

Deborah Goldman

Impressions of my first trip to Cuba: HOT! Hot and humid days, lovely warm, balmy island nights, clean, green, urban organic gardens, beautiful tropical flowers, sugar cane fields, co-op farming, friendly people, gorgeous and industrious women, lively music, expressive dance, colorful art, beautiful tropical flowers, mojitos, colonial architecture, shades of pastel, classic American cars sharing the road with three wheel cabs, bicycle taxis, and horse and buggies, passion for the values of the revolution, solidarity, education for all, collective spirit of service to the community AND free, universal health coverage; what a concept. We just scratched the surface in the 12 days we were there and I would love to go back and learn more about this multi-faceted country.

On a deeper level, what inspires me about Cuba is the resilience of the people, especially the women, and the strength of their survival and solidarity in spite of the unfortunate U. S. blockade that causes an unfair and unjust economic burden on the country. Most other countries don't have the chutzpah to counter the U.S. blockade against Cuba. Cuba's Government is a socialist democracy and we saw on many levels true democracy in action, a system of grassroots community support where decision making begins at the municipal level, everyone has a voice, and everyone works for the common good of the community. It is certainly not a perfect society as we learned, for example, that a struggle of racism and of homophobia still exists, not unlike our experience in the U. S. However, there is institutional support for equality for all, and the women I had the pleasure of meeting and talking with are working especially hard to manifest equality and improve the lives of all Cubans. We learned so much from them and I appreciate the hard work of the U.S. Women and Cuba Collaboration for making this delegation possible.