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# *La universidad y la comunidad un binomio para la soberanía alimentaria y la educación nutricional*

## *The university and the community a binomial for the food sovereignty and nutritional education*

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**Resumen:** La Universidad en los momentos actuales realiza acciones que se materializan en la comunidad, fortaleciendo la extensión universitaria para empoderar a los comunitarios en adecuados modos de actuación en pos de la soberanía alimentaria y la educación nutricional. La investigación tuvo como objetivo: proponer actividades educativas para el desarrollo de la soberanía alimentaria y la educación nutricional en comunidades del municipio Imías provincia Guantánamo. Se obtuvieron resultados satisfactorios en la ejecución de las actividades propuestas, según la metodología utilizada, que permitió fortalecer la realización de actividades que permitan el cumplimiento de la Ley 148 Soberanía Alimentaria y Educación Nutricional.

**Palabras clave:** Universidad; Educación Nutricional; Soberanía Alimentaria; Sostenibilidad.

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**Abstract:** The university currently carries out actions that materialize in the community, strengthening the University extension to empower the community members with an adequate mode of action in pursuit of food sovereignty and nutritional education. The research aimed to propose educational activities for the development of food sovereignty and nutritional education in communities of the municipality and Imías in the province of Guantánamo. Satisfactory results were obtained in the execution of the methodology used, which allowed strengthening the realization of activities that allow compliance with Law 148 on food sovereignty and nutritional education.

**Keywords:** University, Nutritional Education, Food Sovereignty, sustainability.

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## **Introduction**

In recent years, social and scientific interest in human health issues has increased, reflecting the importance of holistic human well-being for the harmonious development of society. Education and health are certainly

two fundamental pillars of human development. Their dynamics and interrelation are closely linked to the socioeconomic progress of nations.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has sufficient experience in addressing food and nutrition education, through the development of programs aimed at different nations, countries, communities and households: "... its mission is to raise nutrition levels, improve the performance of agricultural production, improve the conditions of the rural population, and contribute to the expansion of the world economy (...)" (2014, p.4)

Food sovereignty becomes an important process in the current conditions for adequate nutrition; the search for possible solutions to the nutritional problems faced today requires the participation of its inhabitants in decision-making through commitment, action, and responsible behavior for food production.

All of the above promotes self-management and collaboration to address the needs and interests of the residents, which implies updating priority issues in the communities such as: food sovereignty and nutritional education; aspects that are linked to the teaching and learning process at each level of education.

These arguments highlight the relationship that should be established between the university and the community through university outreach, given the university's role as an educational institution. Food and nutritional sovereignty are essential elements for bridging the gap between theory and practice, as they foster a positive and motivational climate of cooperation among participants. This, in turn, promotes new knowledge, encourages the exchange and sharing of experiences, and contributes to the community's sustainability.

The widespread incorporation of Municipal University Centers (CUM) into the functioning of Municipal Administration Councils (CAM) is interpreted as a step forward in the training of community social actors, including governments, and the use of knowledge in management for the deployment of local policies.

Consequently, there are other aspects to consider:

The university is conceived not as a solitary actor that emits signals and disseminates its knowledge to society, but as a component of broader systems, within which diverse actors, including the university, participate in the processes of production, distribution, and use of knowledge; in the generation of collective learning that promotes innovation. (Núñez, 2019, p.96)

From this perspective, it is considered an essential aspect in understanding the comprehensive and holistic nature of implementing food and nutritional sovereignty, which involves everyone's collaboration to improve food conditions in communities.

The Council of Ministers approved the National Plan for Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education (2020), the first of its kind in Cuba, with the objective of,

(...) to achieve a management of the Cuban State's work that facilitates the organization of local, sovereign, and sustainable food systems that integrate the production, processing, marketing, and consumption of food and the promotion of a food culture and nutritional education that contributes to achieving a healthy population. (p.1)

According to the interests of this study, both food sovereignty and nutritional education constitute fundamental aspects for an adequate food culture of the population, by acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that influence local development to reduce food vulnerability in individuals, groups and families.

In this regard, the pedagogical process in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their systematic relationship with the community at present still show shortcomings that limit the scope of food and nutritional sovereignty among residents of the municipality of Imías. Therefore, the objective is to propose educational activities for the development of food sovereignty and nutritional education in communities of the municipality of Imías, Guantánamo province.

## Development

Health and nutrition maintain an important place in the country's development strategy, and actions are implemented aimed at the well-being of the population in communities, with an emphasis on the most nutritionally vulnerable groups, prioritizing the principles of the right to healthy food.

In accordance with the above, the 2030 Agenda expresses the need to,

(...) to end hunger and ensure access for all people, in particular the poor and those in vulnerable situations, including children under 1 year of age, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round. (United Nations, 2015, p.17)

In relation to the above, the role of Latin America and the Caribbean is highlighted, as they have established their goals, with the Latin America and Caribbean without Hunger initiative, and the Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and the Eradication of Hunger of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the countries show their commitment to achieving this purpose.

In this regard, Law No. 148 on Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutritional Security, in its preliminary provisions, states that:

(...) is the nation's capacity to produce food sustainably and provide access to sufficient, diverse, balanced, nutritious, safe and healthy food for the entire population, reducing dependence on

external means and inputs with respect for cultural diversity and environmental responsibility.  
(National Assembly of People's Power, 2022, p.3)

The demands for food and nutritional sovereignty in Cuba, through the participation of the people with their representatives (delegates, mayors, governors), establish synergies to serve the communities, since they suffer a perpetual degradation of the resources they need in food production.

Such arguments strengthen policies, programs, and other initiatives that impact people's food and nutrition and, consequently, their health and well-being, while also influencing the socio-economic development of local food systems, as a way of contributing to food sovereignty and nutritional education.

In analogy with the above, the deployment of local food systems (LFS),

(...) requires the design and implementation of a coherent system of knowledge management, training, education and innovation that reaches all actors (managers, farmers, producers, among others) through participatory dialogue, collective leadership and learning. (Díaz-Canel, et al., 2020, p.11)

It is agreed with (Fernández and Núñez, 2020) that the Municipal University Center is important and a bearer of situated knowledge, revealing that each context, according to its environmental, social, cultural particularities, level of development, expectations of its populations and opportunities, demands different types of knowledge and relationships between them.

The university, in its connection with other social actors, must recognize cultural richness and ancestral knowledge; these are strengths for transmitting learning to future generations, for developing food sovereignty and nutritional education, and for contributing to the sustainability of the municipality.

The activities were developed with teachers and students from the Imías University Center (CUM) based on the university-community relationship. They are structured as follows: title, objective, location, participants, methodological guidelines, conclusions, and evaluation.

## **Activity 1**

Conference

Title: Growing with my people. SAN Plan (current SAN Law).

Objective: to assess the impact of Law No. 148 on Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education as a fundamental element for territorial development.

Location where it takes place: Municipal Government Hall, ecological classroom, Municipal Health Directorate and Municipal University Center.

Participants: residents, teachers, staff and reserves, community members.

Methodological Guidelines: This conference is recommended because of its significance for the residents, to understand that food production is fundamental at this time, where we must all be responsible and take a leading role in this activity due to the need to obtain safe, sufficient and varied food in the community.

Conclusions: the conference allows us to describe the potential of Law No. 148 on Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education in addressing the demand for food production through the program "Sowing with more science", the "plant your little plot" campaign, and family and community gardens.

Evaluation: The PNI is applied to assess the impact of Law No. 148 on Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education in the community.

## **Activity 2**

Guided tours

Visit 1. Imías Agroforestry Company

Objective: to assess the company's link with the community in order to strengthen food sovereignty and nutritional education through food production in the community.

Location where it takes place: Agroforestry Company of Imías.

Participants: workers, community leaders, cadres and reserves, CUM professors.

Methodological Guidelines: the objective of the activity is coordinated with the company management, specifying the visit, planning the date, time and the participants who will be present.

Guide for the guided visit to the Imías Agroforestry Company

An interview is conducted with the company's management, covering the following aspects:

1. They consider the link between the company and the community necessary to address the pillars contained in Law 148 on Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutritional Security.
2. Describe the corporate purpose of your company.
3. Explain how you can contribute to compliance with Law 148.
4. What actions can be implemented by the company to contribute to the food sustainability of the community?
5. The company's connection to the community will be necessary. Please provide justification.

6. Administrative staff, workers, and visitors who access the company are familiar with the legal framework of Law 148.

Conclusion: The role of the company is essential in strengthening Law 148 on Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutritional Security to achieve the food self-sufficiency that the community needs.

Evaluation: a PNI (Positive, Negative, Immediate) analysis is carried out to assess the opinions, criteria, and judgments made by the participants in the guided visit.

### **Activity 3**

Title. The University Student Federation (FEU) in my community

Objective: to argue the importance of food sovereignty and nutritional education from university outreach in the community.

Location: Community Ecological Classroom

Participants: teachers and students from CUM Imías, residents of the community, delegate of the district, the president of the People's Council and of the CDR.

Methodological Guidelines: Food production is crucial at present to strengthen food sovereignty and nutritional education at the community level. This activity is carried out in the following way:

Steps to follow

1. Guidance from the coordinator of the Agronomy Engineering career for the study of community and family vegetables that can be grown in the community.
2. The installation of the gardens by the students of the Agronomy and Forestry career together with the community members putting into practice knowledge of their training as future Agroforestry professionals responding to Law 148 Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education.
3. The coordinator of the Agronomy Engineering program describes the steps to follow for the monitoring that must be carried out once the orchards have been planted.
4. Evaluation of the results of the activity taking into consideration the current relevance and validity of Law 148 now.

Conclusions: Students in these programs describe to community members the importance of food sovereignty and nutritional education in relation to nutritional sustainability.

Evaluation: It is carried out independently and qualitatively.

## Conclusions

The university's outreach to the community is essential for implementing Law 148 on Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education in the communities of Imiense. The university serves as a central hub, possessing the indispensable tools to promote and train the community on proper nutrition. The implementation of these educational activities demonstrates increased community participation in initiatives related to food sovereignty and nutritional education, fostering developmental learning through the exchange of experiences between community members and the university.

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