



Tropentag, September 17-19, 2014, Prague, Czech Republic

“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

## Towards Integrated Assessment of Gender Relations in Farming Systems Analysis

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### Abstract

Gender sensitivity in agricultural research and development is considered to be crucial for effectively contributing to gender equity, but also for improving the effectiveness of agricultural interventions in terms of poverty alleviation and improvement of household nutrition. Yet farming systems research often neglects the analysis of gender relations even when working in the context of smallholder households. More than 30 years of research have repeatedly revealed that women hold an important role in smallholder agricultural production. In many cases, women contribute the majority of agricultural labour and are responsible for certain domains of production on which they have special local knowledge. Their responsibility for household nutrition has often been emphasized. Yet, because farming systems analysis and the modelling tools used for it often focus only on biophysical and economic data, women's special needs, preferences and constraints are not considered when innovations for the design or improvement of farming systems are developed. Therefore it is the aim of this study to show options for integrating the analysis of gender relations in farming systems research.

The study focuses on the conceptualisation, i.e. the identification of relevant gender issues and their causal relations based on literature review, expert interviews and qualitative interviews with female farmers that were performed during a two week case study in the Eastern Province of Zambia, location to the SIMLEZA project of the Africa RISING program (“Sustainable Intensification of Maize-Legume Systems for the Eastern Province of Zambia” and “Africa Research in Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation” by CIMMYT and IITA).

The findings are presented in a conceptual framework that illustrates the complex mutual effects of agricultural intensification and gender relations. Based on this, possible extensions or changes to model based farming systems analysis were identified, such as the inclusion of sex-disaggregated labor profiles or the analysis of separate economic units within one household to capture independent female income. Furthermore it can be concluded that understanding and commitment of researchers to gender matters is a necessary precondition to reach gender sensitivity in agricultural research. The presented conceptual framework aims at facilitating this.

**Keywords:** Farming systems analysis, gender, conceptual framework