

Panama Retakes Stalled Literacy Program



Panama City, January 7 (RHC) — Panama is retaking the national literacy program based on the Cuban method known as “Yes, I Can,” after a five-year freeze under the administration of Ricardo Martinelli.

Social Development Minister Alcibiades Vazquez said that the program was inaugurated seven years ago, but faded out over the past five years to the point that Panama has not yet been declared free of illiteracy. Vazquez noted that UNESCO declares a country free of illiteracy when it reports an illiteracy rate below 5.0 percent, but Panama is still at 5.5 percent.

Former Minister Mides Guillermo has been held accountable for the standstill of the literacy program after he focused actions foreign to the Development Ministry’s interests and he is now under investigation for personal enrichment, Prensa Latina news agency reported.

The program was paralyzed in July lacking funds for implementation despite the fact that upon its inauguration it counted on a one million dollar budget.

Only 800 citizens were benefited with the program over the past six months, particularly thanks to the efforts of a small number of Cuban experts who have continued to implement the strategy.

Vazquez said that they expect to reactivate the program this year on a 700,000 dollar budget to start with and benefit 3,000 citizens.



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