

NOTE FROM THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

When we began working on this thematic issue of *Universitas Forum* on “local development and participation”, our intention was to emphasize the growing relevance of this question in the political and technical agenda both within countries and at international level. In preparing this issue, however, we found that a wide variety of approaches exist, as the reader can observe in the articles published here. This diversity is undoubtedly interesting. We see that while from different perspectives, answers to the same question are being sought: *how can participatory local development be a relevant tool for global change?* But this very diversity can also be misleading because the three keywords (development, local and participation) are given different meanings that are specific to the authors’ contexts and cultures.

Reading the articles, we note that the discussion focuses more on intuitions than on well-defined hypotheses. These are intuitions that merit attention in that they are emerging everywhere, stimulated by a widespread desire not to be crushed by the implacable mechanisms of globalization. In fact, what is being debated are the current dynamics that concentrate power and resources in the hands of a few, making our world more violent and less livable. Faced with this, it is important to find alternatives based on social dialogue, effective participation, and the valuing of everyone’s cultural and territorial roots. So even if solutions are not at hand, we hope these reflections will generate interest on how and under which conditions participatory local development can be a tool for transforming development policies and knowledge.