

GenderUp DATE

*A conversational method for
responsible scaling*

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

Practical applications, Method improvements,
Institutionalizing GenderUp principles and
Research spin-offs



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INTRODUCTION

What is GenderUp?

GenderUp is a discussion-based method that supports innovation teams to scale agricultural innovations in a gender responsible and socially inclusive way. It provides methodological support to make scaling initiatives more inclusive, reflexive, responsive and anticipatory by focusing on social differentiation and trade-offs faced by various groups of people (Figure 1).

The scaling of innovations is a crucial aspect of Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D). To improve scaling efforts in agri-food systems, the [Scaling Readiness](#) approach was developed as part of the CGIAR's Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas. This approach, along with many other scaling tools, is primarily focused on identifying aspects in the enabling environment that might either facilitate or hamper the scaling of innovations (Sartas et al., 2020), rather than the unique needs, opportunities and constraints of different types of innovation users.

In response, GenderUp was designed to anticipate longer term negative consequences of scaling and to guide innovation teams in achieving positive scaling outcomes across different social groups (McGuire et al., 2023). To do so, GenderUp helps innovation teams place more practical attention on gender and its intersectionality with other relevant diversity.



Figure 1. GenderUp drives inclusive scaling strategies.

[Source](#)



Source

Objective

In this progress report we reflect upon the impact of GenderUp in the AR4D space, including its application across various scaling teams, discussions it has evoked, and its influence on other scaling tools (Figure 2). We describe different updates that are meant to give interested innovation teams a better understanding of:

- The GenderUp process and insights that innovation teams have obtained through GenderUp.
- Improvements to the GenderUp method and website in response to its actual application.
- How elements of GenderUp are currently being institutionalized in the CGIAR.
- Research spinoffs inspired by GenderUp.

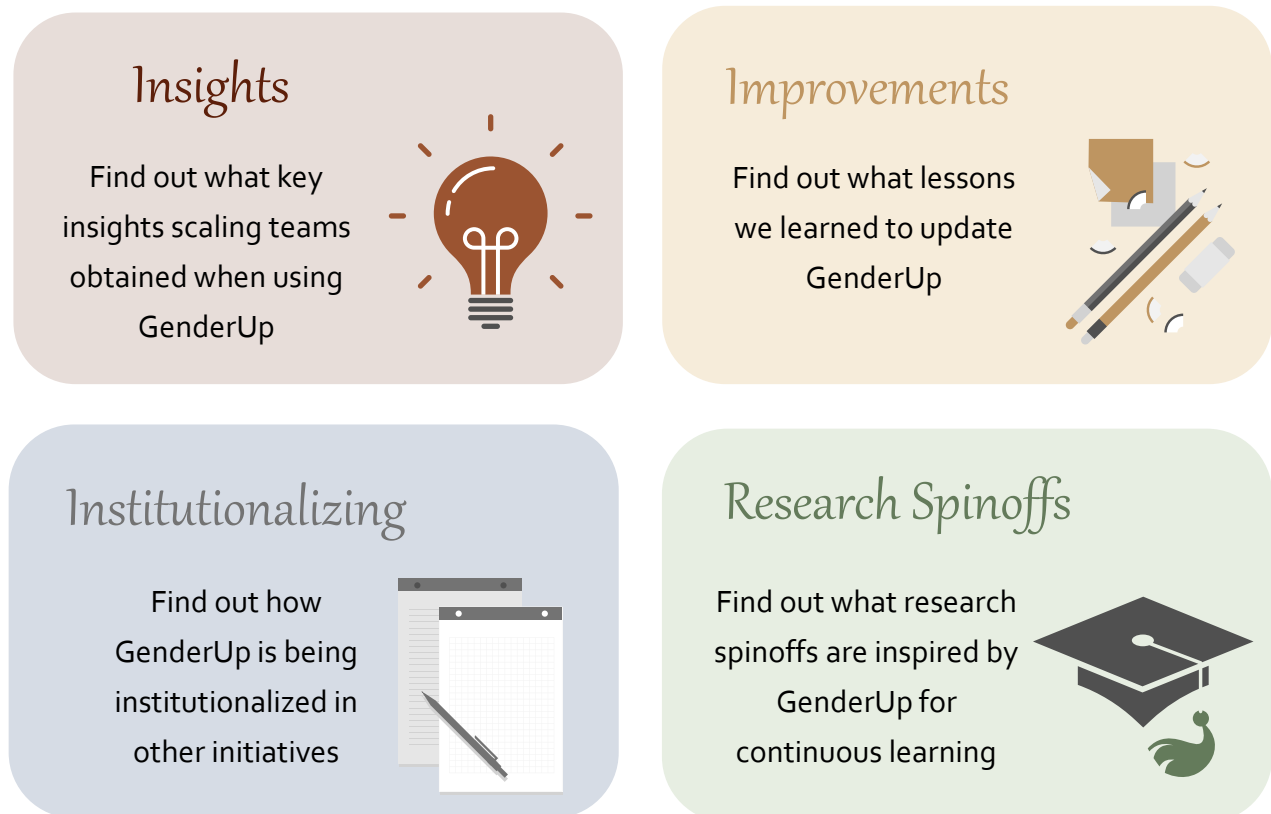


Figure 2. Different types of outcomes described in this outcome story

These activities have evolved as part of different CGIAR Research Programs and Initiatives such as Roots, Tubers and Bananas, Ukama Ustawi, and Mitigate+. They have benefitted from the combined effort of researchers from Wageningen University, the USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture at UC Davis, and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. In this progress report, two practical applications of GenderUp are used to highlight key insights for scaling teams and lessons learned by the GenderUp team to further improve and scale the tool itself. A brief description is provided of GenderUp's influence on other scaling tools and how its elements are being institutionalized in CGIAR initiatives, and PhD projects and other research spinoffs inspired by GenderUp.

The GenderUp process

GenderUp workshops are designed to be led by a facilitator who is experienced in social inclusion and wants to guide innovation teams in achieving the greatest impact for all intended users. Periodic training events are hosted by the GenderUp team to certify facilitators. Once certified, facilitators partner with innovation teams who:

- want to mitigate unintended consequences of their innovation,
- are open to thinking differently about their current scaling process, and
- are willing to analyze their team's diversity dynamics and approach.

Innovation teams are typically made up of 3-6 members with various social and disciplinary backgrounds. In GenderUp workshops, these teams are guided through a series of stages (Figure 3). The purpose of these stages is to:

- identify gender and relevant diversity among innovation users for more inclusive scaling of their innovation, and
- improve their scaling strategy by anticipating unintended consequences that an innovation may create for different groups in society.



Figure 3. The five different stages that make up the GenderUp journey. [Source](#)

GenderUp was developed during the Covid-19 pandemic as a web-based workshop that makes use of learning slides, an online survey, and interactive team discussion on Miro boards (Figure 4). Miro is an online whiteboard platform that can be used by teams to adjust their scaling strategies in a creative and collaborative way. As a result of its own scaling process, GenderUp now provides printable resources on its [website](#) for GenderUp workshops to be completed in-person, without internet access.

Stage 1a: Defining the innovation and scaling ambition

Your innovation

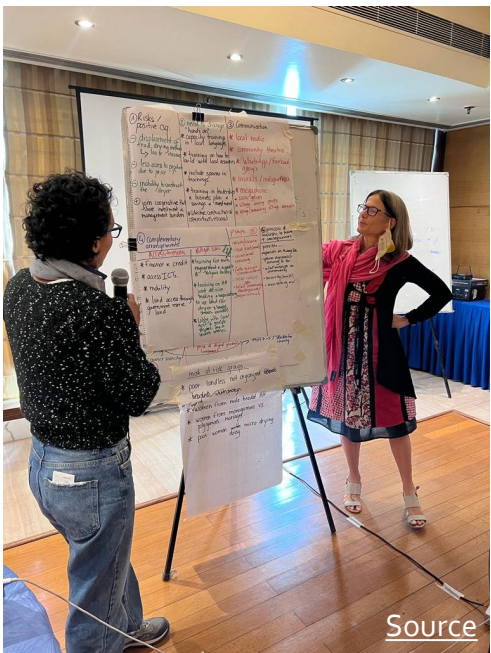
What is the core innovation you are aiming to scale?	Describe which problem the innovation is solving	Describe which development goals the innovation is contributing to	What is the purpose of scaling? What ends do you aim to achieve?

The context

Are there other innovations that you are promoting at the same time?	Describe the context where the innovation will be launched (social, geographical, agricultural...)	Describe what your innovation will replace	Describe on which scale you want to have an impact: in the community, regionally, or nationally?

Figure 4. Example of a Miro board used in the GenderUp workshop. [Source](#)

In 2022, 29 facilitators were trained, with an additional 20 facilitators trained in 2023. These facilitators have diverse roles and come from various institutions including CGIAR research centers, universities, and Feed the Future Innovation Labs. Once certified, facilitators are listed on the GenderUp website for interested innovation teams to contact. In turn, six innovation teams across Rwanda, Malawi, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Zimbabwe have gone through a GenderUp workshop. Two of those experiences are detailed in the following chapter.



INSIGHTS

Case 1 - Malawi Horticultural Marketplace App

This case study represents the application of GenderUp in its “originally intended form” – that is, a trained facilitator guiding an innovation team through a series of virtual GenderUp workshops to ensure inclusive scaling of a single innovation. The trained facilitator was a graduate student researcher who is now on the GenderUp development team at UC Davis. The innovation team was composed of seven participants, including researchers, IT developers, and program managers. They are researching and testing a horticultural marketplace app through funding from the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Markets, Risk and Resilience. The app is intended to overcome limitations faced by producers, especially women, when transporting and selling produce in local markets.

The innovation team in Malawi participated in two, three-hour long GenderUp workshops through Zoom. Through interactive and reflective discussions, they identified three diverse groups who might be left out of their current scaling and uptake strategy. These included those who are poorly educated, young and elderly people, and those with low levels of income. They also discussed how gender intersects with each of these dimensions, making it even harder for women to access and use their innovation. For example, women generally have less access to mobile phones and especially young women lack access to finance, negatively impacting their ability to use the app.

Upon completion of the GenderUp workshops, the innovation team was pleased with the actionable mitigation strategies they developed to ensure each of the above groups could receive the benefits of the marketplace app. These included:

- Re-thinking the timing of trainings to accommodate women’s daily schedules;
- Performing a drama to share information about the app with those who have low levels of literacy; and
- Developing partnerships with private sector entities to make the innovation more affordable and with farmers’ organizations to better reach excluded groups.



Case 2 - Zimbabwe Mechanized Conservation Agriculture Innovations

Diverting slightly from GenderUp's originally "intended use", the CGIAR Initiative on Diversification in East and Southern Africa, Ukama Ustawi, adapted GenderUp to fit their specific and contextual needs. A trained GenderUp facilitator working within Ukama Ustawi's Work Package 5 - Empowering and Engaging Youth and Women - gathered together stakeholders from across governmental institutions, FAO, USAID, and CGIAR centers to facilitate a GenderUp workshop. These stakeholders are researching and scaling innovations focused on Conservation Agriculture (CA) and previously participated in a Scaling Readiness workshop on mechanized CA.

Throughout the GenderUp process, the teams settled on three diverse groups who might currently be missing out on the benefits of mechanized CA. These groups included those who are young and elderly, those with disabilities, and those located in remote geographic locations. The team expected that use of the innovations would increase the labor burden for elderly people, mainly because they may face difficulties in acquiring the skills to operate the machines. Notably, the team also thought dynamics in social cohesion may change, leading to individualism and destroying collectivism/social interactions. Workshop participants expected farmers might be less likely to help one another on their farms. This provides an example of how the scaling of innovations not only influences users, but also non-users.



Participant feedback

Participants in both workshops shared positive thoughts on their experience in the workshops. One of the participants mentioned that after the workshop she better understands the need to look at the beneficiaries' perspective. In general, participants appreciated the practical strategies they gained to promote gender equality. They also requested access to scaling resources for reference in the future. The potential benefits of GenderUp outside the CGIAR arena was also highlighted by participants.



Source

“

GenderUp needs to be shared with other institutes outside the CGIAR arena because of its applicability and impact, especially partners involved in the design of innovations should be included - Workshop participant 2

”



IMPROVEMENTS

Online materials

GenderUp is ambitious to continue learning, improving, and taking note of the theory underlying its own structure to scale up in a more inclusive way. GenderUp has been doing so through developing more accessible resources for offline workshops, re-designing the [website](#), and streamlining content for facilitators to conduct efficient and effective workshops.

The GenderUp workshops described above served as an opportune learning experience for the GenderUp team. Facilitators and participants identified a few challenges that could be improved for future applications of the tool. The main challenges related to accessibility and user-friendliness of the GenderUp website. See *Table 1* for a summary of website improvements that have been made in response to this feedback.

Table 1. Website Improvements for Facilitators and Participants.

DIFFICULTY	IMPROVEMENT
No slide deck for facilitators to present that includes all GenderUp resources and guides participants through an easy-to-follow flow of learning activities, surveys, and discussions.	All GenderUp resources, including the learning slides, Miro discussion boards, and survey links, have been combined in the Workshop Flow found on the website.
No central location to host scaling literature, resources, videos, or learning slides. This prevented participants from following up on topics they were interested in learning more about.	A list of scaling literature and resources now available on the website, along with all videos and learning slides .
Existing videos do not reflect GenderUp's inclusivity and diversity goals.	New videos created that are engaging and better depict the concepts of relevant diversity and intersectionality.
Difficult to understand jargon and language across the Miro board, website, and learning slides.	Updated language to be more understandable by non-social scientists and to be translated to other languages more easily in the future.

Offline materials

GenderUp was largely developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in an online tool where each participant needs a laptop or computer with internet access. However, this format was not accessible for the group in Zimbabwe who lacked a stable internet connection. In response, the GenderUp team realized that GenderUp itself needs to be 'responsibly scaled' by making available a tool in different formats that accommodates for different users. The materials in *Table 2* have been adapted or developed to run a GenderUp workshop without internet and electricity. The materials are accessible on the new website [here](#).

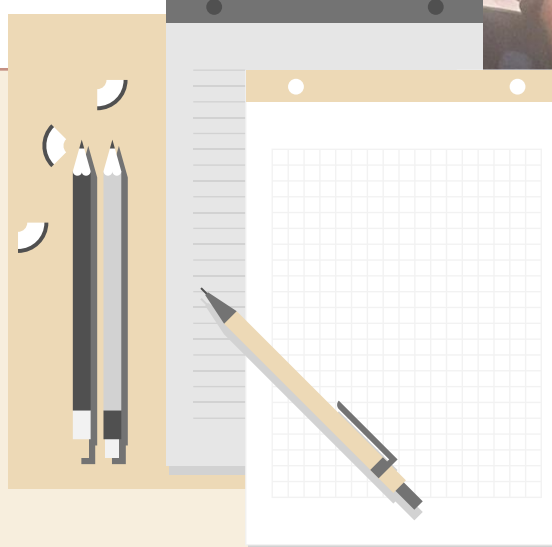
Table 2. Printable versions available.

Pre and post surveys

"Workshop Flow" for both facilitators and participants to reference

Flip charts that include questions from the virtual collaboration space called Miro

"Dimensions of Diversity" survey and printout for assessing results



Helpful hints for GenderUp facilitators

Feedback shared by the facilitators of GenderUp workshops has been valuable in the improvement of GenderUp as a tool. Here, we have summarized their feedback and hope it will provide helpful hints for future facilitators.

Hint 1: Limit the number of workshop participants

Within previous GenderUp workshops the number of participants varied. Based upon feedback from facilitators the GenderUp team recommends workshops to be held for one specific innovation team with 3-6 members. This creates a space for robust conversation and targeted outcomes.



Hint 2: Take your time

GenderUp workshops typically take a total of about 10 hours. The GenderUp team recommends that content gets split up between 2-3 days. Within a shortened, 1-day workshop format, participants have faced several challenges when trying to understand new concepts, reflect deeply with teammates, and determine actionable next steps.



Hint 3: Engage with your participants early

It is important to understand the unique needs and constraints of your innovation team. Determining early on whether your workshop will be held in-person or virtually is important for the proper preparation of training content and materials. Sharing resources with participants prior to the workshop enables them to have a stronger base understanding of important concepts.



Hint 4: Facilitation strategies

As a facilitator, you should be prepared and equipped with strategies to incentivize discussion and keep teams on track. You may need to split innovation teams into groups and/or allot time for group share-outs. The impact of GenderUp strongly depends on the engagement of the innovation team.





INSTITUTIONALIZING

GenderUp may be used independently or in combination with other methods such as Scaling Readiness. In collaboration with several initiatives such as Ukama Ustawi and Mitigate +, GenderUp is further developed, promoted and its principles are institutionalized.

CGIAR Innovation Packages and Scaling Readiness

To ensure that promising agricultural solutions reach their full potential the CGIAR has developed the Innovation Packages and Scaling Readiness (IPSR) approach (CGIAR, 2023). IPSR embeds key principles of the Scaling Readiness approach into the new CGIAR Initiative portfolio. GenderUp has influenced the reporting and monitoring logic of the IPSR platform to simultaneously document and spark-off attention to responsible scaling. CGIAR and partner innovation teams are invited to report on their innovations which allows CGIAR to track the innovation and scaling process. Inspired by GenderUp's principles, an innovation team diversity score has been added to the platform (Figure 5). This should encourage the establishment of diverse scaling teams. Diverse research teams have many potential benefits that could enhance their performance. Furthermore, 3 questions were added to the IPSR platform to increase awareness among trade-offs and better include gender equity and social inclusion considerations (Figure 6).

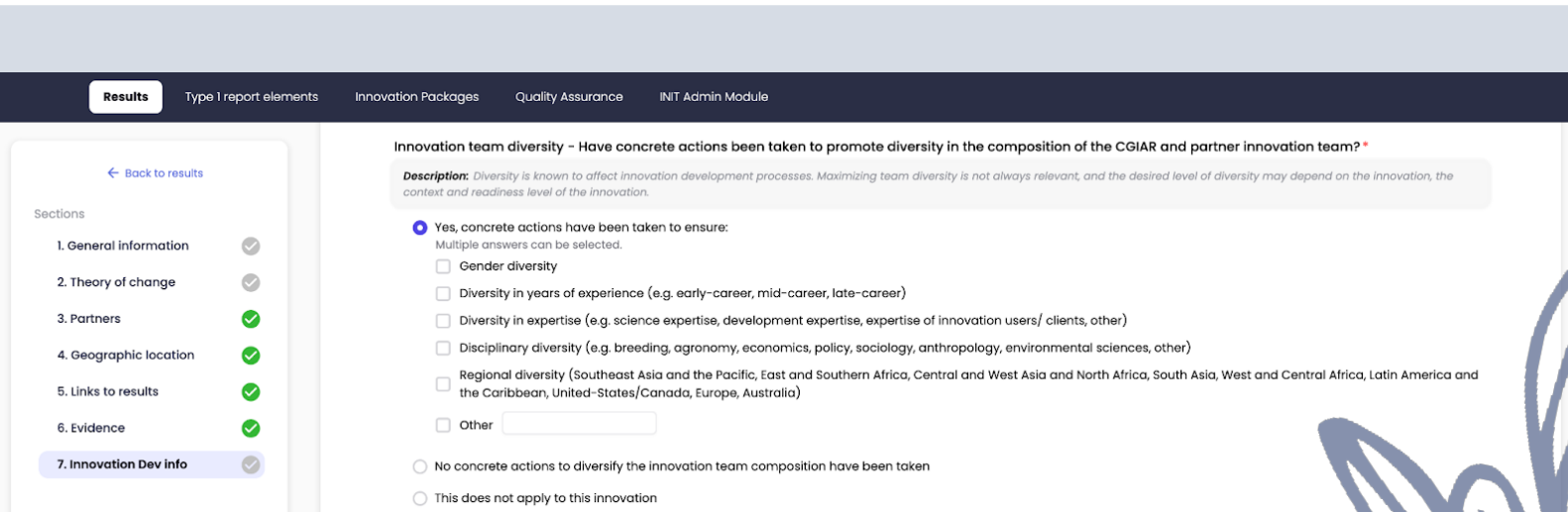


Figure 5. Screenshot of the IPSR reporting platform questions on innovation team diversity

Results

Type 1 report elements

Innovation Packages

Quality Assurance

INIT Admin Module

← Back to results

Sections

1. General information

2. Theory of change

3. Partners

4. Geographic location

5. Links to results

6. Evidence

7. Innovation Dev info

PDF

View

Copy link

Responsible innovation and scaling:

1. Have concrete actions been taken to understand and improve Gender Equality and Social Inclusivity (GESI) in developing this innovation? *

Description: Relevant diversity may vary across innovations, and relates to how gender, age, location, capacity, resource endowment or other forms of diversity may affect the extent to which diverse use groups:

- Are aware of the innovation;
- Have access to the innovation;
- Can afford the innovation;
- Have capacity to use the innovation;
- Benefit from the innovation.

Yes, the following actions have been taken:

Multiple answers can be selected.

☐ Dedicated CGIAR GESI expert on innovation development team
 ☐ Dedicated partner(s) with GESI expertise in innovation development team
 ☐ Engaging diverse innovation use groups in innovation development
 ☐ Commissioned a GESI study, or context analysis
 ☐ Used GESI-tools (e.g. GenderUp,)
 ☐ Other

☐ No actions taken yet
 ☐ No Gender Equality and Social Inclusivity issues expected
 ☐ It is too early to determine this

2. Have concrete actions been taken to understand and/or limit potential unintended negative consequences or impacts if the innovation is used at scale? *

Description: Think about how innovation use at scale may lead to:

- Increased greenhouse gas emissions;
- Losses in (agro-)biodiversity;
- Gender inequality and/or social exclusion;
- Compromised human health, nutrition and/or food security;
- Increase income gaps or (youth) unemployment.

Yes, the following actions have been taken:

Multiple answers can be selected.

☐ Dedicated CGIAR GESI expert on innovation development team
 ☐ Dedicated partner(s) with GESI expertise in innovation development team
 ☐ Engaging diverse innovation use groups in innovation development
 ☐ Commissioned a GESI study, or context analysis
 ☐ Used tools to anticipate unexpected negative impacts
 ☐ Other

☐ No actions taken yet
 ☐ No negative consequences or impacts expected
 ☐ It is too early to determine this

4 alerts

Figure 6. screenshot of the IPSR reporting platform questions on innovation team diversity

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) have recently granted CGIAR a project of USD550,000 to co-create an IPSR Scaling Strategy design process that effectively scales for positive social outcomes. This targeted 12-month 2023-24 investment will co-create, test/validate, and mainstream a standardized process that supports CGIAR and partners in developing 3 (gender-)responsible scaling strategies for innovations and innovation packages with a high-impact potential. By working with BMGF-supported pooled-funded Initiatives and W3/Bilateral projects, the investment also provides a starting point for harmonized CGIAR results reporting and further progress on innovation portfolio management. GenderUp Developers Cees Leeuwis and Erin McGuire will be engaged in the project as key advisors on how to effectively embed principles of responsible innovation and scaling into the CGIAR scaling strategy design process.

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New GenderUp facilitators

Elise Elizondo, a master's student in UC Davis's International Agricultural Development program, became a certified GenderUp facilitator in December 2022. Through the training, Elise became interested in applying GenderUp to a community surveying tool based in Guatemala. She pursued this interest and turned it into her capstone project for her master's degree. Elise conducted a GenderUp workshop for the community surveying tool innovation team in Guatemala in July 2023. She then analyzed results from the workshop and discussion, and successfully passed her capstone exam on December 1, 2023.

The GenderUp team continuously provides new opportunities to become a certified facilitator (Figure 7). During the October 2023 CGIAR Gender Research Conference in New Delhi, India, a GenderUp facilitator training workshop was hosted for 17 participants. In 2024, four facilitator training events are in the planning stages. These training sessions will be held in conjunction with meetings for the BMGF project and PhD candidate meetings in Nairobi, and the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture's annual meeting in Guatemala. Trained facilitators will integrate GenderUp principles in their projects within and outside of the CGIAR.



Become a Facilitator

GenderUp is facilitated by a facilitator - you! If you are committed to social inclusion and want to help innovation teams achieve the greatest impact for all intended users of their innovations, becoming a facilitator may be right for you!

Becoming a GenderUp Facilitator certifies that you can conduct workshops for innovation teams.

Visit the "Contact Us" page to share your interest in becoming a certified facilitator.

[Contact Us](#)

Figure 7. Find out opportunities to become a GenderUp facilitator at the [website](#).



RESEARCH SPINOFFS

To further improve the science and practice of responsible scaling of innovations new PhD researchers have been assigned that are embedded in different CGIAR research programs. These PhD projects are inspired by GenderUp in several ways.

Ukama Ustawi

Initiative on Diversification in East and Southern Africa.

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and Wageningen University & Research (WUR) seek to recruit a PhD graduate fellow to work on intelligence for responsible innovation and scaling under the CGIAR Regional Integrated Initiative on Diversification in East and Southern Africa (Ukama Ustawi). The Impact at Scale program is responsible for spearheading the scaling-up of innovations of all International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) programs for a sustainable future. The PhD will be action-oriented in that it seeks to conduct scientific research in support of achieving development outcomes and impacts. The design, testing and validation of decision-support tools to advance intelligence for responsible innovation and scaling with CGIAR and partners will be a central part of the PhD project. Intelligence for responsible innovation and scaling aims to advance solutions to solve complex problems while being mindful of potential risks and unintended consequences. It involves considering factors such as privacy, security, inclusivity, equality, transparency, and the potential impact on various stakeholders, including individuals, communities, and the environment.





Mitigate + The Low Emissions Food System Initiative.

Hanna Ewell is a PhD candidate in the Knowledge, Technology and Innovation Group of Wageningen University and Research. She has recently joined the CGIAR as a visiting researcher within the Mitigate+ Initiative to examine responsible and inclusive scaling strategies. She got familiar with scaling and the “Taskforce on Scaling” at her previous position as gender focal point at the German Development Corporation (GIZ). During their collaboration she developed a keen interest in ensuring that the innovations scaled by this taskforce, and within other CGIAR projects, would “do no harm” and be accessible to women and marginalized groups. She came across GenderUp at one of the Initiative’s workshops, and its set up and concepts resonated with her immediately. While it is not the only tool that supports this process, it specifically builds in elements of intersectionality to identify social groups relevant in each scaling context. It also helps research teams identify leverage points for making scaling strategies more inclusive and sustainable. Hanna further explains that:

“

There is a wind of change within the CGIAR that one can witness in workshop and conference discussions. There is a greater focus on participatory, farmer-led approaches; interdisciplinary project design; and recognition of systems thinking to tackle today’s complex challenges. Let’s build on this momentum to not let gender and social inclusion remain a tick box exercise but rather be intentional about asking: for and with whom are we innovating? Only if all people are included, agricultural research for development catalyzes impacts and effectively supports those beneficiaries most in need of groundbreaking science.

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CONCLUSIONS

Through GenderUp's own responsible scaling process, numerous workshops, discussions, and research spinoffs have taken place. Workshops in Malawi and Zimbabwe resulted in innovation teams who better understand social differentiation amongst their innovation users and the development of more inclusive scaling strategies. These workshop experiences also depicted the need for a more accessible, streamlined tool for innovation teams across the globe. GenderUp is responding to these needs through an improved website and printable materials. Scientifically-based scaling research and scaling discussions, like the one held in Rwanda, are propelling the topics covered in GenderUp forward. These topics, introduced by GenderUp, are also being recognized and implemented by other scaling initiatives. The need for additional research to be conducted on the long-term social impacts of scaling has allowed multiple PhD students to focus on the multi-dimensional challenges explored throughout GenderUp. As GenderUp continues to evolve, we invite you to take part in the journey towards more socially inclusive, responsible scaling.

Does GenderUp sound like the right fit for you? Are you ready to think critically with your team about how to scale up your innovation in a more inclusive and responsible manner? If so, visit the [GenderUp website](#) to learn more about upcoming events and opportunities.



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