

**TABU JUSTIN (2007-M093-10129)**

**An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Farmer Field School Extension Approach in Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Among the Rural Farmers in Agago District: A Case Study of Parabongo Sub-county.**

Farmer Field School (FFS) is a popular education and extension approach worldwide. Such schools use experiential learning and a group approach to facilitate farmers in making decisions, solving problems, and learning new techniques. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Farmer Field School extension approach in promoting sustainable agriculture among the rural farmers in Parabongo sub-county, Agago district. The specific objectives of this study were: To establish the functions of FFS Extension Approach in promoting sustainable agriculture, to find out to what extent FFS approach is boosting sustainable agriculture and to craft strategies that will improve the implementation of FFS approach methodology as one of the agricultural extension approaches. This study used on a case study design; both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed. An interview guide was used to collect data through key informants; focus group discussions and questionnaires were used to gather data from the other selected respondents. The major findings of the study are the following; on its functions in the life of a rural farmer, FFS methodology has the ability to build the capacity of the farmers to become experts because it is farmer lead, it encourages farmers to experiment, empowers the farmers to think independently, it builds self confidence in the farmers especially for the women due to equal participation and it encourages the formation of the cooperative working groups. As regards the extent to which it interacts with the key component of sustainable agriculture, the research found that the approach is also effective in boosting the sustainable agriculture by strengthening the key element of sustainability through the practical training integration of environmental protection in production, emphasis on economical sustainability and contextualising the social sustainability. The FFS is an experimental, participatory learning methodology, it promotes new learning without compromising the experiences of the farmers, uses the problem solving approach based on the a specific location, therefore, the study concludes that: FFS as a model is the most effective and appropriate extension methodology for validation and dissemination of agricultural technologies and practices which eventually lead to people-oriented and sustainable agriculture amongst the rural farmers. However, the study also discovered that there has been a gap in the FFS in the way the FFS extension approach is being handled by the different implementers, the training duration and ideology behind. The study recommends that the government and her line department of Agricultural extension should prioritise the adaptation of the FFS extension for knowledge and technology transfer; NGOs and other stake holders active in FSAL sectors not to take FFS as a means of securing funds from donors but should treat it as one of the extension approaches that needs to be adopted by the framers for their survival; rural farmers to embrace the FFS extension approach and its evolution into the FFS network as the best and the only way through which the farmers are empowered to access markets for their produce at an affordable cost; need for future research on how FFS extension approach can be used to train the local farmers on other non-crop products.

**Key Words: Rural Farmers, School Extension Approach, Sustainable Agriculture Rural Farmers, Agago District.**