

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS (e.g. village headpersons)**

*Bunda, 2/6-07*

The key to the guide is to ensure that all issues of interest in the investigation are covered and are probed sufficiently in order to leave no question of interest to land and collective action unanswered. The specific way in which the issues are investigated will vary depending on the circumstances.

The RAs should use personal interest/tact/skill to investigate through careful listening to conversations and to keep their eyes open and make observations in the village regarding land matters and collective action. During interview times, they will proceed in a conversational manner and probe land questions until all information has been collected. Where a piece of land is connected to several people with significant stake or interest in the land, the interviewers will make an effort to cross-interview such persons.

Malawians like to use a lot of parables and proverbs in order to give emphasis and make matters clear when describing things and processes. Any attempt to paraphrase such idioms invariably changes their meanings. RAs shall, as far as possible, write verbatim answers where idioms phrases are used in addition to your own interpretation of what is being said.

The topics below are only a guide and need not be followed in the order given since conversations can start with any topic. Indeed more interesting issues may be raised by the key informant.

### **C1: History, family systems and size of the village**

Find out historical details of the village such as when the village was established, the size of land allocated to the village, who allocated the land to the village, number of families and households in the village, ethnic groups, types of residential units (virilocal/uxorilocal), etc. Has there been any break-away villages from this village, or is it a breakaway village itself? Was land allocated to the village? Make a sketch of a social village map, with original village and the current ones in the same area. Is there unallocated land in the village, ask for historic development.

### **C2: Emigration out of the village**

Find out if there are any households that have moved out of this village to settle elsewhere and if people have emigrated find out how many? Where have they moved? Why did they move? Discuss if any of them come back, and why they did so? Etc.

### **C3: Immigration into the village**

Find out if there are any households that have come to settle in the village in the past? If people have immigrated into this village, how many are they? Where did they come

from? What type of settlement (temporary or permanent). What were the reasons for immigrating.

#### **C4: Availability of idle and absentee land**

Find out if there are any pieces of land that have been left by people either through migration, marriage, etc? Who are the individuals who have left, e.g. relationship in village, age, education? When did they leave the village? Will they come back or not? What has happened to their land? Do the emigrants exercise any rights to the land or products thereof? For how long has this land been idle (fallow normally no more than three years). Is anyone using the land that the individuals who left the village were farming/owned?

#### **C5: Availability of grazing land**

Observe the existence of livestock and discuss issues of grazing, management, regulations, limitations conflicts, etc

#### **C6: Availability of other types of land in the area**

Observe other type of land not for cultivation in and close to the village, e.g. estate lands, government lands, forest reserve, national park, game reserve, agricultural scheme, etc. Ask the respondent to describe the history behind such land, e.g. size, use, conflict, management etc.

#### **C7: Sources of necessary resources**

Find out where people in the village obtain such resources as firewood, sand and gravel for building material, land where soil is taken to mould bricks, stone for building, soil for building, grass for building, and trees for burning charcoal, etc. Are these resources privatized, i.e. people have to pay for them, or are they open access resources? Describe the management system. Are there any conflicts over their use? If yes, how are they solved. Has there been any change in the use of the specific resources over the history? Are any sources of natural resources within walking distance, i.e. estate land, forests, national parks, wildlife reserves, governmental agricultural scheme, other governmental lands.

#### **C8: Collective works**

How are different types of collective works organised in this village, both public works and more private collective actions. Ask the respondent to indicate type of project, amount of labour, other contributions, who participated, who initiated, organised and financed it, perceived benefits for the household, what will people do if an individual does not take part (sanctions?). What are the reasons for not participating? Who are selected to be in the development committees?

### **C9: Outside connections and influence**

How does this village try to influence central decision making, e.g. handouts, investment, projects? Describe the process, i.e. who initiates, what contacts are used, how is such lobby activity financed, does the village have to do anything in return? Is this village more or less successful in such lobbying than neighbouring villages? Why is this so.

### **C10: Intra village distribution**

Who are the weak/poor groups in your village, and why? Who are the strong/rich groups in the village, and why? Is this internal distribution a result of the fight for restricted resources in village, e.g. land, fertilizers subsidies, or maybe the opposite, the cause of unequal distribution? How will these groups be affected by increasing scarcity of land, e.g. weak pressured out, weak will sell lands?

### **C11: Perceptions of change in cooperation**

The local societies change over time, how and why has cooperation and trust changed through history according to his/her opinion? How was cooperation affected by the Kamuzu period. Is there a change in cooperation and trust between people within the same village or in different villages? Explain why there has been a change, or why it is still the same. Has religious movements and market access influenced cooperation and trust?

### **C12: Conflicts and their resolutions**

Find out from the village headperson whether there have been any conflicts in relation to land. If there have been land disputes, find out the details of the disputes in terms of types of conflicts, people involved in the conflict, number of conflicts, reasons for conflicts, how the conflicts were settled or resolved, etc. Ask for case histories as examples, including conflicts between villages.

### **C13: Land transactions**

Discuss with the village head the various land transactions he has been involved in the village. Find out details of such transactions such as sales renting out, renting in, allocations of land to village members or outsiders, conversion of land to leasehold, etc.

### **C14: Land allocation and administration**

Find out who allocates land in the village? Who decides on people legible for land allocation? Who regulates the use of the land? Find out who is legible to inherit land in general (children, spouse, nephews, sisters, brothers, etc).

**C15: Land policy**

If the respondent mentions the new land policy during the interview, pick it up immediately and ask what his thoughts are on this issues, i.e. what are the consequences for the people, him as a leader etc. and how does he think it will work out, e.g. the proposed committees. If not mentioned voluntarily, ask directly at the end of the interview.

**C16: Water for household use and dambo cultivation**

Find out the various water sources in the area and get information on the various users such as domestic users, irrigation users, animals, etc. How are the users regulated and who regulates them?