

## **Pathway to a Better Life in Gros Morne**

On February 26, 2017, Fonkoze entered into an agreement with Sisters of Mercy of the Americas to implement Fonkoze's Chemen Lavi Miyò (CLM or Pathway to a Better Life) in the Gros Morne region of Haiti. The purpose of the program is **to enable ultra-poor women in Haiti to emerge from poverty by acquiring income-generating assets and the skills, health, and confidence to grow such assets.**

CLM is based on the graduation approach methodology—a means of enabling families to lift themselves out of ultra poverty through an intensive, 18-month program. In 18 months, participants develop dependable livelihoods. They learn to manage income-generating activities, and they receive the assets needed to jumpstart their economic activities. They then receive close accompaniment through weekly home visits throughout the program's 18 months.

The graduation approach offers a unique chance to families that lack the means and the know-how to start activities, especially if they are too poor to benefit from credit. After only 18 months, they are eating hot meals every day; their school-age children are in school; they have at least two sources of income; and have proven their ability to increase the value of their assets. Most importantly, they have a plan for the future and the confidence to know that they can succeed.

### **Results to date**

Program startup. The CLM Team began the program by establishing office space and a staff residence in Gros Morne. They also hired and trained new staff as appropriate. Staff includes the following:

- **Supervisor.** The team was able to rely on an internal promotion to fill the supervisory role for the team in Gros Morne. Gissaint César, formerly the CLM Social Development Sector Specialist, is originally from the Gros Morne area. Not only does he have a strong understanding of the program and sound leadership skills, he also has a deep understanding of the Gros Morne region and context.
- **Administrator.** The team was also able to internally promote one of our longstanding Case Managers, Sandra Julien, to fill the role of Administrator—managing data and logistics for the program.
- **Case Managers.** These four individuals, similar to social workers, serve as coaches for all program participants. They are tasked with visiting each participating CLM household once a week and providing them with training, psycho-social support, and coaching as the families make their way out of ultra poverty. The case managers gather data to document the progress of CLM members and identify challenges and opportunities. They also lead the first phase of the participatory selection process.
- **Nurse.** Mercy Focus on Haiti will be sponsoring a nurse for the CLM participants to provide basic medical attention for the duration of the program. In addition, a medical group led by MFOH member Sister Karen Schneider will go to Gros Morne July 21 to provide the first of four mobile clinics for the CLM participants and families.

**Participatory selection process.** The CLM program begins with a participatory selection process to identify the poorest families in a rural community. The process involves four steps.

The first step is a site selection. The team defines the target area and selects the communities, which are informal units of approximately 70 households. In rural areas of Haiti, households are scattered

throughout the countryside, not concentrated in villages. The project, however, needs to work with small geographical units in which most people know each other well. These are the “communities.” The boundaries of these informal geographical units are defined using the knowledge of local leaders, who are contacted by the CLM team when they first enter the area.

The second step is participatory wealth ranking. In collaboration with village leaders (including religious leaders; representatives of community-based organizations; women’s and farmers’ groups; local elected officials; and school teachers and principals), the team maps all the households in the area, defines local criteria for socio-economic groupings, and allocates each household to one of five or six groups, or “wealth ranks.”

The third step is the preliminary selection. Case Managers visit all households in the two poorest wealth ranks and collect information on their socio-economic situation using the standard Fonkoze evaluation tools: Fonkoze’s Poverty Scorecard and an internationally-recognized food security index developed by Freedom from Hunger. The CLM team has conducted 723 home visits in Gros Morne, and the Case Managers recommended 215 families for the program. The following criteria are used in selecting participants:

- The household has no productive assets.
- It has no regular support from abroad or from an NGO.
- There is one woman aged between 15 and 65 years who can work. *Traditionally, participating households required a woman capable of working who would become the CLM “member,” but the CLM team is now integrating ultra poor persons with disabilities, including men, into the program.*
- There is at least one dependent child living in the household.

The last step is final verification. Regional Directors verify final selection of participants through a second home visit.

We are happy to announce that the launching ceremony for the CLM program supported by Mercy Focus on Haiti will be July 13, 2017. MFOH members and guests who will be attending are:

MFOH Members

Beth Dempsey, RSM  
Andrea Healy  
Kathy Thornton, RSM  
Jill Weber, RSM

Guests

Cynthia Black  
Sara Healy  
Sophie Hertz  
Kathy Thill, RSM

\*Adapted from Fonkoze Report - June 2017