Understanding how soybean adoption can successfully take place at the household level involves many different research aspects. SIL researchers are collaborating to understand the economic, gender and nutritional impacts of household soybean production through a randomized controlled study of 2,400 households in Mozambique and Ghana. Through the provision of a soybean seed pack containing seed, fertilizer, inoculum and extension material, SIL researchers are engaged in a multi-year study to evaluate if soybeans can successfully be grown at the household level.

Nine villages were selected in Mozambique and Ghana to participate in the household adoption research. Baseline household surveys were conducted in 2014 with annual follow-up occurring throughout the duration of SIL’s five-year program. The “soybean success kits” were distributed to two-thirds of the villages in each country. This first controlled research study involving soybean introduction among small holder farmers involves an evaluation of the full value chain from input markets through to grain sale and local utilization. SIL’s research addresses within sustainable soybean systems issues of: technology adoption and drivers for adoption, value chains and the role of credit and savings, crop and utilization budgets, and gender equity and the role of women.

Because soybean is inherently commercial in nature, there exist a number of bottlenecks that may limit the adoption by small and medium scale farmers. The fundamental research questions asked by SIL are providing the first rigorously conducted research on soybean sustainability in Sub-Saharan Africa. SIL’s research is the first to specifically address how and if small holders can sustainably participate in commercial value chains. We are identifying the role of women within soybean production and utilization systems, a vital component of the production given soybean is principally commercial, non-native, and labor intensive.

Dr. Kerry Clark, Co-Principal Investigator of SIL’s Grain and Seed Quality research distributes “Soybean Success Kits” to study participants in Mozambique. The kits contain five pounds of soybean seed, four pounds of fertilizer, a small pack of inoculum and a seed bag with printed extension material. The kits were distributed to 1,200 households in Mozambique and will also be distributed to 1,200 households in Ghana next year.
Extension education underway to participants of socio-economic research.

Seed packs ready for distribution in Mozambique.