



# Education in Cuba, FIDEL'S LEGACY

The 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 the Cuban people and peoples world-wide received with great sadness the news of the death of Fidel Castro, revolutionary, referent for critical thinking, constructor of utopias and realities, and inspirational figure for generations who have fought for a better world.

In beautiful Cuba, Caribbean island, a liberated territory of America, Fidel was able to guide the victory of the Cuban people, and face down United States imperialism and its illegal economic blockade. Many are his teachings and enormous is his legacy, in these lines it interests us to highlight only one: making the right to education for all Cubans a reality, an education that not only teaches to read and write, but was also one that teaches the whole child, is humanistic, supportive and promote critical thinking.

As IDEA in our 17 years of existence, we have learned of the transformations in Cuban education, we have learned from their experience, and we have admired their achievements in medicine, in the arts and science. We are encouraged that in such little time and with massive youth participation, Cuba was able to reach every corner of the country and eradicate illiteracy.

Cuba is the only Latin-American country where the entire population knows how to read and write, and enjoys universal coverage



Photo: miradasecontradas.wordpress

of primary education and guarantees of access to higher education. All education is public and without cost, not only due to the lack of tuition or service fees, but because the State provides school meals and all education materials necessary for children and youth.

The achievements of Cuban education speak for themselves. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization –UNESCO- Cuba is the only nation to reach the education objectives established by this organization during the period 2000 to 2015. Among the main ones, to extend and improve primary education; universal coverage of primary education; guaranteed lifelong access to education for youth and adults; and eradication of illiteracy as the most prominent. These achievements can be understood in the light of a people committed to education and the fulfillment of the State’s responsibility to guarantee proper educational funding. Although Cuba is a country with many shortages, it boasts the highest investment in education in Latin America, with 14% of its GDP.

All these achievements are accompanied by a liberating and pedagogical project, influenced by the ideas of teacher, poet and revolutionary José Martí, the revolutionary spirit of Ernesto “Che” Guevara, and the wisdom, principles and revolutionary strategies promoted by Fidel Castro, who worked for towards the transformation of a fairer society. Education in Cuba is and will always be, the great legacy of Fidel.

Fidel... your dreams of justice, dignity and rebellion will guide us in the struggle for a better world, and the defense of education by and for our peoples.

*!Hasta Siempre, Comandante!*

Initiative for Democratic Education in the Americas - IDEA