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THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE PLUS INITIATIVE



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JALUIT ATOLL DESKTOP REVIEW REPORT

Global Climate Change Alliance Plus
Scaling Up Pacific Adaptation (GCCA+ SUPA)
USP Component



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

USP
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
SOUTH PACIFIC

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Honorable Mayor Alington Robert and Honorable Acting Mayor Tone Hertin pre-planned the workshops with the USP consultant and North Pacific In-Country Coordinator. Local Council Executive member Anjar Enos facilitated the coordination of site visits with guidance from the Honorable Minister and Secretary. The traditional leadership of Jaluit Atoll, Lerooj (Chieftess) Emmy Samuel and land owners assisted in facilitating the community engagements on Jabwod. Catering was sponsored by the GCCA+ SUPA project for morning tea and lunch for the two-day workshops on Jabwod which were provided by all 4 church denominations (Catholic, Protestant, Full Gospel and Assemblies of God) on Jabwod. The traditional leadership, Catholic Church and the local government contributed the meeting space at the Catholic Church's community hall.

This desktop review was written by Dustin H. Langidrik, consultant for the University of the South Pacific's capacity building component of the project. The basis of information gathering process is based on the community engagements conducted on Jaluit Atoll from April 28th – May 6th, 2020. The Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS), including the Wellness Center and KUMIT were also key components of the process. The copra processing company (TOBOLAR) was also part of the team engaging the people of Jaluit Atoll by hearing and answering their concerns and ideas on how to improve livelihoods with the services provided by the company. Taitos Amram, an alap (land owner) and community member but residing in Majuro also assisted coordination of engagements during the visit. It is important to note that much of the information gathered for this report was made possible by engaging communities of Jaluit Atoll, in particular the Jaluit Atoll Local Government, the traditional leadership, sub-local government stakeholders which also includes the community members.

1. INTRODUCTION

This desktop review was conducted in support of the European Union Global Climate Change Alliance + Scaling Up Pacific Adaptation (EU GCCA + SUPA) project. This project is being implemented by the South Pacific Community (SPC) in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the people and governments of Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu. This project is funded with \$18.89 million Euro dollars from the EU towards enhancing climate change adaptation and resilience. This GCCA+ SUPA is about scaling up climate change adaptation measures in specific sectors supported by knowledge management and capacity building. The specific objective is to strengthen the implementation of sector-based, but integrated, climate change and disaster risk management strategies and plans.

Jaluit Atoll was one of two atoll communities selected within the Marshall Islands as part of the project. This desktop review will focus on USP's component of the project to enhance the capacity of local government stakeholders to build resilient communities. Following this desktop review, a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) will be conducted for local stakeholders and the Jaluit Atoll Local Government to prioritize identified training needs that will then inform the planning and delivery of accredited resilience training within the project. It is important to note that the Marshall Islands identified scaling up climate change adaptation initiatives in the health sector, enhancing community health and wellness in combination with atoll agriculture. This project will be approached in a coordinated and integrated manner, supported by the three implementing organizations utilizing a people-centered approach and involving men, women, elders, youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

This desktop review intends to provide a snapshot of the current status of the Jaluit Atoll Local Government in its capacity to address climate change, concentrating on few important areas including governance and social system, disaster risk management and capacity development. This report also considers these areas and provides recommendations for potential capacity development options to address climate change.

2. SITE BACKGROUND

From the consultations on Jaluit Atoll, it was identified that during the German and Japanese administrations in the Marshall Islands, Jaluit Atoll was considered the capital of the Marshall Islands. In 1887, a German corporation called the Jaluit Company was assigned the authority to govern the Marshall Islands. Later in 1914 Japan seized the islands and was given the mandate by the League of Nations to administer the islands in 1920.

Today Jaluit Atoll is one of three sub-capitals of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The other two sub-centers are Wotje Atoll and Kwajalein Atoll. Jaluit Atoll is best known in the

country today for its coconut candy (ametoma). The ametoma is a natural candy made by a combination of coconut crust and coconut honey, which was locally created during World War II in times of martial law when the local people had little for sustenance. It is widely used today in all community aspects of the islands in Jaluit Atoll. As a result, the people of Jaluit Atoll also produce the most coconut honey in the Marshall Islands. Handicrafts including hats, fans, mats and other products such as coconut oil and fire wood are also common. However, similar to every neighboring atoll or island community, copra production and fishing are the foundations for daily livelihoods. Jaluit is a coral atoll larger than the capital, Majuro Atoll, with more than 80 islands and islets combined. As one of the sub-centers of the Marshall Islands, Jaluit Atoll houses one of the four main public high schools (Jaluit High School) in the country. The Jaluit High School (JHS) is a boarding school and students from the southern and western islands including Ebon Atoll, Namdrik Atoll, Kili Island, Aelonlaplap Atoll, Namu Atoll and Jabat Island and students from Jaluit Atoll itself are enrolled there. The total number of students at JHS is close to 600. There is also an extension of the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) at the high school campus. This extension is a distance learning center for local CMI students including USP and GED program students.

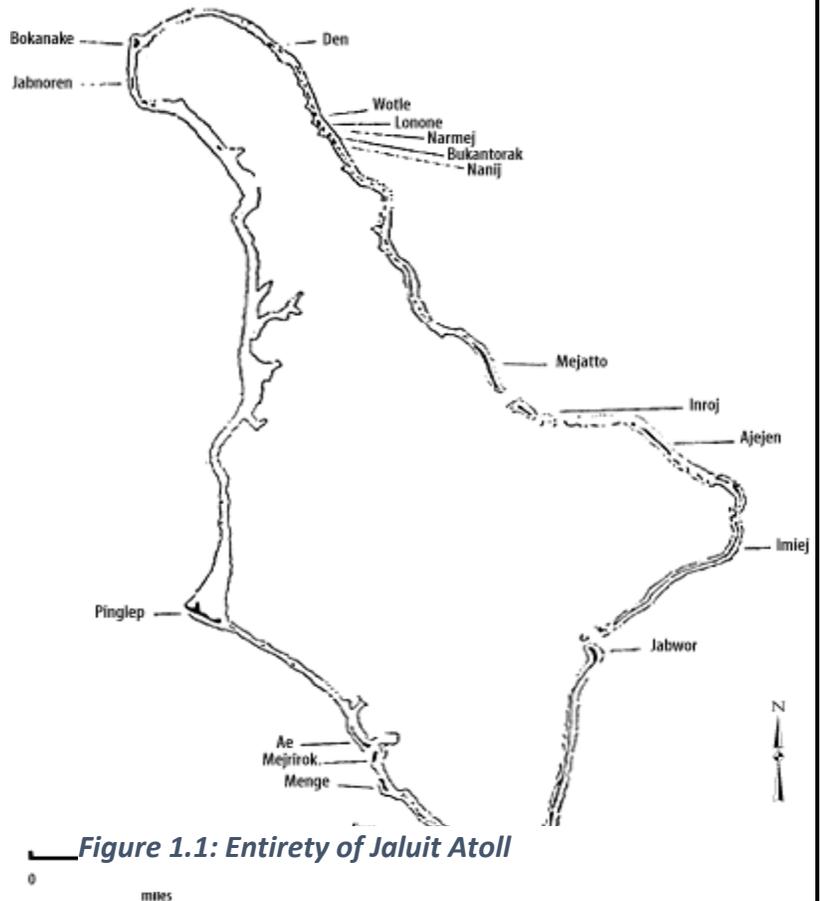


Figure 1.1: Entirety of Jaluit Atoll

Jaluit Atoll is also known for a folklore called 'Laintok'. This lore revolves around a belief that anything or anyone being carried by the sea currents from islands situated north-west of Jaluit Atoll usually ends up on the shores of Jaluit. The belief is said to be anything from physical features and associated dogmas are all collected by Laintok and stored in Jaluit Atoll. An example of this or perhaps coincidence was evident when 5 men travelling on an outboard motor boat from Majuro Atoll to Arno Atoll got lost at sea for 8 days. These men washed ashore one of the islands north-east of Jaluit Atoll (Naarmej Island). This can also be supported by the fact that the island with most cases of people lost at sea in the Marshall Islands and making it to its shores is Jaluit Atoll. During the trip, the visiting team experienced real-time emergency response by the community and the local government. The local government identified that there is need not just for capacity development in emergency response but also in equipment and physical infrastructure.



Figure 1.2: Four of the with Hon. Minister Jemi Nasion and USP consultant Dustin Langidrik on Jabwod on the day of their emergency return flight to Majuro, 3 days after washing ashore Jaluit Atoll.

The canoe tradition on Jaluit Atoll is thriving and this existing capacity is a key livelihood component for Jaluit Atoll, in particular the islands north-east of Jabwod. Jaluit Atoll is powered by both solar and fuel generated energy. The Marshalls Energy Company (MEC) supplies the electricity to the main community on Jabwod. All other communities are solar powered. Jabwod community also has cellular and internet services that were found inadequate and in need of improvement to assist capacity development in building community resilience. There is a strong possibility of this capacity to spread across the board and assist neighboring islands in their future climate change adaptation initiatives. This could be a factor could be a factor for sustainability and an indicator to addressing capacity development in the Ralik-Rak (South-west) Islands.



Figure 1.3: Family coming to town (Jabwod) for Christmas shopping (Photo by Waan Aelon in Majol)

3. METHODOLOGY

This report was produced through extensive informal and formal dialogues of workshops, meetings, interviews and consultations on Majuro and Jaluit Atolls. On Jaluit Atoll there were 2 main consultation workshops conducted on Jabwod with the Jaluit Atoll Local Government. There were also individual interviews conducted with lead local government officials, their stakeholders, the national focal point for the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), who is also the focal point for the Marshall Islands Red Cross (MIRC). This report is mostly derived from compiled information through community engagements including site visits to the other main communities within Jaluit Atoll (Jaluit, Imeej, Mejrirok Imroj and Jittok-En). Interviews with the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA) and other national stakeholders including the Ministry of Health and Human Services (MoHHS), the Public School System (PSS), the National Training Council (NTC) and project implementing partners were also made in both Jaluit and Majuro Atolls. Some literature reading online and research were also made to support this piece. The team to Jaluit Atoll was led by the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA) and the Honorable Minister Jemi Nashion. The team consisted of MoCIA's Secretary, Mr. Wallace Peter, MoCIA's departments of

Disability, Gender Equality and Women and Children's Offices. Tobolar, USP, MoHHS, Wellness Center and KUMIT were also part of this team. This team engaged the Jaluit communities from April 28th to May 5th. This week-long field work was supported by Honorable Minister Jemi Nashion and MoCIA. From the ministry's support the team was able to conduct meetings and consultations with all the main communities in Jaluit Atoll within a week. These community engagements were critical information sharing sessions with the community and the team members.

The MoCIA designated the ministry's Historic Preservation Office (HPO) to assist the facilitation of USP's community engagements and consultations on Jaluit Atoll. The USP consultant coordinated the main consultations on the main community (Jabwod) with the local government officials and stakeholders assisted by HPO. The consultant also attended the community engagements led by the Honorable Minister in Mejrirok and Jittok-En (Naarnej Island) communities. Community meetings and consultations on Imeej, Jaluit and Imroj were attended by HPO on behalf of USP and the GCCA+ SUPA project.

The results and outputs of this report were mostly transpired by the community consultations, interviews and engagements on Jaluit Atoll including prior consultations and interviews in Majuro with local and national government stakeholders.

4. GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL SYSTEM

4.1 Demography

As of the 2011 Census of the Marshall Islands, the population of Jaluit Atoll was 1,788 with a total of 252 households and a density of 408 persons per square mile. The lagoon area covers almost 270 square miles with an area of land encompassing 4.38 square miles. Jaluit Atoll is represented in the National Government of the Marshall Islands (Nitijela) by two elected senators. All local governments of the Marshall Islands serve a four-year term in office and so does the National Government. There are 13 inhabited island communities in Jaluit Atoll and 9 of them are elective wards. These elective wards each have a primary school and a health clinic. Students and people living on the other 4 inhabited communities without a school and health clinic attend to school and medical care at the elective ward closest to their island. During national elections which is conducted every November at the 4th year of a term, these people cast their votes at the ward of their origins or the community in which they were born or having land rights to.

The table below was created during the 2-day consultation workshops on Jabwod and it lists all the elective wards, their current population and their public and traditional representations to the local government including presence of schools and health clinics.

Elective Ward	Population	Public Council Rep.	Traditional Council Rep.	Elementary School	Health Assistant	Health Clinic
1. Jabwad	500	2	1	2	1	1
2. Jaluit	102	2	1	1	0	1
3. Mejrrok	80	2	1	1	1	1
4. Imroj	150	2	1	1	0	1
5. Imej	99	2	1	1	1	1
6. Mejatto	35	2	1	0	0	1
7. Mejjai	3	2	1	0	0	1
8. Pinlep	6	2	1	0	0	1
9. Jittok-En	180	2	1	1	0	1
TOTAL:	1,155	18	9	6	3	9

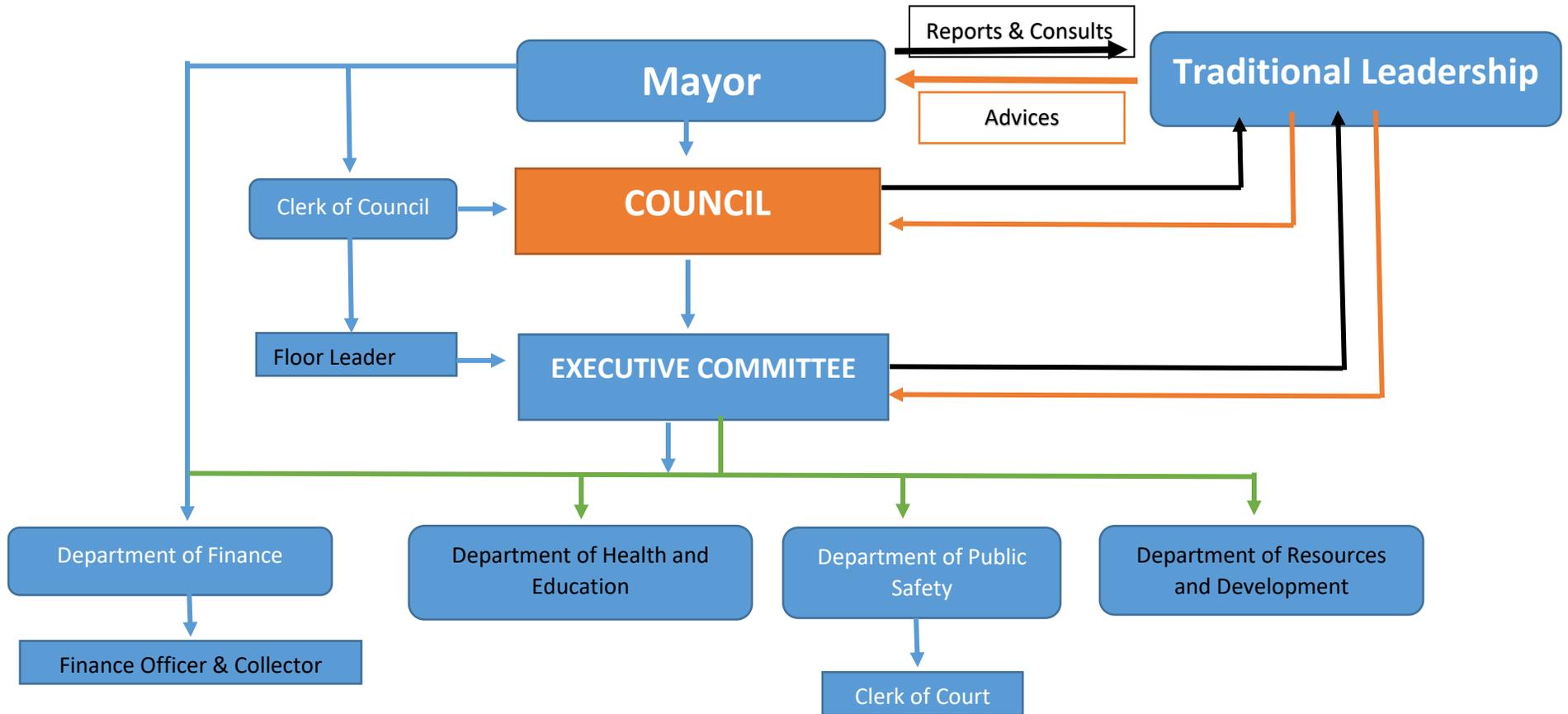
Table 1: 2020 shows a difference of 633 less people compared to 2011 Census

There are 4 reserved council seats for the 4 Traditional Authorities (Mojen in Marshallese) of Jaluit Atoll. Including the elected Mayor, there is a total of 32 JALG members. Normally, one of the 4 main traditional authorities represents all 4 Mojen at the council. The two elected representatives (senators) to the National Government are also members of the executive committee without voting rights during committee's decision making processes, although they can advise and make recommendations to the committee.

From the above table, there is a reduction in population since 2011 census. The council members identified higher education, better health care and job opportunities as the main reasons for the outmigration of people. Pressure on livelihoods from limited intra-lagoon transportation was also revealed as another contributing factor of outmigration. The people who migrated out were told to have moved to either Majuro and Kwajlein Atolls, and Hawaii but most were told to have migrated to the United States (US).

4.2. Government Structure

The flow chart below illustrates the structure of the Jaluit Atoll Local Government but this is not the official flow chart. This chart was created with guidance from the JALGOV during the 2-day consultation workshops.



4.2.1. Traditional Leadership

From the above chart, it is clear that there are 4 main governing authorities for JALG which consists of the Traditional Leadership (Manit in Marshallese), Office of the Mayor, the Council and the Executive Committee. The traditional leadership on its own has 3 cultural establishments or authority figures. These include the Irooj (Chiefs), alap (landowners) and kajoor or rijerbal (land managers). Together these three customary authorities form the traditional leadership and this body has a significant influence in all aspects of decision making processes regarding land and people. Within the JALG, the traditional leadership acts as an advisory body and member.

4.2.2. Office of the Mayor

The Mayor is the head of the JALGOV, responsible for the overall administration of all local government activities, programs and projects. The Office of the Mayor is also responsible to the National Government working closely with the Marshall Islands Mayor Association (MIMA) and the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs, in particular the Local Government Office. The Local Government Office is a one of many departments within the MoCIA and it provides financial and administrative support to all offices of mayors in the Marshall Islands. The Mayor is responsible to ensure that all resolutions passed by the council is processed accordingly and in a timely manner. The Mayor works closely with the council to make or pass laws to cater for the wellbeing and welfare of the people. On behalf of the Mayor, the Acting Mayor will carry out Mayoral duties and responsibilities for the local government. The Mayor or the Acting Mayor are tasked with ensuring all resolutions coexist with the Constitutions of both the local and national governments.

4.2.3. The Council

Making, passing ordinances or laws and approving all resolutions of the local government are the core duties and responsibilities of the council. The council of JALG is comprised of all 32 members including the traditional leaderships, the elected council members and the elected mayor. The Council has a clerk who is accountable for record keeping of regular sessions of the council and the executive

committee. He or she is also tasked with the management of council's resolutions and their amendments. The Floor Leader is also a member of the council responsible to chair and manage official council and executive meeting sessions. The Council is also responsible for the overall direction and approval of community engagements, projects and programs supported by the mayor, acting mayor, executive committee and the traditional leadership. The council is also responsible to the mayor in ensuring that all ordinances and resolutions align with the constitutions of JALG and the national government. The council identified the local-hire protocol as an immediate need for capacity development. The local-hire protocol is a scheme where locals train locals to take up important positions in the local workforce. The focus was on the health and education sector due to limited number of local teachers and health workers on the islands.

4.2.4. Executive Committee

The executive committee is comprised of the mayor, clerks and the 4 directors appointed by the mayor and approved by the council to administer the 4 main executive portfolios or ministries of the local government. These are the Department of Finance, Public Safety, Health and Education and Department of Resources and Development. The Executive Committee members directly manage and implement the daily functions of 4 main departments created by ordinances and they can also create their own portfolio's resolutions for council's approval to make new ordinances or amend existing ones. The Public Safety department identified trainings in disaster risk management focusing on emergency response and public safety, specifically police training in report writing, communication, negotiation and search and rescue. Report and proposal writing, including computing, information system and finance management were the training needs identified by the finance department. The Department of Resources and Development also suggested the local-hire protocol to train locals to manage marine resources, and to train locals to become certified health assistants. Enhancing the existing traditional knowledge in canoe building was also brought up by the department of resources and development.

5. DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Jaluit Atoll like all atolls in the Marshall Islands – it is extremely susceptible to sea level rise and climate change. Over the last decade Jaluit Atoll has experienced loss and damage to property and ecosystems from droughts, extreme weather and storm surges, coral bleaching, disease outbreaks and sea inundations. Jaluit Atoll is restricted with the tools and equipment to manage the posing threats of climate change, most especially the capacity to address climate hazards and execute existing resources to manage their impacts.

Although there is an Environmental Management Plan (ERMP) in place, the local government's capacity to implement the plan is limited. There is also the Reimaanlok Process which is also a framework for resource management but in order to put these management plans to good use, the capacity in resource management should be recognised at all levels and most especially at the local government level. All stakeholders must be made aware that the need to equip the local government with the capacity to utilize any development or management plan is the ideal approach to ensure sustainable developments in the future.

The JALG identified over-harvesting of resources as the most serious posing threat to the atoll's environment, in particular the marine ecosystem. Coastal erosion and loss of coastal vegetation were also of concern. These further clarify that these management plans are not being utilized to their fullest extent. The national government and all local governments are currently engaged in the development of a Disaster Response Plan for COVID19. For this response plan the national government and stakeholders will need to conduct rapid capacity development plan and assessments at all sectors and most importantly at the local government level, especially the local health workers and national focal points in all neighboring islands to ensure competency in execution of the plan.

In short the JALG has identified that capacity development to utilize existing resources or development and management plans, and to address disaster risks are crucial for building the community's resilience to the impacts of climate change.

6. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

At the present the JALG needs a capacity development plan for a more robust and sustainable developments in the atoll and its ecosystems. At the same time there is also potential to scaling up the existing capacity in solar photovoltaic technology and traditional knowledge on conservation efforts which includes traditional sustainable sea transportation. The JALG stakeholders also identified the following training needs:

- First-aid and CPR (List of trainees engaged in NTC's training with Red Cross)
- Computing, Information Technology and communication
- Report writing, proposal writing, negotiation skills
- Local hire teacher/health assistants training (TOTs)
- Emergency response, save and rescue, and safety
- Skills and knowledge in agriculture
- Equipment operations and maintenance (outboard motor engines and electricity)
- Coastal management
- Resource management
- Finance management
- Disaster Risk Management
- Cultural management
- Project management, assessment, monitoring and evaluation
- Water quality assessment

Fisheries, specifically in-shore fisheries is an issue in most island communities today because of over-harvesting. There are traditionally designed protected areas managed and enforced by traditional leaders but this practice is compromised by social pressures and increased demand of fish. From this it can be said that there is a need for the development of a cultural management plan fisheries and a need for management training in fisheries. Leadership training was not identified by the council as a need but the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs suggested that leadership is linked to many of the training needs that they identified and should also be a priority.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, a capacity development plan for all JALG sectors including culture should be established as a framework to guide future developments and projects. At the same time, basic resource management trainings, or prior learning should be provided to all JALG stakeholders and frequently to acquire the standard for further advancement towards certified resource management trainings. The JALG recognizes capacity development in resource management and disaster risk management as priorities along with all the other training needs they identified. There should also be a road map of future developments with their prioritized capacity needs.

One existing capacity in Jaluit Atoll having high potential for innovative enhancement in community resilience is strongly tied to their own culture and traditions. This is the canoe tradition that is thriving today in Jaluit Atoll, most notably in the north-eastern island communities. Although this canoe tradition is now limited to intra-lagoon transport, the opportunity to enhance community resilience and sustainable livelihoods may just be tied to scaling up this traditional knowledge. Jabwod community also has cellular and internet services but very limited and the capacity in Information Technology is also inadequate. Obviously, in order to assist capacity development in building resilience, the capacity development in communication and information systems needs to be addressed as well. Basic Information Technology trainings for Jaluit Atoll would mean to improve the communication systems and establish an early warning system to monitor disasters and hazards. It would also mean to improve the services provided by all sectors including health, energy and all social services. Equipping the JALG stakeholders with the basic skills and knowledge in these areas would also mean that the neighboring islands will utilize this capacity to assist in their own future climate change adaptation initiatives and disaster risk management efforts.

Another existing capacity on Jaluit Atoll is on solar energy. There are more than 30 young men who are certified to conduct solar systems quality control analysis, monitoring and evaluation, troubleshooting and installation. This training was funded Youth Corp with the College of the Marshall Islands. The local government also suggests that this capacity should also be scaled up to enable these locals to train and certify other locals to install and maintain the solar systems, not just on Jaluit Atoll but also for the Ralik-Rak (South-west) islands and Ralik-lolap (western) islands.

Although Jaluit Atoll has an Environmental Resource Management Plan in place, the

local capacity to implement the management aspects of the plan is lacking. Clearly, resource management training in fisheries and climate resilience are needed. The following recommendations are toward building community resilience, sustainable development and disaster risk management. Create a capacity development plan setting the priorities and a road map for all future developments and projects. This plan should be integrated with traditional norms and incorporated into the JALG as ordinance.

- Develop suitable training modules and curriculum to teach traditional canoe building and sailing at Jaluit High School.
- Conduct prior learning and workshops regularly to meet standards for advancement towards certified trainings in resource management, and disaster risk reduction
- Provide basic training in general management, report and proposal writing and administration also through prior learning schemes.
- Scale up existing capacity on solar PV to enroll in the certified trainer of trainers (TOTs) course locally called the local-hire program.
- Involve JALG stakeholders such as church women groups, youth groups and high school students in all prior learning schemes in report writing, proposal writing and general management
- Conduct basic training to carry out rapid assessments on climate risks and adaptation

Sources

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