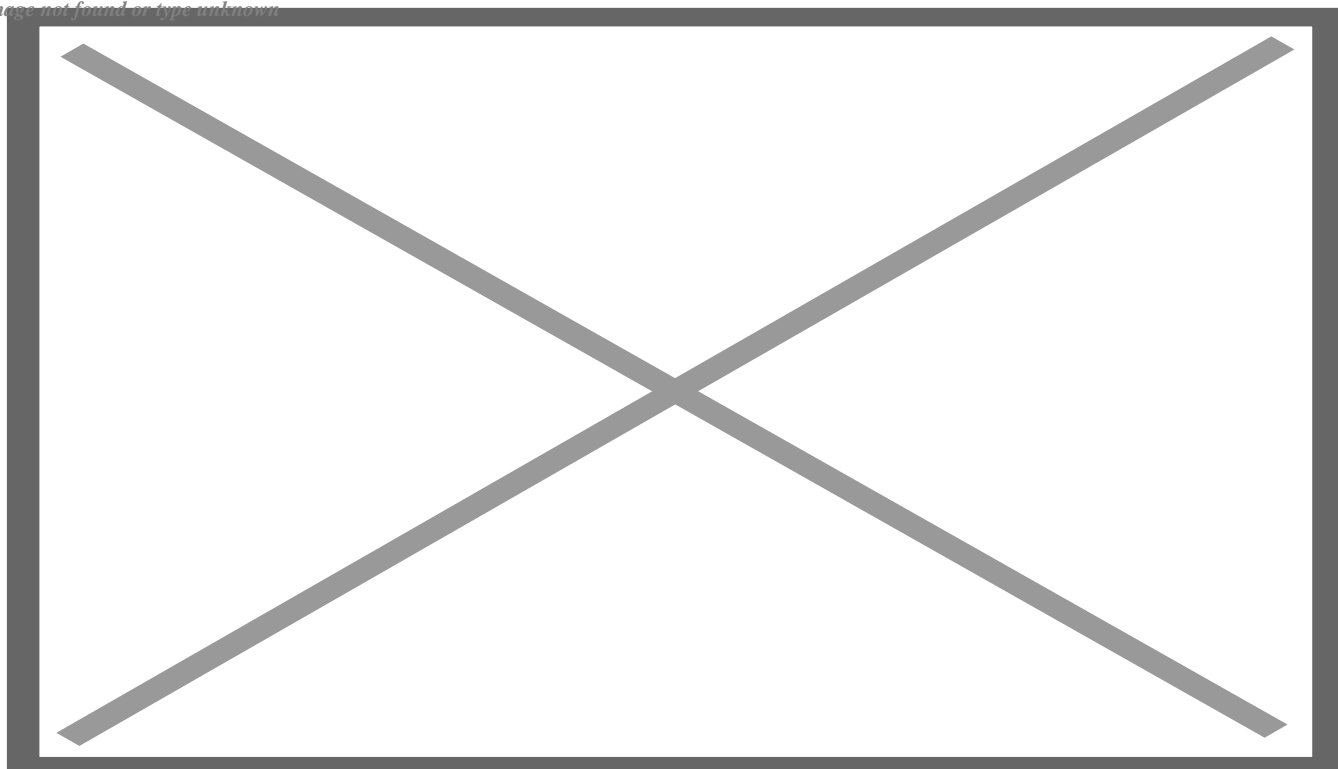


Cuba joins Honduras in the fight against illiteracy

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By María Josefina Arce

The government of President Xiomara Castro aspires to declare this year more than one hundred Honduran municipalities free of illiteracy, an endeavor in which it counts on the help of Cuba, with great experience in this work, due to its advice to some thirty nations.

More than a hundred Cuban methodologists are assisting in Honduras in the implementation of the "Yes, I can" method, through which some ten million people in the world have learned to read and write.

Thanks to its application in Venezuela and Bolivia, these nations were declared Illiteracy Free Territories in 2005 and 2008 by UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

"Yo sí puedo" has been adapted 20 times and has reached countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Oceania and Europe. There are also versions for the blind, deaf and intellectually challenged.

At present, some 30,000 Hondurans are taught to read and write with the Cuban program, recognized for its efficiency and economy by UNESCO, which in 2006 awarded it the King Sejong Literacy Prize.

Data from the National Institute of Statistics reveal that in the Central American country there are more than 710,000 illiterate people, which represents 12% of the population. Most of them are located in rural areas, identified as the main focus of the historical problem.

In declarations to the Prensa Latina news agency, the Honduran Minister of Education, Daniel Esponda, expressed his satisfaction for the presence of the Cuban educators and the application of the "Yes, I can" method, which he qualified as the best in the world.

Hondurans are already familiar with this program, created by the educator Lionela Relys, at the initiative of the historic leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro. Let's remember that it was applied in that nation from 2006 to 2009 by the government of then President Manuel Zelaya, and managed to reduce the illiteracy rate to about 6%.

However, the coup d'état against Zelaya, democratically elected at the polls, meant a delay in many areas, including education. Collaborators from the Greater Antilles withdrew in the face of false accusations and attacks by the coup perpetrators.

But the Cubans have returned to join forces with the Hondurans. In fact, during a recent visit to Tegucigalpa, the then Cuban Minister of Education, Ena Elsa Velázquez, ratified her country's willingness to accompany Honduras in its efforts to make the population literate.

The authorities of the Central American country are confident that illiteracy can be eradicated by the end of 2024 with the help of the largest of the Antilles, which despite the U.S. blockade has never hesitated to support other peoples in their efforts to bring knowledge to all its citizens so that they can integrate into society and improve their quality of life.

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