



**Western SARE Program**

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## CULTIVATING A CULTURAL SYMBOL

**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 of 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.

**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.



Okada models the finished products from her classes.

**Actions**

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



The next generation learns lei-making.

**Farmer/Rancher Grant**

**Project Number:** FW04-104  
**Project Title:** Lei Making and Marketing — A New Approach to Marketing  
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**SARE Grant:** \$6,750



*Western SARE, a USDA organization, funds grants for research and education that develop or promote some aspect of agricultural sustainability, which embraces*

- *profitable farms and ranches*
- *a healthy environment*
- *strong families and communities.*

*The Western Region, one of four SARE regions nationwide, is administered through Utah State University.*

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- 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

**Results**

From the Hotel Survey, she found that:

- 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

The Workshop Survey showed that:

- Of the 24 people who



Okada in the finished greenhouse with her thriving plants.

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 per-

sonal celebration

- A step-by-step lei making brochure was printed and distributed and is available for future workshops

**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



Workshop participants craft ti leaf leis.