

Colombia

Dancing dialogues

In Colombia, the Sankofa Danza Afro company and Kenyan choreographer Tekeeh Makombora worked with young people from the city of Tumaco to create a performance highlighting the role of Afro-descendant identity in the country's history and present.

COUNTRY

Colombia

LOCALISATION

San Andrés de Tumaco

DATES OF THE PROJECT

August 2023 – September 2023

ARTISTS INVOLVED

Sankofa Danza Afro company,
Tekeeh Makombora

PARTICIPANTS

Young residents of Tumaco

FUNDING

Fonds Metis
Budget 15,000 €

PARTNERS

Colombian Ministry of Culture /
Teatro Colón

SECTOR AND SDG'S



30
YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATED
IN THE WORKSHOPS

4
YOUNG DANCERS JOINED THE
SANKOFA DANZAFRO COMPANY

300
PEOPLE ATTENDED
THE PERFORMANCES

STRUCTURAL RACISM

Colombia is home to a significant Black population, the second-largest in Latin America after Brazil. Afro-Colombians, who form a majority in the south of the country, are marginalized and excluded from society. They are often relegated to low-paying jobs and face systemic discrimination in all aspects of life. Persistent inequalities in access to education, employment, and healthcare contribute to the perpetuation of racism.

San Andrés de Tumaco, where 88% of the population is Afro-descendant, exemplifies this situation. Located on trafficking routes leading to the Amazon, the city is a strategic hub for smuggled goods, drug trafficking, and illegal mining. It is marked by extreme violence and insecurity, exacerbated by long-standing racial tensions.

A VITAL AND ENGAGED DANCE

Founded in 1997, Sankofa Danza Afro blends capoeira, hip-hop, and traditional Afro-Colombian dances. The company creates universal dance manifestos that challenge stereotypes and highlight the importance of African heritage in Colombian culture. It regularly performs internationally, including in France at La Maison de la Danse in Lyon and Théâtre de la Ville in Paris.

With Metis, and in collaboration with Kenyan choreographer Tekeeh Makombora, Sankofa Danza Afro invited 30 young people from San Andrés de Tumaco to participate in workshops on contemporary Afro dance. This art form is seen as a symbol of unity among Afro-descendant communities and part of a shared history.

The month-long workshops culminated in a choreography merging Afro-Colombian and African dance techniques.

Several performances took place in Tumaco, attended by over a hundred people. Conferences were also organized in schools and at the Center for Memory, reaching around 200 students.

Four young dancers from the workshops joined Sankofa Danza Afro's latest production. The premiere was held at the Teatro Colón in Bogotá—the country's most prestigious theater—on August 31, 2023, as part of the United Nations International Day for People of African Descent. Another performance took place in September 2023 at the fourth edition of the Finance in Common Summit (FICS) in Cartagena, which gathered 500 development banks.

Participating in a demanding artistic creation gave these four young dancers the opportunity to consider a professional career in dance.

THEY SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE

"For us, dance is also a discourse."

RAFAEL PALACIOS, DANCER AND CHOREOGRAPHER