

# Why gender focal person structures are not working in Rwanda and Uganda's national agricultural research organizations

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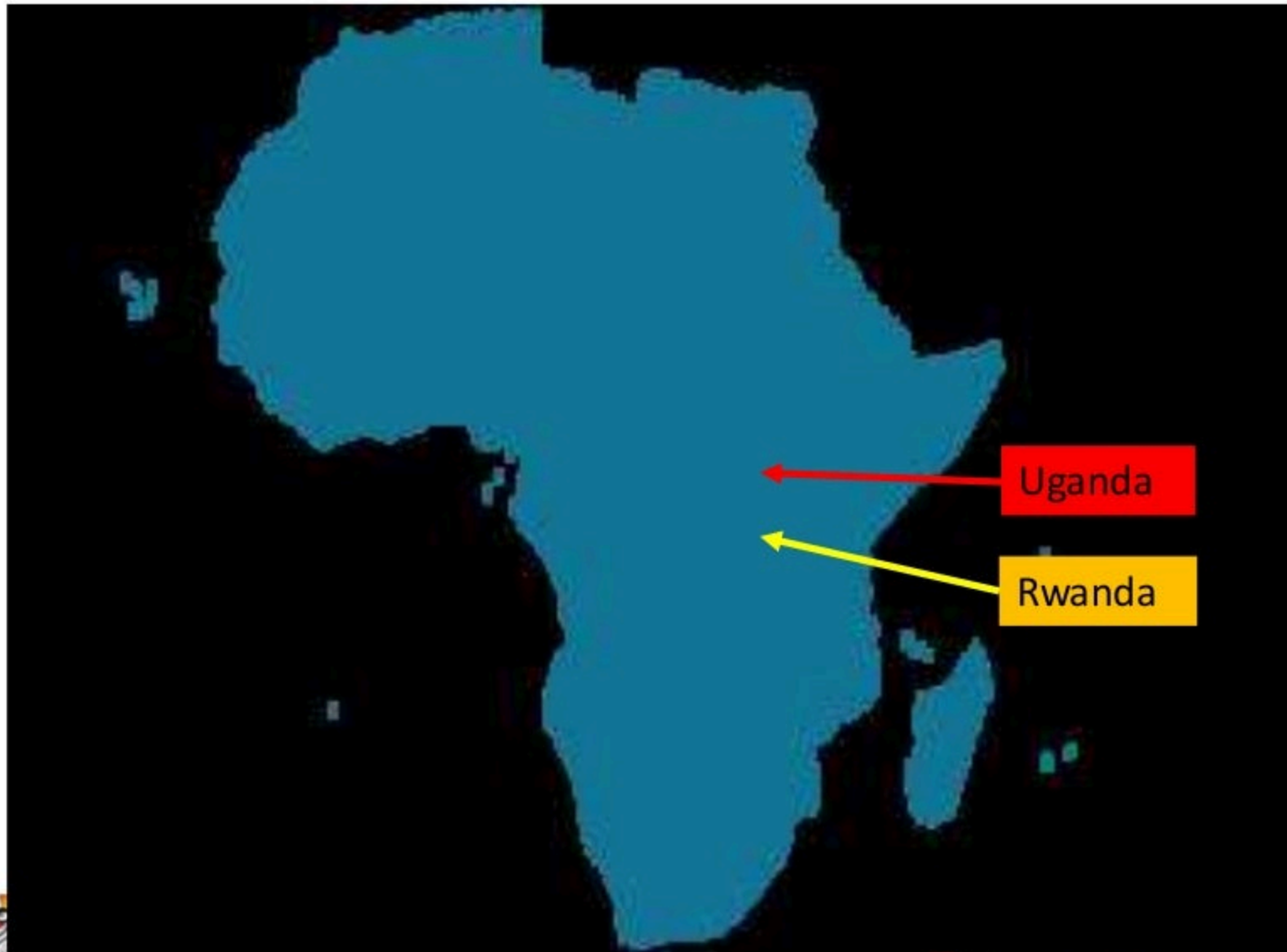


# Presentation outline

- Research question
- Methods
- Status of GFPs in NARO and RAB
- Why the structures are not working
- Conclusion



# Case studies—Rwanda and Uganda



# Research question

- Gender focal person structure (GFPs) strategy is widely used e.g FARA, ASARECA, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda but institutionalization of gender still elusive.
- **Question:** Why is the gender focal person structure not working in Rwanda and Uganda national agricultural research organizations?



# Methods

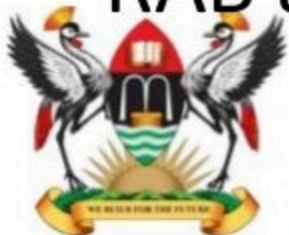
- Data collected in June-August, 2016
- Mixed methods approach
- Self-administered questionnaire to researchers and managers (NARO-218; RAB-37)
- Key informant interviews (NARO-25; RAB-8)
- Document review (Strategic plans, Human resource manual, selected research project documents)



# Status of GFPs in NARO and RAB

GFPs:

- ✓ Existing staff were identified to guide integration of gender in the research processes within their Institutes (NARO in 2005; RAB in 2013)
- ✓ Have low visibility--only 27% in NARO and 30% RAB aware of their existence



# Status of GFPs in NARO and RAB...

- ✓ Not incorporated in the mainstream human resource policy (no use of formal recruitment process, no established positions, reporting, performance assessment, and reward systems)
- ✓ Gender integration treated as a project—within localised interventions.
- ✓ Pushed by a few champions, no organizational budgets, donor funded



# Why the structures are not working

## 1. Institutionalization journey incomplete:

- ✓ The champions succeeded in raising awareness of need/relevance of gender

But informal structures were set up—not embedded in mainstream structures





# Why the structures are not working...

## NARO:

- ✓ Champion was a female Director General who initiated the process after attending a gender meeting
- ✓ Adhoc National secretariat taskforce set up
- ✓ National and institute GFPs appointed by Directors— not through the mainstream appointment procedures
- ✓ Gender responsibilities on top of existing responsibilities



RAB:

- ✓ Champion was donor funded ASARECA
- ✓ National GFP given a formal appointment letter signed by Director
- ✓ National GFP appointed the regional GFPs but these had no formal appointment letters



# Why the structures are not working...

**2. Capacity low:** Few in number (one per institute), not qualified for the task

Examples of selections criteria:

- ✓ Attended a gender training (1-3 days)
- ✓ Interested in gender and willing to serve
- ✓ Social, good working relationship with staff
- ✓ Working in socio-economics unit—agric economists
- ✓ Being a woman

**None mentioned gender expertise, or academic qualifications in gender and agriculture**



# Why the structures are not working...

## 3. Perceptions and varied interpretations of gender integration

### *Perceptions about gender:*

- ✓ A women's issue and a threat to men
- ✓ Contradicting culture
- ✓ Not "serious" science
- ✓ A confusing concept

### *Interpretations of gender integration:*

- ✓ Having an equal number of women and men in the work place or in field meetings
- ✓ Gender in research proposals
- ✓ Proposals, implementation, strategy
- ✓ Women's welfare issues addressed



# Why the structures are not working...

## 4. Gender a misfit within existing structures:

Research organized around commodities yet gender is not a commodity—How does it fit in the structure?

RAB: Fitted within existing socio-economics unit without revising its mandate, staff establishment and budgets



# Conclusions

GFP structures are not working due to:

- ✓ Lack of a harmonized understanding about gender, gender integration and role of GFPs
- ✓ Insufficient demonstration of the value add to existing structures and processes
- ✓ Gender remains the responsibility of GFPs—not embraced by management at all levels and all staff
- ✓ Not embedded in mainstream policies, operational documents and structures



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# Thank you

