



Health Partners International with pharmaceuticals for Hurricane Michelle relief, 2001

co-operation with the Canadian NGO, Health Partners International, has helped reduce that gap by organizing donations of Canadian drugs for distribution by the Cuban Ministry of Public Health. Both the drugs and the costs of transportation to Cuba are donated free of charge by the Canadian firms involved. Health Partners organized special donations to support Cuba's program to aid the children of Chernobyl, and to

respond to Cuba's needs to replenish its drug supplies following Hurricane Michelle in November 2001.

One of the challenges Cuba faced after the disintegration of the socialist bloc was to adapt its centrally planned economy to succeed in a global market. Canada has helped the Cuban government modernize its economic management through two important bilateral projects. First, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency worked with the Cuban Ministry of Finance and Prices to create a taxation system for the new dollar-earning sectors of the economy. Today, the National Office of Tax Administration (ONAT) has offices in every municipality in Cuba, and a training centre, established with Canadian assistance in Cojimar, in east Havana.

Second, a consortium of Canadian universities and management consulting firms worked with the Cuban Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP) to train a new generation of planners in market-based methods for forecasting the impact of different economic decisions. This was reinforced by assistance to the Ministry's training centre in Havana, and the development of a master's level course in public administration using Cuban case studies. The training provided under this project is delivered using distance education, via computer networks that connect the MEP training school to offices across the island. Today, Cuban planners are now able to update continuously their economic forecasts, and quickly analyse current data collected across the island.



Irailia Mestre Ramos, employee at ONAT call centre in Old Havana, 2003