

Handicraft entrepreneur, SPBD Business Woman of the Year

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Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Photos by Linny Folau



Handicraft entrepreneur and mother of six, Susitina Tesi (45) won the SPBD Business Woman of the Year Award this morning, Friday 18 September, for improving her family handicraft-making business, using the South Pacific Business Development Microfinance program.

Susitina from Ma'ufanga said she joined the program and took out small loans to help expand her family's handicraft business called 'Treasure Island', located upstairs at the central Nuku'alofa Talamahu Market.

Crown Princess Sinaitakala presented Susitina with the award. Funaki Taliai of Kolofo'ou first runner up and Seini Mafile'o of Kolomotu'a, second runner up also received their awards from the princess.

Other awards, including outstanding individual saver, outstanding centre financial education facilitator, outstanding centre chief and secretary, were awarded by SPBD founder and owner Greg Casagrande.

He founded SPBD in Samoa 15 years ago, and launched the microfinance program in Tonga six-years ago.

"I am proud to say that we have done this by providing the women of Tonga with meaningful economic opportunity. We have provided our members with training, unsecured credit and ongoing guidance to help them start and expand small income generating businesses."

He said SPBD has worked with over 8,000 families in villages across Tongatapu, Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua, providing them with over \$35 million pa'anga of unsecured credit.

“We have done all of this to help our members build small businesses, improve their families living conditions and provide for costs of their children's education.”

The awards ceremony was attended by many of the SPBD women's groups at the Queen Salote College Hall.





SOURCE: Matangi Tonga Online.

<http://matangitonga.to/2015/09/18/handicraft-entrepreneur-spb-d-business-woman-year>