

CUBA 60



*Celebrating the 60th
anniversary of the Cuban
Revolution 1959-2019*



A world leader in learning



Cuba has the highest level of education funding as a proportion of government spending of any country in the world, at 13% compared to 6% in Britain.



Education is provided free of charge from pre-school to university and adult education. Every worker also has the right to paid leave to further their education.



The target class size in primary schools is a maximum of 20 which is achieved in 93% of schools. If children are unable to attend school then “mobile teachers” make home visits.



School meals and uniforms are subsidised for everyone. Many schools also provide free morning and after-school care for working parents with no extended family.



The arts, physical exercise and humanities are allocated significant time within the curriculum and seen as an entitlement for all young people.



“Any Cuban will tell you that there is much more to do before they can say their system has succeeded but they firmly believe that the route out of poverty for everyone is education.”

NEU-NUT Section delegation report 2016



The Great Literacy Campaign



A literacy teacher on the May Day march in 2016



Multilingual Yo Sí Puedo teaching resources

Free education is a universal right up to and including higher education. Pre- 1959, before the Revolution, education was the privilege of the wealthy and there were few schools in rural areas.

The Great Literacy Campaign of 1960-61 was run by almost 100,000 volunteers and saw the illiteracy level drop from 42% to 4% in under a year. Literacy rates now stand at 99.8%.

Recent campaigns include Cuba's 'Yo Sí Puedo' (Yes I can) teaching method which has been used to teach more than ten million people to read and write throughout the world.



Literacy campaign teachers marching in Havana in December 1961 after Cuba was declared free of illiteracy
Photo: Liborio Noval

Cuban achievements



53.2 % of MPs are women – the second highest number in the world



Infant mortality rate of 4 : 1,000 – lower than the United States



Over 4 million sight-saving eye operations worldwide since 2004



31,000 students from 103 countries trained by Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine since 1998



30% forest cover compared to pre-1959 figure of 11%



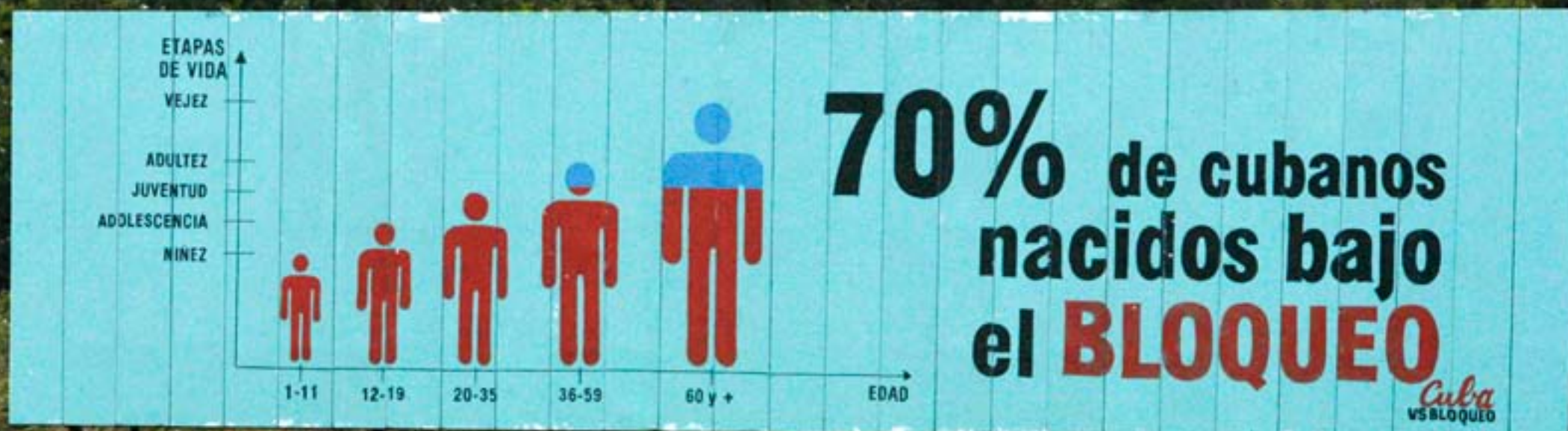
400,000 medical professionals have worked in 165 countries since 1960



11 preventable diseases eradicated through vaccination programmes

2.6 million births, 9.1 million surgeries, 12.8 million vaccinations carried out by medical volunteers overseas





A Cuban billboard reads 70% of Cubans have been born under the blockade



The Blockade

The US blockade of Cuba is a collection of US laws and regulations which restricts Cuba's ability to conduct trade, not only with the United States, but with many other countries too. It impacts on all areas of Cuban life from access to health and education, food and basic provisions, as well as sports and culture. The US blockade has cost the Cuban economy more than \$933 billion since 1962.

Within education the damaging effects include difficulties obtaining simple resources such as stationery, computers and science equipment.

The United Nations General Assembly has condemned the blockade in an annual vote for 27 consecutive years, voting against it by 189-2 countries in November 2018.

The blockade reaches far beyond Cuban shores. British banks have paid multi-million pound fines to the US Treasury for trading with the island. The Cooperative Bank closed down the accounts of Cuba Solidarity Campaign due to the "risk" of US-imposed fines. In 2017, Cuban students were barred from enrolling at the Open University because of blockade laws.

“The embargo against Cuba must stop. It is the most unjust, severe and long-lived system of unilateral sanctions ever applied to a country.”

Ban Ki Moon, former UN Secretary-General, 2016



Women: the 'revolution within the revolution'



The Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) was founded in 1960. It has four million members and is the largest mass organisation in Cuba.

Cuba pioneered sexual and reproductive rights, becoming the first Latin American country to legalise abortion in 1965, which together with contraception are free.

The FMC is consulted on legislation and its potential impact on women. All government ministries must give annual accounts on how their policies have contributed to the advancement of the female population.

Such policies have resulted in impressive statistics for women's health and achievements:

- Women make up the majority of doctors (60%), scientists (58%), university graduates (64%), international volunteers (65%) and grassroots union organisers (72%)
- Cuba is ranked first in Save the Children's 'Lesser Developed Countries' Mother's Index and the maternal mortality rate is 0.02%, the lowest in Latin America and low income countries
- 53% of MPs are women – the second highest rate in the world, and women head nine of the country's fifteen provincial assemblies
- Female life expectancy in Cuba is 80.45 years – higher than in the United States

International Solidarity

Links between British and Cuban unions stretch back more than 20 years. Representatives regularly attend each other's conferences as well as annual May Day celebrations in Havana.



In terms of practical solidarity, British unions have supported the training of language specialists who teach Cuban doctors before they join medical brigades in English speaking countries and have sent ambulances and medical equipment.



Branches and regions have also donated to appeals for hurricane relief and for Braille machines for Cuban special needs schools. Delegations have also delivered material aid directly to Cuban schools and hospitals.



Hundreds of branches are currently affiliated to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, and have played important lobbying roles in ensuring the recent ban on Cuban students enrolling at the Open University was overturned and for the freedom of the Miami Five.



Join a delegation to Cuba

CSC organises regular May Day and specialist delegations to Cuba. Tours visit Havana, Pinar del Río and Viñales to examine current education and health provision in urban and rural environments. They also take part in professional meetings with workers and unions in their places of work and communities as well as exchanges with the Federation of Cuban Women and student organisations; plus historical, cultural and community visits.

