

# *Invaluable support for the rescue of Cuba's cultural heritage*

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By María Josefina Arce.

Created in 1966, the International Italo-Latin American Organization, based in Rome, has accompanied Cuba for decades in the rescue and conservation of its historical and cultural heritage.

Essential has been its support in the restoration works that have been and are being carried out in the historic center of Havana, a place much visited by Cubans and tourists due to its beauty and great architectural richness.

The flagship of this cooperation has been the remodeling of the Casa Leal, converted into an exhibition and training center, in memory of Havana Historian Eusebio Leal, who died in 2020, and to whom we owe the rescue of the historic center, declared a World Heritage Site in 1982 by UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, for his tireless work and love for the city.

The International Italo-Latin American Organization is also involved in the rescue of the valuable architectural complex of the former Convent of Santa Clara de Asis, which dates back to 1638.

The project seeks to restore the splendor of this building, which will serve as a center for training in the arts and crafts of restoration in Cuba and the Caribbean region.

The entity's support has been extended to other regions of the Cuban territory. Thus, it intervened in the improvement of access routes to the town of El Cobre, in eastern Cuba, and to its main sites of patrimonial interest, among them the famous Basilica of the National Sanctuary of Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, patron saint of Cuba.

Technical advice, work with the community and financing are the contributions of the organization, which has developed courses on entrepreneurship for the inhabitants of this town in the province of Santiago de Cuba.

Cuban authorities have highlighted the invaluable support of the International Italo-Latin American Organization, as they have expressed to its secretary general, Antonella Cavallari, who is visiting our country.

During the meetings, interest was expressed in extending this fruitful collaboration to other areas such as food safety and support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, an experience that is making progress in Cuba.

There have been decades of sharing projects that have made it possible to rescue Cuba's valuable cultural heritage, but also to benefit the inhabitants of the surrounding areas, who have seen their living conditions improve.

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