# The role of women in production and management of RTB crops in Rwanda and Burundi: Do men decide and women work?

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# Introduction

Potato, sweetpotato, banana and cassava are important food, nutrition and income security crops (Ewell & Mutuura, 1991)

Rwanda has the highest per capita consumption of sweetpotato roots at 89 kg compared to the global average of 14 kg.

Gender norms influence decision-making processes in the home, which in turn affect the ability of women to access training opportunities (Mudege, Chevo, Nyekanyeka, Kapalasa, & Demo, 2016).

Income generating food crops such as potato and banana are usually under the control of men (Rietveld et al., 2016).

Access to agriculture extension is assumed to lead to better decision-making, improved agricultural performance and better outcomes (Anderson & Feder, 2004)

# Introduction

The role played by women in African agriculture cannot be down-played and this calls for the need to understand their power to make decisions within a household

Access to credit or training can increase the level of participation in decision-making within a household

Women's level of participation in decision-making in RTB crops is not known

Poverty levels are high in the two countries with over 50% and 70% of the population living on less than 1 US$ per day.

While its important to understand gender division of roles, it is also important to understand the meaning and reasons for such division as this can affect many household processes including decision making and access to benefits.

What are intra-household dynamics regarding decision-making on crop production?

What is the gender division of labour?

Are there gender differences in access to credit and training?

**Introduction: research questions**

# Materials and Methods:

- Sample size:
  - 405 (261 women and 144 men) farmers in Burundi

  - 406 (184 women and 222 men) farmers in Rwanda

# Materials and Methods: Data was collected on

Who was a member of a farmers' organization ➡ who was trained by the agricultural extension worker ➡ who received credit ➡ who decided or did the following farm activities:

- i) land preparation
- ii) bought inputs,
- iii) selected the variety ,
- iv) planted,
- v) weeded,
- vi) sprayed,
- vii) harvested ,
- viii) transported to market
- ix) processed and
- x) sold

# Results: Factors influencing decision making and labour provision

**decision-making for women potato farmers**

**+ve influence (**Age, Education, HH size, farming as primary occupation, owned land size and crop ownership)

**-ve influence** (credit access, acreage)

**labour provision for women potato farmers**

**+ve influence (**Education, HH size, farming as primary occupation, owned land size, crop ownership, woman income and distance to the main road).

**-ve influence** (Age, distance to the market & field size).

**decision-making for women sweetpotato farmers**

**+ve influence (**Age, Education, HH size & crop ownership)

-ve influence (husband primarily farmer).

**labour provision for women sweetpotato farmers**

+ve influence (Crop owner & acreage)

-ve influence (farming experience, acreage & market availability.

# Results: Factors influencing decision making and labour provision

**decision-making for women banana farmers**

**+ve influence (**Age, education, crop owner and distance to the market)

labour provision for women banana farmers

**+ve influence (**Age, education, crop owner, total HH income )

**-ve influence** (HH size)

**+ve influence decision-making for women cassava farmers**

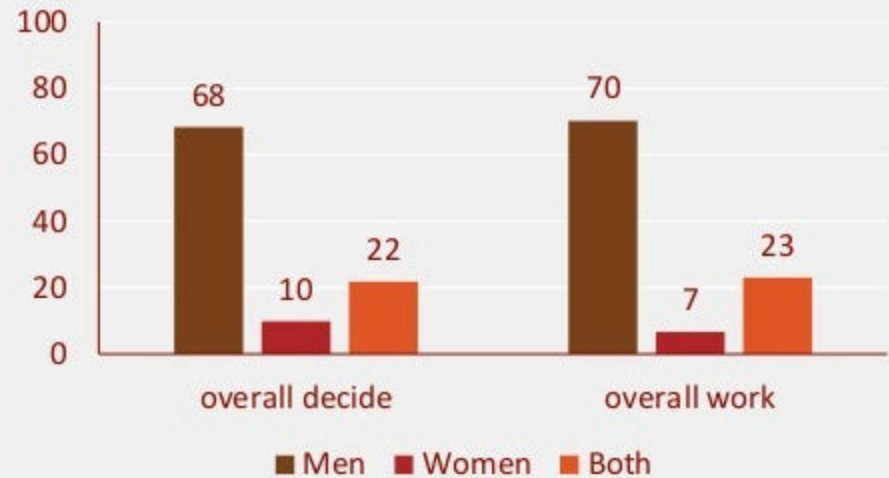access to credit, acreage & distance to the market.

**+ve influence labour provision for women cassava farmers**

acreage & crop owner

**Results:
Level of decision making
and labour provision
(% responses)**

**Banana in Burundi (n=215)**

| | overall decide | overall work |
|---|---|---|
| Men | 68 | 70 |
| Women | 10 | 7 |
| Both | 22 | 23 |

■ Men  ■ Women  ■ Both

**Banana in Rwanda (n=115)**

| | overall decide | overall work |
|---|---|---|
| Men | 42 | 40 |
| Women | 9 | 8 |
| Both | 49 | 52 |

■ Men  ■ Women  ■ Both
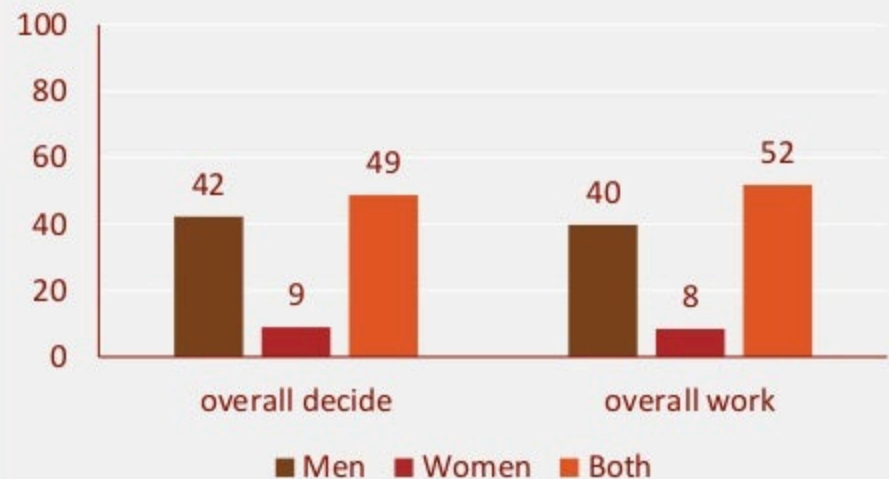
**Results:
Level of decision making and labour provision
(% responses)**

## Potato in Burundi (n=108)



Overall decide: Men 56, Women 24, Both 20
Overall work: Men 56, Women 19, Both 25

■ Men  ■ Women  ■ Both

## Potato in Rwanda (n=214)



overall decide: Men 23, Women 7, Both 70
overall work: Men 29, Women 7, Both 65

■ Men  ■ Women  ■ Both
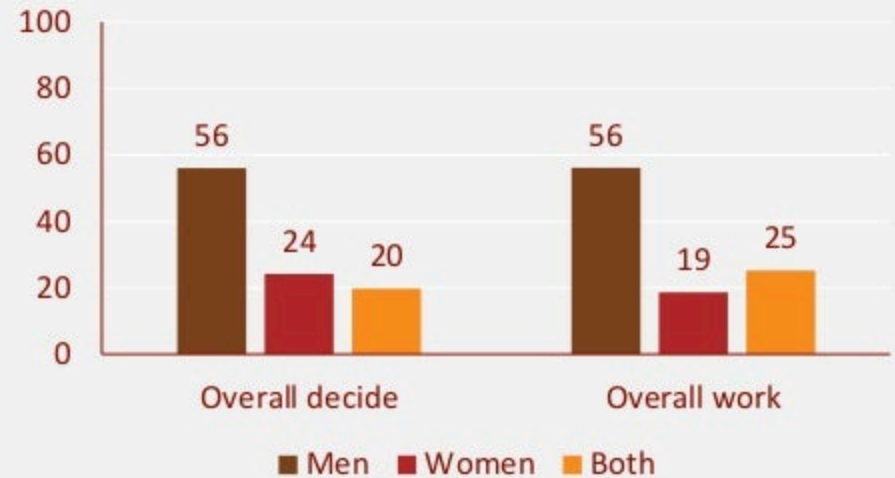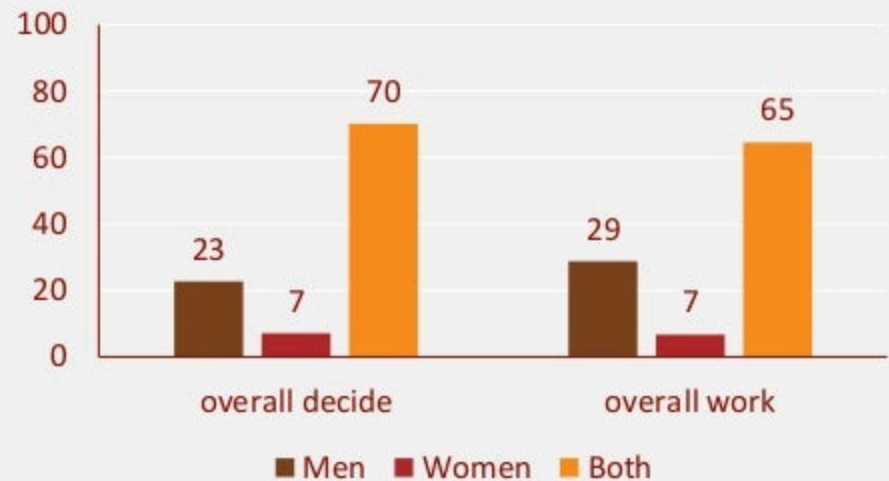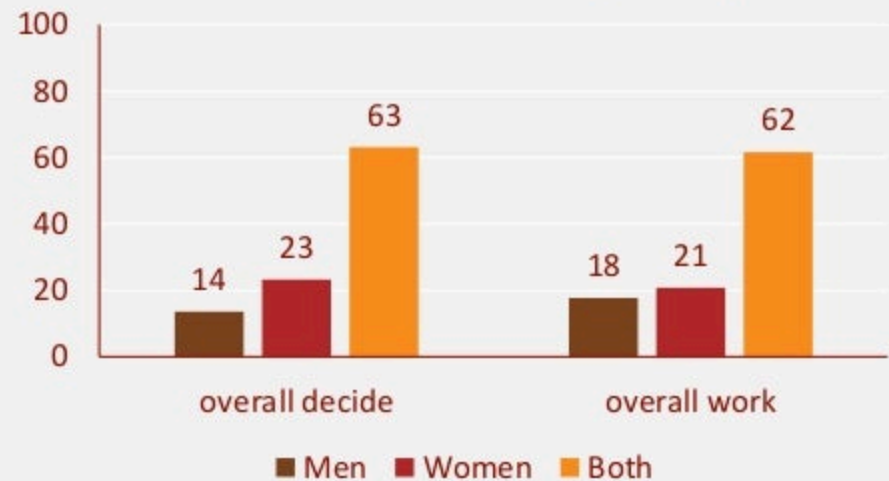
**Results:**
**Level of decision making and labour provision (% responses)**

## Cassava in Burundi (n=304)



Overall decide: Men 46, Women 28, Both 26
Overall work: Men 53, Women 19, Both 27

■ Men  ■ Women  ■ Both

## Cassava in Rwanda (n=109)



overall decide: Men 14, Women 23, Both 63
overall work: Men 18, Women 21, Both 62

■ Men  ■ Women  ■ Both
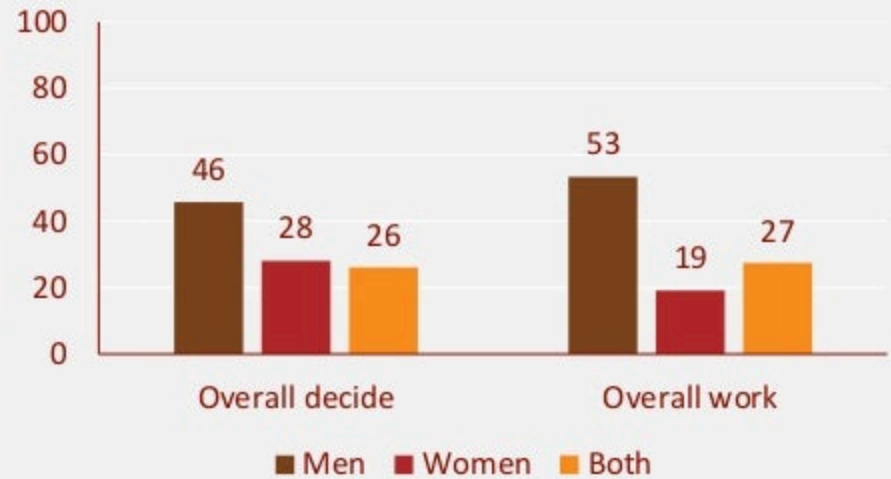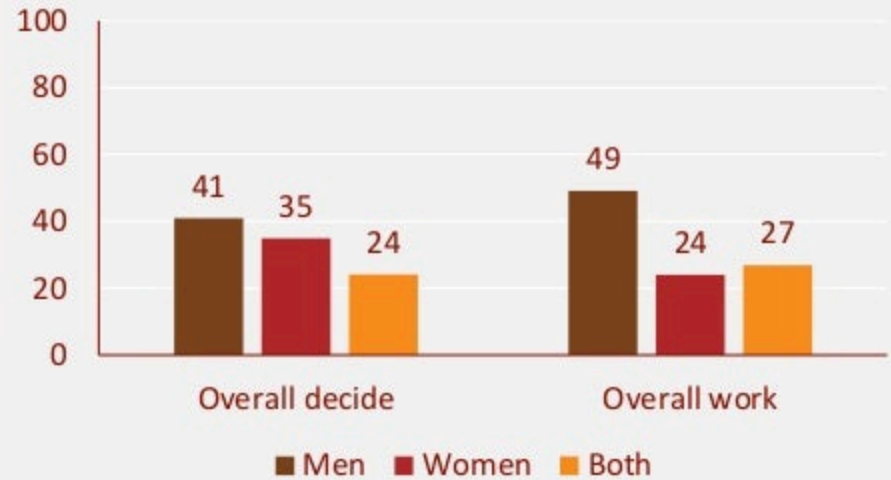
Results:
Level of decision making and labour provision
(% responses)

## Sweetpotato in Burundi (n=332)

Men | Women | Both

## Sweetpotato in Rwanda (n=275)

Men | Women | Both
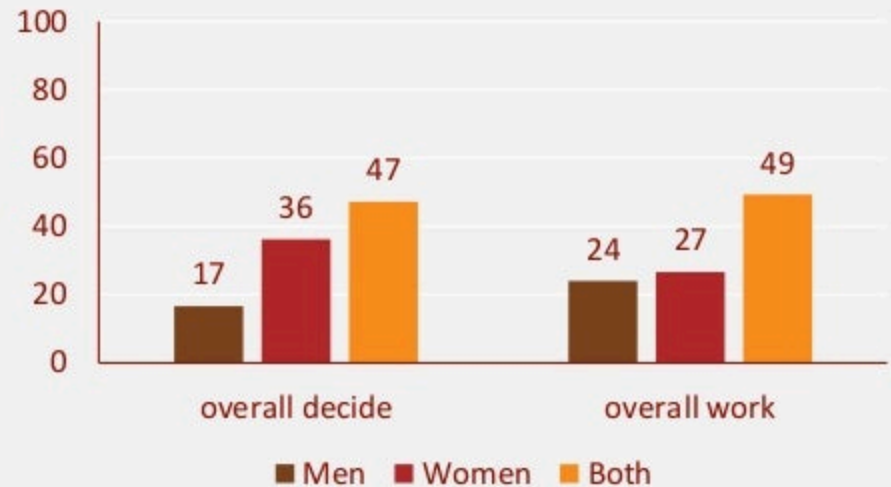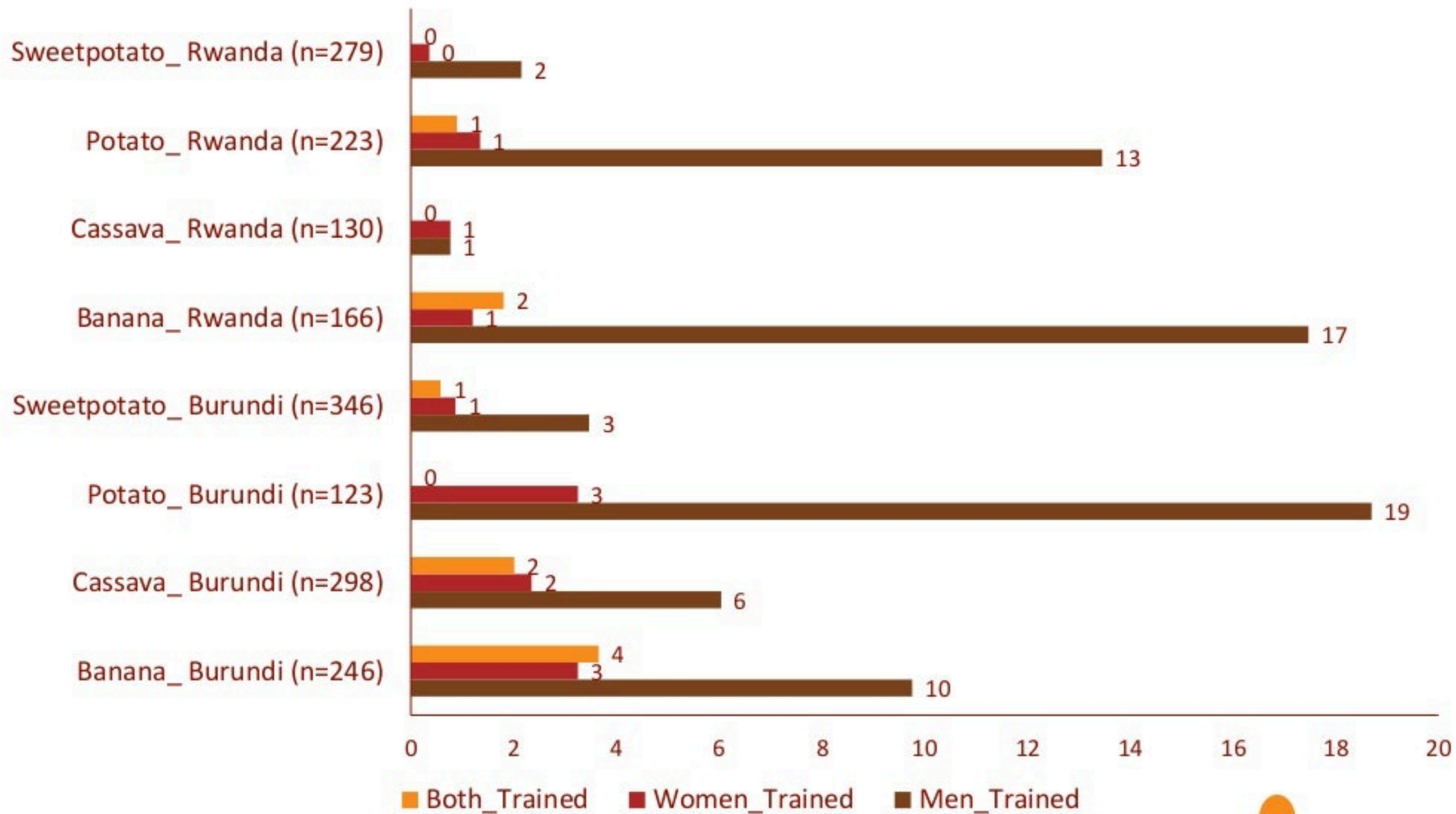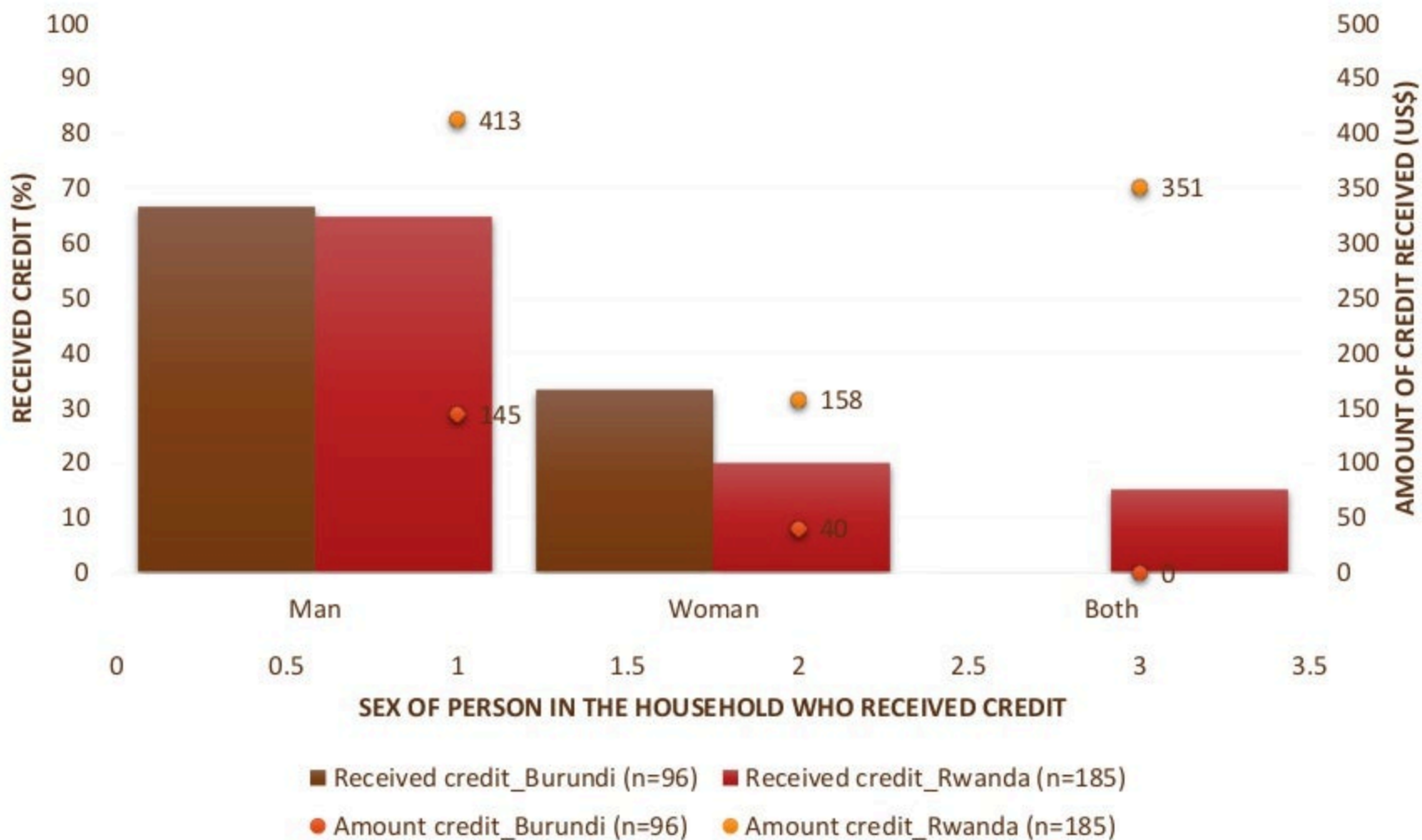
**Results: Households which had received training in pest and disease management (% responses)**

# Results: Access to credit

# Conclusions

**1**

Our results challenge the established notion that women provide nearly 70% of labour in agricultural production

**2**

while women have little decision-making power in men dominated crops, men have much better decision making power & control over crops that are dominated by women.

**3**

Women invested more of their time in sweetpotato and cassava because its their role to feed the children and the two crops require low input use

**4**

Low access to extension services can further reduce women participation in decision-making due to reduced knowledge and skills

**5**

Cultural norms do influence division of labour eg

- In Burundi, women don't establish new banana fields and men don't harvest sweetpotato

# Way forward

**To improve women's life and wellbeing, R4D programs should challenge the cultural norms which underlie men's domination in cash crops**

**Increase knowledge and confidence of women to make decisions through trainings but also engender men to increase women participation**

**Future studies should go deeper into identifying the drivers for culture-specific gender roles that bring about the differences in the division of roles between men and women**

**Capturing the exact amount of time spent doing a specific task on each plot per household member per day and each person reporting his/her time would be the most ideal and can significantly reduce potential risk of bias**

**Low-cost labour saving technologies together with spouse support with household chores may help to increase women participation during production of RTB crops**

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**CGIAR**

RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
Roots, Tubers
and Bananas

**Thank you**

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