



VIPs pose with the proud graduates. Back row from left: Mayor Charles Abraham, Internal Affairs Secretary Daisy Momotaro, instructor Janta Lang, Johnitha Muller, Lisa Charley, Nema Saimon, Somina Saimon, Daisia Alee, Daisey Elias, Minna Alee (in front of Daisey), Dr. Irene Taafaki, and Senator Kessai Note representing the Nitijela. Front row from left: Instructor Airine Keju Jieta, Elwina Henry, Anako Lokjeb, and Zebora Lang.

Mejit congratulates its jaki-ed graduates



Right, weaving apprentice Minna Alee poses with some mats. Left, Daisey Elias with her mother, Mejit council woman Anatha Elias. Photos: Tamara Greenstone Alefaio.



"You can see in their faces the same strength as the graduates from the Majuro weavers program," Dr. Irene Taafaki said after enjoying a special day on Mejit Island. "The confidence the apprentices develop as part of their jaki-ed training is really exciting to see."

Taafaki, Director of the University of the South Pacific's Majuro campus, joined a group of officials on a trip to the northern isle last Thursday for its celebration of Liberation Day and the graduation ceremony of 10 apprentice weavers of jaki-ed (clothing mats).

"Mejit has been an important part of the revival of jaki-ed since the beginning," Taafaki said.

This is partly because Mejit is home for two of the expert weavers, Susan Jieta and sister-in-law Airine Keju Jieta. "But Mejit is also significant for us because of the example of wonderful leadership support from the Senator (Dennis Momotaro) and Mayor (Charles Abraham)."

The four-month apprentice program is one of six National Training Council-sponsored workshops that

have been held in the last few years, the first of which was the Majuro program, held in the specially built, thatch covered weavers

house in USP's "secret garden."

"There's another reason the Mejit graduation was special," Taafaki said.

"It was decided for the first time that one of our successful Majuro apprentice graduates, Betty Lobwij, has the skills to represent the program in Mejit and monitor how the training was going."

The quality of the jaki-ed has been improving at an outstanding rate, with the creations on Mejit being

"just superb," Taafaki said.

"I also noted something I hadn't seen on Majuro: It appears that the apprentices' relatives were very involved in the program. It's not an individual project, it seems to be very much a family affair."

Taafaki's trip to Mejit was her first outer island expedition in many years.

"The hospitality was wonderful. Even with the drought, the island is really a most pleasant place to be."

Tamara's time warp



Visiting Mejit on Thursday was a particularly special event for USP's Coordinator of Continuing and Community Education, Tamara Greenstone Alefaio, as in 2004-05 she was a WorldTeach volunteer teacher on the island. Her role at USP includes organizing much of the detail for the jaki-ed apprenticeships: "It was just wonderful to visit my family and especially fun because one of the graduates, Daisia Alee (left), was a pupil of mine when she was in sixth grade."

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