

Where Have All The Female Team Leaders Gone?

A look at gender and senior leadership roles in market systems and private sector development programs.

Objective

- This research aimed to gain insight into gendered differences in the recruitment and retention of Team Leaders (TL)/Chiefs of Party (CoP) in market system (MSD) and private sector development (PSD) programs.
- The first phase of the research identified material differences and similarities in experiences of female and male TL/CoP to narrow down and better target the second phase of research and to engage the industry, donors, and practitioners in evidence-based, action-oriented dialogue.

Methodology & Limitations

Methodology

- Developed and tested online survey.
- Refined and disseminated a 34-question survey (multiple choice and fill-in) through researchers' networks and social media (e.g. LinkedIn and Facebook).

Limitations

- Small sample size.
- Self-selecting nature means that a certain type of industry respondent is more likely to come forward ('active' industry players, women seeing themselves in the survey topic).
- Survey dissemination channels may have limited participation of older respondents.
- Approach was unlikely to attract those dropping out of the industry.
- Survey responses not validated for accuracy.
- Difficult to determine a population boundary.

Survey Respondents

Gender

Women



18 women with no Team Leader experience



25 women with Team Leader experience

Men



10 men with no Team Leader experience

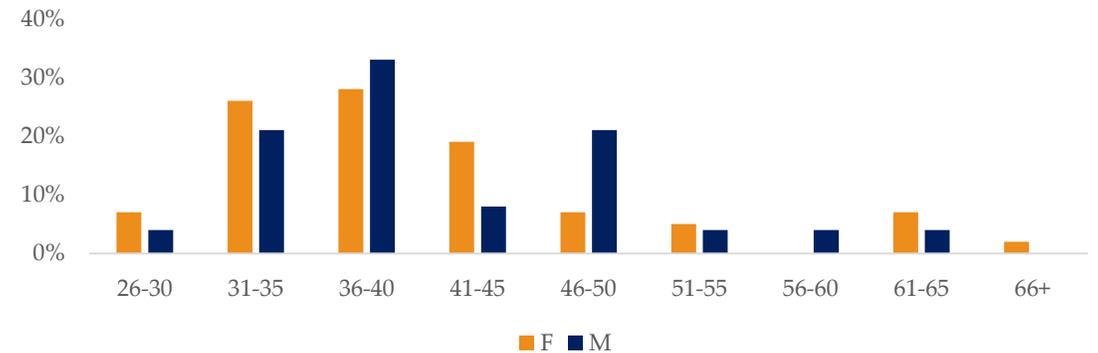


15 men with Team Leader experience

Nationality



Age

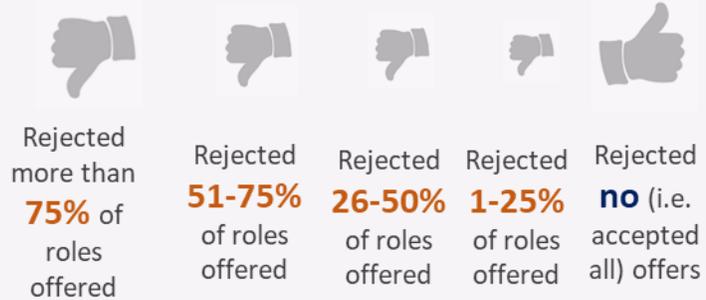


FINDING #1

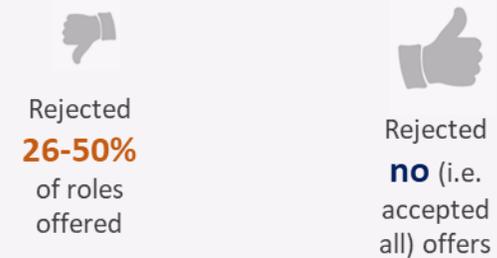


Women are receiving fewer TL offers and rejecting a higher percentage of the offers they receive

Women



Men

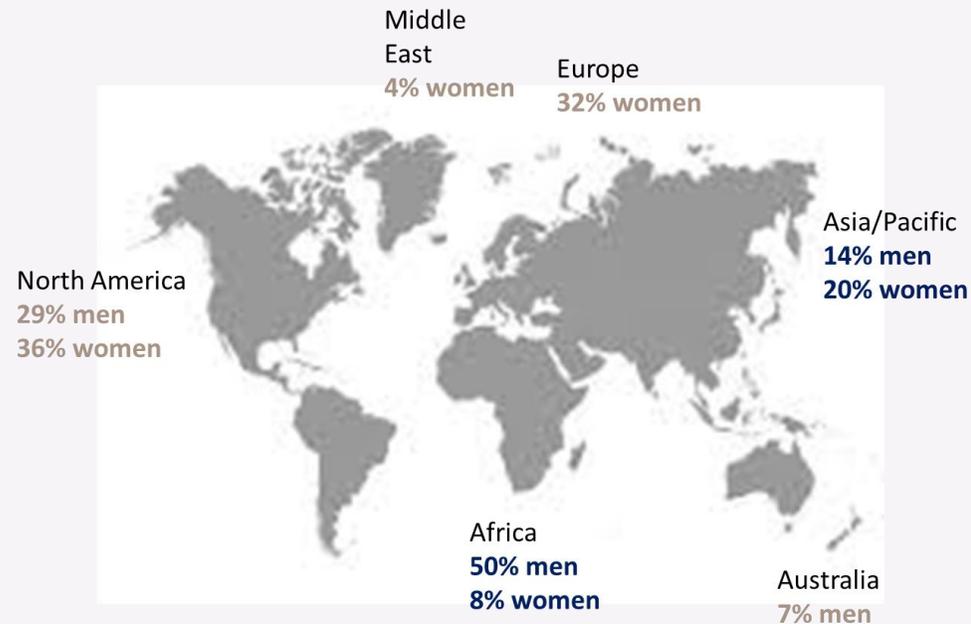


Men say yes more often.

FINDING #2



Women TLs more represented in non-field locations

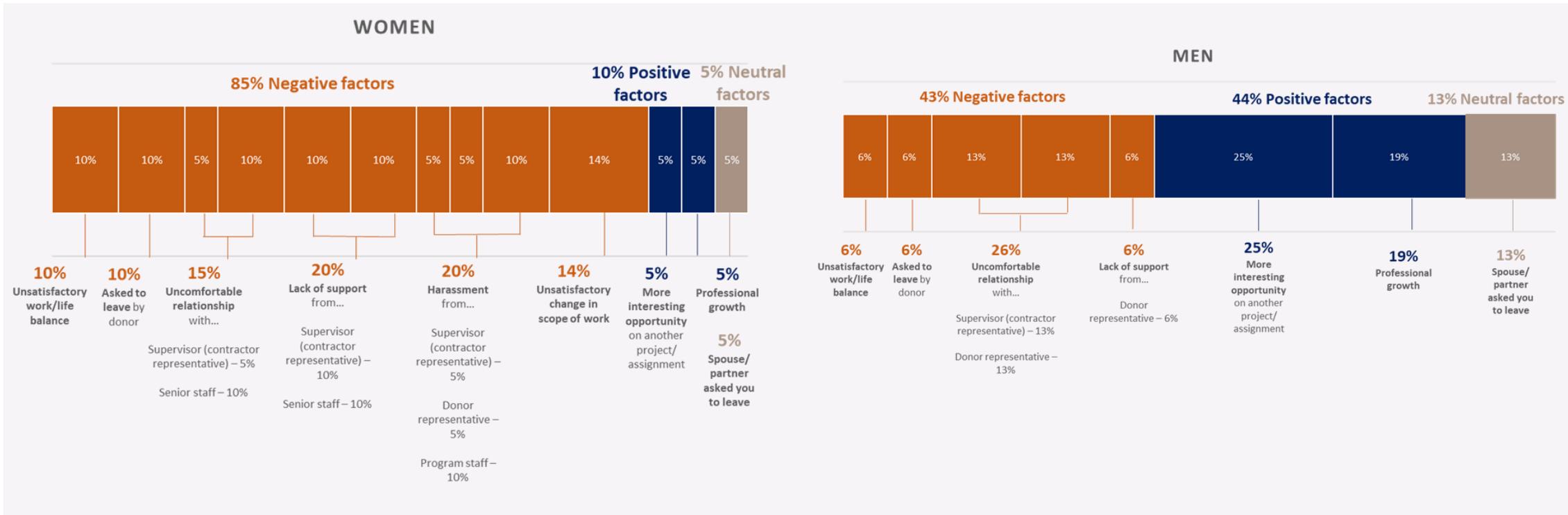


- 68% of women are in non-field locations (e.g. Australia, Europe, North America) compared to just 34% of men.
- Location was a top consideration for women with children when evaluating TL roles.

FINDING #3



Men and women face similar challenges in the role but leave TL roles for different reasons

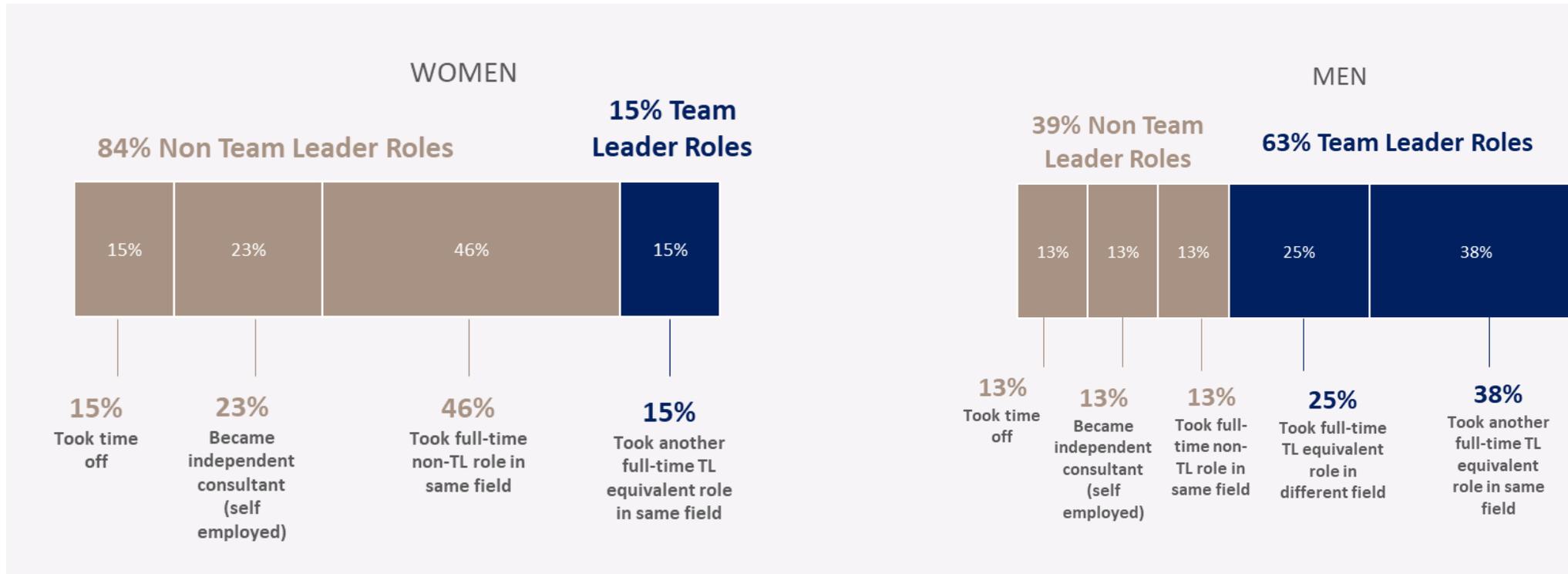


Men leave TL roles for new opportunities whereas women leave because of a change in scope of work, harassment, or lack of support.

FINDING #4



After leaving a TL position prematurely, women are more likely to take a step down to a non-TL role

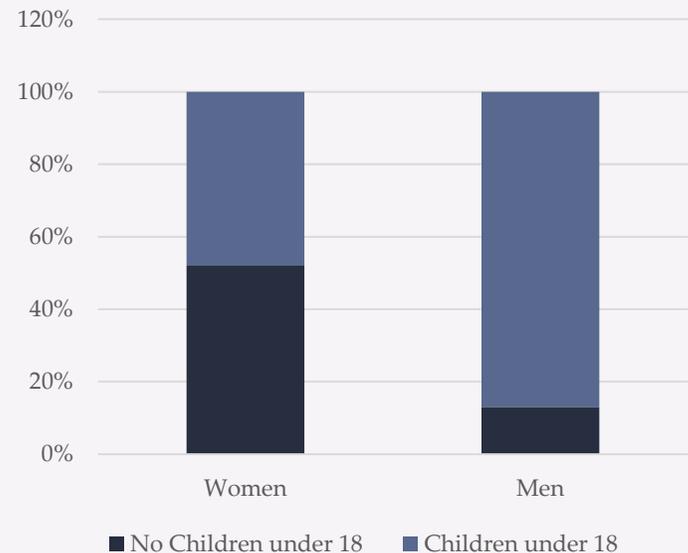


Almost 85% of women took a non-TL role after leaving a TL role prematurely.

FINDING #5



Children have more significant impact on women TLs than men



- 52% of the women with TL experience have NO children under the age of 18, compared to 13% of men.
- Women perceived that **children have a more significant impact on the number of offers they receive and accept** compared to men.
- Women with children listed location as the leading decision factor when evaluating TL roles, whereas **scope of responsibility** was the leading factor for men (with and without children) and women without children.
- Women with children are **more likely to leave a TL role prematurely** than women without children (though less likely than men).

FINDING #6

Both women and men face numerous challenges in TL roles



Work/life balance

- Most cited challenge by men, and tied for 1st place for women.



Uncomfortable relationships

- Poor relationships with contractors, senior staff, and donor representatives were sources of challenges for women *and* men.
- Women faced more issues with peers and subordinates than men.



Lack of support

- Women and men also faced a deficit of support but source varied; i.e. contractor (women) and senior staff (men).



Harrassment

- Women and men experienced harassment, but for women it was from both above (contractor representative) and below (program staff).

Deep Dive: Recruitment

Gender difference is more pronounced between women and men who had not yet been a TL.



- **Work/life balance** was the most important consideration when evaluating a TL role for women who have not been a TL though far less important for women who had previously served as a TL.



- Women who had not yet been a TL cited **strong leadership (18%), management (15%), and strategic skills (13%)** as the most important qualities of a TL, whereas men who had not been a TL split their responses evenly across characteristics: leadership, management, technical, relationship management, and ability to delegate.

Women and men who have not yet been TLs have different perceptions of the demands of the role

How were you recruited for your TL role(s)?



Deep Dive: Recruitment

Top 3		
1	Internal promotion without formal recruitment process	Self-initiative
2	Self-initiative	Asked/encouraged to apply by senior colleague
3	Asked/encouraged to apply by senior colleague (tied 3 rd place)	Corporate recruiter asked/encourage to apply
	Corporate recruiter asked/encourage to apply (tied 3 rd place)	

Internal/informal channels most important for women.

Deep Dive: Retention

Have you left a TL role prematurely?

		
Children under 18	64%	69%
No Children under 18	43%	60%

If so, why?



With Children under 18	
Asked to leave by donor	More interesting opportunity on another project or assignment
Professional growth (tied 2)	Professional growth
Lack of support from senior staff (tied 2)	Spouse/partner asked you to leave (tied 3)
Harassment from contractor/contractor representative (tied 2)	Uncomfortable relationship with supervisor (contractor representative) (tied 3)
Planned to leave country before offer was made (tied 2)	Uncomfortable relationship with donor representative (tied 3)

“Asked to leave by donor” most selected reason for premature departure from TL role for women.

What difficulties have you faced as a TL ?



1	Unsatisfactory work/life balance (tied 1st)	Unsatisfactory work/life balance
2	Lack of support from contractor representative (tied 1)	Uncomfortable relationship (contractor representative)
3	Uncomfortable relationship with senior staff (tied 1)	Lack of support from senior staff (tied 3)
4	Uncomfortable relationship with donor representative	Lack of support from contractor representative (tied 3)
5	Uncomfortable relationship with supervisor (contractor representative)	Uncomfortable relationship with donor representative

Deep Dive:
Retention

Challenging relationships with key stakeholders were the biggest source of difficulties, after work/life balance.



Deep Dive: Retention

Sources of difficulties*		
Donor representative	27%	18%
Senior staff/program staff	26%	16%
Contractor representative (supervisor)	29%	32%
Non-relationship-based issues	18%	44%
* Grouped 'uncomfortable relationship, lack of support and harassment'		

Next Steps: Follow up Surveys

Recruitment

- Do perceptions of the criteria and demands of the job prevent some women from pursuing TL offers?
- Discrepancy between women's satisfaction level with number of offers and actual lower number of offers.
- Nuances in recruitment processes at tender and during program implementation for women and men.
- The role of location in the decision of women and men to accept TL roles.

Retention

- Turnover rates both men and women
- Factors which influence the decision of women with children to stay in a TL role
- Unsatisfactory work/life balance for men and women
- Importance of 'supportive' partners for women and men in TL roles and what this means concretely
- Relationship dynamics between TLs, contractors and donors
- 'Asked to leave by donor' was the most cited reason for leaving for women with children

Other

- Ways in which ethnicity may amplify or mute gendered differences
- Other intersectional aspects (age, class, sexual orientation)

Acknowledgements

*For more information, or to be involved in future interviews, please contact
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Researchers

- Vicky Carter, Holly Krueger, Michelle LeMeur, Tim Sparkman

Graphic design

- Jessica Joye

Special thanks

- Lynley Mannell, Tim Stewart