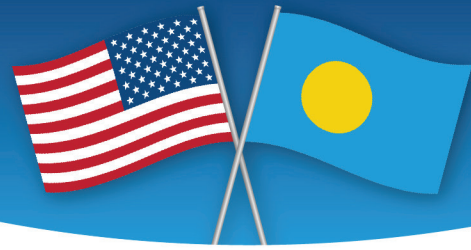


Palau and the United States of America



Partnership Brings Progress to Palau Residents, Communities

When Joshua Darrow of Korrer retired from his government job in 2010, his pension would not stretch far enough to make ends meet. With a family to support and two children in college, he began looking for ways to earn a living.

“I could hardly pay my bills,” he explained. “I worked as a fisherman and later had a food wagon, but those did not work out. Then I had an idea and a good location for a retail store but did not know how to make it a reality.”

That’s when Joshua heard about the United States Small Business Development Center (SBDC). He made an appointment to meet with its director, Ltlatk (Lte) Fritz.

“She explained how SBDC could help me start a retail business,” he said. “We went to workshops, and she helped me write a business plan. We decided what to sell to the residents and to students since I am near a school. After planning for two years, Lte helped with my loan application.”

A few weeks later, Joshua’s dream was coming true; less than a year after opening, the JM Mini Mart is now profitable. He is proud of his accomplishments and excited about the future.

“I couldn’t have opened my store without her assistance and the SBDC. I can pay my bills and have money left! I even have a little in savings for my family. More importantly,” he added, “the store brought the community together. People used to go to a town to buy things. Now, they come here. We sometimes eat, play music, and talk. Neighborhood children can also walk here.”

Joshua’s venture shaped the future of his own kids, too.

“When I worked in government, my children didn’t like business. But my son told me last summer he wants to major in business. He finishes his fourth year of college in May.” His son, who has a full scholarship from the United States, travels back and forth freely from Palau to Guam to attend Pacific International University due to Palau’s relationship with the U.S.

Do you have a business idea? U.S. Small Business Development Center counselors offer confidential counseling free to help people start, sustain, and/or grow a business. The SBDC program is one of many benefits residents of Palau enjoy through their continued partnership with the United States. For more information, see www.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/progress-through-partnership/.