



## Farmer-centered and structural perspectives on innovation and scaling: a study on sustainable agriculture and nutrition in East Africa

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** We studied innovation processes in agriculture and nutrition to discuss a scaling approach that encompasses the technical, institutional, and behavioral dimensions of change.

**Approach:** To understand dynamics across these dimensions, we analyzed farmers' innovation processes through two analytical lenses: farmer-centered and structural. Focus group discussions in Kapchorwa, Uganda, and Teso South, Kenya, looked at farmers' choices of innovations. Individual interviews and stakeholder workshops at both study sites increased understanding of the local innovation system.

**Findings:** To address local challenges, strive for livelihood aspirations, and fulfill personal taste preferences, farmers selected and adapted practices promoted by a research project. A wide range of additional support providers encouraged farmers to develop innovations in agriculture, marketing, and nutrition.

**Practical implications:** By promoting innovation as a process rather than an outcome, it is possible to address context-specific needs and enhance farmers' adaptive capacities. Scaling these processes necessitates the involvement of innovation support service providers in order to create an enabling environment for experimentation.

**Theoretical implications:** Analytical dualism highlights the different roles of human agency and structures in innovation processes needed to design successful scaling strategies.

**Originality/value:** This paper sets out a novel approach to understanding the increasingly discussed dimensions of scaling by linking them with concepts from innovation studies.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 June 2022  
Accepted 4 December 2022

### KEYWORDS

Sustainable agriculture;  
nutrition; scaling; innovation;  
Kenya; Uganda