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# CACAO CONNECTS (COLOMBIA)

## OVERVIEW

Cacao Connects works with cacao-producing communities to build trust, inclusion, and shared norms needed to improve local governance and foster economic development. The activity's main objective is to enhance women and youth engagement, and it supports initiatives that strengthen women and youth's capacity to act as local change agents and community leaders. The activity will also improve digital connectivity and the use of technological tools, which foster participation and transparency. This activity is implemented through a Global-Development Alliance (GDA) with Microsoft, Ideas for Peace Foundation (FIP), and the Compañía Nacional de Chocolates (CNCH). Cacao Connects is implemented in Apartadó, Dabeiba, Necoclí, and Turbo (Antioquia), and it runs from May 2019 to May 2024.

## GOALS

### **TRANSFORM CACAO-PRODUCING ASSOCIATIONS**

Cacao Connects supports cacao production and commercialization strategies, and it strengthens trust, governance, and inclusion within cacao-producing associations. The activity places special focus on women and youth engagement in these associations, improves women and youth access to productive resources, and encourages women and youth involvement throughout the cacao value chain.

### **STRENGTHEN WOMEN AND YOUTH CAPACITY**

Cacao Connects strengthens local community organizations' capacities to engage with public and private sector actors and to participate in regional decision-making processes. This includes enabling and empowering women and youth to act as change agents and leaders in their communities, and to promote gender equality in cacao associations and communities.

### **PROMOTE REGIONAL COORDINATION**

Cacao Connects works with local government institutions to develop and implement inclusive public policies and management plans. The activity coordinates with the municipal planning councils, municipal development councils, social and economic policy councils, and other decision-making arenas to achieve this objective.

## ANTICIPATED RESULTS

- Engage 30 women in the process of updating the women's public policy in Apartadó;
- Strengthen the administrative and operational capacities at four cocoa-producing associations;
- Provide technical assistance to over 300 cacao producers, half of which are women, in Apartadó, Dabeiba, and Turbo;
- Strengthen capacities of 31 young leaders and encourage them to participate in local decision-making spaces in their municipalities;
- Improved digital connectivity for over 3,000 rural community members by establishing 24 digital connectivity points in Apartadó, Dabeiba, and Turbo; and
- Promote governance of grassroots community organizations, including Community Action Boards (JACs), in the rural areas of Apartadó, Dabeiba, and Turbo.