

## Luz Soliz-Ramos

Honduras / Garifuna: dancer, choreographer, teacher, activist, and founder of Garifuna Heritage Center for the Arts and Culture

Object: hana and hanaóudua – mortar and pestle

*Ágüdahabei bagücha lou babágariduní, bafáreihani, labu lou barufudahani sun lácharagun. Buidu me gién lun pantaba lou kátabulá.*  
(Garifuna)

*[Preserve your culture by practicing, sharing, and teaching all the essential aspects of it. Especially, be proud of who you are.]*

I was born in the Garifuna community of Trujillo Colón, Honduras. The Garifuna people, or Garinagu, who live in Central America today, originated in the island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in the Lesser Antilles. They were descended from Africans and Kalinagu natives, who had migrated from the Orinoco region in South America to throughout the Caribbean in the 13th century. The French first colonized Martinique and Dominica and attempted to take over St. Vincent, but the Garifuna people resisted. In 1796, the Garifuna lost to the British, who took control of St. Vincent and Dominica. The Garifuna were removed to Roatan, Honduras in 1797 and migrated to the mainland of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. There are still Garifuna people living in the islands of St. Vincent and Dominica who no longer speak the language. Garifuna people in Central America still speak the Garifuna language today.

I came to the U.S. in 1972. My father, my mother, and my older siblings were here already. My father came through an aunt that was already here with the hope that life would be better in the U.S. My father, the late Lino Soliz Sr., was a coat cutter in the fashion industry in New York City during his time.



The mortar and pestle are important cooking utensils in Garifuna culture. It is mortero y el palo in Spanish, and hana and hanóoudua in Garifuna. Every Garifuna home has one to make hudutu, the main traditional meal for Garinagu. In Africa they call this meal fufu. They boil green plantains and mash them in the hana. By the time you finish mashing the plantain, a soup made of coconut milk, fish, shrimp, and other seafood should be ready to eat and enjoy!

### Bio:

Luz Soliz-Ramos is the founder of the Bronx-based Garifuna Heritage Center for the Arts and Culture and Co-Choreographer & Artistic Director of the Wabafu Garifuna Dance Theatre, which was established as the Hamalali Wayunagu Garifuna Dance Company in 1992. She was inspired by her teachers, including Lee Aca Thompson and Lavinia Williams-Yarborough, and her friend, Manuela Sabio, founder of the Wanichigu Garifuna Dance Company. Luz studied dance and drama at Bard College and now teaches at Boricua College. She has also taught for over a decade in New York City public schools. She holds a Master's from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is also the author of a language book, *Learn Garifuna Now!*

For information on Wabafu Garifuna Dance Theatre, visit: [facebook.com/wabafudance](https://www.facebook.com/wabafudance)