COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS











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CRE Mission Statement

The Cooperative Research and Extension's mission is to enhance accessible, innovative, and resilient development in agriculture, aquaculture, nutrition, community empowerment, and youth and family well-being, while advancing climate change adaptation. Through research, education, and extension, we collaborate with stakeholders to support the College's mission and FSM's socioeconomic and environmental priorities and long-term goals.

COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

Building Resilient Communities

In FY 2026, the CRE Program delivered a wide range of agriculture, aquaculture, food safety, nutrition education, and climate resilience initiatives that reached thousands across all the FSM states. Through hands-on training, school and community outreach, and evidence-based EFNEP nutrition programming, CRE strengthened local food production, improved dietary practices and sanitation, and expanded sustainable aquaculture and climate-smart farming. These efforts equipped farmers, youth, women, and low-income households with practical skills that enhanced food security, household income, and overall community resilience. Collectively, the 2026 CRE initiatives made significant contributions to FSM's goals for sustainable development, climate adaptation, improved public health, and long-term self-reliance

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During FY2026, the Cooperative Research and Extension (CRE) programs across Yap, Pohnpei/CTEC, Chuuk and Kosrae continued to advance applied research, agricultural development, aquaculture, community education and technical assistance. Collectively, the programs addressed important priorities, including local food production, food security, sustainable fisheries, climate resilience, improved farming practices, public health and community livelihoods.

Yap CRE delivered a broad portfolio of agricultural and community extension activities alongside marine aquaculture research. Major accomplishments included crop production support, climate-resilient gardening, black pepper propagation trials, poultry farm development, school health and nutrition education, and food safety outreach. The program reported 104 climate-related field visits across nine municipalities, supported school and household gardening, and documented 21 newly established poultry farms. Aquaculture research advanced sea cucumber hatchery production, giant clam monitoring, rabbitfish and mud crab studies, strengthening the technical foundation for sustainable marine resource management.

Pohnpei/CTEC CRE focused on agronomy, aquaculture research and farmer capacity development. Two agronomy research projects received approval during FY 2026, while hatchery infrastructure at Nett Point was restored, improving its operational readiness and operating functionally. Marine monitoring activities included an eight-day mission in Mwoakilloa, during which 10 underwater temperature sensors and a weather station were deployed. Extension programs supported swine and poultry management, home gardening, crop production and food safety education. Reported achievements included 616 crop extension clients trained, 379 poultry program participants and documented follow-up activities supporting improved livestock management and household production.

Chuuk CRE continued to strengthen local food production, nutrition education and sustainable marine resource management. Activities included taro-sweetpotato relay intercropping research development, agricultural extension, school gardening, aquaculture awareness, community nutrition education and hydroponics training. The aquaculture program reported reaching 411 participants and supported community-based giant clam management and marine conservation awareness. EFNEP reached 641 participants through nutrition education and local food demonstrations. The completion of the Chuuk Hospital greenhouse and composting activities also demonstrated progress in promoting alternative food production systems and institutional capacity.

Kosrae CRE concentrated on aquaculture research and tropical crop development. Major activities included mangrove crab stock and broodstock assessments, green seaweed cultivation, edible oyster evaluation, citrus propagation, coconut variety assessment and dragon fruit production trials. Researchers identified four Caulerpa species around Kosrae and examined two edible oyster species. Hatchery development also progressed, with approximately 80% of the required supplies and equipment reported as procured. Crop research advanced through substrate testing for lime propagation, field assessments and preparation of dragon fruit research plots.

Overall, FY2026 demonstrated the value of CRE's integrated research and extension approach in supporting communities, strengthening institutional capacity and developing locally appropriate solutions. The programs achieved important research milestones, expanded technical knowledge, improved community engagement and supported agricultural and aquaculture development.

Continuous investment in research validation, farmer adoption, production monitoring and consistent impact measurement will be important to translating these achievements into sustainable, long-term benefits for communities throughout the FSM.

Yap CRE

1. Sandfish Sea Cucumber Project

Project Overview

The multi-state research project examines the genetic variation of sandfish sea cucumber (*Holothuria scabra*) and advances hatchery propagation, selective breeding and grow-out approaches suited to Micronesian environments. It responds to pressure on wild stocks and the need to develop community aquaculture based on locally available resources. Yap CRE combined population surveys, broodstock spawning, microalgae and zooplankton culture, nursery production and community farm support.

Key Achievements

- Conducted sea cucumber species surveys in October 2025 across seven Yap municipalities and 25 villages, documenting 10 species. The Yap survey provides a site-specific foundation for subsequent stock and habitat assessments.
- Produced five batches of *H. scabra* juveniles during 2026 for restocking-oriented work in seagrass and seaweed habitats, building on the 10 batches recorded during 2025.
- Maintained a hatchery production chain: broodstock spawning; larval nursing; brown microalgae (Chaetoceros and Isochrysis) and green microalgae (Chlorella and Nannochloropsis) culture; rotifer and copepod culture; and juvenile rearing in raceway tanks and floating cages.



- Advanced integrated polyculture experiments involving sea cucumbers, other marine species and seaweeds in raceway tanks. Experimental feeds included dried black soldier fly material and spirulina powder; measured comparative growth results are not reported yet.
- Participated with Chuuk CRE and local partners in surveys of 11 Chuuk sites, recording 16 sea cucumber species.
- Repaired or renovated existing community farms and established a new sea cucumber farm at Chool village, Maap municipality in Yap.
- Collaborated with Palau College aquaculture researchers during February–March 2026, including one recorded spawning batch of Actinopyga miliaris and live-feed culture work at the PCC-CRE hatchery.
- Conducted hatchery demonstrations and outreach with school groups and public events, introducing larval rearing, hatchery systems, grow-out and marine-resource stewardship to learners and communities.

Impacts

- Established documented production experience for sandfish sea cucumber at multiple life stages, an essential technical foundation for testing larger-scale and community-based aquaculture systems.









- Expanded the species-distribution evidence available to guide broodstock collection, habitat management and future conservation decisions in Yap and collaborative Chuuk study areas.
- Strengthened operational and community capacity through practical work on culture systems, demonstration farms, field surveys and inter-campus knowledge exchange.
- Created an evidence base for eventual restocking and livelihood opportunities; ecological recovery, commercial returns and farm-level survival benefits.

Key Highlights	
FY2026	Yap survey: 7 municipalities / 25 villages / 10 species | 2026: 5 juvenile batches | Chuuk collaboration: 11 sites / 16 species

2. Giant Clams Project

Project Overview

The giant clam project investigates population status, genetic diversity and culture techniques for ecologically and economically important Tridacna and Hippopus species. The work is designed to inform conservation and responsible community aquaculture and to strengthen the capacity to produce juveniles for future local stocking. Activities in Yap included repeated field monitoring, broodstock handling and hatchery spawning, and coordination in Chuuk and Palau.

Key Achievements

- Surveyed and monitored *Hippopus hippopus* and *Tridacna derasa* at Maap; expanded survey attention to *H. hippopus, T. derasa, T. maxima and T. gigas* across Rull, Tamil, Maap, Dalipebinaw and Gagil municipalities during FY 2026.
- Conducted giant clam broodstock spawning at the Yap CRE hatchery. On November 4, 2025, the team collected 10 *T. derasa* specimens from Tamil for spawning use, according to the program submission.
- Carried out monitored site visits with Yap marine resources personnel, including Tamil on September 25, 2026 and Maap on October 30, 2026, supporting continuity of field observations and partner engagement.
- Worked with KIOST researchers and Chuuk CRE personnel on giant clam monitoring at Onei Island; also joined a Palau monitoring activity with 20 farmers and consulted staff involved in clam culture.

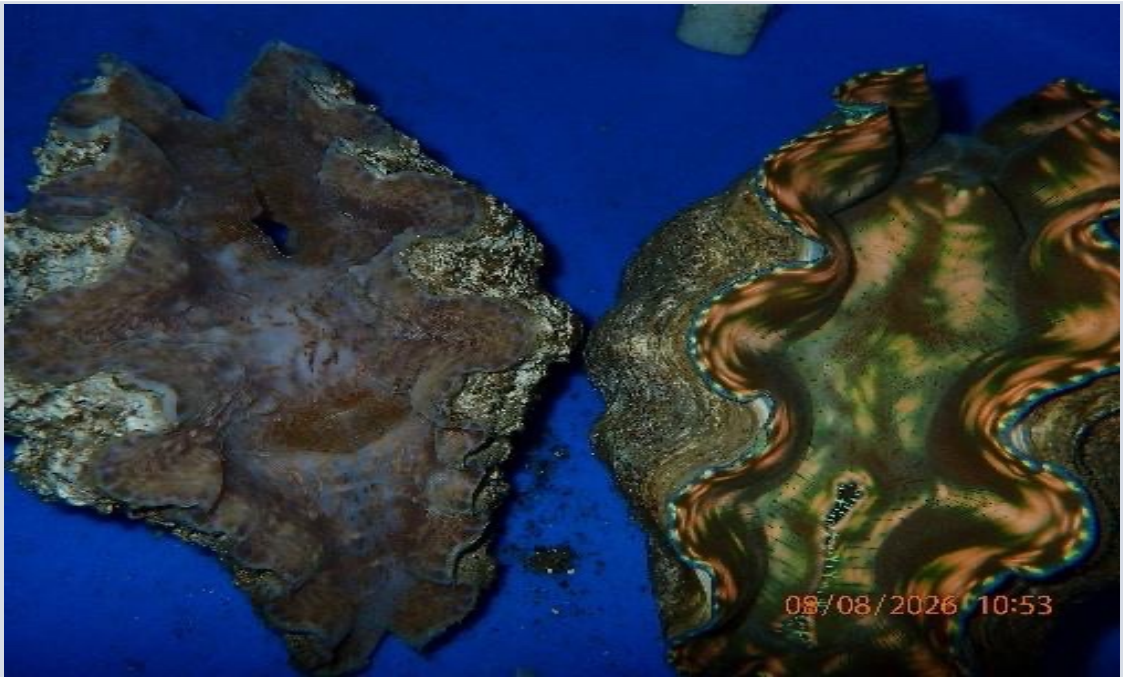
- Introduced giant clam conservation and hatchery work to schools and other visitors through demonstrations at Yap and Palau aquaculture facilities.

Impacts

- Improved field-level knowledge of giant clam presence across several Yap municipalities and established a stronger basis for repeated monitoring and future population assessments.
- Maintained staff experience with broodstock collection, spawning procedures and coordination between research facilities and marine resource authorities.
- Broadened practical awareness among community participants and students regarding conservation, aquaculture and threats to important reef organisms.



- Provided preparatory information for sustainable culture and eventual stock enhancement.



Key highlights	
FY2026	Monitoring: five Yap municipalities | 4 species noted in Yap surveys | 10 *T. derasa* taken for hatchery spawning (Nov 2025)

3. Rabbitfish Project

Project Overview

This multi-state project focuses on golden rabbitfish (*Siganus guttatus*) and forktail rabbitfish (*S. argenteus*). Its research objectives are to characterize genetic structure and explore breeding, broodstock and nursery methods that eventually support reliable fingerling production, coastal stock enhancement and community livelihoods.

Key Achievements

- Collected rabbitfish specimens for DNA sampling from habitats in Chuuk in October 2025, Palau during February–March 2026, and Yap during the reporting period; these collections support planned population-structure analysis.
- Participated in Palau College hatchery work involving rabbitfish broodstock management, larval nursery activities and juvenile grow-out.
- Established and maintained live-feed culture in Yap, including copepods cultured with Chlorella and Nannochloropsis and Artemia nauplii for marine fish nursery use.
- Reared five batches of fingerlings in raceway tanks alongside sea cucumber juveniles and transferred fish to floating cages near the Yap CRE hatchery.

- Maintained rabbitfish broodstock in a hatchery quarantine raceway tank and explored locally manufactured fishing traps through engagement with the Maap community.

Impacts

- Strengthened the genetic sampling and field-research groundwork required for future assessment of rabbitfish populations across Micronesian locations.





- Expanded practical capacity for marine fish broodstock holding, nursery feeding, fingerling grow-out and integration with existing hatchery systems.
- Demonstrated productive coordination between local community knowledge and hatchery operations, including discussion of Yapese fishing-trap products.



Key Highlights	
FY2026	DNA sampling: Yap, Chuuk and Palau | 5 batches of marine fish fingerlings reared

4. Mud Crab Project

Project Overview

The mud crab project examines genetic diversity and practical aquaculture development for Scylla species, including juvenile nursing, habitat-substrate and feeding approaches, and hatchery production. It addresses reliance on wild capture for seed stock and the need to test locally practical systems for commercial and community grow-out.

Key Achievements

- Conducted mud crab surveys and DNA sample collection in Chuuk in October 2025, Palau in March 2026 and Yap in October 2026 to support future comparisons of population genetics and resource status.
- Collected and maintained sampled mud crabs in individual holding boxes after DNA sampling, supporting observation and continued hatchery work.
- Established nursery experiments using different substrates and seaweed shelter arrangements to examine growth and survival conditions for native mud crab juveniles; juvenile sea snails were also included in related rearing work.
- Produced three batches of native mud crabs at the Yap CRE hatchery, with larval culture supported by green algae and copepods, as documented by the submission.
- Included mud crab research in demonstrations for visiting learners in Palau, supporting broader awareness of prospective community aquaculture opportunities.

Impacts





- Established preliminary hatchery production experience for native mud crabs and a practical platform for improving juvenile-rearing techniques.
- Generated regional biological samples and site information that can inform later genetic assessment and sustainable management decisions.

- Identified practical experimental variables—substrate and seaweed shelter—that can be tested further to improve culture performance.

Key Highlights	
FY2026	Sampling: Chuuk, Palau and Yap | Hatchery: 3 native mud crab batches | Substrate/shelter experiments underway

5. Bush Pepper Production as a Cash Crop for Small-Scale Growers

Project Overview

The bush pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.) project advances crop diversification and small-scale enterprise opportunities through propagation research and grower education. It investigates the suitability of lateral branch cuttings from mature vines for producing nursery plants and compares locally available rooting substrates. The research seeks practical approaches that growers in FSM can eventually apply to establish pepper plants under island conditions. Work during FY2026 included consecutive nursery experiments, material acquisition, extension activities and technical knowledge exchange.

Key Achievements

Completed two experimental cycles evaluating cutting survival in different growing-media combinations. A 1:1 native-soil and potting-soil mixture achieved observed survival rates of 72% and 70%, compared with 41% and 32% for a 3:1 cocopeat-to-potting-soil mixture. These results identify a promising medium for further validation.

Evaluated propagation factors, including nursery media and rooting hormones, and continued monitoring plant survival and growth through subsequent trial cycles. The findings provide a more systematic evidence base for refining pepper nursery management.

Obtained additional pepper cuttings from University of Guam field-station and nursery sources to address limited planting-material availability. The cuttings were potted and monitored as prospective mother plants for future propagation experiments.

Contributed to the Black Pepper Plant Distribution Workshop hosted by the University of Guam on September 12, 2026. Training covered propagation, field establishment, shade and moisture management, nutrition, pest and disease monitoring, harvesting, processing, product quality and marketing. Workshop participants received potted black pepper plants.

Developed reusable brochures and information sheets covering propagation, crop care, harvesting and marketing, including a Pohnpei–Guam production comparison to highlight the importance of locally adapted practices.

Presented climate-resilience research at the International Pepper Community's 53rd Annual Session in Kochi, India. An abstract on AI, satellite data and climate resilience was accepted for the forthcoming 54th Annual Session, extending regional scientific exchange.

Impacts

The project has strengthened the technical foundation for developing bush pepper as a potential specialty crop in Micronesia. Its most direct research contribution is identifying a promising, locally relevant propagation medium and documenting survival results from repeated trials. This can help direct future testing toward affordable methods that may be more accessible to small growers than imported media alone.



Grower training, distributed planting material and practical extension publications broadened access to production knowledge and created opportunities for participants to begin applying new techniques. Collaboration with the University of Guam also improved the project's access to planting stock, technical expertise and regional platforms for disseminating results. In the longer term, pepper cultivation may contribute to crop diversification, lower household spending on purchased pepper and supplementary income; however, these potential economic benefits have not yet been measured and should not be presented as realized outcomes.

Key Highlights	Reported result
Cutting survival — native soil + potting soil (1:1)	72% and 70% across the first two cycles
Cutting survival — cocopeat + potting soil (3:1)	41% and 32% across the first two cycles
Regional grower workshop	September 12, 2026 • University of Guam
Research status	Additional cycles and mother-plant establishment ongoing

6. Climate Change Challenges Extension Program

Project Overview

The Climate Change Challenges Extension Program supports household and institutional food production through practical agricultural training, materials distribution and continuing field assistance. Operating across nine municipalities in Yap, the program addresses heavy rainfall, soil constraints, shortages of inputs and the need to adapt garden management to tropical weather variability. Extension work integrates nursery establishment, composting, vegetable production, soil management and climate-responsive practices such as improved drainage, raised planting beds and coconut-husk mulch. School participation links food production with hands-on agricultural learning.

Key Achievements

Completed 104 field visits across nine municipalities. Reported outreach comprised 219 farm households, 201 individual farmers and 22 institutional clients, including support to 18 school and institutional kitchens. These reach categories describe overlapping groups and must not be added together as unique beneficiaries.

Provided direct guidance on seed germination, soil preparation, transplanting, staking, pruning, fertilizer use, neem-based pest management and routine crop care. Follow-up visits helped participating growers apply techniques under actual farm and household conditions.

Distributed more than 50 bags of organic animal manure, alongside seeds, seedlings, potting media and nursery materials, to support garden establishment and ongoing vegetable production.

Demonstrated composting using locally accessible leaves, coconut husks, crop residues and dried seaweed, offering households practical alternatives when livestock manure or commercial agricultural inputs were difficult to obtain.

Introduced and reinforced practical climate-adaptation measures, including raised beds, better drainage, nursery protection during severe weather and mulch-based soil-moisture management. These practices responded to the operational challenges associated with heavy rainfall and weather disruptions.

Engaged Yap High School, St. Mary School and Tamil Elementary School in gardening, compost preparation, harvesting and plant care, strengthening experiential learning and connections between agriculture and local food provision.

Documented harvests of garden beans, cucumbers, eggplants, Napa cabbage and green onions in participating communities. Produce contributed to household meals and was shared with neighbors when surplus was available.

Shared Yap's experience in community-based climate adaptation through a University of Guam seminar on September 10, 2026, titled "From Vulnerability to Resilience: Two Decades of Community-Based Climate Adaptation in Yap, Micronesia."

Impacts

The program's principal documented impact was stronger practical capacity to establish and maintain household and institutional gardens in demanding environmental conditions. By pairing agricultural supplies with demonstrations and repeat field visits, it enabled growers to adopt more informed approaches to soil preparation, crop protection and water management. The reported production and sharing of vegetables provides direct evidence of contributions to local food availability, although aggregate yields and household savings were not quantified.

Composting instruction helped farmers make productive use of accessible organic materials when purchased or supplied fertilizers were limited. Nursery protection, raised beds and drainage improvements increased awareness of practical measures for managing rainfall and weather risks. School and institutional engagement extended the benefits beyond individual farms, providing students with experience growing and maintaining local food crops and supporting food-production activities connected with kitchens.

The University of Guam seminar also elevated the visibility of Yap's extension experience and supported institutional learning across the region. Longer-term effects on household food expenditure, nutritional status and crop losses during severe weather remain unmeasured and should be assessed through future monitoring.

Key Highlights	Reported result
Field visits	104
Municipalities reached	9

Farm households reported	219
Individual farmers reported	201
Institutional clients	22
School and institutional kitchens supported	18
Organic manure distributed	More than 50 bags

7. School Health and Wellness Program

Key Achievements

- Reached 913 participants during FY2026, comprising 486 children (221 boys, 265 girls), 255 youth (124 males, 131 females), and 172 adults (67 men, 105 women). Of the overall reach, 573 were recorded as new participants and 340 as returning participants, reflecting both new engagement and continuity with previous activities.
- Implemented School Health and Wellness activities through 13 schools, three agencies and three communities. This network enabled CRE to deliver childhood-obesity awareness and healthy-lifestyle messages in educational and community settings rather than relying on a single event or delivery location.
- Provided nutrition education, BMI monitoring and discussions of factors associated with childhood obesity. Sessions emphasized making healthier daily food choices, drinking sufficient water and understanding how nutrition and movement contribute to well-being.
- Integrated accessible physical activities—including group exercises, walking and jump-rope activities—into education sessions. Participants had opportunities to practice the activities, making the messages more concrete and feasible to repeat at school or at home.

- Expanded the Local Food Day initiative through the participation of an additional elementary school. The initiative linked nutrition education with locally available nutritious food, hydration and routine physical activity, reinforcing consistent messages within the school environment.

Impacts

- The program provided broad exposure to health and wellness education across age groups and learning environments. Its delivery through schools, agencies and communities created repeated opportunities for families and students to hear practical obesity-prevention messages.
- Participants in follow-up activities reported choosing healthier foods, replacing some sugary drinks with water and being more physically active at home and school. These are valuable indications of behavior change.
- The Local Food Day initiative helped translate general nutrition advice into recognizable school practices. Students reported increased energy, while teachers reported better focus and classroom participation; these are observations reported by the participating schools.
- Group physical activity sessions supported confidence in simple, low-cost exercises. The approach demonstrated that everyday movement need not require specialist equipment and can be incorporated into school and family routines.
- Collected follow-up responses from 31 participants; reports a 3% knowledge increase on childhood obesity prevention and healthy-lifestyle practices. The follow-up also captured



participant reports of improved eating, increased water consumption and continued exercise.

8. Youth Extension Program

Key Achievements

- Engaged 607 individuals through the Youth Extension Program, consisting of 405 youth participants (195 males and 210 females) and 202 recipients (92 males and 110 females). The program combined youth-focused activities with wider family and community involvement.
- Delivered instruction and hands-on opportunities in traditional and contemporary craft-making and vegetable gardening. Learning covered practical production skills that young people could apply in home settings, school gardens and small-scale enterprise activities.
- Conducted mentoring and personal-development activities, including Upward Bound mentoring and outreach at Yap Catholic High School. These sessions addressed leadership, values, citizenship and the connection between personal skills and responsible community participation.
- Recorded positive findings from program evaluations: 97% of assessed participants increased their knowledge of core topics and youth/family issues; 98% acquired practical craft and gardening skills; and 98% considered the program valuable.

- Reported mentoring outcomes among participating Upward Bound students: 90% demonstrated improved knowledge, 85% acquired practical skills, and 97% reported improved understanding of social, moral and entrepreneurial skills.
- Included career exploration and learning about services related to health, public safety, emergency response, marine resources and environmental protection, widening young participants' awareness of career and service pathways.





Impacts

- The program strengthened young people's capacity to apply knowledge through tangible activities such as making crafts, growing vegetables and participating in mentoring. Its practical format connected learning with day-to-day household and community needs.
- Income examples illustrate how youth skills may translate into modest enterprise opportunities. The documented $372 in craft sales and $700 in surplus produce sales are specific participant outcomes, not total program revenue or evidence of earnings for all trainees.
- Vegetable gardening and craft-making also offered opportunities to share practical knowledge across generations and support self-reliance.

9. Food and Water Safety Program

Key Achievements

- Recorded 531 activity contacts, including 404 contacts across three schools and 127 through additional activities. The remaining activity contacts were reported through Upward Bound (72), Summer Reading Program (30), YINEC (14) and Nimar food processing (11). These are activity contacts, not a verified unique-person total.
- Delivered school- and community-based education on personal hygiene, food safety, handwashing and safe snack handling. Educational materials and handwashing stations supported instruction, making safe practices easier to demonstrate and reinforce.
- Implemented a weekly food and water safety curriculum with 93 students at Gagil, St. Mary's and Dalipebinaw schools. The program followed the same student group to assess continued use of practical personal-hygiene measures.
- Documented that 57 of the 93 students in the curriculum follow-up group—approximately 61%—adopted consistent hygiene practices, including use of clean water, tissues or napkins, and hand sanitizer.
- Conducted community cooking demonstrations for 33 parents from St. Mary's and 18 from Gagil. This extended program activities beyond students and provided opportunities for households to discuss safe food preparation and handling.
- Introduced breadfruit flour processing as a practical household activity. Eleven parents requested further instruction, and 11 households subsequently began processing breadfruit flour, demonstrating uptake of a local food-processing skill.
- Collected school reports on illness-related absenteeism. The schools reported approximate reductions of 15% at Dalipebinaw, 15% at Gagil, and 20% at St. Mary's during the relevant period.

Impacts





- The 93-student follow-up provides a concrete indication that training was translated into hygiene practice: 57 students consistently demonstrated the behaviors assessed. This is a stronger measure of application than attendance alone, though it applies only to that follow-up group.
- Schools reported reductions in illness-related absences of approximately 15–20%. This is a potentially important outcome for student attendance and learning continuity; however, the report does not establish that the program alone caused those reductions.
- Food safety sessions promoted practical habits around washing hands, handling snacks and preparing food more safely. The inclusion of handwashing stations and materials helped connect health messages with actions students could practice repeatedly.
- Parent engagement increased the opportunities for lessons to be reinforced at home. Cooking demonstrations supported household-level awareness, while follow-up interest in breadfruit processing reflected a willingness to apply locally relevant skills.
- The 11 households beginning breadfruit flour processing illustrate potential benefits for using local food more fully, reducing waste and managing food costs. The source does not quantify actual household savings.
- The 531 reported contacts should not be treated as unique beneficiaries, and the 93 curriculum/follow-up students should not be added to the school-contact count because the source distinguishes the reporting groups.

10. Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Key Achievements

- Reported a program reach of 1,895 participants in FY2026, including 1,880 new participants and 15 returning participants. The report describes outreach to children, youth and adults through both schools and communities.
- Delivered nutrition education focused on healthy eating, balanced meals and appropriate food portions. Lessons encouraged participants to think about the composition of everyday meals and the role of consistent choices in household well-being.
- Promoted use of locally available foods and home gardening as practical complements to nutrition education. This linked dietary messages with the resources and food practices accessible to participating families.



- Encouraged participants to reduce excess sugar and salt and limit highly processed foods when making meal choices. The program presented these goals as achievable adjustments to daily household eating patterns.
- Used cooking demonstrations and interactive activities to illustrate nutrition concepts in food preparation. The approach allowed participants to observe and practice ways of planning and preparing balanced meals rather than relying on lecture-based instruction alone.

Impacts

- EFNEP expanded access to practical nutrition information through a reported 1,895 participant engagements. The large proportion of new participants indicates substantial reach during the reporting year.

- Education on meal balance, portion control and local ingredients helped participants identify changes they could consider in everyday food preparation and household meal planning.
- Cooking demonstrations connected nutritional principles with real preparation skills. These activities were intended to make healthier food choices more understandable and applicable at home.
- By promoting local foods and gardening alongside dietary education, the program supported awareness of food security, household resource use and the nutritional value of locally available ingredients.



Chuuk CRE

1. Agriculture Research — Taro–Sweetpotato

Key Achievements

- Developed and submitted the Hatch research proposal, “Effect of Spatial Arrangement on Sweetpotato Growth and Yield in a Taro–Sweetpotato Relay Intercropping System in the Federated States of Micronesia.” The proposal was approved during the reporting period.
- Presented the proposed research at the Farmer Focus Conference in Chuuk in collaboration with the University of Guam. The presentation outlined the study objectives, experimental design, proposed treatment arrangements and practical questions facing local growers.
- Assessed a potential research site and evaluated readiness for future field implementation. This preparatory work moved the study from proposal development into the project-planning stage.



Impacts

- Approval of the Hatch proposal established a formal research pathway for investigating ways to use limited farming land more productively while responding to typhoons, flooding, drought and other production challenges experienced by Chuuk farmers.
- Conference dissemination connected the planned experiment with farmers and regional technical partners before field implementation, providing an opportunity for local stakeholders to understand the research and its intended practical application.

2. Agriculture Extension — Home, School and Community Food Production

Key Achievements

- Delivered 16 agriculture training and awareness sessions during FY2026, reporting 602 participant contacts: 183 youth (95 male, 88 female) and 419 adults (313 male, 106 female). Training addressed home gardening, composting, seedling development, transplanting, crop care, soil improvement and pesticide awareness.
- Conducted six agriculture outreach activities involving Weno communities, the Chuuk Women's Council and elementary schools, broadening access to practical training in household and school food production.
- Collaborated with the Chuuk Women's Council on homemade-pesticide education for 15 female participants and distributed pamphlets explaining preparation using locally available materials. Training reinforced awareness of responsible pest-management practices.
- Supported compost-making instruction at Weno in cooperation with the Hydroponic Agent, reaching 11 community participants (10 male and one female) and demonstrating the use of locally accessible organic materials.
- Provided school-gardening education at three elementary schools, involving six teachers and 20 students. These activities introduced young learners and educators to practical gardening and local food production.
- Distributed 157 vegetable seedlings without charge to schools and outreach participants. A CRE garden visit and home-gardening activity engaged 10 Chuuk Women's Council participants (nine female and one male).
- Held two market-day activities at COM-Chuuk Campus, selling 183 vegetable seedlings to 16







community members. Established a small CRE garden trial to observe the performance of more than 10 vegetable crops under local growing conditions.

Impacts

- Hands-on demonstrations and technical assistance increased exposure to practical methods for producing vegetables in homes, schools and community gardens, strengthening agricultural awareness among adults, youth and teachers.
- Composting and pest-management training emphasized affordable, locally obtainable resources that may help growers manage soil fertility and pests without depending exclusively on purchased inputs.
- Seedling distribution and sales improved access to planting materials while connecting education with opportunities to start or expand garden activities. Market-day sales also demonstrated a modest income-generating component of extension operations.
- The more-than-10-crop garden trial laid a practical basis for observing locally suitable vegetables.

3. Sustainable Aquaculture Development

Key Achievements

- Reached 411 participants through documented outreach, research-related and community engagement activities involving students, residents, conservation officers, women's groups, farmers and traditional resource owners.
- Conducted sea cucumber assessments across multiple sites, contributing field information on locally occurring marine resources and supporting future management and aquaculture research.
- Provided technical assistance and practical training to the Oneisomw Giant Clam Farm, helping community members and conservation officers strengthen their understanding of farm management and maintenance.
- Delivered aquaculture outreach at COM-FSM Chuuk Campus, Chuuk High School and communities including Sapuk and Wichap. Activities addressed marine conservation, food security, sustainable aquaculture and pathways into marine sciences.
- Contributed technical advice to KIWA project planning and climate-related workshops, including support for community work plans and plans involving four women's groups.
- Undertook additional field and learning activities involving mangrove crab measurements and freshwater shrimp specimen collection with elementary school students.

- Worked with regional and local partners, including the University of Guam, Northern Marianas College, community leaders and marine resource owners, to support practical knowledge exchange and responsible resource management.



Impacts

- The reported reach demonstrates broad engagement in sustainable use of marine resources and provided a foundation for continued aquaculture education across schools and communities in Chuuk.
- Technical support at the giant clam farm strengthened local exposure conservation tasks, while promoting greater involvement of community members and conservation officers in farm stewardship.
- Community planning and engagement with women's groups helped bring different stakeholders into discussions of possible aquaculture livelihoods and climate-resilient coastal resource management.

- Field surveys and specimen activities generated information useful for future assessment, conservation and planning.

4. Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Key Achievements

- Reached 641 reported participants, including 386 females and 255 males, through school, community and institutional nutrition education activities during the reporting period.
- Delivered presentations, discussions, cooking demonstrations and hands-on training on healthy eating, portion control, the MyPlate approach, reducing sodium and consuming fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Addressed diabetes, obesity and other non-communicable disease risk factors through nutrition awareness, discussion of physical activity and practical approaches to healthier household food choices.
- Demonstrated food safety, safe food preparation and handwashing practices, complemented by activities involving food labels, food recall surveys and vital-sign screening.



- Promoted better use of local foods through food preservation and processing demonstrations, including preparation of flour from tapioca, taro, banana and coconut; sessions also covered storage and food-waste reduction.
- Worked with women's groups, school communities, COM-FSM faculty and students and relevant health and education stakeholders across Chuuk, connecting health education with locally available food resources.

Impacts

- Participants gained access to applied nutrition and food-safety education that could be used in meal preparation, household food management and school or community activities.
- Training promoted the nutritional and practical value of locally grown staples, while offering food processing techniques that may reduce waste and create additional uses for seasonal or surplus produce.
- The program linked dietary education, food safety and household resource management with Chuuk's wider priorities for healthier families and local food security.

5. Hydroponics and Alternative Vegetable Production

Key Achievements

- Recorded at least 335 participant attendances in educational outreach, training, institutional engagement and community activities in 2026. This is an activity-attendance measure and may include individuals who attended more than once.
- Introduced hydroponic growing concepts to students at Chuuk High School and members of the Chuuk Women's Council, explaining how fresh vegetables can be cultivated with limited conventional agricultural land.
- Worked with Berea High School to assess and identify a suitable location for a potential school hydroponic system, advancing the planning required for future installation.
- Completed the greenhouse at Chuuk Hospital in collaboration with the institution, creating infrastructure that can support future institutional vegetable-production activities.
- Conducted compost-making instruction and outreach in Mwan Weno and at the CRE Office, focusing on converting organic materials into useful inputs for gardening and farming.
- Participated in the Chuuk Farmer Focus Conference to share information about alternative food-production methods with farmers, fishers, educators and community members.
- Conducted water-filtering surveys in Sapuk and Wichap communities, gathering community input relevant to water-resource challenges and future management activities.

Impacts

- The program increased exposure to alternative vegetable-production methods among students, women and community members, particularly where space, soil and other production resources may be constrained.
- Completion of the Chuuk Hospital greenhouse represented a tangible infrastructure achievement. However, the source does not establish that the greenhouse was already operating a productive hydroponic system or report vegetable yields.
- Site assessment at Berea High School advanced readiness for a school installation, while practical composting activities offered participants another method for improving local gardening capacity.
- Water-filtering surveys provided a basis for understanding reported community concerns and developing more targeted follow-up activities.



CTEC CRE

1. Poultry Production Program

Key Achievements

Extension delivery. Delivered 80 training and demonstration activities across communities and schools in Pohnpei, including 41 awareness trainings, 26 follow-up trainings, nine demonstrations and four treatment activities.



Training reach. Reported 379 clients reached through poultry-management awareness and related practical instruction, with outreach extended to seven schools.

Practical husbandry. Provided instruction and follow-up on chick management, feed and feeding ratios, coop improvement, sanitation, composting and locally used plant-based poultry-care practices.

Household production monitoring. Followed nine households identified as having strong potential; their reported combined flock count increased from 96 chickens at initial visits to 172 at the latest visits.

Impacts

Composting adoption. Reported that 72 clients adopted chicken-manure composting practices, connecting poultry management with soil improvement and resource use.

Income activity. Reported nine clients selling eggs and chickens, with approximate proceeds of $50–$100 after three to four months.

Improved practical capacity. Training and follow-up strengthened participants' familiarity with housing, hygiene, feeding and day-to-day poultry management.

Observed flock expansion. The increase recorded among the nine monitored households demonstrates growth in flock size within this small follow-up group; it should not be treated as a statewide production estimate.

Household livelihoods. Egg and chicken sales provided some participants with opportunities for supplementary cash income while maintaining poultry for household needs.

Local production potential. The program built a basis for increased local egg and poultry supply; however, its reported import-reduction objective had not yet been achieved.





Resource reuse. Composting training encouraged productive use of chicken manure as a garden input.

2. Enhancing Swine Production Program

Key Achievements

Direct technical services and training. Reported 350 participations through swine-care and advisory activities covering medication application, castration, piglet tooth clipping, live-weight estimation and tailored husbandry recommendations.

Medication demonstrations. Conducted 64 medication-related activities reaching 193 participations across 64 households; supported dosage and application instruction with educational posters.

Specialized demonstrations. Provided castration demonstrations for 42 participations in 14 households, tooth-clipping demonstrations for 19 in 12 households, and live-weight estimation training for 54 in three households.

Individual advice. Completed 31 advice and recommendation activities involving 42 participations, addressing problems in household-level herd management.

Follow-up visits. Conducted 63 follow-up visits with 63 swine farmers to assess how previously taught practices were being applied.

Livelihood participation. Follow-up reporting identified 17 farmers selling pigs in FY2026, compared with 12 farmers in FY2025; 46 other follow-up participants principally raised pigs for family and cultural gatherings.

Impacts

Greater self-reliance in husbandry. Follow-up findings indicate that some farmers applied medication, castration and piglet-management techniques with less dependence on extension staff.

Herd-management improvement. Farm records described individual examples of herd growth, including increases from eight to 13 pigs and from 12 to 14 pigs.

Income and cultural value. Commercial pig sales supported household expenses for participating sellers, while livestock continued to play an important role in family and cultural events.

Shift toward outcome monitoring. Compared with the earlier broad training approach, FY2026 follow-up work put greater emphasis on adoption, farm practices and household-level results.

3. Sustainable Aquaculture Development Program

Key Achievements

Direct awareness reach. Reached 495 people through school presentations, community outreach and informal discussions in Pohnpei: 22 children, 450 youth and 23 adults.

Species-focused education. Introduced locally relevant aquaculture opportunities involving giant clams, sea cucumbers, rabbitfish and mangrove crabs, with emphasis on responsible marine-resource use.

Community technical engagement. Provided basic farm-management guidance and held follow-up conversations with current and prospective aquaculture farmers to identify needs and future opportunities.

Hatchery outreach. Used hatchery and spawning activities to demonstrate principles of aquaculture production and generate interest in further technical training.



Impacts

Strengthened marine-resource awareness. Students, youth and community participants gained exposure to sustainable farming approaches and the conservation rationale for aquaculture.

Improved readiness for community initiatives. Technical discussions and demonstrations helped interested individuals recognize the requirements and possible benefits of community-based aquaculture.

Alternative livelihood opportunities. Activities highlighted the potential of marine farming to complement capture fisheries, contribute to food availability and diversify income opportunities.

4. Crop Extension Program

Key Achievements

Home-gardening training. Conducted 25 training and demonstration activities with related technical assistance and one-to-one consultations across Pohnpei communities.

Participant reach. Reported 616 clients receiving home-gardening training: 356 youth (187 male, 169 female) and 260 adults (132 male, 128 female).

Technical subject coverage. Demonstrated seed germination, transplanting, composting, hand pollination, staggered planting, soil management, pest-control awareness and basic harvesting practices.

Follow-up and advisory support. Reported 25 follow-up activities with communities and individual households to collect information and provide practical recommendations.





Impacts

Garden establishment. 15 home gardens established for household food consumption.

Small-scale commercialization. 10 commercial farmers earning money from existing farms and distributed 25 educational posters to community trainees and individual farmers.

Applied production skills. Practical sessions gave participants instruction they could use in household gardens and small farms, helping translate awareness into planting and management practices.

Household food access. The 15 established home gardens created additional opportunities for home-grown vegetables and other crops for family consumption.

5. Food and Waterborne Illness Prevention Program

Key Achievements

Community and school outreach. The program reported 178 educational and practical activity sessions addressing the prevention of food- and waterborne illnesses, with delivery through four high schools and household-based outreach in Pohnpei.

Household engagement. Extended outreach to 173 households, complementing school-based instruction with guidance relevant to everyday food handling, water safety and household sanitation.

Follow-up support. Reported 70 follow-up activities to reinforce earlier learning and promote use of safer water and hygiene practices in daily life.

Water testing and filtration education. Reported 50 activities focused on water-filtering and water-testing kits, enabling participants to gain practical experience in assessing water quality and handling drinking water.

Targeted public-health instruction. Reported activities on community health assessment (29 sessions), water treatment (16), food safety and sanitary evaluation (8), and waste disposal (5).

Reported participant reach 1,113 community members and high-school students were engaged during FY2026. Training covered water contamination risks, safe storage, handwashing, food handling and sanitation.

Water-filtration initiative. Reported that bucket and filtration-system distribution was underway in the Kahmar communities.

Impacts

Stronger awareness of preventable illness. School and household participants received education about the pathways through which unsafe water, poor sanitation and inappropriate food handling can contribute to disease.

Practical water-management capacity. Water-testing and filtration demonstrations gave participants skills for recognizing water-quality concerns and managing drinking-water sources more carefully.

Safer food-handling knowledge. Instruction on hygiene, sanitation, and food preparation equipped participants with actionable practices to use in schools and homes.



Broader information sharing. The combined school and household approach provided opportunities for young people and adults to reinforce good hygiene and water-safety practices within families.

6. Cassava Project

Project Overview

The approved Hatch project, “Effects of Compost, Cover Crop, and Pruning on the Yield, Sustainability and Profitability of Cassava Production in Pohnpei, FSM,” examines agronomic practices and the economic viability of locally grown cassava. The research is designed to assess soil fertility, crop productivity and production costs, including gross-margin analysis that can clarify whether the prices received by farmers adequately cover their expenses.

Key Achievements

USDA Hatch project approved. The cassava proposal was approved during the February–May 2026 reporting period.

Field research preparation. The AES team inspected potential study locations, identified a suitable site at Paies near the COM-FSM National Campus, discussed terms with the landowner and drafted a memorandum of understanding and initial field-site activities.

Gross-margin research implemented through student collaboration. The team partnered with Professor Kiyoshi Phillip (COM-FSM) and Dr. Bindu Poudel-Ward (University of Guam) to supervise UOG student Shaquille Nimea on "Determining the Gross Margin of Cassava Production in Pohnpei."

Farmer interview skills strengthened. Research assistant provided field-based guidance on interviewing farmers in Palikir. The student completed interviews and presented findings at a seminar attended by CRE staff and COM-FSM agriculture faculty.

Markets and value addition explored. The research team discussed potential cassava exports to the Marshall Islands and contacted the College of the Marshall Islands Land Grant food technologist regarding processing and value-added uses of cassava.

Impacts

The project strengthened the evidence base for understanding the profitability of cassava production in Pohnpei, rather than relying exclusively on perceptions of production costs and market prices. The student research provided local interview-based information and developed research skills in field data collection, analysis and scientific presentation. Collaboration with the University of Guam connected COM-FSM agricultural priorities with undergraduate training and external technical expertise. Discussions on processing and market outlets created potential pathways for improving producer returns.

Key Highlights	
Project status	USDA Hatch proposal approved; project preparation and early research activities recorded
Student research	UOG undergraduate special project on cassava gross margins; findings presented locally
Field development	Site identified; landowner discussions and draft MOU recorded

7. Soils and Fertilizer Project

Project Overview

The second approved Hatch project, "Soil- and Fertilizer-Related Research in Support of Sustainable Agriculture Development in Pohnpei, FSM," addresses soil health, fertility and practical management options for food production on volcanic islands and atolls. Activities included developing a research site, studying the performance and accessibility of locally produced compost, supporting STEP-UP student research and expanding discussion of regenerative soil management and cover cropping.

Key Achievements

USDA Hatch project approved. The soils proposal received approval in the February–May 2026 period, alongside the cassava project.

Student-led investigation of local composts supported. The team supervised STEP-UP student Kiana Pelep, whose study, "Assessment of the Effectiveness of Local Composts in Agriculture in Pohnpei," drew on literature reviews, field observations and interviews with compost producers, farmers and extension agents.

Research findings communicated regionally. The student prepared an abstract and presentation approved through the STEP-UP regional coordination process and presented her findings in Guam.

Practical supply constraint identified. Interviews indicated that participating farmers were generally satisfied with local compost performance, but availability when needed remained a recurring problem.

Second phase of regenerative-soil research advanced. The team supported subsequent work on soil health and regenerative soil management in Pohnpei's atolls, with emphasis on composting and cover cropping. An associated abstract was accepted for a New Zealand Soil Science Society conference.

Scientific and institutional connections strengthened. The team expressed interest in collaborative soil research with the Center of Excellence for Soil Research in Asia and engaged in state and national sustainable-land-management planning discussions.

Impacts

The project generated locally relevant, qualitative information on compost use and access that can help shape future research and extension priorities. It built a pathway for young Micronesian researchers to undertake applied agricultural inquiry, develop presentation skills and participate in regional scientific exchanges. Engagement in sustainable-land-management planning linked CRE research interests to broader discussions about soil degradation and land use. The project's longer-term effects on crop yield, fertilizer costs, soil condition or farm profitability still require field-trial evidence.

Key Highlights	FY2026 documented status / output
Project status	USDA Hatch proposal approved
Research training	STEP-UP compost study completed and presented in Guam
Emerging finding	Farmers interviewed reported satisfactory compost performance but inconsistent supply
Follow-on research	Regenerative soil management and cover-crop study advanced; abstract accepted

7.1. Research, Capacity Building, and Institutional Engagement

The following activities contributed to the AES research portfolio outside the two approved Hatch project work plans. Where the reports record preparatory work or prospective partnerships, these are described as initiatives rather than completed outcomes.



7.2 Student Research and Mentoring

STEP-UP and university research supervision. The AES team supported Kiana Pelep's compost and soil-health research, Shaquille Nimea's cassava gross-margin study, and early field exploration with a STEP-UP student on yellow beach pea (Vigna marina).

Yellow beach pea research demonstration. A preliminary trial in Madolenihmw indicated the beach-adapted nitrogen-fixing plant could also establish inland, suggesting potential for cover cropping and compost production. The reports do not supply experimental yield or soil-fertility measurements.

Impacts

Mentoring translated CRE research questions into applied learning opportunities and helped students gain experience in interviewing, interpreting evidence, preparing abstracts and presenting findings. These activities also built relationships with the STEP-UP program and the University of Guam, supporting the development of future local research capacity.

7.3 Publications, Presentations and Scientific Exchange

International book contribution. CRE researchers co-authored "Gardening on a Wet Island," a Pohnpei chapter in the island-gardening collection produced through the International Small Islands Studies Association. The book was launched in South Korea during 2026.

Pacific climate and research presentation. Dr. Nat participated in a September 2026 SPREP meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands, where the collaborative paper "Integrating the College of Micronesia-FSM into the Pacific Matrix of Research on Critical Regional and Global Issues" was presented.

Regional soil-science dissemination. An abstract related to soil health and regenerative management on volcanic islands and atolls was accepted for presentation at a New Zealand Soil Science Society conference; the report does not establish that the future presentation had occurred during FY2026.

Professional networking. Discussions during the SPREP event explored potential collaborations with scientists from Solomon Islands National University and institutions in Australia, New Zealand and other Pacific islands, including indigenous knowledge and graduate-level training.

Impacts

The book chapter documented agricultural knowledge and experience from Pohnpei for a wider audience. Conference engagement increased opportunities for CRE to share place-based research priorities and establish scientific contacts across the Pacific



8. Sea Cucumber Project

Project Overview

This work stream supports research readiness and community engagement for sustainable sandfish sea cucumber (*Holothuria scabra*) aquaculture in Pohnpei. Activities combined site identification, hatchery preparation, technical exchange with Yap, microalgae supply arrangements and consultation with potential community and private-sector partners.

Key Achievements

- Research sites assessed. Two potential sites were assessed for sandfish trials, with local farmers consulted on site preparation, responsibilities and future research management.
- Regional hatchery skills supported. Participated in *H. scabra* spawning activities in Yap, including broodstock handling and hatchery assistance. Spawning activities are going on in Nett point hatchery as well.
- Private-sector planning initiated. Held discussions with North Pacific Company seeking technical guidance for establishing 15 sea cucumber farms in Pohnpei
- Community uptake encouraged. Engaged a prospective farmer in Sokehs on a mangrove crab farming initiative and offered technical and advisory support and planning to establish a mud crab farm.

Impacts

- Research foundation strengthened. Site assessment, farmer coordination and hatchery-related preparation helped move sea cucumber activities toward experimental implementation.
- Potential production pathways identified. Engagement with fishers and private businesses outlined possible future aquaculture investment and livelihood opportunities, although resulting production and revenue are not yet documented.

Key Highlights	
Potential field sites	2 locations assessed
Proposed farms	Approximately 15 discussed with a private company
Status	Hatchery is handling spawning

8.1 Nett Point Hatchery Restoration and Research Infrastructure

Key Achievements

- Essential systems restored**.** Resolved electrical supply issues, restored freshwater service with the Pohnpei Utilities Corporation and repaired the saltwater pump, returning principal hatchery systems to operation.
- 

Culture systems prepared. Cleaned tanks and facilities, introduced sand substrates, strengthened housekeeping and biosecurity practices, and procured essential operational materials.
- Backup power needs assessed. Identified that the backup generator required a replacement battery and reported battery procurement; routine backup operation was not independently confirmed.
- Laboratory development planned. Assessed National Campus aquaculture laboratory equipment and consumable requirements, identified priority items, and sought supplier quotations.

- Institutional operations supported. Assisted with the procurement process for a CRE vehicle and the installation and setup of Starlink connectivity.

Impacts

- Operational research readiness improved. Restoring water and electrical systems allowed the hatchery to support spawning.
- Risk management advanced. Biosecurity maintenance and the backup-power assessment identified operational safeguards important to sustaining biological experiments.

Key Highlights	
Hatchery water and power	Major systems reported restored
National Campus laboratory	Equipment and supplies assessed; procurement stage
Generator	Replacement battery/procured; operating
Status	Fully operational, Giant clams and Sea cucumber larvae

8.2 Giant Clam Spawning and International Engagement

Spawning activity of giant clam and a scientific visit has been taken place in September and November 2026.

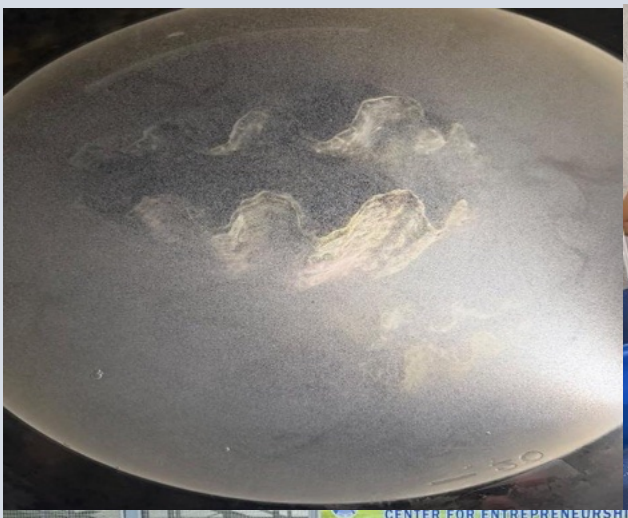
Key Achievements

- Giant clam spawning undertaken. In September 2026, spawning of *Hippopus hippopus* were took place and we got approximately five million fertilized eggs.
- International scientific visit hosted. Welcomed visiting scientists and a delegation from Italy, with a European Union-funded initiative involving FSM National Government and COM-FSM.

- Inter-program demonstrations supported. The visiting group also toured CFE hydroponics at the National Campus, creating an opportunity to demonstrate agricultural innovation alongside aquaculture research.

Impacts

- Institutional visibility strengthened. The international visit provided a platform for scientific exchange and presentation of COM-FSM facilities and activities.







Key Highlights

Reported output	FY2026 evidence
Reported giant clam output	Approximately 5 million fertilized eggs

International visitors	Europe-based scientific team visited Nett point hatchery and CFE Hydroponics

8.3 Research, Capacity Building, and Institutional Engagement

Student Research, Mentoring and Technical Training

Key Achievements

- STEP-UP research mentoring. Supported student research on barriers to sustainable sea cucumber aquaculture, including survey design, field methods, data management, analysis and preparation of abstracts.
- 3 Students from Japan also completed their short internship at Nett point hatchery.
- Regional research communication. Students completed data collection and analysis and presented their work at a Pacific regional research event in Guam.
- Graduate research support. Provided methodological feedback to Master's student Luke Carlos and engaged with a Sophia University student exploring indigenous and local knowledge.
- Laboratory skills development. Participated in STEP-UP training on laboratory procedures relevant to aquaculture and microbiological research.





Impacts

- Research capacity expanded. Student participants gained practical experience in field methods, interpretation and scientific presentation.

- Local scientific participation strengthened. Mentorship and regional presentation opportunities helped connect Micronesian student researchers with wider academic networks.

8.4 Environmental Monitoring and Marine Resource Assessment

Key Achievements

- Mwoakilloa field mission completed. Worked with the Pacific Community (SPC) on an 8-day environmental monitoring mission, installing ten underwater temperature sensors and a weather station and documenting monitoring locations.
- Initial resource observations. The surveys found sea cucumbers at two sites and giant clams at one site; these are preliminary site observations, not island-wide abundance estimates.



Impacts

- Baseline monitoring established. Installed instruments provide a foundation for future temperature and meteorological data collection in an outer-island setting.

Partnerships, Planning and Institutional Contributions

Key Achievements

- Aquaculture sector planning supported. Contributed technical input to consultation on the Pohnpei Aquaculture Development Plan 2026–2030, drawing on field and hatchery experience.
- Research proposals developed. Assisted Dr. Kay with documentation and technical input for a W-SARE mangrove crab proposal.
- Government coordination assisted. Prepared or formatted a draft MOU between Pohnpei State Government and CRE, and engaged in local policy consultations, including a sea cucumber legislative hearing.

- Regional and institutional collaboration maintained. Participated in activities with FAO, SPC, COM Land Grant, farmer stakeholders and public agencies, including sustainability and climate-related workshops.
- Publication contribution made. Co-authored the Pohnpei chapter in the island gardening book launched in South Korea in July 2026.

Impacts

- Interagency coordination improved. Collaboration across academic, government, research and community partners supported planning and technical information exchange.
- Institutional profile strengthened. The publication, workshops and sector-planning activities raised the visibility of local research and practical experience.
- Research opportunities advanced. Proposal preparation positioned CRE teams for potential future funding; application support does not establish grant award.





CFE

1. Youth and Family Entrepreneurship Development

Key Achievements

Training and Community Engagement

Conducted 16 training and awareness events, recording 437 participant attendances.

Delivered training on hydroponic and vegetable production, composting, bookkeeping, practical entrepreneurship, water safety and appropriate use of water filters.

Conducted seven community water-survey and filter-distribution activities, recording 928 contacts or beneficiaries.

Engaged students in practical community activities connected with household and community development needs.

Internship and Workforce Development

Engaged 105 student interns across the four FSM states: 70 in Pohnpei, 12 in Yap, 13 in Chuuk and 10 in Kosrae.

Provided practical work experience through greenhouse operations, crop production, demonstrations, extension activities and community education.

Supported the transition of four former interns into employment: Maykaele'a Ki'ani Charley as UNICEF Coordinator; Margary John as Farm Technician; Redson Mariano as Bookstore Assistant; and Vincent Chaem as Research Assistant.

Three former interns secured employment in Pohnpei and one in Yap.

Student Entrepreneurship and Business Blitz

CFE implemented the $100 Business Blitz Challenge through CTEC, Our Lady of Mercy (OLM) High School and the Upward Bound Program.

At CTEC, 28 Agriculture and Food Technology students participated in entrepreneurship and financial management training, with eight teams completing the business challenge.

The winning CTEC team generated approximately $1,300 in profit, while other teams reported profits ranging from $200 to $500.

At OLM High School, students from freshman through junior levels established and managed small businesses, applying pricing, marketing, bookkeeping and cash-flow management skills.

Through Upward Bound, 53 students organized into 11 business teams, each receiving $100 in seed capital. The leading teams generated sales of $264.00 and $235.30, respectively.

Student-Led Compost and Vegetable Enterprise

Agriculture and Food Technology interns at CFE's pepper and hydroponic farms participated in compost production and vegetable marketing.

Produced approximately 50 bags of compost for sale and marketed the compost together with vegetables harvested from the hydroponic farm.

Generated approximately $500 in combined sales during a September 2026 public sales event.

Provided students with practical experience in pricing, invoicing, customer service and business operations.



Community Water Safety and Household Support

In Pohnpei, trained 23 Public Health students as water safety champions and conducted eight school-based educational activities reaching 338 participants.

Provided water filtration systems and practical training to 48 households in Eirike, Nett Municipality.

In Kosrae, four COM-FSM students conducted household water surveys covering 80 households. Subsequent training in Tafunsak and Utwe reached 29 households, with 42 water filtration systems distributed, expected to benefit approximately 200 residents.

In Yap, student interns participated in household water surveys and water-quality testing in Ablul, Lebnaw and Wanyan, followed by water safety training and filtration support for approximately 20 households in Ablul.

Small Island Food and Water Project (SIFWAP)

Assisted in completing 10 investment proposals: seven in Pohnpei and three in Kosrae.

Supported proposals covering vegetable production, hydroponics, poultry and pig farming, food processing and preservation, handicrafts, and household and community water security.

Provided assistance in community development plan validation, site verification, proposal preparation and business planning.

All 10 proposals were completed and were awaiting contract issuance by the FSM National Government at the time of reporting. Eligible private applicants may receive grants of up to $14,000, while eligible public or community projects may qualify for up to $40,000.

Program Impacts and Significance

Improved employment opportunities: The placement of four former interns in professional and technical positions demonstrates a tangible transition from internship experience to employment.



Development of entrepreneurial skills: Business Blitz activities allowed students to establish and operate small businesses using seed capital. Reported profits at CTEC and sales through Upward Bound demonstrate that students applied financial management, pricing, marketing and customer-service skills in real business situations. Compost and vegetable sales further demonstrated how student learning could generate revenue and encourage independent enterprise development.

Strengthened household water safety: Follow-up evaluation in Eirike showed that all participating households reported improved access to safe drinking water, while 97.9% reported using their filters daily. Water safety training and filter distribution in Kosrae and Yap extended practical household support and awareness of safe water practices.

Expanded opportunities for household investment: Completion of 10 SIFWAP investment proposals helped households and community groups move from initial business ideas to formal investment applications. Although contracts and equipment distribution remained pending, the

achievement established a pathway for potential improvements in household production, income generation and economic self-reliance.



2. MARKETING AND EXPORTS PROGRAM

Program Overview

During FY2026, the Marketing and Exports Program focused on strengthening the capacity of households, farmers and local businesses to convert locally available resources into marketable products and sustainable economic opportunities.

The program addressed challenges associated with limited food processing and preservation facilities, inadequate marketing capacity, agricultural production constraints and invasive alien species that threaten local farming systems and potential trade opportunities. CFE delivered practical training in food processing, preservation, product development, local food promotion and invasive alien species awareness.

Key Achievements

Food Processing, Preservation and Product Development

Conducted 204 food processing and preservation training sessions, recording 2,184 participant attendances.

Delivered practical training on preserving locally available staple crops and developing value-added food products.

Worked with women's organizations and community facilitators to promote household-level food processing and preservation.

Encouraged the development of marketable products using locally available agricultural resources.

Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Awareness and Training



Conducted 22 community training activities on invasive alien species, recording 285 participant attendances.

Delivered a 60-hour non-credit IAS certification program.

Successfully trained and certified 21 participants across the four FSM states: Pohnpei (8), Yap (6), Chuuk (6) and Kosrae (1).



Developed an online IAS learning module through the COM-FSM Moodle platform to support continued access to training materials and educational resources.

Extended invasive-species awareness to farmers, community groups and relevant government personnel.

Local Food Promotion and Community Awareness

Conducted nine additional promotional and project-introduction activities, recording 869 participant attendances.

Promoted locally produced foods and encouraged consumers to support FSM farmers and local businesses.

Strengthened awareness of the relationship between agricultural production, product quality, market opportunities and invasive-species management.

Development of Commercial Hydroponic Production

Provided continued technical assistance to A-Exports and Trading, a locally owned business operating two commercial hydroponic greenhouses, each measuring 20 × 80 feet.

The business currently produces approximately 150 pounds of leafy vegetables and 10 pounds of tomatoes weekly for the Pohnpei market.

Documented continued demand for the company's products, which reportedly exceeds its current production capacity.

Recorded the business owner's plans to establish five additional greenhouses, each measuring 66 × 100 feet, to expand production capacity and explore future market opportunities. These remain proposed developments.

Program Impacts and Significance

Increased capacity for value-added food production: Food processing and preservation training provided participants, particularly households and women's groups, with practical knowledge to extend the usability of local agricultural products and explore opportunities for developing marketable food items.

Strengthened agricultural protection and trade readiness: The 60-hour IAS certification program established a pool of 21 trained individuals across the four FSM states. The availability of trained personnel and online learning resources strengthens the institutional foundation for identifying, understanding and managing invasive species that threaten agriculture, biodiversity and agricultural trade.

Growth of locally owned agricultural enterprises: A-Exports and Trading provides a practical example of how technical assistance and agricultural innovation can support commercial

production. Its two operational greenhouses and reported weekly vegetable production demonstrate the potential of hydroponic farming to supply local markets. Demand exceeding current production capacity provides a basis for the owner's proposed expansion and future market development.

Strengthened local market awareness: Promotional activities encouraged consumers to recognize and support locally produced foods. Greater awareness can contribute to stronger connections between farmers, businesses and consumers, creating opportunities for local enterprises to expand their market presence.

YOUTH AND FAMILIES PROGRAM

437 Training participant attendances	**105** Student interns across four states	**4** Former interns employed
10 SIFWAP proposals completed	**~$500** Student compost and vegetable sales	**928** Water activity contacts / beneficiaries

Program highlights

- 28 CTEC students participated in Business Blitz; the winning team earned approximately $1,300 in profit.
- 53 Upward Bound students formed 11 business teams.
- 48 households received water filtration systems in Eirike; 97.9% reported daily filter use.
- 42 water filtration systems were distributed in Kosrae.

MARKETING AND EXPORTS PROGRAM

226 Training events	**2,469** Training participant attendances	**21** IAS-certified participants
60 hrs IAS certification training	**2** Commercial hydroponic greenhouses	**160 lbs** Combined weekly vegetable production

Program highlights

- 204 food processing and preservation sessions.
- 22 invasive alien species community training sessions.
- 869 additional attendances through promotional and project-introduction activities.
- Five additional hydroponic greenhouses proposed by A-Exports and Trading.

Kosrae CRE

1. Citrus Project

Project Overview

The project addresses declining production and plant health of Kosrae's valued thornless lime and tangerine, including concerns about citrus canker and twig dieback. It evaluates air-layered citrus propagules across alternative rooting and growing substrates to identify practical nursery techniques that can improve root establishment and support the availability of healthy planting material. Research was implemented at the Micronesia Plant Propagation Research Center (MPPRC), with continuing field monitoring and extension engagement with local growers.

Key Achievements

Established a structured field experiment with five substrate treatments: topsoil control; commercial substrate with NAA; peat moss; vermicompost; and a 1:1 coco-fiber/potting-mix treatment. Perlite treatments were discontinued because of limited viable planting stock.

Arranged treatment propagules in a completely randomized design at MPPRC and collected plant-growth observations at approximately two-week intervals. Color-coded grow bags, daily irrigation and plot maintenance strengthened consistency of trial management.

Initiated primary and secondary nutrient profiling of the propagation substrates to investigate relationships between growing media and rooting performance. The report notes that standardized analysis at a certified soil laboratory remains necessary.

Observed strong root development in peat-moss and cocopeat/potting-mix media relative to conventional topsoil.

Continued propagation of local tangerine using air-layering and began moving available propagules into farmers' fields to develop future mother plants and expand access to planting material.

Engaged growers, home gardeners and extension staff on sustainable propagation media, plant health, irrigation and the potential for future distribution of improved planting stock.

Impacts

The project strengthened the practical basis for producing citrus planting material locally, an important step toward maintaining Kosrae's valued lime and tangerine resources.

Field comparisons and routine monitoring provide a foundation for identifying propagation approaches that could improve survival and growth.

- Grower engagement and farmer-field establishment of air-layered plants support extension learning and the possible development of local stock-plant suppliers.





Key highlights	
Experimental treatments	5 substrate treatments
Field arrangement	Completely randomized design at MPPRC
Monitoring	Biweekly plant-growth observations; routine irrigation
Status	Field trial and tangerine propagation ongoing

2. Assessment of Coconut Project

Project Overview

This study evaluates the agronomic characteristics and potential economic uses of local coconuts, including Pacific Tall types, to improve understanding of coconut yield components and copra-related value. Field sampling initially focused on Utwe and Tafunsak. The work examines fruit morphology, coconut-water volume, shell and other components, and locally

important phenotypic differences, with the Malayan Green Dwarf used as a comparative baseline in the research design.

Key Achievements

Collected and examined coconut samples from Utwe and Tafunsak, with a reported target of 100 samples from each location. The report records 60 exclusions because samples were immature, underdeveloped or otherwise unsuitable.

Collected measurements of fruit components and characteristics relevant to yield and potential processing, including nut size, shell measurements, coconut water and copra-related characteristics.

Documented two local coconut variants with distinctive visible traits during conservation and identification visits, contributing information for a future local germplasm collection.

Organized field observations into a research database to support analysis of agronomic performance and possible future scientific publication and grower guidance.

Engaged coconut growers and households in Utwe and Tafunsak to collect material and discuss local sorting, harvesting, copra processing and production practices.

- Expanded field collection and green copra purchasing activity at the two initial sites while identifying the need for additional sampling in other Kosrae municipalities.

Impacts

The study established a preliminary evidence base for comparing local coconut material and assessing fruit components important to processing and value addition.



Documentation of local phenotypic diversity supports future conservation and selection work, including identification of types that may be suited to Kosrae conditions.

Farmer involvement links research with existing coconut practices and helps identify practical questions for eventual extension materials.

Key highlights

Initial assessment locations	Utwe and Tafunsak

Sample collection target	100 coconuts per location
Excluded samples	60 unsuitable/immature samples reported
Varietal documentation	2 distinctive local variants recorded

3. Dragon Fruit Production Project

Project Overview

The project investigates whether supplemental artificial lighting and gibberellic acid (GA_3) treatments can support dragon fruit flowering and off-season production under wet tropical conditions. The FY2026 emphasis was on trial readiness: establishing and consolidating field infrastructure at MPPRC, preparing healthy planting stocks, procuring the planned treatment materials, and finalizing a research layout that will allow systematic assessment once the experimental plants and equipment are operational.

Key Achievements

Initiated experimental field-site preparation at MPPRC and installed five initial posts as part of the planned support and trellis system.



Multiplied dragon fruit planting material in the nursery and prepared growing media and substrates for subsequent transplanting to the experimental plots.

Procured artificial-lighting equipment and plant growth regulators needed for the proposed flowering-response treatments.

Finalized the spatial arrangement of research plots and experimental design.

Advanced planning for laboratory renovations, including air conditioning for the growth room, preparation room and secure storage spaces.

Worked with CRE colleagues and local growers on field readiness and potential demonstrations of dragon fruit cultivation integrated with seasonal greenhouse vegetable production.

Impacts

Trial preparation established the infrastructure and biological planting-stock basis needed to test dragon fruit off-season production in Kosrae.

The intended combination of lighting treatments and GA_3 could generate locally relevant evidence for crop diversification if future experiments document a reliable response.

Collaboration with growers creates a pathway for future field demonstrations and practical sharing of validated methods.

No measured flowering response, off-season harvest yield or farmer income attributable to these treatments was reported for FY2026.

Key Highlights	FY2026 documented result
Trial site	MPPRC
Support posts initially installed	5
Inputs prepared	Dragon fruit cuttings, substrates, lighting, plant growth regulators
Research stage	Plot establishment and experimental preparations

4. Sustainable Mangrove Crab Project

Project Overview

The sustainable mangrove crab project aims to establish a practical research and hatchery foundation for *Scylla serrata* aquaculture in the FSM. The work responds to reported pressure on wild crab stocks and the need for reliable broodstock, controlled breeding systems and community-oriented production methods. The Kosrae component forms part of a multi-state effort involving field assessment, hatchery preparations, technical exchange and engagement with government and community stakeholders. The project is designed to support the longer-term development of local production capacity and more informed marine resource management.

Key Achievements

Conducted stock assessments and broodstock-availability surveys across FSM states during 2025–2026, establishing baseline information relevant to site selection, collection strategies and hatchery planning. The report describes declining crab stocks in states other than Pohnpei, while noting several possible contributing pressures rather than demonstrating a single cause.

Advanced the physical and operational preparations for hatchery work. Approximately 80% of the equipment and laboratory supplies required to initiate hatchery operations in Kosrae had been procured by the reporting date; procurement and shipment arrangements for larval feeds and other materials continued.

Engaged Kosrae's Governor, the Department of Resources and Economic Affairs, KIRMA, KCSO and youth stakeholders to communicate potential aquaculture benefits, research priorities and possible workforce opportunities.

Delivered information-sharing presentations and training involving Chuuk CRE personnel, COM-FSM students and Kosrae CRE colleagues, strengthening inter-campus exchange on hatchery development and technical methods.

Submitted a full proposal to the Center for Tropical and Sustainable Aquaculture (CTSA) on



sustainable mangrove crab hatchery and community-based aquaculture systems. Initiated collaborative histological laboratory work and discussions of an MOU with Prince of Songkla University, Thailand.

Impacts

The project generated baseline biological and operational information needed to move from opportunistic wild collection toward planned hatchery research. Equipment procurement, proposed facilities and coordination among campuses represent tangible progress toward an institutional capacity to test production and nursery techniques. Stakeholder engagement connected hatchery development with local resource governance and opened channels for staff training and potential technical partnerships.

Key Highlights	
Kosrae hatchery supplies	Approximately 80% procured
Partnership development	CTSA proposal submitted; laboratory collaboration with PSU initiated

5. Green Seaweed Cultivation Project

Project Overview

This project evaluates green seaweed cultivation as a potential small-scale food-production and aquaculture-diversification opportunity in Kosrae, with particular emphasis on *Caulerpa racemosa*. The work combines local species identification, comparative cultivation, observed product quality, and the development of controlled tank-based trials. Integrated culture with oysters is of interest because the species may make complementary use of nutrients within an aquaculture system. Longer-term objectives include dependable planting stock and appropriate household-scale cultivation guidance, subject to further testing.

Key Achievements

Identified four Caulerpa species around Kosrae Island, providing an initial picture of locally available seaweed resources and candidates for cultivation research.

Conducted small-scale cultivation trials under natural conditions at the CRE office. In the preliminary comparison, seaweed grown alongside oysters showed better reported growth and taste quality than seaweed grown alone.

Identified *Caulerpa racemosa* as the strongest performer among the four species in the initial trials on the basis of observed growth and consumer preference. These results provide a priority for additional testing rather than a finalized production protocol.

Initiated a separate tank-based cultivation trial at the Kosrae Campus greenhouse, including seawater collection, sea-grape habitat surveys and preparation of the cultivation system.

Completed procurement of essential nutrients and laboratory supplies for ongoing seaweed research and considered the role of seaweed in recycling nutrients from other cultured organisms.

Used practical demonstrations to introduce cultivation concepts and inform future community outreach and planting-stock distribution plans.





Impacts

The trials narrowed the choice of candidate seaweed species and highlighted an approach—co-cultivation with oysters—that warrants further evaluation. By identifying a promising locally occurring species and launching greenhouse-based testing, the project strengthened Kosrae's evidence base for adapting production methods to its own environmental conditions. Practical demonstrations may support future adoption by households and community growers.

Key Highlights	
Promising candidate	*C. racemosa* in preliminary comparisons
Next research phase	Tank-based greenhouse cultivation underway

6. Edible Oyster Cultivation Project

Project Overview

The edible oyster project examines the potential for hatchery-produced oyster spat and local oyster cultivation to contribute to food security, livelihood options and coastal ecosystem management in Kosrae. The present reporting phase emphasizes laboratory examination of local edible oysters, screening for potential biological hazards and discussion of restoration opportunities. Because the safety of cultivated and harvested seafood depends on environmental water conditions as well as animal condition, the project incorporates food-safety assessment before any broader consumption or cultivation recommendations.

Key Achievements

Examined two edible oyster species in the laboratory to develop initial evidence regarding their suitability for future cultivation and food-security research.

Reported no harmful organisms in the oyster stomach samples examined. However, parasitic worms and harmful algae were observed in some ambient water samples, highlighting a need for additional environmental and food-safety investigation.

Documented preliminary observations that can guide the design of further parasite screening, harmful-algae monitoring and other safety assessments before recommending routine consumption or culture expansion.



Initiated discussions with the Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority (KIRMA) concerning partial oyster-bed restoration and the assessment of possible environmental and community benefits.

Established a basis for considering future oyster-spat production, habitat assessment and integrated cultivation work, while keeping proposed activities distinct from completed field production.

Impacts

The project supplied preliminary laboratory evidence and, importantly, identified environmental conditions that need further scrutiny. That finding supports a precautionary, evidence-led approach to oyster farming and public-health protection. Collaboration with KIRMA creates a pathway for assessing oyster-bed restoration as a possible conservation and food-production measure.

Species examined	Two edible oyster species
Laboratory observation	No harmful organisms reported in examined stomach samples; environmental water samples raised safety concerns
Partner engagement	KIRMA discussion on partial oyster-bed restoration