

How Do Identities of Afro-Colombian Women from The Community Council of San Andrés Village Contribute to Their Community Development

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ABSTRACT

Identity leads to conditionate actions in context, and these actions can contribute to community development. This paper will present a historical overview of afro-women in Colombia; will describe how afro-women from the Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés village identify themselves. Based on this, the main goal of this research is to discover how afro-women contribute to community development based on their self-identity conception. The research is done following a mixed method with an exploratory sequential design, applying qualitative and quantitative analysis. A new finding is presented that evidences individual and collective identity and their historical and current contribution to the community development of the Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés village.

Keywords: community development; identity; afro-descendant; community council

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Cómo Contribuye la Concepción de Autoidentidad de Las Mujeres Afrocolombianas Del Consejo Comunitario de la Vereda San Andrés Al Desarrollo Comunitario

RESUMEN

La identidad conduce a acciones condicionadas en contexto, y estas acciones pueden contribuir al desarrollo comunitario. Este artículo presentará un panorama histórico de las mujeres afro en Colombia; se describirá cómo se identifican las mujeres afro del Consejo Comunitario Afrodescendiente de la vereda San Andrés. A partir de esto, el objetivo principal de esta investigación es descubrir cómo las mujeres afro-descendientes contribuyen al desarrollo comunitario a partir de su concepción de autoidentidad. La investigación se realiza siguiendo un método mixto con un diseño secuencial exploratorio, aplicando análisis cualitativos y cuantitativos. Se presenta un nuevo hallazgo que evidencia la identidad individual y colectiva, así como su aporte histórico y actual al desarrollo comunitario del Consejo Comunitario Afrodescendiente de la vereda San Andrés.

Palabras clave: desarrollo comunitario; identidad; afrodescendiente; consejo comunitario

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INTRODUCTION

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

– Margaret J. Wheatley

This research aims to focus on women's self-narration, and later, on what it means to be an Afro-descendant woman based on self-recognition by women of the San Andrés Community Council in Colombia. This research seeks to identify how this self-recognition allows the creation of relations and organizations, that end up bringing community development. How these women identify themselves as a social and individual body? and how do these links create new realities?

In this case, this paper seeks to clarify to the reader the context of the organizational forms of Afro-women in San Andrés Community Council, and their way of self-defining or identifying. Based on it, their ways of community development in the Community Council of San Andrés village will be identified.

To begin, it is worth mentioning that the Afro-descendant woman of the XXI century, in Colombia, is still in the shadow of the popular Spanish concept of *machismo* which can be translated as "sexism" or "machoism". For Kauth, Magallanes and Quintana (1993) it is an element of the social imaginary; for Giraldo (1972), machismo is a sociocultural phenomenon. Both Quintana (1993) and Giraldo (1972) agree that machismo consists of "the emphasis or exaggeration of masculine characteristics and the belief in the superiority of men" (Giraldo, 1972, p. 295).

This is supported by various assumptions such as the relationship of being a man with "being the male" (Spanish saying) who stands out in herds for his great sexual potential, optimal physical conditions, and ability to support several females. This, without mentioning his great aggressive character about what "being the male" means. It could be said, before pointing to women, who are the main object of this research, that men can also be considered as victims of this type of education given in Colombia. Men, women, and every way of self-identification express themselves in the historical reality in which they have been born, raised, and educated.

This first statement is a connector between *machismo* (*sexism*) and the social organizational role of women in San Andrés village, Colombia, which is described by Lugo (1985):

overcrowding, promiscuity, use of violence to settle any differences, use of violence to "educate" children, frequent beatings against wife or mother, high incidence of abandonment of children and wife, authoritarianism and lack of privacy, incest, rape, adultery and bigamy (p. 41)

By associating these precedents, and others that will be described in this research about afro-women in Colombia, it is feasible to identify social gaps that are establishing roles and shaping identities. The women from San Andrés Community Council are women who have founded the Afro-descendant Community Council. They have been leaders, activists, and in constant social action, they are a focus of research to recognize their transformation process from how they conceive themselves and from this, how they have generated and continue to generate community development which strengthens their identity and culture. Under this route, and in a narrative way, this investigation will be carried out.

Understanding Afro-descendant Concept

Colombian Law 70 of 1993 defines the Afro-descendant community as black community, it establishes that

It is the set of families of Afro-Colombian descent that have their own culture, share a history and have their own traditions and customs within the rural-populated relationship, which reveal and preserve identity awareness that distinguishes them from other ethnic groups (Art. 2 - Law 70 of 1993).

It is important to clarify that the term Afro-descendant refers to all people whose ancestral origin was Africa and who currently reside in America or anywhere else in the world. Grueso (2007) specifies that the Afro-Colombian population refers to human groups with roots or cultural descent from Africa but born in Colombia. This heritage received can be on a folkloric, historical, and cultural level, and, in some cases, on a linguistic level as the Creole language in the San Andrés Islands of Colombia.

Constitution of Afro-descendant Community Councils in Colombia

Community Councils arise in Colombia as part of the cultural recognition recognized in the Political Constitution of 1991. The Community Council of San Andrés village is an ethnic authority with functions of territorial administration, established and supported by the provision of the legal system, the Colombian Law 70 of 1993, and the Decree 1745 of 1995 in compliance with the constitution of 1991 and Transitory Article 55. An Afro-descendant community council is an identity with legal status, legally recognized, and formed by a black community in Colombia. The Community Council is the

highest authority to manage the internal territory that has been awarded to black communities, therefore, it must be recognized and respected by all other authorities and state entities.

The statutes of the Community Council of San Andrés Village (2021), in chapter I entitled Denomination, Article I, establishes that the community council is "an entity for the benefit of all inhabitants" (p.1). In chapter II about definitions and objectives of the organization, it states that the community council is created as part of the development of the Law 70 of 1993. It is also identified as an organization that has historical and cultural wealth as its "own, traditions and customs within the populated field relationship that preserves and reveals our identity that distinguishes us from other ethnic groups" (Statutes of the Community Council of San Andrés Village, 2021, p. 2).

Historical background of afro-descendant women in Colombia

The historical process of women in Colombia has been marked by changes and transformations. Women have worked on getting equal rights, autonomous decision-making, and freedom of expression. Throughout history, women in Colombia, regardless of their ethnic group and even their social class, were characterized by treatment where they only had duties and no rights. All this marked by their main function of being a mother. Therefore, below, this role of women in terms of duties, rights, and marriage in colonial times will be deepened.

The freedom or opinion of women in the 19th century used to be something that did not imply force or importance in Colombian society (Caputto, 2008), so much so that "their rights and freedoms had to be protected by others, since equality did not exist as a norm in this society, which was conceived as fair as it was made by men and for men" (Caputto, 2008, p.114). For the colonial period, the role of women and their education lay in a good performance in housework, as a wife and in the care of their children, "marriage meant not only a spiritual union and a social commitment, but also an economic contract to preserve the family fortune. It was a means to create a fabric of family interests and alliances" (Blanco and Poveda, 2009, p. 146).

In the case of black women, Mena (2015) points out that in "the colony, violence against the bodies of black women was incorporated as a doctrine of life" (p. 1), mainly, when their bodies were used in a utilitarian way by the white man. The black woman for the colonial time is also attacked by the Spanish state who had completely forgotten the palenqueros or black territories. Caputto mentions (2008) that

The right of Colombian women to participate in democracy through suffrage is relatively recent. Only in 1957, with the plebiscite, was this right granted to women, Colombia is one of the last Latin American countries to achieve it (p. 113).

This meant a great step for society, especially at that time, since women were not taken into account in political leadership, their participation was secondary. A great advance and satisfaction for women since this meant the beginning of new changes for the future of colonial women and also, of Afro-descendant women in Colombia.

Historical background of afro-descendant women in Antioquia state

In Antioquia State, exactly between 1890 and 1936, women experienced a difficult process because "the ideal woman was the one confined to her home, dedicated to domestic chores, to work and if she has suitors, they must be received in the presence of their parents, without any parties." (Melo, 1999, p. 110). Based on Melo's (1999) statement, it can be inferred that women did not have great value outside their homes, such as in actions linked to companies, and politics. In addition, it was also considered that "the most beloved jewel of women and the most esteemed of society" (Melo, 1999, p. 110) was a woman at home.

In order to identify the background on the forms of community development of Afro women of the San Andrés Community Council, located in Antioquia state, Colombia, it is also necessary to reflect on the 19th century, when Curiel (2014) argues that black women identity was given for the fact of being black, not from personal experiences of each black woman as they were confined from each other. The places of enunciation of the black woman was focused on the meaning of the word "black" and not on being "women" (Curiel, 2014). Lamus (2012) refers that

Inquiring about the political and cultural place of women from the black communities of Colombia implies asking about the effects of the conditions of poverty and violence, the characteristic of the territories, both historical and current, that they and their families inhabit (p.7).

The identity of the Afro-women in the community councils from Colombia refers, in part, to their common African origin and the regional transformation that each one has experienced. At the beginning of the 20th century, for example, women started assuming some roles in society, however, it was not common to find women from Antioquia state in positions other than secretary, teacher, housewife, and

assistant in fieldwork (Rivera, 2013). Something meaningful happened by the 1950s, the Antioquian woman acquired a status in the world of fashion and clothing. This time is linked to a radical change in women given that the Antioquian woman began to think more about herself (Rivera, 2013).

Understanding Community Development

Characterizing community within the setting of community development requires an extended definition that incorporates face-to-face interactions, and social media or virtual interaction (Goel, 2014). A community can share a geographical area like towns, neighborhoods, and villages. This is a place-based community (Goel, 2014; Phillips, and Pittman, 2009). A community is also created for social elements such as the same topic of interest, common historical background, “a national professional association or a labor union (communities of interest definitions)” (Phillips, and Pittman, 2009, p. 32). This is an interest-based community (Goel, 2014; Phillips, and Pittman, 2009).

An additional perspective of community is exposed by Cascante and Brennan (2012, p. 294) who present three different community approaches

- **Human ecology:** series of relationships that allow a group to meet its needs or daily requirements (Cascante and Brennan, 2012). Human ecology centers on how human relations build up caring practices.
- **Systems theory:** understands community as a body of different sub-systems that work for the same joint goal (Cascante and Brennan, 2012). “This theory views people as holding different roles and status as part of different systems closely linked with each other” (Goel, 2014, p. 2).
- **Field theory:** identifies social interaction as the most meaningful aspect of a community (Cascante and Brennan, 2012). Social interaction takes place through fields or environments as new fields are also created.

Each of these approaches contributes to clarifying what community is. All of them highlight the importance of relationships to build up a community. inter-relation and common goals; interests, and teamwork through social interaction. Better quality of life, strengthening relations, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are some of the keywords that emerge when thinking about community development. Phillips, and Pittman (2009) state that “community development not only concerns the physical realm of community, but also the social, cultural, economic, political and environmental

aspects” (p. 26). Community development can be motivated by community needs (needs-based emphasis) or by a self-identification of assets and equity (asset-based emphasis) (Phillips, and Pittman, 2009). Community development can be defined through its double nature, as an outcome, and as a process. As an outcome, it refers to actions and results (Phillips, and Pittman, 2009). Collective decision-making (Mattessich & Monsey, 1997) is an example of community development from an outcome perspective. On the other side, community development involves processes. Through processes, it is possible to learn and make improvements in every aspect of community life (Mattessich and Monsey, 1997; Phillips, and Pittman, 2009; & Ploch, 1976). Process nature in community development strengthens community relations as new experiences come. In order to develop communities, ties need to be strengthened. A community requires common ground and a common vision. Besides, community development needs to be linked to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of global goals for fair and sustainable health at every level: from planetary biosphere to local community. The aim is to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity, now and in the future (Pencheon, 2017, p. 123). The SDGs consist of 17 goals with 169 targets. According to Olayide (2016), the Sustainable Development Goals were approved by the United Nations in 2015 and are aimed to be done by 2030.

Figure 1. Sustainable Development Goals. (United Nations, 2023).



All of these goals face many community challenges, from local to national perspectives. Community action is important around the world.

After conceiving community and community development, it can be said that development is an outcome (first nature of community development) of social skills built up through community processes (second nature of community development). In this way, community development is interpreted as both a process and an outcome. Community development like an outcome refers to “physical, social, and economic improvement in a community [... and] community development as a process [... refers to] the ability of communities to act collectively and enhancing the ability to do so” (Phillips, & Pittman, 2009, p. 32). Finally, the sustainable development goals are relevant to measuring community development.

METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods research is the type of research in which it is possible to combine elements of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The 5 interviews done follow a narrative methodology, and the 10 surveys applied follow a survey research methodology. Connely and Clandinin (ctd Larrosa, 1995) point out that the narrative method is both the object of investigation and the methodology: as an object of study, it makes it possible to understand that the human being lives a story and that, same time, he gives account for that story. As a methodology, narrative research "seeks to describe those lives, collect and tell stories about them, and write accounts of the experience” (Connely and Clandinin, in Larrosa, 1995, p. 12).

The mixed method will have an exploratory sequential design, which means that the first phase of qualitative research will be done and will be followed by the collection of quantitative data, which will be used to complement the qualitative results. The Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés village registers its census not per person but per family. The Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés village consists of 50 families, the results will provide information about 15 families. The Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés village has 20 women on leading positions. A mix method will make possible to bring a narrative freedom to the interviewed in the application of the qualitative instrument, this will allow their self personal and cultural expression. The survey will complement by providing numerical insights offering a structured and measurable perspective to support

and validate qualitative findings. This combination enhances the depth and credibility of research, providing a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon.

Limitations

This research focuses on understanding the way afro-women from the Afro-descendant Community Council of San Andrés village identify themselves, it will not cover other women who also live in San Andrés village territory, but that are not part of the Afro-descendant Community Council of San Andrés village.

Conclusions of the Methodological Design

As a conclusion to the methodological application, a narrative methodology will be used. Due to the instruments to be applied (interviews under a narrative methodology and surveys under a survey research methodology), the participants will give open answers regarding their life experiences. The methodological application focuses on narrative instruments since it seeks to generate open spaces for afro-women's expression of ideas, and thoughts. However, the survey results will be presented under a quantitative descriptive approach. Based on the answers provided, this research will proceed with a narrative analysis that will focus on answering the following questions: how Afro women from the Afro-descendant territory of the San Andrés village identify themselves? and how does it enhance community development?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. In fact, they are the only ones who have ever achieved it."

-Margaret Mead

This section presents the results obtained from the methodology and instruments applied to the afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés. The narrative interview was applied to 5 women and the survey to 10 more, as explained in the Methodology section. The instruments were applied in Spanish language. All of the findings were translated into English by the author. The following aspects to consider correspond to categories interpreted through the applied instruments. The names of the Afro-descendant women that will be mentioned will be distorted for their identity protection. They will be called Ángela (2023), Ella (2023), Kenia (2023), Mary (2023) and Elena (2023). For the reader's

understanding of these women's contributions, their names will be cited following a structure of the APA Style, version 7.

Figure 2. Afro-women who grew up in San Andrés village. (Mazo, 2023).

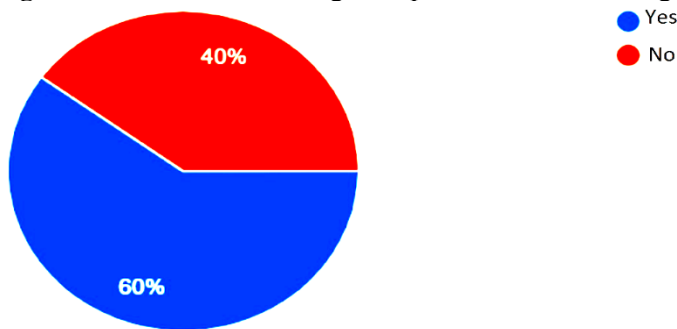


Figure 2 describes the percentage of Afro-women who grew up in San Andrés village. 60% grew up in this territory, and 40% out of it. Its standard deviation is 10. San Andrés Village receives displaced people from remote areas of Colombia. The Calle sector of San Andrés village is an important area where displaced families around Colombia have settled down.

How Do Afro-Women From the Community Council of San Andrés Village Self-Identify?

Women from the Community Council of San Andrés village self-identify as Afro-women, beyond this, they were asked how the fact of being a woman can be defined. Within their various answers, there is a coincidence that being a woman has to do with being someone who resists. While being interviewed, they constantly mentioned adjectives such as "strength" and "resistance".

Ángela (2023) mentions: "being a woman means transcending for me" (p. 1). When inquiring about what she meant by transcending, she refers to the word "multitasking":

...multitasking, yes! that is to say, a woman in the house, women not only do the housework but also many things with their children, the son has a task and we are teachers, something is damaged in the house and we are plumbers, the woman has an essence of empowerment and seeks solutions, women are persevering (p.1).

It is identified that women from the Community Council of San Andrés endow themselves with meaning from the roles they have in their day to day, mainly as mothers and wives. Being a woman is "strength, it is empowerment" (Ángela, 2023, p. 1). Fajardo, Bermejo, Ruiz, and Fajardo (2005) state that gender

identity is the "internal sense that a person has of being a man or a woman" (p. 197), according to that gender identity, there is a role, this for Fajardo and *et al* (2005) is the external expression of identity.

Within this role of being a woman, the afro-descendant women from San Andrés Community Council identify themselves as protectors, in particular, they self-identify as protectors of the opposite sex:

First of all, because we can be mothers, and because even when we are not mothers it is like an instinct that we, women, have to always protect, whether it is an animal or the environment in which we are with our relatives or our children, or to those who are unprotected or in need in our community. So, women are always a little more attentive than the opposite sex in terms of meeting needs and suddenly there are some emotional, spiritual, or even material needs that are very hidden and are not easily perceived, and a woman does perceive them if she sees that a person may need help, or might be feeling sad (Elena, 2023, p. 1).

For the women of the Community Council San Andrés village, being an afro-descendant woman is being a symbol of resilience, activism, and overcoming obstacles. Kenia (2023) describes: "because Afro-descendants have been injected with that 'being capable of doing everything, and feeling capable of doing everything. It is as if nothing is too big for us, as we are very strong, very pushy" (p. 1). In this statement, it is possible to identify what Espina and Fernández (2021) call the means of achievement: the attributes, characteristics, and hallmarks that members of a group attribute to themselves. They describe themselves as very active and participatory in everything that is related to their community.

Figure 3. Dance group from the San Andrés Community Council. (Durley Mazo, 2019)



Ways Afro-Women Relate and Interact With Their Community

The afro-women from the Community Council of San Andres Village establish meaningful connections with their community through active engagement in local cultural events, participation in village organizations, and involvement in various social, educational, and religious activities. Additionally, they also do it by demonstrating kindness, respect, and leadership, especially in the roles of teaching and community service. These interactions collectively enhance social cohesion, contributing to an interconnected community life. When they are asked to describe the direct mechanisms they use to relate, they mention cultural, social, educational, and religious mechanisms:

- A. By enjoying the local dances and the one-act farces (Sainete).
- B. Participating in the activities offered by the village organizations.
- C. Cultural activities, participating in health and religious events.
- D. By belonging to the Community Action Board.
- E. By being a kind and respectful person
- F. As a teacher, and as a community leader in the field of helping and contributing with my knowledge from being and doing.
- G. In social, educational, cultural, religious, and tourist events.

The Afrodescendant Community Council itself holds the highest membership, indicating a strong sense of belonging and commitment to their ancestral community. Apart from this primary organization, a significant portion of the respondents are engaged in multiple other organizations:

Figura 4. Community Organizations afro-women from the Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés Village expressed to have active membership. (Mazo, 2023).

Name of the Organization	Number of Members
Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés Village	10
Living park The Sainete	2
Gymnastics for the Elderly	2
Women Water Managers	1
Community Action Board of San Andrés Village	5
San Andrés High School	2
The Inder (Institute of Sports and Recreation)	1

Corantioquia (Regional Autonomous Corporation of the Center of Antioquia)	3
Basin Council of the Aburrá Valley	3
Holy Family Parish	3
Dance and Music Folklore Groups	2
Heritage lookout	1

Only 4 women mentioned to have active membership in one organization more apart from the Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés Village, the remaining 6 claimed to be active in an average of 4.1 organizations more. Having in mind that these women have other duties like their jobs, their family, cleaning, cooking, and their children, this gives a deleving information about the importance these women give to their ancestral territory. Additionally, the diverse range of organizations, including cultural, educational, recreational, religious and environmental groups, signifies a multifaceted approach to community engagement, showcasing the women's holistic involvement in the welfare and progress of San Andrés Village.

When women were asked about the reason why they were afilliated to so many community organizations based on their likes, dislikes and, based on their personality, their reasons varied among individuals, this reflects a deep sense of purpose and commitment related to their individual identity. Many are drawn to these activities for the mental and community health benefits derived from communal engagement, finding fulfillment in the shared experiences and mutual support. Others value the opportunity to expand their knowledge, appreciating the enriching environment these organizations offer or also the opportunity to share knowledge. There is a desire to be closely connected to their community, coupled with a genuine wish to assist and contribute positively, this was identified on several participants. For some, the pleasure of sharing moments with others in a pleasant atmosphere is a driving factor, while the satisfaction derived from giving back to the community stands as a compelling reason for involvement:

- A. For the self-mental and community health I get by sharing in community
- B. Because they enrich my knowledge
- C. Because it is my way of being close to each other
- D. To be able to help my community
- E. Because I like to share with other people, the atmosphere is pleasant
- F. It is very satisfying to contribute to my community.
- G. I am a teacher by vocation. It captivates me.
- H. I know it is children and young people who face the challenge of being an active part of a responsible society with themselves and with their environment.
- I. Collaborating in my community is a wonderful experience.
- J. Because I recognize myself as and afro-descendant
- K. For the love of social work
- L. Peace begins from love for oneself and love for others

In contrast to this, women express in both the interview and the survey, that the lack of active membership in more organizations is attributed to time constraints arising from both employment and academic commitments. Until here, it was possible to identify ways afro-women from the Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andrés Village participate in their local community, and their personal motivations. In the following section, it will be possible to identify how these women bring development cooperation through their identities.

Identities Contribution to Community Development and the Sustainable Development Goals

In this section, it will be possible to identify how familiar the afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés Village are with development cooperation and with the the sustainable development goals. Later, how they contribute to them based on their identities.

Figure 5. Relations with the concept of development cooperation. (Mazo, 2023).

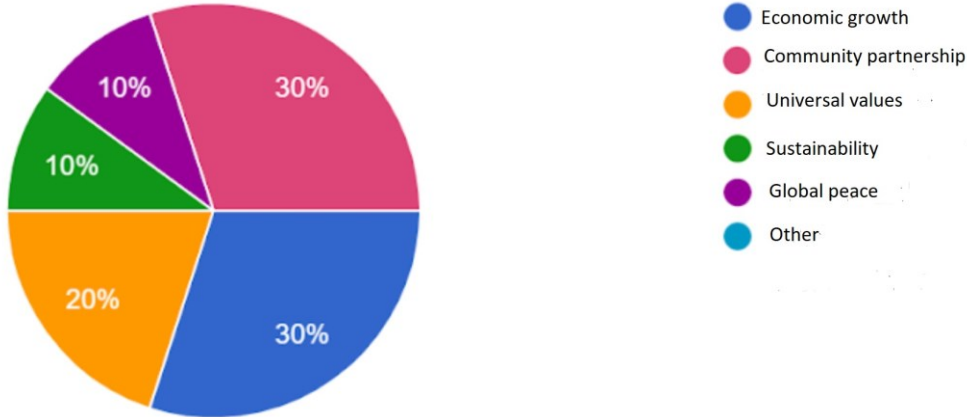
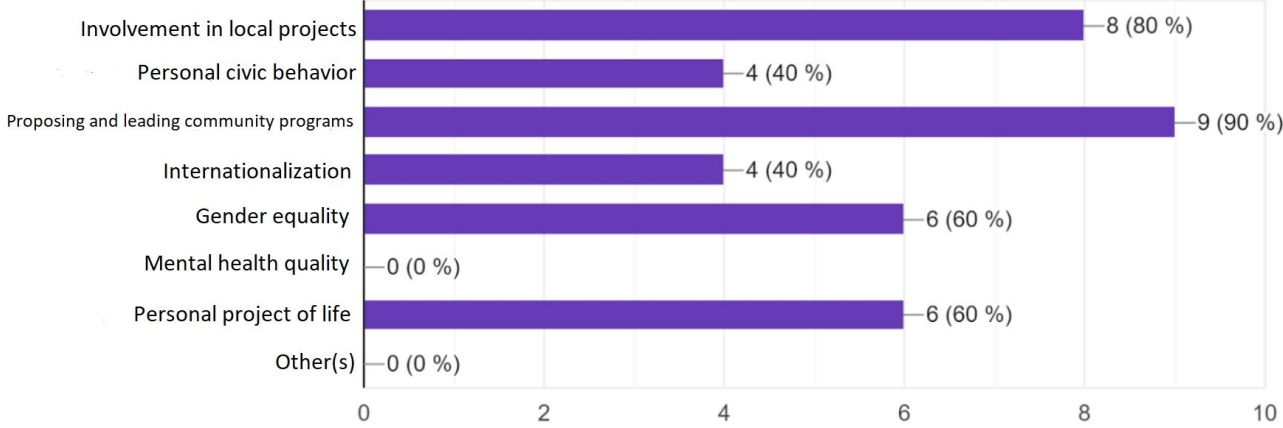


Figure 5 presents the main items which Afro-women of the Community Council of San Andrés Village relate development cooperation with. 30% relate it with economic growth, another 30% relate it with community partnership; 20% relate development cooperation with mainly universal values; 10% with sustainability, and 10% with global peace. None of the Afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés relate development cooperation with any other item. However, one respondent complemented her response by adding the following: “Community association and care for my planet earth, it is our common home”.

Figure 6. Identity awareness contribution to cooperation development. (Mazo, 2023).



Identity awareness best contributes to proposing and leading community programs (90%), and on involvement in local programs (80%). It also contributes to gender equality (60%), and personal project of life (60%). In a lower impact, to Afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés, identity awareness contributes to personal civic behavior (40%), and internationalization (40%). None of the participants considered mental health quality as an important item that identity awareness best

contributes to when it is about development cooperation, however, they also recognize that one personal reason for they participate in community organizations is for self-mental and community health.

Figure 7. Level of familiarity with SDGs. (Mazo, 2023).

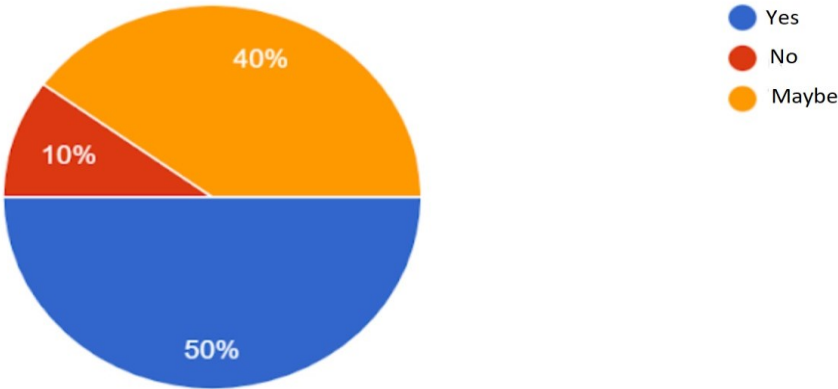


Figure 7 describes whether afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés village have previously heard about SDGs. 50% have heard about SDGs, 40% are not sure about it (Maybe), and 10% have not heard about the SDGs. Although half are sure they know about the sustainable development goals, there is still a large lack of knowledge about the sustainable development goals in 50% of the respondents, this also means that development cooperation does not necessarily have to come from the sustainable development goals for the afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés Village.

Figure 8. Identity Awareness Contribution to SDGs. (Mazo, 2023).

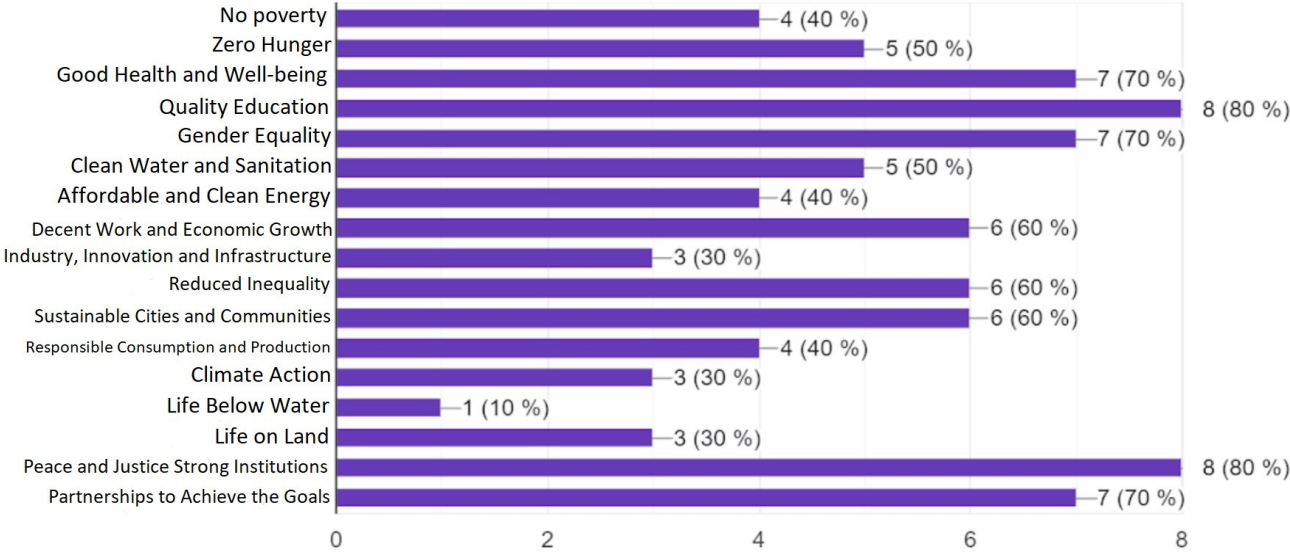


Figure 8 presented to the participants the SDGs. On this question they could read them all and relate them with identity awareness under the question “Which sustainable development goals do you think it is possible to contribute through identity awareness?” 80% consider that through identity awareness, it is possible to contribute to quality education goal and to peace and justice strong institutions goal. 70% think identity awareness contributes to good health and well-being goal, to gender equality goal, and to partnerships to achieve the goal. Identity awareness can contribute in 60% to decent work and economic growth goal, to reduced inequality goal, and to sustainable cities and communities goal. Identity awareness contributes in 50% clean water and sanitation goal; 40% to affordable and clean energy goal and to responsible consumption and production goal. Afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés village consider that identity awareness contributes to industry, innovation and infrastructure goal, to climate action and to life on land goals at 30%; and, to life below water at 10%. The participants' familiarity with the sustainable development goals and their beliefs regarding the contributions of identity awareness to specific goals shed light on the intricate interplay between community engagement, individual identity, and broader sustainable development objectives. This section will deepen more on identity contribution to community development.

This was one of the most revealing questions asked in both the survey and the interviews: Why do you think that identity awareness contributes to these sustainable development goals you have selected? It was possible to create the following categories that summarize the afro-women's conceptions about how identity awareness can mainly contribute to the sustainable development goals:

Figure 9. How identity awareness contributes to the sustainable development goals. (Mazo, 2023).

Reasons for Identity Awareness	Contributions to Sustainable Development Goals
Territorial Well-being	Defines connection to the community and promotes its well-being.
Knowledge Enrichment	Enables collaboration for community improvement through enriched knowledge.
Humanitarian Improvement	Identity awareness contributes to the improvement of humanity as a whole.
Building Sustainable Communities	Self-recognition fosters sustainable communities with strong economies, education, and environmental consciousness.
Lifestyle Contribution	Identity awareness guides the desired way of life, contributing to a shared vision of a desirable society.

Addressing Inequalities	It aims to confront inequalities in developing areas. Identity awareness fosters fairness and social justice.
Global Contribution	Clear self-identity allows diverse contributions to society's sustainable development from various fields covering its 17 development goals.
Autonomy and Decision-making	Self-recognition empowers autonomy and confident decision-making.
Embracing Diversity	Learning to live from differences encourages acceptance and understanding in diverse societies.

The participants who answered the survey were also asked to select the sustainable development goals they believe they have contributed to or are currently contributing to within the Community Council of San Andres territory based on their self-identity. This task aimed to identify their perceived impact on specific sustainable development goals, shedding light on the areas where their efforts have made a difference or are actively making a positive change.

Figure 10. SGDs contribution by Afro-women from Community Council of San Andres. (Mazo, 2023).

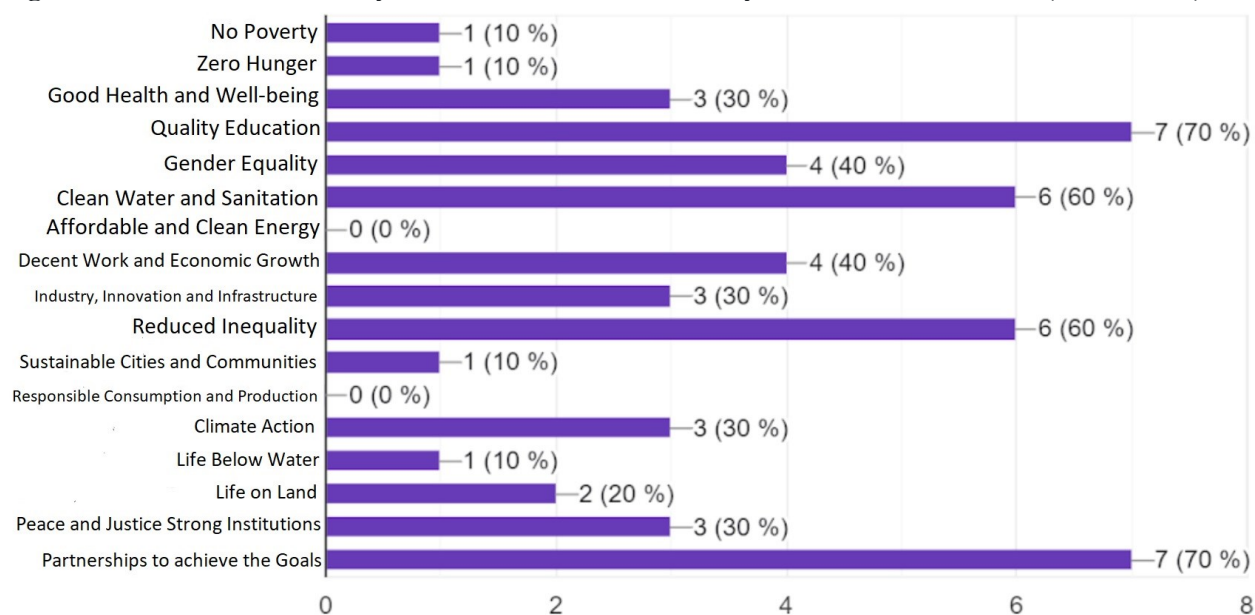


Figure 10 describes Afro-women contribution to the sustainable development goals. 70% recognize they have contributed to quality education goal and to partnerships to achieve the goal at 70%. At a 60% they have contributed to clean water and sanitation, and reduced inequality goals. 40% to gender equality and decent work and economic growth goals; 30% have contributed to good health and well-being, climate action, and peace and justice strong institutions. At a 20% level to life on land; and at a 10% level to sustainable cities and communities and life below water goals. Afro-women from the

Community Council of San Andrés village, consider they have not contributed to affordable and clean energy, and to responsible consumption and production goals.

Besides Figure 9, the afro-women from the Afrodescendant Community Council of San Andres Village describe how, specifically, they contribute to the sustainable development goals, given their multifa

Figure 11. SGDs contribution by Afro-women from Community Council of San Andres. A qualitative perspective. (Mazo, 2023). ceted contributions, their responses have been categorized as follows:

Category of Action	Description	Supporting Quote	SDGs Identified
	Offering support in health and education for vulnerable individuals.	"I offer my support in different ways: accompaniment in health and education for those vulnerable people who have needed my help."	Good health and well-being (SDG 3). Quality education (SDG 4)
Health and Education Support	Providing knowledge, economic and in-kind contributions, and raising awareness about environmental care.	"My knowledge, economic and in-kind contribution, practicing and raising awareness among other people of the importance of caring for the environment."	Quality education (SDG 4). Climate action (SDG 13).
Efforts for Clean and Drinking Water	Initiatives focused on ensuring access to clean drinking water within the community.	"I've made efforts to be able to get drinking water in our community."	Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6).
Educational Initiatives	Dedication to developing children in rural environments, emphasizing critical thinking and self-worth.	"From my work as a teacher, I care about developing children, who are in a rural environment, with low income."	Quality education (SDG 4).
	Emphasizing respect, equality, and cleanliness in communal areas.	"Mainly maintaining respect and equality for each person, keeping the sidewalk areas clean."	Quality education (SDG 4).
Global Environmental Awareness	Promoting a global perspective on environmental issues and	"That they understand that the problems that afflict our environment are not only local, they are universal and we will only learn to understand and solve them if we work together	Climate action (SDG 13). Life on land (SDG 15).

	fostering collective action.	as a global society, where everything is up to all of us."	
	Advocating for shared responsibility and appreciation of natural advantages.	"The responsibility for what happens in the future with the planet, our mother Earth, is everyone's commitment."	Life on land (SDG 15).
Promoting Kindness and Altruism	Encouraging altruistic actions without discrimination.	"The love of otherness, doing good without looking at who."	Reduced inequalities (SDG 10). Peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16),

When describing the contributions to the sustainable development goals, the respondents also shared challenges, one common challenge concerns the San Andrés High School who has been left behind in the midst of the school curriculum throughout the country and mechanisms must be implemented that force its institutionalization, since it allows the development of interdisciplinarity, especially in Afro-Colombian contexts like the one that exists in San Andrés village. The school must prioritize enhancing the Afro-Colombian Studies program within its curriculum. It is crucial to advocate with the Colombian government for the allocation of specialized ethno-education teachers who can cater to the unique needs of this diverse community.

CONCLUSION

90% of the Afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés village consider that identity awareness best contributes to proposing and leading community programs. This goes in accordance with their actions, given that these Afro-women lead different community organizations. Through this active citizenship and institutionalization of citizen participation, afro-women have brought a better quality of life to their families and themselves. In question 4.3. afro-women expressed that a part of the Community Council of San Andrés membership, they also have an active membership in more than 12 other community groups such as the Community Action Board, the Living Park The Sainete, Gymnastics for the Elderly, and Women Water Managers.

Most of these organizations were founded by one or a group of these same women. One example of this are the Artistic Director of Dance, and Music Folklore and Tradition Group which was founded by several men and women from San Andrés village in 1990, and the Music band Tenderness founded by one woman in 2006. This confirms that for the Afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés village, identity awareness leads to proposing and leading community programs and that the rest of community development this women contribute, are based on this, proposing and leading community programs. Another element that supports this reality is that 80% of the participants consider that identity awareness leads to the involvement of local projects. Identity is more viewed as a factor that motivates action toward local challenges rather than international ones. Internationalization got a 40% while involvement in local programs got 80% (See figure 6).

When inquiring about the groups or organizations that are missing in the community, and that it would be constructive to create them for the population in general, and, mainly for the population of women from the territory, the participants stated that it is missing more training in the strengthening of human capacities from the spiritual and mental health:

I would create training groups in psychological and spiritual aspects, so that women learn to know ourselves better and understand each other to avoid much suffering, to avoid expecting others to understand us, but rather we learn to know ourselves and learn to see all our potentialities as Afro-women to take advantage and get ahead (Ella, 2023, p.8).

It can be inferred from Ella's (2023) perspective, that it is missing a kind of identity awareness where the local culture does not be involved, however, after that, Ella (2023) states that getting to know yourself makes you see your abilities or potentialities, and these abilities are seen and considered as being an afro-women. This means that Ella (2023) finds it important to work on identity from the self, and, initially, from an individual perspective. Through this exercise, Ella (2023) considers that a woman recognizes her own capacities and talents with the purpose of applying them in contexts, in this case, in an afro-descendant community. Community cooperation is moved depending on the level of its member's identity awareness, and how they link their singularity into context. Mary (2023), another participant, shares “when there is self-recognition, sustainable communities can be achieved, with a good economy, education, and in the environmental area” (p. 4).

Luz (2023) highlights that identity awareness leads to “learning how to live from the difference” (p. 6). Being able to interact in moments where everyone thinks differently can be tense. Having clear communication among different identities and perspectives is a relevant skill to bring development through community cooperation. Mary (2023) complements that “self-recognition enables your autonomy and decision-making” (p. 4) and finishes by saying “only when you are clear about your identity as a valuable and responsible human being, within a global society, you can contribute from different areas to the sustainable development of that same society” (p. 4).

All of the participants shared different elements where identity awareness contributes to community development, however, none of them stated that identity awareness does not contribute to community development. Additionally, none of these women stated that they do not recognize themselves as afro-descendant, or that do not connect their identity with their local history, which means that the fact of belonging to the Community Council of San Andrés is already an expression of identity in context. It was also found that afro-women mainly contribute to community development by proposing and leading community programs (Figure 6). This is also supported on figures 10 and 11 when they were asked about the sustainable development goals they have contributed the most. SDG17 about partnership to achieve the goals got the highest percentage with a 70% just like the Quality Education goal.

The Community Council of San Andrés village, currently, prevails for the majority of female participation. Each reading of the events that circumscribe modern realities is a response to social forces and stimuli, on this occasion, this research focused on understanding afro-women from the Community Council of San Andrés village identity, and based on that, how they contribute to their own community development.

The organizational form of this afro community is given from their interactions in the search for the preservation of their afro-culture. Their goal of strengthening to bring community development is evidenced in their organizational expressions, such as the artistic richness identified in the dance groups of children and older adult women; the sainete groups, their own celebrations such as the Dance and Sainete festivities, the Ancestral Festivals of Dance, Music and Sainete,

The thing about Kenia, who has a farce (Sainete) made up of women, that seems very admirable to me, the fact that it is all women, and they perform the farce (Sainete) very well, their presentations are very beautiful. Also the dance groups, the groups of women who make their food and their products to sell. Ángela, I also admire her very much, who writes afro poetry, whether it is her inspiration or that she has learned it from other authors (Ella, 2023, p.2).

In this way, the women inhabitants of the ancestral territory of the Community Council of San Andrés are open to new identity and relationship proposals, understanding these external contributions as a real context, a possibility to increase, but not as an excuse for forgetting their ancestral memory. When considering identity and how it contributes to community development, Grossberg (2014) states that “an event or practice does not exist independently of the forces of context that constitute it as such. Obviously, the context is not a mere backdrop but the very condition of possibility of something else” (p. 255).

In the case of the Community Council of the village of San Andrés, the active participation and organizational capacity of women stands out as a way of community development. Since the Community Council foundation, in 1999, these women were the ones who carried out the historical and investigative compilation for the constitution of a community council in this territory.

For future analysis, the youth population is changing, while women work hard for their culture conservation. A complementary approach for this research could be to compare youth understanding of identity and how they mainly contribute to community cooperation vs what their moms, sisters, grandmothers, and aunts have expressed in this research. By identifying the place of Afro-descendant women in the organizational processes in Colombia, Lamus (2012) points out that "there is no organization and collective mobilization without processes of identification of a self and an us" (p. 145). It was possible to recognize this by evidencing that the individual and collective identity of the Afro-descendant women of the Community Council of San Andrés village is manifested in the construction of their relationships in connection to their common historical and cultural realities, they build up relationships and organizations, an interesting perspective of community development.

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