

Lei Making and Marketing – A New Approach to Marketing

Antoinette Okada (Guam: Farmer/Rancher Grant)

Project Number: FW04-104

Title: Lei Making and Marketing – A New Approach to Marketing

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SARE Grant: \$6,750



Okada inspects her greenhouse plants

Situation

Guam relies heavily on a single source of revenue – tourism – and communities need to develop markets to tap into this source of revenue.

- Hotel lobbies, restaurants, banks, offices and conference rooms on Guam display beautiful floral arrangements
- Flower leis are given at a variety special occasions and celebrations – graduations, anniversaries, weddings and arrival and departure of friends of family – as symbols of love, friendship, best wishes and welcome.
- Few of the flowers used in leis and floral arrangements are grown on Guam; most are imported from Hawaii and Asia.
- The Okada family wanted to see if they could grow tropical flowers on their farm, then add value in the form of leis and flower arrangements. In turn, they wanted to share their results with others.+



The greenhouse under construction

Objectives:

Provide economic opportunities for tropical flower producers and encourage women, in particular, to enter into the cut flower and lei making market, a market currently untapped by local producers.

Actions

In this multi-faceted project, coordinator Antoinette Okada engaged in several activities:

- She conducted a phone survey to gauge the retail value of the flowers in floral arrangements
- She surveyed local hotels to assess their interest in purchasing local flowers
- She advertised and conducted two lei-making workshops
- She installed a collapsible greenhouse on her farm to propagate plants used for leis and floral decorations.



Okada in the finished greenhouse with her thriving plants

Results

Hotel Survey

10% of Guam hotels were surveyed to obtain information on the potential for leis and cut flowers

- All 11 hotels surveyed responded that they purchase flowers from on-island flower shops
- The most commonly ordered flowers are orchids, heliconias, bird of paradise and anthuriums



Workshop participants learn how to craft ti leaf leis

Workshops

Of the 24 people who attended her workshops, 22 attended to develop or further their lei-making skills as a hobby or recreational activity

- Six of the 24 were interested in making leis for money
- Five will continue to make leis for their personal celebration
- A step-by-step lei making brochure was printed and distributed and is available for future workshops



Okada models the finished product

Potential Benefits

The Okada family expected to save around \$900 on the purchase of plant material from off-island vendors. They also reduced the risk of introducing off-island pathogens and diseases.

While others could realize similar benefits, Okada cited three barriers for those entering the cut-flower industry:

- Lack of lei-making skills
- Lack of Capital for purchasing seedlings
- Lack of capital for building a greenhouse



The next generation also learned the skills of making leis