

Cuba develops first COVID-19 tracking app



Cuba experts have developed the country's first COVID-19 tracking app aimed at supporting efforts to stem the spread of the virus nationwide.

An example of south-south cooperation, the Cuban professionals, who developed the app honed their skills as computer science professionals through a Chinese government scholarship in the city of Wuhan in 2018.

"What I learnt in China has been fundamental to develop this app which will facilitate better and quicker detection of suspected cases and people infected with COVID-19 on the island," 37-year-old Yosvel Falero said.

Falero and a group of some 20 other young engineers from Cuba's University of Computer Sciences take down notes, discuss and process data provided by nearly 200 contributors working on supporting the early detection system of suspected cases of the novel coronavirus across the country.

"We send information provided by the population to health authorities. Then, medical workers visit people reporting symptoms and make decisions about it. That is the way it works," Alain Pieria, leader of the project, told Xinhua.

Currently, more than 3,000 students study at the University of Computer Sciences, located on the outskirts of Cuba's capital Havana and founded by then Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro in 2002, which aimed to develop national software industry.

The University of Computer Sciences, which developed Cuban social media toDus and local play store ApKlis, is annually involved in nearly 100 projects intended to increase consumption of online contents produced by Cuban entities.

Yanio Hernandez, vice president at Havana's University of Computer Sciences, said Cuba has studied the effectiveness of tracking apps developed by China.

"A huge number of technological platforms we work with has been developed in China. So, the Chinese experience has been valuable for us," he added.

Cuba has more than 6 million internet users, according to the country's Ministry of Communications.

"The majority of self-reports registered are sent from Havana and Villa Clara, among the virus-hardest-hit provinces in the country," said Raidel Montesinos, president of the University of Computer Sciences.

As part of the process to digitalize Cuban society, more than 2 million people on the island have accessed mobile Internet since December 2018 after the government invested in infrastructure acquired from different countries, including China.

The first coronavirus tracking app developed in Cuba is the result of a work project involving the Cuban Ministry of Higher Education, the state operated telecommunications company ETECSA and the country's Ministry of Public Health.

The University of Computer Sciences in Havana, from which more than 15,000 engineers have graduated since its foundation, also helps Pedro Kouri Tropical Medicine Institute process data taken from COVID-19 samples.

Hundreds of coronavirus tracking apps have been developed worldwide following China's pioneering experience in mobile technologies amid the coronavirus outbreak.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/salud/221807-cuba-develops-first-covid-19-tracking-app>



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