



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

LIKE MANY WOMEN IN HAITI, Marie Ocianie Zamy has a very large family. She has eleven children, ages 11 to 33, and four grandchildren. For all of them, she is the family's "*poto mitan*," the bedrock and cornerstone. Her courage has allowed them to overcome tremendous odds.

MARIE OCIANIE ZAMY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CLIENT IN MIBALE

Marie is a long-time member of Fonkoze. She started in Solidarity lending in 2002 when she took her first loan of 1,500 HTG, which then equaled about \$40, and started selling rice, vegetables, and other food products. At first, profits were small, but Marie and her family persevered and grew the business. "My children were my first motivation, I wanted them to have at least one good meal each day," Marie says. "That's not easy with 11 children."

With her husband working on their vegetable garden, and Marie working to sell the surplus food and items she purchased in Port-au-Prince at the market, returns slowly began to improve.

Although a loan from Fonkoze helped, determination was the key factor. Even with setbacks, like the hurricane season of 2004, her family stood behind her as she and her Solidarity group began to prosper. In fact, the group was never delinquent during all five years she was in the program. Finally, in 2007, her business outgrew group lending, and she entered Fonkoze's individual loan program, Business Development.

She now borrows 70,000 HTG at a time, about \$1,750. Her business has become a restaurant which sells prepared food, cool drinks, and packaged food. She built the restaurant next to her home. She also purchased two motorcycles for a motorcycle taxi business handled by her sons, and owns several pigs, two cows and many other livestock. In her garden, she grows corn, beans, rice, and tobacco.

WHAT IS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT?

Business Development provides year-long loans that start at \$1,300 and can increase without limit. This program helps clients become part of the formal economy and create jobs in rural areas where there is very little employment. It currently has clients borrowing more than \$25,000 at a time, and most of these clients employ a workforce. Most of the clients of this product are in the business of value-added production, which helps bolster the local economy in ways that smaller business activities cannot.

Many Business Development clients are *ti machann*, women market traders, who have been in the solidarity lending program for a long time. Their businesses have outgrown the maximum loan size in Solidarity lending. They are clients with a long history of good loan repayment and are ready to take responsibility for an individual loan, perhaps in the formal economy. The loan sizes can rise to \$100,000 or more. Business Development is Fonkoze's last step on the Staircase Out of Poverty.



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Although she has done well with Fonkoze, the pathway has not always been easy. Like so many, Marie's family was hurt by the 2008 hurricane season. Assets were destroyed and her house was damaged, but fortunately she was able to afford repairs. Those were difficult times, but she has persevered and now she says her family is stronger than ever.

Although her father left her land on which to live, since becoming a member of Fonkoze she was able to build a larger, much stronger house for her family to live in. When few others would have been willing to take a chance on Marie and her business, and would not have accompanied her along the way, Fonkoze was always there for her.

“Fonkoze is my lifeline,” says Marie. “I educated my entire family and kept food on the table because of Fonkoze, I could have never done all this without Fonkoze behind me. I did my own evaluation when I started with Fonkoze, and it's the only real bank in Haiti for poor people, it's the only bank you can truly trust.”

