



2023

PISBDCN

ANNUAL

REPORT



Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network

The University of Guam Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network (PISBDCN) and the Guam Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is housed at the University of Guam School of Business and Public Administration. This center was opened in 1995. From 1999 through 2002 five additional centers were opened, creating the first international SBDC Network. Service Centers are located in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) namely the Yap, Chuuk, Kosrae, and Pohnpei State, Republic of Palau and the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI). The local service centers are hosted by the respective state governments through contractual agreements with the PISBDCN. Service center offices are located in professional facilities or educational facilities. Each island has a distinct heritage, culture, belief system, language, national state identity, and legal system.





Mission

The University of Guam Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network's (PISBDCN) mission is to support the growth and economic development of the U.S. affiliated pacific islands in the western pacific region by providing high quality training and one-on-one confidential counseling to existing and prospective small businesses.

Vision

The Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network (PISBDCN) supports a well established, respected, adequately funded and capable Small Business Development Center network, recognized by the public, the private sector and host entities as the preeminent economic development agency in the region providing high quality business counseling, training and information. The PISBDCN will continue to build strong, effective and functional partnerships while recognizing the cultural diversity of its constituents and will seek to overcome any barriers to their participation in the PISBDCN's programs and activities, including those arising from differences of languages and culture.

Network Director's Address



Frederick Granillo, MBA
PISBDCN Network Director
Lead Center Guam SBDC
Director

Ladies and gentlemen, valued entrepreneurs, and esteemed partners,

It is with great pleasure and honor that I reflect on the achievements of the Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network in 2023. This year has been a testament to the unwavering determination and resilience of our small business community in the face of unprecedented challenges. Despite the tumultuous economic climate and natural disaster faced, our network has continued to serve as a beacon of hope and support for aspiring and existing small business owners throughout the region.

Throughout the past year, the SBDC network has remained steadfast in its commitment to fostering entrepreneurship, providing critical resources, and delivering tailored guidance to empower small businesses. Our dedicated team of advisors has worked diligently to offer personalized consulting, training workshops, and access to vital capital, enabling entrepreneurs to navigate the complexities of starting, sustaining, and growing their ventures.

Furthermore, we have forged invaluable partnerships with local and regional stakeholders, government agencies, and corporate entities to amplify our impact and expand the reach of our services. Together, we have cultivated a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem that is driving innovation, creating jobs, and stimulating economic growth across the Pacific Islands.

Looking ahead, we are resolute in our dedication to amplifying our efforts and enhancing our support for small businesses. We remain steadfast in our mission to empower entrepreneurs, facilitate economic development, and drive prosperity throughout our island communities.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to our network's remarkable team, our invaluable partners, and, most importantly, the resilient entrepreneurs who inspire us every day. Together, we will continue to champion the spirit of enterprise and pave the way for a brighter, more prosperous future for the Pacific Islands.



Frederick Granillo
PISBDCN



Michael Taijeron, Jr.
PISBDCN



Faith Antol
PISBDCN



Kenneth Hizon
Guam SBDC



Myracle Mugol
Guam SBDC



Laurine Sablan
Guam SBDC



Ketsen Haregaichig
Chuuk SBDC



Cassandra Dereas
Chuuk SBDC



Skiller Jackson
Kosrae SBDC



Emily O'Steen
Kosrae SBDC



Elsina Sepe Tolenna
Kosrae SBDC



Ltelatk "Lte" Fritz
Palau SBDC



Alfia Alfonso
Palau SBDC



Leeno Aikuij
RMI SBDC



Zorina Tayag
RMI SBDC



James Limar
Yap SBDC



Geraldine Mitagyow
Yap SBDC



Helen Tinan
Yap SBDC

The PISBDCN Team

OUR NETWORK

Guam SBDC



University of Guam
303 University Dr.
Mangilao, GU

RMI SBDC

Office of Commerce,
Investment & Tourism
Majuro, MH



Palau SBDC

National Development
Bank of Palau Vicinity
Airai, PM



Yap SBDC

Yap Small Business
Incubator
Colonia, Yap. FM



Chuuk SBDC

Nepukos Village
Weno, Chuuk, FM



Kosrae SBDC

College of
Micronesia
Tofol, Kosrae, FM



Pohnpei SBDC

Pohnpei State
Government
Kolonia, Pohnpei,
FM



The Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network (PISBDCN) is a partnership between the U.S. Small Business Administration and the University of Guam. Requirements have been established for the implementation of the SBDC program in the U.S. Territory of Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (Yap, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Pohnpei), and the Republic of Palau.

Annual Impact

Service Snapshot

Women-Owned = 45
Veteran-Owned = 4
Minority = 174 Clients



Jobs Created

46 Jobs created

Clients Counseled

323 Counseled
1,102 Counseling Hours



of Trainings

83 Training Sessions
1,554 Training Attendees
227 Training Hours

Business Expansions

956 Jobs Retained



New Businesses

15 New Businesses

Capital Infusion

Total Loan & Equity= \$183,897

Access to Capital

- Traditional Bank Loans
- SBA-Guaranteed Loans
- Equity Capital Investment
- Federal Funding



**Total
Loans
15**

**Total
Loan Amount
\$141,362**

**Total
Equity
8**

**Total
Equity Amount
\$42,535**

Guam Demographics



Population

173,534



Ethnicity

CHamoru: 37.3%
Filipino: 26.3%
White: 7.1%



Key Industries

Tourism, Federal
Expenditures,
Constructions



GDP

\$6.12 billion

FSM Demographics



Population

113,131



Ethnicity

Chuukese: 48.8%
Pohnpeian: 24.2%
Kosraean: 6.2%
Yapese: 12%



Key Industries

Tourism,
Farming



GDP

\$404 million



RMI Demographics



Population

42,050



Ethnicity

Marshallese: 95.6%
Mix: 5.9%
Other: 0.4%



Key Industries

Fisheries
Wholesale, Retails,
Public Administration



GDP

\$260 million



Palau Demographics



Population

18,024



Ethnicity

Palauan: 73%
Asian: 21.7%
Carolinian: 2%



Key Industries

Tourism,
Fishing,
Agriculture



GDP

\$218 million



Minagof Music Presents Kindermusik: A Musical Approach to Child Enrichment

Jennifer Ungacta Chau, a dedicated CHamoru mother of four, has always embraced the value of family and lifelong learning. Despite her background of working for a multinational corporation, her entrepreneurial spirit drove her to pursue her dream of being her own boss while prioritizing her family. Her journey with Kindermusik, an early childhood enrichment program, began 18 years ago in Taiwan. Witnessing its transformative impact on her shy, developmentally delayed child, Jennifer recognized the potential. Seizing the opportunity, she pursued formal training, coupled with her pre-existing passionate commitment to childhood development through music, and became her own boss.

Kindermusik, designed for children from infancy to age 7 (with Jennifer's specialty focusing on the 0-4 age group), offers 45 minutes of joyful music activities. Parents and caregivers participate in classes featuring fingerplays, singalongs, instrument exploration, circle dances,

creative movement, and musical storytelling. Beyond the classroom, parents can extend learning at home, observing the positive impact on their child's physical, language, cognitive, and social-emotional development.

Upon returning to Guam, Jennifer recognized a significant gap in enrichment activities for children under the age of five. Her deep belief in the benefits of music for literacy and child development convinced her that she needed to start her business.

Along with her 18 years of Kindermusik experience from Taiwan, and knowledge as a parent who had applied music and stories in her children's upbringing, she understood the impact of building a community to support mothers and families. This motivated her to make her services accessible to the families of Guam, and she started Minagof Music.

Starting her own business was a personal and professional challenge for Jennifer. She initially funded the venture from her own savings, operating on a shoestring budget. She focused on networking and building connections with parents who were unfamiliar with her type of services, but soon became her client base. The process was slow, as she was essentially starting from scratch, but her

determination fueled her efforts. One of the biggest challenges Jennifer encountered was introducing her services to people who had never experienced or seen them before.

Convincing parents of the benefits of Kindermusik, from bonding to setting the stage for success in school, required effective communication and marketing strategies.

Jennifer is determined to overcome this challenge and build awareness about her business. Jennifer's journey had its triumphs as well. One memorable moment was the smooth process of obtaining her business license, despite the potential setbacks. She also cherished what her son calls a "rockstar" moment when, with limited social media exposure, she managed to secure a space for marketing at a popular holiday fair on short notice. Her showcase of services



Read more on page 16...

Ulei – M & M by Mesiwal Madlutk

m & M is a small company started by Ms. Mesiwal Madlutk who makes and sells handmade coconut candy, called ulei. Mesiwal learned how to make ulei from her mom, following her mother's recipe. In fact, Mesiwal decided to carry out her mom's legacy by continuing to make the ulei and sharing the delicious treat with others.

Traditionally, ulei has been made and eaten as a dessert item during special family or village gatherings. Mesiwal only started selling the ulei about five years ago when her mother could no longer make the handmade coconut candy. At that time, the ulei was only sold at two local retail outlets, a small mom-and-pop store in Aimeliik and another local store in Airai.

After attending a workshop in 2022, Mesiwal reached out to the Palau Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to seek assistance in improving and expanding her operations. Mesiwal has been learning how to access new markets, including getting into organic certification through the Pacific Organic Ethical Trade Community (POETCom).

As Mesiwal continued to seek assistance from Palau SBDC, she decided to submit

an expression of interest for a small grant from the United Nations International Office for Migration (IOM). After attending another training workshop by Palau SBDC, Mesiwal sought further one-on-one business counseling to develop the narrative story for the grant application. During the counseling, Mesiwal also received advice on how to improve her logo and labels for her products.

Mesiwal was able to get a \$5000 grant through the Small Grants for Entrepreneurs under the Gender Empowerment project funded by the United States Department of State through the IOM Palau. The grant has allowed her to purchase equipment to increase production and has helped her improve the labels and packaging of the ulei. With the new packaging, Ulei – M&M by Mesiwal Madlutk is now sold at two of Palau's major supermarkets.

As a member of Ngerutechei village, in Ngeremlengui, Mesiwal wanted to include part of her heritage and identity to be

Read more on page 16...

Business Name: M & M
Owner: Ms. Mesiwal Madlutk
Business Type: Local Manufacturer
Contact Number: (680) 775-2157
Email: madlutk416@gmail.com



Kindermusik Continues...

made a lasting impression on the fair organizers, who accommodated her within 24 hours of the event and felt that it is absolutely needed for the community.

Jennifer's short-term goals include educating parents about the benefits of Kindermusik and expanding her reach to more centers willing to host the program, such as community centers and childcare facilities. She aims to promote Kindermusik as a valuable tool for early childhood development. In the long term, Jennifer envisions her program becoming a part of afterschool programs and community centers, further enriching the lives of children on Guam. She also aspires to cultivate a team of early childhood music and movement specialists to ensure the continuity and growth of her mission.

For those aspiring to start their own businesses, Jennifer offers valuable advice:

-Don't quit your day job prematurely, especially during the early stages of your business. Maintaining a stable income is crucial unless you have access to significant funding.

-Be prepared to pivot and adapt to changing circumstances. The business landscape can shift rapidly, so flexibility and readiness are key.

-Network actively. Collaborate, cross-promote, and seek opportunities to provide your services.

-Build a strong community and nurture

customer relationships. Jennifer ensures that each child and parent feel welcome and valued in her business, as personal connections can be powerful tools for growth and happiness. "Minagof" is CHamoru for happiness.

Minagof Music and Jennifer Ungacta Chau's journey exemplify the impact of dedication and a passion for enriching the lives of children and families. With her vision and unwavering commitment, Jennifer dreams to bring the joy of music and learning to the children of Guam, and we are excited to witness it.

Owner: Jennifer Ungacta Chau
Contact Information:
minagof.hu@gmail.com
Email for more information
class details



Ulei continues...



captured in the product labeling. In the legends of Ngerutechei, it is believed that the gods used the rainbows to travel to Ngerutechei's fishing grounds. Therefore the final logo captures the story while making it distinct from other candy makers in Palau.

Starting this small business has been very rewarding for Mesiwal, as she has always had an interest in owning a small business of her own. By making and selling the ulei, Mesiwal gets to showcase part of her heritage and culture as a Palauan. Her goal is to continue selling the handmade coconut candies in Palau, with a vision of exporting in the future.

Mesiwal's advice to other entrepreneurs is "Don't give up on your dream. It's not easy, but in the "end" you're happy with your success."



Elsina Opens ELSI-2 in Finpihkal, Lelu, Kosrae

Elsi-2 is a retail store located in Finpihkal, Lelu Municipality in Kosrae. The store is owned and operated by a Kosraean native, Elsina Sepe Tolenna. Elsi-2 opened its doors to help residents with their daily necessities as well as to help Elsina and her family.

Elsina Sepe Tolenna is married to Tolenna Tolenna. They both reside in the beautiful village of Malem and together have four (4) children, 3 daughters and 1 son. For quite some time, Elsina and her husband Tolenna, were selling take-outs and pastries. The demand for such items grew, which led the couple to start their own business by building a new outlet.

In an interview between Elsina and her Business Advisor, Emily O'Steen from the Kosrae SBDC, Elsina said "I would say that starting a take-out business is an endeavor that continues to be lucrative, where you have people vying to get a tasty meal to enjoy. I know that selling take-outs may start as an ordinary task and it can also become an income-earning career fueled with passion." Elsina shared her passion that dates back to her childhood, helping her grandmother make different kinds of pastries. "I have been helping her since, and I feel that the experiences I have with her will also assist me in managing a small

business on my own." With this passion and experience, Elsina also said that the market for retail businesses is growing significantly. Many consumers prefer shopping at a nearby and convenient location, and as a result, many new retail stores have opened recently in the area, including hers. Elsina's biggest challenge during the process was "to seek lending funds from the financial institutions and compiling a workable business plan." She gives credit to the Kosrae SBDC and her business advisor, Emily O'Steen, for helping her with understanding the paper works needed and coming up with a business proposal. The business proposal resulted in her business getting funding from the FSM Development Bank, which she expressed was her most memorable triumph in the start-up process. It is Elsina's long-term goal to expand her business to other areas such as selling local produce. She ended the interview with a piece of advice, "Starting a business can be challenging but help is just a phone call away. Call SBDC Staff!"

Business Name: ELSI-2
Owner: Elsina Sepe T. Tolenna
Type of Business: Retail Store
Location: Finpihkal, Lelu
Hours of Operation: 7 am to 10 pm
Contact Information: (691) 970-9227



Didi's Store: Providing Essential Items to Alinglaplap, Atoll

Didi's Store is a convenient store located in Jeh, Alinglaplap. The store supplies the outer island of the Republic of Marshall Islands with items such as rice, flour, sugar, canned meats, and other exported products.

Didi's Store is owned and operated by Wellington Johnny, a native of Alinglaplap. Wellington is the second oldest son and a father of two young men. Aside from owning and operating his store, Wellington is also a classroom teacher at one of the outer island's school where he also served as a school principal.

Wellington decided to start his business, ultimately, to support and assist his mom and dad, as well as his siblings. He saw in his island a scarce of exported items such as rice and flour and decided to solve that issue by opening up Didi's Store. In an interview with the RMI SBDC Director and Business Advisor, Kathleen Candle-Jikit, Wellington said, "As we all know, in the outer islands there are not enough stores to accommodate especially the needs and wants of the people in Alinglaplap Atoll. Nowadays, people in the outer islands are always demanding rice, flour, sugar, canned meats and other exported items. I know if I start up a new retail store it will help those people in the Jeh, Ailinglaplap and it will get more revenue. People can come and exchange their copra and handicraft for foods and cash."

Wellington sought help in understanding the business industry to get this plan moving forward, and he did.

"I would say that the Small Business Development Center has really helped me in accomplishing my goals. It really helped me in fulfilling my dreams, too. It gave me an opportunity to expand my knowledge in the business industry because I have never written my own business plan before. With the help of their very dependable and caring staff, I got my chance to do so and to learn from it. The SBDC office is always there whenever I needed help not by doing it for me but letting me do it on my own to get my own experience. All we knew at first was to apply for a small business loan, but I didn't know that I needed a business plan in order to proceed with the next step. I was starting to give up but once I had gained the right information and where exactly to go, I was good to go. I learned from myself. By asking the right questions and knowing where to go to find the right answers. I also see their advertisements and I would always read and update myself whenever something new comes up. I would like to thank the SBDC staff here on Majuro for all their hard work and their motivation because if it weren't for them, I wouldn't have gone this far with my business.

The start-up process was not very difficult because my friends told me about the process before. First, I came the SBDC office to seek assistant about the business plan and they told me about the process. They were always ready for whatever questions we had, and it did not take long for us to get our small business loan

approved because they were helping us every step of the way. I got fund from Marshall Islands Development Bank.

Wellington mentioned his short-term plan is to sell food and expand to household items for 3 years. His long-term plans are to build a new warehouse for copra and buy one diesel truck to help copra maker to transport their copra. He is also looking into opening a transport service.

"I would recommend for people who wants to start their own business would be to seek help and look for the SBDC office because based on my experience, I know it's worth it. Thank you SBDC for all your help!" -Wellington Johnny

Business Name: DIDI'S STORE
Owner(s): WELLINGTON JOHNNY
Type of Business: RETAIL
Location: JEH, AILINGLAPLAP
Hours of Operation: 6am to 10pm
Contact information: PH: 692-455-5566



Network Office



671-735-2590



sbdc@pacificsbdc.com



www.pacificsbdc.com



303 University Dr. Mangilao, GU

DISCLAIMER: The Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network (PISBDCN) at the University of Guam – School of Business & Public Administration is partially funded by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. Requests for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals with at least two weeks advance notice. For arrangements, please contact Guam SBDC, P.O. Box 5014 Mangilao, Guam 96923, Tel: (671)735-2590, or Email sbdc@pacificsbdc.com. Services are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis.



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