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MAKING ALL
VOICES COUNT

RESEARCH REPORT

A GRAND CHALLENGE
FOR DEVELOPMENT

Poverty, voice and advocacy: a Haitian study



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Summary

Over the past ten years, Fonkoze (a non-profit organisation in Haiti) has adapted the ‘graduation’ model of lifting families out of extreme poverty through its Chemen Lavi Miyò (CLM) or ‘pathway to a better life’ programme. Yet despite international recognition for this approach, Fonkoze’s work is little known within Haitian policy circles on social protection and poverty.

This paper is the product of a 12-month action research project by Fonkoze with support from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). It used a rapid outcome mapping approach (ROMA) as a framework for creating an advocacy strategy through which Fonkoze could influence the development of Haiti’s social protection policy. It also aimed to give voice and promote downwards accountability to people who have lived experience of ultra-poverty by enabling them to articulate their views within the policy process.

For Fonkoze, this was a first attempt to move into activities other than programme implementation, and to leverage its impact by influencing other development actors to engage with the ultra-poor as a group with specific vulnerabilities and needs. It achieved some successes, despite the very limited time scale, weak voice of local institutions in policy processes and challenging external conditions. Giving voice and downward accountability to ultra-poor women (former CLM members) proved somewhat problematic though. These women, enmeshed in the structures that impoverish and marginalise them, cannot easily step outside of those structures to articulate their voice.

The report concludes by highlighting the problem that donors tend to channel their resources through separate government ministries or departments. Though inevitable (to some extent) given the context, this is also unhelpful in terms of promoting a coordinated social protection policy.

Key themes in this paper

- Policy processes are complex and rarely linear or logical.
- Successful advocacy work requires a nuanced understanding of the agendas of all stakeholders (national and international).
- Communication and networking are essential parts of influencing policy.
- Efforts to give voice to ultra-poor people need to be planned and implemented carefully to avoid inadvertently disempowering them.

What channels are available for the policy process to be responsive to citizens, and what is needed to give voice to those with experience to share?

Introduction: poverty, voice and advocacy

This paper examines voice at two levels: national voice in an international policy agenda, and citizen voice in the national policy process. The context is an action research project around the development of a national social protection strategy in Haiti, and the desire of a local non-profit organisation, Fonkoze, to have its successful social innovation – a ‘graduation’ approach to addressing extreme and ultra-poverty – recognised as part of this policy process. Fonkoze also wanted to create space for the voice of women living in extreme poverty to be heard and to influence this process in some way.

The international policy debate on the social protection agenda, reflected in the positions of key international agencies, is played out in the development of a national social protection strategy in Haiti. The processes are complex and layered with different international actors seemingly competing and channelling resources through different national actors. Inevitably, the normative policy process for these national actors is at least partially shaped by the international agencies. This is not uncommon, and indeed may be a ‘norm’ in fragile state contexts and can even be a force for progressive change. But the current Haitian context of political fragility, weak institutions and infrastructure, and severe lack of resources, creates a lop-sided process in which state voice is often weak since it is beholden to international actors for resources.

Fonkoze’s experience with the graduation approach to addressing ultra-poverty in Haiti is very positive and has generated good ideas on the evolution of policy to address ultra-poverty. Its experience mirrors success with the graduation approach in several other countries, evidenced by rigorous evaluation studies. Nevertheless, the approach is

contested and the efficacy of the graduation model has become a core part of international debate on social protection. It is in this context that Fonkoze is seeking to expand from its service delivery focus to informing the national policy process through its experience in designing and implementing the graduation approach in Haiti. Fonkoze seeks to influence national discourse and practice in relation to programming to address ultra-poverty. This is challenging in Haiti where there are many NGOs which are often criticised for their ineffectiveness and inefficiency and which are not generally part of the policy process. Fonkoze made a very deliberate attempt to inform its approach to the policy process by bringing to bear the voice of people with direct experience of extreme poverty. What channels are available for the policy process to be responsive to citizens, and what is needed to give voice to those with experience to share?

This research report is the product of a 12-month process of action research. Staff from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK, worked with Fonkoze to define a strategy for engaging with government, donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to:

1. share the evidence for its approach to ultra-poverty
2. engage in discussions about extreme and ultra-poverty in Haiti
3. influence, in the longer term, attitudes and practice in line with the experience of its programme targeting the ultra-poor – the Chemen Lavi Miyò (CLM) or ‘pathway to a better life’.

Competition for limited resources, institutional weaknesses and political and policy uncertainties weaken the ability of Haiti's government to be either responsive or accountable

The strategy sought first to gain 'a place at the table',¹ to build awareness of the graduation approach and Fonkoze's experience, and of what this could offer to the national social protection strategy. It also sought to create a channel through which women² who have experienced living in extreme poverty could contribute to the process.

This was the first time that Fonkoze had sought to engage with and influence the wider development community in this way. The process was thus a learning experience for Fonkoze in terms of how to approach this sort of engagement, as well as a wider exploration of how to influence policy processes in a fragile state with few resources, dominated by the agendas of international donors and agencies.

The policy processes to develop the national social protection strategy and Fonkoze's efforts to engage with it are ongoing and evolving. The research for this paper covered a short period during this process, and therefore can only present a snapshot. Furthermore, the 12-month project (June 2016 – June 2017) coincided with external factors typical of the practical challenges that tend to delay and frustrate development in Haiti. Coinciding with the launch of the project in June 2016, the presidential elections were annulled, leading to an eight-month political vacuum until the new president was sworn in during February 2017; this made conversations about future government strategy difficult. In addition to this, a major hurricane devastated the south of the country in October 2016, killing more than 550 people, leaving 1.4 million people in need of humanitarian aid, and diverting time and resources within many organisations (United Nations 2017).

While the scope of the advocacy activities addressed through this paper is narrow, nevertheless we hope that it brings some insights around two key questions: how do successful innovations get taken up by policy processes? And how to give voice to those with direct experience or connection to the issues at hand in the process?

This research contributes to the evidence base built up by the research component of the Making All Voices Count programme, which seeks to understand strategies to make government more accountable and responsive to citizen voice. Haiti is clearly a different case from the Making All Voices Count priority countries,³ where government institutions are much stronger. Haiti presents a complex scenario for citizen voice and government accountability, and does not have the accountable and responsive government that the programme's theory of change envisages. In this paper, the question of accountable government is examined in a context in which much policy direction is shaped by international donors, working through local institutions vying for power and patronage and where the voices of the most marginalised people are excluded from policy processes. Competition for limited resources, institutional weaknesses, and political and policy uncertainties weaken the ability of government to be either responsive or accountable. These features, together with the national development budget's strong dependence on foreign aid, in effect cede a high degree of policy influence to international organisations whose lines of accountability lie outside of the country.

¹ We use this phrase in a figurative sense to imply active participation in policy processes around the emergent social protection agenda, but also in a literal sense since the government-initiated social protection policy development group is known as the 'sectoral table'.

² The Fonkoze graduation programme always works with women from ultra-poor households both because of a recognised need to seek to empower women within the household and community, and because children's welfare is likely to be best served through this targeting strategy.

³ Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa and Tanzania.

1. Contextualising the advocacy challenge

1.1 Fonkoze's 'graduation' programme

In Haiti, 59% of the population live in poverty and 24% in extreme poverty (World Bank 2017).⁴ Poverty rates are much higher in rural areas, at more than 75%. The vast majority of the extreme poor (80%) live in rural areas and comprise 38% of the rural population.⁵ Multidimensional poverty measures (the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and the Human Development Index (HDI)) confirm the severity of poverty in Haiti, and there is policy recognition (see section 1.7) of the need to target support to the extreme poor, especially rural households.

Given these high levels of need, beginning in 2007, Fonkoze's approach through the CLM programme was to distinguish a sub-group, the 'ultra-poor', and focus on one geographical area (the Central Plateau). This was an effective use of scarce resources in a country with so much need, but the CLM approach also had a more pragmatic basis, reflecting Fonkoze's practical experience of working with thousands of poor women through its microfinance institution. A key lesson from its microfinance programme was that many of the poorest households were unable to utilise microfinance because of constraints linked to confidence, capacity and access, reflecting the multiple poverty traps they faced daily. CLM was developed to address the needs of these households and it adopted a specific targeting strategy to identify them. A core element in this ultra-poor targeting strategy was to select households with active female members who

would be able to use the programme support to develop a small enterprise, often based on livestock or trade. While the programme has other selection criteria – confirmation of their ultra-poverty status by both the community and programme management, and the presence of children – the capacity of a woman in the household to work was key to the programme's logic (see Figure 1 for the CLM theory of change).

1.2 The graduation model

Over the past ten years, Fonkoze has successfully 'graduated' more than 5,000 women and their families into sustainable livelihoods, with a 96% success rate.⁶ Developed from a proven 'graduation' model⁷ (see Figure 2), the CLM programme targets the poorest women in rural Haiti with an 18-month support package including assets, a cash stipend, weekly mentoring visits, skills training and savings facilities. As there are few basic services available to people living in poverty in Haiti, Fonkoze has included several additional elements in the programme, such as support to improve housing, sanitation and a water filter, as well as a partnership arrangement with a local health charity, Zanmi Lasante,⁸ which provides free health care for programme participants.

The graduation model has gained prominence particularly in response to the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), ending extreme poverty. It aims to support recipients to reach a stage where they are able to maintain (and, in many cases, improve) their livelihoods at a level that, while remaining poor, lifts them out of extreme

⁴ See www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview – updated April 2017 but poverty data is based on the most recent (2012) household survey, 'Enquête sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages après le Séisme' (Post-earthquake household living conditions survey), ECVMAS 2012, produced by Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique (IHSI).

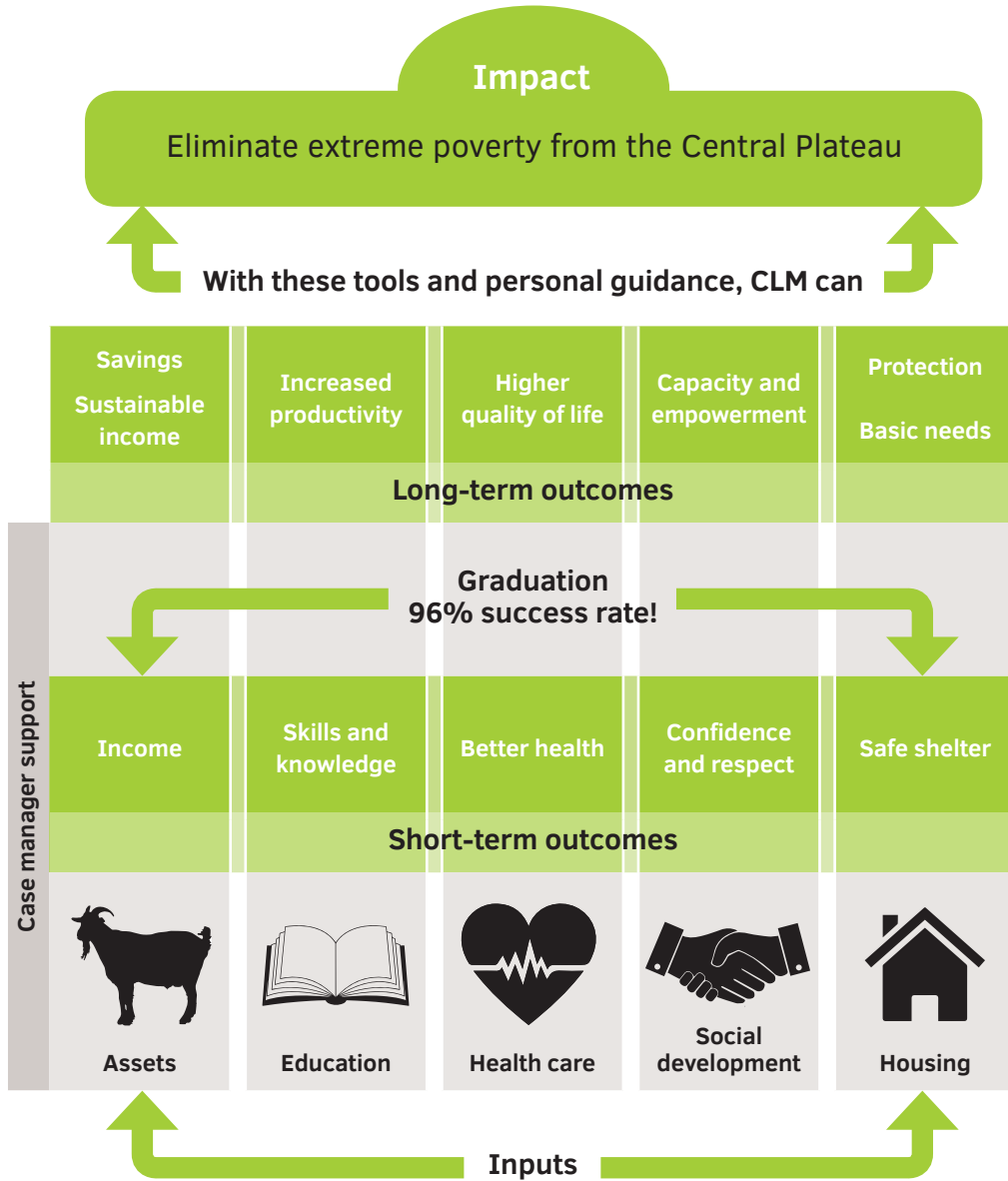
⁵ The extreme poor are those living under the national extreme poverty line. This line is well below the new \$1.90 purchasing power parity (PPP) line, which estimates national extreme poverty at 53.9% according to data published by the World Bank.

⁶ This rate is based on internal monitoring data assessing 'graduation' status of participants who have completed the CLM programme.

⁷ The model was first developed and used by BRAC in Bangladesh in 2002.

⁸ Haitian partner of Partners in Health.

Figure 1. The CLM theory of change



Chemen Lavi Miyò
Pathway to a Better Life
Theory of change

Figure 2. The 'graduation' model



Source: Presentation by Syed Hashemi to IDS/Fonkoze graduation workshop, IDS, University of Sussex, October 2015

poverty (Bandiera, Burgess, Das, Gulesci, Rasul and Sulaiman 2016, cited in CGAP 2016). The graduation approach is now being applied in 37 countries – 20 through government programmes. It recognises a unique set of characteristics and needs of people living in extreme poverty and presents a carefully sequenced combination of inputs developed through years of evidence-based testing, and adaptation to a number of different country contexts. Rigorous research using randomised control trials (RCTs) has demonstrated the effectiveness of the model in reducing poverty in different contexts (Banerjee, Duflo, Goldberg, Karlan, Osei, Parienté, Shapiro, Thuysbaert and Udry 2015). The graduation approach, through its focus on sustainable livelihoods, is a market-based development

strategy that is strongly identified with the inclusive growth agenda. But it is also a sophisticated social transfer programme targeting the extreme poor. The model operates with a more nuanced understanding of constraints to household livelihoods than is usually seen in other development approaches such as cash transfers and agricultural development programmes. The breadth and depth of evidence testifying to the positive outcomes of the model has led to significant international support for the approach and an advocacy programme from several agencies championing it. The logic informing this enthusiasm of development agencies and their 'pitch' to the international development community is summarised in Box 1.

Box 1. The business case for graduation

Excerpt from *The Business Case for Investing in Graduation*:

Graduation targets people who are well below the US\$1.90 / day threshold for extreme poverty – a cohort described as the ‘ultra-poor’, ‘poorest of the poor’, ‘chronic poor’, ‘invisible poor’ and ‘destitute’. Their lives are characterized by food insecurity, poor health, minimal education, unreliable incomes, low social capital, and a lack of assets and land ownership. Daily, they face the risks of health crises, climate change, and other shocks and stresses. They often live ‘off the grid’; in remote rural areas, lacking access to banks and other financial systems, and often excluded from poverty programs through governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The number of people living in these unacceptable conditions of poverty is estimated to be in the range of 400-500 million (80-100 million families).

This is the moment to invest in Graduation. It provides a proven means of reducing extreme poverty and can increase the effectiveness of government social protection programs for the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

Graduation is defined by its five core characteristics: it targets the household, often

those headed by women; it is holistic in that it combines social assistance, health care, livelihood training, and financial services; it provides the family with an initial economic ‘push’ through a single, significant investment; it includes forms of coaching or mentoring to overcome economic and social barriers; and it is time bound, with a clear schedule for graduating the household into larger social protection systems or access to microfinance. To be sure, Graduation is not appropriate for every person living in conditions of extreme poverty but a reasonable estimate is that it could benefit some 200-250 million people. Graduation builds individual autonomy and agency, reduces the risk of long-term dependency on government programs, and can prevent downstream social problems exacerbated by poverty. Graduation connects marginalized citizens with the market and with other financial, social, and political systems that can accelerate their progress. A growing body of evidence shows that Graduation can yield a very positive long-term return on an initial, time-bound investment.

Source: Abrams, Goldstein, Reed, Roenen and Tardif (2017) ‘The Business Case for Investing in Graduation’, Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP).

1.3 Gaining exposure on the national stage

Fonkoze’s experience of using the approach in Haiti (and, indeed, international experience) highlights the potential positive impact of a programme that is effectively targeted towards ultra-poor people and designed with their specific characteristics and needs in mind. Fonkoze’s experience with the CLM has demonstrated the efficacy of the approach for a significant group of the poorest households in Haiti who had strengthened their livelihoods and achieved a sustainable reduction in poverty. However, in Haiti, Fonkoze’s CLM programme is little known; and the organisation lacks the resources that would be needed to address ultra-poverty at scale. The decision to instigate an advocacy strategy came from the recognition that to maximise the value of its experience and expertise, Fonkoze would have to influence other development actors in Haiti.

During its years implementing one of the most significant poverty reduction programmes in Haiti, Fonkoze has had very little contact with key actors in the sector. Like most national NGOs in the country, Fonkoze has not been substantively engaged in strategic discussions or coordination meetings with government and international donors in the development of poverty reduction and social protection strategy and programmes. However, shortly before the launch of the advocacy process, a ‘policy advisory’ sectoral table on social protection had been formed involving ministries across government and donors (as well as the international NGO CARE through its role in the consortium leading a major social protection project, Kore Lavi). This table provided an opportunity for Fonkoze to use its experience and expertise to influence thinking, policy and practice on national strategy for the extreme poor.

1.4 Advocating for a focus on ultra-poverty: the strategy workshop

A core challenge identified by Fonkoze was the invisibility of people living in ultra-poverty in Haiti. It was not simply a matter of highlighting the success of the graduation approach, but of raising awareness of the need to see the ultra-poor as a group needing particular policy attention. As a sub-group of the extreme poor, the specific characteristics of the ultra-poor define them; it is these same characteristics, described in Box 1, which informed the design of the graduation approach and made it effective in supporting women in ultra-poor households to improve their living conditions. While academic writing on the concept of multidimensional poverty traps (e.g. Carter and Barrett 2006) has contributed to a greater understanding of the ultra-poor, they are not a well-defined target group within the extreme poor. Addressing this issue, the strategy workshop held by IDS and Fonkoze sought to define needs, challenges and opportunities by bringing together a number of actors from government, local NGOs and civil society.

A focus on extreme poverty and ultra-poverty was seen to be challenging for a number of reasons. Firstly, in a country with high levels of poverty, there is a sense that there are so many people in need and that the extreme poor should not be favoured. Moreover, policy-makers and decision-makers often do not have experience of the reality of people living in extreme poverty. While there is

some focus on the extreme poor through social protection programmes such as Kore Lavi⁹ and Kore Fanmi,¹⁰ the ultra-poor are not identified in national statistics. Sometimes this ambiguity results in NGOs claiming to work with the poor when in fact they do not. Moreover, with the high vulnerability of poor households to natural disasters and their frequent recurrence, extreme poverty is often regarded as a humanitarian rather than a development issue. For others, addressing the needs of the ultra-poor is simply a poor fit with the government's need for visible and quick results, and does not resonate with those who are politically strong and organised.

The experience of Fonkoze can address some (but not all) of these challenges. It highlights the need to differentiate between different levels of poverty and provides evidence that graduation out of extreme poverty is possible; moreover, it demonstrates that such graduation can be an important contributory element of a national social protection programme, providing visible results and reducing the numbers of people requiring ongoing social assistance.

Specifically, in terms of advocating for a focus on ultra-poverty in Haiti, Fonkoze identified a number of key lessons learned that formed the core objectives of the advocacy strategy (Table 1). This highlighted the need to bring a focus on ultra-poor women and their families to the national agenda. Given that this was Fonkoze's first deliberate attempt to engage with national policy processes, discussion at the strategy workshop (the first activity in the advocacy programme) also

⁹ The Kore Lavi programme is implemented by a consortium of CARE, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented in partnership with the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour to establish a sustainable system of social protection for households experiencing chronic food insecurity. Kore Lavi is implementing a safety net programme (food voucher) that improves access to locally produced foods among vulnerable households. The programme also implements maternal and child health and nutrition interventions for pregnant and lactating women and children under two years of age. Initially lasting four years and extended by two years in 2017, Kore Lavi has had a direct impact on more than 18,000 households (the monthly food voucher) and 205,000 people (maternal and child health and nutrition components) in 16 food-insecure communes, distributed across five departments.

¹⁰ The Community Social Worker Initiative Kore Fanmi, was a pilot programme (now discontinued) implemented by the Haitian Government's Economic and Social Assistance Fund (FAES), based on an agreement between the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP) and the World Bank. The programme sought to harmonise and improve the provision of basic services to poor and vulnerable families, such as access to education, vaccines and latrines, with a view to moving away from a national fragmented and unequal system to one of systematic coverage focusing on the rights and needs of families. Families are classified based on their level of vulnerability, and the activities, medicines or food provisions provided are tailored to meet their needs. Each worker was responsible for about 100 families for which he or she must prepare a plan covering a specific period. The plan focuses on 28 life goals, such as, "the family must use latrines". Each family has a certain number of goals, based on its own specific needs. The activities of FAES in the Kore Fanmi project are now restricted to the building of a social registry. UNICEF used the Kore Fanmi approach in three communes in the Southeast department, since 2014 and will close this specific project in October 2017.

Table 1. Applying Fonkoze’s lessons learned to the advocacy strategy

Lessons learned	Advocacy strategy aim
1. Ultra-poor women and families are invisible	1. Raise awareness of the existence of the ultra-poor and how to reach them
2. Ultra-poor families can develop sustainable livelihoods	2. Raise awareness of the capacity of ultra-poor women / families to effectively develop sustainable livelihoods
3. They need a well-adapted package of interventions to make it work	3. Share evidence on the need for an integrated package of services
4. Fonkoze cannot do this on its own	4. Develop collaborative activities with key stakeholders (government and civil society) to move the agenda forward

reflected on the specific actions that Fonkoze should take. This included discussion on experience of Haitian policy processes and successful advocacy efforts. For example, there was active participation from a former secretary of state who was living with a disability and had led a very successful campaign to increase recognition and rights for disabled people in Haiti. Using an outcome mapping approach (see below), the workshop developed desired outcomes for key stakeholders and a plan of activities.

1.5 Giving voice to people with experience of extreme poverty in the national policy process

One of the most significant evolutions in development practice has been the emergence of attempts to create and amplify citizen ‘voice’ in relation to the delivery of public services. Political democracy has proved a weak tool in many development contexts to ensure meaningful accountability of the state to its citizens. Early attempts to address this democratic deficit focused on supply-side initiatives, particularly the ideas emerging from new public management (NPM). As Joshi (2008: 11) discussed, initiatives based on NPM, borrowing from the private sector, attempted to improve bureaucratic performance by separating policy design from implementation, and through arrangements such as performance-based contracts, contracting out services and creating competition. These reforms have had mixed results (World Bank 2008) but, critically, have done little to promote accountability to citizens or to strengthen inclusion of the poor in access to services.

An alternative approach, or family of approaches, emphasises the demand side and the empowerment of citizens to be able to hold government to account. These social accountability approaches focus on strengthening transparency in service delivery and access to information about services as well as seeking to hold government accountable to citizens (Gaventa and McGee 2013). In reviewing transparency and accountability initiatives, Gaventa and McGee (2013: 517–19) acknowledge the limitations of the evidence base but, gleaned insights from the available studies, underline the importance of political will and legal frameworks as core conditions providing the platform on which successful transparency and accountability initiatives depend.

Neither of these are conditions which characterise opportunity for social accountability approaches in Haiti. Notably, an important voice that is absent in the policy processes around social protection in Haiti is that of people with direct experience of living in extreme poverty. The advocacy project therefore sought to address this in a small way through working with former CLM members, and supporting them to define an agenda and engage with government and other national institutions. As part of this process to make the ultra-poor visible, the need to give voice to ultra-poor people themselves in this process was highlighted – borrowing from a popular campaign slogan used in campaigns for disabled people “nothing about us without us”. The hope was that CLM members would convey their own experiences and priorities and potentially influence the attitudes and practices of people devising the national social protection strategy. Only very tentative steps were

taken in this direction during the project, but the experience throws up some interesting questions that are relevant for a process to strengthen downward accountability (of the state to its citizens), as well as the role of a development actor such as Fonkoze in facilitating this process.

1.6 State voice and international agendas

Graduation as part of the international social protection agenda

Fonkoze's advocacy work coincided (fortuitously) with efforts by the Haitian government and international donors to develop a national social protection strategy. This created a window of opportunity where different approaches were examined and discussed. However, openness to new ideas needs to be understood in the context of the evolution of social protection in Haiti, and particularly in relation to the agendas of key international players such as the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The World Bank is a foremost actor in supporting the development of social protection strategies in developing countries. The Bank's usual approach is to advocate, and financially support, the development of a universal household socio-economic survey to assess household needs. The survey is used to score households using a proxy means test to inform estimates of economic wellbeing. According to resource availability, households are then targeted through social protection programmes to receive cash transfers and sometimes other forms of support. USAID has a more nuanced approach using its own targeting methods, with a strong focus on food security, mother and child health and supporting market-based approaches, especially in agriculture, to reduce vulnerability. These are the two agencies that have, to date, been most involved in supporting the social protection sector in Haiti. (The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and European Union (EU) have also been engaged with the social protection agenda in Haiti.)

In neither case do these agencies have a history of supporting 'graduation' as an element of social protection. However, the World Bank is now actively engaged with this agenda, including through the establishment of a learning platform on graduation. The Bank's commitment to social protection is also informed by market principles; the labour market is people's income source but

unemployment and inability to engage in the labour market are events, or conditions, termed 'social risk'. Social risk is a construct of idiosyncratic (e.g. unemployment or sickness) and co-variant (e.g. economic shocks) conditions adversely affecting the individual and their household but, at its core, it is understood as market failure in the broad sense – people not being able to work, for whatever reason.

The graduation approach is fundamentally about engaging the ultra-poor with the market (at least in terms of the commonest approach to material improvement) and, as such, is quite consistent with the broader market-oriented philosophy of the World Bank. But the Bank's core approach to social protection also involves the recognition of resource scarcity – consumption transfers are equated with reductions in public investment – and therefore involves rationing through a targeted approach. In sharp contrast, the broader global debate around social protection includes the idea of a social protection floor, advocated by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which ultimately seeks to promote a rights-based approach to universal provision of a basic income to all citizens. While in practice this approach also involves some form of targeting based on income needs, it is politically quite distinct, as it is based on the notion of citizenship and legal rights. These debates have only been weakly rehearsed in Haiti (e.g. through the emergence of the National Social Assistance Strategy, discussed below). However, the absolute scarcity of resources and the weak capacity of the state mean that agencies bringing money have considerable leeway to influence the social protection policy process now under way.

1.7 The emergence of the social protection agenda in Haiti

Haiti has never had a social movement (either trade unions or other socio-political movements) to significantly question the predatory state on the specific issue of social protection. However, in the context of a growing wage economy and the emergence of a middle class, the first steps towards creating social assistance mechanisms were taken in the 1940s (Farman 1947; Department of Labour and Welfare of Haiti 1967), after more than half a century of social care through charity work by religious orders and upper-class or middle-class women (Mérat 2011). By the late 1960s, public social security

organisations (insurance and social assistance¹¹) had been developed but were weak institutions and under-funded. After the dictatorship period (post-1986), new institutions and programmes were created. The creation of the social investment fund, an independent, public, financial institution called the Economic and Social Assistance Fund (*Fonds d'Assistance Economique et Social* (FAES)) in 1990 stands out. From that time, there was an extension and diversification of social protection mechanisms, with social promotion policies in education, health, food security, housing and employment (Lamaute-Brisson 2013).

From the 1990s the integration of new social protection functions by the Haitian state was increasingly influenced by donors. The need to address the costs of adjustment and, subsequently, the imperative of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) led to the incorporation of vulnerable populations as objects of attention and enhanced the effective roles of the state in social areas. Major non-contributory innovations included school canteens, free obstetric care, free schooling, conditional cash transfers and support to families. Social promotion was expanded through investment in social infrastructure, temporary job creation projects and support for micro-enterprises. Significantly, progress was made in supporting the often neglected rural areas, especially through the FAES and *Bureau de Monétisation des Programmes d'Aide au Développement* (BMPAD).¹² Nevertheless, the predatory logic of the state – infamous during the long kleptocratic regime of the Duvaliers (1957–1986) – remained strongly in evidence (Lundahl and Silié 1998).

The National Social Assistance Strategy (SNAS) 2012–2014

As of 2011, new public initiatives emerged, inspired by several experiences from Latin America and the Caribbean. There was intent both to broaden the scope of state intervention by introducing innovative mechanisms, and to extend or reactivate previously implemented or proposed

mechanisms. From 2012, a large part of the effort was made through the formulation of a National Social Assistance Strategy (SNAS). This was comprehensive in ambition,¹³ ranging from social assistance to social security, capacity development and economic inclusion. The implementation of the SNAS was entrusted mainly to FAES.

The SNAS had a strong vision of comprehensive social protection provision and explicitly identified the extreme poor as a target group and also the need to target poor rural women, through its *Kredi Fanm Lokal* component. However, the ambition was not matched by resources or implementation capacity. With the change of government following the forced resignation of Prime Minister Lamothe in December 2014, the SNAS lost favour; it would, in any event, have struggled for resources in the difficult fiscal environment (Lamaute-Brisson 2015).

Governance failure

Haiti has a proud history having won its independence in 1804 but has an unenviable reputation for poor governance seen most vividly in the despotic leadership of the Duvaliers, who used the institution of the state to terrorise and steal for 30 years. Little immediate progress was seen upon the fleeing of Baby Doc in 1986 and successive governments have continued to use the office of the state for appropriating resources. Given the long-standing and persistent weaknesses of the Haitian state, international agencies play an influential role. Aid figures fluctuate largely because of humanitarian crises, but donors currently supply aid to Haiti that is equal to nearly 60% of total government expenditure.

The aid effectiveness agenda seeks to support weak institutions to be more effective, and is particularly pertinent in a fragile state context such as Haiti. But despite the commitment to build capacity, which all donors subscribe to, the current limited state capacity leaves international agencies in a powerful position to set the agenda.

¹¹ The 'Office d'Assurance Accidents du Travail, Maladie, Maternité', or the Office for Work Accidents, Health and Maternity Insurance. But only the work accidents policy was initially implemented; the health and maternity insurance did not begin until 2014. And the 'Office National d'Assurance Vieillesse', or the National Pensions Office. Both organisations were created by law in 1967.

¹² BMPAD is the 'Monetisation Office for Development Assistance Programmes'.

¹³ See www.slideshare.net/FAESHAIITI/presentation-ede-pep

While external agencies aim to build sustainable local institutions and enable government to take over the resourcing of ongoing programmes such as social protection, competition between donors and agencies only serves to reinforce some of the dysfunctional organisational behaviour such as rent-seeking, which undermines sustainability. Moreover, while poverty is recognised to be multidimensional, most donors take an approach that focuses on one issue only. More complex approaches that connect mechanisms like social assistance, asset transfers and support to businesses / business activities have generally not been pursued.

The strategy differences at an international level are reflected in the strategies of these institutions' local Haitian offices. Beyond the different strategies to address poverty and deliver social protection are differences in alliances and, in effect, in the patronage given by international agencies to local government institutions. Two main groups exist: the World Bank and UNICEF (until very recently) are providing financial and technical support to the FAES through Kore Fanmi; and USAID and the World Food Programme (WFP) are supporting the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour through Kore Lavi.

The World Bank, observing lack of capacity in Haiti, supported and invested in the capacity of FAES – not a regular ministry, but a specialist unit with technical capacity, which the Bank has used to oversee project implementation and

provide analytic capacity. While the Kore Fanmi funding was stopped because of service capacity constraints, the Bank continues to have a strong influence on the evolution of the social protection agenda in Haiti, and there is clear direction from Washington to apply the global model using a proxy means test to identify households in need. Current plans extend to support for the establishment of a national social register in order to eventually identify all households eligible for social protection. Kore Lavi also uses a poverty targeting tool to channel resources to the extreme poor; recognition of the need to avoid competition has led to the World Bank proposing to develop a version of the Kore Lavi survey as the basis of the social register. It was also agreed to establish coordination mechanisms between Kore Lavi and other stakeholders or projects, including the collection and exchange of information on vulnerable populations and, in some cases, sharing of project costs. Kore Lavi can use information already collected by Kore Fanmi to classify and select vulnerable households (Lamaute-Brisson 2015).

The advocacy approach adopted by Fonkoze did not seek to promote the CLM approach or the work of Fonkoze *per se*. Rather, the ambition was to bring in an 'ultra-poor perspective' to the table to influence attitudes, practices and policy. Recognising the importance of both state and international actors in forming the strategy, Fonkoze sought to engage with both.

2. The advocacy process

2.1 Outcomes mapping as a framework for strategy development and analysis

As already discussed, the Haitian context is characterised by complexity, competitive relationships and uncertainty. Fonkoze, as a local institution with a proven approach to working with 'the ultra-poor' (a group often invisible to policy-makers), sought to raise the profile of this group and to share experience on how to work with them effectively. As an operational organisation, this was Fonkoze's first venture into advocacy. Given the complexity of agendas, relationships between actors, and external factors, an advocacy strategy that sought to achieve specific changes through a pre-defined theory of change would have been at best challenging. The team recognised that the strategy needed to be iterative, based on an evolving understanding of the context and agenda of different stakeholders.

To fit with this, they used the rapid outcome mapping approach (ROMA) methodology (Young, Shaxson, Jones, Hearn, Datta and Cassidy 2014). This provides both a framework for analysis, mapping and evaluating the process towards outcomes, and a process for designing an advocacy strategy.

An important part of the framing of ROMA is an analysis of 'real-world' policy processes and the implications of this for how advocacy is designed and understood. Key points highlighted include that:

- policy processes are complex and rarely linear or logical and therefore advocacy needs to be reflective and adaptive
- policy processes are only weakly informed by research-based evidence and policy-makers have different concepts of 'good evidence'
- there is a range of other political and resource factors which affect decisions – including the need to make a 'reasonable' decision (quickly)
- there is a need for a holistic understanding of context including external influences such as donor policies, political context (people,

processes, institutions) and type, quality, contestability of research and how this is communicated, as well as linkages with other actors

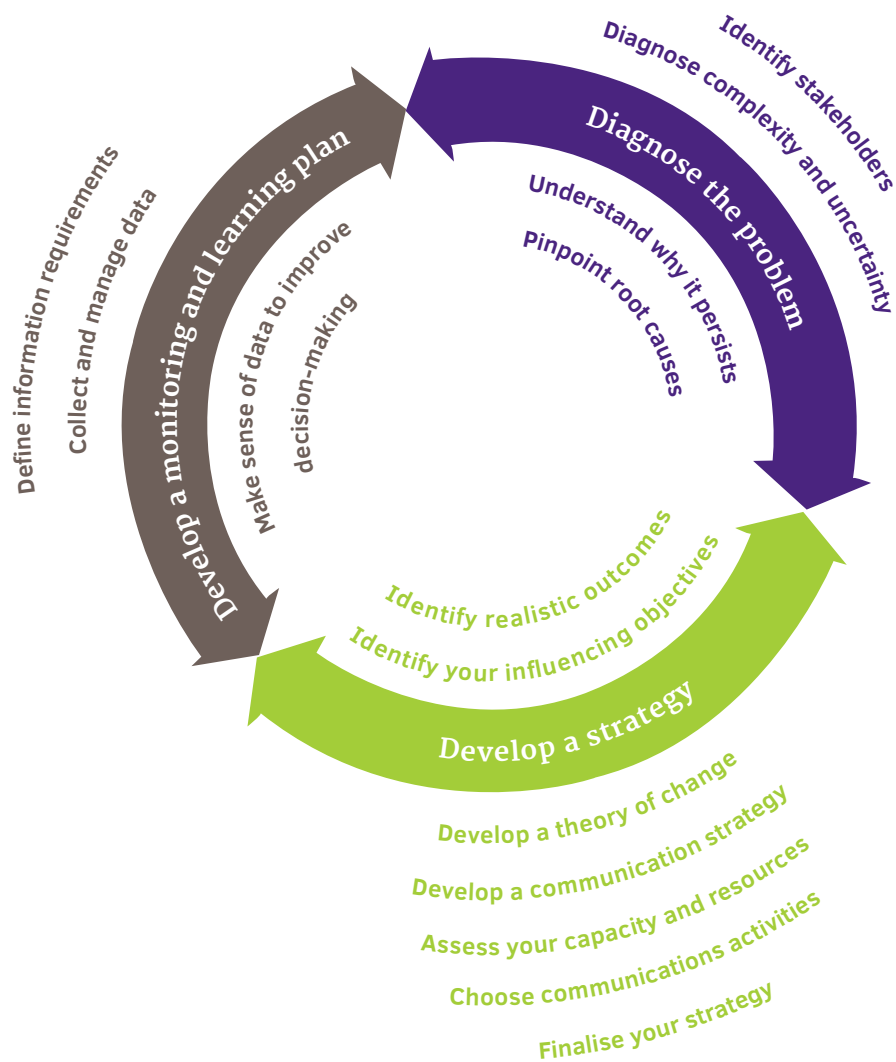
- communication and networking are essential parts of influencing policy, implying the need to engage with key players based on an understanding of politics and interests through different channels and media
- there needs to be a deliberate focus and commitment to influencing (Young and Mendizabal 2009).

ROMA consists of three main activities, each of which is broken down into a series of steps (see Figure 3).

The first step was a mapping process that identified stakeholders (defined in outcome mapping as 'boundary partners') – that is, the people and organisations that Fonkoze sought to influence. A series of key informant interviews were then conducted to build an understanding of the state of attitudes, knowledge and practice of stakeholders. A strategy workshop then brought together key actors – both 'allies', where it was thought that there would be an alignment of agendas and other actors that Fonkoze sought to better understand and potentially influence. The workshop deepened Fonkoze's understanding of stakeholders, their interests and agendas, and helped define the objectives and process for the advocacy strategy. Recognising the complexity of policy processes (especially in Haiti), the workshop also sought to unpack which kinds of processes are seen to be effective and how tools to influence policy and for research would need to be adapted.

Using the ROMA methodology, the baseline and desired outcomes were mapped out for each stakeholder. The theory of change that was adopted stipulated that changing knowledge and awareness leads to changing attitudes and discourse, which in turn leads to changing practice in terms of procedures, content and behaviour (see Figure 4). Specific activities were then developed based on identified opportunities.

Figure 3. The rapid outcome mapping approach (ROMA)



Source: Young *et al.* 2014

Advocacy strategy

Actions were defined in three dimensions:

- Engaging with graduated CLM members to understand and define their own priorities in terms of raising the voice of 'ultra-poverty' in the Haitian policy and development context, and then to engage with stakeholders that they identify.
- Working with allies to leverage their existing relationships, networks and channels to the 'ultra-poor agenda'.
- Facilitating engagement activities involving a range of stakeholders to discuss technical, programmatic and policy issues, in which the perspectives of CLM members can be included.

Fonkoze's experiences with the CLM programme and evidence generated by the complementary research activities were designed to form the basis for this engagement. The two key parts of the process by which CLM seeks to influence policy and practice are empowering voice for ultra-poor citizens and building and strengthening relationships with identified stakeholders. Together, these shaped actions, discussions and messaging.

The strategy was stepped; ultimately, Fonkoze's agenda is to shift thinking and practice in relation to the ultra-poor. The first step to achieving this was to get Fonkoze to the table and to engage in existing processes in relation to the extreme poor.

By doing this, Fonkoze sought to expose other actors to its approach of working with a subset of the extreme poor – the ultra-poor. In the

longer term, it was hoped that this would create space for more explicit discussions and ultimately actions focused on the ultra-poor.

Figure 4. Fonkoze’s advocacy strategy – intended outcomes

Attitudinal changes

- Recognition that extreme poverty can and should be eliminated.
- Recognition that people living in extreme poverty have the capacity to move to a more sustainable livelihood; this requires a developmental not humanitarian approach.
- Recognition that to work effectively with people living in extreme poverty, organisations need to actively identify this target group, and demonstrate that they are reaching these people.
- Gaining collective buy-in for the extreme poverty agenda.
- Building the idea that working on extreme poverty is a win-win strategy for everyone.

Discursive changes

- Bringing a focus on extreme poverty into policy discussion on social protection. Also making connections for discussions on the SDGs, climate change / risk resilience, inclusive growth, gender / empowerment and national development.
- Recognising differentiation of different levels of extreme poor, and that there is a group of ultra-poor that needs to be specifically identified.
- Distinctiveness of rural vs urban extreme poor.

Procedural and content changes

- Clear understanding of characteristics of extreme poor demonstrated in documents, strategy and other communication by key stakeholders in Haiti.
- Process to identify / target poverty level is defined by key actors.

Behavioural changes

- Decision-makers connect with extreme poor (so understand their reality).
- Practitioners apply methods that enable the extreme poor to sustainably move out of poverty.
- Actors at the community, local, national organisation, international organisation and government levels collaborate on activities to promote the extreme poverty agenda.

By drawing on these interpretations of power as an analytical framework, this research explores the different legal empowerment approaches used for obtaining more equal access to basic services. The advocacy activities described in this report are used to discuss the links between empowerment and accountability, and the role of legal frameworks and rights-based action for strengthening both.

In relation to the national social protection agenda, Fonkoze’s strategy sought to engage with key actors at a technical level (hosting a technical meeting on poverty targeting) and at a strategic level (presenting to the social protection table). Table 2 summarises the activities it undertook.

Table 2. Timeline of key activities undertaken as part of advocacy strategy

Date	External factors	Engagement with stakeholders	Engagement with CLM members
March 2016	Agreement of funding for advocacy research	Sectoral table on social protection revived	
May 2016		Strategy workshop	
June 2016	Decision to re-run presidential elections	Invitation to participate in national social protection table	
July to September 2016	Recruitment of consultant who had major role in development of national social protection strategy	Follow-up discussions	
October 2016	Hurricane Matthew		
December 2016	New president elected		
January 2017			Open-space meeting with graduated CLM members
February 2017	New President Jovenel Moïse sworn in		
March 2017			Follow-up meeting of graduated CLM members with women's organisations
April 2017		Technical (Poverty Monitoring and Social Exclusion Unit (UOPES)) and high-level seminars (donors) Presentation to the social protection table	
April-June 2017		Evolving partnership with Kore Lavi, engagement with national social protection strategy and end-line stakeholder interviews	Planning training for CLM staff
July 2017		Exposure visit to Rwanda of CLM staff – discussed with key government officials who were invited but did not take part	

These events were seen as significant progress in terms of attitude and inclusion – although being at the table is only a first step towards being heard and understood

Bringing Fonkoze to the table

As outlined above, over the past ten years Fonkoze has adapted the 'graduation' model and implemented a highly successful approach to sustainably moving women and their families out of extreme poverty. Despite international recognition for the approach, Fonkoze's focus locally was implementation, and although their microfinance bank was well-known, the organisation had no visibility on the social protection and poverty agenda. Nationally, one of the challenges is to make people understand that the graduation package is a mix of social assistance and social promotion (promoting livelihoods), and individual empowerment. The other challenge is to convince people that graduation is not an *exit strategy* from social protection.

A key achievement of the advocacy project was to get Fonkoze engaged in the national policy process, in that Fonkoze has been invited to present to the sectoral table on social protection. This was evidenced in a number of ways, including an invitation for Fonkoze representatives to attend one meeting of the sectoral table.¹⁴ Further evidence was a good turnout of 40 participants, including Ministry of Planning officials, and most of the significant stakeholders, at a technical meeting organised by Fonkoze and the Poverty Monitoring and Social Exclusion Unit (*L'Unité d'Observation de la Pauvreté et de l'Exclusion Sociale*, UOPES). UOPES was a key ally that emerged from the initial strategy workshop and demonstrated keen interest in the issues that Fonkoze was presenting. Indeed, in subsequent sectoral table meetings, there were positive references to Fonkoze's work. Importantly, Fonkoze also started dialogue with the Director General of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, including inviting a senior staff member on an

exposure visit to Rwanda to look at the successful integration of a graduation component into national social protection provisions there.¹⁵

Given Fonkoze's invisibility at the start of the advocacy process, these events were seen as significant progress in terms of attitude and the practice of inclusion. Of course, being at the table is only a first step towards being heard and understood, and to lobbying for changes in social protection provision.

A number of factors may have contributed towards this success. Luck is one such factor; the decision to start a process to design a national social protection strategy created a window of opportunity in which issues can be discussed and new perspectives can be included. Getting the right local guidance as to who to talk to and guidance on messaging was also important. It may also have been that Fonkoze's alliance with an internationally respected development research institute gave some credibility to Fonkoze and 'opened doors'; so, for example, an early visit to the WFP by IDS academics led to an animated conversation about possibilities for collaboration and a commitment to involve Fonkoze in future discussions. It may also partly be due to strategic decisions by stakeholders who sensed a possibility for access to resources or gain for their institution by opening up to Fonkoze.

The technical and donor meetings in particular undoubtedly made Fonkoze and the CLM programme more visible within policy circles. It opened the door and gave credibility for ongoing engagement, although follow-through – particularly around findings from Fonkoze's research agenda – will be important. So through design or intent, Fonkoze is now well-connected to the key stakeholders working on poverty and social

¹⁴ The members of the sectoral table are public / state institutions, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies / donors / embassies and CARE as a leading member of the Kore Lavi project.

¹⁵ The visit took place in July 2017, but unfortunately the Haitian official had to pull out at the last moment. Fonkoze staff who did travel to Rwanda will make a presentation to the sectoral table.

protection nationally, and there is now widespread awareness of Fonkoze's CLM programme and its focus on the ultra-poor.

Building new alliances

Collaborating with Kore Lavi. Fonkoze aimed to better understand the perspectives of different stakeholders and to engage in a way that was supportive (rather than pushing a 'graduation agenda'). This approach has opened up space for new alliances. Evolving collaboration with Kore Lavi (and its component organisations CARE, WFP and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour) is regarded as a significant breakthrough, as it has given Fonkoze a way to interact directly with major stakeholders, and paves the way for future opportunities to engage on the ultra-poverty agenda. The example also clearly demonstrates outcomes at each level of the theory of change on which the advocacy strategy is based – attitudinal, discursive, procedural and behavioural.

Kore Lavi is a multi-organisation partnership. It falls under the auspices of the Ministry and is implemented through a partnership with the international NGO, CARE (the main implementing organisation alongside WFP). Funding comes from USAID. Engagement therefore took the form of bilateral discussions with each partner as well as with Kore Lavi itself.

CARE has worked with Fonkoze for several years, but not in relation to the CLM programme. Despite attempts for dialogue there had been no contact with WFP prior to the meeting of IDS academics at the start of the advocacy process. USAID works with the Fonkoze Foundation but not on the CLM programme. Presentations on CLM have been made to USAID prior to the advocacy programme, with no obvious effect, but USAID is now committed to funding the expansion of Kore Lavi and is interested in the agenda. So far as the USAID position on social protection is effectively the Kore Lavi position, there may have been some changes, but there was no direct contact with USAID representatives on the subject during the advocacy project.

Fonkoze found a natural ally in Kore Lavi in terms of a focus on extreme poverty. A number of elements in the CLM approach resonated with challenges being faced by Kore Lavi. The first was the cost of poverty targeting. Kore Lavi

uses a household survey implemented through a census of all households in an area, with an algorithm for calculating an index of vulnerability and a classification of the households according to their level of vulnerability. This is the Haitian Deprivation and Vulnerability Index (HDVI) and is used to identify the 10% most vulnerable households, which are then targeted by the programme. However, this approach is costly, and there are concerns about the sustainability of the approach at scale, given the context of resource scarcity in Haiti (funding for social protection mostly comes from donors, except in the education sector, and the rationalisation of costs could release resources to reach more people who are impoverished or vulnerable). A second and continuing concern for Kore Lavi is that it does not have an exit strategy as such, unlike the graduation model of CLM. It is these two interrelated issues (lower cost targeting and exit from the social safety net) that open the door to Fonkoze's discussion of the respective targets of Kore Lavi and CLM.

Initial conversations were with the IDS team and the WFP representative. However, within the partnership, CARE has taken the lead with Fonkoze, and it was through the advocacy efforts that the Kore Lavi Chief of Staff became more engaged in dialogue with Fonkoze. There were several meetings between the CARE / Kore Lavi leadership team and the Fonkoze team, including a field visit by the Kore Lavi team. Discussions evolved and led to an agreement to collaborate on comparative research between the CLM programme and Kore Lavi on targeting methods to understand the differences between which people were being targeted by the two programmes. This was done by collecting data from households in a new CLM area using both the CLM targeting approach and the Kore Lavi questionnaire, and the Kore Lavi algorithm (implemented by the Kore Lavi team). The results highlighted a strong degree of correlation in that most CLM members were identified as qualifying for Kore Lavi, confirming the effectiveness of both Kore Lavi and CLM in targeting the extreme poor. In addition, a substantial number of households (372, or 28%) qualified for Kore Lavi but were excluded by CLM targeting.¹⁶ This affirmed the notion that CLM reaches a sub-group of the extreme poor. Kore Lavi recognises that its targeting is less specific than the CLM approach but is comfortable with that. The second area of interest was comparing and refining the programmatic elements of Kore Lavi.

Given the lack of resources for social protection in Haiti, and the relatively high cost of Kore Lavi and CLM, there was particular interest to understand the relative benefits of the two approaches. The successful research on targeting led to an interest in deeper comparative research and agreement to a joint Kore Lavi–Fonkoze application¹⁷ to fund a research project to look at overlap and complementarity where CLM and Kore Lavi work in the same community. A Kore Lavi representative observed that this development signified “our strategic interest in starting a collaborative and structured research effort on the different protection and poverty models for the poorest in Haiti”. The study proposed a mixed methodology, combining a quantitative baseline and end-line household survey with qualitative case studies, to understand the differences between households served by the two programmes, the results achieved, and how households had utilised programme resources to achieve results. The research findings would further support and shape engagement with the national social protection policy process.

Engaging with the state and relevant ministries.

The sectoral table on social protection was initially announced in 2014, and following a number of workshops, it was formally launched in April 2016, coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. The Ministry is also taking the lead in the development of the new social protection strategy, announced after the new president had taken office. Through the advocacy initiative, Fonkoze has engaged with most of the key players in the strategy: government ministries (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation); NGOs (CARE / Kore Lavi); and donors (WFP, USAID, EU, UNDP).

The technical meeting on poverty targeting, attended by most key stakeholders (except UNDP), was an important step for Fonkoze in engaging with key state players in the policy process. In addition, UOPES, which hosted the meeting, included many staff from their home ministry, the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation. The UOPES Director invited them because he wanted to use that opportunity to make the discussion around social protection more mainstream in the

Ministry – not just a UOPES initiative. The reaction of these persons showed that CLM strikes a chord with Haitian intellectuals and middle-class public servants: the idea of social promotion – of a push to help people improve their lives – is very attractive to them, as opposed to the idea of continuous handouts.

Fonkoze’s developing collaboration with Kore Lavi (which is also led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour), led to an opportunity to engage with the Ministry, through a consultant contracted to it. The consultant was influential, having been involved in the previous task force on social protection linked to the national presidency. He attended a half-day meeting with Kore Lavi and Fonkoze to review the findings from the research comparing the poverty targeting of Kore Lavi and CLM.

The collaboration with Kore Lavi also led to an invitation to present to the sectoral table and later to participate in subsequent meetings. This link in turn allowed Fonkoze to invite a representative from the Ministry to participate in an exposure visit to Rwanda to learn about the integration of the graduation approach into its national social protection programme.

Engaging with donors. While the connection to the Ministry and the invitation to the sectoral table are certainly very positive developments, the policy process is complex since the policy space is congested with donor agencies and ministries offering alternative perspectives; local agencies – local NGOs and grassroots organisations – are not usually present and their voices remain unheard.

While the strategy is formally being led by the state, in practice, it is donors that are controlling the process through their money, capacity and knowledge – though, of course, they have to operate through the different state functionaries as discussed. The policy process for the national social protection policy has been slow because of the changes in state leadership, which resulted in a restarting of key processes and only partial opportunity to build on earlier work. The current process now has a clear timetable leading to the development of the strategic framework for social protection but has not yet reached a stage

¹⁶ It is not necessarily the case that all these were excluded categorically as in some cases geographic overlap of the surveys was incomplete. Also, there were a very small number of CLM households not in the HDVI target scores. These were investigated and it was found that, despite the apparent anomaly, CLM management was content that the households selected and the households in question had social and economic circumstances that belied their HDVI scores.

¹⁷ Unfortunately, the first application was unsuccessful.

where even the positions of donors and national actors are clear. While the advocacy process was an opportunity in terms of timing, and potential openness to new ideas, the ‘political chessboard’ that is the social protection agenda will become more visible in the coming months.

The World Bank is promoting the idea of a ‘social registry’ based on a household survey (census) and using the Bank’s favoured proxy means test approach – surveying largely observable characteristics of a household to estimate their incomes or consumption. As discussed below, and confirmed through meetings with World Bank staff, there has been some sign of adaptability, with an agreement to include Kore Lavi’s vulnerability survey (HDVI) as the basis, with some amendments, for the survey for the registry. From Fonkoze’s perspective, this is an important step, as the HDVI allows for identification of the ultra-poor, and creates space to focus on this group. The data from the social registry will be available to any organisation that wants to target poor people, and will be updated with information from those using it.

Beyond the debates on the social registry and resolving potential tensions between the World Bank and USAID, there are a number of other donors interested in social protection, looking to define their own niche. Through its long-standing relationship with the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), Fonkoze was invited to present to the Haitian donor group (of which the SDC held the presidency). While this was a short meeting, it did create visibility for Fonkoze with heads of mission and ambassadors of key donors, and has led to some interesting follow-up with the EU, UNICEF and SDC. While there had been no prior contact with the EU, after the donor meeting Fonkoze exchanged documents with an EU representative, who has communicated that they are ‘on board’ with the idea that there are ultra-poor people who have to be targeted specifically, noting that “these people are difficult to reach and it looks like Fonkoze has a way to reach them and work with them”. The EU is interested in including a social safety net into a programme that would include nutrition / agriculture / food security, and is exploring the relevance of the CLM approach to this.

Recognising the ultra-poor as a separate group that needs a package of actions to address multidimensional poverty

Extreme poverty has been recognised as a focus in Haiti for some time, with (for example) the creation of a Ministry of Extreme Poverty and Human Rights in 2012. But there has been no attempt to segment the extreme poor by poverty level; rather, a focus on different life-cycle positions or those with special needs. The analysis of poverty made by OPES¹⁸ and the World Bank (published in 2014) was a parallel process¹⁹ with information on extreme poverty and moderate poverty, which provides the technical means for the World Bank’s application of a proxy means test but does not seek to distinguish sub-groups of the extreme poor.

Given the discussions about the costs of the social registry and of poverty targeting, there is particular interest in Fonkoze’s poverty targeting approach. The strategy workshop also highlighted that there is awareness of differences between poor people, with a Haitian proverb talking about the difference between being ‘wet’ and ‘soaked’ in relation to levels of poverty. The advocacy strategy sought to build on this engagement and deepen understanding of the ultra-poor as a distinct category to focus on. The core idea was to demonstrate that the ultra-poor can be cost-effectively targeted and that a package of interventions can lead to sustainable movement out of ultra-poverty. This then makes the case for channelling resources to the ultra-poor as a pragmatic response to the huge levels of poverty in Haiti – i.e. to focus the limited resources available on those most in need.

This analysis comes just six months into the process, so it is very early to ask about success in terms of building recognition of the ultra-poor as a distinct sub-group of the extreme poor. However, there are some early indications that Fonkoze will be able to stay usefully engaged on the social protection agenda. There was a positive reaction to the sense that the graduation approach fosters autonomy rather than ongoing dependency on handouts. While the consultant to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour communicated that he was convinced that Haiti’s national social protection strategy should include a graduation component,

¹⁸ *Observatoire National de la Pauvreté et de l’Exclusion Sociale* (ONPES but now known as UOPES).

¹⁹ This analysis was based on the 2012 living conditions survey after the 2010 earthquake.

A second aim of the advocacy initiative was to facilitate the voice of people living in ultra-poverty to define and communicate their own agendas

it is too early to say whether this will lead to changes in practice. There is recognition that the extreme poor as a group are too large to target in a cost-effective way, but, despite good evidence, Fonkoze's approach has not yet been widely endorsed by key stakeholders as an effective way to reach the ultra-poor. Most of the people Fonkoze engaged with while developing the advocacy strategy felt that the CLM's targeting methodology was difficult if not impossible to replicate. This is an important focus for future discussions.

Within Kore Lavi, WFP's position is very sympathetic. There is recognition that the Kore Lavi programme is costly in that it is not possible to provide food vouchers to populations indefinitely. The concept of graduation is therefore attractive. Similarly, CARE is open to exploring alternatives, including community-based targeting and thinking about the package of activities.

By contrast, the World Bank's position has always been that graduation is too complicated to do in Haiti. While Paris-based staff members wrote several times that the inclusion of graduation-type activity packages made sense for social protection in Haiti, the local representative commented that there is "no counterfactual proof that graduation works in Haiti". The carefully tailored package of CLM does not seem to fit with the Bank's move to greater simplicity, scaling back the complex design of Kore Fanmi, towards conditional cash transfers targeted through a single social registry, which can also be used by other actors to channel complementary resources or services.

2.2 Downward accountability and getting the voice of CLM members heard

A second aim of the advocacy initiative was to facilitate the voice of people living in ultra-poverty to define and communicate their own agendas. This was envisaged as occurring through working with former CLM members who have experience of living in ultra-poverty. Two activities were articulated as part of this process. The first step was to help women who were former CLM members to articulate their own messages through an 'open space' event, exploring issues around the 'invisibility' of the ultra-poor and their capacity to move out of poverty. The women defined messages they wished to communicate, and identified who to target these messages to. Next, Fonkoze was to set up an advocacy meeting with the identified organisations and work with the women to prepare the event.

Open space meeting

The meeting included 27 women who had graduated from the CLM programme. There was strong recognition of continuing need so that others could take part in the CLM and a feeling that more should be done to support the many ultra-poor not served by CLM. As one participant observed, "there are still people who find themselves in situations worse than ours today, or as difficult as ours was when CLM first reached us. Their children do not go to school; they have passed the compulsory school-leaving age. The land is not used. We must help the needy, show them how they must work, and help them when they do not have the resources to work."²⁰

The concept of advocacy, and taking this message to government and other actors who were in a

²⁰ It was noteworthy that the translation of concepts into Creole proved difficult - the participants did not use the equivalent of "ultra-poor" in Creole. The wealth ranking used by CLM leads to participants defining several loose categories of poverty: a little needy (*ti malere*), needy (*malere*), poor (*pòv*), and misery (*nan lamizè*); but during the open space the women essentially referred to "people who are where I was".

position to take action to change things, was more difficult to understand. The women found it easier to talk about their own experience in the CLM programme, and how it had helped them. It was harder to identify more generalisable messages such as what support the ultra-poor need or the value of a holistic approach. The conversation also included requests for CLM to return to their neighbourhoods, which was perhaps inevitable given the previous support they had received from the programme and the absence of any other type of intervention.

One question that came up was around identifying the recipient of the advocacy.²¹ There was an understanding of the need for those in authority to listen to people without power – that the state has rights as well as responsibilities – so that it is not just about asking for help from CLM but calling on the state to fulfil its remit. While there was recognition that “we are proof that the help we were given brings results; we can advocate ...” and that to “speak on behalf of others, we must organise ourselves”, there was a concern about their capacity to do this: “CLM is more familiar, CLM has genuinely helped, and we don’t know how to go about talking to the state”. For most women, immersed in survival in a risky environment where solidarity comes primarily through family or community, advocacy was an alien concept.

This sense of disempowerment among former CLM members with respect to the advocacy process, and looking to CLM for answers, was deep, even extending to their engagement with the external facilitator, who was felt to be “paternalistic” and “patronising”. As we shall discuss, this theme continues throughout this strand of the advocacy activities.

One of the objectives of the open space meeting was to select former members of CLM who were willing and able to advocate for the ultra-poor with government ministries, civil society organisations and others engaged in social protection in Haiti. Stepping into the paternalistic role again, it was Fonkoze staff who selected four former members who “had shown capacity to speak in public, speak in a clear and structured manner, and had some interesting ideas about their experience with CLM and the way in which

they took advantage of the tools provided by CLM (not without professing repeatedly their gratitude towards CLM)”. The four women selected were able to talk about their own experience, to connect their experiences to the need for interventions to mitigate the impact of catastrophic events on people’s livelihoods, and to tell others about the strategies they conceived and implemented during the CLM programme (comparing the survival strategies prior to their entry into the CLM programme and their new strategies building on learning from their past CLM membership).

Advocacy meeting with feminist organisations

An advocacy meeting was held, at which the four selected former CLM members were to present. It was attended by women’s organisations, plus staff and students from the University of Quisqueya (a local private university), including the rector, who opened the meeting. Prior to the meeting, Fonkoze worked with the four former CLM members to help clarify the issues they wanted to present and discuss the likely questions they would be asked.

Following the opening of the meeting, the four CLM members each spoke in turn highlighting their experiences of ultra-poverty: the key words and expressions they used were humiliation and fear (“since they see you are poor, you are afraid”), and dependency (“women depend on men”). They also talked about the support provided by CLM.

The discussion in the meeting did not engage extensively with the experiences articulated by the women, other than participants expressing a sense of being moved by their testimony. Rather, participants discussed various aspects of the CLM programme, including the training given to case managers, the targeting process, opportunities for integrating people with disabilities, gender issues (such as the extent to which members control the resources given to them, and domestic violence) and the potential for links between CLM and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Women’s Rights. Certainly, the environment was challenging for the former CLM women, in that it was a large group (25 people from women’s organisations, ten students, plus four CLM staff) and the discussion focused on technical aspects of the programme,

²¹ There was some confusion around the recipients of messages and the location of advocacy. Some could only imagine advocacy in their own area of residence.

While the aim of enabling ultra-poor women to communicate their experiences directly is valid, the process of supporting them to engage more effectively would need to be much longer and more considered

rather than their lived experience of poverty and how government and civil society actors could engage with this. During the open space meeting the women had been very engaged, but their demeanour was very different in the advocacy meeting, becoming much more closed, quiet and fitting into the norms of social stratification in Haiti, understood as a “mental structure where you say very little and don’t expose yourself to anything”.

It is important to emphasise that the position of certain key stakeholders (such as the feminist organisations represented at the meeting) was that the testimony of CLM members did not come across as transformative. Rather, the CLM case manager observed that they developed the relationship with the members in a paternalistic way, and the former members talked about their case managers being *like their father and mother*. This highlighted the lack of reflection within CLM on the social structures they are engaging in and the extent to which the intervention might reinforce rather than challenge the status quo. CLM focuses on addressing the material aspects of extreme poverty, and the process does support self-reflection and provides the tools for members to empower themselves. However, the critique from a rights-based approach is that CLM does not seek to explicitly empower women in terms of challenging the social structures that surround CLM members and that inform the paternalistic approach of the case managers.

Some feminists at the meeting observed these gaps. CLM members talked about their lived experience and about becoming empowered, but this was not convincing for some of the women’s organisations present, who criticised both the paternalism of CLM and the lack of solidarity of former CLM members with other women. They criticised CLM women members for not doing more to empower other extremely poor women (i.e. you were ultra-poor, now you’re not, so now

you have to be citizens). CLM members responded in a patronising way – “I help my neighbours when they are sick and children can’t go to school, etc.” – ie, traditional solidarity expressed in such a way that reflected that these individuals now had more power than their neighbours. Their enhanced material status was not reflected in a shift in their attitudes, highlighting the focus of CLM on material rather than cognitive or relational (transformative) changes.

This experience has been replicated in other contexts. Sardenberg (2008: 18) has observed, in relation to Latin America, that “feminist thinking in the region still lacks concerted analysis of the linkages and discontinuities between individual agency, collective action and structural transformation ...”. Haiti, with all its attendant disadvantages through its polity, poverty and frequent natural disasters, sorely lacks the capacity to make such linkages. While there is a peasant movement (the Papaye Peasant Movement (MPP), set up in 1973 and now with more than 50,000 farmer groups operating in the same areas as CLM, in the Central Plateau), it does not address ultra-poverty. It has support from international NGOs, a seemingly radical agenda, and includes a women’s movement, but its 44-year history shows it is primarily a farmers’ organisation.

While some participants at the meeting were moved by CLM members’ testimony, the meeting was not effective in terms of connecting the individuals with organisations that could be allies. However, it was useful to CLM in terms of raising issues that the programme needs to address, including paternalism, gender relations and empowerment, and some of the organisations that were represented at the meeting have expressed interest in working with CLM to do so. CLM plans to organise training for staff and internal discussion on these issues. It also opened some space for creating links with

feminist organisations or individuals regarding the incorporation of a rights-based approach. It is perhaps always going to be awkward, however, for Fonkoze to be both a facilitator and a spokesperson on behalf of CLM members, compared to the political power that potentially comes through a member-based organisation established to focus only on representing its members' interests.

Finally, the meeting highlighted the challenge of downward accountability, with an external organisation seeking to 'give voice' to others

during this advocacy process. While the aim of enabling ultra-poor women to communicate their experiences directly is certainly valid, the process of supporting those women to engage more effectively would need to be a much longer and more considered one. For now, the next step for CLM is introspection on the empowerment agenda rather than further advocacy meetings with former CLM members. Another idea that came from this reflection was that it is also possible to help (former) CLM members find their voice by using short videos or written words instead of having them talk directly to what may be perceived as intimidating audiences.

3. What are the lessons?

3.1 Usefulness of outcome mapping to shape an advocacy strategy

Fonkoze's advocacy initiative was a first attempt by the organisation to do more than implement programmes and to leverage its impact through wider connections. Given the very limited time scale, the challenging external conditions and the fact that the national social protection strategy is still under development, Fonkoze has achieved a lot. The ROMA process proved to be a useful framework, encouraging an iterative, flexible approach and focusing on building connections and relationships with stakeholders based on an understanding of their perspectives and priorities. Fonkoze rightly did not try to push the graduation approach as a solution; rather, it engaged in discussion, it shared information and looked for opportunities to collaborate. Lessons from using the ROMA process with Fonkoze resonated with those coming out of previous research seeking to understand how policy processes operate in the real world (Young and Mendizabal 2009).

Policy processes are complex and rarely linear or logical. This highlights the need for advocacy strategies to be reflective and adaptive. Rather than setting out clear advocacy messages, actions and targets at the outset, Fonkoze sought to engage in the policy process and look for ways to contribute with broad objectives in mind.

Advocacy actors need a holistic understanding of context. Understanding the nuances of

the agendas of different stakeholders and the relationships between them proved invaluable for understanding where Fonkoze could contribute to the process. For example, the strategy workshop identified the value of focusing on poverty targeting, which proved right given the World Bank's agenda to develop a national social registry and the concerns of Kore Lavi over the costs of a census-based approach. Seeing how debates and agendas evolve has allowed Fonkoze to position itself where it has something to contribute.

Policy processes are only weakly informed by research-based evidence. Policy-makers have different concepts of what constitutes 'good evidence' and a range of other factors affect decisions; they often need to make a 'reasonable' decision (quickly). This is partly the case in Haiti, given the vying for position and competition for resources among national and international institutions alike. As one person put it: "There are two things that make people move: discussions and exchange but also resources. And the latter comes only from donors who don't make decisions based on these meetings".

But this is not entirely the case; having solid evidence to compare the targeting methodology of Kore Lavi and CLM was an important factor in building collaboration with Kore Lavi, in the success of the technical meeting, and more broadly in Fonkoze being taken seriously and being 'invited to the table'.

However, it also seems apparent that not having strong enough evidence-based research was a

weakness of Fonkoze's advocacy activity. For example, the head of the World Bank in Haiti highlighted the lack of evidence demonstrating the impact of the graduation model in the Haitian context.²² Similarly, the Ministry of Planning and UOPES were somewhat sceptical due to a lack of evidence on the impact of CLM with a solid counterfactual. Current research being undertaken by Fonkoze in collaboration with IDS will provide a better evidence base to inform future engagement. At this stage in the country's development of a national social protection strategy, it is too early to identify new policies, and indeed the presence of a policy in itself does not lead to change. However, providing such evidence has the potential to make a significant impact, should the idea of social promotion to support sustainable livelihoods gain prominence in the development of the social protection strategy, and if resources become available for its implementation.

Communication and networking are essential parts of influencing policy. Engaging with key players based on an understanding of agendas and politics has certainly been core to Fonkoze's advocacy efforts to date, and affirms the importance of this principle.

3.2 Voice and downward accountability

So what has been learned about giving voice at different levels to create policy processes that are accountable to those affected? These levels include the accountability of civil society and government institutions to the most marginalised and disempowered citizens, and accountability of international institutions to the states they seek to support. On one level, the complexity of the Haitian context invites a conclusion that everything is context-specific and that nothing can be generalised. At another level, things are perhaps more simple. The former CLM women, enmeshed in the structures that impoverish and marginalise them, cannot easily step outside of those structures and engage in a way that gives voice to their needs, other than in terms of those structures. It cannot be their job to better articulate their needs; rather, it is the job of those who seek to catalyse change to listen and seek to understand their views. Similarly,

in the context of a weak state with a poor track record and few resources, there is limited power to demand anything from international institutions. Real downward accountability of donors to the state would mean promoting local ownership of policy processes and not starting with 'blueprint' head office solutions. Nor should the promise of resources shape and manipulate the position of local institutions that are expected to take control and lead implementation in due course.

Significant amounts of time and resources are being spent in developing Haiti's social protection policy. But how can a policy be effective if there are no domestic resources to put it into practice? In Haiti, many policies that have been elaborated gather dust on shelves, particularly as governments fall and new priorities are identified. Perhaps one clue to the ultimate value of developing the social protection policy comes from a question raised in the SDC-hosted donor meeting: "What is it that government wants?" The policy is being driven by the agendas of international agencies, and written for government by consultants paid for by these same agencies, which provides a sort of legitimacy to their actions in seeking to 'support' the state to put the policy into practice. But the extent to which the state has effective voice in this process is unclear, particularly as donor financing patterns encourage fragmentation within government. The channelling of resources by donors through particular government ministries or departments is characteristic of donor engagement in social protection in Haiti. It is therefore questionable (as the FAES example below makes clear) as to whether there has been coordination across donors and the promotion of a common vision for the development of the social protection sector.

To give an example, the World Bank supported FAES to carry out the Kore Fanmi programme. At that time, donors regarded FAES as both functional and credible. FAES planned to develop the Unified Register of Beneficiaries (RUB) – a precursor to the more recently proposed Unified Social Register, which would have taken some time to develop. But because donors tend to adopt a 'project' approach, support is short-term and institutional capacity-building goals are often unrealistic, leaving government departments

²² See Huda and Simanowitz (2010) and Pain *et al.* (2015).

competing for short-term project funding. The operations of FAES have been largely project-based and as projects have completed without sufficient replacements in 2017, FAES has had to scale back. At the same time, since 2013, USAID has put substantial resources into the sector through the Kore Lavi programme, which operates through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and includes a capacity-building component. With the scaling back of Kore Fanmi, the plan for the social register is now likely to involve the use of the Kore Lavi questionnaire and will thus require coordination, as both FAES and the Ministry may have a role.

Institutional survival often means that funding is more important than choosing the model or the social policy instrument. This approach, and the resistance to institutional change (which is very real), ends up producing institutional configurations that are far from an accountable and responsive governance model. Aid effectiveness – informed by the idea that aid is only effective if good policies are in place – presumes an effective voice of government in policy processes, but in Haiti, this domestic

ownership is sorely lacking. It is evident from this experience how donor practice can exacerbate divisions rather than foster coordination, by encouraging competition and vying for position among local institutions.

It is therefore questionable as to whether the strategy of engaging with secondary channels (through donors and, to a lesser extent, through the sectoral social protection table) has been sufficient to persuade the Haitian government to consider integrating the CLM approach into its poverty reduction policies. Moreover, the members and representatives of the state did not really engage in the discussions until about May 2017, after the major stages of the advocacy process had been completed. While there have been some very positive signs, with senior government officials involved in the social protection table talking through the graduation approach, it will only be possible to ascertain how far the CLM approach has been understood and integrated when the national policy paper on social protection and promotion is launched. The national social protection strategy remains under development, so there remain opportunities for Fonkoze to influence it going forward.

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About Making All Voices Count

Making All Voices Count is a programme working towards a world in which open, effective and participatory governance is the norm and not the exception. It focuses global attention on creative and cutting-edge solutions to transform the relationship between citizens and their governments. The programme is inspired by and supports the goals of the Open Government Partnership.

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Research, Evidence and Learning component

The programme's Research, Evidence and Learning component, managed by IDS, contributes to improving performance and practice, and builds an evidence base in the field of citizen voice, government responsiveness, transparency and accountability (T&A) and technology for T&A (Tech4T&A).

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