



## CHEMEN LAVI MIYÒ (CLM)

**EIGHT MONTHS AGO** when Dieulita Fleury became a member of Fonkoze’s *Chemen Lavi Miyo* project in the Central Plateau, her life was consumed with just one task each day: finding food for her five children. Eking out a daily existence consumed Dieulita, yet rarely did her children eat on consecutive days.

“Most days, I would boil leaves and hope the next day would be better” she says. Things became so difficult that she sent her two oldest daughters, 16 and 18 years old, to live with a cousin in Port-au-Prince. Her sons, 12 and 14 years old, ran away to live with their dad in the Artibonite 15 miles away. She has a three-year-old with the man she has been living with for the past six years.

Today, Dieulita is making big plans. Dieulita has confidence in her future. “For the first time in my life, I look forward to waking up and starting my day.” She plans to send for

her boys, now that she believes she will be able to put food on the table for them regularly. She hopes one day her daughters will return and work with her.

Although she has just begun, Dieulita is building a successful business. Since becoming a CLM member, she has been training to become a micro-entrepreneur. With the help of the program, she started selling food products such as rice, oil, beans and sugar.

“There was too much competition,” she says. So with the help of her case manager, she switched to selling chickens and ducks.

This business has flourished. “On a good day, I can buy 10 to 20 chickens and ducks and resale them that same day at a good profit in the market place.” She goes to work at the open market three times a week, and spends the rest of the week tending to her goats and her small farm plot at home.

Before starting CLM, Dieulita had virtually no assets, and certainly no assets that would produce income. She was given three goats through the program, but now, just eight months later, she has six goats. She also has many chickens and a small garden of corn and beans.

## WHAT IS CHEMEN LAVI MIYÒ?

*Chemen Lavi Miyò*, or the Pathway to a Better Life, reaches out to the poorest of the poor, those on the margins of Haitian society. Throughout an 18-month program it accompanies them with training, one-on-one supervision and encouragement, confidence building and other services like health care and home repair. Participants develop both their capacity and their confidence until they have their own functioning microenterprises.

Participants are selected through a unique process called Participatory Wealth Ranking. Fonkoze relies on members of the local community to identify the poorest people in the area. Fonkoze then visits the homes of potential members, in order to verify their eligibility for

participation. This participatory process ensures that Fonkoze targets only the ultra-poor who are not eligible for our microfinance program.

The families that are selected are those who:

- ▶ Are headed by women with multiple children;
- ▶ Have no income-generating assets;
- ▶ Do not have any of their children in school;
- ▶ Do not have reliable access to food, and are often hungry, and;
- ▶ Do not have access to healthcare or do not know how to access it.

At the completion of the eighteen-month program, Fonkoze evaluates each of the families for their readiness for graduation. Members cannot graduate out of the program if they have a malnourished child, are unable to work, or have a roof that leaks when it rains. Additionally, members are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- ▶ The member's family is "food secure"
- ▶ The member has two income-generating activities
- ▶ The member has an active savings account
- ▶ The value of her productive assets is \$150 USD
- ▶ The member has confidence and a plan for her future

In the pilot of the program, which was completed in December 2008, 95% of CLM participants met the graduation criteria.



**"I love Fonkoze and CLM because now I believe in myself."**

"We eat every day!" she says joyfully. "My baby eats every day." Other elements of her quality of life are improving. As part of the CLM program, Dieulita is rebuilding her home with a cement floor and a tin roof. "We are even building a latrine in the back," she beams.

Dieulita can't stop smiling, she says she had almost forgotten how to do it. "My case manager visits me every week, we discuss my business, we discuss malnutrition and we discuss my life. He showed me how to treat my water so that my child won't get sick."

In the 8 months since she has been with CLM, Dieulita says that her life has changed completely. "What can I say? I am just happy. Thank you Fonkoze, for not giving up on me and other women in my situation."

She looks forward to her graduation from the program and her continued success. "I know I will be successful. Look what I have done already! And I am not giving up." Very softly she says, "I love Fonkoze and CLM because now I believe in myself."