

# *Cuba pays well-deserved tribute to its educators*

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By María Josefina Arce

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On December 22, 1961, a transcendental moment in the history of the Caribbean nation took place. Cuba was declared "Territory Free of Illiteracy", after the successful culmination of the Literacy Campaign, the first great educational feat of the nascent Cuban revolution, besieged by U.S. imperialism.

In a Revolution Square full of citizens, the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, described the campaign, in which 271 thousand volunteer educators from all over the national territory were involved, as a true battle against illiteracy.

More than 700 thousand people learned to read and write, thanks to that feat, which counted on the decisive participation of a great number of young people who made their own Marti's maxim that "On coming to Earth every man has the right to be educated, and then, in payment, the duty to contribute to the education of others."

Today that thought of the Cuban hero continues to inspire those who with devotion, love and defying material shortages bring knowledge to children and young people and instill in them the love for the homeland.

And the fact is that education also suffers strongly from the limitations of the blockade that the United States has imposed on our country for more than six decades.

The unilateral and criminal economic siege caused losses to that sector amounting to nearly 76 million dollars between March 2022 and February of this year alone.

The U.S. measures hinder the acquisition of inputs for the production of books, pamphlets and other materials necessary for education at all levels.

These shortages have a significant impact on such a humane specialty as special education, which has not stopped thanks to the commitment of the state and educators, who are the architects of alternatives to prepare these children and youngsters for their full insertion into society.

Like those young people who more than six decades ago marched to the most remote places of the Cuban geography to bring knowledge, today's educators are the object of respect and admiration.

No matter the shortages, every day, without sparing time, they deploy all their love and dedication to train the men and women of tomorrow with the best values and principles.

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