

Farmer Field Schools in Emergency, Preparedness and Pastoral Settings

Lessons Learned and Strategy Recommendations



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid

Acronyms

AESA	Agro-ecosystem analysis
CBO	Community-based organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBO	Faith-based organization
FFS	Farmer Field School
HESA	Human ecosystem analyses
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life School
LRRD	Linking relief, rehabilitation and development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PFS	Pastoral Field School
WFP	World Food Programme

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The international meeting

Over the last few years, the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach has been adapted for the emergency context and scaled up in a number of countries, i.e. northern Uganda, southern Sudan, Somalia and Kenya. The FFS adaptations and innovations have emerged gradually and concurrently in pastoral areas, refugee camps and conflict zones. Some of the results are promising and the interest from donors is high.

To share key experiences and guide the harmonized development of the FFS approach, an international meeting was held for actors implementing and supporting the expansion of FFS in preparedness, emergency and rehabilitation contexts. The two-day international meeting on Farmer Field Schools in emergency, preparedness and pastoral contexts was held in Nairobi in May 2009. The workshop (see programme in annex 1) had two main objectives:

1. To share experiences and lessons learned in applying, improvising and adapting the FFS approach to various preparedness, emergency and rehabilitation contexts in the sub-Saharan Africa region.
2. To identify coordination and harmonization mechanisms among actors, and draft strategy guidelines for implementation of FFS-related interventions in preparedness, emergency and rehabilitation situations.

About this report

This report on the International Meeting is not a recording of the meeting's proceedings, but instead it is a workshop report communicating the presentations and outcomes of the discussions in a reader-friendly and usable format. In creating a report that also serves as a comprehensive source of information, some data and information from other sources has been added.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the FFS approach in the original development context. Chapter 2 explains the need for new approaches in emergency. Chapters 3 to 5 present the experiences of piloting and adapting the FFS approach among youth in refugee camps, with pastoralists and in rehabilitation contexts, with analyses of lessons learned in each context included. Chapter 6 presents the outcomes of thematic group and plenary discussions on the role of FFS in disaster management, on the FFS principles in emergency contexts and on the strengths and weaknesses of the FFS approach in emergency situations including how to turn these into opportunities, transforming FFS into a fully functional tool for emergency operations. Finally, Chapter 7 contains a summary with conclusions and recommendations. The full programme for the international meeting is given in annex 1 and the participants are listed in annex 2.

This report is targeting **FAO** operations involved in emergency, rehabilitation and preparedness activities. It is also thought to be useful for others including: **implementing partners**—to offer them an overview and insight before starting up; **donors**—to encourage their support for such activities; and **governments** or **other institutions** attempting to replicate, use or adapt the FFS approach in their own contexts.

1 What is a Farmer Field School?

Deborah Duveskog

Overview and evolution in the African region

The Farmer Field School (FFS) approach was pioneered in Indonesia in the late 1980s. It was developed by FAO in partnership with national governments for introducing integrated pest management (IPM) to rice farmers. In Indonesia and the Philippines, FFSs played an important role in helping farmers in controlling large disease outbreaks in rice emerging as a consequence of the Green Revolution and increased chemical spraying that caused widespread resistance. By using the FFS approach, farmers themselves could try out which solutions were most effective.

The approach builds on the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methodology, taking it one step further. While the PRA method is useful for problem analysis, the FFS approach guides farmers in searching for and finding solutions to their own local context-based problems. The process aims at empowering farmers to become the experts by comparing their current practices with new methods and techniques, analysing and assessing which one works best in their situation, sharing and discussing with fellow farmers, and by making decisions based on what they have come to understand. Trained facilitators guide the FFS groups, providing the methods and tools for learning in a participatory and discovery-based manner.

There are two main objectives of Farmer Field Schools:

- **Human development** in terms of building decision-making capacity and stimulating local innovation.
- **Technology transfer** by sharing and encouraging the uptake and adaptation of new technology options, and applying these to develop practical innovations.

FFS is not a blueprint for development. There are certain situations where FFS is suitable and others where it might be less suitable. Where there are no direct solutions to local problems and challenges, or if there are social taboos or constraints restricting farming practices, the FFS approach is particularly useful. However, for delivering simple and clear technical messages built on proven practice, traditional extension methods and radio or *baraza* approaches may be more cost-effective and appropriate.

In the late 1990s, when the approach was brought to eastern Africa, the focus was mainly on integrated pest management technology. However, with the highly diverse African agricultural systems, the approach was quickly adapted to respond better to the wider range of livelihood challenges facing African farmers.

For the last few years, the method has been tested in agro-pastoral and pastoral areas, with vulnerable children and youth in refugee camps, and in emergency situations. Aspects of life skills, self-financing, marketing, agro-biodiversity, etc. have gradually been included in the learning curriculum. Today, the FFS approach has a strong empowerment focus, where facilitators by guiding the learning process enable participants to experiment and analyse what is needed for their present or future enterprises to succeed, encouraging them to discuss among themselves and make their own decisions.

Gradually, the FFS approach has expanded from more high-potential areas to semi-arid lands, and further into remote and fragile lands. The components of empowerment and democratization are strong, leading to interesting development achievements. In Uganda, for example, the approach has been scaled up in a very short time. Together with handouts of agricultural inputs such as seeds and tools, plus funding grants for experimentation and facilitation, the FFS approach is stimulating agricultural production in a modern culture of knowledge-based decision-making and business-orientation.

Some FFS experiences in emergency contexts are highly promising, while others demonstrate a number of challenges that need to be tackled. To adapt the approach to best suit an evolving purpose or context, it is important to fully assess current experiences.

The Farmer Field School approach

The FFS approach is a well-structured learning process based on certain basic principles yet at the same time flexible and adaptable to local situations and contexts. The approach has been described as *a platform for improving the decision-making capacity* of farmers. It has also been described as *a school without walls*—as all studies take place outdoors. Originally used mainly for technology adaptation, the FFS approach of today is mainly an avenue to effectively empower farming communities. Even though the methodology has undergone major changes, it remains firmly based on certain principles, setting it apart from other farmer group or common interest group approaches.

An FFS consists of a group of *active resource users* (farmers, pastoralists etc.) that get together on regular basis to learn about a shared common interest—often a problem. Each group comprises 20 to 30 members. The members experiment, observe, analyse, present and discuss their findings with the other group members. By applying their collective experiences and knowledge, the members become better equipped in making informed decisions on how to improve their usual practices. Certain inbuilt features in the process are there to enhance group cohesion and sense of belonging.

Core principles and components

Some of the core principles and components of the FFS approach are:

- ***Facilitation, not teaching.*** The facilitator is crucial for successful learning and empowerment because it is not about teaching but about guiding the learning process. To foster the learner-centred process, the facilitator stays in the background, listening attentively and reflectively, asking questions and encouraging the participants to explore by stimulating them to think, observe, analyse and discover the answers themselves.
- ***The field is the 'living' class room.*** The learning takes place in the close surroundings of the community. If cropping is the topic, all activities take place in the field and continue over the whole cropping season. If the topic is livestock, the meetings are held by the pen or kraal as well as in the field or in the grazing area. The participants observe and learn from their environment instead of from textbooks.
- ***Hands-on and discovery-based learning.*** The process of learning adheres to principles of adult education and “learning by doing”. Adults do not learn and change behaviour by passive listening, but as a consequence of experience. Through learning by doing in a discovery-based manner, the group members feel ownership over their knowledge and gain confidence in what they have learned.
- ***The farmer as the expert.*** The FFS approach recognizes community members as the experts of their particular context, and considers indigenous and local knowledge an important source of information to be used within the FFS learning process. Through the process, the members learn how to improve their own abilities to observe and analyse problems, create practical and relevant solutions. The approach inspires members to continuously learn by exploring and educating themselves on issues and topics that affect their livelihoods.
- ***Integrated and learner-defined curriculum.*** The FFS curriculum is defined by the learners and is unique for each group. All topics must be related to what is important to the group members and fill their particular gaps in knowledge.

- **Comparative experiments.** Knowledge is gained through practical experiments where different options are compared with each other. The trials are regularly observed and analysed. Issues are discussed as they occur—in reality. This aspect of the approach dictates that the ‘duration’ of an FFS course match the life cycle of the enterprise being studied, from seed to harvest, lamb to lamb, egg to egg, etc.
- **Agro-ecosystem analysis.** The agro-ecosystem analysis (AESAs) is one of the cornerstones in the FFS approach. This analysis ranges from the stages of observation, analysis and presentation to synthesis and discussion. This activity enhances the participants’ analysing skills as well as their presentation and leadership skills, thereby improving knowledge-based decision-making, and their communication capacities too. Originally, the AESA was used for analysis of crops in the field, but it also has been adapted for live-stock and broader ecosystem processes. The Junior Farmer Field and Life School approach have extended it into a human ecosystem analysis (HESA), exploring the human body in connection with health, food, etc.
- **Special topics.** The *main focus* of studies is decided on by the group, and is included in the curriculum and learning experiments. But there is always room for *special topics*, included as per demand by the group members—usually addressing wider livelihood issues. These special topics don’t necessarily relate to the main learning focus of the group and can be facilitated by external resource persons rather than by the group facilitator.
- **Team building and social animation.** Aspects of team building, group dynamics and social animation are important components of the learning sessions. Through song, dance and drama people share knowledge and culture, build cohesion, and learn communication and leadership skills. This also creates a platform for dealing with difficult subjects such as abuse, gender, HIV/AIDS, etc.
- **Participatory monitoring and evaluation.** While preparing the FFS curriculum, the participants develop a plan for monitoring the progress to later assess whether they are achieving the objectives as agreed.

Learning session schedule

Although the FFS groups make all decisions about the content and curriculum for their studies, each learning session follows a pre-defined schedule that is more or less the same for all Farmer Field Schools. This ensures that all components of the approach are properly included.

Time	Activity	Responsible persons
8.00-8.10	Roll call, brief recap	Host team
8.10-8.30	Field observation	All
8.30-10.00	AESA and experiment analysis	All
10.00-10.30	Group dynamics	Host team and facilitator
10.30-11.30	Special topic	Facilitator
11.30-11.50	Review of the days activities and planning	Facilitator
11.50-12.00	Roll call and announcements	Host team

Example of a meeting schedule containing all elements of the approach.

Main steps in Farmer Field School implementation

For the implementing agency, there is a lot more to the FFS than running the group meetings. It starts with training of facilitators and support staff, continues with community mobilization and thereafter the actual season-long FFS learning activities. At the end of the season, the FFS graduation ceremony or event is held for the participants, and after that post-FFS activities generally commence.

1. *Training of facilitators*

The first step is to train the facilitators in the FFS methodology. As the programme has been implemented in eastern Africa, this training has on average taken two to four weeks to complete, while in other countries courses lasting up to three months have been conducted. In addition to the FFS methodology, there may be need for technical training, depending on the skills the facilitator trainees already have.

2. *Community mobilization*

The second step is mobilization of the community. This includes promotion of the concept in the community and the formation of FFS groups plus the identification of a host farm or experimental plot and problem identification. This process can take several months as the groups need to create and agree on their constitution, register their group with the government and open a bank account; etc. It is also important to introduce the concept to other stakeholders in the community at an early stage. If, for example, the government officials are not aware or supportive, it may be difficult to sustain the FFS.

3. *Season-long FFS activities*

The season-long activities continue for 6 to 18 months, depending on the main study focus of the group. The members meet regularly (usually weekly) following the set schedule, with the facilitator attending and guiding the learning sessions. During this time, the master trainer (supervisor) continuously mentors the facilitator on methodological issues. There should also be other resource persons (researcher, district agriculture officer, veterinarian, officer in local innovation, etc.) available that the farmer groups may chose to call in for special topics sessions. At the end of the season, there is a graduation ceremony for the members.

4. *Post-FFS*

After graduation, the FFS groups are encouraged to continue with activities of their choice. They may decide to continue the field school for another season, maybe study another topic, and should preferably be assisted with regular follow-up and technical backstopping.

Sometimes adjacent post-graduate farmer groups form FFS networks to improve and further extend information sharing, commercialization, provision of services, etc. Such networks are a natural continuation of the FFS. However, it is important that they are not imposed on the graduates, but instead arise from empowered members creating their own institutions. It has been shown that concentrations of interventions according to the so called “foci-model”—where FFS groups are formed close to each other, facilitate the formation of post-FFS networks.

2 The need for Farmer Field Schools in emergency and pastoral contexts

Bruno Minjauw

As described in the previous chapter, the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach was originally created as a tool for development. In the past few years it has also been tested in emergency and pastoral contexts as well as among orphans and vulnerable children. To date, the FFS approach seems to be addressing some of the problems currently encountered in emergency operations quite well, and there is growing interest among donors and project leaders in utilizing this approach.

Challenges arise, however, when attempts are made to adapt or dramatically scale-up any specific programme. In the process of adapting the Farmer Field School approach to suit the requirements of emergency and pastoral contexts, the question has arisen concerning how much the approach can be changed without losing its core values and principles. Similar to the development context, there are emergency activities where the approach will be extremely valuable and others where it will not be appropriate to use.

With increasing calls for scaling up the FFS programmes, important questions on its adaptation for emergency and pastoral contexts are arising:

- What are the roles for FFS in emergency operations?
- Are there situations when it should not be used?
- Which adaptations of the approach are suitable or necessary?
- Which principles must be maintained for the approach to retain the FFS methodology?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the approach in an emergency context?
- How can we build further on the strengths and how can we counteract the weaknesses and turn them into opportunities for improvement?

Just consider how a Toyota Corolla is not the same car today as it was 30 years ago. In the 1970s, Toyota Corolla was a small, cheap and somewhat unreliable car, functioning best in urban areas. Since then it has entered many entirely different markets with new needs stemming from a completely changed environment. Toyota Corolla of today is a strong, reliable car that goes forever. But the name and certain inbuilt characteristics are the same, though it appears in general terms to be a different car today than it was 30 years ago. Similarly, we need to find out how far we can alter the FFS concept—according to the customers' demands—but without being forced to change its name.

To start with, we will begin with exploring the trends and needs in emergency operations, getting to know the disaster management cycle, try to understand the inherent differences of the FFS principles and those of emergency operations, and agree on the objectives of FFS in development *versus* emergency situations.



Needs and trends in emergency operations

The nature of disasters has changed over time, and this has led to new types of challenges for emergency operations. For example, for pastoralist communities in the drylands, it is not a question of *if*, but of *when* and *how hard*, the next drought will hit, and the intervals are getting shorter. The slow-motion catastrophe of HIV/AIDS leaves behind millions of victims and orphans across nations and continents—with the hardest consequences being faced by the majority that is already poor. Globally, millions of children are born and raised in refugee camps, only to enter adulthood without having a clue as to what normal life is.

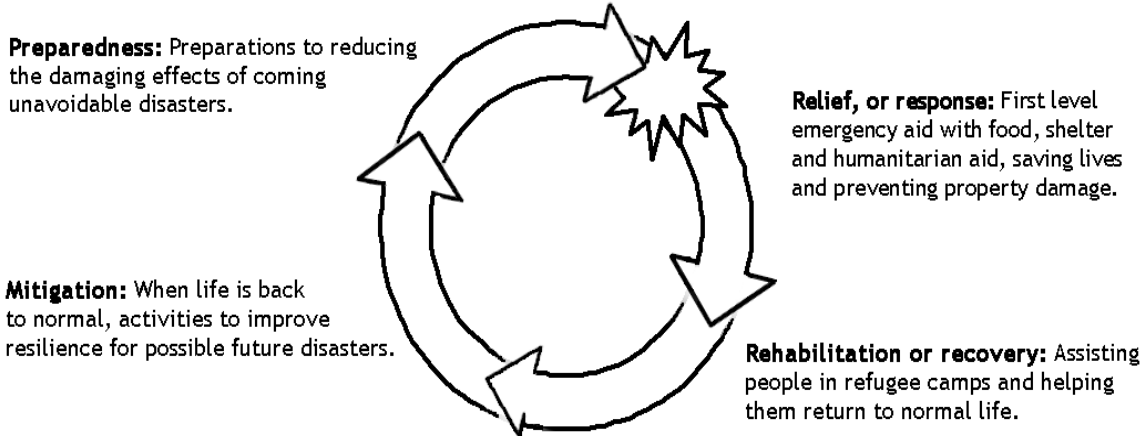
Climate change factors, population growth rates and the escalation of environmental degradation are raising the incidences of emergencies. Increasingly, they are foreseeable and recurrent, requiring more emphasis on preparedness. More and more of them are long-term, lasting for years and decades. An emergency operation is no longer just a quick fix—rushing in with food, shelter and medical aid and soon leaving again. The diverse contexts of emergencies today require a range of responses—and there is no single ideal approach.

There is a real gap between what emergency interventions normally involve, and what development cooperation takes care of, which especially in long-term situations make rehabilitation into normal life difficult. When relief agencies distribute seeds and tools for farmers to rehabilitate, they don't always come to proper use and the distribution is repeated year after year. Restocking doesn't necessarily mean that the animals will be properly cared for. It has become evident that such rehabilitation efforts have to be looked upon in a broader context of food and livelihood security, assisting people getting back to their livelihoods again. Connection of relief intervention with rehabilitation activities, leading back to the normal development situation has become a concept, called 'linking relief, rehabilitation and development' (LRRD).

The disaster management cycle

In disaster management, emergencies are commonly described as cyclic events. At the onset of a disaster, there is a quick response with relief interventions trying to save lives and property. This continues with rehabilitation, where people get assistance in refugee camps and/or are helped to return to normal life. In the normal life situations, efforts are placed on mitigation, developing plans how to reduce the damaging effects of future disasters. Eventually, there may come a new phase of preparedness, helping threatened populations becoming prepared to better withstand the inevitable calamity.

The disaster management cycle is usually expressed as including at least four, often overlapping phases. The length of each phase varies from a few months to several years and even decades. Some refugee camps seem to be everlasting, and in the drylands there is always going to be another drought, for which people must be prepared.



Comparing principles and objectives

The workshop participants were asked to identify and compare the principles of FFS in the ordinary development context with those of emergency operations (table 1).

Table 1. Principles for FFS and for emergency operations

FFS principles	Emergency principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation by all • Human skills development • Build on experience • Trained facilitator • Regular group meetings • Group cohesion • Learning by doing • Experimentation • AESA (agro-ecosystem analysis) • Demand-based curriculum • Equality (gender, tribe, age, health, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid and timely response • Target the most vulnerable • Reach large number of beneficiaries • Need-based response • Life saving • Secure livelihoods • Build resilience • Cost-effective • Provide relief • Balanced and fair distribution

Obviously, the principles are very different. In short, emergency activities are about reaching the largest number of people in the shortest possible time at the lowest cost. It is important that the assistance is unbiased and that it has a balanced gender and HIV/AIDS focus. The FFS approach, on the other hand, is a development tool, used for empowering people taking control over their own development and future. Therefore, there may be some principles of the FFS approach that are not compatible with emergency situations.

To understand better how the FFS approach differs between the development and the emergency perspectives, the workshop participants listed the objectives of using FFS in the two settings or contexts of development and emergency (table 2).

Table 2. Objectives of FFS in the development situation versus the emergency situation

The objectives of FFS in the development situation (the classical FFS setting)	The objectives of FFS in the emergency context (when saving and restoring lives and livelihoods)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build self-esteem • Empower farmers with knowledge and skills • Stimulate experiencing and development of analytical skills • Farmers to be the experts, understanding basic science as well as indigenous knowledge • Adapt technologies for the local situation, using both modern science and indigenous knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore and secure livelihoods • Assist in emergency interventions • Restore hope • Contribute to peace building and conflict resolution • Support returnees • Enhance utilization of agricultural inputs • Bridge the gap between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)

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- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve decision-making• Improve local knowledge management and information sharing skills• Change attitudes to new ways of thinking• Promote community-based extension• Increase food security, productivity and income• Build group cohesion and participation• Increase community ownership over the development process• Integrate social and cultural needs• Achieve conservation of the environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise awareness• Build participation• Enhance community sharing of natural resources• Improve community disaster risk management• Enhance socio-economic mitigation• Build resilience• Enhance existing coping mechanisms• Stimulate early response via early warning systems (EWS)• Promote coordination in multi-sectoral emergencies• Develop safety nets• Do advocacy |
|---|---|
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The objectives proved to be very different, which is normal as the contexts are completely different. In the emergency context, the resource requirements are much higher as the needs are immense, because in emergency situations people have nothing. There are large concentrations of needy people and even access to them is often difficult.

In a later session (Chapter 6), the workshop will again examine the disaster management cycle in connection with FFS, scrutinize the principles to find out where and how they are compatible, and the workshop group will identify the real strengths and weaknesses of the approach within this new context, and construct the basis for expanding on the approach. Before conducting these further analyses, we will first learn more from recent pilot-tests of the approach in emergency situations (Chapters 3 to 5), and agree on lessons learned.

3 Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools

More and more often, elderly people are seen with a crowd of children around them—grandchildren and other orphans—taking on the chores of parents that have passed away due to AIDS. Around twelve million children in sub-Saharan Africa have lost one parent—and close to three million have lost both of their parents—as a consequence of the AIDS epidemic¹. As a response to this “orphan crisis”, the Farmer Field School approach has been adapted to give children many of the life skills their parents would have conveyed to them. The Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) approach came into use first in Mozambique in 2003, and has since been successfully implemented by FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) in a number of countries in Africa, redressing the effects of HIV/AIDS among orphans and vulnerable children.

In addition to these, there is another lot of children at risk: in sub-Saharan Africa approximately one million children and young people are—with or without parents—living in refugee camps and cut-off from normal life². In this context, the JFFLS approach has also been tested by FAO. In Kenya this approach has been pilot-tested among children refugees from Southern Sudan and Somalia, in internally displaced people’s (IDP) camps after the post-election violence in Kenya 2008, and in northern Uganda.

To date in Kenya, 1,980 children in 66 JFFLS groups have benefitted from the programme. It has been used in teaching or conveying life skills, preparing children for repatriation and in building an understanding for peace and reconciliation. For HIV/AIDS orphans, the programme has helped in improving the children’s often difficult relationships with their guardians as well as their position within their communities, building the children’s self-esteem as “the one who can also provide”.

Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools in Mozambique

Extracts from the video ‘Harvesting for Life’. 2005. Produced by Boudicca Downes, Communication Division, FAO: Rome

The Manica Province in central Mozambique is crossed by the Beira Corridor, a major transport route linking inland southern Africa to the coast. A steady flow of truckers frequenting sex workers accelerates the spread of HIV/AIDS in the area, with soaring infection rates and a growing number of children left orphaned and vulnerable.

In Mozambique, there are more than 220,000 children and youth under the age of 19 years living with HIV/AIDS, and as many as 325,000 that have lost one or both parents to the disease. In response to this slow-motion catastrophe, FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) have set up a number of JFFLS. The philosophy is simple: orphan children need a healthy diet and an education plus the means and confidence to earn a living if they are to have the chance of creating a better future.

Every such school trains 30 children between the age of 12 and 17 years in all aspects of farming. Extension workers and school teachers provide guidance with practical field lessons, encouraging the children to learn by experimenting and observing the effects of both traditional and new techniques on crops grown in small demonstration plots. Once they master these new techniques, the children have something to offer the community and can thereby improve their often strained relationships with their guardians. The children are not only learning better farming practices but they’re also learning how to cope with diseases, how to eat better, and which food is good for people living with HIV.

¹ Africa’s orphaned and vulnerable generations; children affected by AIDS, 2006:

www.unicef.org/publications/files/Africas_Orphaned_and_Vulnerable_Generations_Children_Affected_by_AIDS.pdf

² 2007 UNHCR statistical yearbook: www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?pid=4981c3252&tbl=STATISTICS

Nobody can learn on an empty stomach. Hence, the WFP is a vital element of the JFFLS, providing food at each training session. At harvest time, vegetables grown by the children on the demonstration plots supply extra vitamins as well as a sense of achievement when children begin to feed themselves.

Perhaps the most innovating aspect of the JFFLS is the way the children are encouraged to develop as people. Culture and agriculture are integrated and the school timetable includes singing, dancing and drama. The dancing makes the learning easier while certain topics, such as abuse or exploitation are easier to put across through drama. Weekly theatre sessions and discussion groups help the children tackle difficult but potentially life saving issues such as prevention of HIV/AIDS infection and gender equality, all explored under the careful guidance of trained teachers and facilitators.

The JFFLS project began with four pilot schools in 2003, and has since expanded to 28 in Mozambique, and more in Kenya, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The JFFLS approach doesn't solve all problems but they provide the basics for these children, empowering them with the agricultural knowledge and confidence they need for a safer, healthier and happier future. Knowledge, practical skills, awareness of gender equality, productive attitudes and the confidence to earn a living are vital if the next generation is to escape the vicious cycle of poverty and the scourge of HIV/AIDS infection.

The FAO experience with refugees and HIV/AIDS orphans

Masai Masai

Refugee camps provide safety but not a normal life. There is little to do as it is all temporary. However, most people end up staying there for years. In well-established refugee camps, many of the children have the possibility to go to school, but there is still a need for additional educational support. The children have often experienced war, lost parents and relatives and gone through difficult times before they arrive at the camp.

As a part of the United Nations' system-wide work programme for scaling up HIV/AIDS services for populations of humanitarian concern, FAO started piloting the JFFLS approach in refugee camps in Kenya. In 2006, the concept was tried in Kakuma Refugee Camp (northern Rift Valley Province) with Sudanese refugees, and thereafter in Dadaab (North Eastern Province) with Somali refugees. The approach had already been tried with HIV/AIDS-orphans in normal villages in Bondo (Nyanza Province in western Kenya), and later in Kilifi, Kwale and Taita-Taveta (Coast Province).

The JFFLS approach in these camps builds on the experiences from Mozambique but with adaptations suited to function within refugee camps. The programme targets youths between ages 12 and 17 years, organized into groups of 30 participants. However, in contrast to the one-year courses for HIV/AIDS orphans, the refugee camps courses are limited to three months.

Before starting up the activities, a JFFLS Getting Started manual was created. Since all children in refugee camps are considered vulnerable and the pilot programme only could address a small number, specific criteria were developed for the selection of these children. At each site, three facilitators were selected—usually one agricultural expert, one teacher and one life skills trainer—and properly trained on the FFS and JFFLS approaches. The concept was introduced to all local stakeholders and a guardians' committee was formed to help with managing the project. As specific conditions always vary, a curriculum was developed for each site. For example, in Kakuma there was a strong focus on repatriation, while at the coast HIV/AIDS was a priority topic. Although the contents of the FFS learning approach is supposed to be demand-driven with the curriculum drafted by the groups themselves, this was not considered an option with the children. Instead, facilitators and experts created the children's curricula.



JFFLS sites in Kenya. Kakuma and Dadaab are refugee sites.

As agriculture is the main livelihood—and the source from which most people in rural Africa will earn their living for many years still to come—agricultural learning was always the main activity. In a very practical way, the children learned to plan, monitor, and make decisions on what to do in order to grow a healthy crop, followed by discussions and specific skills training sessions on processing, conservation and marketing of the produce. For several reasons, vegetables were chosen as the most suitable crop for experimentation. As they have a shorter life cycle than maize, cassava and other common crops, the children were quickly rewarded for their labour. It allowed keeping the schools short-term, preventing the JFFLS from becoming another reason to stay longer in the camp. The vegetables made a valuable contribution to a balanced diet, of particular importance since meat and vegetables are not included in the food rations provided in refugee camps. Of the same reason, the vegetables helped the children understand and learn the importance of including vegetables in their diets—a lesson essential for their wellbeing as they enter adulthood, become parents and build their own productive lives and future.

Half of the weekly meetings were spent on agricultural learning, and the other half on life skills. The agricultural topics were connected to discussions on human health, hygiene and sanitation. The facilitator made use of different animation methods such as role play, drama, games and small group discussions. The agro-ecosystem analysis (AESAs) was sometimes transformed into human ecosystem analyses (HESAs), using the same methodology but learning about the human body and its functions.

The pilot programme was supervised by FAO but implemented by collaborators—NGOs already active in the refugee camps. The WPF provided food to the children during meetings plus take-home rations for their guardians. Other international agencies as well as various departments of the Government of Kenya were also involved in some way. To reach and train the 1,980 children in 66 JFFLS groups who have benefited from the programme to date in both refugee camps and normal village settings, a total of 140 facilitators and coordinators have been trained in how to use the approach.

In general, the JFFLS approach has proven to be a flexible tool, easily adjustable to suit different situations, as long as the basic principles are left untouched. In the IDP camps set up in

the aftermath of Kenya's 2008 post-election violence, a particular focus was given to peace and reconciliation. In Kakuma Refugee Camp, the JFFLSs concentrated on preparing the children for repatriation to southern Sudan with special attention to planning for life including questions such as: *How do you see your future? What would you like to do? How should you think and act to achieve these goals? Which skills and what knowledge will help you achieve these goals?* Some tangible results of these pilot-tests were: children replicated the acquired knowledge at home, thereby bringing better health and nutrition to the whole family; the children's health and their self-esteem improved; and the sometimes difficult relationship between child and guardian improved.

The real strengths of using the FFS approach is that it helps create and foster an effective community structure, it uses community-based facilitators, and it has a strong multi-sectoral structure bringing together different institutions (education, health, agriculture etc.) working as a team around the children.

Lessons learned

The workshop participants were asked to list their experiences with JFFLS activities. This section presents the major lessons learned, divided according to the strengths of the approach; the limitations of the JFFLS approach and the external and internal challenges and threats.

The strengths of the JFFLS approach

The strengths, making the JFFLS approach effective in addressing emergency situations, are:

- **Food support.** The JFFLSs target the most vulnerable children, who are often underfed. Therefore, an important component is that the children are given food at meetings (to be able to participate properly) and also food rations to take home. While FAO brings the technical aspects, WFP brings the food. After graduation, community food support for orphans was commonly more stable.
- **Linking agricultural and life skills through social animation.** Animation is a powerful tool for equipping children with knowledge and skills, all useful in emergency situations.
- **The children as the target group.** As children are the most vulnerable group in emergency situations, this setup makes it effective to reach them.
- **Improved performance in formal school.** After attending JFFLS, children have increased enrolment and attendance, and performed better in the formal school.
- **The participatory approach.** The participatory nature of the approach is easily accepted by the communities, making it easier to reach the beneficiaries.
- **The flexible curriculum.** The curriculum is easily modified for specific situations. For example, when there was a cholera outbreak in Kilifi, this was brought up as a special topic together with hygiene in the running JFFLS.
- **Empowerment and involvement.** When JFFLS participants take home food rations, their self-esteem and also their position within the household improves.
- **Creating interest from adults.** Occasionally guardians replicate the JFFLS. For example in Kilifi, the adults requested an adult FFS to be started alongside the ongoing JFFLS.
- **Guardian involvement.** Guardians are commonly involved in decisions-making concerning the JFFLSs; making the approach an effective entry point when emergency arises.

The limitations of the JFFLS approach

The limitations of the JFFLS approach to be fully effective in the emergency context are:

- ***Inadequate resources comparing to numbers of children in need.*** The number of orphans and vulnerable children is so high and one may want to reach so many, while the resources are too limited.
- ***The training materials are inadequate.*** Both trainers' manual and field guides need to be development (as only drafts are yet available). They should include the experiences from piloting and ongoing programmes.
- ***Too few trained and experienced facilitators.*** The facilitators are too few and their competence sometimes too limited. At times there would be need for facilitators with psychosocial training to work with traumatized children.
- ***There are too few master trainers.*** Master trainers train new facilitators and give continuous mentoring support during running programmes. Currently lack of master trainers hampers the up-scaling of programmes.
- ***Integration of youths out of schools.*** With the present set-up, running programmes together with the formal schools, it is difficult to reach (and even trace) children that drop out.

The challenges and threats to the JFFLS approach

The challenges and threats (external and internal) of accomplishing the JFFLS intentions in the emergency context are:

- ***Linking of JFFLS graduates to post JFFLS activities.*** It is difficult to find meaningful activities once the children have graduated.
- ***Involvement of the children in curriculum development.*** Currently, the JFFLS facilitators and coordinators develop the curriculum, but preferably there should be more involvement of the children.
- ***Conflicts in the management of affairs.*** As children are not allowed to open bank accounts, adults have to be trusted with managing their funds. Occasionally, there have been disagreements over who is in charge of the JFFLS resources, especially between the guardians, the school management and the facilitators. As children may not have skills to keep track over how funds are used, risk of misuse cannot be eliminated.
- ***Sickness of participants.*** This is a problem especially for orphans and HIV/AIDS affected children.
- ***Cultural limitations.*** It has been difficult to reach gender equality when the traditional roles for boys and girls are very different. Sometimes parents or guardians withdraw girl child participants from the FFS for early marriages, which is especially common in Kakuma refugee camp and in Uganda.
- ***Linking agricultural skills and life skills through social animation.*** Although this is a strong component of JFFLS, it can be a challenge finding facilitators with both subject matter knowledge and animating skills.
- ***Premature ending of food provision.*** Normally, FAO provides the facilitation while WFP provides the food. Due to short timeframes for funding, food support may end before the children have graduated, and as a consequence hunger is limiting their performance.

4 Pastoral Field Schools

In the dry season, Turkana in northern Kenya is hot and dusty, a barren landscape with sparse vegetation. Karamoja, on the other side of the Ugandan border, is much alike, and so are many of the areas in Africa inhabited by pastoralist communities. This type of environment is being severely affected by the changing climate, and together with the growing populations life is increasingly harsh, people living on the brink of constant emergency. These communities usually live far from service centres and are often nomadic. Generally they tend to be closed communities with strong cultural traditions, not easily persuaded to adopt different or modern ways of doing things—which anyway may not work in their unique situation and environment without sufficient adaptation.

The first Pastoral Field School (PFS) was started in Turkana in 2006 and today the approach is used across northern and north eastern Kenya and northern Uganda. The PFS approach empowers the pastoralist livestock keepers to compare modern and traditional management practices, learn about and incorporate what proves to be most useful into their current management systems.

The Vétérinaires Sans Frontières - Belgium experience

Francis Anno

In 2006, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), FAO and Vétérinaires Sans Frontières – Belgium (VSF-B) started pilot-testing the FFS approach in pastoral settings, as a method of empowering people to improve their livelihood enterprises. Twenty community animal health workers from central Turkana were trained for two weeks on the FFS approach—using the FFS manual but trying to translate it into the pastoral context. After four months of capacity building and preparatory work, ten of the trained facilitators were able to form one PFS each in their respective areas, following a simplified draft PFS guidebook.

The PFS groups registered with the Government of Kenya's Department of Social Services, and each of them opened a bank account with Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) in Lodwar. Each group received a grant of USD 300 for learning material, and on top of that each member had to make a small contribution to the group activities.

Nearly all continued to graduation, with an attendance of 83 percent, i.e. on average 25 participants per meeting. About two thirds of the participants were women, and one third men. Eight groups with sedentary pastoralists took 14 months to complete the course, while the two groups with nomads needed 16 months before they were through—the longer time due to their movements. The main problem encountered—the same as all people in those areas face—was insecurity from armed cattle rustlers and thieves, where three of the groups were affected.

In 2008, VSF-B was funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department's Regional Drought Decision (ECHO-RDD) to start activities in Karamoja, improving the pastoral communities' resilience to drought. VSF-B has so far trained four facilitators together with eight to-be members of the upcoming groups, and in January 2009, two groups were started. The programme builds on the lessons learned from Turkana. For example, are there now two facilitators appointed for each group. And so far the progress of learning is much faster compared to the pioneer groups in Turkana.

The main topics chosen for study were usually livestock related, such as diseases, production, value adding and marketing. As special topics, the PFS groups studied human health and nutrition, HIV/AIDS, alternative livelihoods and income generating activities, insecurity, and environment and drought management. Eight Pastoral Field Schools chose goat and sheep milk

production as their focal activity, while two studied goat and sheep meat production and one poultry raising. For comparative experiments they studied herding *versus* herding with supplementation (zero-grazing is not an option), modern *versus* traditional treatments, weight gain, milk quality and livestock productivity under different management schemes, and half-confined *versus* free-range poultry systems.

So far, the results are promising, with two items recognized as having the largest impact:

1. Improved knowledge-base, gained through a different way of thinking and doing things.
2. Increased use of community animal health workers.

Within the local communities, the approach has been recognized for bringing skills and understanding, both about livelihoods and social life. Members are seen to replicate the lessons learned at home. Dependency on food aid might be reduced as PFS members have started cultivation of both food and feed, mainly along the River Turkwell. And there has been a change in attitude towards improved livestock health and management practices.

It is imperative to conduct proper precondition surveys and promotion of the approach before starting, for people not feeling it being imposed upon them. The PFS should target issues concerning people's way of life, not merely technological improvements, and there must be enough funding to support the whole PFS cycle. The facilitators are crucial. They need at least two weeks initial training plus follow-up training during the PFS cycle (therefore there must be master trainers available in all areas). They also must have good technical competence, either in community animal health or agriculture.

For sustainability, farmer-led PFS should be established after the completed facilitated cycle, with continued support from the programme. It is important that local authorities and other institutions acknowledge these groups.

A mentoring and review study of Pastoral Field Schools in Kenya

Arnoud Braun

In March 2009, FAO Kenya commissioned a review of the PFS approach. Six organizations in eight districts were visited, with the objectives to 1) assess the current implementation of PFS in Kenya and 2) mentor facilitators and project staff in PFS implementation. The study included reviewing documentation, office briefings, on-the-job mentoring of PFS sessions, and semi-structured interviews with PFS members, facilitators and field staff.

The overall purpose of the mission was to learn the constraints for scaling up; to find the real bottlenecks for improving the system. Therefore it focused more on the problems than on the successes. This presentation is the first sharing of the observations, a brief outline of the findings, while the report with conclusions and recommendations is still to come. The full report will be available on the internet (www.farmerfieldschool.net) later in 2009.

Organizational aspects

- The aspects of group mobilization and management, leadership structure, financial contributions, etc. are well internalized in the PFS groups, which provide a good basis for sustainability and self-reliance.
- The facilitators usually come from and are selected by the community. This means that they are well respected and liked by the group members, and also this provides strength of PFS in terms of sustainability.

The learning process

- The technical aspects related to livestock are generally well covered, particularly in the area of animal health. This is probably attributed to the fact that many PFS facilitators are community animal health workers or have undergone such training.
- Most PFS groups have an interest in covering crop related aspects during the rainy seasons. However, the facilitators' knowledge on crop related issues is usually weak.
- Many of the groups focus on different technical aspects during each learning session, with topics covered somehow in isolation (i.e. one week vaccination, the next castration, etc.), without relating the various topics to more long-term experiments and trials or a broader pastoral learning context.
- One of the core activities in the FFS methodology is experimentation and trials as a basis for learning. But some PFS groups were found not to have trials, or compare too arbitrarily (e.g. if comparing only two animals, many factors can affect the result).
- Another core component of the FFS approach, the agro-ecosystem analysis (AESAs), had the same weakness and was often not used at all, or used in an inappropriate way.
- Some NGOs distribute inputs to the PFS groups, such as improved breeds. While this serves as a boost for learning and motivation, the distribution sometimes become a limiting factor for demand-driven learning.

The training of facilitators

- The training of the facilitators demonstrated several weaknesses. The time allocated for training of facilitators was often too short to adequately cover even the most crucial components. The exercises and learning content were not sufficiently adapted for the pastoral situation. The learning tools were not adequately adapted for the illiterate context. There was a bias towards technical aspects at the expense of methodological skills. The same PFS training process was provided for everybody, whether community member, technical facilitator or project management staff. The training of facilitators was sometimes conducted by trainers not adequately experienced in the FFS approach and the PFS context.
- Sometimes the training-course for facilitators were conducted with project staff, who after the training immediately carried out sub-sequent training of facilitators at field level in their particular project sites. Such a two-step training process might be beneficial in order to adapt to logistical and linguistic challenges in the pastoral setting. However, without gaining practical experience through implementing the approach before training others, it may compromise both the quality of the training and the whole FFS approach.

PFS management

- The PFS facilitators often feel left alone to deal with complicated group or learning issues without a mentor or advisor to turn to for guidance and support. Some PFS facilitators mentioned not having received any advisory support after their training, and others said that support had been provided only for follow-up on the progress but not with enough time to discuss challenges or problems encountered.
- In some cases, there were no group learning grants, not even for the most basic items such as flip-charts and pens. Such situations prohibit effective learning and demotivate both groups and facilitators, because 1) the diversity of possible learning topics and enterprises becomes limited, and 2) the facilitators have to rely on oral teaching (which easily becomes just the unwanted—teaching) instead of visuals and drawings to enhance the learning process.

- Currently, there is not much sharing of experiences among actors involved in PFS in Kenya, leading to duplication of mistakes, at the same time slowing down the progress of adapting the technology to a fully functional approach for pastoral environments.

Lessons learned

The workshop participants were asked to list their experience with PFS activities. This section presents the major lessons learned, divided according to the strengths of the approach; the limitations of the PFS approach and the external and internal challenges and threats.

The strengths of the PFS approach

The strengths, making the PFS approach effective in addressing emergency situations, are:

- ***Strong traditional institutions used as entry points (manyatta, kraal, fora, etc.).*** The PFS approach of building on existing structures, makes group formation easier, enhances participation, awareness raising and sensitization, and thereby functions well as an entry point for emergency response.
- ***Enabling the use of existing coping strategies to build resilience against disaster.*** The PFS approach allows incorporation of local traditional coping strategies, such as traditional restocking, loaning, split-herd management and diversification of herds.
- ***Taking advantage of available opportunities.*** Livestock keeping thrives in pastoral areas, and pastoralists possess a wealth of knowledge on livestock production systems and the environment. The PFS approach includes this traditional knowledge and easily links to traditional institutions to access grazing areas, etc.
- ***Its cost-effectiveness.*** Emergency interventions can be tailored to suit communities' needs, thereby bringing a high level of effectiveness for low costs. Due to the local setup of the approach, inputs (material, labour, etc.) can easily be purchased locally and in that way reduce costs.
- ***The respect and sensitivity to cultural values.*** Sometimes, pastoral communities' traditions become hindrances for emergency operations. If the community has already come together in PFSs, it becomes easier to intervene.
- ***All, also the disadvantaged, are included.*** As PFS incorporates gender and equality, all are included; not only women but everybody. Therefore people will not resist intervention as everybody is involved in the decision-making.
- ***The strong lobby and advocacy power.*** Members of PFS learn to articulate their needs and request for what they want.
- ***Including improved practices and livelihoods in emergency operations.*** The approach is an opportunity for reaching out with improved management practices, for instance while restocking after an emergency.

The limitations of the PFS approach

The limitations of the PFS approach to be fully effective in the emergency context are:

- ***The limited capacity of facilitators.*** Many times, the facilitators' technical knowledge is too narrow, and in pastoral areas often focused on livestock. Usually, the community animal health worker is the facilitator, but the groups may want to study also cropping and other subjects.
- ***Funding (timeliness; short timeframe of emergency interventions and underfunding of learning grants).*** It is important that the groups receive funding while

doing their activities. If the emergency PFS is required within a short time, the PFS may not be able to achieve its goal within the emergency context. For example, livestock interventions take long (for larger livestock around a year) while emergency interventions are acute and short-term. Some PFS have been unable to acquire learning grants, for example for adequate study materials, which is unacceptable.

- ***Illiteracy and low level of education.*** Illiterate people need other approaches than those currently used by the PFS groups, making learning harder.
- ***Low supervision of facilitators.*** Due to long distances and remote areas, facilitators don't get the required mentoring and supervision.
- ***The nomadic migration.*** The nomadic pattern of migration hampers the implementation of programmes.
- ***The programme may not reach the most vulnerable.*** In pastoral communities, widows and others vulnerable may shy away from joining the PFS.
- ***Conflicts with cultural norms.*** Cultural norms may be a hindrance, for example when you need to take a blood sample of an animal. Also, the PFS might recommend restricting the number of livestock while the cultural norms appreciate high numbers. Commonly, animals don't belong to one person only, which creates problem if the PFS wishes to sell it.

The challenges and threats to the PFS approach

- The challenges and threats (external and internal) of accomplishing the PFS intentions in the emergency context are:
- ***Availability of facilitators.*** Sometimes it is difficult to even get trained facilitators to visit the PFS, as they may be busy with other jobs, even working for other organizations.
- ***Poor infrastructure.*** Roads are poor and governmental services and banks may be far away, restraining the implementation and follow-up of activities.
- ***Lack of appropriate governmental policies.*** Due to outsiders' misconception of pastoralism, the pastoral areas are often neglected and pastoral development policies tend to be inappropriate to the real needs.
- ***Poor institutional linkages.*** Mainly due to the poor infrastructure and sparsely populated areas, linkages between PFS and various service institutions may not be strong enough to function well.
- ***Insecurity.*** Security is a big problem in pastoral areas, due to cattle raiding and competition over natural resources.
- ***Cross-border issues affecting the performance of the FFS.*** Pastoralists often live in boundary areas and are affected by conflict over boundaries, policies restricting pastoralist movements across boundaries, and lack of harmonized policies on vaccination programmes between countries.
- ***Contextualizing and adapting the FFS concept in pastoral systems.*** There is still need for sharing of experiences and developing guidelines on how to adapt the FFS approach for the pastoral context.

5 Farmer Field Schools in emergency and relief operations

The two-decade civil strife in northern and north-eastern Uganda has left several hundred thousands of people dead and close to two million in displacement with limited access to social services. As a consequence of the conflict in southern Sudan, there is a large Sudanese refugee population settled in the West Nile area, on marginal land with severe environmental degradation and erosion of livelihoods. The agro-pastoral communities inhabiting the semi-arid Karamoja areas in eastern Uganda experience cyclic droughts and are chronically food insecure.

All these three emergency scenarios are lagging behind on all socio-economic indicators with two thirds of the population unable to meet their basic needs. The troubles seem endless with some people having been displaced for up to twenty years, service delivery systems—including agricultural extension—are inadequate or broken down, and there is a continuous erosion of livelihood assets. Globally, similar emergency situations are not uncommon.

To enhance rehabilitation after emergencies, farmers are commonly provided with agricultural inputs, like seeds and tools, but in these long-term situations people are many times not capable of making proper use for them because they are lacking additional resources plus knowledge and confidence. In an attempt to enhance the efficient utilization of such inputs and support rehabilitation interventions in northern Uganda, FAO has scaled up the FFS approach within a very short time. Implemented through 19 NGOs, there are after only two years 1,466 FFS with participants from 43,000 households, and through them up to 258,000 beneficiaries are being reached.

Preliminary results indicate that the approach provides an excellent platform for the transition from emergency to recovery and normal life. The farmers involved produce, harvest, sell and restock more food than in comparable areas, resulting in higher incomes and household food access.

The FAO experience in northern Uganda

James Okoth

After twenty years, the prolonged low-intensive armed conflict in northern Uganda had eventually come to an end. People were in urgent need of tailored training to improve their crop and livestock management skills, if they were to re-engage in meaningful self-reliant and sustainable agricultural production. In 2006, FAO decided to try out the FFS approach, as a holistic mechanism for assisting farmers in their transition from emergency back to normal life. The strategy was to move away from blanket distribution of inputs and instead support medium and long-term livelihood options.

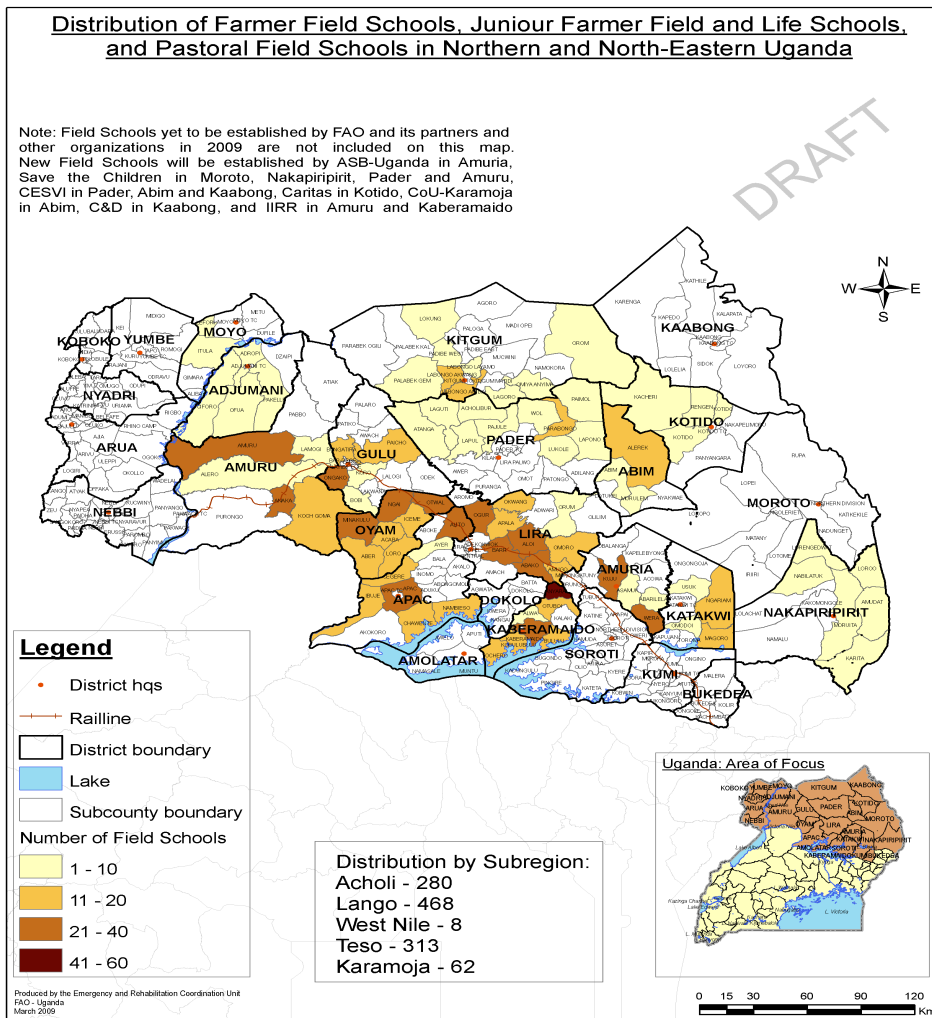
As a first step, FAO created a food security and agricultural livelihoods (FSAL) framework involving all stakeholders engaged in relief work and from the agricultural sector. The forum was arranged by FAO, and chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and it agreed on the rather strict modalities of the programme.

The programme was implemented through collaborating NGOs; only those active in the respective area that had food security or agriculture already on their agenda were allowed to implement the programme. All facilitators had to be on fulltime employment or on contract with the NGO. FAO provided training and gave technical back-stopping to all facilitators, supervisors and other staff to ensure that the core FFS principles were adhered to. Each facilitator ran four field schools per season and was paid USD 200 per month, which is equivalent to what they would earn in the regular extension system. FAO also provided the grants for each of the FFS groups as well as some agricultural inputs.

Every NGO was funded to support one M&E person to work closely with the facilitator and collect data for baseline information, mid-term and end-of-season evaluations. FAO kept close contact with these M&E persons to monitor the processes, making sure the core values of the FFS were maintained while still allowing for the necessary adaptations to the different situations.

Each FFS consisted of 20 to 30 participants, working in smaller groups of five to enhance the participatory learning methodology. The systematic learning process followed the natural cycles of the subject and each FFS had a field study site within convenient reach of all participants. In addition they were supposed to establish their own garden or similar enterprise at home. All training had strong emphasis on food security, self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills. Each session were also used as a forum for upcoming issues, such as HIV/AIDS, abuse, nutrition and health, and soon they became a popular community forum in which farmers could discuss problems within their own local context and seek local solutions with minimal external influence.

Now, the programme has run for two years. Through 19 collaborating NGOs, it has formed 1,466 FFS with participants from 43,000 households, thereby reaching 258,000 beneficiaries. The map shows the distribution of the field schools in northern Uganda. FAO has tried to avoid having concurrent programmes running in same areas, to avoid duplication and interference.



There are two main reasons why the FFS approach has proven to be extremely suitable in emergency and recovery contexts:

1. It is ***comprehensive***, in such a way that the participants develop agricultural skills but also get trained in entrepreneurial skills, through managing the grants and stimulating activities that gives economic returns. The approach also allows for agricultural input provision.
2. It is ***flexible and adaptable***, in such a way that it permits various beneficiaries to be involved; it focuses on different practical subjects and skills; it gives a conceptual understanding of the underlying principles; and it is holistic in its interventions.

There are numerous achievements of the programme with impacts on different levels:

- *Social capital*: there are now groups and networks with good cohesion and participatory decision-making skills. These groups work well together and have a positive view on learning in groups and collective responsibility.
- *Human capital*: the approach has built confidence and there are enhanced critical and logical decision-making and accountability for action. Indigenous and traditional knowledge are reinforced.
- *Financial and physical capital*: most groups have now joint bank accounts and save regularly. Savings are accumulated through revolving funds and investment grants and there is a growing sense of financial responsibility. In some areas FFS groups or networks have started commercial enterprises such as mills.

The programme has as much as possible worked within existing frameworks to create synergy with other initiatives, such as the National Development Plan (NDP), the Presidential Initiative on Prosperity for All (PIPFA), the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP).

There has also been a number of challenges. Due to the limited funding frames, most FFS run for only six months, which is unacceptable and constrains the quality of the whole concept. Ideally, they should continue for two successive cropping seasons with each group. There is need for aspects of quality assurance of the programme, as some NGOs don't take the approach seriously sometimes "masquerading" activities. There is a shortage of staff and facilitators within the implementing partners, with requisite technical competence in agriculture. There is high turnover of staff and sometimes a competition between NGOs, leading to staff keeping changing employer. There is need to raise the critical mass of facilitators, as "they are the first people we lose". Many implementing partners treat the FFS activity in isolation, instead of mainstreaming it into their ongoing programmes. The syndrome of reliance on relief handouts hampers the evolution of livelihood safety nets. At times conflicting approaches between institutions brings confusion, for example occasions when FAO doesn't give handouts while the government may decide to do so.

In conclusion, the FFS approach adds value to delivery under the emergency contexts. It provides an excellent platform for transition from emergency to rehabilitation. It is also enhancing joint programming, as various stakeholders can integrate activities more systematically and holistically. There is need to review the quality mechanisms to cope with the envisaged up-scaling interest. There is also need for some caution: FFSs are not a stand alone, but should be part of a longer term strategy, linking to the overall direction of development and add to moving forward.

Lessons learned

The workshop participants were asked to list their experiences with FFS activities in emergency situations. This section presents the major lessons learned, divided according to the strengths of the approach; the limitations of the FFS approach and the external and internal challenges and threats.

The strengths of the FFS approach in emergency

The strengths, making the FFS approach effective in addressing emergency situations, are:

- ***Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD).*** The FFS approach is well placed to bridge the gap between the relief, rehabilitation and development (normal life) activities.
- ***High level of participation and inclusiveness.*** In the FFSs, there is participation throughout. As experiments are carried out and subjects debated; everybody in the group becomes involved and their ideas get heard. Working together in this way, each person is contributing to solve a common and real problem, enhances group cohesion and builds self esteem.
- ***A flexible platform for joint action within the different emergency contexts.*** The approach doesn't only increase cohesion within the community, but also between the different players from various sectors (professionals in health, hygiene, sanitation, agriculture etc.) around the community as they get to collaborate.
- ***The need-based curriculum.*** In emergency there may be several needs in different situations, upon which an FFS can be built.
- ***It improves service delivery.*** In emergency, many institutions just deliver food and materials, while the FFS also brings training and skills.
- ***It encourages joint capital investment.*** Many times, FFS networks operate jointly around small agro-processing equipment. For example, in a sub-county (division in Kenya), a network of 20 FFSs can together run a mill and create capital.
- ***The creation of strong farmer institutions.*** When people and communities become dispersed in emergencies, FFSs can help bringing them together again. Where there are gaps in delivery services, the FFSs can assist. Through FFS, local trade and services can be promoted, e.g. instead of buying seed from Kampala, networks of FFSs can produce the seed locally, generating income to the participants and at the same time reduce the costs of transportation.

The limitations of the FFS approach in emergency

The limitations of the FFS approach to be fully effective in the emergency context are:

- ***Shortage of competent facilitators and master trainers.*** The FFS hinges on the facilitator, whose competence is crucial for success. Currently, there is a shortage of trained facilitators and in remote areas, especially during emergency situations; the most qualified facilitators might rather look for work elsewhere. Master trainers train facilitators and provide back-up during running FFSs and are equally important. Presently also they are too few (and most often also having other assignments) limiting the scaling up of the approach.
- ***The short funding timeframe.*** The short funding timeframe of emergency operations limits the successful linking of rehabilitation with development. This weakness is serious because the preparatory activities for each farmer group cannot be fast tracked: people need time to understand what they are to do if they will be able to take the lead and make the decisions; they must all agree on the group's constitution and getting the group regis-

tered with community development offices (or departments of social services) can take a long time; also the bank may be far away. If the project is only for six months, the group may just have started the field school activities when the programme closes.

- **Weak exit strategy.** The short funding timeframe for emergency-related projects doesn't allow for development of exit strategies. At least one-year project periods would be needed to allow time for considering the ending and to plan for it.
- **The costs.** Compared to the ordinary emergency distribution of seeds and tools, the costs for FFSs are much higher, limiting the number of beneficiaries. (Although the number of successful interventions might be higher.)
- **Inputs for activities on own land.** Beyond demonstration, those without own assets cannot get started on their own land unless they have assets to buy, or are given seeds and tools.

The challenges and threats to the FFS approach in emergency

The challenges and threats (external and internal) of accomplishing the FFS intentions in the emergency context are:

- **Limited access to productive resources.** In emergency situations and refugee camps land might be small—not even enough for each household. Who will then allow a plot for the FFS?
- **Poor infrastructure.** War and emergency situations have a large impact on the standard of roads and other infrastructure, limiting communities' access to services and the facilitator in reaching the PFS groups.
- **Natural calamities.** For example, if an area is affected by drought in the middle of an intervention, the studies stop.
- **Gender related issues.** In some cultures, women are not allowed to own land, then a wife cannot donate a small part of her husbands land to the group, or the husband may refuse her to plant certain crops. The time women spend with the FFS may also cause conflict at home. (One solution to this could be to allow husband and wife together attend the FFS.)
- **Political interference.** Local politicians might interfere with the placement of experimentation plots, demanding it to be placed on their land. They may also have opinions on the allocation of demonstration inputs, making it difficult to reach the most vulnerable.
- **Institutionalization and acceptance.** It is important to get acceptance and support from government and other local institutions. For example, if the FFS approach is not supported by the government, the agricultural officers may be reluctant to collaborate and attend to group meetings if requested.
- **Apathy due to trauma.** In disasters, people do loose their relatives, their cattle, maybe years of savings, everything. These people may not be able to participate fully in the FFS activities and reason around topics like others.
- **Limited awareness of the approach.** In general, most donors do not yet know this approach.

6 Applications of Farmer Field Schools in emergency operations

The previous presentations have shown that despite being only on a short-term piloting basis, the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach has contributed successfully in various emergency contexts. This chapter outlines the most appropriate applications, i.e. where and how the FFS adds value in emergency situations, how the strengths of the approach can be further improved, and how the weaknesses can be redressed and turned into opportunities.

Farmer Field Schools in disaster management

The disaster management cycle (Chapter 2) was revisited and the workshop participants were asked to indicate in which phases of emergency the FFS can be valuable.

It is obvious that in the *acute phase* of emergency operations with rapid distribution of food, medical aid and shelter, the FFS approach is not applicable, as it is neither fast nor short-term. Except if it is already there, as for example in pastoral areas hit by drought, the PFS may be used for fair and widespread distribution and for speeding up recovery. In situations where emergency is chronic with high insecurity, as during armed conflicts, using FFS is completely out of question. However, as soon as the security situation improves and the interventions start focussing on rehabilitation and/or repatriation, the FFS approach becomes highly useful.

During *rehabilitation*, the FFS adds value to the distribution of agricultural inputs. Thereby, the approach can bridge the gap between rehabilitation and normal life. The FFS approach can also be an entry point for “building back better”, i.e. improving livelihoods compared with what existed before the emergency. The Farmer Field Schools can be an effective and culturally acceptable approach to letting people try out modern technologies and incorporate what they find suitable into their traditional practices.

The FFS is also considered useful in the *mitigation and preparedness* stages. This is particularly true where disasters are recurrent phenomena, for example in drought prone and/or extremely poor areas. Here, FFS can provide a greater degree of resilience and faster recovery from the next emergency.

The workshop concluded that, in general, the PFS is more applicable in the preparedness phase, while the JFFLS and FFS approaches are most appropriate in the rehabilitation and normal life phases.

Analysis of principles

The principles of FFS and of emergency operations, as previously listed (Chapter 2), are entirely different from one another. Now, the participants were asked to identify, for each of the FFS principles, the emergency principles to which they contribute (table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of which emergency principles the FFS principles contribute to

FFS principles	Emergency principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation by all • Human skills development • Build on experience • Trained facilitator • Regular group meetings • Build group cohesion • Learning by doing • Experimentation • AESA (observation–analysis–discussion–presentation) • Demand-based curriculum • Equality (gender, tribe, age, health, etc) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapid and timely response* 2. Target the most vulnerable 3. Reach large numbers of beneficiaries* 4. Need-based response 5. Save lives* 6. Secure livelihoods 7. Build resilience 8. Be cost-effective 9. Provide relief (food, shelter and medical aid)* 10. Balanced and fair distribution

* Principles for the acute relief stage interventions.

Also in this exercise it was apparent that the FFS does not have a role to play in the acute emergency stage, characterized by the emergency principles ‘rapid and timely response’, ‘reaching large numbers of beneficiaries’, ‘save lives’, and ‘provide relief’. As many as eight of the FFS principles were linked with the emergency principle ‘building resilience’ and six of them were linked to ‘achieving a needs-based response’, indicating that the FFS approach will give its strongest contribution in emergency activities based on these two principles. Three of the principles were linked with ‘balanced and fair distribution’, two to ‘secure livelihoods’ and only one of the FFS principles was linked to ‘rapid and timely response’, ‘target the most vulnerable’ and ‘be cost-effective’, respectively.

Even though everybody agreed that a properly trained facilitator is crucial for the FFS to be successful it was, in fact, not easy to indicate which of the emergency principles it would support. Also, the AESA was somehow not easily linked, still all agreed that this is a cornerstone of the FFS, strongly contributing not only to the participants analysing skills but also to their presentation and leadership skills, thereby improving their knowledge-based decision-making capacity. Surprisingly, the emergency principle ‘be cost-effective’ was only supported by the FFS principle of having a trained facilitator, and this link was also not easy to come up with. Some further observations were that:

- in areas with recurrent disasters such as pastoral drylands, also the principles for the acute relief stage interventions, such as ‘reach large numbers of people’ and ‘rapid and timely response’, can be supported if the FFSs are already established there.
- for the FFS approach to contribute to ‘build resilience’, there must be a large number of FFSs established, to give high enough number of entry points for preparedness activities such as early warning. As one participant expressed: “FFS is like a vaccination—it only has an impact if done on a large scale”.
- only the FFS principle of ‘demand-based curriculum’ didn’t get linked with any of the principles for emergency interventions. And as a matter of fact, curricula may in some cases have to be pushed on people. For instance if upcoming mosaic virus in cassava is causing starvation in an area, resistant varieties may be forced upon people in adjacent areas before they get affected.
- there may be differences between which of the FFS principles play a larger role in rehabilitation and which ones are more important in the preparedness phase. For example, in stages of preparedness, the ‘experimentation’ and ‘AESA’ may be very valid for building resilience, while in rehabilitation ‘learning by doing’ may have higher importance.

Opportunity and strategy analysis

Building on the presentations in previous chapters, the lessons learned and the analyses above, the participants were asked to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of the FFS approach in emergencies, and turn them into opportunities for strategy development. The workshop participants were divided into three groups according to profession and interest (JFFLS, PFS and FFS in emergency contexts) and asked to suggest:

1. Which strengths (from Chapters 3 to 5: Lessons learned) are most viable in emergency situations, and how can they be used as opportunities or strategies for further improvement?
2. Which are the main weaknesses (from limitations and challenges in Chapters 3 to 5: Lessons learned) in using FFS in emergency situations, and how can those weaknesses instead be turned into opportunities?

The purpose was to, while still maintaining its most important principles, turn the original FFS into a robust and efficient approach for emergency situations. The outcome is presented in tables 4 to 9.

Table 4. Analysis of the strengths of JFFLS that are most viable in emergency situations

Strengths	Strategies for further improvement	Who (partners needed)	inputs and support functions needed
Providing food support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate community food support into the programme. - Procure local food to promote and sustain local business. - Strengthen the FFS approach as a source of food for children. 	Communities, NGO/donors, Existing FFS networks, Government	Agricultural inputs, Extension materials and support, Grants/ funds
Conveying agricultural and life skills through social animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revise the JFFLS training manual, to be very specific how to implement these topics and links. - Offer refresher-training for facilitators during the implementation 	JFFLS experts, Donors, NGOs, Master trainers	Funds, Training materials

	<p>period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train additional resource persons. - Develop a trainer's manual and a facilitator's field guide. 		
Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) as the target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobby for the development and implementation of an OVC policy. - Scale up JFFLS due to the large number of orphans and vulnerable children. - Target out of school youth. - Increase the pool of trainers and facilitators. 	Government, Donors, Community and schools, Implementing partners, JFFLS experts and/or master trainers	Funds, Technical support, Training materials

Table 5. Analysis of the weaknesses of JFFLS in emergency situations

Weaknesses	Strategies for turning into opportunities	Who (partners needed)	inputs and support functions needed
Linking JFFLS graduates to post-JFFLS activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce the JFFLS or FFS concept into post-primary schools and other institutions. - Support post-JFFLS activities, such as income generating activities for JFFLS graduates. - Train JFFLS graduates as JFFLS facilitators. 	Implementing partners, Government line ministries, JFFLS master trainers	Funds, Training materials
Involvement of children in curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let all JFFLS graduates evaluate their programme and use when developing future curricula. - Consult junior facilitators. 	Implementing partners, JFFLS co-ordinators	Technical expertise, Funds
Conflict in the management of affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form JFFLS joint monitoring and/or management committees (school management, guardians and participants representatives). - Train junior management committees in organization and management. 	Implementing partners, Government	Training materials, Funds

Table 6. Analysis of the strengths of PFS that are most viable in emergency situations

Strengths	Strategies for further improvement	Who (partners needed)	inputs and support functions needed
Using traditional institutions and structures as entry points (manyatta, kraal, fora, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuously mentor the PFS facilitators and groups. - Enhance experience sharing between PFS groups and implementing partners respectively. - Register and institutionalize the PFS groups. 	NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, Government, UN agencies	Capacity building*
Utilizing existing coping strategies to build resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop mechanisms for the utilization of traditional early warning 	Communities, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs,	Capacity building*

against disaster	<p>systems and integrate with modern famine and livestock early warning systems (FEWS and LEWS).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop methods for evaluation of existing strategies. 	UN agencies, Donors	
Flexibility to take advantage of available opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate indigenous technology knowledge into the PFS process. - Improve linkages and networking with government, NGOs and private sector. - Improve timeliness of implementation of PFS programmes. 	Government, PFS networks, NGOs, Donors, UN agencies	Capacity building*
Its cost-effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scale up for further increasing cost-effectiveness. - Introduce additional cost-saving technologies. 	NGOs, Communities, Government, UN agencies, Donors	

Table 7. Analysis of the weaknesses of PFS in emergency situations

Weaknesses	Strategies for turning into opportunities	Who (partners needed)	inputs and support functions needed
Limited capacity and availability of facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase and improve training of facilitators and master facilitators. - Develop a consensus manual for training of facilitators. - Formulate PFS standardized guidelines to ensure harmonized implementation. - Increase incentives for facilitators. 	Donors, UN agencies, NGOs, CBOs, Government	Capacity building*
Funding (timeliness, the limited timeframe and underfunding of learning grants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy and documentation of experiences. - Harmonize learning grants to groups. - Train PFS groups on fund-raising and resource mobilization. 	Donors, NGOs, UN agencies	Funding, Capacity building*
Poor access to banking facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Link community managed micro-finance institutions, e.g. VICOBA, to PFS networks. 	Government, NGOs, PFS networks	Funding, Capacity building*
Illiteracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase training of facilitators on participatory learning methods (e.g. functional adult literacy). 	NGOs, CBOs, FBOs Government,	Capacity building*
Poor institutional linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase representation, participation and organization at all levels (networking). 	NGOs, Government, UN-agencies	Capacity building*
Drought / Areas are normally affected by recurrent droughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop mechanisms for the utilization of traditional early warning systems. - Integrate traditional and modern early warning systems (famine and livestock early warning systems, FEWS and LEWS). 	NGOs, Communities, Government	Capacity building*

Insecurity, due to cross-border migration and fighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make use of traditional institutions to negotiate for utilization of natural resources and access to grazing grounds and watering points. - Bring in local administration and the government in negotiations. 	NGOs, Government, Communities, CBOs, FBOs, UN agencies	Funding for peace building activities
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* includes training, learning materials, human resources and funding.

Table 8. Analysis of the strengths of FFS that are most viable in emergency situations

Strengths	Strategies for further improvement	Who (partners needed)	inputs and support functions needed
Linking relief, rehabilitation and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the FFS programmes fit within existing policy frameworks as an exit strategy towards mainstreaming into longer-term development initiatives. - Develop a harmonized plan of action, for different actors to restore livelihoods. - Strengthen existing coordination frameworks: through regular coordination and meetings as well as training of facilitators, implementing partners and FFS networks. 	Legislators, OCHA, Line ministries, Donors	Funding
The high level of participation and inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Always review and develop curricula based on the prevailing needs in every situation. - Increase the availability of skilled manpower in the region, through training of facilitators and supervisors, exchange visits, experience sharing and training of master trainers. 	Farmers and institutions, FAO, Facilitators	Funds Human resources Hands-on manuals
A flexible platform for joint action within the different emergency contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the existence of multi-actor and multi-disciplinary sectors: there is need to harmonize action plans. - Train the partners on the methodology. - Create awareness on the FFS methodology. - Develop comprehensive curricula to suit the different contexts (PFS, FFS, and JFFLS). - Conduct joint needs assessment. - Coordination and reporting. - Monitoring and evaluation. 	FAO, Different agencies, Implementing agencies, Local government, OCHA	Funds Human resources Manuals

Table 9. Analysis of the weaknesses of FFS in emergency situations

Weaknesses	Strategies for turning them into opportunities	Who (partners needed)	inputs and support functions needed
Shortage of facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train (and mentor) more facilitators and master facilitators, both in English and French. - Improve terms and conditions for facilitators. - Develop a database over trained facilitators (at all levels). 	FAO, Implementing partners, National agric. research systems, Line ministries (incl. those responsible for gender issues)	Master trainers, Funds, Training materials (i.e. modules and manuals)
Short funding timeframe of FFS in emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAO and implementing partners to dialogue and lobby with the donors for longer funding timeframe. - Change project programming into much longer frameworks, e.g. develop a three-year FFS programme for northern Uganda. 	Donors, FAO, Implementing partners, Local government, CBOs, FBOs, Line ministries.	
Weak exit strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redefine and specify a clear exit strategy and activities for that. - Continuously fit the FFS methodology into existing development frameworks and programmes. - Strengthen the capacities of groups/networks on management and entrepreneurial skills. - Link FFS groups to other networks, micro-finance institutions, collective production and marketing, and improved-input dealers. 	Private sector, Implementing partners, Local government, FAO, Farmer groups	

7 Conclusions

It is obvious that the well characterized but flexible Farmer Field School (FFS) approach has potential to increase the effectiveness of post and pre-emergency interventions. This chapter presents some key conclusions from the workshop, proposes strategies for up-scaling and identifies expectations on FAO as well as some emerging issues requiring attention.

Key conclusions

Some key conclusions from the workshop are:

- The FFS approach can add value to emergency interventions at the rehabilitation, mitigation (normal life) and preparedness stages. The Pastoral Field School (PFS) is most applicable in the preparatory phase while the Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) and FFS are most appropriate in the rehabilitation and normal life phases.
- There is no point in forming FFS during an acute emergency as the approach is neither fast nor short-term. However, if they are already there, for example in pastoral areas hit by drought, they may contribute to balanced and fair distribution and faster recovery.
- The FFS approach has its strongest contributions to the emergency operation principles ‘need-based response’ (primarily concerning rehabilitation) and ‘building resilience’.
- Although the FFS principles ‘AESA’ and having a ‘trained facilitator’ are not priority activities in emergency operations, they were considered essential for the FFS approach:
 - The agro-ecosystem analysis (AESA) is the foundation of the approach, without which there wouldn’t be an FFS. It is especially useful in rehabilitation bringing people back to normal life, improving their livelihoods and increasing their resilience for future emergencies. Some basic elements make up the AESA, but it is flexible enough and in the emergency context, it is necessary to adapt the AESA according to the needs of the given situation.
 - The competence of the facilitators is equally crucial as they are there to guide (and not teach) the empowerment process. All agreed that the facilitators’ knowledge, skills and attitude make or break the FFS, and that facilitators and supervisors at all levels must be properly trained prior to implementing their programme.
- The FFS principle of demand-based curriculum is not strong in emergencies. There may be cases where activities must be imposed on people, while when returning to rehabilitation and normal life, the demand-driven activities take precedence.
- The issue of ‘cost-effectiveness’ came up somewhat contradictory. In the analyses costs appeared both as a strength and a weakness. In general, setting up and running FFS cost more than merely distributing agricultural inputs. However, if the alternatives are keeping people trapped in dependency or helping them back to normal life, the additional costs may be well worth the effort.
- The piloting with six-month support to FFS has experienced some problems due to the short-term character of emergency operations. To achieve empowerment and successfully link over to normal life, the FFS must not be imposed on participants. There must be time to introduce the concept to surrounding stakeholders and create links with local institutions, to form groups and get them running.

- The particular strength of the FFS seems to be that it is very well placed to create that difficult link between emergency, rehabilitation and development (LRRD).

Strategies for further improvement of the strengths

The major strengths of the FFS approach in emergency contexts, as identified by the workshop participants, are here summarized together with strategies for further improvement (for details see chapters 3 to 5: Lessons learned, and tables 4, 6 and 8):

1. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development

- Ensure that the FFS programmes fit within existing policy frameworks as an exit strategy towards mainstreaming into longer-term development initiatives.
- Develop a harmonized plan of action, for different actors to restore livelihoods.
- Strengthen existing coordination frameworks, through regular coordination and meetings as well as training of facilitators, implementing partners and FFS networks.

2. Forming a flexible platform for joint action within the different emergency contexts

- Increase the existence of multi-actor and multi-disciplinary sectors: there is need to harmonize action plans.
- Develop comprehensive curricula to suit the different contexts (PFS, FFS, JFFLS), and train the partners on the methodology.
- Create awareness on the FFS methodology; conduct joint needs assessment; monitor and evaluate.

3. Using traditional institutions as entry-points, (especially in pastoral communities)

- Continuously mentor the PFS groups.
- Facilitate experience sharing between both groups and implementing partners.
- Register and institutionalize the traditional institutions.

4. High level of participation and inclusiveness

- Always review and develop curricula based on the prevailing needs in every situation.
- Increase the availability of skilled manpower in the region, through training of facilitators and supervisors, exchange visits, experience sharing, and training of master trainers.

5. Providing food support to children

- Incorporate community food support into the programme, and purchase locally to sustain local business.
- Strengthen the FFS approach further as a source of food for vulnerable children.

6. Conveying agriculture and life skills to children through the powerful social animation

- Revise the JFFLS training manual, and include specifications on how to implement these topics and links. Develop a trainer's manual and a facilitator's field guide.
- Offer refresher-training for facilitators during the implementation period, and also train additional resource persons.

7. Specifically targeting the most vulnerable children

- Lobby for the development and implementation of policies for orphans and vulnerable children.

- Scale up JFFLS to reach larger numbers of orphans and vulnerable children, and also target out of school youth.
- Increase the pool of master trainers and facilitators.

8. Utilizing traditional coping strategies to build resilience (in pastoral areas)

- Develop mechanisms for the utilization of traditional early warning systems and integrate with modern famine and livestock early warning systems (FEWS and LEWS).
- Develop methods for evaluation of existing strategies.

9. Flexibility to take advantage of all available opportunities

- Incorporate indigenous technology and knowledge thoroughly into the PFS process, and improve linkages and networking with government, NGOs and private sector.

10. Cost-effective, or well worth of money spent

- Scale up the approach for further increase of cost-effectiveness.
- Introduce additional cost-saving technologies.

Strategies for turning the weaknesses into opportunities

The major weaknesses of the FFS approach in emergency contexts, as identified by the workshop participants, are here combined and compiled. For each weakness, there are corresponding strategies on how to redress those weaknesses in order to turn them into opportunities (for details see chapters 3 to 5: Lessons learned, and tables 5, 7 and 9.):

1. Limited capacity and availability of facilitators

- Increase and improve training of facilitators and master facilitators, in both English and French.
- Formulate standardized guidelines to ensure harmonized implementation of the approach (for JFFLS, PFS and FFS respectively), and develop a consensus manual for training of facilitators.
- Improve terms and conditions for facilitators.
- Develop databases over trained facilitators (at all levels).

2. Weak exit strategy

- Redefine and specify a clear exit strategy and activities for that.
- Continuously fit the FFS methodology into existing development frameworks and programmes. Introduce the JFFLS concept into post-primary schools and other institutions. Create a natural link over to development activities.
- Strengthen the capacities of groups and networks on management and entrepreneurial skills. Promote self-funded mechanisms, fund-raising and resource mobilization. Support income generating activities for JFFLS graduates.
- Link FFS groups to other networks, micro-finance institutions, collective production and marketing, and improved-input dealers.
- Document success exit strategies.

3. Too short funding timeframe for full efficiency of the approach

- FAO and implementing partners to dialogue and lobby with the donors for longer funding timeframe. (For successfully linking over to development, projects need a much longer framework, e.g. a three-year FFS programme for northern Uganda.)

4. Insecurity (especially in pastoral areas)

- Make use of traditional institutions to negotiate for utilization of natural resources and access to grazing grounds and watering points.
- Bring in local administration and the government in negotiations.

5. *Conflict in the management of affairs of JFFLSs*

- Form joint monitoring and/or management committees with school management, guardians and participants representatives and train these junior management committees in organization and management.

6. *Illiteracy*

- Increase training of facilitators on participatory learning methods (e.g. functional adult literacy.)

FAO roles and support

The workshop participants were asked to identify and list their expectations on FAO in supporting the up-scaling of FFS in emergency:

- Developing standards and guidelines for FFS in emergency (including implementing modalities, such as size of grants)
- Developing and distributing training materials
- Facilitating experience sharing:
 - Documenting lessons learned
 - Arranging study tours between countries, as part of experience sharing
- Training master trainers, supervisors and facilitators (i.e. trainers on all levels) in the FFS approach
- Mentoring (back-stopping) trainers on all levels after completed training, as well as implementing partners
- Giving financial and budget support to implementing partners (including learning grants for groups and establishment of FFS networks)
- Providing farm inputs
- Developing M&E framework
- Raising awareness about the FFS approach, especially among government, partners and donors
- Coordinating FFS implementation
- Mobilizing resources

Emerging issues

Before closing, the meeting was asked to identify emerging issues that will require attention. Most of the issues that came up reappeared from earlier discussions, in particular the weaknesses, indicating the urgency of attending to them:

- *The AESA* should never be removed from the FFS approach. However, in emergency the FFS component must be adapted to the different contexts and needs.
- *The facilitators and supervisors* have to be properly trained on the FFS approach before implementation. A model for training of facilitators should be developed, together

with a trainers' manual properly conveying the holistic approach of the FFS. The creation of web-based databases over facilitators and master trainers would improve availability.

- ***Experience sharing.*** For the approach to develop swiftly and mistakes not repeated, there is need for experience sharing between FFS and implementing agencies. The creation of databases of all Farmer Field Schools in each country is a first step in supporting the sharing of experiences.
- ***Coherent implementation.*** FAO does not implement FFSs, but collaborate with implementing partners, usually NGOs active in the local areas. It is important that these agencies are well informed and fully understand the various elements of the FFS modalities (provision of food, size of learning grants, trainers' remuneration, etc) to accomplish coherent implementation of the programme.
- ***The formulation of exit strategy.*** Although graduation should not be the final point, many FFSs end there. So far, there are no consistent principles or clear guidelines on how to continue. Sometimes the groups carry on for another season with farmer-led activities, or they decide to form networks. There are examples of FFS networks that have started viable enterprises and generally the groups are geared to go on. Some workshop participants suggested that FFS networks should be the automatic consequence of a completed FFS. However, there was some caution not to impose those networks on people as they may not be viable unless created spontaneously, from bottom up. The important issue raised was the need to develop recommendations and guidelines on an exit strategy clearly supporting the link to LRRD.

**International Meeting on Farmer Field Schools
in Emergency, Preparedness and Pastoral Contexts
Lessons Learned and Emerging Issues
Lukenya Getaway, Kenya, 19-22 May 2009**

Tuesday 19 May	
16.00-21.00	Welcome and registration Official opening and introductions
Wednesday 20 May	
8.15-09.30	<i>Setting the Scene</i> - FFS overview and evolution in the African region - Needs and trends in emergency and pastoral operations (D. Duveskog and B. Minjauw)
9.30-10.45	<i>Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS)</i> - JFFLS in Mozambique (video) - JFFLS in Refugee camps and dealing with HIV/AIDS (M. Masai) - Plenary sharing of experiences and ideas
11.15-12.30	<i>Pastoral Field Schools (PFS)</i> - PFS: the VSF-B experience (F. Anno) - Feedback from PFS Kenya review mission (A. Braun) - Plenary sharing of experiences and ideas
14.00-15.30	<i>FFS in emergency and relief operations</i> - FFS in emergency operations: the Ugandan Experience (J. Okoth) - Plenary sharing of experiences and ideas
16.00-17.00	Plenary – buzz group brainstorming on “key issues”
Thursday 21 May	
8.15-9.45	<i>Parallel Thematic working groups: Lessons learned analysis</i> - Introduction to working groups - Working groups: 1. Junior Field and Life Schools 2. Pastoral field schools 3. FFS in Emergency and Relief operations
10.15-11.15	<i>Parallel Thematic working groups: Lessons learned analysis (cont)</i> - Group presentations and feedback
11.15-12.30	Plenary – buzz group brainstorming on “key issues”
14.00-15.45	<i>Parallel Thematic working groups: Opportunity and strategy analysis</i> - Introduction to working groups - Working groups: 1. Junior Field and Life Schools 2. Pastoral field schools 3. FFS in Emergency and Relief operations
16.15-17.15	<i>Parallel Thematic working groups: Opportunity and strategy analysis (cont)</i> - Group presentations and feedback
Friday 22 May	
8.30-8.45	Recap
8.45-10.30	<i>Way Forward</i> - Interactive plenary buzz-group discussion: Meeting recommendations
11.00-12.00	Plenary discussion on needs for regional/national FFS/PFS/JFFLS support
12.00-12.30	Wrap up and closing

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