
Movement of Young People in Cuba: Authentic, Real, Aware, and Committed

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What actions of social impact are young people in Cuba developing these days? Karla Santana Rodríguez, a law student and acting president of the University Student Federation (FEU) at the University of Havana (UH), puts us in context on the participation of her university in support tasks in several social processes.

What social impact tasks is the FEU at the University of Havana currently working on?

While our country is tackling an epidemiological war against the pandemic, the UH could only be consistent. Its university community has been actively involved in several fields, each with extraordinary worth and social impact.

The contribution has come from the collaboration in the Family Attention System (FAS) with the follow-up of the people helped and cases of vulnerability; joining the isolation centers as volunteers; the link in the control of lines at shopping centers; support in primary health care tasks with data processing and delivery of negative PCR test results; visiting our emeritus professors classified as vulnerable in this times of pandemic; and participating in fruitful jobs.

Students and professors from the Faculty of Geography have been involved in the making of maps that allowed monitoring the behavior of the pandemic according to territories. The Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science has also developed math models and systems that made it possible to analyze and predict the evolution of the pandemic. The incorporation of students and professors from the Faculty of Biology in the analysis of PCR results has also been an invaluable contribution.

These are good examples of the tasks in which the UH has kept a leading and proactive role in confronting the pandemic, with volunteering and being committed and consistent. These have undoubtedly been times of definitions, times where right word has been humanism, and in which support has become action.

Taking into account that there are no face-to-face classes, what mechanisms do you use to arrange, coordinate and organize the participation of young people in the different tasks?

As the situation demands and abiding the measures - based on the fact that virtuality today in the absence of face-to-face classes is a need - we have exploited the spreading chance of our social networks through the FEU profiles on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. The use of WhatsApp and Telegram have been very helpful, not just as a fast track to move content, but also as a space for feedback and agreement on the criteria and concerns of students regarding the actions that are the responsibility of the organization now.

What do you think about young university students voluntarily participating in these activities? Some skeptics don't believe this enrolment.

I can assure you that the enrolment and participation of our students has been absolutely voluntary, extraordinarily voluntary.

I have had the chance to talk and share with young people involved in the different tasks the organization has performed at this stage, and everyone is grateful for the opportunity to be useful. I deeply believe that not trusting in the voluntary participation of our youth is just an unfounded stance to discredit a youth mobilization in Cuba that is so authentic, real, aware, and committed.

It's amazing to recall the experiences our students have left in each of the moments when the youth have contributed its grain of sand. You just have to listen or read the anecdotes they have had in each of these spaces to understand the truth and the commitment behind their participation.

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