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## AVANZA PACIFICO

Providing education and leadership development opportunities for Afro-Colombians and Indigenous youth.

### OVERVIEW

The Avanza Pacifico Activity provides scholarships, education support, leadership training, and capacity building to Afro-Colombian and Indigenous individuals and organizations in Colombia's Pacific Coast region. Avanza Pacifico is implemented by the Colombian organization *Manos Visibles* ("Visible Hands") in Cauca, Choco, Nariño, and Valle del Cauca, and in the cities of Bogota, Medellin and Cartagena. The activity runs from July 2020 – June 2023.

Youth represent approximately one-third of the population in the Pacific Coast. Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities in the region are disproportionately impacted by violence and exclusion, and youth's social mobility is often limited by barriers to education and professional opportunities. Avanza Pacifico creates alliances with local schools, universities, and institutions to provide opportunities to Afro-Colombian and Indigenous emerging leaders and students. Avanza Pacifico is one of USAID/Colombia's first ever activities directly implemented by an Afro-Colombian or indigenous organization.

PHOTO BY MANOS VISIBLES

## COMPONENTS

### PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR PEACEBUILDING AND LEADERSHIP

Avanza Pacifico provides master's degree scholarships to outstanding Afro-Colombian and Indigenous youth and community leaders, in alliance with Los Andes University and ICESI University. It also targets secondary schools, teachers, parents, and students to improve educational outcomes and helps students plan for their futures by identifying concrete steps to achieve those goals.

### EMPOWERING YOUTH

Avanza Pacifico provides leadership development training to emerging Afro-Colombian and Indigenous leaders. The activity also strengthens community organizations' capacities so that they can better provide opportunities and safe spaces for youth and support local peacebuilding efforts.

### BUILDING MANOS VISIBLES' CAPACITY

Avanza Pacifico includes targeted capacity-building for the *Manos Visibles* organization itself. *Manos Visibles* serves as an important actor in local development networks. Targeted capacity building for *Manos Visibles* includes organizational and administrative strengthening, and support for fundraising strategies and monitoring and evaluation.

## RESULTS

- Provided organizational support to 10 community organizations;
- Trained 200 emerging Afro-Colombian and Indigenous leaders in leadership skills;
- Supported 90 Afro-Colombians and Indigenous professionals to enroll in master's degree programs;
- Engaged teachers, students, and families from 13 schools through training and life planning activities; and
- Strengthened *Manos Visibles'* organizational and administrative capacities to foster its continued impact as a leading local development actor.