



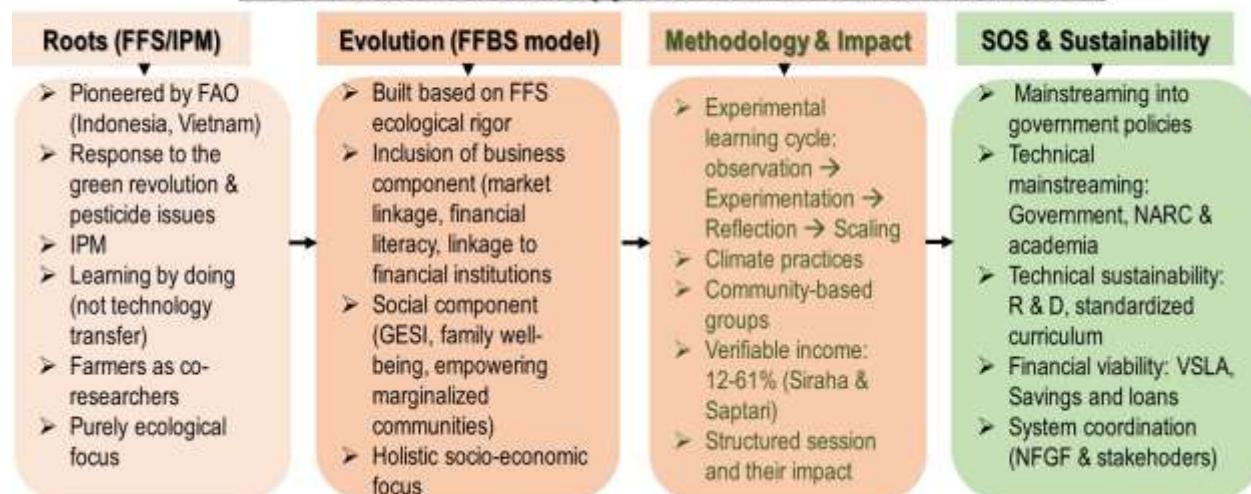
Integration of the Farmer Field Business School (FFBS) Model into Academia

The Farmer Field Business School (FFBS) model is a successful example of a participatory, transformative adult learning approach that integrates agriculture, gender equality, entrepreneurship, and household well-being. It is based on the Farmer Field School (FFS) methodology developed by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which CARE International has expanded into a comprehensive, gender-focused, market-oriented, multi-sectoral model. The FFBS model integrates the traditional FFS approach with entrepreneurship and business skills, aiming to strengthen the resilience and livelihoods of smallholder farmers, particularly women and marginalized communities. It is built around four interconnected pillars—agriculture, gender transformation, household nutrition, and market access—that foster holistic rural development.

In Nepal, FFBS has been implemented since 2022 in selected municipalities of Siraha and Saptari districts by the National Farmers Group Federation, Nepal (NFGF) with financial support from CARE Nepal. It has achieved notable improvements in productivity, climate-resilient agriculture, household nutrition, and women's empowerment. With CARE's global "**Impact at Scale**" vision and Geneva Global guidance on system orchestration, the FFBS initiative has matured into a robust model of community learning and governance coordination.

The FFBS approach needs to be embedded within higher education, a process called academic mainstreaming. This process involves incorporating the model into the three-tier government structure (scaling up) and formalizing its methods within Nepal's higher education system. Academic mainstreaming comprises integration of FFBS tools into university and technical curricula (undergraduate/postgraduate, and continuing education), along with Research and Development (R&D) support, to standardize facilitator skills and secure the model's technical sustainability.

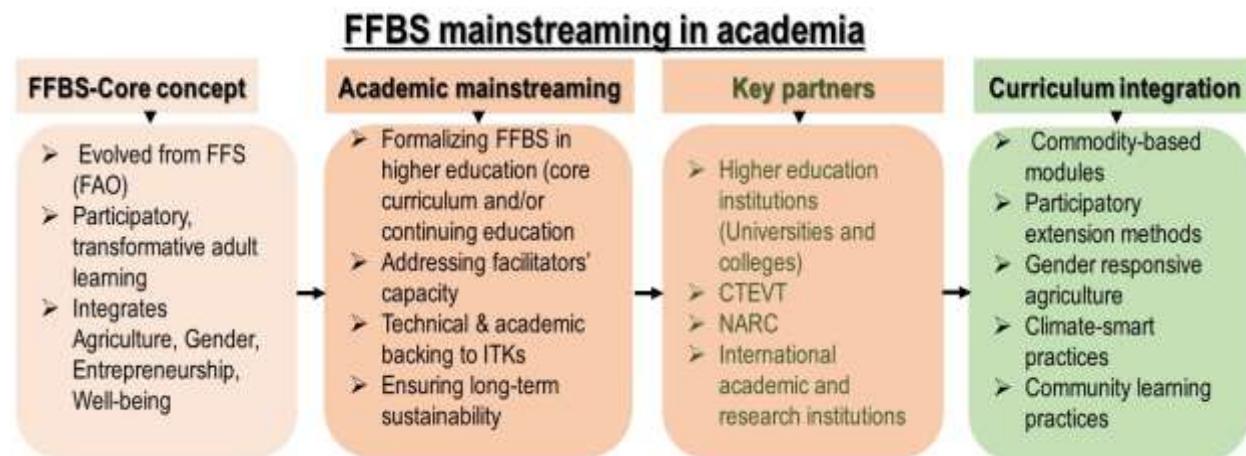
FFBS Model: Holistic Approach for Rural Transformation



The FFBS model is derived from the traditional FFS by moving beyond a solely ecological focus to incorporate a comprehensive socio-economic perspective, incorporating business and social elements for marginalized communities. This innovative model delivers measurable impact, with its long-term effectiveness hinging on the System Orchestration Strategy (SOS), which promotes sustainability via political integration, academic standardization, and financial stability.

FFBS mainstreaming in academia

The FFBS aims to enhance farmers' technical and entrepreneurial skills, promote gender-equitable leadership, and support diversified production for improved nutrition and resilience. It also strengthens market linkages and access to finance, intending to institutionalize inclusive, community-based learning within Nepal's agricultural extension system.



FFBS implementation in Nepal

The field implementation, led by NFGF and local governments, has effectively boosted agricultural productivity by promoting climate smart agriculture practices such as zero-tillage. It has also supported human resource development through lead farmer training. The next vital phase is system orchestration—standardizing the FFBS curriculum and embedding the approach into university programs and local government budgets—to secure lasting technical, financial, and political sustainability.



Since the FFBS initiative is an empirically validated model for sustainable systemic change within Nepal's agricultural extension system, it demonstrates that participatory, multi-sectoral approaches can effectively improve productivity, promote gender equality, and strengthen local governance. This is achieved by integrating the ecological rigor of FFS and Integrated Pest Management Pathshala, the entrepreneurial focus of the Business School, and a firm dedication to gender-transformative change. The essential, non-negotiable step to achieving "Auto-pilot mode" and ensuring the model's long-term technical, financial, and political sustainability is complete academic integration. This will enhance the professionalism of the extension workforce and establish formal community-based learning. To achieve this, recommendations suggest making FFBS a compulsory, graded field practicum in all agricultural curricula, both undergraduate and postgraduate. They also propose creating a professional certification program for FFBS facilitators and establishing a National FFBS Academic Consortium, including Universities, NFGF, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, to standardize R&D-supported curricula and officially recognize the NFGF as the community-led extension partner for university outreach.