



## *Fact Sheet:* **EDUCATION AND LITERACY IN VENEZUELA**

### **The importance of education**

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The expansion of educational opportunities is one of the principle achievements of the current government of Venezuela.

As well as increasing access to existing basic and higher-level education, Venezuela has instituted educational programs aimed at sectors of the population who have been left out of the formal system of education. These programs, known as “missions,” were launched in 2003 and have served millions of Venezuelans, allowing them to gain basic literacy, complete basic or higher education, and enter the workforce.

The Venezuelan government allocates 7% of the GDP to education, while in 1998 the contribution was barely 3.9%.<sup>1</sup>

Enrolment in higher education in Venezuela has exploded since 1998, increasing from less than 700,000 to over two million - a 338% increase.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the second-highest rate of higher education enrolment in Latin America, at 83%. Cuba has the highest rate with 88% enrolment, according the UNESCO Institute of Statistics. The average rate of enrollment for the region stands at 29.6%.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of People’s Power for Communication and Information, “Ya van 10 años de logros”. (Spanish). February 5, 2009, (load date February 6, 2009) [http://www.minci.gob.ve/reportajes/2/187637/ya\\_van\\_10.html](http://www.minci.gob.ve/reportajes/2/187637/ya_van_10.html)

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of People’s Power for Communication and Information, “Venezuela segundo lugar en América Latina en matrícula de educación superior”. (Spanish). January 13, 2009, (load date January 13, 2009) <http://www.vtv.gov.ve/noticias-culturales/13276>

### **Education Missions in Venezuela**

#### Mission Robinson I:

The first phase of the mission targets Venezuelans over 15 years of age who are unable to read or write, and draws on a Cuban methodology known as Yo Si Puedo or “Yes I Can,” which utilises audiovisual equipment and local volunteers to teach reading, writing and arithmetic.

The results have been tremendous; 1.5 million citizens have been taught to read and write, increasing the literacy rate in Venezuela to 98%<sup>3</sup>. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has applauded Venezuela’s efforts, calling the country a leader in the region at reaching UN Millennium Development Goals for literacy.

#### Mission Robinson II

The second phase of the Mission provides basic elementary education (up to the equivalent of year 6). Only five years after the Mission was launched, 437,171 people had graduated, among them 81,000 indigenous people.

#### Mission Ribas

This Mission provides free high-school education to those who dropped out of school and helps them graduate within two years. Over 510,585 people graduated in the five years up to 2008.

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<sup>3</sup>UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Venezuela [http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/docume nt.aspx?ReportId=124&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Countr y=8620](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/docume nt.aspx?ReportId=124&IF_Language=eng&BR_Countr y=8620)



## Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the UK and Ireland

### Mission Sucre

Mission Sucre is a scholarship program that provides free university level education for those who previously didn't have the opportunity or were unable to pay the fees.

30,000 people graduated in seven programs including education, environmental management, social management of local development, social communication, administration, computer science, agricultural production. Additionally, a further 15,893 people graduated with degrees in education.

### **Education: Facts and Figures**

- Venezuela spends 7% of GDP on education
- 7,5 million people currently registered on the education missions.
- Venezuela has the second highest number of people enrolled in higher education in Latin America at 83% while the average across Latin America is 29.6%.
- Between 1999 and 2008, the number of children receiving free lunches in school rose from 252,284 to 4,055,135.
- UNESCO confirms 98% literacy in Venezuela
- According to Latinobarometro 2008, a regional poll, 53% of Venezuelans have used the internet at some point in their lives, the highest of the 19 countries in the survey