

**(RA details will be listed here once they are hired)**

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions. Ailish Craig is contactable at ac14g14@soton.ac.uk or  **(insert Malawi number when I have it.)**

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

**Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, ‘Personal data’ means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University’s data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University’s policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason (‘lawful basis’) to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the ‘Data Controller’ for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University’s data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

**Thank you.**

Thank the individual for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.