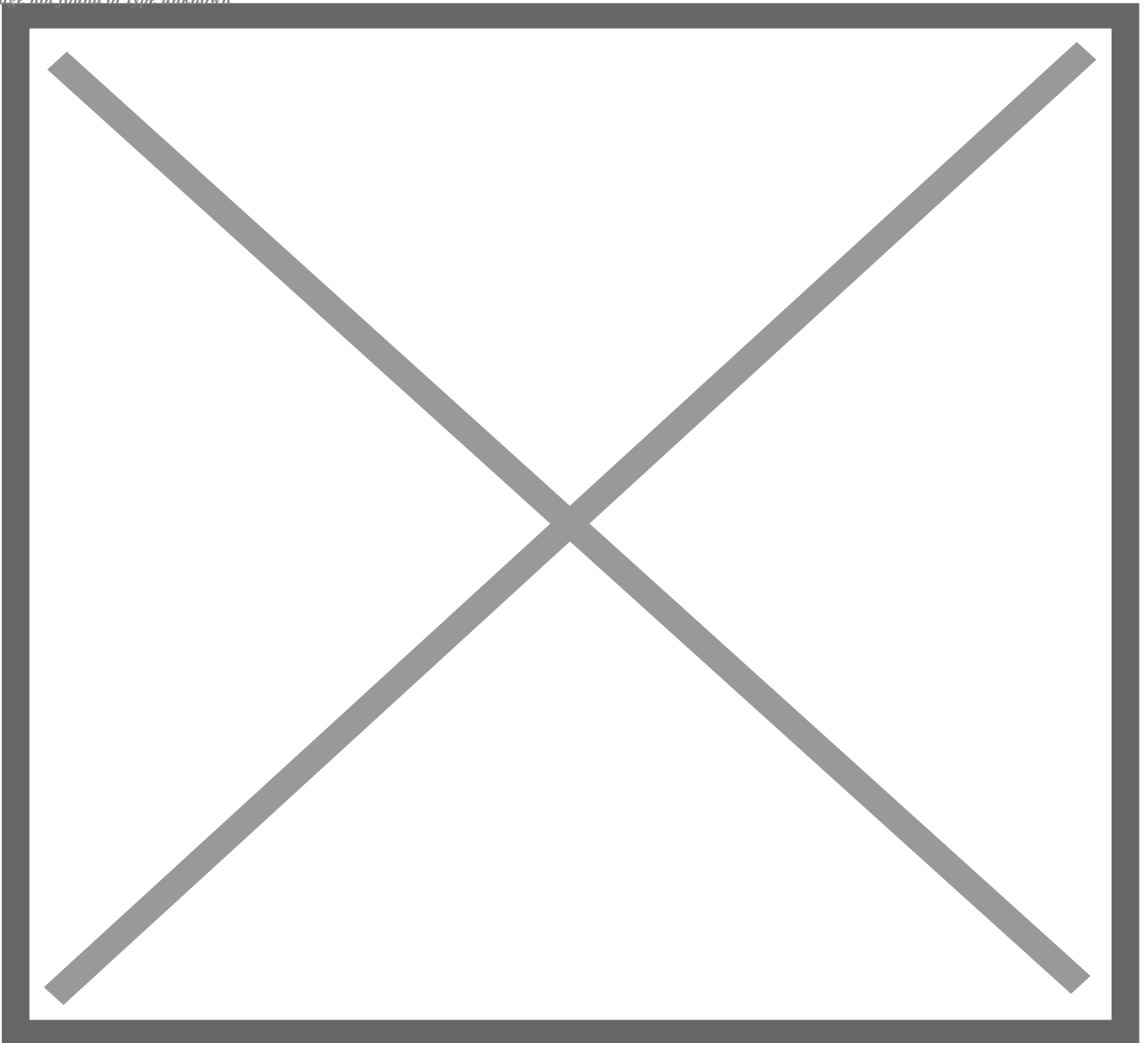


# *The indispensable presence of Cuban women in science*

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By María Josefina Arce

The historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, always fought for the future of our country to be linked to science. And women have undoubtedly played an essential role in the progress made along this path.

Cuban women occupy a preponderant place in the scientific field. More than 50% of the academicians belong to this sector of the population, which has contributed much in the various branches to the achievements that the Caribbean nation exhibits today.

At present, the Cuban Academy of Sciences is the institution of its kind in the world with the highest percentage of women, representing 34% of its total membership.

And from this prestigious institution, women have accompanied the Cuban government's strategy to achieve greater involvement of science, technology and innovation in order to solve the country's most pressing problems.

Cuban women have fought countless battles in our country and contributed to its success. One of the most recent, the confrontation with COVID 19 and the obtaining by Cuba of three highly effective and safe vaccines for the immunization of its citizens against the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

Cuba was even the first country in the world to vaccinate its pediatric population from two to 18 years of age. An action supported by years of history and prestige in the development of Cuban immunogens for children.

Great was the leadership of women at the head of the research teams that gave life to the vaccines, as well as in the development of protocols for action against the virus.

They were also in the front line against COVID 19, having an outstanding presence in the medical sciences. Cuban women represent more than 70% of the health personnel in the national territory.

The participation of women in the advancement of science has been internationally recognized. Women scientists from Cuba have received prestigious distinctions for their research in different fields. Such is the case of the UNESCO Women and Science Prize, awarded to María Guadalupe Guzmán, a specialist in infectious diseases, and the Sofía Kovalevskaya Prize, which has been awarded to some 60 Cuban women researchers for their work in mathematics and computer science.

With the satisfaction and pride of having a broad and prestigious presence of women in science, Cuba arrives on February 11, International Day of Women and Girls in Science, a day that has been celebrated worldwide since 2015.

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