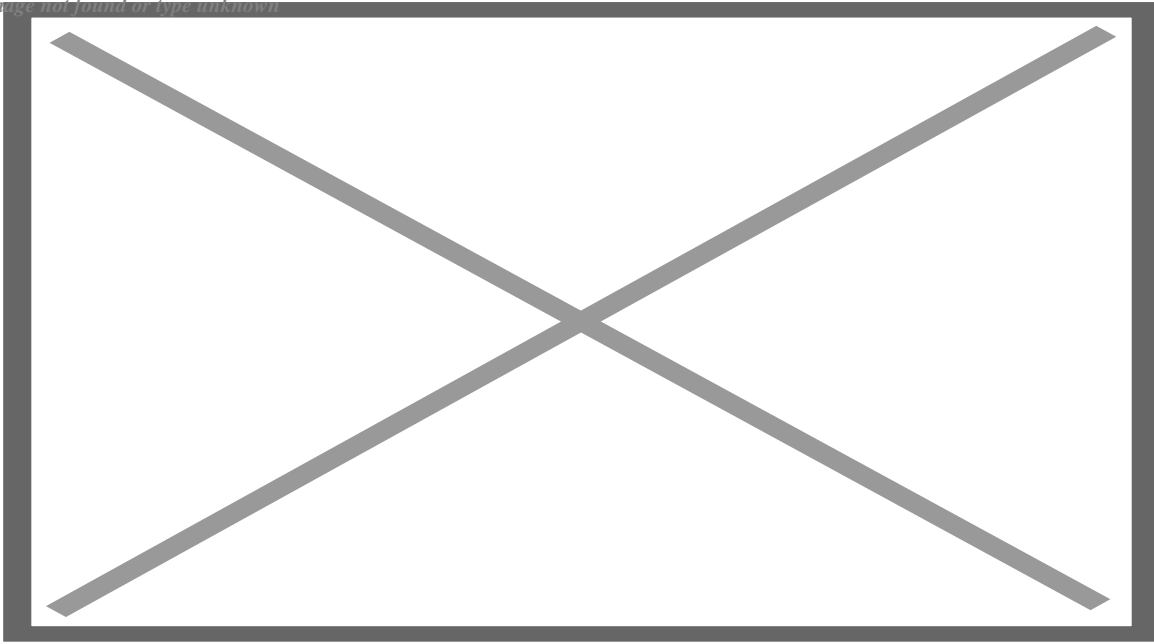


An agreement with major social implications

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Signing of the agreement between Cuba and Venezuela. Photo: Archive

by María Josefina Arce

Twenty-four years have passed since the signing of the Cuba-Venezuela Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement, which in more than two decades has made it possible to develop several projects with great social impact.

The historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, and the then President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, signed the agreement in Caracas, which paved the way for broad cooperation in solidarity for the benefit of both peoples.

The agreement made it possible to coordinate the social programs implemented by the Bolivarian Revolution for the benefit of all Venezuelans, especially the most vulnerable sectors.

This is how *Barrio Adentro* was born, with the cooperation of Cuba, to bring health care to every corner of the South American country, even the most remote.

The presence of Cuban health workers in Venezuela has saved countless lives and provided millions of consultations. This program, the Venezuelan authorities have stressed, has been one of the strengths in controlling the COVID 19 pandemic in the South American country.

The Cuba-Venezuela Integral Cooperation Pact has also extended to other areas such as education, sport, culture, communications and energy.

In fact, thanks to the support of teachers from the Greater Antilles and the implementation of the Cuban literacy method "*Yo sí puedo*" (Yes, I can), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Venezuela to be a country free of illiteracy in 2005.

In the area of culture, the support and creation of *Colmenitas Bolivarianas*, a socio-cultural project to promote values in children and families, inspired by the Cuban children's theatre company *La Colmenita*, stands out.

More than a thousand projects have been developed under the agreement, which has strengthened relations between the two peoples and has been a prelude to promoting regional unity.

As Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel has said, what is celebrated every year on 30 October is more than just another anniversary of the Agreement, it is the moment when the integration of Our America became closer and possible.

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