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GLOBAL

The Top 100 NGOs 2013.

# Nouvel Fonkoze

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 1

## Finding Transformation on the Road to a Better Life

BY MACKENZIE KELLER | EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

**C**hemèn Lavi Miyò (CLM), Kreyòl for “the road to a better life,” is the innovative first step on Fonkoze’s Staircase Out of Poverty. CLM lifts up women living on the very margins of rural society in some of the most extreme poverty in Haiti.

Each woman CLM targets lives in sub-standard shelter typically amounting to little more than a shack. She has multiple children, none of whom attend school. She and her family may go days at a time without food, and they have no access to healthcare. She has no productive assets, no skills, and perhaps worst of all—no self-esteem.

As CLM graduate **Locianie Bondesir** said, “I didn’t have anything. There were people who didn’t see [me] beneath [my] appearance.”

Fonkoze recognizes that in this condition, a woman like Locianie is not yet ready to be given a \$75—or even \$25—loan. She first needs support and guidance to learn basic life skills, gain confidence, and realize her own capacity. CLM empowers and equips her through an intensive 18-month program that includes asset provision, business training, and one-on-one case manager guidance.

**At its core, CLM is a program of transformation.**



Figaro Bazelais hams it up during one of his case manager visits. Each CLM case manager visits 50 members at home every week to check on their progress, give them business advice, and provide them with general guidance and counseling.

“Where others can sit, now I can sit there too, thanks to CLM,” said CLM graduate Suzette Toussaint.

### THE CLM PROCESS

#### Selection

CLM works directly with those in a rural community to carefully identify the very poorest community members.

Using a participatory poverty assessment method known as Participatory Wealth Ranking, Fonkoze works with villagers to literally draw a map on the ground of each household in the village, ranking them using wealth categories defined by the community.

The process enables village members to recognize that the poorest members of the

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## From Father Joseph



Dear Friends of Fonkoze:

Those of you who know me know that I frequently reflect on the Biblical teaching that we are all one body, and that there should be no division in the body. All of us should have equal concern for each other. If one of us suffers, everyone suffers; if one of us is honored, we are all honored.

This newsletter is dedicated to the Fonkoze program Chemen Lavi Miyò (CLM), Fonkoze's first step on the Stairway Out of Poverty. CLM embodies this concept that we are all one body.

When a woman is chosen to participate as a member of CLM, the entire village comes together. They identify the families in their community who are suffering, and they understand that the suffering of these vulnerable families is the suffering of their village, of their beloved country. They make the collective decision that they do not want this kind of extreme poverty in their midst, and that women and their children do not deserve to suffer as they do.

The communities start the process. But each woman soon becomes increasingly self-sufficient, eventually transformed into a full member of her community.

A graduate of CLM is a woman with self-esteem, skills, ideas, and motivation. Breaking the generational cycle of poverty, she becomes a role model for her children.

Just as we suffer when one part of the body is suffering, we are also honored when a part of the body is honored. CLM women honor us daily as they take the first step onto the Staircase and begin that difficult climb.

As my colleague Anne Hastings said, "The women want to thank me, to thank Gauthier, the CLM Director, for their success in the program. I say, no—it is you who had the courage to change your life in this way."

Sincerely,

Joseph B. Philippe, CSSp  
Founder and Coordinator

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# Climbing the Staircase: Jésumène Zidor

BY STEVEN WERLIN | CLM REGIONAL DIRECTOR, FONKOZE

**W**hen Jésumène Zidor joined CLM, she was one of the poorest women Fonkoze recruited.

She lived with her husband, six children and two grandchildren in a rented straw shack on a small parcel of land in Boukankarè.

When selecting families for the CLM program, Fonkoze uses the “Fonkoze Poverty Scorecard,” which examines and rates applicants not only based on income, but also on living conditions. **Out of 63.5 possible points, an average score is 31.8—Jésumène and her family scored 11.5.**

Fonkoze also uses a food security index to assess a family’s nutritional situation. Jésumène’s family again scored as low as possible. Not only were they unable to eat three meals a day, they often relied on foraging for days at a time to survive. Jésumène was forced to send three of her children to live as servants in other family’s homes because she simply couldn’t feed them.

*“I have a little spot of land where I can sit down.”*

—Jésumène Zidor

**Most striking, though, was her score on a third survey: the Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI).** The Index, developed by the Grameen Foundation, is a poverty measurement tool used by organizations and businesses with a mission to serve the poor.

The answers to 10 questions about a household’s characteristics and asset ownership are scored to compute the likelihood that the household is living below the poverty line.

**Jésumène’s score was zero.**

Her situation qualified Jésumène for a special benefit: a cow from a Fonkoze partner organization as one of her income-generating assets. The cow eventually enabled her to buy land of her own. However, it is a slow-developing asset, so she was pressured to find daily income in the meantime.

To do so, Jésumène managed her secondary asset from Fonkoze—two goats—carefully, and invested savings from her six-month stipend in poultry. She also gave part of her stipend to her husband to help him develop his chair-making business.

Thanks to her hard work, Jésumène flourished in Fonkoze’s CLM program. Before CLM, Jésumène and her family slept on straw mats on the floor of a hut that didn’t belong to them, on land they didn’t own. Now Jésumène and her husband have their own house on their own land.

Jesumene sums it up simply: “I have a little spot of land where I can sit down.”

After graduating from CLM, Jésumène and her case manager decided that she should advance to the next step in Fonkoze’s Staircase Out of Poverty, and start a small commerce through Fonkoze’s Ti Kredi (“little credit”) program. She has improved and updated her



CLM graduate Jésumène Zidor (pictured with her grandson) explains why she loves CLM: “They helped us build a house. We had been getting soaked every time it rained, but now we can stay dry.”

business several times since, and it remains profitable.

Jésumène has even greater dreams. She wants to keep investing in livestock and land, and build her business so she has something to help secure her children’s future.

**With her hard work, and your support of Fonkoze, her dreams are well within her reach. ●**

community need their help. They gain an important sense of ownership in the CLM program, preventing potential instances of jealousy and further social exclusion. By acknowledging extreme poverty as an issue in their community, village members establish a strong foundation of community support and protection that CLM members will need further down the road.

After prospective CLM members have been identified by their fellow villagers, CLM staff visit every household in the two lowest wealth categories to identify the families

“I want to explode the myth that we don’t know how to eliminate extreme poverty in Haiti. We do know how. All that’s left is to do it.”

—Anne Hastings, CEO, Fonkoze Financial Services

with the greatest need. During these home visits CLM staff are careful to act in ways that place each woman in a position of status. For example, rather than taking the chair she offers (usually borrowed from neighbors, as most do not have chairs of their own), a CLM staffer will sit on the ground, insisting that the woman take

she begins by choosing two of the four enterprises Fonkoze currently offers: goat-rearing, poultry-rearing, pig-rearing, and small commerce. Each woman receives three days of intensive training in each enterprise, along with basic literacy and health training.

Next, she receives a water filter, the materials to construct a home with a tin roof and latrine, and—most importantly—a card providing her with access to healthcare through a partnership with Zanmi Lasante (Partners in Health’s sister organization). For the first six months, she receives a weekly cash stipend of about \$5 to prevent money being diverted from her fledgling business. She then becomes financially independent, with continued guidance from her case manager to reinforce training and track progress.

the chair. **Each interaction is a step towards helping a woman become an accepted and active member in her community.**

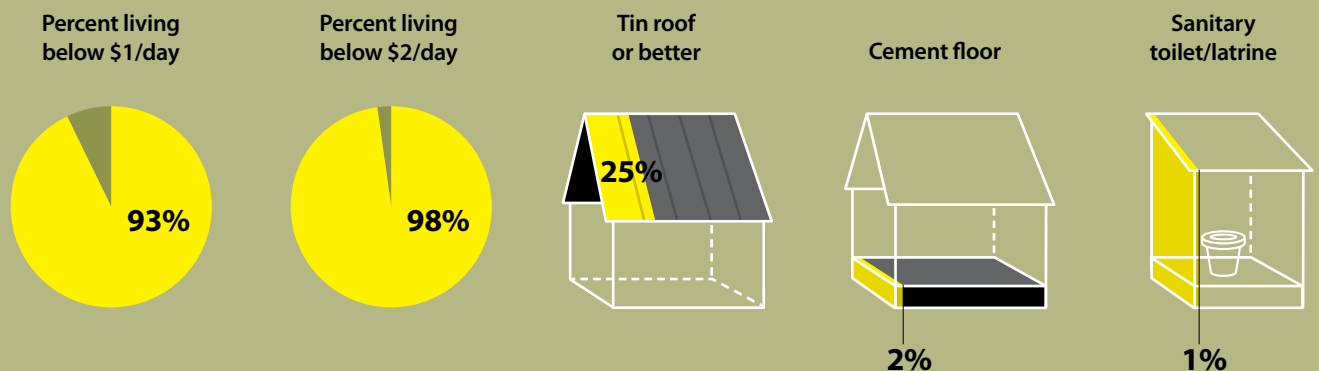
**Lansman (Launching)**  
Once approved, a woman is invited to become a member of CLM and commit to its 18-month program. If she accepts,

## Each CLM graduate has:

- ▶ A safe living situation
- ▶ The ability to provide her family with at least two meals per day
- ▶ All of her children in school
- ▶ An income and an active savings account
- ▶ Good health for her and her children
- ▶ A solid plan for the future

## Key socio-economic indicators for incoming CLM members

Fonkoze is reaching the most poor and vulnerable segments of Haitian society. CLM members start at or below Haiti’s national averages for poverty and literacy.



## Results

On her graduation day, CLM member Rose-Marie Assenne summed up CLM's impact this way: "The person that I was yesterday, I am not the same person any longer." She explained that CLM taught her to engage in commerce, allowing her to leverage the two goats and a pig she received at the program's beginning into four goats and a horse.

Such transformation in the life of one woman does not end with her—it extends to her children, to her extended family and to her neighbors. The success of one CLM graduate uplifts her entire community.

**The CLM program has an astounding 96% graduation rate.** In addition, approximately 80% of graduates climb the next step of Fonkoze's Staircase Out of Poverty and join the Ti Kredi ("little credit") program, giving them the opportunity to build even further on the progress they have made. (Read the powerful story of Jésumène Zidor's successful transition from CLM to Ti Kredi on page 3.)



"The person that I was yesterday, I am not the same person any longer."

—Rose Marie Assenne, CLM Graduate

Each woman who climbs a step on the Staircase brings us one step closer to eliminating extreme poverty in Haiti. **Visit [www.fonkoze.org](http://www.fonkoze.org), and learn how you can support CLM and all of Fonkoze's transformational programs.** ●

**The cost to provide this amazing impact is only \$1,500 per family.**

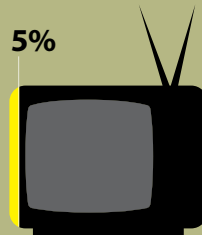
Send all children to school



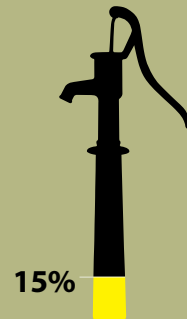
Can read and write



Own small assets like a radio or TV



Access to piped or well water



# Your Partnership Makes CLM Possible

BY LEIGH CARTER | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FONKOZE USA



Members from the Haitian Timoun Foundation enjoyed seeing the Foundation's support of Fonkoze in action.

**M**en anpil chay pa lou. In English, this Haitian saying means, “Many hands make the load lighter.” It is a fitting description of CLM’s growth.

Since its 2006 inception as a pilot, CLM has grown from 150 women and families to 1639, reaching increasingly remote areas of rural Haiti.

Fonkoze is grateful to the hundreds of individual donors who support CLM, including local Friends groups from Philadelphia, Washington DC and Bucks County, PA, and DC Hearts to Hands in Haiti.

The partners who have embraced Fonkoze’s poverty alleviation program demonstrate the diversity of people inspired by these courageous women. Our supporters include institutional funders like CGAP, faith-based groups such as Haitian Timoun Foundation, corporations like MasterCard, and communities of Fonkoze Friends throughout the U.S.

Not only are our partners diverse, so are the means by which they lend their support to CLM’s transformative program. We receive support through both traditional grants and increasingly creative means—like a play about CLM performed by school-children in DC. How

many seven-year-olds do you know who can explain and act out Participatory Wealth Ranking?

Our donors reflect the innovation of the program itself. Members of Artists for Haiti offered up proceeds from the sale of their art to fund CLM. Arcade Fire (through Kanpe) donated profits to escort several hundred women and their families through the program. And CLM Director Gauthier Dieudonne even donned a chicken suit to raise funds in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Bottom line: it all makes a difference. **It only takes \$1,500 to bring a CLM family through the extensive 18-month life-changing program.** Whether you are a congregation that wants to bundle funds to support one or more families, a large institution that can afford to help hundreds of families, or an individual who can send \$50 to help purchase a goat, your contribution will move a woman and her family one step farther along the Staircase Out of Poverty.

Please join us in accompanying these brave women on the road to a better life. As Gauthier Dieudonne said, “The result? Children will be fed and going to school. The family will be healthy, their shelter will be improved, human dignity will be restored, and self-confidence will be achieved—all this through a holistic approach by caring and having love in your heart.” ●

## Our CLM Partners



# Going to Extremes: Case Manager Martinière Jasmin

BY MACKENZIE KELLER | EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

**D**uring Martinière Jasmin's first hike in his new role as a Fonkoze case manager, he couldn't even keep up with CLM Regional Director Steve Werlin on treacherous mountain passes to visit members.

"Now you get the feeling he could do all his routes while carrying me," Steve says. It's more than a feeling.

Only six months into the job, Martinière's strength was tested. He carried a deathly ill CLM member named Ytelène down the mountain from Zobaka, the most remote area of Boukankarè—after running to the peak, the only place with cell service, to call for help. He then borrowed a stretcher and, with the help of another CLM member's husband, carried her to the hospital in central Boukankarè.

**Once he got Ytelène to safety, he climbed back up the mountain to be ready for work the next morning.**

Such hikes are no small journey. To reach Zaboka, Martinière and his fellow case managers must hike for four hours across streams, muddy trails, and rocky mountain paths. And that's just to reach the base—many members live even farther up the mountain.

Ytelène is one such member. Without Martinière, she would not have survived, her family having given up trying to get her to safety. She made a full recovery, however, and has since flourished in the CLM program.

**She credits Martinière and his fellow case managers for her success. "If it wasn't for the CLM team," she says, "I wouldn't be here. I never**

imagined that the CLM team would do that much for me. When Martinière stood up in the hospital [to get me a bed], it was a really big deal. **Since then, my family sees me as someone who really matters."**

Martinière provides that same care to the other 49 CLM members that he mentors, helping each to realize her own self-worth. As a case manager, he visits all fifty members in their homes every week. On each visit, Martinière checks in to see how the member is doing, offering business advice and general counseling. Sometimes he must intervene in extreme situations, such as health emergencies like Ytelène's, or instances of domestic violence.

But Martinière wouldn't trade his job for anything. He started out as a Ti Kredi credit agent, but decided to apply for the CLM program after hearing Director Gauthier Dieudonne explain its mission.

It is that passion and dedication to the members that drives Martinière and his fellow case managers. The sincere care that they express for each member is, perhaps, more impressive than the physical feats they display.



Martinière (with the daughter of CLM graduate Chrismène Nacisse) is a favorite among the CLM members—he connects with them not only in weekly meetings, but in other events, including confidence building training. "I love the responsibilities and the objectives of CLM," he says.

Ultimately, all those trips up and down the mountain are but another sign of their investment in each women's success.

**"When the members graduate, I am so proud," Martinière says. "It's a beautiful thing." •**



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## Fonkoze Ranked Among Top 100 NGOs

The *Global Journal* released its 2013 list of the top 100 NGOs. Out of 450 organizations working locally, nationally, and internationally, Fonkoze was ranked #33.

According to the *Global Journal*, the organizations were evaluated based on "impact, innovation, and sustainability," and the list includes "NGOs from 27

countries and working across a range of sectors: from building a fleet of motor-bikes and off-road ambulances to ensure the delivery of vital health care resources across Africa, to pioneering video as a popular tool for the protection of human rights."

Thank you so much for your support in helping us reach this amazing milestone! We are honored to be recognized among such a well-respected and innovative group of organizations and hope that you share in our pride as the supporters who have it possible.

Fonkoze is also proud to be a Charity Navigator 4-star Charity, a GuideStar Valued Partner, and a Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity.



## Become a Fonkoze Pledge Partner

You can help a woman in rural Haiti climb the first step on Fonkoze's Staircase Out of Poverty by becoming a Fonkoze Pledge Partner today! For as little as \$10 a month, your tax-deductible gift to Fonkoze USA can make a life-changing impact for some of Haiti's poorest women. Visit [Fonkoze.org](http://Fonkoze.org), or contact Fonkoze USA at 202-628-9033, to join.

## YOU Make It Happen

Your gift to Fonkoze is helping put loans in the hands of 64,000 women throughout rural Haiti! Thank you for your support.

**Keep Fonkoze in your thoughts and prayers.** Your prayers and positive thoughts are a source of strength and inspiration for Fonkoze staff and clients. We love to hear from you!

**Make a tax-deductible contribution.** Your gift is more important than ever! Visit our website to make a secure online contribution ([www.fonkoze.org](http://www.fonkoze.org)), or send a check payable to "Fonkoze USA" to 1700 Kalorama Road NW, Suite 102, Washington DC 20009.

**Give through your employer matching gift program.** Submit your company's matching gift form with your donation, and Fonkoze USA will process and return it to your employer. Or, send us your donation first, then present your acknowledgement letter to your employer for processing a match.

**Give through CFC.** Fonkoze USA participates in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Designate your contribution to Fonkoze USA, CFC ID # 31204.

**Remember a loved one.** Give a gift in honor or in memory of a loved one, and support the women of Haiti. Provide the details via our online giving form at [www.fonkoze.org](http://www.fonkoze.org), and Fonkoze will notify your honoree on your behalf with a beautiful card.

