



Pro-Resilient Fiji -  
Strengthening climate resilience of communities for food and nutrition security



©FAO / P. Korovulavula

## Farmer Field School approach in Fiji

### What are Farmer Field Schools?

- Farmer Field Schools (FFS) consist of groups of farmers who get together to study a specific topic.
- FFS provide opportunities for learning through hands-on experience. It teaches basic agricultural and management skills that make farmers experts in their own farms.
- FFS is a forum where farmers and facilitator debate observations, experiences and present new information introduced to the community.

- Sharpening the farmers' ability to make critical and informed decisions.
- Sensitizing farmers in new ways of thinking, problem solving and help farmers learn how to organize themselves and their communities.

### Introduction to FFS

**1. A group** of 20 -25 people who have a common interest and/or problem to solve forms the core of a Farmer Field School. The FFS strengthens existing groups or may lead to the formation of new groups.



©FAO

**2. The field** is the teacher. It provides most of the training materials like plants, pests and other facilities. In most cases, communities provide a study site with a shaded area for follow-up discussions.



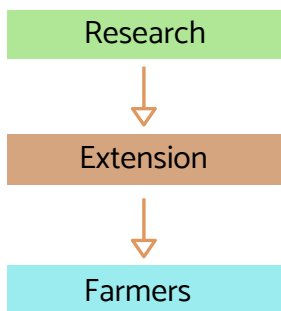
©FAO / P. Korovulavula



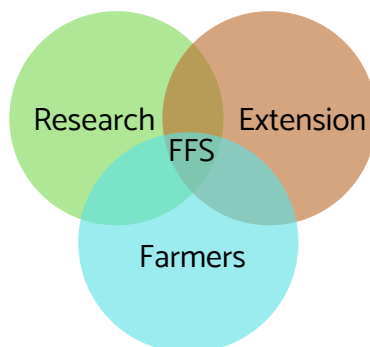
©FAO / P. Korovulavula

### Existing extension system vs FFS

#### Existing extension model



#### FFS model



### What does FFS offer?

- Empowering farmers with knowledge and skills.
- Making farmers experts of their own fields.

**3. The facilitator** is to be technically competent on the technical topics, be able to organize the group and understand the FFS methodology and be committed to farmers' empowerment. The facilitator can be an extension agent or a Farmer Field School graduate.



©FAO / P. Korovlavlavlja

**4. The curriculum** follows the natural cycle of the subject. It can be crop, animal, soil, or handicrafts. This allows all aspects of the subject to be covered in parallel with what is happening in the FFS field.

**5. The local officers** are essential to supporting the training of facilitators, obtaining materials organized for the field, solving problems in participatory ways, and supporting facilitators. The programme leader should be a good leader who empowers others.

**6. Financing** is an important element of Farmer Field Schools as initial investment can be high but capacity is built over the longterm and impact span technical, environmental, social and economic domains.

### Existing extension system vs FFS

**1. Farmers** is an important element of Farmer Field Schools as initial investment can be high but capacity is built over the longterm and impact span technical, environmental, social and economic domains.

**2. The field** is the learning place where farmers working in small groups collect data, analyse and make decisions based on their examination then present the decisions to other farmers for clarification.



©FAO / P. Korovlavlavlja

**3. Extension workers** are facilitators not teachers. Once the farmers know what to do the extension workers takes a back seat only offering guidance when need be.

**4. The curriculum** is developed and adapted through the preparation phase that precedes all FFS where information is collected on farming system, local challenges and solutions which include crop husbandry, animal husbandry, land husbandry and other areas in relation to ecology, economics, sociology and education.



©FAO / P. Korovlavlavlja

**5. Training** is related to the seasonal cycle of the practice being explore such as land preparation, cropping, harvesting, livestock feeds and so on.

**6. Meetings** are held at regular intervals depending on what activities need to be done.



©FAO / P. Korovlavlavlja

**7. Learning materials** are generated by farmers and are consistent with local conditions. Even illiterate farmers can prepare and fuse simple diagrams to illustrate the points they want to make.

**8. Group progressive training** includes communication skills building, problem solving and leadership and discussion methods. Farmers implement their own decisions in their own fields.

This project is funded by the European Union



This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of FAO and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union

### Project contact

Philippe Martins  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Representation in Fiji  
Ministry of Agriculture, Level 2—New Wing  
Robinson Complex, Raiwaqa  
Telephone: (+679) 3384299  
Email: Philippe.Martins@fao.org



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence