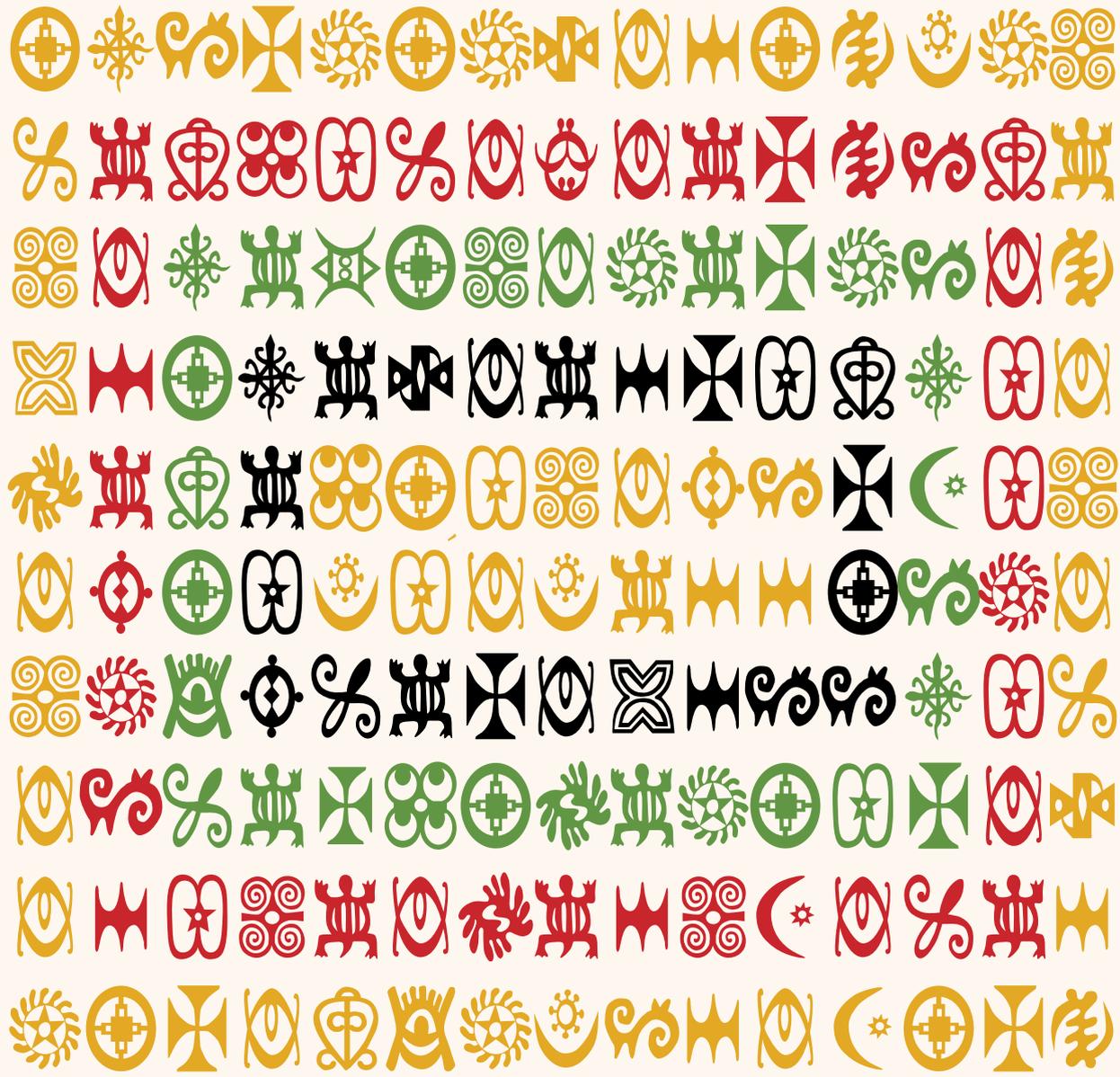


# Braiding networks of freedom



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# Braiding networks of freedom



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Esta publicación se ha realizado en el marco del proyecto Apoyo a la institucionalización de la Cátedra de Estudios Afrocolombianos y otras medidas de lucha contra la discriminación racial de la población afrocolombiana en el Sistema Educativo Distrital de Bogotá, de la Secretaría de Educación Distrital (SED) en Convenio con la Asociación de Profesionales de las Ciencias Sociales EL COLECTIVO y con el apoyo de la Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID).

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# Introduction



“ Every great dream  
begins with a dreamer.  
Always remember, you  
have within you the  
strength,  
The patience and the  
passion to reach  
For the stars to change  
the world.”

Harriet Tubman

Braiding networks of freedom constitutes a valuable tool for teachers and students in the exercise of constructing citizenship and promoting coexistence in their schools and their surroundings. This document contributes to strengthening citizens' capacities, as promoted by the ECC- "Educación para la Ciudadanía y la Convivencia": Identity, Dignity and Rights; Responsibilities and respect for people's rights; Sensitivity and Emotion Mana-

gement; Meaning of Life, Body and Nature; Participation and Coexistence”.

One mission of the Colombian education system is to promote a general and objective understanding of the world while maintaining the subjective perspectives, customs, beliefs and ways of life of each ethnic group; that is why, as part of its social and integration program, the Ministry of National Education has regulated the “Cátedra de Estudios Afrocolombianos” (CEA) which promotes the construction of interculturality within and from educational institutions, and focuses on recognizing the contributions African-Colombian, Black, Palenquera and Raizal populations have made to politics, economics, sciences, academia, arts and so on.

Discussing African and African-descendant leaders is aimed at promoting the recognition of African culture within the Colombian culture, and highlighting the contributions they have made in order to produce the society we live in today. This exercise aims at empowering the African-Colombian community with regards to its self-recognition



and self-esteem by paying homage to its ancestors and leaders. It also provides knowledge to non-African-descendant teachers and students that will transform imaginaries, such as stereotypes and prejudices that reproduce high levels of discrimination and which translate into the violation of African-Colombian students' rights.

All teachers should question themselves on how they are teaching their students and how their students are receiving the messages they are conveying in order to avoid the production and reproduction of stereotypes. Colombia needs real intercultural education where nobody (students, teachers, family, authorities and society in general) discriminates or is discriminated against based on their age, ethnic group, sexual orientation, and political or religious ideology, among others.

With this in mind, this text attempts to reinforce children's identities through the acknowledgment and appreciation of their roots and history; and these stronger identities are reflected firstly in respect and love for themselves and then in respect for others' rights. These capacities are directed towards a healthy coexistence, facilitating their participation in the community.

Braiding networks of freedom is an educational resource that English as a Foreign Language - EFL teachers can use in order to integrate African-Colombian culture into their classes through an intercultural approach. According to Agudelo (2007) the intercultural approach is an effective

alternative for developing students' critical cultural awareness, as well as to explore the critical relationship among their practices and personal views. Moreover, it shows EFL teachers becoming more conscious of the essential role of culture in language teaching. One of the aims of this text is to break the traditional parameters where English is learned in a flat framework; moreover, it integrates the culture and history of Africa and its Diaspora into the English learning process.

The activities suggested in this text aspire to encourage reflection and propose actions aimed at changing realities. This is the RAP – “Reflexión, Acción, Participación” methodology, promoted by the District Secretary of Education, which is based on horizontality, the needs and potentialities of the educational community, combining reflection with action, and understanding that students' and teachers' realities transcend the school environment. Nevertheless, not all the activities follow all the RAP phases nor are they necessarily in an established order because some authors use a different methodology.

The following document is divided in three chapters: the first one is about the African Independence Movement and the different strategies carried out to liberate African countries from Eu-



ropean oppression and it also highlights the hard and crucial role that women played in the emancipation process in South Africa. The second chapter contains a brief description of the African American Civil Rights Movement, and it highlights three important leaders: Harriet Tubman, Angela Yvonne Davis and Malcolm X. Finally, chapter three refers to three African-Colombian leaders who have left a memorable legacy in our society. These leaders are Tante Friday, Arnoldo Palacios and Benkos Biohó.

In this text you will find different activities to develop students' English skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening), each one is based on the four RAP phases which are:

-  Thinking myself and ourselves (pensarse y pensarnos).
-  Sharing our knowledge (diálogo de saberes).
-  Transforming realities (transformando realidades).
-  Enriching our knowledge (reconstruyendo saberes).



# ① African women in emancipation processes



During the XIX and XX centuries, Europeans colonized and ruled the African continent, with the objective of gaining economic power, demonstrating political prevalence and solving their own social problems. With this mindset, Africa was distributed amongst European countries at their convenience; African people were not treated as human beings, social or political subjects, but valued only for the income they represented for the colonizers.

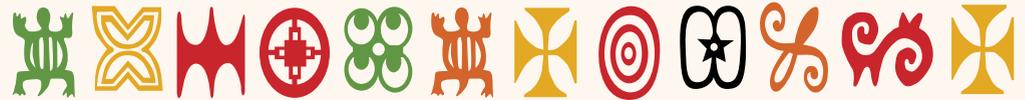
In order to break this subjugation, African citizens decided to organize groups aimed at opposing colonialist mandates. To accomplish this mission, they used both violent and non-violent methods, even though they labored under unequal conditions due to the quality and extent of the guns used by Europeans.

In the case of South Africa, as mentioned in *The History of Apartheid in South Africa* "with the enactment of apartheid laws in 1948, racial discrimination was institutionalized. Race laws touched every aspect of social life, including a prohibition of marriage between non-whites and whites, and

the sanctioning of "white-only" jobs". One of the purposes of the Anti-apartheid Movement (AAM) was to attempt to end this form of discrimination based on racial conditions. The AAM functioned through networking and, according to the *African Activist Archive*, "supported the struggles for freedom in Namibia, Zimbabwe and the former Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique and, in West Africa, Guinea-Bissau. In this the AAM cooperated with African liberation movements, particularly the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa and the South West African Peoples' Organization (SWAPO) of Namibia."

In this chapter, readers will learn about the role of women in the South African emancipation process.





Women have always played a relevant role in liberation and empowerment processes around the world, even though historically they have faced the greatest marginalization, the worst social conditions

and systematic exclusion, and although, their actions have not been recognized, valued and recorded by writers

and historians who are responsible of prolonging and preserving the world's memorable events. If we go back to Africa, the cradle of humanity and a continent that has been trampled by Europeans

for more than five centuries, we realize that the great resistance struggle carried out by African countries has been

enacted not only by the men of these communities, but by women who have worked alongside them in order to obtain a better quality of life for their society. This document synthesizes the wonderful story of some African women's organizations that decided to confront the wicked European settlers afflicting their people and, along with other social organizations, were able to set their countries free.

As Kwame Nkrumah used to say, "Until all African countries become independent, no one in Africa will feel free".

As a mission of solidarity, some women's organizations in Africa such as The Women's Defense of the Constitution (The Black Sash), The United Women's Organizations (Western cape) and The Federation of South African Women (Witeatersrand), supported by women's organizations in other countries decided to start a single group (The African National Congress Women's League) which fought against pass laws and against all principles of racial segregation legally established during apartheid, such as the case where black-skinned Africans had to carry documents to work in white-only residential areas.

Two of the most significant events conducted by the league of women took place on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1956, when more than 20.000 women marched to the Union Building in Pretoria -South Africa, in order to protest against all the consequences women had suffered under apartheid, and on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1960, when the demonstration against pass laws

On August 9th, 1956, more than 20.000 women marched in Pretoria, protesting against all the consequences women had suffered under apartheid.





Dorothy Nyembe

Frances Baard

Sophie Du Bruyn

Lillian Ngoyi

Winnie Mandela

Helen Joseph



led to the Sharpeville massacre. With regards to the first event, African women's day is now celebrated on August 9<sup>th</sup>.

Later, African women's organizations formed a new group called The Women's National Coalition (WNC) which actively participated in the transition period (1990-1994) when South Africa was transforming its political system into a democracy. It culminated in the first free elections, in which Nelson Mandela was elected president. After this achievement, WNC participation consisted on ensuring that gender equality and other socio-economic rights for women were guaranteed in the new political system. Among the most representative activists and women politicians of the apartheid era are Winnie Mandela, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Dorothy Nyembe, Sophie Du Bruyn and Frances Baard.

The reward for this courageous work was that the emancipation process became a reality; Libya (1951) and Egypt (1952) were the first African nations to gain independence. Ghana (Gold Coast) in 1957 was the first country south of the Sahara to become independent. 1960 was the big year for African independence; fourteen African countries gained their independence. By 1966, all but six African countries were independent nation-states. One of the leaders who guided the process of independence was Kwame Nkrumah. In 1963, Nkrumah created the Organization for African Unity (OAU). If you want to know more about him, decode the following secret message.



### ACTIVITY 1: Deciphering the secret code

-  **Thinking myself and ourselves:** After the struggles women have endured in order to be valued and recognized in society on the same level as men, do you think that nowadays women and men are treated equal?
-  **Sharing our knowledge:** Make groups of four and discuss why it is essential to understand the significant role women have played worldwide in different fields.
-  **Enriching our knowledge:** This activity consists on decoding the following African Independence process secret message by using the key code below and matching the African Symbols to the alphabet. Then share with your partners the secret code's meaning and its importance.



## 2 African american heroines and heroes



The African-American Civil Rights Movement in the United States has exerted a strong influence on the development of different social movements around the world. Leaders like Rosa Parks, Angela Davis, James Farmer, Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King and John Lewis have elucidated the importance of generating new organizational processes to promote the rights of ethnic communities and women around the world.



Achieving equality for African-Americans, the right to vote, equal access to public facilities, employment, education and housing and freedom from discrimination, among others, were the objectives that encouraged the struggles in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. As happened with other movements, it involved all types of social, political, educational and cultural manifestations carried out by social organizations, African Americans, women, students, children and anybody who did not agree with the Jim Crow laws or any expression of racism.

Manifestation strategies were developed in places like churches, which congregated thousands of people who joined in a common objective; the community's welfare. In this chapter, you will learn about three of the most important leaders who took part in the African-American Civil Rights Movement; they are Harriet Tubman, Angela Davis and Malcolm X.

### 2.1 Harriet Tubman

Throughout history, there have been many African and African-descendent heroines who have actively participated in important fields such as politics, education, religion, the sciences, economy, philosophy, literature and technology; and in specific events such as the abolition of slavery, emancipation, civil rights movements and women's suffrage, among others. Some of these heroines are Toni Morrison, Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks, Angela Davis, Bell Hooks, Billie Holiday, Delia Zapata, Wiwa, Tante Friday, Nelly Mina, Maria Isabel Mena, Ana Fabricia Cordoba

“I had reasoned this out  
in my mind, There was  
one of two things I  
had a right to,  
Liberty or death; if I  
could not have one,  
I would have the other.”

Harriet Tubman



and Betty Ruth Lozano inter alia. These women have worked towards the construction of a better society, though they have not been recognized and valued as they should have been. Seemingly, to make this problematic evident, Angela Davis quoted Frederic Douglas in her book *Women, Race and Class* when she stated “*when the true history of the anti-slavery cause shall be written, women will occupy a large space in its pages; for the cause of the slave has been peculiarly women’s cause*”. Evidently, the anti-slavery cause is not the only issue of which a true history needs to be written, but of all the issues that have affected society both nationally and internationally.

With this text, we recognize, value and appreciate a great woman who left a strong and indelible legacy on North American history and especially in our hearts. Her legacy was embodied in the multiple roles she played as a slave, an abolitionist, a conductor on the Underground Railroad, a Civil War soldier and a Women’s Rights Advocate. This worthy woman is Harriet Tubman, who fled slavery and then guided dozens of runaway slaves to freedom in the North of the United States and Canada through the Underground Railroad strategy. It was a resistance network used by antislavery northerners to illegally help fugitive slaves reach safety in the Free states and it consisted of meeting points, secret routes, transportation, and safe shelters, and assistance provided by abolitionist sympathizers. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.freedomcenter.org/underground-railroad/>

Smart, strong, wise, decisive, independent, charitable, merciful and easygoing are some of the adjectives used to describe our female leaders in the past, but we can point out that, nowadays, those are the same adjectives we must use when speaking of all the actions our African and African-descendent women perform every day. Many of them may not be as recognized as Harriet Tubman was, but they continue working on making African and African-descendent communities get free from their mental barriers. At the present time, we can find a great number of women who are working in order to build a better world. We observe our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, cousins and friends who daily contribute in different areas. Although, the activities these women carry out are not as difficult as they were decades and centuries ago, these actions have the same significant impact on our societies.

What we can take from these heroines is their active fight for empowerment and for learning their rights as African-descendent women and, most importantly, for enforcing their rights by any means necessary as their female ancestors taught them. One of their greatest examples is that special period when Harriet Tubman became active in promoting women's rights, particularly African-descendent women's rights and became a strong supporter of women's suffrage. Harriet died in 1913 but her life of courage and determination continues to inspire around the world.

In conclusion, we highlight the importance of women's role in history. Each of them has played relevant, essential, meaningful, decisive, and determi-

ning roles in different contexts; they have fought for and, to a large degree, accomplished a reevaluation of traditional perceptions of their role in society. To achieve this, many women have contributed to the transformation of practices worldwide, beginning by changing their diverse worlds. In this sense, African and African-descendent women alive today keep crowning achievements every single day.

## ACTIVITY 2: Broadcasting the african-descendent movements



 **Transforming realities:** Think about some racist behaviors you have noticed in your school and what these people should do in order to change their practices.

 **Thinking myself and ourselves:** What is your opinion on the North American system which between 1876 and 1965 enacted in the Jim Crow laws by which African-American people could not have the same rights as white people? In a round table discuss your points of view.

 **Enriching our knowledge:** Make a news report where you pretend to interview the most important African and African-descendent women from different organizations around the world. Then, make groups of five and using the information collected from the interviews, web-sites and books, perform a newscast and present the reports.

## 2.2 Angela Yvonne Davis

She is one of the most significant women in the African-American Civil Rights movement's history. She is an African-American activist, politician, leader, writer and professor, among other roles and professions. Angela grew up in an environment of rebellion and resistance through her parents' example. She had a close relationship with the Communist Party and it influenced her life from then until today. In her childhood she grew up in a marginalized neighborhood called "Dynamite Hill", which received this name because of its constantly burned houses; one of many racist activities perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan. On one occasion, she personally felt closer to a bloodthirsty action when some of her friends were killed in bombings.

She has dedicated her life to social activism but it has been a hard work. In the 1960's, she joined several groups, including the Black Panthers led by Martin Luther King. This group fought for African American people's rights; in fact, Angela Davis spent most of her time working with the Che-Lumumba Club, which was an all-black branch of the Communist Party that has been her perpetual fight. She is a Communist woman who has been fighting against all kinds of discrimination, the repression of the capitalist system and to achieve women's real freedom from all chains: System, Race and Sex.

Her books are aimed at viewing African-descendent women's role objectively, from slavery until

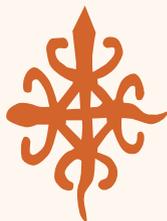


today; in order to change the perception of most books, where women positions are restricted to occupations such as housekeepers, babysitters or their bosses' mistresses and where, in many cases, they were presented as submissive women who constantly allowed abuse. All those stereotypes need to be demystified. Currently, Angela Davis

continues fighting for women's liberation in all aspects: Labor, politics, social, and cultural, among others. Angela is an African American Heroine that has the courage to confront all spheres of oppression that prevent women from being free.

Make an acrostic describing some characteristics of an African-American woman, using the following one as a model.

### ACTIVITY 3: Angela Davis' legacy



**Thinking myself and ourselves:** As a class, brainstorm some issues that arise in the world today and which promote inequalities in society.



**Sharing our knowledge:** Divide the class into two groups and carry out a debate in which the first group states the advantages and the second group demonstrates the disadvantages of unequal practices in Colombia.

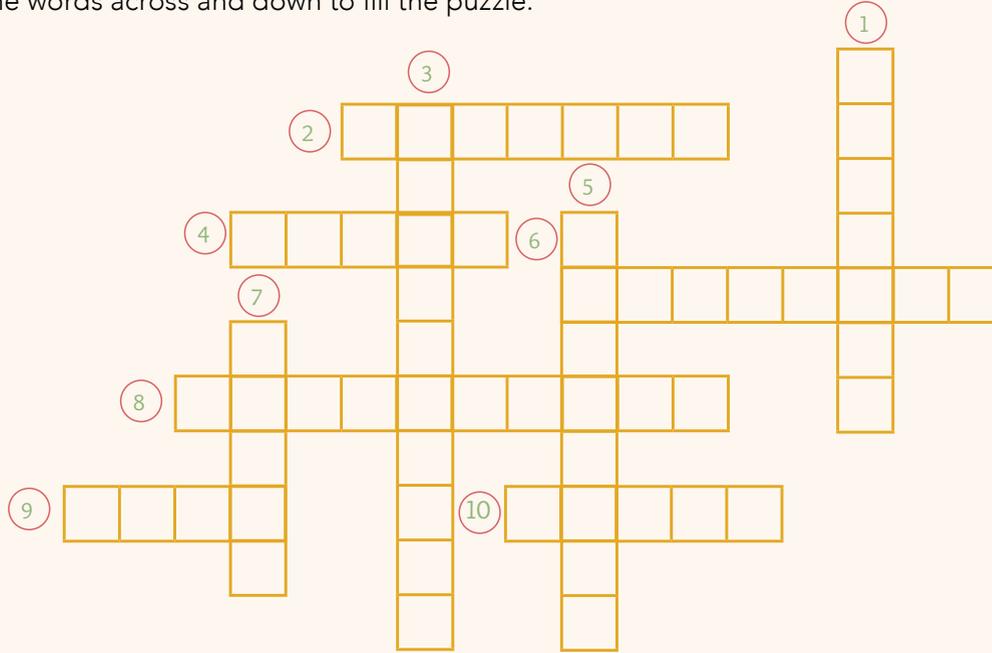


**Transforming realities:** Individually, draw your ideal school without any kind of inequality. Then post it on the wall and describe it to your partners.

**A**ngel of feminism  
**N**othing is impossible  
for her  
**G**etting women's  
freedom is her goal  
**E**qual conditions for  
everyone  
**L**abor for the world  
**A**rdent  
**D**edicated woman  
**A**lways struggling  
**V**ital has been her  
contribution  
**I**n the Civil Rights  
Movements  
**S**pecially for women

# Angela Davis African American Heroine

Use the words across and down to fill the puzzle.



## ACROSS

2. The right to speak, to act and think as one wants
4. Socio-economic levels in society
6. The state of being equal
8. Person involved in politics
9. Human beings collectively
10. Synonym of struggle

## DOWN

1. Woman with heroic qualities
3. The refusal to accept or comply with something
5. Movement for equal rights for women
7. Adult females

**ANSWER KEY** Freedom: The right to speak, to act and think as one wants / Women: Adult females / Politician: Person involved in politics / Resistance: The refusal to accept or comply with something / Fight: Synonym of struggle / Feminism: Movement for equals rights for women / Class: Socio-economic level in society / Race: Human beings collectively / Heroine: Woman with heroic qualities / Equality: The state of being equal



## 2.3 Malcolm X



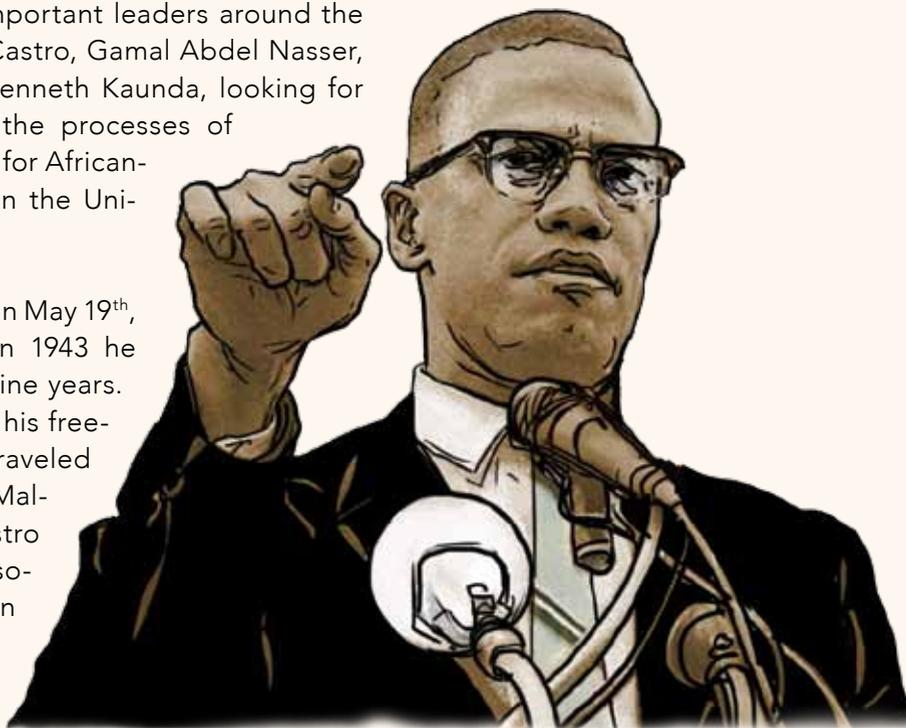
Why do people constantly mention Malcolm X?

People use Malcolm X's name and image on t-shirts and posters and mention him in articles, books, lectures and movies. The reason is that, he became a defender of African-American human rights, and strove to accomplish his goals because in the United States, during the Jim Crow Law era, racism strongly affected him and the whole African-American population. He visited various countries and met important leaders around the world such as Fidel Castro, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Ahmed Sèkou and Kenneth Kaunda, looking for ways to strengthen the processes of respect and freedom for African-descendent people in the United States.

Malcolm X was born on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1925 in New York. In 1943 he was imprisoned for nine years. In 1952 he recovered his freedom and in 1959 he traveled to Africa. In 1960 Malcolm met Fidel Castro and important personalities of the African National Congress, and in 1964 he visited many coun-

tries meeting important people that could contribute with strategies and means that would help him defend African-American people's rights. Malcolm X was murdered on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1965.

In brief, Malcolm X did not live to 40 years of age but, in life, he not only defended African-American people's civil rights, but he also contributed to position African-descendent people in society.



## ACTIVITY 4: Connecting Malcolm X's story

 **Thinking myself and ourselves:** Individually make a list of institutions that encourage leadership processes in your neighborhood and make a reflection on the importance of taking part in them.



**Transforming realities:** In groups of five, make an action plan to establish strategies on how you and your partners can participate actively in the social, political and cultural activities your neighborhood institutions develop.

Using the verbs in the chart, organize the order of the events in Malcolm X's life. Then draw a line linking the years with the actions.

**Returned to freedom, was murdered, traveled to Africa, was born, traveled to different countries, met Fidel Castro and important African people, was imprisoned.**



**Was born**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**1943**

**1964**

**1952**

**1965**

**1960**

**1959**

**1925**

Some of the most significant African-American Civil Rights Movement accomplishments were the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that restored and protected voting rights, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that banned discrimination

based on "race, color, religion and national origin", in employment practices, public accommodations, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, that banned discrimination in the sale or rent of housing.

### 3 African - colombian leaders



This section is a small sample of the stories, characters and words that need to be heard, read and saved for reflection and memory.

The male and female descendants of people who were enslaved by Europeans since the sixteenth century have helped to construct the Colombian nation with their knowledge, different cultures and traditions, ways of teaching and learning and relating to the natural environment and with others.

However, our country has systematically forgotten, hidden and denied these contributions; and it has tried to “clean the blood” that gives it its vitality, strength and uniqueness.

That is why the African-Colombian, Black, Raizals and Palenqueras communities have claimed their place in history, culture, art, science and other fields of our country, through their struggles for freedom (from 1510-1852) and the recognition of their rights (from emancipation to present).

The African-Colombian movement in its many representations from the Benkos Biohó maroon

process in the seventeenth century, the struggle for the rights of women workers such as Juana Julia Guzman in the early twentieth century to the enactment of Law 70 of 1993 has provided not only the cultural, political and social recognition of the African-Colombian population, but also promoted respect for the rights and identity of the indigenous communities, rural communities and white-mestizo people comprising the Colombian nation.

This section about African-Colombian leaders is a small sample of the stories, characters and words that need to be heard, read and saved for reflection and memory.

In this chapter, you will enjoy the story of Tante Friday who was the last direct descendant of African slaves in the archipelago of San Andres, Providence and Saint Kathleen islands, Benkos Biohó who liberated many slaves by creating the Palenques in Colombia; and finally, the African-Colombian writer Arnoldo Palacios.

### 3.1 Memories of liberty day

“ To all those who  
once came to these  
Islands against  
their will,  
And left without  
the chance to tell  
their story”

Hazel Robinson<sup>2</sup>

When people talk about the Archipelago of San Andres, Providence and Saint Kathleen, it is usually associated with phrases like: the seven colors sea and the best place to have fun and party. This perception is due to the capitalist system oppression that, since 1953 – with the creation of the Freeport, has progressively turned this archipelago into an international tourist center by destroying natural resources and also by diminishing the historical,

cultural and ethnic identity of these islands' inhabitants' ancestry. However, today these values reclaim their importance in this territory.

During colonial expeditionary invasions, colonists captured and enslaved a great number of Africans to make them work in the exploitation of the New World's natural resources. As a means to maintain absolute control over the slaves they tried to destroy every aspect of African cultural, social and religious traditions; imposing a Eurocentric value system on the African slaves. Every traditional activity carried out by Africans was treated as heathen, backward and evil. In spite of these attempts to eradicate an entire culture, African slaves resisted through an underground battle that permitted aspects of African culture to survive.

Today African influence is present in music, dance, food, religion and language in a beautiful place in the Caribbean called the archipelago of San Andres, Providence and Saint Kathleen. The intention of this text is to recover the past ignored in the archipelago as a way to vindicate what seems to have been forgotten: *our African roots*. This will be done through the memories of the abolition of slavery of our native heroine and historical reference Tante Friday.

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<sup>2</sup>Hazel Robinson Abrahams, a brilliant Raizal writer, author of *No give up, Maan!* and *Sail ahoy!*, Books that were published in 2002 and 2004 by the National University of Colombia in San Andres, and she is one of the sharpest intellectuals of the island.



## Liberty! Liberty!

Tante Friday was the last direct descendant of African slaves in the archipelago; she is usually remembered as the lady in charge of maintaining the First Baptist church, where she assisted every Sunday; but the real importance of this woman, as a cultural reference is well known by the brilliant native islander writer *Hazel Robinson Abrahams* who for years has kept up her legacy and her role in the construction of our native identity.

As stated in the book *Rutas de Libertad: 500 años de Travesía*, this heroine was a humble woman that continuously remembered the stories of her parents, especially those referring to the abolition of slavery on the island, she was only a little girl at the time but she remembered, in our native language, - Creole Raizal - the great events told by her mother:

*-I wende rain an rain stop. (It was raining and the rain stopped)*

She continued:

*-Grampa hair get white. (My grandfather's hair grew white)*

*-Di sense hen lay two egg that day. (The hen Sense laid two eggs that day)*

*-Di church bell staat ring by himself (The church bell started ringing by itself)*

*-Ta Matilda babay cry in him belly. (Mrs. Matilda's unborn baby cried)*

*- Mabour, tanty picora son, gan walking fron cosyside to Gaugf, then North End hallerin liberty! Liberty! (Tante Picora's son, Mabour walked from Cove to San Luis and then North End crying Liberty! Liberty!)*

*-Muma se next day grandma give her milk in the coffe. (My mother said that the next day my grandmother gave her coffee with milk)*

*-Muma se granpa de cry the hole night (My mother said that my grandfather cried all night)*

She stood in silence for a while before she continued:

*-Den, one government man tel grandpa se the sed land da fi him wit piepa. (Then one day a man came from the government and told my grandfather that the land where he lived was for him and gave him a paper)*

As an old woman, Tante just wanted the government to give her a new dress and a comb to go to church, because she had never had the joy of being benefited by the government. In this way, Tante was humble in her Island of seven colors waters with a strong Baptist influence and, even when the drums

were confiscated from the African slaves, the African spirit could never be destroyed.

Finally, we can say that looking back on the dawn of our history is a way to pay tribute to the struggles and the cultural resistance that our ancestors went through.

This should be a source of inspiration for our youth to grow up proud, comfortable and secure in their identity, not only as a way of social recognition but also as a way of defending and establishing an African-descendent ideal in this contemporary society.

### ACTIVITY 5: Getting to know the Raizal Culture



The Raizal Creole is a language that arises from the contact between different people and cultures; it is the result of integrating African languages, English and Spanish words, accents, pronunciations, meanings and grammatical structures. If you look carefully, in the words of Tante, you can find different pronunciations from different languages.

 **Thinking myself and ourselves:** In groups of three, think about a particular situation you have lived with an African-Colombian person where he or she has shared his/her cultural

customs with you. Then, explain what you liked about this.



**Sharing our knowledge:** After this, discuss with your teacher and partners specific characteristics of the Raizal community which differ from the Palenquera community.



**Transforming realities:** Subsequently, make proposals on how to learn about these two ethnic groups in your school in order to enrich your own culture.



**Enriching our knowledge:** One of the main congregation places of the Raizal community in San Andres, Providence and Saint Kathleen islands is church. To discover the secrets these places keep, investigate what their main religion is and how spiritual rituals are performed there and make a performance about a special situation you like.





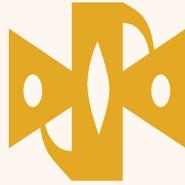
## 3.2 Benkos Biohó

A brief story of an African leader...

Kumo kusa tá (Hello! How are you? in palenquero language) : My name is Benkos Biohó and I would like to tell a short story about my life. To start, I was born in 1621, in the Bioho region of Guinea Bissau, West Africa. After being a slave for many years, I escaped from my owners in the Magdalena River. I decided to go to the south of Cartagena; there, I organized an intelligence network in order to collect escape routes to free territories. The palenques and quilombos were groups organized by people who escaped from slavery. Everyone in the palenque used to call me Arcabuco. It was the name given to me by everyone in that century. Now you and your friends know me as Benkos Biohó.

Suddenly, a leader appeared one day, he was the Cartagena's Governor. The Governor and I signed an agreement that was never fulfilled because he wanted to stop the slaves' liberation process. This was really difficult for me because I had always dreamed with freedom, but he betrayed me. Finally, one night, someone entered my house and took me into custody. I was executed in a horrific way.

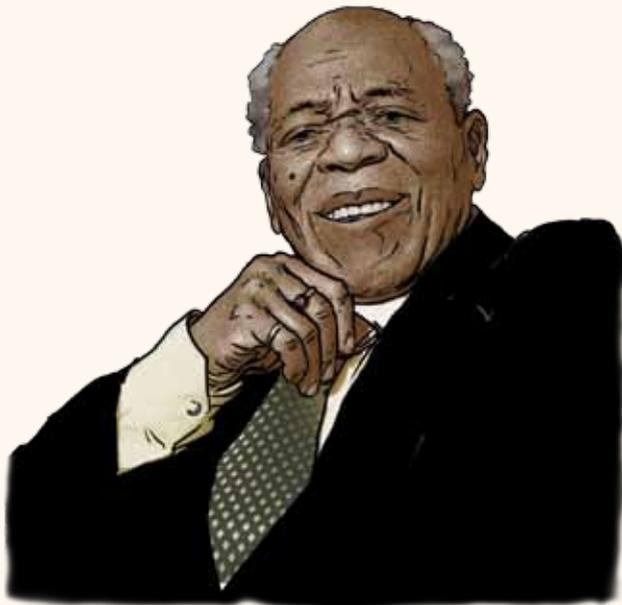
## ACTIVITY 6: Walking the Maroons' Path



 **Thinking myself and ourselves:** In our time, one of the purposes of the Palenques in Colombia is to gather members of the community and solve issues going on in the town. In pairs, recall problems you have in your school.

 **Transforming realities:** Then set up a Palenque with your teacher and classmates and look for solutions for those problems.

### 3.3 Arnaldo Palacios



In the following text you will learn about this majestic novel written by Arnaldo de los Santos Palacios Mosquera.

### The stars are black

“Irra went down to the beach to embark on a fishing trip. He carried the buoy and worms in a container full of damp earth. He wore bathing trunks, cut-off pants that had become too old and torn. He looked at the blue sky overhead and the evening light glittering on the waves of the Atrato River. Sitting at the prow of the boat was an old man rolling up his patched pants. He was over eighty years old, with a small head, his baldness shone on his chocolaty black skull, fringed with kinky hair around the ears and neck, a bony face, sunken cheeks and temples; brown, dark, deep eyes radiating peacefulness. A few hairs escaped his flat nose and intertwined with the harsh yellow, sweat-soaked mustache. Thick, salivating lips held open, while four tanned teeth bit on the wooden stem of a clay pipe. His gaunt face, embossed with wrinkles, shone with the profound contentedness of long life.”

## Las estrellas son Negras

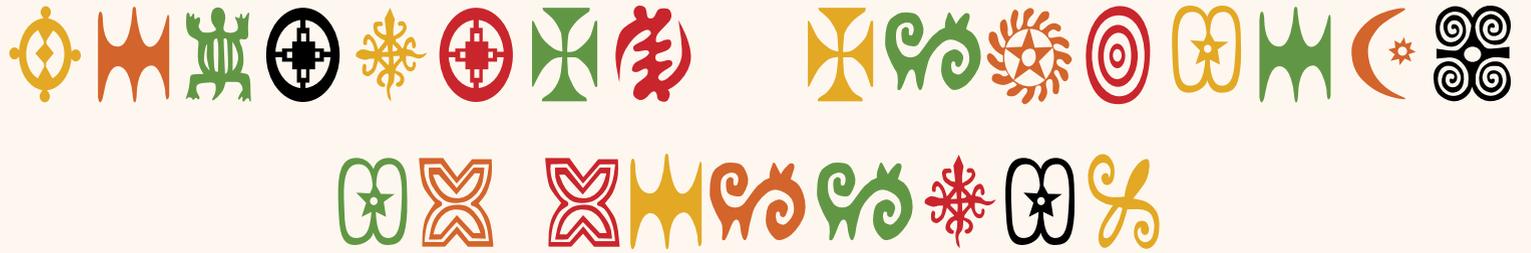
Irra bajó a la playa con el ánimo de embarcarse a pescar. Llevaba la boya en la mano, y lombrices dentro de un mate lleno de tierra húmeda. Vestía unos calzones de baño, reducción de pantalones largos ya demasiado despedazados de viejos. Miró sobre su cabeza el cielo azul, y sobre el Atrato la luz vespéral plateando las ondas. Sentado en la nariz de la piragua estaba un viejo remangándose los pantalones remendados. Él, con más de ochenta años de edad, cabeza pequeña, calvicie reluciente en su cráneo negro chocolatoso, orlado de cabello motoso hacia las orejas y la nuca, cara huesuda, sienes y mejillas hundidas; una mirada apacible emanaba de ojos pardos, oscuros y profundos Su nariz chata dejaba escapar unos pelitos que se entrelazaban al áspero bigote amarillento, empapado de sudor. Los labios gruesos, salivosos, se mantenían abiertos, mientras cuatro dientes curtidos mordían el cabo de madera de la pipa de barro. Su rostro descarnado, relievado de arrugas, traslucía profunda conformidad ante la vida larga.

(Palacios, A., 2010)



### ACTIVITY 7: Reading the World through Literature

-  **Thinking myself and ourselves:** Literature is one of the most wonderful worlds students can explore, and reading this world you can live infinite breathtaking experiences. Investigate about the “the stars are black” novel and enjoy the stories Arnaldo Palacios narrates while you let your imagination take flight making yourself part of the stories.
-  **Sharing our knowledge:** Then, compare those stories with some events in your life and tell the class what similarities and differences you found among them.
-  **Enriching our knowledge:** Look for more information about this Colombian writer and make a presentation about the contributions he has made to Colombian literature and society.



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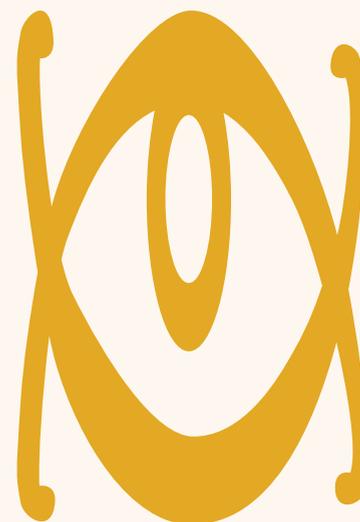
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Discussing African and African-descendant leaders is aimed at promoting the recognition of African culture within Colombian culture, and highlighting the contributions they have made in order to construct the society we live in today. This exercise aims at empowering the African-Colombian community with regards to its self-recognition and self-esteem by paying homage to its ancestors and leaders. It also provides knowledge to non-African-descendant teachers and students that will transform imaginaries, such as stereotypes and prejudices that reproduce high levels of discrimination and which translate into the violation of African-Colombian students' rights.



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