



Cartagena, Colombia
November 2020

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- Effects of the pandemic and our response
- Moving forward: How you can help in 2021

Ararca is the smallest and the first of three small towns you encounter as you cross the bridge into the island of Barú from the city of Cartagena, Colombia.



1300 *ararqueros* live here, many of them in precarious conditions.

Due to centuries of isolation, there is a lack of interest in reading and not much vision for education as an opportunity for progress. Government services are scarce. Therefore, literacy and cultural levels are dismal. And the employment and income expectations are sadly equally low.

Nevertheless, in the last few years, there have been some investments on the part of the state, and of some local businesses, and some of the new generation are making an effort to get training and be able to access the benefits of the modern society.

We have supported the development of these youths since 2010 with educational programs, school materials, workshops, and more.



Seven years ago, we got permission from the school principal to establish and run a school library and playroom with educational toys and activities.



Since 2013, the children have been able to enjoy stimulating activities at the library that—hard as it is to believe—they don't have at home:

At the library the children draw and paint, use playdough, work with legos and various mechanical toys, do puzzles, use memory games and educational lottos, and have access to many other educational toys and experiences. They also have reading and comprehension practice, put on plays, receive school reinforcement, and participate in a variety of workshops.

arribalasm manos

para combatir la pobreza
y promover los valores esenciales
en Cartagena, Colombia





We have been able to create a cheerful, welcoming, clean, and organized stimulating space where Dionisia, our librarian-educator, lovingly receives and supports the students. She shows them videos, directs a variety of activities and educational games, and they enjoy themselves as they learn about the world, about their country, their town and themselves.

Dionisia is the soul of the library, and thanks to the books and videos she has shown them, scores of children have gotten to know other worlds outside of Ararca and the limited experiences their families have been able to provide for them.



Through the workshops, they have discovered abilities and capacities they didn't know they had. Several "impossible" students have recovered their self-esteem after finally learning to read through personal tutoring.



In 2020, the school and library had to close their doors due to the coronavirus, but Dionisia took library materials home, and she has kept up her work, supporting her young neighbors in her nearby hometown of Pasacaballos.





During the lockdown she took the time to visit homes door to door and prepared a listing of the 90 most vulnerable families in Ararca that don't get unemployment benefits.



We were able to buy a good amount of food straight to the peasant farmer families in *Montes de María* region and deliver them to these families in Ararca.



Here you see Dionisia working with Evelin and Brenda, two graduates from the school and our workshops. They researched and prepared a list of the 300 people that most need shoes, for a foundation that wants to donate footwear.

This month of November we got permission to open the library again! Everyone follows strict prevention protocols. But that doesn't stop the children from taking one hour turns using the library materials in the well ventilated outside corridor to prevent contagions.



This year, as a consequence of the pandemic, our dear volunteers were not able to hold the usual fundraising activities, so we still need the money to cover our 2021 budget.

Please help us be able to pay Dionisia's salary so she can keep reinforcing the development and education of the *ararquero* children.

- Our yearly minimum budget is US \$6,000.
- With US \$500 you can keep the library going for a month.
- We gratefully accept very big and very small contributions, and anything in between. 😊

CHOOSE THE WAY THAT IS EASIEST FOR YOU TO CONTRIBUTE:

- ❖ *Give to Soroush and Roya and they will make sure it gets to us.*
- ❖ *Transfer directly from your account to the bank account of Arriba las Manos Foundation in Colombia (see next page).*
- ❖ *Give through www.caringforcolombia.org, which will keep a percentage for administration, but they are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and your donation may be deducted from personal and income taxes in the US.*

If you send a donation by any of the above means, please let us know so we can know that it comes from you, and we can thank you and keep in touch:

Email: info@arribalasmanos.org **Whatsapp:** +34644949455



www.arribalasmanos.org

On Facebook: *Arriba las Manos. Entidad sin ánimo de lucro*

If you have any questions or would like to know more details, just drop us a note.

Direct payment in US dollars to Arriba las Manos bank account

Intermediary bank: Citibank, New York N. Y

SWIFT: CITIUS33

ABA: 021000089

Our beneficiary bank in Colombia: Itaú Corpbanca Colombia S.A.

Our bank's account in Citibank: 10953817

Our SWIFT: BCTOCOBB

Account Holder: Fundación Arriba las Manos

Our account number: 501402234

Our ID: 900358429-8 (NIT)

Payment details: Please write your name and any indication as to how you would like us to use your funds.