

# Social Organisation for the Development of Fort Oge (OSODFO), Cap Wouj



Department: Southeast

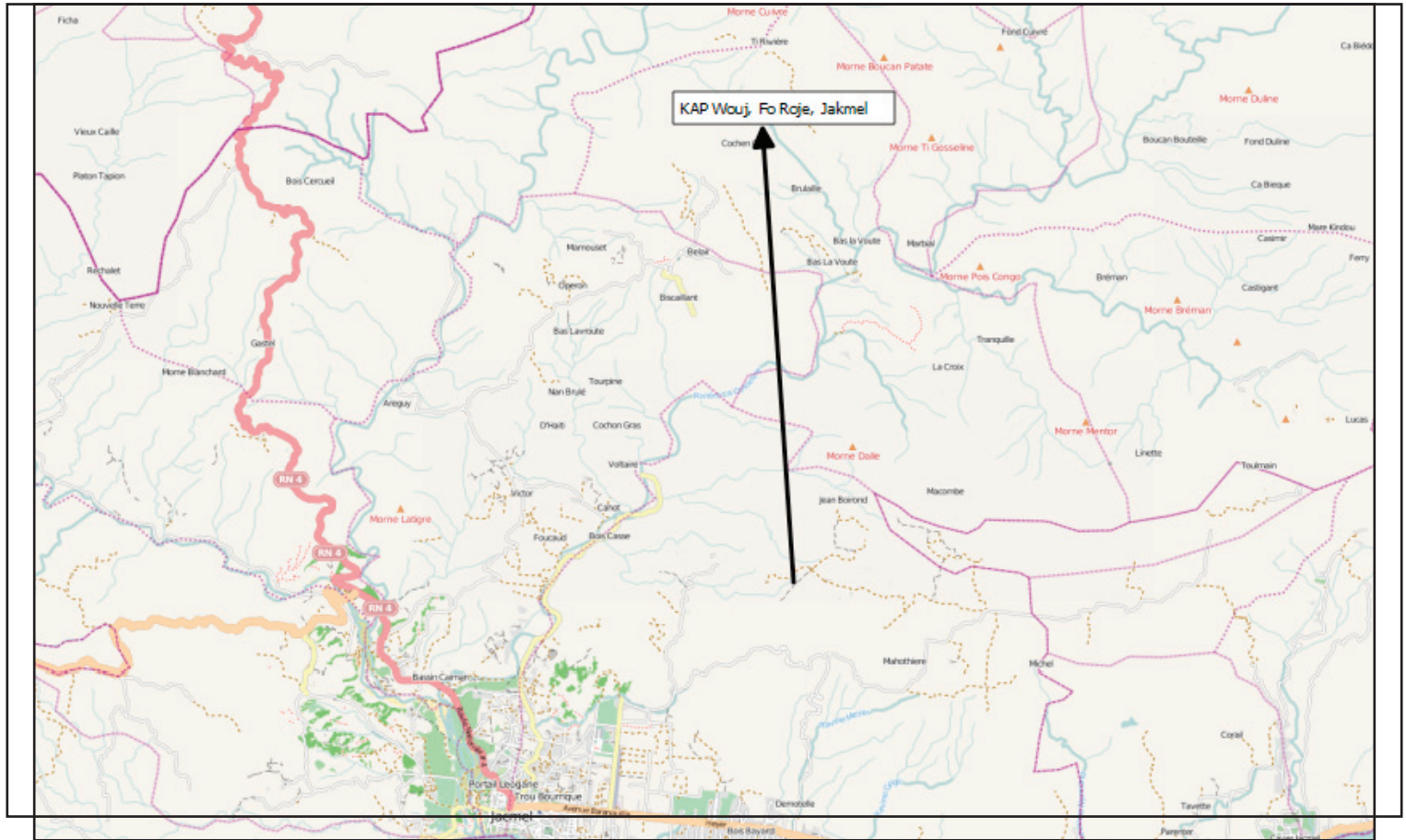
The Social Organisation for the Development of Fort Oge (OSODFO) was created in 2006 with the vision of rehabilitating the historical Fort GE and through that, rehabilitating the community. It has begun to pool the community's resources to rehabilitate the fort in hopes of making it a national pilgrimage site.



**What can other communities learn from Cap Wouj?**

\* Local ownership of the country's historical patrimony





## History of the organization

Cap Wouj is a rural section lying in the mountains north of Jacmel, home to 16,000 people. It is the site of a historic fort called Fort Oge that was built in 1805, the year after Haiti won its independence, by Nicolas I. The purpose for building the fort was to protect the country from a southern, maritime attack by the French. Therefore, from the fort, one can see the entire seaboard of Jacmel and all of the communities along it. However, the government has no measures to preserve or protect the fort, and it has been falling into disrepair.

## Summary of the work

The community of Cap Wouj began to realize that the fort was an important resource and a treasure for the community, and because the state was not taking responsibility for it, the community would have to. So in 2006, they founded an organisation called OSODFO (Social Organisation for the Development of Fort Oge), with the vision of rehabilitating the fort and through that, rehabilitating the community. They would like it to become a national pilgrimage site, and that if they return the fort to its proud state then the state would invest in the infrastructure necessary to bring tourists there, such as a decent road (although OSODFO has also started mobilizing the community to work on repairing and constructing the road through konbit).

There are many children of Cap Wouj that moved to Port au Prince after graduating from school, and in Port au Prince they have formed a commission to work on developing the fort. They contribute money, raise funds, and buy materials that the community can use to repair the fort. The commission returns several times throughout the year to contribute their time and energy in the efforts to rebuild the fort.

On the 17th of May, 2012, the committee erected a small entrance in front of the fort and began to ask people for contributions to the reconstruction of the fort. People give what they can, and this money is saved in a community chest which has not yet been opened at the time this report is being written: they are planning on opening it at a grand community meeting on the 4th of November, and share with all of their neighbors what has been raised and reflect together on how to best make use of the money as the entire community has participated in the maintenance of the fort.

OSODFO also works with agricultural cooperatives in the area, managing a community vegetable nursery to give farmers plants and working to help the local school.





## What can other communities learn from Cap Wouj?

OSODFO is a powerful example of Haitians reclaiming their rich history and preserving their historical buildings, which are unfortunately often neglected and mistreated despite their value. This is a form of local ownership over historical artifacts and historical tourism that could be both inspirational and instructional for many other communities who happen to be living near relics such as this fort.

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