



CIRCULAR ECONOMY TRAINING IN VANUATU —ACTIVITY REPORT— DECEMBER 2025

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En partenariat avec

France 



**SPREP
PROE**

SWAP
Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific



This initiative is supported by the SWAP2 Project, funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), with the aim of improving waste infrastructure, building capacity, and fostering regional collaboration.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The SWAP2 Project

The second phase of the Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific (SWAP2) project¹ builds upon the achievements of the first phase, which aimed to improve sanitation, environmental, social and economic conditions in five Pacific island countries — Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu — and one French territory — Wallis-and-Futuna — through improved waste management systems.

SWAP2, funded by the Agence Française de Développement² (AFD), contributes to achieving the strategic goals of the Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy (Cleaner Pacific) by improving waste infrastructure, strengthening institutional and technical capacity, and fostering regional cooperation among Pacific Island countries and French territories.

Implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme³ (SPREP) from 2025 – 2028, the project benefits Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna.

The project supports sustainable waste management across the Pacific region through the following objectives:

1. Supporting local populations and authorities in the development of national waste management policies and actions (collection, sorting, recovery, proper disposal);
2. Improving the delivery of waste services through development of waste management infrastructures and implementing pilot projects; and
3. Strengthening the technical, financial and governance capacities of authorities and practitioners.

SWAP2 focuses on four main components:

1. Marine Litter;
2. Used Oil Management;
3. Solid Waste Management; and
4. Regional Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing.

¹ <https://swap.sprep.org/>

² <https://www.afd.fr/en>

³ <https://www.sprep.org/>

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1.2. Context of the Circular Economy Training

Under Component 3 – Solid Waste Management, SWAP2 engaged Mrs Dalida Janet Borlasa, owner of *Yumi UP*, a company based on Efate Island, Vanuatu, to train groups of women on producing high-quality baskets made from recycled rice plastic bags (see photo below). From this point forward, Mrs Borlasa will be referred to as the *instructor* throughout the report.



Photo 1: Recycled baskets produced by Yumi Up

The training aimed to promote the Circular Economy Approach by transforming waste materials into handcrafted, marketable products. Its main objective was to demonstrate how waste can be repurposed into valuable goods, creating income-generated opportunities for local women while promoting environmental awareness.

To support this initiative, the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) identified four women's groups:

- Lelepa Island – 30 trainees
- Mele Village – 30 trainees
- Erakor Village – 15 trainees
- Northern Ward – 20 trainees

To ensure sustainability of this initiative and to empower the trained women, SWAP2 procured three sewing machines for each group.

Additionally, *Yumi UP* incorporated a composting session into the training, delivered by Mr. Michel Raikatalau, Manager of *V-Organic Company* in Port Vila.

A video documentary is also being produced to showcase this initiative. It will be shared on social media platforms to promote the Circular Economy Approach and facilitate experience sharing with other SWAP2 participating countries and territories.

This report serves as the activity report for the training.

2. LELEPA ISLAND TRAINING

2.1. Day 1 – 28 October 2025

The first day of the Circular Economy Training began at 8:30 AM with a morning devotion. After that, the instructor welcomed all the participants and introduced the purpose of the training. She explained that the training was sponsored by the SWAP2 project, funded by the AFD and implemented by the SPREP based in Samoa, through the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC), who partnered with *Yumi Up* to run this program.

The instructor then shared the goals of the training and explained the activities planned for the three days. To understand how much the participants already knew about waste management, she divided them into four groups. Each group discussed their understanding of waste and waste management. After their discussions, the groups presented their ideas to everyone.

After the group presentations, all participants continued with the activities that were planned for the rest of the day, detailed below in chronological order

2.1.1. Community Waste Collection and Sorting

- Participants went out to the coastal area and around the community to collect rubbish.
- Once they finished collecting rubbish, they had a short refreshment break.
- After the break, they started waste segregation. Participants sorted the collected rubbish into what could be reused, recycled, or thrown away.
- They selected the plastic packaging materials they planned to upcycle, then washed and dried them.
- When the plastics were dry, participants cut (shredded) them into small pieces to prepare for the next activity.

2.1.2. Upcycling Activity – Making Pillow Covers

- After lunch, the participants started sewing pillow covers.
- Once the covers were completed, they filled (stuffed) them with the shredded plastic.
- This helped participants understand how waste can be reused and turned into useful products instead of being thrown away.

The participants ended the first day of training after completing the pillow-making activity.

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Photo 2: Training activities – Day 1 – Lelapa Island Training

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***Photo 3:** Group photo – Day 1 - Lelapa Island Training*

2.2. Day 2 – 29 October 2025

Day 2 of the training began at 9:00 AM with a morning devotion. After the devotion, the instructor introduced Michel Raikatalau, the composting facilitator, who led the activities for the day.

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2.2.1. Introduction to Composting

Mr. Raikatala started by asking participants about their current knowledge of composting. They had a group discussion, and many participants shared their understanding of:

- What compost is;
- Why composting is important; and
- How it helps the environment.

After the discussion, Mr. Raikatala gave a presentation on composting, explaining:

- The importance of composting, especially since Lelepa Island is in the dry season;
- How compost can help nourish soil, support plants, and improve food crops so they can produce more fruits and vegetables;
- The benefits of using organic waste instead of burning or throwing it away.

They the whole group took a 15-minute refreshment break.

2.2.2. Practical Activity – Collecting Compost Materials

After the break:

- Prior to Day 2, Mr. Raikatala asked the participants to collect and put aside food scraps, dry leaves, and food waste from the materials they segregated on Day 1.
- The collection activity of compost materials continued on Day 2 for about 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- After collecting the materials, they stopped for lunch.

2.2.3. Making the First Compost

In the afternoon, they began making our first compost pile:

- Participants helped layer green waste (food scraps, root crops, and fresh leaves) and brown waste (dry leaves, wood pieces, and other carbon materials).
- Mr. Raikatala explained the importance of:
 - Layering the compost properly;
 - Making sure the compost can produce enough heat; and
 - Allowing air circulation inside the compost for it to break down properly.

2.2.4. Alternative Compost Method for Cyclone Season

Mr. Raikatala also demonstrated another simple type of compost that can be prepared ahead of the cyclone season, as Vanuatu was entering that season at the time of the workshop.

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2.2.5. Group Sharing and Discussion

For the rest of the afternoon:

- Participants shared their experiences, thoughts, and interest in composting.
- They asked questions, and they answered them together in an open discussion.
- The discussions lasted about 30 minutes.

The day ended with a closing prayer, and participants were dismissed.

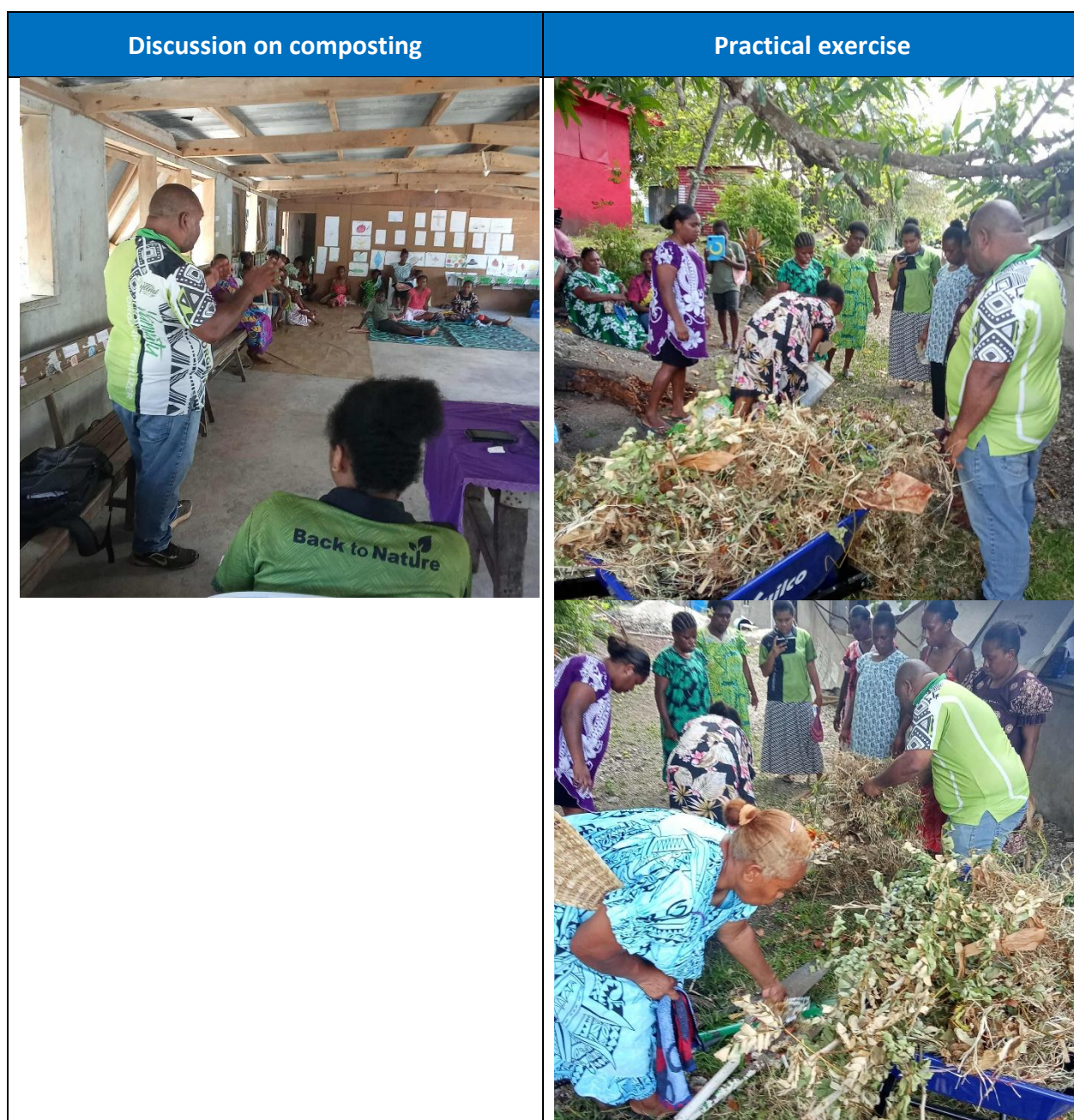


Photo 4: Training activities – Day 2 – Lelapa Island Training

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2.3. Day 3 – 31 October 2025

The final day of the training began at 9:00 AM with an opening prayer. After the prayer, they went straight into our main activity for the day — recycling plastic to make baskets.

2.3.1. *Basket Making (Recycling Activity)*

- The instructor began by demonstrating how to measure and cut the materials needed for the recycled baskets to the participants.
- After the demonstration, everyone started sewing their baskets using the sewing machines.
- The activity took place during the whole morning. Participants only took short refreshment breaks and returned immediately to their sewing machines to continue their work.
- Even during lunchtime, many participants continued working, as they were very focused and excited to finish their baskets.
- After lunch, everyone completed their products successfully.

2.3.2. *Reflection and Discussion*

After the basket-making activity:

- Participants all sat together and asked the participants how they felt about the three-day training.
- The participants expressed that they were very grateful to SPREP for thinking of them and supporting this project.
- They also mentioned the need for a space where they can sell their products to earn income.

2.3.3. *Future Plans and Support*

- In response, Mr. Raikatalau and the instructor suggested helping the participants form an association so they can work together, support each other, and achieve their goals.
- The participants also spoke to their village chief to ask if he could provide a space for them to sell their products.
- If a space is not available in the village, the instructor offered to take some of the participants' products to sell in her handicraft shop until they find a proper selling place.

2.3.4. *Closing*

- After the discussion, the instructor officially handed over the sewing machines to the participants.

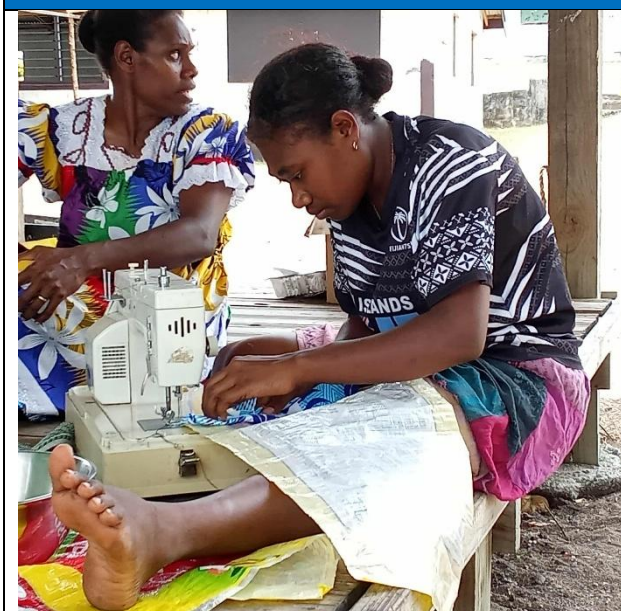
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- The participants thanked their instructor and Mr. Raikatalau, as well as SPREP for the training and support they received
- They took a group photo, closed with a prayer, shook hands, and ended the training.

Preparation



Sewing activity



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***Photo 5:** Training activities – Day 3 – Lelapa Island Training*



***Photo 6:** Group photo – Day 3 – Lelapa Island Training*

3. MELE VILLAGE TRAINING

3.1. Day 1- 1 November 2025

The first day of the Circular Economy Training commenced at 8:30 AM with a welcome from the Chief of Mele Village, followed by remarks from former MP Julia King, who shared inspiring encouragement for women to become future leaders. She also expressed appreciation to SPREP for organizing the waste management program.

The former MP emphasized the importance of changing our mindset to see waste not just as rubbish, but as a valuable resource that can be reused.

The Area Administrator also shared a few words thanking the women for attending the training and encouraged them to take full advantage of everything being offered.

An opening prayer was then made, and the training officially began.

The instructor began by explaining the purpose of the training and how SWAP's funding supports the initiative. The participants were divided into groups of four and asked to hold a small discussion about waste and waste management, then share their ideas through a presentation.

After the group presentations, all participants continued with the activities that were planned for the rest of the day, detailed below in chronological order:

3.1.1. Community Waste Collection and Sorting

- Participants went out to the coastal area and around the community to collect rubbish.
- Once the group finished collecting rubbish, they had a short refreshment break.
- After the break, they started waste segregation. Participants sorted the collected rubbish into what could be reused, recycled, or thrown away.
- They selected the plastic packaging materials they planned to upcycle, then washed and dried them.
- When the plastics were dry, participants cut (shredded) them into small pieces to prepare for the next activity.

3.1.2. Upcycling Activity – Making Pillow Covers

- After lunch, participants started sewing pillow covers.
- Once the covers were completed, they filled (stuffed) them with the shredded plastic.

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- This helped participants understand how waste can be reused and turned into useful products instead of being thrown away.

The first day ended after completing the pillow-making activity.

Discussion on Waste and Waste Management



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Collection of rubbish



Segregation



Making of Pillow Covers



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Making of Pillow Covers



***Photo 7:** Training activities – Day 1 – Mele Village Training*

3.2. Day 2 – 2 November 2025

Day 2 of the training began at 9:00 AM with a morning devotion. After the devotion, the instructor introduced Mr. Raikatalau, the composting facilitator, who led the activities for the day.

3.2.1. Introduction to Composting

Mr. Raikatalau started by asking participants about their current knowledge of composting. They had a group discussion, and many participants shared their understanding of:

- What compost is;
- Why composting is important;
- How it helps the environment.

After the discussion, Mr. Raikatalau gave a presentation on composting, explaining:

- How compost can help nourish soil, support plants, and improve food crops so they can produce more fruits and vegetables;

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- The benefits of using organic waste instead of burning or throwing it away.

He also shows a short video about compost, the video was made by SPREP. The group= then took a 15-minute refreshment break.

3.2.2. Practical Activity – Visit to a Participant’s Home to Start Composting

After the break, the group went to a participant house to start with composting activity. Upon arrival, the group took a 15-minute refreshment break.

- Mr. Raikatalau asked the participants to collect food scraps, dry leaves, and some leaves from the surrounding area, along with food waste from the materials they segregated on Day 1.
- The participants helped create the first compost pile by layering green waste (food scraps, root crops, and fresh leaves) with brown waste (dry leaves, wood pieces, and other carbon-rich materials). This demonstrated the composting technique to the group.
- Mr. Raikatalau also explained the importance of properly layering the compost.
- Mr. Raikatalau explained the importance of:
 - Layering the compost properly;
 - Making sure the compost can produce enough heat; and
 - Allowing air circulation inside the compost for it to break down properly.

3.2.3. Alternative Compost Method for Cyclone Season

Mr. Raikatalau also demonstrated another simple type of compost that can be prepared ahead of the cyclone season, as Vanuatu was entering that season at the time of the workshop.

After the activity, the group had a one-hour lunch break.

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Composting Practical exercise



Photo 8: Training activities – Day 2 – Mele Village Training

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***Photo 9:** Group photo – Day 2 – Mele Village Training*

After lunch, the participants continued with the pillow-making activity from Day 1, making new designs like heart-shape, doll shape and round shape pillows. The participants expressed they had lots of fun and they showed a lot of interest to these various trainings. The day finished with a word of prayer.

3.3. Day 3 – 3 November 2025

The final day of the training began at around 9:00 AM with an opening prayer, after the prayer the group went straight into to their main activity of the day, being how to make baskets from the recycled plastics they collected in the previous days.

3.3.1. Basket Making (Recycling Activity)

- The instructor began by demonstrating how to measure and cut the materials needed for the recycled baskets to the participants.

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- After the demonstration, everyone started sewing their baskets using the sewing machines.
- The activity took place during the whole morning. Participants only took short refreshment breaks and returned immediately to their sewing machines to continue their work.
- Even during lunchtime, many participants continued working, as they were very focused and excited and show a lot of interest to finish their baskets.
- After lunch, everyone completed their products successfully.

3.3.2. Reflection and Discussion

After the basket-making activity, the group was ready to finish the training. The Area Secretary, the Area Administrator and the Woman's representee were all present for the closing ceremony, where the instructor handed over the 3 sewing machines to the group of mamas.

- The participants expressed that they were very grateful to SPREP for thinking of them and supporting this project.
- They also mentioned the need for a space where they can sell their products to earn in come.
- At the end of the closing ceremony, the group took a group photo and did a closing devotion.

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Photo 10: Training activities – Day 3 – Mele Village Training

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Photo 11: Group photo – Day 3 – Mele Village Training

4. ERAKOR TRAINING

4.1. Day 1 –11 November 2025

The first day of the Circular Economy Training began at 8:30 AM with a morning devotion. After that, the instructor welcomed all the participants and introduced the purpose of the training. The instructor explained that the training was sponsored by the SWAP2 project, funded by the AFD and implemented by the SPREP based in Samoa, through the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC), who partnered with *Yumi Up* to run this program.

The instructor then shared the goals of the training and explained the activities planned for the three days. To understand how much the participants already knew about waste management, she divided them into two groups. Each group discussed their understanding of waste and waste management. After their discussions, the groups presented their ideas to everyone.

After the group presentations, all participants continued with the activities that were planned for the rest of the day, detailed below in chronological order.

4.1.1. *Community Waste Collection and Sorting*

- Participants went out to the community area to collect rubbish.
- Once they finished collecting rubbish, they had a short refreshment break.
- After the break, the group started waste segregation. Participants sorted the collected rubbish into what could be reused, recycled, or thrown away.
- They selected the plastic packaging materials they planned to upcycle, then washed and dried them.

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Photo 12: *Community Waste Collection and Sorting – Erakor Training*

4.1.2. Composting Activities

The instructor received Mr. Raikatalau on the first day of training (contrary to the second day for the rest of the trainings), so the group did the compost activities on the first day. Mr. Raikatalau talked about organic waste. He did a presentation and show the compost video from SPREP. He also talked about the importance of composting.

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***Photo 13:** Introduction to the composting activities – Day 1 – Erakor Training*

The composting activities started by all the participant going out and using organic waste to make some compost, as Mr. Raikatalau showed the participants how to create a pile of compost.

After making compost, the group had a 1-hour lunch. After lunch, the instructor gave time to the participants for them to ask questions about compost to Mr. Raikatalau (lasted about 1 hour).

After this time, the group started the pillow-making program. They started this program by washing the plastics packaging and drying them. Then they started cutting or shredding them. After an hour of work regarding the pillow-making program, the participants ended the first day of training with a prayer.

4.2. Day 2 – 12 November 2025

4.2.1. Upcycling Activity: Making Pillows (Follow-up)

- **Start of Day**

Training commenced at 9:00 AM with an opening prayer. After the prayer, the day's activities were introduced.

- **Morning Session**

Participants began the upcycling activity by shredding packaging plastics using scissors. This task took the entire morning. A 10-minute morning tea break was provided before continuing with the shredding activity.

- **Lunch Break**

A one-hour lunch break was taken once all plastics were fully shredded.

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- **Afternoon Session**

After lunch, participants proceeded to sew the pillow covers. Once the covers were completed, the shredded packaging plastics were used as stuffing. By the end of the session, the pillows were fully completed.

- **End of Day**

The day's activities concluded with a closing prayer.



Photo 14: Training activities – Day 2 – Erakor Training



Photo 15: Group photo – Day 2 – Erakor Training

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4.3. Day 3 – 13 November 2025

Day 3 began with an opening prayer, followed by a short recap of the previous sessions. The group then jumped straight into their activities planned for the day.

While they started working, they received a visit from two Japanese representatives of the Vanuatu Municipality, one representative working for the JICA (that also works with SPREP), and one representative from the Vanuatu Environment Office working with the Port Vila Municipality. They observed the training, asked questions, and shared morning tea with the participants. The two representatives then returned to their offices. They also had the media team present that day, interviewing participants to the training.

As a gesture of appreciation, the group offered two baskets and a pillow to the two Japanese representatives.



***Photo 16:** Japanese representatives – Erakor Training*

After a 15-minute tea break, the group continued the program of the day. Participants focused on making packaging items, including baskets. They prepared the rice bags, and then began sewing until lunch time. The participants were very motivated—most of them ate quickly and returned to continue working until everyone completed their products.

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In the afternoon, all participants gathered for the closing ceremony. The instructor invited all the participants to come together, and held the handover ceremony for the 3 machines that were donated to the Erakor community participants. They were extremely grateful and expressed how much the machines will help them—both in protecting the environment and in supporting their income.

The group concluded the day and the entire training with a closing prayer.

Handover of the sewing machines



Photo 17: Handover of the 3 sewing machines – Day 3 – Erakor Training

5. NORTHERN WARD TRAINING

5.1. Day 1 – 25 November 2025

The first day of the Circular Economy Training commenced at approximately 8:30 AM. Participants, mostly women, gathered and greeted one another before opening the session with a prayer. This created a warm and respectful atmosphere for the day's activities.

To begin, the instructor provided an overview of the purpose of the training, highlighting the importance of proper waste management within the community. She also explained how SWAP's funding contributes to supporting this initiative and enables them to carry out capacity-building activities such as this workshop.

Following the introduction, participants were divided into smaller groups to encourage open discussion and active engagement. Each group was tasked with sharing their current understanding of waste management, identifying challenges they face in their households or community, and suggesting practical solutions. After the discussions, the groups delivered short presentations summarizing their ideas, which sparked further conversation and helped identify common issues across the ward.

Once the presentations concluded, they transitioned to the main practical activities that were planned for the rest of the day, detailed below in chronological order:

5.1.1. Community waste collection and sorting

- Participants went out around the community to collect rubbish.
- Once they finished collecting rubbish, they had a short refreshment break.
- After the break, they started waste segregation. Participants sorted the collected rubbish into what could be reused, recycled, or thrown away.
- The group selected the plastic packaging materials they planned to upcycle, then washed and dried them.
- When the plastics were dry, participants cut (shredded) them into small pieces to prepare for the next activity.

5.1.2. Upcycling Activity – Making Pillow Covers

- After lunch, the participants started sewing pillow covers.
- Once the covers were completed, they filled (stuffed) them with the shredded plastic.
- This helped participants understand how waste can be reused and turned into useful products instead of being thrown away.

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The first day ended after completing the pillow-making activity.

5.2. Day 2 –26 November 2025

5.2.1. Opening

Day 2 of the training started at 9:00 AM with a morning devotion. This helped to set a calm and focused atmosphere for the day's activities.

5.2.2. Composting Session at the Seaside

- Following the devotion, the group continued with the scheduled program and proceeded to the seaside for the composting session facilitated by Mr. Raikatalau. Mr. Raikatalau provided a detailed overview of composting, including:
 - What compost is used for;
 - The steps involved in making compost;
 - The different stages of the composting process;
 - The estimated time required for compost to fully mature and be ready for use, packaging, or sale.
- Participants were actively engaged and asked many questions throughout the session.
- The group was joined by representatives from JICA and the Port Vila Municipality, who observed the training and interacted with participants.
- After this session, they had morning tea before continuing with further discussions and demonstrations on composting. When the composting activity was finished, the group had lunch.
- Once lunch was done, the group returned back to the training site.

5.2.3. Afternoon Session – Product Preparation

Upon returning to the training site, they continued with the practical activity of shredding (cutting) plastic packaging, pillow covers, and other recyclable materials. Participants then filled the pillow covers and completed the products as planned.

5.2.4. Closing

The day concluded with a word of prayer to close the training activities.

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Composting Practical exercise



Photo 18: Training activities – Day 2 – North Ward Training

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***Photo 19:** Group photo – Day 2 – North Ward Training*

5.3. Day 3 – 27 November 2025

5.3.1. Opening

Day 3 of the training commenced with a word of prayer. This set a positive tone for the day and prepared participants for the activities ahead.

5.3.2. Morning Session

After the opening prayer, the group continued with the planned program. Participants began by cutting the rice bags and then proceeded to the sewing activities. Morning tea was taken after this session and lasted for 15 minutes.

5.3.3. Midday Session

Following the tea break, participants continued working on the baskets until lunch. Lunch was 1 hour.

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5.3.4. Afternoon Session

After lunch, the group resumed with product-making activities. Over the next two hours, the participants completed all the products for the day. Once finished, everyone helped clean up the workspace in preparation for the closing program.

5.3.5. Handover Ceremony

A handover ceremony was conducted, during which the instructor officially handed over the three sewing machines to the group. The participants expressed their appreciation through thank-you speeches.

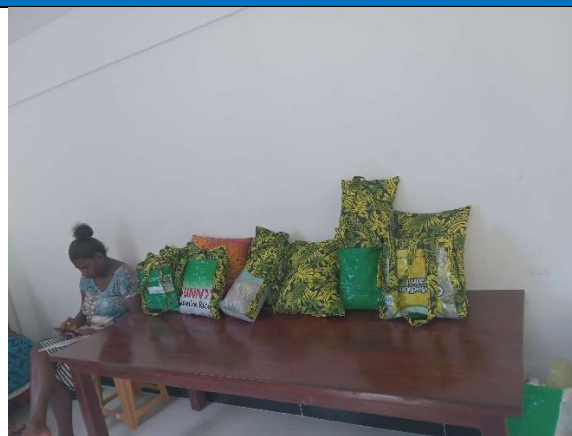
5.3.6. Closing

The day concluded with a final word of prayer.

Preparation	Sewing activities
	

**SUSTAINABLE WASTE ACTIONS IN THE PACIFIC – PHASE 2
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Pillows



Handover of the sewing machines



Photo 20: Training activities – Day 3 – North Ward Training

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Photo 21: Group photo – Day 3 – Nort Ward Training