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## Wotje (Inclusive of Wodmej) Community: Marshall Islands Hazard, Vulnerability, Capacity Mapping Exercise

### Introduction:

During May 2013, the International Organization conducted a Hazard, Vulnerability, Capacity, Mapping exercises with Wotje and Wodmej community members, in partnership with Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI). HVCM is a component of the Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction & Education (CADRE) program implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with funding available through the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (AUS DFAT). Wotje Atoll HVCM was later updated in November 2015 with funding from the United States Government through the United States Agency for International Development's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA). There were 43 community members who participated in both sessions. Participants included traditional leaders, national and local government workers, teachers, women's clubs members, NGO members, and other community members.



### Community Breakdown

Male	29
Female	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>
Children	
Disabled	
Government	

PHOTOS SHOWN HERE ARE FROM 2013,  
2015 AND 2018



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## Wotje (Inclusive of Wodmej) Community Profile Statement

**Background:** Wotje, the largest and most populated of the 72 islands that make up Wotje Atoll, is the main hub. Along with Northern Islands High School, Wotje hosts the national and local governments, the power plant, Bank of Marshall Islands (BOMI), National Telecommunications and the air strip where small airplanes operated by Air Marshall Islands (AMI) are able to land.

From the RMI Census of 2011, the population of Wotje Atoll is 723 people. In Wodmej Island community there are approximately 143 people. Government employment (police, teachers, etc.) is the core dependency in Wotje. Alternate sources are fishing, running small canteens, mini stores, handicrafts, gardening, farming and copra. Some families receive money from families living abroad in USA mainland, Guam, Hawaii, Ebeye and Majuro.

The Wotje Atoll Local Government oversees activities around Wotje. Decisions are overseen by the mayor and council with close collaboration and coordination with the traditional and church leadership. Active social groups in Wotje include women's clubs and youth clubs- that are involved in activities such as farming and planting trees to beautify the community etc.. The Likjeron Club is a particularly active women's group currently involved in a gardening project.

Wotje and Wodmej communities are facing the negative impacts of Climate Change. Their coastlines are eroding. Their wells and limited crops are threatened by salt water intrusion.

Between the two communities, there are ethnic groups from China, Philippines, Kiribati, Fiji and United States of America living among the local people, mostly involved in retail businesses and teaching at the schools.

Primary social concerns raised by community members include alcohol abuse, especially of the locally brewed *jekajeje*, and tobacco abuse.

**Geography and location:** Wotje Atoll is situated 9°21'-9°34'N and 169°49'-170°.07'E, at the center of the Ratak Chain.

**Hazards:** The most unforgettable natural hazards shared by community members were the 1992 typhoon, 2013 drought, and most recent king tide events of 2014. Identified and prioritized hazards as a result of the HVCM session in Wotje are: wave inundation, sea level rise, drought, extreme heat, and coastal erosion. For Wodmej, community members were concerned with wave inundation and sea level rise, drought and extreme heat, diseases and Typhoon.



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Wotje atoll was among the recipients of humanitarian aid due to the drought national disaster declaration made by RMI President Christophe Loeak in 2013 and also for the 2016 drought that RMI President Doctor Hilda Heine declared.

**Capacities:** Wotje community's main strengths are involved members of the local and national government, and active traditional and church leaders. The fact that Wotje houses a power plant, banking services (for convenient money transfers), Post Office and a substation of the National Telecommunications gives people in Wotje a sense of connection to the outside world. Organized groups of women, youths, and men contribute to the community with improvement projects such as replanting along the coastlines, upkeep and maintenance of the local airport landing strip. The airport has also recently blessed and opened a terminal for the comfort and sheltering of passengers of Air Marshall Islands. Wotje has a jail and police station kept by the national and local police force.

There is a health center not too far from the Northern Islands High School.

From elaborately constructed underground concrete water harvesting and irrigation system, bunkers, to the mounted rusting gun outside the UCCP Church, evidence of the former military occupation can be found all over Wotje. Some of the historical buildings are still serviceable and inhabited. Some are used as shelters during typhoon events as they are made of thick concrete. Northern Islands High School and Wotje Public Elementary School, also serve as evacuation shelter in the case of rapid onset events.

Principals of the three schools in Wotje Atoll (Northern Islands High School, Wotje Public Elementary School, and Wodmej Elementary School) are active leaders, not just in the school system, but also in the community. WUTMI and KUMIT (Women United Together Marshall Islands) have active chapters in Wotje.



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## Hazard Vulnerability Risk Map



*Wotje, Wotje*



*Wojte, Wodmej*





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## Hazard Vulnerability Matrixes

Hazard	Impact/Risks	Vulnerabilities/ Weaknesses	Adaptive Capacities/ Strengths	Short-term Actions
1. Drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Dirty Water</li> <li>-Dirty Environment by pigs</li> <li>-Plants and trees are dying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Not enough proper bathrooms</li> <li>-Not enough medical supplies</li> <li>-No proper sewage system</li> <li>-Not enough vehicles</li> <li>-Not enough health assistant</li> <li>-Not enough workers to keep drinking waters clean</li> <li>-Not enough awareness being done to educate the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Healthy local food</li> <li>-There is an Health center and a health assistant</li> <li>-Well trained people who are capable and trained in CPR</li> <li>-Council vehicles and AMI flight (in case of emergency)</li> <li>-fresh ground water has been located</li> <li>-Concrete water catchment have been build</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communities to work together to build new concrete water catchments and repair old ones</li> <li>-preserve local foods such as Jenkun (Made of ripe pandanus), Bwiro (made of ripe breadfruit)</li> </ul>
2. Sea Level Rising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Coastal erosion</li> <li>-Destroy houses near shoreline</li> <li>-Salt water ruining plants and crops</li> <li>-ground water are salty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No seawalls on lagoon and ocean sides</li> <li>-not enough trees planted on coastlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Health Center</li> <li>-Local Council, school and NGO Vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Plant more trees on the coastline (Kōnat and pine trees)</li> <li>-Build Seawalls</li> </ul>
3. Diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Dirty Water Catchments</li> <li>-Dirty Environment by free roaming pigs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-not enough proper bathrooms</li> <li>-not enough medical supplies</li> <li>-no proper sewage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-health center</li> <li>-health assistant</li> <li>-Local council</li> <li>-Local vehicles to transport patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Plant and preserve local food (Such as Jaankun and bwiro)</li> <li>-Clean the environment and</li> </ul>





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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–pink eye</li> <li>–diarrhea</li> <li>–Chikingunya</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>system</li> <li>–not enough health assistants</li> <li>–not enough worker to keep drinking water clean</li> <li>–not enough awareness on health</li> <li>–unhealthy eating habits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–well trained people on CPR</li> <li>–Healthy local food and drinks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>homes</li> <li>–Clean water catchments</li> </ul>
4. Typhoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–People died</li> <li>–Homes swept away</li> <li>–Plants and crops were destroyed</li> <li>–grave ruined</li> <li>–ground water contaminated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–No seawalls</li> <li>–Limited resources</li> <li>–weak homes</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–DisCom has been established</li> <li>–Evacuation Shelters in place</li> <li>–well train people on CPR</li> <li>–Well train people on DSAR</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Emergency Transportation</li> <li>–clean drinking water and food</li> <li>–build a stronger evacuation shelter</li> <li>–Emergency communication devices</li> </ul>

Community Vulnerabilities/ weaknesses	How can we overcome or stop this weakness?	Community strengths/ Capacities	How can we build on this strength?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Homes &amp; resources too close to shoreline</li> <li>2. Lack of plans</li> <li>3. Lack of awareness</li> <li>4. No seawalls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relocate away from shoreline to high ground</li> <li>2. Build Seawalls on lagoon and ocean sides</li> <li>2. Education</li> <li>3. Informing public of location of evacuation centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Typhoon evacuation center</li> <li>2. DisCom has been established</li> <li>3. Evacuation Shelters have been assessed by IOM Engineer</li> <li>4. Concrete water catchment from WW2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build a stronger evacuation center</li> <li>1a. Generator</li> <li>1b. Maintain water tanks</li> <li>2. Provide more disaster related trainings</li> <li>4.Drain out and repair the water catchment from WW2</li> </ul>



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## Community Action Plan Table

Kauatata ko rejelet jukjuk im bed eo <i>Identified Hazards/Threat</i>	Buñten ko rekka <i>Proposed solutions</i>		Won ej lolorjake? <i>Who is responsible?</i>		Naat eo enaj kōjeimooj buñten kein? <i>When are the tasks to be implemented?</i>
	Ta ko emōj kommani? <i>What has been done?</i>	Ta ko jemaroñ kommani? <i>What can be done?</i>	Ilo jukjuk im bed eo? <i>(Within Community?)</i>	Tu nabōj en jukjuk im bed eo? <i>(Outside Community?)</i>	
Iuwetak in lojet/No <i>Sea Level Rise Wave Inundation</i>	NIHS seawall Elon jikin emoj ekkat ie	1)Ekkat wojke berijot ko (kōñe im joñ) 2)Komman seawall lik im iar/berijot ko	-Council eo -Alap ro -Schools	- R&D - NGOs - OEPPC - CMAC - WUTMI	2019
Mōrā/det <i>Drought/Extreme heat</i>	-Eloñ aibojlal -Water monitor team have been trained -Fresh groundwater has been identified to serve as a backup during dry periods	1) Jerbal ibben dron nan koman & kokaal nien dren ko ilo aolep em 2) Preserve local food (e.g. bwiro, jenkun)	- Council - Alap ro - Kajojo baamle - NIHS	-IOM -Red Cross -R&D -WUTMI	2019



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<b>Nañinmij</b> <i>Diseases</i>	-Dispensary in Place -Health Assitant	1) Kejbarok mona/dren ko kijed/nimed 2) Karreo jikin jokwe im kiki ko 3) Request more MOH mobile team visits 4) Request specialized doctor & equipment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Alap ro</li> <li>• Baamle ko kajojo</li> <li>• EPA</li> </ul>	MOH MIRCS EPA GoRMI	Dec. 2019
<b>Kōto</b> <i>Typhoon</i>	-Ededelok ejaake Disaster Committee eo an Wotje -Trained on First Aid/CPR -Shelters have been assessed by Engineer	1) Kejbarok mona/dren ko kijed/nimed 2) Ejaake juon plan nan komakūt armij ilo ien idiñ in 3) Kalōk juon jikin kone eo im e tiljōk 4) Kein kōnono ilo ien emergency 5) Emergency Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local gov't</li> <li>• DisCom</li> </ul>	MOH NDC IOM MIRCS GoRMI	Dec. 2019





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## Summary

The Wotje (and Wodmej) community is the sixth community in the RMI to have completed the Hazard Vulnerabilities Community Mapping exercise (HVCM). The community members have worked hard and produced a community action plan. It is now within their hands to start implementing the activities written on their action plan. The challenge now is for them acquire the necessary skills, initiatives, and resources to implement their prioritized activities to better adapt to climate change and reduce their risks for disasters associated with climate related hazards. The Wotje chapter of WUTMI will continue to support the action plan for Wotje (inclusive of Wodmej) community. IOM and WUTMI will continue to render support as required.