

# *From knowledge to promote local development*

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By María Josefina Arce

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of encouraging local progress, a strategy of the Cuban government reflected in the National Plan for Economic and Social Development until 2030 and in the Constitution endorsed in 2019.

And it has insisted on the necessary involvement of Cuban universities in achieving this goal, aimed not only at the benefit of the population of each territory but of the whole country.

The centers of higher education, with their human potential, scientific and technological capacity, are called to be an essential actor in the progress of the various localities.

With the aim of stimulating this approach of the academy to the new practices of the Cuban economy, the Second International Convention IslaCiencia 2023, sponsored by the University Jesús Montané Oropesa of that special municipality, was held on the Isle of Youth.

Representatives of various Cuban and foreign universities, research centers and national companies participated either virtually or in person in the event, described as essential by its organizers to advance local development from science.

This biannual meeting makes it possible to exchange experiences, seek alternatives, reach agreements and learn about initiatives developed by institutions of other nations in their local environment.

IslaCiencia is part of the strategy outlined by the Cuban government to use knowledge to strengthen the strengths of each territory and open new opportunities for its progress.

It seeks to encourage food production, generate productive chains, contribute to exports and replace imports, an aspect of vital importance.

It is undoubtedly an urgency of these times in view of the complex economic situation Cuba is going through, the object of a reinforced U.S. blockade, of a financial persecution that limits its monetary resources.

That is why the country is betting on a greater involvement of the centers of higher studies with the community not only to jointly seek options and solutions, but also for the formation of human potential in the locality.

And although there is still a long way to go, concrete steps have been taken, numerous research projects have been carried out, partnerships with companies have been achieved and spaces continue to be opened that lead to that necessary university-territory link, which translates into greater welfare of its inhabitants and, in general, of all Cubans.

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