

Gender roles and stereotypes.

Welcome

To **'PROMES'** – promotes the 'promise' of social protection and economic inclusion of disadvantaged households, with a special focus on the most vulnerable women in the south-east of Haiti.



What is the Project about?

Background

As a result of the profound socio-economic and cultural transformations that societies are currently undergoing, gender equality has become crucial. Gender equality is the act of providing women and men with the same rights, opportunities, resources in all areas. It is also the fact of facilitating differential treatment between women and men to correct inequalities. In this sense, the Swiss Cooperation Office, through its PROMES project, engaged Fonkoze, to implement its Pathway for a better life ("Chemen Lavi Miyo) programme, aimed at reaching the most vulnerable women living in extreme poverty in the South-East department. The CLM program is a Haitian adaptation of the "graduation model" developed by BRAC in the 1990s in favor of ultra-poor households.

Context

In the Haitian context, ultra poverty can be defined as an inability to meet even the barest of basic needs. The ultra poor are typically food insecure, have few or no assets, lack education, and suffer from poor health. A lot of ultra-poor households are headed by women. Ultra-poor women tend to be the victims of social exclusion, gender-based violence, and lack self-confidence or opportunities to build the skills and resilience necessary to plan their own futures. Often chronic and intergenerational, ultra poverty creates a trap that is incredibly difficult for women and their families to escape from. Traditional microfinance institutions do not reach out to the ultra-poor due to the very high level of accompaniment required to help them ascend from ultra poverty.

Summary

Theory of change

If a holistic support with a gender perspective is provided to ultra-poor persons based on transfer of assets, training and regular coaching for better managing income-generating activities, consumption and savings, under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST that supports territorial public and private actors to strengthen their social promotion and social protection, then the most disadvantaged households, especially women, will be able to integrate into the socio-economic life of their communities and offer their children, young and old, the opportunity to break free of the poverty trap.

Overall goal

Contribute to the increased socio-economic integration of disadvantaged households in the South-East through a territorial system of social protection and promotion (PPS).

Specific objective(s)

- National and international public and private actors work and define a plan based on the National Social Protection and Social Promotion Policy (NSPPP) for the social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged households in the South-East.
- Women and men from about 2,400 disadvantaged households in the South-East are reached and benefit.

Expected results

- Women have the confidence, and capacity to critically self-assess their lives and develop plans to overcome identified social, political, and economic barriers to address their individual needs.
- Women have access to and can take advantage of productive resources and livelihood enhancing opportunities, addressing their practical needs.
- Social structures which are gender biased are improved and more inclusive, especially of the more poor and vulnerable women and their families.

Stakeholders

Project partners

FONKOZE: Fondasyon kole zepol. <https://fonkoze.org/>

Project primary stakeholders (priority target group(s))

Women and men from about 2,400 disadvantaged households in the South-East

AVEC: Village Savings and Loan Association.

Project secondary and boundary stakeholders (system actors, duty bearers, service providers etc.)

CROSE: Regional Coordination of Associations of the South-East

Fanm Decide (Women Decide)

MAST: Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour



Some key reflections:

- The CLM approach is already in the National Policy for Social Protection and Promotion (PNPPS) of the MAST. The challenge is for the State to implement it directly or indirectly with the appropriate gender approach and other modifications.
- The involvement (albeit limited) of two civil society institutions (CROSE and Fanm Decide) was timely to amplify advocacy and ensure the replication of the CLM method as well as the sustainability of the gains in the South-East department.
- Important to continued dialogue with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MAST), for the appropriation of the gendered graduation approach for people in situations of ultra-poverty.

What did the project do and learn?

Design and Implementation

Key design and implementation features, included:

- Fonkoze is responsible for ensuring the achievement of the second objective through its Chemen Lavi Miyo (CLM) program, applying a gender perspective. Chemen Lavi Miyò (CLM) or "The Pathway to a Better Life" program empowers Haiti's poorest women to lift themselves out of ultra-poverty, with hope and vision for their futures.
- Integrated and holistic project design and approach
- Reflective support (individualized coaching) is done over a period of 18 months in two stages. First, individualized coaching is carried out, at the rate of one home visit every week, for 12 months. This is followed by coaching in small groups over the last few months.
- The member graduates after this period, according to graduation criteria related to an enhanced and diversified livelihood and the capacity to make plans for life. The process is done through key components : targeting, cash transfer, assets transfer and practice of savings, training and regular coaching for building competences and decision-making capacity.
- There are two sets of criteria for graduation. The first describes the expected socio-economic advancement and the new one describes the expected empowerment of the person.

Criteria for graduation, the person:

- has influence on at least three areas of their life.
- has self-confidence & a better self-esteem.
- perceives that their well-being has improved.
- feels that their voice matters more in their family.
- perceives that the community recognizes them and their voice.
- thinks they can continue on their own.



Key Achievements and Good Practices

- Group coaching workshops, known as "Bati konfyans" workshops, allow women to become aware of their situation and to think critically about the social, political, and economic barriers that prevent them from changing their living conditions. Their self-esteem is increased as well as their sense of self-sufficiency.
- During individualized coaching visits at home, other trainings and awareness-raising sessions were carried out on topics that can help them live better such as water treatment, malnutrition, cleanliness, cholera, childhood diseases (intestinal worm), vaccination, vitamin A, sexuality, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), family planning, early pregnancy, pre- and post-partum care, child development.
- Individualized coaching at home also includes coaching members to learn to read, write, count, and sign their names (especially for illiterate members). All these interventions help to increase self-esteem among the targeted women, who can now make their voices heard.
- For the members, a 12-month individualized coaching was carried out: which helped to develop women's empowerment at the individual level. This individualized coaching allows CLM members to define several action plans according to their objectives (economic or not).
- Progressive asset transfers, which allow women members to gradually achieve financial independence. Individualized coaching allows them to develop their economic capacity and carry out economic activities such as small-scale livestock, small-scale trade, agriculture, and other income-generating activities. Their participation in the Village Savings and Loans Associations (AVEC) allows them to save and have access to credit to increase their small businesses and to meet other financial needs.
- 1,000 CLM members were engaged in the process between 2020 and 2022. Nearly 80% of the members of this cohort graduated in 2022.
- Scaling: Another 1,400 CLM members are in process. For this group in progress, Fonkoze is currently working with 1,000 CLM members in Grand-Gosier. With technical assistance from Fonkoze, CROSE is currently working with 200 members in Côte-de-Fer, and Fanm Deside is working with 200 members in Belle Anse.Tags.



For more on the project, and SDC Gender in LAC experiences

- <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/Gender/Pages/Toolbox/Knowledge%20sharing/Gender-experiences-from-Latin-America.aspx>



Key Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- There have been cases of violence where spouses, excluded from CLM activities, have had negative reactions because of the contribution of the assets that the project brings and therefore perceived power re-distribution into households.
- Incorporating transformation of Gender Relations: Positive Masculinity meetings and workshops were incorporated for spouses. These workshops are designed in conjunction with the Bati Konfyans workshops so that similar topics are debated by women (Bati Konfyans) on the one hand, and by men on the other (Atelye Transfome maskulinite/ transforming masculinities workshop). Women's progress is greater when men collaborate. Of course, there is still resistance to these changes.
- Consider single women and women in other types of situations; women are not a homogenous group. Consider also valuing the progress and changes made by the men.
- The Village Savings allocations need to consider differences between 'client profiles' to be more fair, not just equal, e.g. size of families, number of dependents, specific vulnerabilities
- Currently, there are more men than women as case managers. Gender parity would be desirable. Working in a mixed pair would be ideal.
- Consider additional gender, mediation, and other 'livelihood' needs training offers.
- Consider workload, and incentive package for case handlers and other community workers for sustainability and work/life balance.
- Ensure proper training and follow up when transferring & scaling to other organizations.