**Women in Cuba Factsheet**

**Aims of Policies**

* Empower women
* Defend equal rights
* End discrimination
* To help women contribute to the new society
* To get a productive work force

**Federation of Cuban Women (FMC)**

* Founded by Vilma Espín (*1960*), wife of Raul Castro and revolutionist in Sierra Maestra
* The main aims of the FMC:
* Bringing Women out of the home and into the economy
* Reorganizing peasant households that keep women in subservient positions
* Developing communal services to alleviate domestic work and childcare
* Providing equal opportunities for women
* Mobilizing women into political work and government administration
* Providing adequate working conditions "to satisfy the particular needs of the female organism and the moral and spiritual needs of women as mothers."
* Develop non-sexist attitudes among students in schools.
* What they did:
* Fight prostitution.
* Gave women first-aid training
* Recruited women in activities involving health and education.
* First nationwide vaccination programs against tetanus and polio.
* Mobilized in the Bay of Pigs invasion (*1961*).
* Carried out the Cuban Literacy Campaign (1961)
* Create the Cuban Family Code (1975)
* Carry out research where there were still problems involving women.

**Cuban Literacy Campaign (1961)**

* Aim to achieve an **egalitarian society**.
* Forced different parts of society that would not usually interact to come together for the betterment of Cuba.
* Che Guevara helped initiate the campaign and rounded up volunteers who would teach people in the rural areas of Cuba.
* Another aim of the campaign was directed to **create a sense of unity between the people of Cuba**.
* Taught of politicized educational materials
* Idea of unity was being spread.
* **Ideas that men and women can come together** as one increasing solidarity.
* As reward, **women were given scholarships** to further their education.
* Women had a chance to **see new places**, **be independent** and become **highly trained.**

**The New Constitution (1976)**

* Approved in by popular referendum in February *1976*
* Included laws such as:
* Equal relationship of men and women in marriage.
* The Cuban Family Code.
* Punishes discrimination on the bases of sex.
* Infringement of the right to equality as a crime.
* Guarantees the right to work to both men and women.

**Paternalism & Reproductive Policies**

* 12-week paid leave for pregnant women (*1963*)
* One paid day leave for prenatal care before birth
* One paid day leave for pediatric checkups after birth
* Abortion decriminalized (*1965*)
* Abortion made free and easily accessible (*1979*)
* Women excluded from jobs considered dangerous to female reproductive systems (mining, fishing, construction)

**The Family Code (1975)**

* Made in response to new laws failing to solve inequality (*1975*)
* Household responsibilities were legally obligated to be shared between husband and wife
* Equal rights and duties in marriage
* All martial property, including wages, became joint property.
* Equal rights to seek divorce
* Women could decline or end marriages.
* Children are the mutual and enforceable obligation of both parents.

**Programs and Other Policies Created**

* Grocery shopping more convenient
* Plan Jaba – working women had shopping priority
* Clinics kept open late
* Cafeterias opened in the workplace
* Daily distribution of milk to pregnant women and children under the age of seven.
* Children’s Circles (daycare/nurseries)
* Working day was cut to six hours for mothers
* Boarding schools increased

**Success of Policies:**

* Improved material conditions
* More freedom to gain any job
* Economic, political & social independence
* Women became literate
* Created unity in amongst different groups in Cuba
* Influenced other Latin American countries
* The FMC became extremely popular

**Failures of Policies**

* The policies could not solve the problem of inequality.
* Men had to be integrated into housework (resulting in the Cuban Family Code)
* Women still faced discrimination in the workplace.
* Political life for women was still very limited (11.5 percent of assembly delegates at the municipal, 21.4 percent at the provincial and 22.6 percent at the national level).
* The Code required huge changes in men’s lives, and many resisted.