

Portable Extension Office for Program Literature Exchange

(PEOPLE)

Bob Barber , Extension Agricultural Economist (Guam: Professional Development Program Grant)

Project Number: EW98-011

Title: Portable Extension Office for Program Literature Exchange (PEOPLE)

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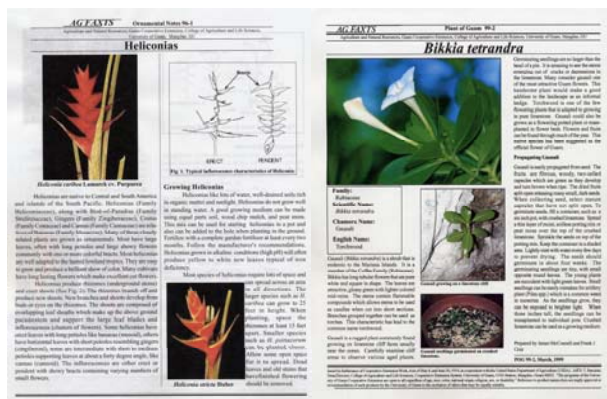
www.uog.edu/cals/people

SARE Grant: \$18,400

Situation:

Compared with their U.S. Mainland counterparts, land grant institutions in the Pacific are small and isolated from low-cost communications options. Their small size means fewer extension subject matter specialists are available to meet the information needs of their clients. Yet these clients have information needs as diverse as those on the Mainland.

At the same time, advances in computer and Internet technology have opened low-cost avenues of disseminating information digitally to even the remotest locations.



Objectives:

- Identify, obtain and disseminate, in digital format, literature related to tropical sustainable agriculture practices and issues developed through extension programs in the Pacific, Caribbean and U.S. Mainland
- Increase institutional capabilities to publish and disseminate information relevant to the Pacific
- Develop staff skills at nine Pacific sites on the use of equipment, software and information resources to enable a print-on-demand literature exchange program
- Determine the impact of the literature exchange and distribution program on the development of tropical sustainable agriculture in the region



Actions:

Needs assessments, conducted among agricultural professionals on Guam and extension agents across the Pacific, concluded that a digital extension library that brings together all of the publications from the Pacific Islands and U.S. Mainland relevant in a tropical environment would help agents deliver more effective extension programs.

Based on this information, the project team:

- Located regional, national and international publications and organized them digitally onto a CD
- Disseminated the CD to participating islands and to hundreds of individuals and institutions
- Supplied participating institutions with equipment that allows them to print the digitized publications on demand
- Developed a website that mirrors the CD – www.uog.edu/cals/people

Results:

- Initially, 33 digitized publications, most related to dealing with insect and disease pests, were added to the CD and website.
- The project distributed 28 three-ring binders containing hard copies of all publications on the PEOPLE CD and website to each participating Pacific island extension office.
- Recognizing the relevance and importance of the PEOPLE project, the Agricultural Development in the American Pacific Program (ADAP) added funding and helped identify relevant publications to include on the CD and website.



Potential Benefits:

The PEOPLE project has given participating offices a 100-fold increase in the number of extension publications available for client and program use. In addition:

- Many of the publications have been updated electronically, notably on new guidelines for chemical use.
- The publications have been used as sources of information to benefit agricultural sustainability.
- Several agricultural telecommunications and distance education programs have used the publications as source texts

In short, the CD and website have become powerful tools enabling isolated island professionals to address a wide variety of topics.