

IOM Rebuilds Destroyed Homes and Infrastructures Following Typhoon Wutip in the Federated States of Micronesia

When Typhoon Wutip struck the Pacific Island States and parts of Asia in 2019, more than 11,500 people were left insecure. In the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), 136 homes were completely destroyed and 42 public infrastructures damaged. Major agricultural crops like taro, breadfruit, and coconut sustained heavy damage.

Residents who lost their homes to the natural disaster were forced to live in unsafe, makeshift homes or move in with friends and family members until they could make alternative living arrangements. Etikwa John is a resident of Chuuk State, one of the hardest hit in FSM, and a mother to three young children.

“When our house fell apart, we made a shed out of a tin roof and have been living there ever since. It’s a relief to live in a home again, and we are much safer now if another storm were to hit.”

Etikwa John, Chuuk resident

Following the emergency response activities in 2019, in August 2022, IOM completed the first phase of construction and repair work in FSM’s Chuuk Lagoon, a stretch of sea in the North Pacific encircled by coral reef that spans 225 kilometers (140mi). The lagoon

inhabitants. In Polle, Udot, Fanapanges, Tol, Uman and Siis islands of the lagoon, IOM handed over 29 typhoon-resistant homes to community members like Etikwa, roughly 145 household members, equipped with individual water tanks to ensure residents have access to clean water.

Three public facilities, a school, health dispensary and community hall, in Polle and Tol islands that were badly damaged by the storm were also renovated and handed over to the Chuuk Municipal Government.

IOM, under the United States Agency for International Development-funded Disaster Resilience in the Compact Nations (RESILIENCE) project, has been working in collaboration with the National and State Governments of FSM to mobilize construction materials through large shipments and provide reconstruction assistance to community members affected by Typhoon Wutip. Reconstruction work has been completed with the active participation of Community Working Groups trained and mentored by IOM engineers.

In November, the team in Chuuk expanded its work to the outer islands of the Mortlocks region where, by the end of 2022, the project completed construction and handed over 10 typhoon-resistant homes to community members in Losap and Oneop.

In addition to reconstruction assistance, the project works to strengthen the disaster management capacities of the Governments of FSM and the Republic of the Marshall Islands and local communities, and to enhance the provision of life-saving and early recovery assistance.



JRMN virtual meeting on 26 Aug. to relaunch the network.
Photo: IOM 2022

Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Platform Revived in the Federated States of Micronesia

On 26 August 2022, the Joint Risk Management Network (JRMN), the Federated States of Micronesia’s (FSM’s) Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation platform led by the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Emergency Management (DECCEM), was relaunched following a lull of nearly five years. The network brings together over 70 representatives from National and State Governments, municipalities, NGOs, Embassies, UN agencies and Civil Society Organizations to work jointly and strengthen disaster preparedness and recovery in FSM.

Supported through the RESILIENCE project, the virtual launch enabled participating agencies to update the network’s scope and review key documents including FSM’s National Disaster Response Plan and National Standard Operating Procedures for Emergency and Disaster Response.

JRMN seeks to strengthen coordination among Government agencies, to ensure first responders identify Government priorities, and to serve as a platform to disseminate timely information to partners. The network also offers an important venue for integrating gender and inclusivity into preparedness and response efforts and supporting under-represented community members and vulnerable populations.



Etikwa John and her family receive storm-resistant home constructed under the RESILIENCE project in Chuuk Lagoon. Photo: IOM 2022/Lee Perez

Drought Preparedness and Rapid Response Strengthened in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The strengthening effects of El Niño make the low-lying atolls of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) vulnerable to severe drought conditions. According to the National Centers for Environmental Information 2021 annual report, the northern Marshall Islands experienced drought for more than half the year and three of the island nation's 29 atolls Kwajalein, Jaluit, and Wotje had ranked the driest in over 35 years.

In the remote outer islands of the RMI, where communities rely heavily on rainwater as a primary drinking source, droughts cause available water sources to be drier and saltier, posing a great challenge for communities to access water for household consumption.

In previous years, Reverse Osmosis (RO), a water purification process, proved to be an effective way to avail potable water to communities. In 2022, IOM in close collaboration with RMI's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), retrieved and maintained RO units, batteries and solar panels in need of repair from Wotje, Maloelap and Mejit atolls, as well as NDMO RO units stored in IOM's warehouse, to ensure they are ready for dispatch to municipalities experiencing, or exposed to, drought. IOM also procured and prepositioned RO unit spare parts to support rapid response when needs arise.

To ensure RO units can be maintained locally



Technicians in RMI conduct maintenance checks on RO Units to prepare for upcoming drought seasons. Photo: IOM 2022

and to strengthen the capacity of first responders to mitigate the impacts of droughts, in July 2022, technicians representing 13 of the affected atolls received training with support from IOM. Technicians were trained on maintenance and troubleshooting of RO units, weather patterns, Drought Situational Overview reporting, water monitoring and treatment, as well as the NDMO's early warning systems.

Additionally, in December 2022, IOM in coordination with NDMO, organized a tabletop exercise to simulate drought response activities in RMI and identify areas to strengthen preparedness for the upcoming dry season.

Participants of the tabletop exercise, including the Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster, Food Security and Agriculture Cluster and other key actors, recommended ways to improve RMI's drought response plan and strengthen coordination between first responders.

With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Australian Aid, IOM actively supported the NDMO and the WASH cluster in drought response and preparedness interventions in line with RMI's Immediate Drought Response Plan 2022.



IOM and partners at a tabletop exercise in the Republic of Palau Photo: IOM 2022/Portia Franz

IOM Supports Palau to Build Community Resilience and Preparedness to Natural Hazards

In the Republic of Palau, IOM and partners conducted tabletop exercises to test emergency response plans and procedures and address operational gaps by working closely with relevant authorities.

[Read more](#)

Responding to Climate Security Challenges in the Pacific: Climate Security Risk Assessment Profiles Presented at COP27



The Government of Tuvalu, in partnership with the Government of Kiribati, the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and with the support from IOM and UN Development Programme (UNDP), convened a side event at the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, to present summaries of the National Climate Security Risk Assessment Profiles for Tuvalu, Kiribati, and RMI.

The side event aimed at fostering dialogue on ways climate hazards such as droughts and increasing temperatures can strain resources, livelihoods, mobility, Government capacity, and territorial integrity giving rise to instability in the region. Further it aimed to promote ways to mitigate security risks by

employing peace and resilience-building approaches that ensure the safety and well-being of all community groups.

“The assessment profiles will support us in addressing the underlying root causes of fragility before conflict arises. In the RMI, social cohesion is critical, and the profiles will guide actions to protect the resilience and identity of our community as a whole.”

Kathy Jetnil-Kijner, Climate Envoy for the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The comprehensive reports of the risk assessments will be finalized in January 2023 with the aim of serving as a critical tool to mainstream climate security across policies and government sectors and supporting the implementation of the 2018 Boe Declaration Action Plan which recognizes climate change as “the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific.”

The assessment profiles were developed by Adelphi under the Climate Security in the Pacific Project implemented jointly by IOM and UNDP in collaboration with the Governments of RMI, Tuvalu and Kiribati and supported through the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

[Read more](#)



COM students receive certificates for participating in CCA Youth Summit in FSM. Photo: IOM 2022/Haimanot Abebe

Building the Next Generation of Climate Action Leaders

As the climate crisis intensifies and Pacific communities become increasingly vulnerable to its effects, creating a conducive environment for youth to learn and play an active role as advocates and leaders of climate action is key to building resilience in the region. In the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), IOM organized three Youth Leadership Summits for high school and college students to learn about Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation as well as essential project development and leadership skills. Youth who participated in the week-long capacity building workshops funneled these skills into developing mini disaster risk reduction projects and competed to win grants to implement their project.

Water Benders and Trash for Cash are the catchy names of two winning projects in FSM that implemented water preservation and recycling projects supported by IOM. By July 2022, Water Benders constructed and installed a water catchment system to increase access to clean water at the College of Micronesia, in Pohnpei, and Trash 4 Cash installed recycling bins to manage waste disposal on campus.

In RMI, beach and reef cleanup, school gardening, and recycling were among the popular projects proposed by students at the workshop. In 2023, IOM will finance eight mini projects and advise students to refine their activities for better outcomes.

The workshops were organized under the Inclusive Mitigation and Preparedness in Action (IMPACT) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), which seeks to build the resilience of communities and the Governments of FSM, RMI, and Palau to the impacts of natural hazards such as droughts and typhoons.



Participants at CCA workshop in FSM. Photo: IOM 2022/Haimanot Abebe

Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation Programs in the Pacific

Natural hazards may be drivers of migration for countries on the frontlines of climate change such as the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Republic of Kiribati that are facing increasingly frequent and intense hazards.

In line with climate change adaptation (CCA) priorities of the Governments of FSM, RMI, and Kiribati, IOM, with funding

from the IOM Development Fund, is strengthening CCA by empowering Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the region.

In November and December 2022, NGOs, start-up NGOs, CSOs, and individuals participated in Grant Writing and Project Implementation workshops in FSM, RMI and Kiribati. The week-long workshops enabled participating NGOs and CSOs to develop their skills in writing winning grant proposals and developing CCA projects inclusive of cross-cutting themes such as gender mainstreaming, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation.

Participating NGOs were also invited to submit proposals to win grants for outstanding CCA projects. IOM will continue to build the capacity of grant recipients as they implement their projects and will further showcase the projects to government and UN partners to foster partnerships and encourage a whole-of-society approach to climate change adaptation.



Participants at IMPACT kick off workshop in Palau. Photo: IOM 2022/Portia Franz

IOM and Partners Kick Off Program to Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Response in the Republic of Palau

IOM and partners kicked off the Inclusive Mitigation and Preparedness in Action (IMPACT) project on September 9, 2022 in the Republic of Palau. With funding from the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), the two-year IMPACT project of USD 885,000 will work at the state and national levels to support preparedness plans and facilitate and inform national level planning and response efforts.

[Read more](#)

Countering Human Trafficking through Awareness Raising for Youth in Micronesia

IOM's human trafficking and migrant protection programming includes a significant focus on prevention activities, such as outreach and awareness-raising. Within the context of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Republic of Palau, IOM has placed emphasis on targeting youth in recognition of the increasing rates of emigration of young adults who often travel in pursuit of further education or employment opportunities. As the Compacts of Free Association allows Micronesians, Marshallese and Palauan nationals to move freely to the United States without a work permit or visa for indefinite periods, many young people move with little preparation or knowledge about life in the United States increasing their vulnerability to exploitation.

Between August and October 2022, IOM held awareness raising sessions with over 150 students, staff, and teachers at the

College of Micronesia in Pohnpei and Kosrae, Palau Community College and the College of the Marshall Islands. IOM emphasized to participating students the importance of verifying the legitimacy of a hiring employer or company abroad, understanding the terms and conditions of employment, and obtaining and securing required documentation before and after travel.

IOM's efforts are made possible through close collaboration and partnership with the FSM Division of Anti-Human Trafficking Services, the Palau Anti-Human Trafficking Working Group, and the RMI National Taskforce on Human Trafficking with funding from the IOM Development Fund.



Participants at human trafficking workshop in Palau. Photo: IOM 2022



Women groups at newly constructed clam farming tank in Likiep, RMI. Photo: IOM 2022/Laura Freeman

Women's Clam Farming Initiative Launched in the Republic of the Marshall Islands

Women of varying ages huddle around a clam farming tank a few feet from the sea in Likiep atoll, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). They observe the spawning clams, test the tank water, and discuss amongst themselves, ready to embark on a new business venture.

Clams are seldom farmed by women in Likiep, as in many of RMI's outer islands.

In Likiep atoll, located 395kms from Majuro, IOM together with RMI Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) aquaculture team, constructed three raceway tanks and supported the completion of a fourth tank for clam farming aimed at promoting alternative livelihood opportunities for women in the community. In November 2022, a team of IOM and MIMRA staff visited the tank site and ensured the tank was fully operational, equipped with water pumps and piping and filled with water optimal for spawning clams.

Alongside installation works, women of the Kabin lep Women Farmers Association, made up of 63 community members, received a training to develop their skills in collecting clams for spawning, snorkelling, using clam cages, and maintaining the tank.

These women will go on to start clam farming businesses through the Kabin lep Association – a significant step towards empowering women through skill development and income-generation. IOM will continue to monitor and support the group through training by specialist clam farmers, business development and sales support and provision of more technical equipment, such as filter bags, to ensure their businesses are successful.

Under the Ridge to Reef program, funded by the United Nations Development Program, IOM supports the operationalising of Reimaanlok, the RMI National Conservation Area Plan, and works towards supporting the implementation of associated Local Resource Management Plans where livelihood projects can support positive use and conservation of target resources and income generation opportunities.