

University-Level Lesson CLM: Voices of Resilience Haitian Women and the Path to Empowerment

Lesson 1: From Survival to Agency The Power of Self-Empowerment

Objective:

Students will analyze the structural barriers faced by Haitian women living in ultra-poverty and explore how empowerment through the CLM program promotes agency, dignity, and systemic change in their families and communities.

Materials Needed:

- CLM participant stories (real or composite, 2–3)
 - Slide deck with overview of Fonkoze’s CLM program
 - Whiteboard or collaborative online document
 - Student journals or laptops
-

Lesson Plan (45 min)

1. Opening Discussion (5 min)

Prompt: “What does *empowerment* look like when someone has virtually no material resources?”

Students briefly discuss in pairs or small groups. Instructor captures key phrases: agency, dignity, access, control, self-determination.

2. Context Brief: CLM and Structural Inequality (10 min)

Instructor presents a brief overview:

- Haiti’s social, economic, and gender context (post-colonial legacies, natural disasters, poverty)
- Introduction to Fonkoze and the **Chemèn Lavi Miyò (Pathway to a Better Life)** program and their partnership with Mercy Focus on Haiti

- Key features: vocational training, asset transfers, health care, mentoring, housing, literacy

Optional: Show a short video (e.g., Fonkoze's YouTube channel) or infographic.

3. Narrative Analysis: Haitian Mothers' Stories (15 min)

Break students into small groups. Each group reads one story of a Haitian woman in the CLM program. They discuss:

- What structural barriers did she face?
- What internal (personal) and external (programmatic) supports enabled her transformation?
- How did this transformation ripple out to her family and community?
- What leadership qualities emerged?

Groups present their story analysis to the class (2 min each).

4. Critical Reflection: Empowerment vs. Aid (10 min)

Whole-group discussion:

- How is CLM's model different from charity or foreign aid?
 - How do agency and dignity appear in the stories?
 - What does this tell us about Mercy's call to **stand with** (not "rescue") women?
-

5. Exit Reflection (5 min)

Prompt: "How do the CLM stories challenge or affirm your understanding of development, equity, and women's leadership?"

Students write in journals or submit a brief digital response.

Lesson 2: Designing with Dignity Proposing Empowerment Models for Justice

Objective:

Students will apply lessons from the CLM program to design their own justice-oriented empowerment initiative, exploring how micro-enterprise and vocational training can address inequity while respecting local dignity and leadership.

Materials Needed:

- CLM recap handout or infographic (optional)
 - Handout: **Principles of Ethical Empowerment** (anti-paternalism, sustainability, inclusion, participation)
 - Chart paper or online collaboration tools (Jamboard, Canva, Miro)
 - Markers or laptops/tablets
-

Lesson Plan (45 min)

1. Opening Prompt (5 min)

“What’s the difference between *empowering* someone and *helping* someone?”

Facilitator introduces ethical development concepts: non-paternalism, participation, solidarity.

2. Mini Recap: Empowerment in Practice (5 min)

Instructor briefly reviews CLM’s integrated model. Emphasize:

- How the program builds **agency** rather than dependence
 - How women become **leaders**, not just beneficiaries
-

3. Think-Pair-Share: Barriers & Justice (10 min)

In pairs, students identify:

- Common barriers marginalized women face (locally or globally)
- What an ethical response to these barriers looks like

Groups share, and facilitator lists challenges vs. empowerment strategies on board.

4. Design an Empowerment Initiative (20 min)

In small groups, students create a fictional empowerment initiative inspired by CLM but tailored to a different underserved context (urban Haiti, refugee community, rural U.S., etc.). Their initiative must:

- Name a target population
- Identify the root causes of their disempowerment
- Propose 2–3 strategic supports (vocational training, mental health care, access to capital, mentorship, etc.)
- Explain how it supports **dignity, leadership, and long-term equity**
- Include a name and (optional) slogan

Groups briefly present their ideas in a **1-minute pitch**.

5. Wrap-Up & Exit Slip (5 min)

Prompt:

“What is one principle from CLM that you would apply in your field of work to empower women with dignity?”

Students submit their response digitally or in writing.

Optional Extensions:

- Assign a short op-ed: “Why Empowerment Requires Structural Change”
- Invite a guest speaker from a local NGO or international development agency
- Encourage students to research and critique a real microfinance program through an equity lens