

# *A profession full of love*

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**By María Josefina Arce**

December 22 is a day of special significance for Cubans. On that date in 1961, the historic leader of the Revolution Fidel Castro proclaimed Cuba "Territory Free of Illiteracy" -- a feat of all the people.

More than seven hundred thousand people from rural areas and slums in towns and cities learned to read and write, reducing illiteracy to 3.9% of the total population. The nascent revolution was winning another battle in favor of all Cubans.

Therefore, December 22 was the date chosen to celebrate Educator's Day every year, a well-deserved tribute to those who, defying limitations, take us into the wonderful world of knowledge and prepare us for

life.

Cuban teachers are an example of unconditional dedication and commitment to the education of new generations, aware of their role in the future of the country.

In their daily work they face multiple obstacles, due to the criminal blockade imposed by the United States for sixty years and which affects this sensitive and important sphere, which only between January and July 2021 suffered losses of more than 30 million dollars.

However, the political will of the government and the efforts of all workers in the sector have made it possible for education not to stop in the archipelago and to obtain remarkable results, including awards for Cuban students.

With alternatives and diverse initiatives, but above all with a lot of love, educators face the shortages that cover the different levels of education. For example, in children's circles, or kindergartens, the allocation of toys and teaching aids is limited, the acquisition of which is made more expensive by having to buy them in distant markets such as China.

Special education requires a variety of resources for the comprehensive care of students with special educational needs, but the hostile U.S. policy has a negative impact on learning, which is necessary for the full social incorporation of these children and young people.

Cuban educators have also taken their knowledge around the world. They have lent their help in solidarity to other nations to reduce illiteracy rates. They have made their own the thought of Cuba's National Hero, José Martí, who stated that "Upon coming to earth, every man has the right to be educated, and then in return, the duty to contribute to the education of others".

Dedication and love for their profession is shown by Cuban teachers, who every day fulfill the beautiful and noble mission of transmitting their knowledge and instilling in the new generations human values and strong convictions such as love for the homeland.

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