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# MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (MLK)

Providing scholarship opportunities to outstanding indigenous and Afro-Colombian university students.

## OVERVIEW

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellowship Program (MLK) provides scholarships to outstanding indigenous and Afro-Colombian university students to study English and participate in leadership training. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities have higher poverty rates and lower educational outcomes than other Colombians. MLK improves indigenous and Afro-Colombians' educational outcomes and access to professional opportunities by providing them with scholarships to study in local universities or Colombian-American Centers (*Centros Colombo Americano*). MLK is being implemented in the cities of Apartadó, Barranquilla, Bogotá, Buenaventura, Cali, Cartagena, Medellín, and Quibdó and runs from June 2014-July 2021.

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## COMPONENTS

### PROVIDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

MLK provides indigenous and Afro-Colombian students with scholarships to participate in an intensive English language course for 8 to 10 hours weekly for up to two years. When students complete this course, they receive an English language certification from the Colombian American Centers. Intensive English training also includes Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) preparation, a test that students need to pass in order to apply for graduate education opportunities overseas.

### ENCOURAGING LEADERSHIP TRAINING

MLK offers leadership training to indigenous and Afro-Colombian students. Leadership training is conducted by experts and builds students' self-confidence, sense of identity and ability to influence change in their communities. The Colombian American Centers also support leadership training by organizing discussions with indigenous and Afro-Colombian students about social, economic, political, and cultural topics.

## RESULTS

- Encouraged MLK fellows to participate in other US Embassy programs like SUSI and Fulbright;
- Engaged MLK fellows from around the country in social projects to assist vulnerable communities; and
- Trained 739 high-achieving indigenous and Afro-Colombian university students through English language and leadership courses.