

# *Cuba and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expand cooperation*

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**Cuba and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have a solid relationship of friendship and cooperation**

By María Josefina Arce

Cuba and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have a solid relationship of friendship and cooperation, which has expanded to include an area of high social impact: special education.

Cuba is helping to carry out a diagnosis of the current state of special education in this sister Caribbean nation and to identify the main needs in this area.

Mabel Álvarez Bernal, a Cuban Doctor of Special Education, has travelled to Cuba with this aim in mind and will help to coordinate actions aimed at improving and perfecting teaching in this field.

Cuba has a great deal to contribute to the development of this specialty in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as it has extensive experience and excellent results in this area of education, which received a significant boost after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959.

Before that date, there were only eight centers of this kind in the country and only about twenty teachers dedicated to this noble task.

Today, there are more than 300 such centers and more than 14,000 professionals dedicated to meeting the special needs of students.

Cuba has never ceased to take care of these children and young people and to monitor their progress, even in the midst of the shortages caused by the blockade imposed by the United States for more than six decades.

Cuba has also assisted St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the psychosocial and clinical-genetic study to identify persons with physical and mental disabilities, which, with the support of Venezuela, has made it possible to develop a strategy for the care and social integration of this sector of the population. In more than thirty years of diplomatic relations, the two Caribbean nations have forged strong bonds of friendship based on respect and cooperation in solidarity, which have been strengthened during difficult times for both peoples.

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