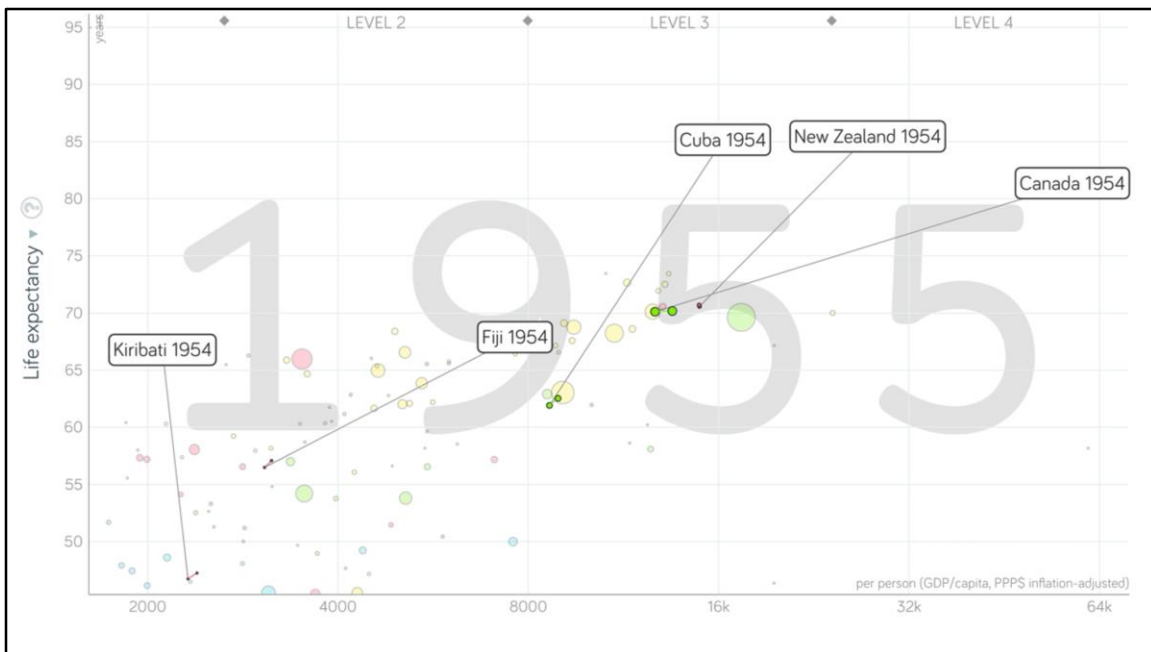


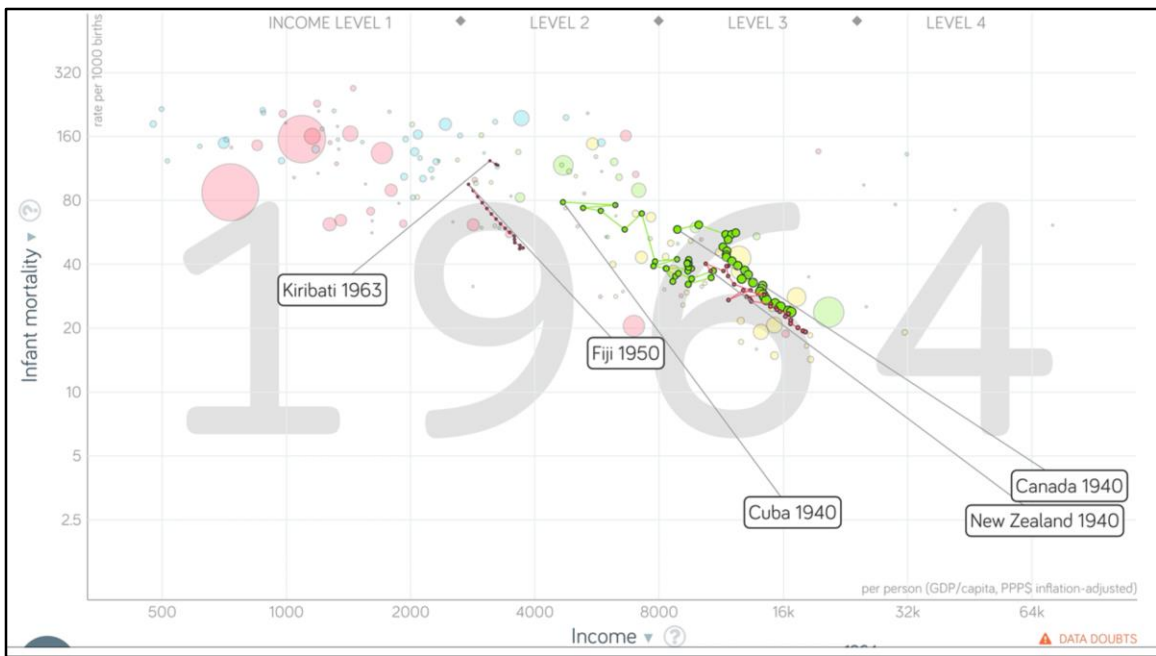
Vale más la vida
de un ser humano
que todo el oro
que el oro más rico del mundo."

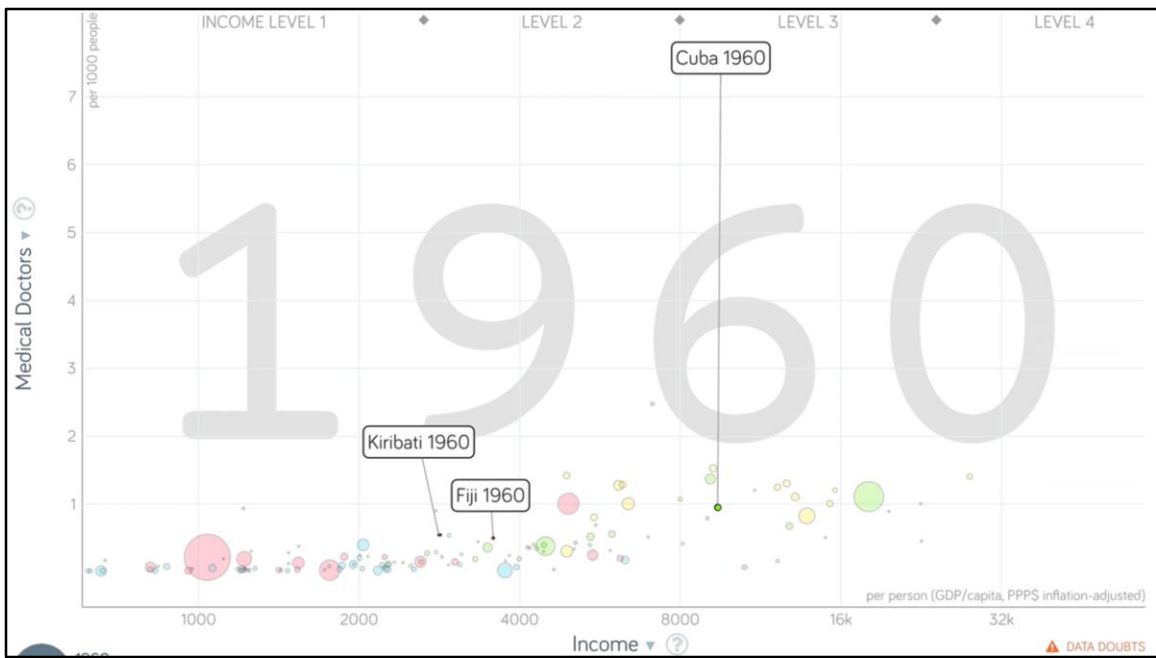
Cuba in the Pacific: Solidarity, Sustainability and Transformation

DevNet2018: Global
Sharon McLennan, Massey University
Robert Huish, Dalhousie University
Helen Leslie, Massey University

December 2018









Cuban Medical Cooperation (an overview)

Medical cooperation

Cuban medical cooperation dates back to the first years following Cuba's 1959 revolution. In 1960 Cuban doctors were sent to Chile after an earthquake and shortly afterward Cuba sent 56 doctors to Algeria to support the newly independent nation. Within days of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl in 1986, Cuba sent over a medical team who found that many of the children would require long-term treatment and arranged for the children and parents to be treated in Cuba.



More recent programmes include:

Ebola – Cuba led the international response with hundreds of doctors

Venezuela: Misión Barrio Adentro – more than 20000 Cuban health professionals

Central and South America: Operación Milagro (eye surgery) – more than 3 million operations



Brazil: Mais Medicos: 11000 Cuban doctors - has ensured that every single Brazilian municipality now has a primary care doctor
There are now over 50,000 Cuban health professionals working in 67 different countries (with more health professionals than Médecins Sans Frontières, The Red Cross and Unicef combined.)



ELAM

Pacific health challenges

- Non-Communicable Disease crisis (eg 7 out of 10 countries with the highest rate of type 2 Diabetes are in the Pacific – and non-communicable disease responsible for 70% of all deaths)
- Ongoing battle with communicable disease (such as high rates of TB) and new and emerging diseases some of which are linked to the impacts of climate change (eg vector borne diseases such as dengue fever has been on the increase over the last decade)
- Poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes such as high rates of STI's and adolescent pregnancies
- Nutritional related impacts of simultaneous high rates of obesity in adults and stunting in children (low height for age as a result of malnutrition)



Pacific health challenges

- Weak health systems and a focus on secondary/tertiary care at the expense of primary health care. In some countries the system of community-based care (health centres/aid posts) is not functioning well or has been rolled back into a more centralised system.
- Historically donors have focused on support to disease specific or vertical health programmes which have not tackled the root causes of poor health.



Country	No. of Cuban doctors
Is. Fiji	-
Is. Cook	-
Is. Salomón	-
Kiribati	5
Nauru	15
Palau	-
Tonga	-
Tuvalu	-
Vanuatu	1

A Rare Opportunity for Pacific Islands Health Care

With a little support, Cuban-educated doctors could change the face of health care in Solomon Islands and elsewhere.

By Eileen Natuzzi
March 17, 2015



Health systems in developing countries suffer from significant resource deficits. In these countries patients have difficulty accessing too few doctors at hospitals and clinics that in many cases are dispersed across a large and challenging terrain.

This is especially true in the Solomon Islands, a country comprising more than 900 islands separated by large areas of open seas, as well as volcanic mountains. One of the most difficult ingredients for establishing a functional health system for a developing country like Solomon Islands is having an adequate supply of properly trained healthcare workers, especially doctors and nurses. Overcoming insufficient human resources for health is largely a question of supply and demand: Are enough doctors and nurse specialists being trained to provide universal access to healthcare and is the country's Ministry of Health able to support their career development? Demand can come from staffing needs within the country's health system as well as the pressures of endemic health challenges the public faces, but it also comes from external sources. The poaching of doctors and nurses from Solomon Islands and other Pacific Island Countries by United States Department of Interior-funded health systems in American Samoa has contributed to health care workforce shortages.



Image Credit: Eileen Natuzzi

In the past decade this programme has spread across the Pacific, with Cuban doctors in Kiribati, Vanuatu and, most recently, Nauru.

	Country	Number of students (2016)	Number of graduated until 2015-16
	Is. Fiji	32	
	Is. Cook	1	
	Is. Salomón	51	53
	Kiribati	10	23
	Nauru	1	3
	Palau	13	
	Tonga	12	2
	Tuvalu	11	11
	Vanuatu	3	18

Perhaps more importantly, hundreds of Pacific Islanders have trained, or are currently training as doctors at ELAM.

Note small numbers but big impact. E.g. in 2017 just 157 doctors in Solomons, but soon to be over 100 Cuban trained doctors.



Wellington, September 11th, 2018. Cuba and New Zealand signed today in Wellington the extension of a cooperation agreement to support Cuban medical assistance in the Pacific.

Why?

- Economic or political gain?
- **Health as a right**
- **Equity**
 - Immediate humanitarian need
 - Addressing structures of marginalisation
- **Solidarity**



Havana medical clinic.
Source: NT Times

Cuba confirms commitment to cooperation with the Pacific

Enviado por editor en Lun, 12/09/2016 - 20:00



NEW ZEALAND, September 11, 2016. – On the occasion of the Post Forum Dialogue at the 47th session of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Director General for Bilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Gerardo Pefalver Portal, confirmed the commitment of his country with the region, highlighting the willingness to continue exploring new cooperation projects.

During his speech, the Cuban diplomat also underlined the multiple coincidences between Cuba and Forum member countries, as Small Island Developing States, sharing ideas and common challenges on key issues of the international agenda, with an emphasis on environmental issues.

Solomon Islands Suspends Sending Medical Students To Cuba

14ymedio

August 16, 2017

14ymedio



In 2007 the Cuban Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services of the Solomon Islands signed a cooperation agreement. (The Island Sun)

Year of arrival	Number of arrivals	Year the students graduate															
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total			
2007	25	22															
2008	25		24														
2009	25			8													
					16												
2011	17					6											
2012	8						8										
2013	6							10									
2014	6								3								
2015	5									8							
2016											2						
2017	1											1					
2018	2												2				
Graduates		22	24	8	16	6	8	10	3	8	2	1	2	110			
Total scholarships provided by Cuba	120																
Did not complete studies	10																
Total scholarships utilized	110																



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