CANOPY'S LAB NOTES

*From Data to Insights*

THE CANOPY LAB

Entry #01: Highlighting Gendered Differences of the Impact of COVID-19

Background: The Canopy Lab was contracted by USAID Feed the Future Market Systems and Partnerships (MSP) Activity in Spring 2021 to conduct a rapid online survey exploring the impact of the pandemic on the work lives of Market Systems Development professionals. In this first Lab Notes entry, Senior Consultant, Laura Kim, shares her journey in trying to tell a better story through data visualization.

TAKE #1:

In this **basic bar graph**, I was trying to demonstrate that a higher proportion of women (78%), compared to men (60%), reported an increase in unpaid care responsibilities – one of the areas we investigated.

I didn't succeed. The graph was difficult to interpret and could not stand on its own. It also took up a lot of space for just one indicator.
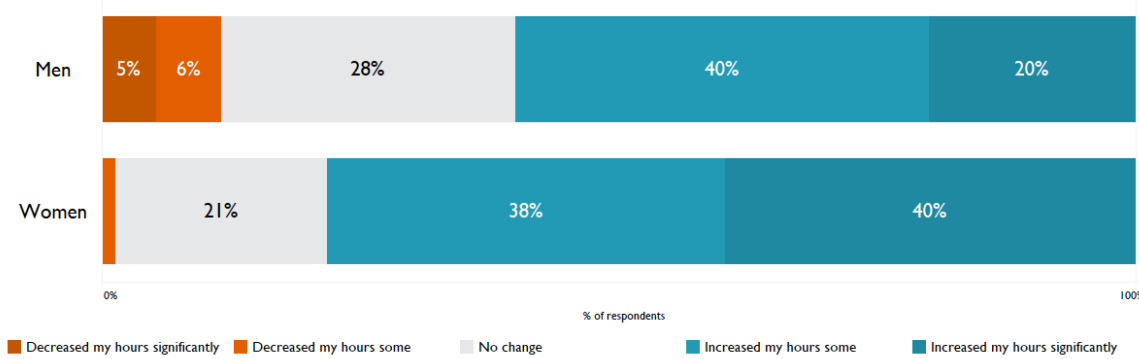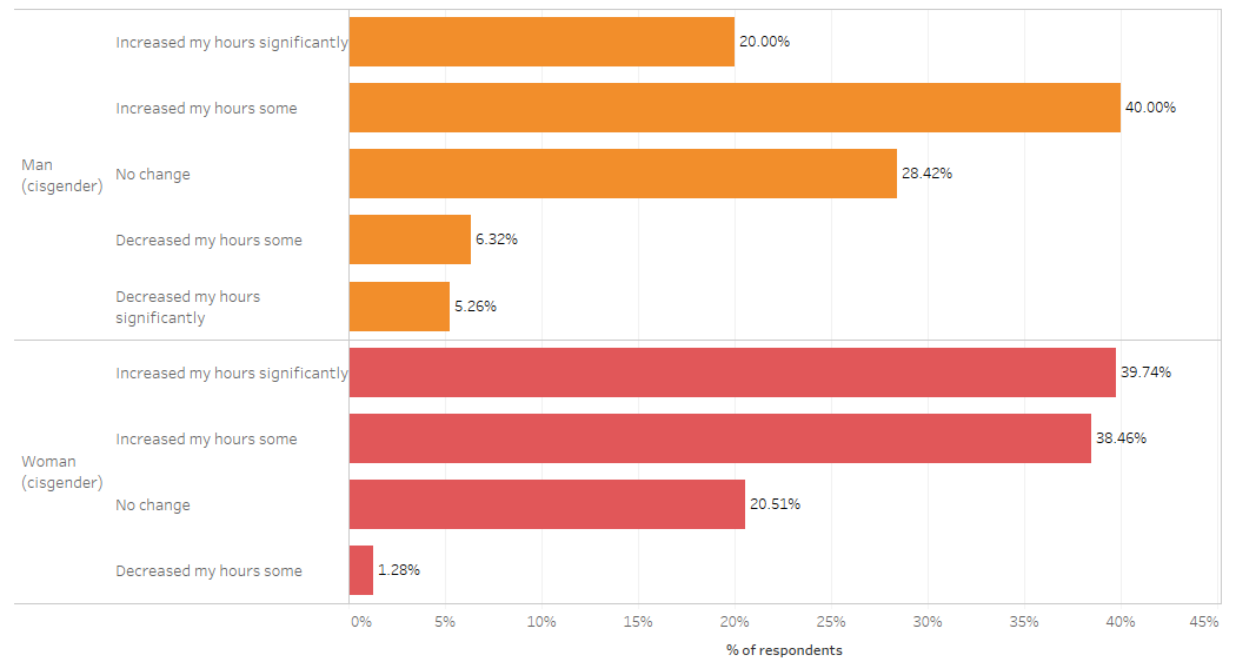

TAKE #2:

For the next iteration, I used **stacked bars**. These allowed me to condense the findings and save precious space. Rather than color-coding the genders, I color-coded the reported changes (decrease, no change, increase) in unpaid care work.

I liked this more, but I thought I could do better to communicate the finding.

TAKE #3:

In my next iteration, I converted the stacked bars to **_divergent stacked bars_**, which allowed for the centering of the reported changes at the midpoint (in our case, this was the "no change" response). I felt that this graph better represented the spread of increase and decrease in care responsibilities.

My Tableau software didn't have an automatic function for creating divergent stacked bars, so I used this helpful video.
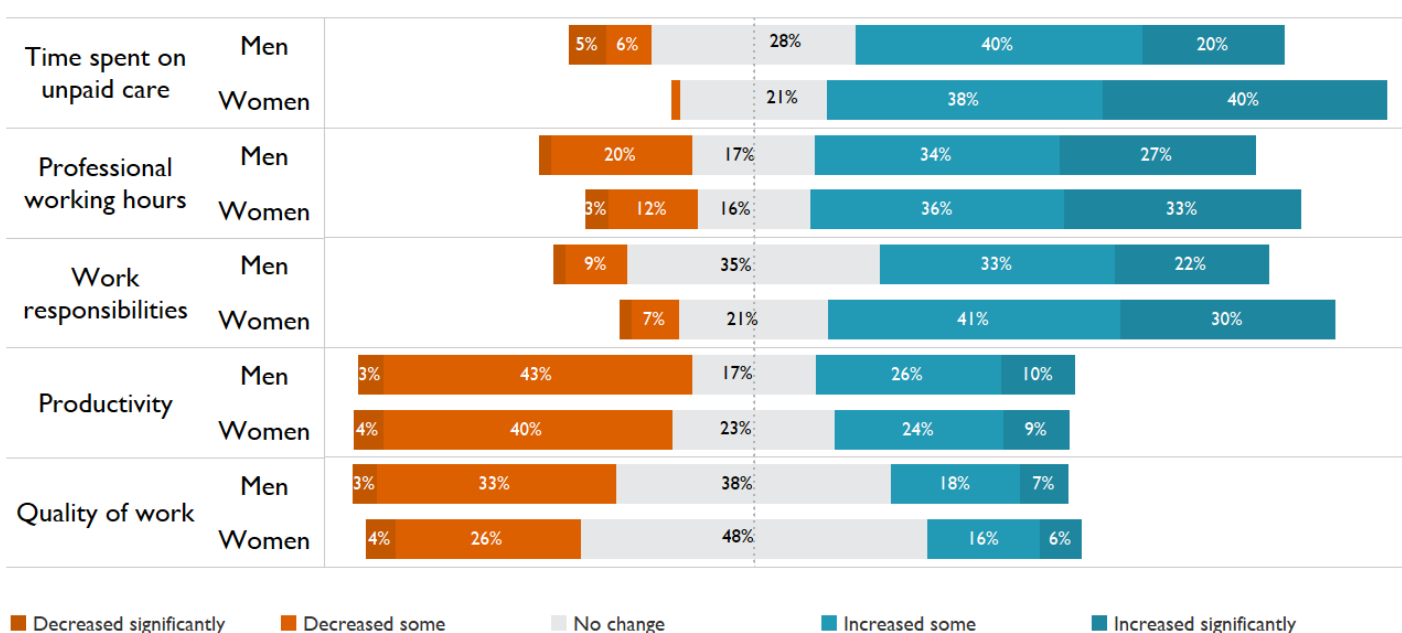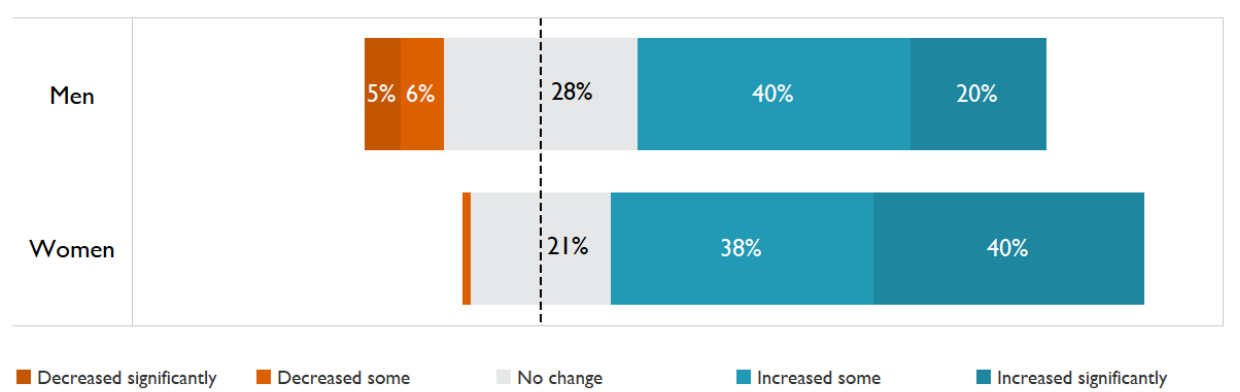
TAKE #4 (FINAL):

With all the space saving, I was able to include our other indicators and showcase a wider array of gendered comparisons. I'm sure there are ways to improve this final take, but I was happy with this iteration.

Check out this diagram in How COVID-19 is Impacting The Talent Pipeline of MSD Activities – our study conducted for the Market Systems and Partnerships (MSP) Activity, funded by USAID.

This Canopy's Lab Notes series features a behind-the-scenes look into our thinking and our processes, as we help our partners navigate complexity through a systems lens.