



PUEBLOS PROTAGONISTAS

*Foro Latinoamericano de Ministros de Desarrollo Social
Encuentro Internacional "Inclusión: Juventud y Género"*

YOUTH AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE 21st CENTURY. CUBA.
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PUBLIC POLICIES TO THE BUILDING OF KNOWLEDGE



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Presidencia de la Nación

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this report is to describe, in a concise manner, Cuba's existing public policies aimed at guaranteeing the social inclusion of the young. It has been drawn up by a work group organized by the Cuban National Commission for UNESCO, integrated by researchers from the Centre of Youth Studies and from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment. This group arranged and organized the information provided by a range of State agencies and civil society organizations.

LEGAL REGULATIONS:

In Cuba, social policies pay particular attention to the young, as there are a range of legal regulations that protect their rights: the Constitution of the Republic (1976), Law 1285/1975 of the Family Code, Law 16/1978 of the Childhood and Youth Code, Law 49/1984 of the Labour Code, Social Security Laws No. 24/1979 and No. 105/2009, Law 51/1985 of the Civil Registry, Law 59/1987 of the Civil Code, Laws 62/1987 and 87/1999 of the Penal Code, Cuban Electoral Law 72/1992, Law 75/1994 of the National Defence and Decree-law 224/2001 of the Military Service. The Cuban Parliament has a Permanent Commission for the welfare of children, the young, and women's rights (1982).

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS:

At the end of 2011, there were 1,543,719 young people between the ages of 15 and 24, representing 13.72% of the total population. 73.53% of these live in urban areas and 26.47% in rural areas. Females make up

48.59 % of the population and males 51.41%. As for skin colour, 61.1% are white, 26.6% of mixed race, and 12.4% black.¹

Over the last few years, there has been a slight increase in the fertility rate, with the largest proportion of births occurring in mothers aged between 20 and 24 years old.

YOUTH POLICIES: GENERAL CHARACTERIZATION

Youth policies are managed and funded by the State, through its ministries, and are characterized by being universal and free, at all levels, irrespective of age, gender, skin colour, religion, financial situation or place of residence. There is a strategy of youth promotion and social inclusion aimed at strengthening cultural, technical and vocational training, in order to promote development and encourage upward social mobility, while improving the quality of life of young people and ensuring their insertion into the workplace.

Cuba's youth policies are governed by the following principles:

- comprehensive approach,
- social equity,
- high participation,
- differential treatment for disadvantaged social groups,
- priority for the education, employment and health sectors.

In the 21st Century, these policies have been characterized by:

¹ Centre of Youth Studies. 4th National Youth Survey, 2011.

- Universality and equity by means of comprehensive and differential programs.
- Promotion of values.
- Considerable centralization.
- State funding.
- Acceptance of young people.
- Prevention of problems that may affect the young and actions to eradicate their causes.

There is a growing tendency to link Social Sciences to decision-making processes, which enables greater precision in the diagnosis, design, implementation and assessment of policies and programmes.

EDUCATION:

Cuba's educational policy aims to develop the comprehensive general knowledge of children and young people from an early age, and to promote solid and deep learning. Its objective is to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process and to foster differential treatment of pupils, teacher stability and improvement in the material conditions of educational infrastructure.

This educational policy is implemented in the form of a National System of Education, consisting of seven sub-systems that are organized according to each education level (primary, basic secondary, pre-university, technical professional, university, adult education and special education), enabling education to be accessed without any type of discrimination. The scope of the education system, the fact that it is free, and the compulsory nature of the primary and secondary levels of

education, all combine to ensure high rates of schooling for children and teenagers.

Cuba has:

Primary schools: **6955**

Secondary schools: **1154**

Pre-university institutes: **278**

Polytechnics: **361**

Special schools: **439**

Universities: **68**

Since early 2000, Teacher Training Programmes for Primary School teachers and Information Technology (IT) teachers have been implemented. IT has been introduced as a subject. Every classroom in primary and secondary schools and in senior middle schools has been provided with a television and video-player, and every school has an IT laboratory. In rural areas, which have no access to electricity, solar panels have been installed.

The changes being implemented as part of the new economic development strategy have helped to encourage those graduating from general education to continue with further studies, by promoting vocational and professional training, linked to the demands of the economy. Priority is given to Technical Professional Training (ETP – “Enseñanza Técnica Profesional”) and, by means of Ministerial Resolution No. 81², a new structure of specialties has been established at this level. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the proportions of places allocated for

² Gaceta Oficial No. 036 Ordinaria. July 11th 2006.



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the ETP and for pre-university institutes were inverted, thereby offering the more than 133,00 teenagers now completing secondary school 58 % of places for the ETP and 42% for pre-university courses.

Over the course of the last decade, the Programme for the **Universalization of Higher Education** came into practice with the objective of extending higher education to all the regions of the country and of facilitating entrance for a greater number of youngsters, in particular for those from disadvantaged social backgrounds: children from families with low levels of education, rural populations and youngsters of African descent. During the 2011-2012 academic year, 123 municipal university centres were operating,³ with the only restriction for studying at university anywhere in Cuba being intellectual ability.

In 2002, the University of Computer Science was created, with an initial intake of 3000 students, and with approximately 300 teachers. It was designed as a platform to develop the computerization of society, to produce software and to provide services for the computer industry.

- There are one million university graduates in Cuba, of whom 989,913 graduated after 1959.
- Six out of every ten people between the ages of 18 and 24 receive higher education – in fact, 63% of the population in this age group.
- In the 2011-2012 academic year, there was an intake of 351,116 university students.
- Over 31,000 young students from 129 countries have graduated from Cuban universities.

³ National Office of Statistics and Information. Cuba's Annual Statistics Directory 2011, Havana, 2012.



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- Over 150 ,00 Cuban professionals are currently undertaking post-graduate studies.
- Over 500 Doctors of Science graduate every year.
- 80% of Cuban university lecturers are involved in research; 4,200 are Doctors of Science and 15,000 have Master degrees.
- Cuba has 10,300 Doctors of Science and over 45,000 holders of science master degrees.
- A total of 600 professionals from 53 nations have obtained Doctorates in Science in Cuba.⁴

Vocational Guidance Programmes fall within the strategies for promoting further education. They have become particularly important following the need to encourage young people to choose courses that meet economic and production demands. The following are some of the main forms taken by these programmes: “Puertas Abiertas” (Open Doors), which consist of exchange visits to education centres where information is given regarding the content of courses, their practical use and the job opportunities they may lead to; “Círculos de Interés” (Groups of Interest), which take place in schools and in “Palacios de Pioneros” education centres, with the help and guidance of qualified professionals, teaching staff and parents of pupils. There are around 100 “Palacios de Pioneros”, and “Círculos de Interés” have been recorded in over 60 subjects, covering 40% of primary and secondary school children. In pre-university institutes, other alternatives apply such as Science Societies.

Special Education

⁴ Statistics Department of the Ministry of Higher Education, 2011.



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The Cuban social system is successful in providing every disabled child, teenager and young person with access to education and to specialized and individual care. Centres of Diagnosis and Guidance, of which there are currently 186 with over 1,056 specialists, are responsible for determining who is to qualify for this access.

There are 439 Special Schools, attended by 39,340 students, offering three course modalities (daytime, night-time and Comprehensive Education Schools). These cover 13 special groups: learning disabilities, hearing impairment, deaf-blindness, blindness, visual impairment, strabismus, behavioural disorders, communication disorders, physical and motor development problems, psychological development problems, rehabilitation of asthmatics and diabetics, hospital classrooms and autism.

For those who are unable to attend these schools due to their physical and motor disabilities, classes are given by "mobile" teachers: these are qualified teachers who report to the Ministry of Education and teach in the homes of students.

Young people with special educational needs are guaranteed a continuation in their studies right up to the completion of the general education cycle. In the 2010-2011 academic year, 1105 students graduating from the Special Education system found work, representing a rate of 90%.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY





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As part of the process of training new generations in computing techniques, and as a way of contributing to the computerization of society, there has been a strengthening of the movement entitled "Joven Club de Computación" (Youth Computing Clubs), a pioneering programme that spreads the use of computing amongst young people, created in 1987. Over the course of the last decade, the number of these clubs all over Cuba has grown to over 600.

In this field, development has increased throughout the National Education System, from pre-school level right up to university level. All the teaching centres in the country have computer laboratories run by groups of teachers who are IT graduates. Furthermore, in all of Cuba's provinces, Computing Polytechnic Institutes have been created, producing thousands of graduates every year whose insertion into the workplace is guaranteed by the State.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

100% of the population receives social protection, as the Social Security System covers all workers, their families and the population in general. The Social Assistance system protects any person who is unfit for work and has no family members able to support him/her.

Decree-Law N° 234 on the Maternity of working women broadened the rights of these women and increased maternity protection by providing for the following: medical attention during pregnancy, pre and post-natal rest by means of paid maternity leave for a year, breastfeeding





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and childcare, as well as differential treatment in cases of disability. It recognizes the shared responsibility of both parents in the care and welfare of their children and that of the father in the event of the mother's death.

251,102 nuclear families are protected by the Social Assistance System and there are a total of 426,390 beneficiaries. Of these, care is given to 55,416 children and 18,483 young people. Furthermore, it protects 7,599 mothers of children with severe disabilities, of whom 5,072 receive financial protection that is equal to a salary.

EMPLOYMENT:

Cuba's labour policy is a priority, with full employment as its basic objective, for which the State takes full responsibility. Its distinguishing features are the priority and differential treatment it gives to young people and it constitutes one of the main pillars of the strategy to foster their social inclusion.

Cuban legislation prohibits child labour, and establishes 17 years old as the minimum age of employment, although 15- and 16-year old teenagers may be offered a job under certain exceptional circumstances.

The Labour Code and other regulations, including the General Regulations on Labour Relations, provide teenagers and young people with the same employment rights and benefits as all other workers. At the same time, it lays out provisions designed specifically to protect them, and to ensure their preparation for and adaptation to the



workplace, their professional training and their cultural development. The average age at which young Cubans enter the workplace is 19 years old. There are practically no differences between genders or geographical regions.⁵

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS) is responsible for coordinating the demand for a qualified workforce, for matching the supply of graduates with this demand, and for putting forward a training plan on an annual basis. Work has intensified to find a better balance between the training of human resources, job opportunities and the needs of the economy. To this end, the MTSS passed Resolution No. 8/2013 entitled "Regulations for planning the training and distribution of the qualified workforce".

Young university graduates are guaranteed a job, and are also required to carry out a 2-year social service placement. The jobs they are given are determined by the demands of the economy in their areas of residence, and a fixed salary is received for the duration of that period. This process seeks to complement the training of graduates with work experience that is related to their professional profile and to consolidate their professional training. It helps increase the motivation of graduates to work and provides the Ministry with information regarding the graduates' capabilities and job prospects in order to decide how best to insert them into the workplace. For the duration of this social service placement, graduates have the same rights and duties as the rest of the workers, including career development.

⁵ Centre of Youth Studies. 4th National Youth Survey, 2011.



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At the end of the first quarter of 2011, the situation of young people between the ages of 17 and 29 was as follows: 50.2 % was working, 40.2% was studying, 7.7% was working and studying, 3.8% was searching for work (1.2% for the first time), 7% performed domestic duties in the home and 4.7% was not employed.⁶

In 2011, 20.63% of the economically active population was between 17 and 29 years old. Young people represent 22% of the total working population.⁷

Over 86% of young workers are employed in the public sector of the economy; a small minority is self-employed (9.1%) and others work in the non-public sector (2.2%).⁸

The public sector constitutes the main source of employment in Cuba. It provides jobs to 46,6% of all young people. Of these, 59.16% are men and 40.84% are women. A large proportion of them are technical employees and, to a lesser extent, manual workers and service workers.⁹

According to the 2012 National Employment Survey ("Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación" – ENO), 515,408 people are employed in the 17 to 24 year-old age group: of these, 319,606 are men and 195,802 are

⁶ *Idem.*

⁷ Centre of Population and Development Studies, National Office of Statistics and Information, 2011.

⁸ Centre of Youth Studies. 4th National Youth Survey, 2011.

⁹ *Idem.*



women. Approximately one third of this age group is registered as being students (non economically active population).¹⁰

Self-employment constitutes another important source of work. It encompasses a range of different economic activities. As a registered workforce, this still represents only a small percentage of the total number of people working in the national economy. Resolution N°. 32/2010 of the MTSS establishes the provisions that regulate how self-employment is exercised, organized and controlled. It broadens the number of authorized activities and makes the hiring of workers more flexible.

There has been an increase in the number of requests for self-employment licenses by young people, as this modality is becoming an attractive work option for those interested in it and/or for those who have no job opportunities in public sector employment. Over 3,000 people between the ages of 17 and 25 are currently self-employed; of these, over 50% had no stable connection to State employment or public study.

Another source of employment for young people, which has grown over the last few years, is the **cooperative sector**, which impacts a range of activities in urban locations, essentially in the area of service provision.

For years, Cuba has been affected by the migration of young people from rural areas to the cities, which has had a negative impact on agricultural development and food production. The policies designed to

¹⁰ MTSS. Working population figures for the 17 to 24 age group, June 2013.

encourage food self-sufficiency establish, as their main measure, the **handing over of land in usufruct**,¹¹ which has particularly benefited the young. The number of usufructuaries between the ages of 18 and 25 stands at 11,488.¹²

HEALTH:

Cuba provides universal and free access to public health. Over the last 4 years, infant mortality rates have dropped to less than 5 and the maternal mortality rate has dropped from 49.4 for every 100,000 live births in 2006 to 40.6 in 2011. Life expectancy at birth is of 80 years for women and 76 years for men. In this field, figures are similar to those of developed countries.

Cuba has a Primary Healthcare System, with over 11,000 Family Doctor and Nurse offices, and a broad vaccination programme.¹³

Youth healthcare has become increasingly comprehensive. Those involved in providing it include all the relevant ministries, agencies and institutions, which all contribute substantially towards fulfilling the material needs, and towards the physical and mental health, of this sector of the population.

¹¹ Decree-Law 259, July 2nd 2008 and Decree-Law 300, September 20th 2012

¹² Earth Department. Ministry of Agriculture, May 2013

¹³ Cuban children are vaccinated against: tuberculosis, hepatitis B, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, meningococcal B and C, mumps, rubella, measles, poliomyelitis, diseases caused by haemophilus influenzae, and typhoid fever.

The following are some of the most important measures taken in matters of youth healthcare:

- Application of traditional programmes: Maternal and Infant Healthcare, Prevention of Accidents in the under-20s, Prevention and treatment of STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases), Prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and Healthcare for the disabled.
- National Programme of Stomatology.
- Comprehensive Teenage Healthcare Programme.
- Comprehensive Family Healthcare Programme, within the Primary Healthcare System.
- Programme of Parenthood Awareness.
- Prevention and treatment of drug-dependency.

The National Programme of STDs/HIV/AIDS has been strengthened¹⁴. In 2010 there was an increase in the proportion of people with HIV/AIDS receiving medical attention. At the end of 2011, the near elimination of mother-to-child transmission of Syphilis and HIV continued, with only one case of paediatric HIV that year. The highest number of HIV tests ever performed in one year was also recorded and the spread of HIV decreased by 2%. Deaths and late diagnoses decreased. There was an increase in the survival rate of those receiving treatment.

Work is being carried out in the creation, improvement and implementation of a National Surveillance System for Risk Factors that

¹⁴ Here are some of the action groups for the fight against HIV/AIDS: Operational Group for the Struggle and Fight against AIDS (GOPELS); Country Coordination Mechanism; AIDS Technical Commission; UNAIDS technical group; National Meetings for the HIV-positive and for HSH health promoters; young promoters, sex workers and HIV-positive women.



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include **smoking**. 72% of Cuba's general hospitals have a service for quitting smoking by means of cognitive behavioural therapies and traditional medicine. Numerous activities are carried out with the participation of communities all over the country. 21% of Cuban smokers start to smoke between the ages of 20 and 24, while 76% start before they reach the age of 20. The greatest rate of smoking initiation, for both sexes, is seen in 12 to 16 year olds.

At the end of the 2012-2013 academic year, 10,500 young people graduated as Doctors of Medicine, of whom 4,843 came from abroad. The total number of graduates from all the courses related to Medical Sciences was 29,712, of whom 5,020 came from abroad.¹⁵

CULTURE:

Cuba's cultural policy has been centred on: the preservation of Cuba's cultural identity, the conservation of cultural heritage, the promotion of creativity, artistic and literary creation and the ability to appreciate art. It is implemented as a wide-reaching process that promotes equal opportunities in the development of each citizen's full potential. The participation of the young is encouraged as a way of ensuring artistic handover, preserving the continuity of cultural traditions and maximizing cultural development.

¹⁵ Granma newspaper, Havana, June 27th 2013.

The country has a wide network of cultural institutions¹⁶. As far as the young are concerned, it is particularly worth mentioning the National System of Artistic Training, the Art Instructor Programme¹⁷ and the Movement of Amateur Artists.¹⁸

The National System of Art Schools covers every level from the most basic right up to the highest, and is made up of: Elementary Schools, Instructor Schools and the University of Arts.

As part of the population's cultural development, and in particular that of the young, Cuba has promoted a reading rescue movement, as one of its most important measures for the stimulation of talent, intellectual discipline and culture. Work is being carried out to provide the system of libraries, both school libraries and public libraries, with essential up-to-date reference works. In addition, the Editorial Libertad Programme was created to organize the production and selling of books at affordable prices and the distribution of encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases, history of art and history of science books in every teaching centre. An important element of this movement comes in the form of Annual Book Fairs; these are held throughout Cuba's provinces and see a high turnout of children and young people.

¹⁶ Cuba has: 376 bookshops, 20 Casas de la Trova, 514 video screening rooms – including 334 video youth clubs -, 377 public libraries, 290 museums and 3 circuses. Over 2,500 professional cultural promoters work in Popular Councils, districts and settlements.

¹⁷ There are 22,852 art instructors in the various teaching centres and in all the cultural arts centres. In 2011, they held 209,580 workshops on artistic creation and appreciation, which saw the participation of 2,492,167 people.

¹⁸ In the Cultural Arts Centres, 100,762 art appreciation workshops took place with 1,388,064 participants, and 108,818 creation workshops took place with 1,104,103 participants, making a total of 209,580 workshops with a total of 2,492,167 participants.



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Cuba's nation-wide system of radio stations broadcasts a considerable number of programmes aimed at the young, and these have become very popular amongst them.¹⁹

With the aim of developing comprehensive general knowledge, there has been an audiovisual revolution with actions that have reached the entire population, and in particular the young. Important programmes that use television as their main channel of distribution have been undertaken:

- University for All: TV courses, given by university lecturers, on Cuban and Universal History, Philosophy, Narration Techniques, Theatre, Music, Dance, Ballet, Cinema, Languages (English, French, Italian and Portuguese), Science and the Environment, Biotechnology, Geography, Nutrition, Chess, amongst others. These courses include the publication and sale of complementary material.
- Educational Television: This broadcasts topics related to programmes from the national teaching system, including materials for primary schools, secondary schools, pre-university level, technological education and preparation for university entrance exams. It uses two national TV channels.
- Video screening rooms: These are comfortable installations where a varied range of national and international films are screened, particularly for the benefit of young children.
- TV rooms: Created in 1,519 of the country's rural communities, these use solar panels for electricity and are equipped with televisions and

¹⁹ There are 205 radio stations, of which 10 are national, 80 provincial and 115 municipal, broadcasting 205 programmes, of which 169 are live and 36 are recorded. Source: International Relations Department of the ICRT (Cuban Radio and Television Institute), June 2013.





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video players. This service has benefitted around 300,000 people and has helped generate 6,000 new jobs.

Publications aimed at young readers are given particular relevance by Cuba's publishing policies. They are produced by Abril Publishers, which have six magazines for child, teenage and young readers: Zunzún, Pionero, Somos Jóvenes, Alma Mater (university students), Caimán Barbudo (young writers and artists) and Juventud Técnica (technicians and scientists). These are distributed for free in all school classrooms and university lecture rooms.

SPORT

The objective of the National Institute of Sport, Physical Education and Recreation (INDER) is to make the practice of Physical Education (PE) and Sport available to everyone. This is legally embodied in the Constitution of the Republic and other institutional documents.

Sport for Everyone covers the notion of exercise in four dimensions: physical activity, widespread practice of sport, physical education and recreation. All of these have inclusive, systematic and free programmes, given their importance not only for the way in which they develop abilities and skills, but also for their contribution towards the formation of values, quality of life and the healthy use of free time.

Sport for Everyone is included in the curricula of Pre-University Education (150,217 students), of Technical-Professional Education (177,465 students) and of University Education, and the options on offer have





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been diversified in response to the tastes and preferences expressed by students in a social research survey carried out in 2011.

Personalized attention is given to teenagers and young people with special needs in educational centres or special schools, educational psychology centres or technical-professional education centres, always with the aim of contributing towards developing their full potential, personal wellbeing and full social insertion.

There has been a strengthening of the School Competitive System, where pupils compete in schools and right up to national level, with the annual holding of Pre-university Games, School Youth Games, University Games, Special Educational Games divided into different categories (physical and motor disabilities, deafness, blindness, amongst others) and Special Olympics.

Special importance is given to the school-family-community link, which is strengthened with the use of school sporting facilities during out-of-school hours and at week-ends, both for practicing sport and for carrying out various physical-recreational activities, whether programmed or spontaneous.

Another aspect to which priority is given is the sport training system in accordance with the strategy drawn up for the development of each sport. Centres for this purpose are located in all of Cuba's provinces. In order to be accepted into these centres and remain there, the selection criteria are sporting and academic performance year after year, without any sort of discrimination on the grounds of skin colour, religious beliefs or gender.



Student intakes for the 2012-2013 academic year were as follows:

- Sporting Initiation Schools (EIDE): 13,192 students.
- Higher Education Schools for the Training of High Performance Athletes (ESFAAR): 1,475 students.

In communities all over the country, systematic exercise programmes are being carried out. These are some of the favourite sports practiced by teenagers and young people: aerobics (practiced by 310,801), basic women's gymnastics (practiced by 251,568), weight-training (including in bio-health gyms, located in all 168 existing municipalities) and maintenance gymnastics.

The holding of major events has had a great deal of impact. Examples of these events are: the celebration of World Days (Heart, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Challenge, etc), "Vía Saludable" (or Healthy Way, the name given to the recreational cycle lane) and CUBAILA, a massive choreographed sport show. Another programme implemented during the holiday season is the "Summer Plan", which offers a wide range of recreational activities aimed at different age groups, with an emphasis on those favoured by teenagers and the young.

YOUTH ASSOCIATIVISM:

The youth associativism movement is another fundamental aspect of the Cuban youth policy. It is composed of a group of political, social,



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cultural and religious organizations and associations that contribute a great deal towards educating young people about civic participation. The main ones are:

Union of Young Communists ("Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas" – UJC). Created in 1962, this is a political association whose members are amongst the most promising young people involved in socio-politics. Its objectives are to contribute towards educating young people about the principles and values of the Revolution and to encourage them to participate in implementing its social project. It has responsibilities related to the implementation of youth plans and programmes.

Federation of University Students ("Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios" – FEU). Created in 1922, this is Cuba's oldest youth organization. University students may join voluntarily. Its objectives are to represent the interests of students before university authorities, to participate actively in the running of universities, to promote studying and personal cultural growth, and to contribute towards the country's scientific and technical development.

Technical Youth Brigades ("Brigadas Técnicas Juveniles" – BTJ). These groups, which first emerged in 1964, see the voluntary participation of young workers and students who get involved in all the sectors connected to the Science, Technology and Innovation System. They seek to promote activities for the scientific and technical development of young people, as well as for the introduction and distribution of research results obtained by them, and to contribute to their vocational guidance.

Middle School Student Federation ("Federación de Estudiantes de la Enseñanza Media" – FEEM): This was created in 1970 to channel the interests and concerns of senior middle school students. It promotes studying, as well as the cultural and scientific-technical growth and popular participation of its members.

The "Hermanos Saíz" Association (AHS): Founded in 1986, its voluntary members include young musicians, authors, visual and scenic artists, as well as creators from the world of audiovisuals below the age of 35. It encourages and promotes, both within and outside Cuba, artistic projects related to the works of these young artists.

FINAL REMARKS

The social inclusion of the young is having a growing influence on social cohesion and stability on a national and international scale, making it a strategic objective in contemporary society.

Its multi-factorial nature requires the drawing up of policies that are **systematic** and **differential**, that ensure that its main elements complement each-other (employment, health, education, participation, rights) and that are able to adjust to the concrete historical conditions of the social sectors at which they are aimed.

Its objective must not be to foster egalitarianism, but rather **equity**, by creating opportunities for upward social and economic mobility based on ethics and individual and collective effort.

Social Sciences are called upon to play a growing role in this process by increasing the production of **forecasts and proposals** rather than simply by formulating diagnoses and assessments. To that end, it is important to



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look beyond the approaches of 19th century positivism and to develop trans-disciplinary outlooks, capable of analysing problems in a comprehensive and dynamic manner. This will not be the work of isolated geniuses but rather that of different groups in continuous dialogue with one another, as well as of the systematic contrasting of theory and practice. Exercises such as this one, encouraged by UNESCO, constitute key tools to achieve this.



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