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## Why Young People Don't Want to Leave Cuba?

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Isn't all of them? Of course not. Is not most of them? We'd need to consult figures, research ... however, this text is not about that. It's not a survey of scientific rigor to support any generalization. Rather, it intends to listen to a part of the young Cubans who have chosen to live their lives and careers in Cuba and each one has their own reasons.

For example, one button, four in this case. They have in common, in addition to their decision to remain on the island where they were born, that they are no older than 35 years.

### **Angie: «Staying in Cuba, living in it and for it»**

Angie Roca Pedré is a very young, Christian mother who sings beautifully and is studying third year of Social Communication:

«My wish is to stay in Cuba, to live in it and for it and to die knowing that this land will cover my eyes.

«Martí used to say that there is no steadier ground than the one where you were born; I treasure that phrase faithfully in my heart.

«If I ever leave my country, it would be because I want to be closer to my family. My husband is not Cuban, but even so, it would be only for a while; I am sure that I could not stand living far from my flag for more than five years.

### **Alex Alday: "I feel successful"**

I met him rapping on the song Drums for Peace, by Raúl Torres, but Alex Alday Pérez also composes and sings beautiful songs.

The "Living better" status should not mean walking full of luxuries and clothes, as advertised and promoted by

consumerism. Living better is undoubtedly, something that you will achieve depending on the approach you give to your personal perspective and how you organize your priorities; that can be done and achieved anywhere. I have lived in Cuba since I was born, here I became a professional. Every dream or personal aspiration that I've had, I can tell you with certainty that I have achieved them and I feel successful because of it.

**Ariel: «My life is baseball and I am at the best you can be in Cuba»**

The catcher (and star-player) of the Cocodrilos de Matanzas, and also contracted in the Japanese professional league, so Ariel Martínez has spent a lot of time abroad in recent years, however, he does not renounce to represent the island, nor even to join the provincial team; in fact, we saw him stay with the national champions, even when injured, until the long-awaited title was won:

“Honestly, since I was a child, I've never had that desire to leave, like some people around me. I don't know if it's because of my family or because of my own feelings. From a very young age, people with that phrase and that desire and I wondered: why don't I have it, why do I love and love my land so much? I grew up and, despite many difficulties and sacrifices, everything in my life was going quite well, at school and in baseball, which is what I do and what I dedicate most of my time. Thanks to baseball, I had the chance to travel and got to know what it was like to be abroad, all the good things about those countries, and even so, that desire to leave did not get into me either.

«Until today, baseball is my life and I'm in the best place I could be: Cuba. I made to the Cuban National Series, and I was hired in Japan. Everything, each step I climbed one after another with a great effort and sacrifice, but they were steady. Honestly, and I repeat, honestly, if all that had not come true, I don't know if I was another young man with that desire "I want to leave Cuba", no one can know...

**Heydy: "I want to build a better country"**

Heydy Montes de Oca is from my province, Matanzas; however, we met for the first time in Bayamo. She studies Journalism and, at the same time, works in the Provincial Music Company:

«I'm not leaving because I'm not going to betray my grandfather, who fought in Sierra Maestra; because I want a better country for us and I want to help build that better country. Good changes are taking place in Cuba. I as a worker for the Music Company in Matanzas, I went from earning 340 to 3 400 pesos, which is not a lot of money, but it's a significant change. With my first salary, I bought a camera, which I have loved since before I started studying journalism, and my mother was single, with a nurse's salary, she could not afford it. Maybe it may seem insignificant, but for me it has a worth because the profit of my work is tangible.

«I am staying in Cuba because I am proud of my history and my generation. I am proud of my colleagues, who went to isolation centers to fulfill what we have to do as a generation (I envy them for having gone). I'm staying because I'm proud of the boys I met while growing up, boys who are already leaders who express the ideas that we all have, the country that we all love; these boys are not afraid to stand anywhere and call themselves followers of Fidel, Martí, Communists, despite the attack that comes afterwards, attacks which I suffered on my own skin—people you don't know and who write to offend you (needless to say) -. I stay because of that. Because I want to build a better country and like Silvio says: it has already been said that it's bigger than the greatest of us, and it has already been said that it's made for others».

**Translated by: Amikal Labañino Valdés / Cubasi Translation Staff**