

A Story of Strength – Learning from Women in Haiti

Students will explore how Haitian women in the CLM program overcome poverty and build strong families and communities. They will reflect on the qualities of leadership and strength in real life.

Materials Needed:

- CLM participant stories. See: [Steve Werlin's Blog](#)
- Whiteboard or projector
- Paper and colored pencils or markers
- “Empowerment Word” list (brave, resilient, resourceful, independent, determined, compassionate, innovative, etc.)

Lesson Plan (45 min)

1. Story or Video: "A Strong Haitian Mother" (10 min):

Choose a first-person narrative that introduces a woman from the CLM program—highlighting her challenges and how she built a small business to support her family.

Prompt students to listen for these key ideas:

- What problems did she face at the start?
- What did she learn or do to improve her situation?
- How did she support her family or neighbors?

Discussion Questions:

- What qualities helped her succeed?
- How do you think she felt when her work began helping her family?
- What do you admire about her choices or actions?

2. Concept Discussion: What Does Empowerment Really Mean? (10 min)

Write the word **empowerment** on the board. Ask:

- What does this word mean to you?
- How is it different from just “helping” someone?
- Can you think of a time someone empowered *you*?

Distribute empowerment word cards or project a list. Ask students to:

- Choose 1–2 words that describe the woman from the story.
- Explain their choices in pairs or small groups.

3. Creative Reflection: Empowerment in Action (15 min)

Ask students to draw or design a one-page visual response:

- Option 1: A portrait of the Haitian woman, with words around her showing how she is empowered.
- Option 2: A representation of someone they know personally who has overcome challenges (could be themselves).
- Underneath, write a short caption using at least one empowerment word.
Example: *“My grandmother is resourceful because she started her own business when she lost her job.”*

4. Reflection & Sharing Circle (5 min)

Invite volunteers to share their work with the class. Encourage thoughtful, respectful listening.

5. Closing Reflection: Small Acts, Big Impact (5 min)

Ask:

- “What is one way you can support or empower someone this week—at home, at school, or in your community?”

Have students write their answer on a sticky note or card to take home or post on a class “Empowerment Wall.”

MFOH’s CLM Program Summary & Images of Graduates

Chemen Lavi Miyò (CLM), also known as Pathway to a Better Life, is a comprehensive approach to eliminating acute poverty. CLM reaches out to those on the margins of society. Throughout the 18-month program implemented by Fonkoze and funded by Mercy Focus on Haiti, case managers support clients as they learn to run a small business, repair their homes, and access health care and education services. Participants develop both their capacity and their confidence until they have their own functioning microenterprises.

Mercy Focus on Haiti was introduced to CLM in 2015. In 2017 the first group of 200 women we sponsored began its journey along a pathway to a better life. Caseworkers and the regional leaders identify ultra-poor families, interviewed the women, and prepared them to participate in the program.

Throughout the program, participants learn how to run a small business, repair their homes, access health care, and send their children to school.

The women are given the tools listed below and guidance in how to use them:

- assets to establish two income-generating activities, e.g., goats, chickens, merchandise to sell
- materials to build a modest home with a sturdy roof and floor, and a latrine
- a small cash stipend that allows them to purchase food for the first six months
- access to free healthcare and training on how to use it
- Confidence-building, enterprise management, and life skills training

The requirements for graduation are:

- The family is “food secure”
- There are two income-generating activities
- The participant has an active savings account
- The participant’s children are able to attend school
- The participant has confidence in her abilities and a plan for her future.





