

UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA del Sacro Cuore

WORLDBOUND

ISSUE 10 - 2024



Here's a glimpse of what happens when boundaries are crossed and definitions of success are rewritten. It's about connection, diversity, and the unexpected outcomes when we come together to make a difference. Welcome to the Worldbounders community.



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore



MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR PIER SANDRO COCCONCELLI

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 10th edition of Worldbound, a significant milestone in our shared journey at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. This special issue celebrates the theme of 'community' – a pivotal element that resonates deeply with our University's ethos.

Edition 10 stands as a tribute to the diverse and dynamic community that defines us. From students and faculty to alumni and staff, our community members come together to foster a culture of inclusivity, collaboration and mutual support.

Within these pages, you will discover the captivating stories and inspiring narratives of our Worldbounder community – a remarkable group of individuals who embody the essence of global exploration, unity, and personal growth. From the bustling streets of our Università Cattolica campuses, to the far reaches of international borders, Worldbounders lead with an adventurous spirit that transcends boundaries and fosters meaningful connections.

We explore significant initiatives like the CeSI project in Cameroon and share insights into our ongoing efforts towards embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion. These discussions reflect our commitment to creating a community that not only shares knowledge but also empowers every member to make a meaningful impact.

Welcome to the Worldbounder community at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, where every narrative is a canvas of exploration, and every story is a testament to the boundless possibilities of human experience.

Warm regards,

Professor Pier Sandro Cocconcelli
*Vice-Rector and Delegate for the
Coordination of Internationalisation Projects*



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WORLDBOUNDERS' JOURNEYS:

Charting Pathways of Purpose and Global Influence

At Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, the **Worldbouncer community** embodies a **vibrant spirit** of global exploration, fostering **unity, diversity, and personal growth**. Through inspiring narratives and diverse experiences, they celebrate the **boundless possibilities of international experiences** and invite others to join their **dynamic network of exploration and understanding**.

PROF. LAURENTI:

“Being part of the university community requires cultivating a thoughtful, caring attitude towards others, whether they are students, colleagues, patients, or vulnerable people. This capacity for empathy represents the core of our education.”



LEONARDO: “Community is a group of people, whether large or small, who together experience and share happiness alongside interpersonal growth.”

In the heart of **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore's global community**, a remarkable group of individuals shines brightly – **the Worldbounders**. These are not just ordinary members; they are the architects of their international destiny, actively seeking out **diverse global experiences** and embracing every **opportunity for personal and professional growth**. As domestic students venture abroad for study programmes, internships, or volunteering experiences, and incoming international students choose Università Cattolica for degrees or short-term programmes, Worldbounders find themselves leading in a **spirited and inclusive community**.

More than mere participants, Worldbounders are driven by an insatiable thirst for international exploration, embodying the **spirit of adventure and curiosity**. They navigate challenges with unwavering perseverance and boundless empathy, serving as beacons of cultural understanding and unity within our university's diverse tapestry. Within this community, Worldbounders forge connections that transcend geographical borders, cultivating **a sense of collaboration and belonging** that propels the collective journey of learning and growth ever forward. Once you're part of the Worldbouncer community, it's more than just joining a network – it's **stepping into a lasting connection** that exists beyond your time at Università Cattolica, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie that lasts **long after graduation**.

ELENA: “My definition of community is people from a lot of backgrounds coming together to help each other out.”

As ambassadors of personal growth and global citizenship, **Worldbounders** stand as **proud symbols** of Università Cattolica's commitment to **excellence and inclusivity**. Their **stories** of triumph, resilience, and cross-cultural collaboration **inspire** us all to reach higher, dream bigger, and embrace the boundless possibilities that await on our international journey.

ALDO: “Community is a place to share your experience, your career, and to help young generations. And what is more important is that the community is a platform that can help you avoid traps in real life.”





SIMON:
“I see community as a team.”



FRANCESCA: “I believe being part of the Worldbound community means deciding your experience is not only yours, but it’s shared with others. It means being open to receiving the support of the other students, knowing that you are not alone in your dreams and goals, and that you might have grown differently, with different times and paths, but you have all lived these meaningful experiences abroad that contributed to your personal growth.”



PROF. CASELLI:
“Community fosters profound interpersonal connections – relationships grounded in simply being together rather than doing. It is a space where what matters most is who you are, not what you do. Though relationships may organically inspire action, the essence is a sense of belonging and shared humanity.”

ENJOY THE JOURNEY.



At Università Cattolica, **community** takes on a dynamic and interconnected meaning. It transcends geographical boundaries and encompasses a **diverse group of individuals** who come together not only to **share experiences** but also to create a **meaningful impact**. Here, **success is redefined** – not by personal accolades but by the **positive changes** we foster in each other’s lives and the wider world. Our community is characterised by a **shared sense of purpose** and a **unified vision of progress**, where Worldbounders catalyse change and growth, not just within themselves but across the global stage, through a meaningful blend of knowledge and cultural exchange.

This **sense of community is palpable** during Università Cattolica events like **Orientation Day** and **International Day**, where **Worldbounders** not only unite to celebrate the richness of cultural diversity that defines our campus but also play vital roles as **testimonials and guides** available for interested students. The air is filled with an infectious energy, as laughter and conversation in various languages mingle, creating a **vibrant**

tapestry of cultural exchange and unity. Whether it’s **domestic students** immersing themselves in international experiences through **study programmes, internships, and volunteering abroad**, or **incoming international students** choosing Università Cattolica to pursue their **degrees or short-term programmes**, it is within this vibrant community that Worldbounders discover a profound sense of belonging. Here, they navigate their international adventures with confidence and contribute to each other’s journey of learning and growth.

To be a **Worldbounder** is to **embrace the world with open arms**, to view it through multiple lenses, and to immerse oneself in the richness of diverse cultures. It’s about stepping out of your own perspective and embracing the perspectives of others, nurturing a **deep sense of empathy** and understanding. Each new city and country become a canvas on which Worldbounders paint their experiences, exploring its nuances and intricacies with curiosity and reverence. **It’s a journey where every encounter leaves an indelible mark.**

Through the captivating stories shared within these pages, we catch a glimpse of the transformative power of the Worldbounder community. These narratives illustrate how **international experiences** can **shape individuals**, fostering a profound sense of cultural understanding and self-development that extends far beyond the confines of the university context. As you embark on this journey through our magazine, we invite you to immerse yourself in the diverse perspectives and profound insights shared by our Worldbounder community. Whether you’re already part of this dynamic network or considering taking the leap into international exploration, we welcome you to **join us in celebrating the spirit of unity, diversity, and global connection**. Welcome to the Worldbounder community at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, where every story is a testament to the boundless possibilities of the human experience. **Enjoy the journey.**

CAMPUS VOICES

Explore the transformative benefits of our Buddy Programme and get inspired by Julia's remarkable journey from California to Cattolica.



CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS

Strengthening Community Ties Through the Buddy Programme

Ever thought about the definition of community? Welcome to Campus Conversation's **second episode**, where we explore the **vibrant community spirit of our University**. In this episode, we'll be highlighting the **Buddy Programme**, which is a cornerstone of our community. This initiative pairs **international students** with **domestic mentors**, creating opportunities for **cultural exchange** and **mutual support**. Through opinions, laughter, and reflection, we celebrate the diverse threads that weave our community together. We also explore the various ways in which students come together, showcasing the **inclusive nature of our campus culture**.

Join us and experience the power of community!

Watch the full video
on Youtube!



WHAT'S YOUR DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY?



"I also feel like you can actually build your own community anywhere you go and we've built our own community here at Cattolica."

"A group of people who share the same beliefs and that come together when in need."

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'VE CREATED A COMMUNITY HERE AT CATTOLICA?

"I think that the way The Buddy Programme is built really helps making this kind of connections. With the Buddy Programme you already know that you have a contact, somebody that you already know even before coming to Italy."

"I think that the Buddy Programme is also a small community...."



HOW HAS UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA'S APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE SHAPED YOUR EXPERIENCE AND EXPECTATIONS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION?



"I think being able to meet many people from different countries really allows you to learn about different cultures and allows you to know about people around the world."

"Cattolica was very helpful for us because they are really committed to this aim: they really want their students enjoy and learn from this experience."

SETTING

NEW PATHS:

JULIA'S JOURNEY THROUGH VOLLEYBALL FROM CALIFORNIA TO MILAN



Until the end of 2019, Julia DiBona's world was an echo of bouncing volleyballs and the rhythmic thud of athletic shoes on the court. Beginning at the age of 12, volleyball quickly became more than a game and transformed into a fundamental pillar in Julia's everyday life. The passion and dedication she poured into every practice and every match propelled her skills to new heights. Volleyball was no longer a sport – it was a lifestyle, a constant companion in Julia's journey through adolescence. Her teammates and coaches became her extended family, with whom she shared late practices, nail-biting games, victories and defeats. These experiences transcended the court and became threads in the fabric of her identity. Through teamwork and intense dedication, Julia discovered strengths within herself. The discipline required for rigorous training translates into a formidable work ethic, the adeptness at working effectively in a team proves invaluable in both professional and academic aspects of life, and the sense of responsibility towards her team fosters a profound understanding of commitment and perseverance. Julia's growth wasn't just measured in points scored or matches won, the lessons learned on the court became the building blocks of her identity.

As Julia embarked on her collegiate volleyball journey, she first found herself on the courts of South Methodist University in Texas, and later closer to home, at Pepperdine University in California, where she pursued a bachelor's degree in creative writing. Yet, as the pages of 2019 turned, Julia stood at a crossroads, confronted with a bold decision that would redefine her path. Opting for change, she made the courageous choice to step away from the volleyball court. In the American college sports scene, where the competitiveness of athletics frequently shapes one's university experience, Julia's choice to leave volleyball was unconventional. In her words, "I quit because I wanted to explore different aspects of the college experience beyond just volleyball." Motivated by a desire to experience university life beyond the boundaries of sport, and to fuel her passion for traveling and exploration, Julia set forth on a new adventure.

After saying goodbye to the familiar rhythm of college sports, Julia embraced an opportunity to study abroad and moved to Florence, Italy. Her semester in Florence proved to be a monumental chapter. Julia began to learn Italian with enthusiasm and experienced navigating the challenges of life in a foreign country. However, with a radiant smile on her face, Julia reflects



“I LOVED IT, JUST GETTING AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE – BEING OBVIOUS IN SIMPLY HOW YOU GROW IN YOUR INDEPENDENCE.”

This experience proved to be a transformative one which validated her decision to leave volleyball with the richness of her cultural immersion. Her time in Florence expanded her perspective, highlighting how **there is more to life than a single pursuit**, such as volleyball. This realisation opened several paths, especially within her evolving career in creative writing.



After having returned to California to complete her bachelor's Julia was faced with choosing the path for her **next chapter**. Eager to build upon the incredible experience in Florence, Julia was drawn to the prospect of **studying abroad again**. After having stumbled upon the **Master's degree in the Art and Industry of Narration at Università Cattolica**, she recognised a unique opportunity. The alignment of her academic aspirations and the programme's focus felt like a perfect fit for her evolving career in the creative writing industry. **Milan**, beyond academic considerations, would allow her to deepen her connection with the language and culture she had come to love in Florence. The **city's unique blend of tradition and modernity** became a **new canvas** for Julia's personal and academic growth.

Settling into the rhythm of Milan's lively streets, Julia faced the **challenges of adjusting to a new city, community, and academic course** with a **positive mindset**. Eager to connect with people and explore her surroundings, when Julia came across the **university's women's volleyball team**, she decided to jump into the unexpected and try out for the team. In this unique chapter of her life, she turned back to volleyball, a sport she had previously left, as a means to immerse herself in a new community. The experience proved to be exceptionally positive. Julia was **welcomed** by a diverse and supportive group of skilled players who embraced her with open arms. Strikingly, the **language barrier**, often the most formidable challenge for international students, **dissolved on the volleyball court**. The court became a space where communication transcended words, and the **universal language of sport** quickly **forged connections among players**. Playing the sport she loved alongside others, whose shared passion was complemented by a collective focus on community building was different from the pressure to perform and win that Julia had become accustomed to back home. Thanks to the new connections made, Julia found a **community within her teammates**, fostering a **sense of belonging** and ultimately enhancing Julia's Milanese adventure in ways she hadn't anticipated. **Overcoming challenges with the strength of community by her side** became a defining aspect of Julia's journey.



Julia's journey from the competitive courts to her adventures in Milan illustrates the transformative power volleyball has had in her life. What began as a passion and fundamental pillar of her adolescent years became a lifestyle and source of identity. Julia's courageous decision to step away from colle-

giate volleyball, although difficult, marked a pivotal crossroads in her life. It demonstrated her **commitment to exploring new and diverse aspects of her life** beyond the confines of sport. Julia's outlook played a crucial role in shaping her future career in the creative industries as it brought her to Milan.

HERE, JULIA'S UNEXPECTED RETURN TO VOLLEYBALL SHOWCASED HER UNWAVERING COURAGE TO CHALLENGE HERSELF IN NEW WAYS.

It became a means not only to reconnect with a sport she loved but also to **build a sense of community in a new city**. Through these experiences, Julia continues to exemplify **resilience, courage, and a relentless pursuit of self-discovery**, reinforcing that **the journey is just as meaningful as the destination**.

DEI (DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION)

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

VOICES BEHIND UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA'S DEI STRATEGY





PROF. ELENA MARTA

THE COLOUR OF WHEAT

We have interviewed **Professor Elena Marta, Full Professor of Social Psychology and Community Psychology, and President of EDUCatt**, the non-profit foundation entrusted by Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore with the task of providing services related to **the right to study in favour of students** during their university career.

Our conversation began with a **focus on student services** and concluded with Professor Elena Marta quoting **'The Little Prince.'** This is the most precise way to encapsulate her own work at EDUCatt and her passion for the psychological well-being of the Università Cattolica community.

"People often tease me for always quoting this one part from 'The Little Prince.' It's the bit where the fox is saying goodbye and mentions how wheat doesn't mean much to her since she doesn't eat bread. But the golden wheat fields always remind her of her friend's blonde hair. It's like this beautiful symbol of their friendship that sticks with her. And it's funny how it changes the fox's whole outlook on the world. My wish is that every student, thanks to EDUCatt, the faculty, staff, and everyone they meet at Università Cattolica, can hold onto a bit of that same kind of warmth and connection."

"WE MUST GIVE THEM THE TIME AND SUPPORT TO REDISCOVER PURPOSE AND MEANING IN THEIR LIVES."

Can you tell us about EDUCatt and its psychological support service?

EDUCatt is a **non-profit foundation entrusted by Università Cattolica** with the task of providing services related to **the right to study in favour of students** during their university career. From the very beginning, **Father Agostino Gemelli**, a doctor, psychologist, and one of the University's founders, had a **special interest in health** in the broadest sense. A **health centre** was immediately established, with a **general practitioner** and **various specialists**, accompanied by a **psychological service**. Today, the psychological pathway begins with an **initial free meeting** and is followed by **two subsequent cycles of five meetings**, either at a **reduced price or entirely free**. It's not a psychotherapy path: the goal is to conduct an initial assessment with a professional who can help the student **understand how to approach their situation** and **frame what is happening**.

Do international students generally use this psychological support service?

Yes, and to facilitate their access to the service, we have a **professional on each campus** who can conduct the sessions in **English** and, where possible, in **French**. **For some** of them, the **discomfort and sadness** are merely a bit of **homesickness**. **For others**, moving abroad can bring about much **deeper personal issues**.

Much of your recent scientific research has focused on the impact of COVID-19 on younger generations. How would you describe the students arriving at Cattolica today, having experienced lockdown during their high school years?

Generation Z faces its own set of challenges, but I would prefer not to speak of them as only isolated or suffering individuals. Moreover, their **distress** is uniquely linked to **reintegrating into a world that has undergone significant changes** and can never return to its previous state. We must **give them the time and support** to rediscover purpose and meaning in their lives as they transition into adulthood.

Do you believe the University, as a community, can be a collective space to reprocess these difficulties?

Absolutely. The **University** serves as more than just a place for academic instruction; it **fosters a supportive community for personal and professional growth**. The educational project of a university must facilitate experiences that help to grow as individuals and professionals. For example, our approach at **EDUCatt**, extends beyond providing a dining service. It's about **taking care** of a **student's dietary habits**, allowing them to choose from different foods and having a **place to socialise**. Similarly, we don't just provide a doctor or psychologist to talk to; **we create a context** where this service becomes important to you as a member of the student community.

Is there a future project you would like to talk about?

Certainly! For the future, we are organising **discussion groups** aimed at helping students **discuss and process the post-COVID-19 period**. As adults, we're often unprepared to cope with events in life, such as loss or failures. The idea that one must always perform well, always be ready to do everything, and always be on time has been disproven. COVID-19 has shown that even something as tiny and invisible as a virus is beyond our control. Then the war between Russia and Ukraine broke out and suddenly the world seemed completely out of control. I believe **discussing and addressing these issues in a group setting can be very helpful**. The University has also participated along with other universities in the **call for the development of projects on psychological well-being**, and we are waiting for the **final approval** from the **Ministry of University and Research**.

"THE UNIVERSITY FOSTERS A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH."



PROF. LUIGI D'ALONZO

COMMUNITY, CULTURE, AND INCLUSIVENESS

We had the opportunity to interview **Professor Luigi d'Alonzo**, who is the **Rec-tor's Delegate for Inclusion and a Full Professor of Special Education**. We asked him what it truly means to be a cultured individual in a university community. Professor d'Alonzo states that **being culturally aware** goes beyond academic excellence and teaching. It involves the **quality of initiatives** that universities undertake **towards inclusiveness**. For him, being a cultured person means **making inclusive thinking a habit** and a defining characteris-

tic of a community. It means **sharing values that support personal and professional growth** and cultivating a **perspective that is attentive to everyone's needs**. The **service that aids students with disabilities** was inaugurated in **1999**, and since then, the number of students using it has significantly increased. Initially, the service was limited to the Milan campus and only served 58 students. However, **it now serves about 3,100 students across various campuses**.

"OUR INCLUSIVE CULTURE SHOULD CONTINUE TO EXPAND UNTIL IT BECOMES A UNIVERSAL PROJECT OF WELCOME."

How has the academic teaching of special education changed, and what characterises it at the moment?

Special education used to be thought of to help people who have disabilities or learning difficulties. However, today it includes **anyone with specific educational needs**, even if they do not hold a medical certification. That is why we changed the name of our department from "Services for the Integration of Students with Disabilities and Specific Learning Disorders" to **"Services for Inclusion."** This change was made to make it clear that **anyone who needs our help can access our services**. Our primary objective is to **remove any barriers** students may encounter during their studies, whether they are architectural, psychological, or physical. For example, we used to have difficulty identifying students who have eating disorders or personal issues that were not linked to learning disorders. However, we realised that they too require support throughout their educational journey due to their specific conditions. Our service **is a point of reference** for them.

In the past, it was believed that the best way to help students who have autism, learning disabilities, or other specific conditions was to address their individual needs. However, now we understand that if we want to create **a truly inclusive environment** that fosters a student's development, we **must work extensively on their context**. This includes the environment in which they live, their peers, and the entire teaching body, not just the support teacher alone. Italy is a beacon for Europe and beyond when it comes to research and practice in this educational field.

How has technology positively impacted the classrooms to facilitate the inclusion of individuals with disabilities?

Technology **plays a crucial role** in facilitating the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. It includes assistive technologies like **prosthetics** for legs and hands, as well as **computers and software** that can help people with **sensory disabilities to manage independently** in this world. We are planning to pilot a technology for visually impaired students on our campuses, which will allow them to **navigate the campus using a mobile phone or a white cane**. This technology will help them understand where various facilities are located, such as the cafeteria, the library, or the student centre, and we hope it will improve their university experience overall.

During the pandemic, we learned that **subtitles** could be a **game-changer** for people who have **hearing loss or auditory impairments**. When all classes were online, many students who have sensory disabilities could not follow the lessons. We implemented this simple feature using tools like Teams, Skype, or Blackboard, but the most challenging part was communicating and conveying the importance of remembering to insert or activate the subtitles to all professors and administrative staff. This experience highlighted the **necessity of creating a world suitable for everyone** and considering all individuals with difficulties when designing and adopting technology.

This topic should become ingrained in us, a constant thought in the realm of education. We must continue to strive until these precautions become completely natural and automatic. Our **inclusive culture** should **continue to expand** until it becomes a **universal project of welcome**.

What initiatives have been created to make the entire community of the Università Cattolica more aware and inclusive?

Every year, usually in Spring, we organise an event called **"Put Yourself in My Shoes."** During this event, students who have disabilities or specific needs invite their **classmates and friends** to visit the **University campuses** with them. They lead them through various paths to provide a **direct experience of what it feels like to be in their shoes**. For instance, blind and visually impaired students guide their classmates who are appropriately blindfolded, up the stairs or to use the restroom without sight.

As part of this initiative, we have created a path for everyone to experience physical disability through direct experience. We invite students and staff to sit in a wheelchair and follow a student who regularly uses a wheelchair. This allows them to move around the campus and confront various barriers, whether architectural or beyond. These experiences **create a sense of community and become a true celebration of inclusion**.

We also invite faculty and administrative staff to participate in this initiative. We believe that this is the best way to ensure that **inclusivity becomes part of our cultural and educational institution**. It is our commitment to personally engage in making this world truly accessible and inclusive for everyone. We can truly call ourselves cultured individuals only if our University can lead the way through the development of a truly inclusive way of thinking.



PROF. RAFFAELLA IAFRATE

COMMUNITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Universities are perhaps one of the places where the **generational clash** between youths and adults is most acutely felt: students who populate the classrooms each year are, from the perspective of those who work or teach there, **increasingly difficult to understand**. Therefore, **creating a strong community** through the right tools, **based on respect** and the **dignity of every human being, is essential**. It empowers us to **transcend differenc-**

es and encourages us to always seek common ground for dialogue based on equality. We discussed this and much more with **Raffaella Iafrate, Professor of Social Psychology** and **member of the University Centre for Studies and Research on the Family**. She is the **first Pro-Rector delegate for Equal Opportunities**, a role **recently created** following the publication of the **first Gender Equality Plan at Università Cattolica**.

"THE YOUNGER GENERATION BEARS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GUIDING ADULTS TO ABANDON OUTDATED SOCIETAL NORMS AND WAYS OF THINKING."

What are the bodies dedicated to equal opportunities at Università Cattolica and how do they work together?

The **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)** is a policy document required by Europe for all institutions, including universities, aimed at **reducing gender asymmetries** across various fronts. Thanks to the GEP, two working and governance groups have been developed: the **Gender Equality Team and the GEP Unit**. The former is made up of various **representatives from the entire university community**, including administrative staff, academic staff, and students. Its purpose is to **monitor the implementation of the GEP**. The **GEP Unit**, on the other hand, has a **more operational function** and is predominantly made up of **administrative figures**. There is also the **Committee for Equal Opportunities/Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**, which stimulates the **promotion of cultural events, oversees projects, and supervises efforts in this area**. Moreover, for the first time within the university strategic plan, a **dedicated working table for equal opportunities** has been established, which I am responsible for alongside the **Human Resources Director, Marzia Benelli**. Thanks to the meeting and collaboration of these bodies, which began with the first meeting in May 2023, a **task force** on the subject is being **established**, and I must say that this synergy is one of the things I am most pleased about. We agreed on the joint goal of **working for equal opportunities** in a perspective that is not limited, for example, only to the issue of gender asymmetry, but that **recognises** an idea of **equal opportunities** as the **equal dignity of all people in their differences**, including those of ethnicity, ability, or socioeconomic status.

Which project do you think has contributed most to creating a community spirit within Università Cattolica?

One project that exemplifies the connection of all these bodies is the recently launched **Focus Team on Equal Opportunities** at the University. It consists of creating **working groups** that allow participants to **express their opinions and give suggestions** for **organisational change** respecting the theme of equal opportunities and inclusion to **improve well-being in the workplace**. It is based on a very communal vision of the university: it is composed not only of students, professors, or administrative staff but of the union of all these forces. The theme of equal opportunities lends itself very well to **creating connections between all these realities**. The teams meet twice a year, the first to analyse the existing situation and the second to identify projects to present at the strategic plan committee. After a year, there will be a rotation, and we will give space to other people. We expect that the **participants**, after this experience, will become the **first ambassadors of equal opportunities** within the University. One project that holds great importance to me, owing to my background in family psychology, is the **Family Enrichment Project**. This project offers **parenting support meetings** to all the **parents working in the University**, as we believe that the roles of a **parent** and a **worker** are **fundamental dimensions** of **one's personal identity**.

How do you see the idea of equal opportunities from the perspective of the younger generations?

As adults, it is our responsibility to be mindful of the cultural changes that our young people go through. In this respect, I feel fortunate to have a job that allows me to fre-

quently interact with university students, especially on sensitive topics such as family psychology. In this historical moment, many institutions, especially the family, face scrutiny regarding their traditional beliefs. By listening to the younger generation, it's evident that **the culture on certain issues is evolving**. The **new generations** are **increasingly aware of equal opportunities, inclusion, and sustainability**, and are more sensitive to these issues. This is evident from the emphasis placed on **refining language** to communicate these concepts effectively. We recently **published guidelines** on the Università Cattolica website for **using inclusive language**. For instance, my generation did not consider feminizing some terms that were traditionally masculine as problematic, but it is a crucial issue for the younger generation. Similarly, issues like racism, ageism, or ableism are important concerns that need to be addressed in language. The **younger generation** bears the responsibility of **guiding adults to abandon outdated societal norms and ways of thinking**. We must always listen to them carefully and take their opinions seriously.

However, I've noticed a trend among younger generations, reminiscent of what was already observed with Millennials. There seems to be a **gap between their words and actions** – a disconnect between their values and intentions and their ability to translate them into actions. It seems that they are heavily influenced by the virtual world, where words like "love" and "friendship" are easily expressed with heart emoticons, but real human connections become less meaningful and long-lasting. While I am not criticising these generations for only using words, I believe that **we should help them turn their values into tangible actions in everyday life**.



**GLOBAL
IMPACT
AND LOCAL
CONNECTIONS**

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES:

a New Frontier in Extrapulmonary Tuberculosis Prevention

Discover the inspiring story of CeSI's innovative campaign to combat extrapulmonary tuberculosis (TB) through community engagement. This article highlights how active listening, partnerships with trusted local leaders, and practical educational initiatives like milk boiling stations are revolutionising the way we approach TB prevention.

In the landscape of global health challenges, **extrapulmonary tuberculosis (TB)** presents a significant problem, particularly in resource-constrained regions. It's a rapidly spreading disease that can prove fatal without proper treatment or adequate awareness. Thankfully, the **Centre for International Solidarity** (Centro di Ateneo per la Solidarietà Internazionale - **CeSI**) at **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore** is pioneering a **community-centred approach** for **TB prevention**, aiming not only to **eliminate the root** of the **spread** of the disease but also to **empower communities** to **safeguard their own health**.

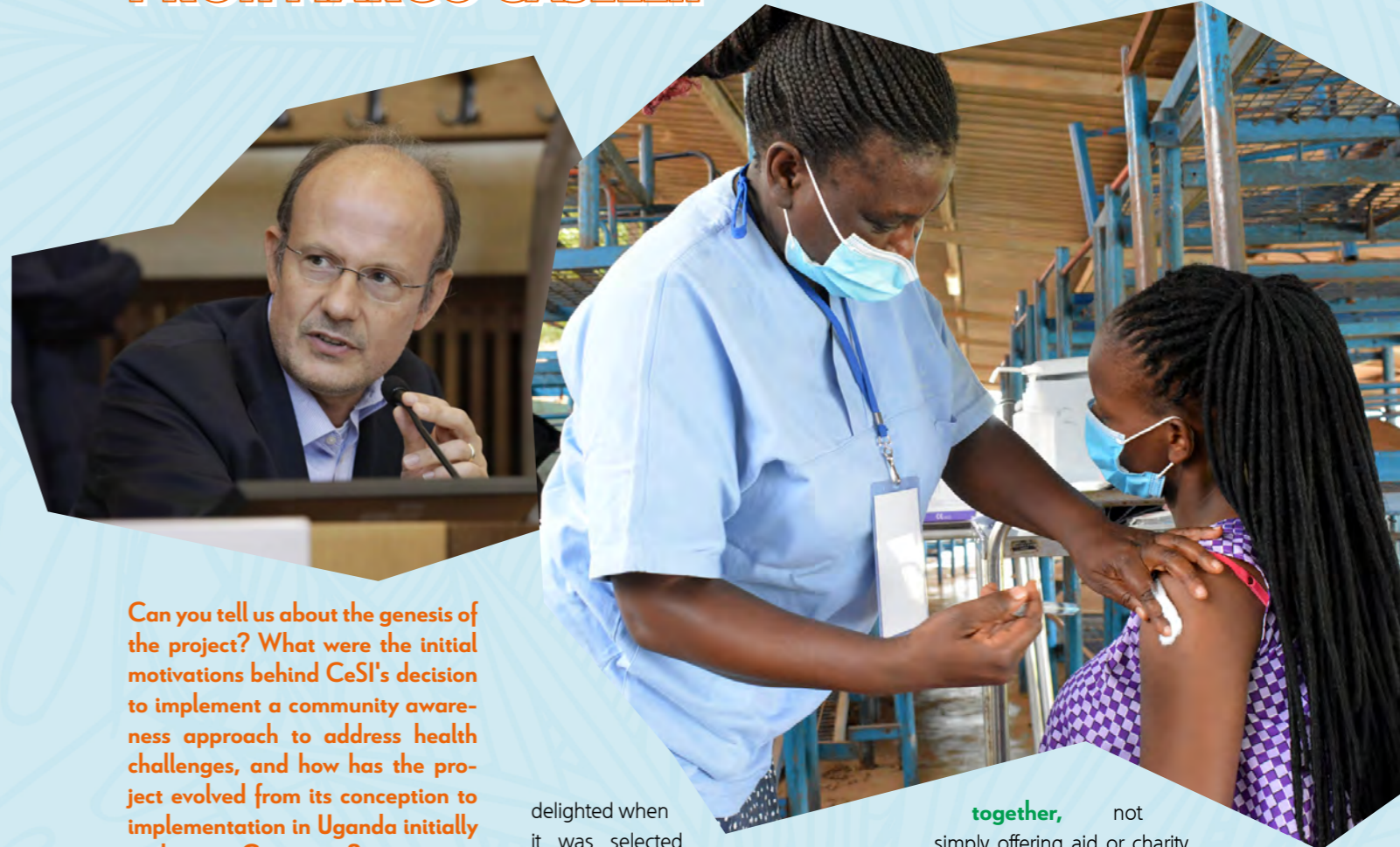
CeSI's initiative focuses on the **Ngaoundal Health District of Cameroon**, where TB poses a significant threat. The project is spearheaded by **Professor Massimo Antonelli** (director of the Department of Anaesthesiologic Emergency Sciences and Intensive Care at Policlinico Universitario A. Gemelli in Rome and Professor of anaesthesiology and resuscitation), **Professor Marco Caselli** (Director of the Centre for International Solidarity (CeSI) at Università Cattolica) and **Professor Patrizia Laurenti** (director of Hospital Hygiene Service Unit and coordinator of the Didactic Structure of the degree course in Pre-

vention Techniques at Università Cattolica). Bringing together the support of various partners, the project aims to understand the local context which will enable CeSI to combat TB through community engagement.

The strategy revolves around **enlisting community leaders**, including women and youth, to **foster ownership of treatment plans** and address **cultural practices** contributing to TB transmission. CeSI's approach transcends traditional healthcare models by amplifying the voices of local leaders and **fostering collective responsibility**. In this article, we'll explore the **significance of community power** and how it can not only serve as a **tool for awareness**, but as a **tool for prevention**, for **saving lives and creating change**.



PROF. MARCO CASELLI:



Can you tell us about the genesis of the project? What were the initial motivations behind CeSI's decision to implement a community awareness approach to address health challenges, and how has the project evolved from its conception to implementation in Uganda initially and now in Cameroon?

Prior to my role as the Director of CeSI, the **project in Uganda** was carried out in **partnership** with **Italia Uganda Foundation**. The **project in Cameroon** takes place at the **Saint Jeanne Antide Hospital in Ngaoundal**, in **collaboration** with the **Thouret Foundation**. CeSI has a history of **developing projects** in the **medical field** under its first director, **Professor Roberto Cauda**, an expert in infectious diseases. The Centre **started health projects in Tanzania** and other places, focusing on treating and preventing infectious diseases. This experience led to the **HIV, TB, and malaria project in Uganda**.

For this recent project, we considered developing a **project proposal** for the **Italian Bishops' Conference**. Then, an **Italian development agency** tender arose, with sections for **university-led infectious disease initiatives** in **priority countries** like **Cameroon**. Despite the tight timeline, our team managed to submit a proposal. We were

delighted when it was selected for funding and, after finalising contractual formalities, we waited for the notice to proceed and launch dual medical and communication activities - **systematic monitoring and treatment** as well as **public health messaging on disease prevention**. Although a partially effective vaccine exists, these interventions are imperative for diagnosing, curing, and controlling this treatable but serious disease.

What sociological needs were the interventions based on? What evidence or research supported CeSI's decision to leverage local leaders and networks as key partners in the intervention?

This issue relates not only to the specific projects at hand but also to cooperation in general. While development cooperation has had some successes, there have also been significant failures, such as projects that required substantial resources yet produced little or even harmed the communities they aimed to help. **True cooperation means working**

together, not simply offering aid or charity. Those who require assistance know what they need, so we must **involve the local masses** to **select the most effective communication methods**. Our **medical team** and **Policlinico Universitario A. Gemelli** played a **crucial role**, but we also engaged in **dialogue with local doctors and hospitals**, as most of the work should be done by locals, allowing them to increase their capacity and expertise. When we depart after a few months, the skills we have imparted remain. It is essential to **engage community leaders** and not just tell people what to do as outsiders since we've noticed that **important locals** who play as leadership figures who explain simple improvements, **carry more weight than foreign doctors** explaining the improvements in different words.

Could you describe the differences you have encountered and what changes have been made to adapt the approach to the context of Cameroon?

There are certainly many similarities between the two projects (Uganda and Cameroon), as well as some notable differences. In the **Cameroon project**, it is important to **involve both men and women** to reflect the local socio-cultural dynamics effectively. While the **Uganda project** saw **significant benefits from focusing on female participation**, the situation in Cameroon is different. Both genders play crucial roles in community decision-making, and it is essential to engage both inclusively to replicate the success seen in Uganda and ensure the effectiveness of the project.



Can you explain how CeSI's intervention aligns with the broader research objectives of the University, particularly in the fields of global health and community development?

Università Cattolica has the fundamental mission of training students. At the Centre for International Solidarity (CeSI) of the University, we take this matter very seriously. One of CeSI's first and still central activities is organising the **Charity Work Programme** for **students and recent graduates** to gain **summer field experience serving others** and developing both professionally and personally. For example, the **Saint Jeanne Antide Hospital** has been a recent site for students in our Charity Work Programme to **apply their medical knowledge and communication abilities** while **learning the value of service**. Overall, we aim for cooperation projects that provide training and build capacity, leaving a **legacy that lasts beyond the project's end**. Our focus is developing people holistically so they can serve community needs as empowered protagonists and this comprehensive approach specifically reflects our core values of caring for people while equipping them with knowledge and skills for a lifetime.

"TRUE COOPERATION MEANS WORKING TOGETHER, NOT SIMPLY OFFERING AID OR CHARITY."

PROF. PATRIZIA LAURENTI

Why did CeSI choose a "community-based" approach for TB prevention, and can you tell us how this strategy addresses specific social challenges in the Ngaoundal Health District?

Well, Professor Massimo Antonelli motivated and spearheaded this community health project through the University's Centre for International Solidarity. When the Professor approached me to collaborate on an initiative in a developing country, I recalled there was an opportunity to address malaria and TB. With my medical expertise with TB, I immediately proposed focusing on this disease in Cameroon.

Community engagement is a **critical tool** for achieving public health goals that depend on people's behaviours. Managing TB is complex since it requires months of treatment adherence. **Engaging communities**, especially women and youth, to **take ownership of treatment plans** is **vital**. We can ally with village leaders to prevent TB in children by addressing some critical issues such as adults spitting in play areas leading to contaminated soil that is exposed to children who then infect

themselves. Another critical factor is that many families own cows but do not boil milk, making it another big source of infection. **Understanding the cultural significance of this habit is key** and like in all community engagement-based projects, **soft and hard skills are needed**.

We must **collaborate and develop feasible plans** while also remaining flexible to adapt to challenges. In recognising trusted local leaders to spread messages is crucial, we start building trust and securing resources. The overarching goal is to increase diagnosis by conveying that TB is curable, not stigmatised. Hospital staff shared that when children are properly cured from diagnosed TB, the parent's confidence grows.

Following this idea, a credible working group combines **vision and concrete steps** since **progress requires moving from ideas to action**. Schools and teachers will raise awareness, so children encourage parents with symptoms to seek diagnosis. **This community-clinical alliance is idealistic yet essential for culture change**.



Can you explain how the community engagement approach enhances the effectiveness of TB prevention compared to traditional healthcare delivery models?

The **community engagement** approach we aim to pursue focuses on **raising awareness** among individuals and **key population** segments **within the community**. Our **goal** is to **increase understanding** of how TB spreads as an infectious disease, so people can protect themselves and vulnerable groups from transmission. A potential initiative includes establishing designated milk boiling stations run by community leaders, who can properly boil and return milk brought by families. Overall, our community engagement model involves **listening to diverse social groups** within the community, **partnering with trusted leaders**, and **collaboratively building awareness**. **Listening is key** so we understand existing barriers before proposing solutions that may seem obvious or easy to outsiders. Without awareness, behaviours that contribute to the spreading of the disease remain. TB then evolves unchecked, infecting and potentially leading to serious health complications in populations.



What strategies has CeSI used to ensure the accuracy and cultural sensitivity of information shared by community leaders?

Our goal is to engage the community to help them understand the value of boiling milk before consuming it. **We believe it is crucial to start by listening to the community's perspective.** This means understanding how they currently perceive the risk of TB at all levels, from leaders to mothers, women,

and even children. What knowledge do they already have about TB? More importantly, what are their perceptions and attitudes towards it? TB has long carried stigma and shame in many societies. Exploring and addressing this stigma will be pivotal to increasing awareness and shifting mindsets through constructive dialogues. We can then provide education to fill knowledge gaps about TB - its characteristics, diagnostic options, and curability with proper treatment over time. This includes stressing

the **importance of adhering to the full regimen of medications**, ideally under direct observation. In this context, **mobile technology** could enable a form of **telemedicine** to **remotely monitor and support patients**, especially regarding treatment adherence given the demanding multi-drug and long-term nature of TB therapy. The goal is to engage the full community with empathy, meet them where they are at, and equip them with understanding to support positive outcomes.

How were community leaders selected and trained for CeSI's awareness programme in Cameroon?

Children attending school are a **key entry point** for TB education and prevention in communities, as they can convey messages and be more observant within their families compared to adults. By teaching kids to recognise the characteristic signs of TB, we can empower them to **encourage family members** showing suspicious symptoms to **go to the hospital for diagnosis and treatment.** However, we must understand the social structures of these communities to determine if existing leaders can become allies in this effort, rather than antagonists. As we mentioned before, **building trust through listening is crucial**, even in challenging contexts. TB is curable with specific drugs that are effective against the mycobacterium. Importantly, successful therapy renders a person non-infectious in less than a week.

Early diagnosis not only prevents disease progression in the individual but also halts transmission in the community.

"COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS A CRITICAL TOOL FOR ACHIEVING PUBLIC HEALTH GOALS THAT DEPEND ON PEOPLE'S BEHAVIORS."



"LISTENING IS KEY SO WE UNDERSTAND EXISTING BARRIERS BEFORE PROPOSING SOLUTIONS THAT MAY SEEM OBVIOUS OR EASY TO OUTSIDERS."



Global Classroom, Community Impact:

The Worldbound Philosophy Through Professor Minciullo's Eyes.

Professor Marco Minciullo's journey at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore **inspires students** with **global adventures** and a **rich teaching philosophy**. Through engaging lectures and cross-cultural exchanges, he cultivates empathy and **empowers future leaders** to **tackle international challenges**, embodying the **essence of a true Worldbounder**.

Università Cattolica, a **hub of diverse minds**. We see students walking through the halls, rushing to their classes. After the busy morning hours, carrying paperwork in hand, **Professor Minciullo** approaches the classroom. After arriving at the classroom, he unpacks his backpack and finally looks around. Filled with the murmur of curiosity and excitement of the different students in the **Business Strategy course**, he proceeds to request silence and starts his lecture in a way that only he knows how to deliver. That he has learned over the years **with expertise**, with **knowledge** but overall, with **experience**. Experiences from **different places around the world**, experiences that taught the Professor many perspectives and created an **impact deep within his way of thinking**.

Perhaps that's what makes Professor Minciullo so eager to teach the **Bachelor of Economics and Management** at **Università Cattolica** or to be the **programme coordinator** of **ALTIS – Master in Sustainable Business Administration** because he felt he could support fellow Worldbounders. This group embodies individuals committed to **borderless education** and holds a **global perspective**. These Worldbounders are recognised not just for their bravery in getting out of their comfort zone, but for their belief in the **power of sharing knowledge across borders**, aiding their international peers in a shared journey of learning. From Portugal to Mozambique, USA to India, this is **Professor Minciullo's worldbound experience**.

Worldbounders are recognised for their belief in the power of sharing knowledge across borders.

"Today's students are true agents of change."



When Professor Minciullo was a **student** at Università Cattolica in **2006**, his journey as a **Worldbounder** started pursuing an **Erasmus exchange programme** in **Germany** where he met a **Professor from Romania** who taught his classes in a very different way than what Professor Minciullo was used to back home in Italy. The fact that this Professor was teaching in such a different country from his own, made him relate partly to young Professor Minciullo as they both were experiencing life abroad in a university environment and were there to learn and explore outside of their comfort zone. This Professor being **very welcoming** towards **international students** as Professor Minciullo, gave a **very good first impression** on what **being a Worldbounder meant**. After returning to Università Cattolica and earning his **Master's degree**, Professor Minciullo began his research and teaching career at his Alma mater. He then embarked on **various international research projects** as a visiting researcher.

The role of community is very important for our development as individuals and as a society.

Beginning in **2011** in **Portugal**, followed by **India** in **2012**, **Mozambique** in **2013**, and landing finally in the **USA** in **2016**, Professor Minciullo not only enriched his vision of the world and his knowledge of the different countries but also had a **transformative impact** on **his sense of community** and how he viewed his students and his way of teaching his material. "I can't teach anything that isn't potentially known by students, which means I don't need to give them new information. All students already have some experience. They have their ideas. What I can do is try to help students disclose and share the knowledge they already possess. Let's say my experiences abroad have a strong influence on the way I do teaching today."

Professor Minciullo considers teaching in the **international curriculum** designed for **semester study abroad students** to be incredibly important and significant. "I'm always learning, my interest in topics such as **environmental sustainability** and **social entrepreneurship** is something that keeps evolving. What I hope students can understand is that **being a professional** means you are also a **citizen of the world**. Today's students are much more aware of what they want to do, they are true agents of change."

As Professor Minciullo keeps the lecture going and asks different questions, he notices active participation from all his students. They are discussing and debating in a dynamic dance of ideas hoping to learn and to reach an ever-so-different conclusion. With every interaction, he realises that **where there is an exchange** between Professors and students, **a sort of community starts to emerge**. Being able to foster that **sense of curiosity and community**

"My experiences abroad have a strong influence on the way I do teaching today."

within students is something he learned during one of his experiences abroad. "In India, I was studying **microinsurance** and **social entrepreneurship** and I have observed and studied models of management which imply contacting a single person or with a community of people. And you see there, how social ties work because you observed that if someone, for example, was not able to repay a debt, the community would cover for that person." Bringing back home everything he learned gives the **journey of this Worldbounder** a full **360-degree closure**, being able to teach what he was once so eager to learn.

As humans, we are an ever-evolving species, **we adapt, we create, and we amaze**. Having people who support and follow us through our path of collecting knowledge and learning from the world is what makes the findings so special. That **feeling of fulfilment** wouldn't be so **wonderful** if we didn't have anyone **to share** it with. The **role of community** is very important for our **development** as **individuals** and as a **society**. We are social beings, and **we are made to bond and help one**

"Today's students are much more aware of what they want to do, they are true agents of change."

another. Professor Minciullo was able to experience so many opportunities: **to see, to grow, to form a community and to share** those we feel, are **the greatest joys of being a true Worldbounder.**

The lecture comes to an end and the students start to disperse from the classroom as the Professor packs up his things and looks around one last time before leaving the room. With a quick turn, the Professor starts his way through the chiostro and finds students laughing and talking. A bling on his phone reveals a notification email for an interview for the Worldbound Magazine. The Professor can't help but throw a quick smile, thinking **once a Worldbounder, always a Worldbounder** while he kept his pace through the international landscape of Università Cattolica.

Once a Worldbounder, always a Worldbounder.



WORLDBOUNDERS' LEGACY

UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE DI MILANO
Faculty of Psychology
Bachelor's Degree in Psychology



Navigating Ethics in Intensive Longitudinal Studies:
Bridging Insights From a War Context to Suicide Research

Dissertation by:
Lisa Gunnarsson
Academic Registration Number 5010882

Supervisor: Prof. Semira Teglabue

Academic Year 2022/2023

Inspiring
Journeys
of Alumni
Making
a Global
Difference

THREADS OF COMPASSION:

SIMÓN'S QUEST FOR CONNECTION AND GIVING BACK

Join **Simón Ignacio Planas** on an inspiring journey from the **Dominican Republic** to **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore**, where his commitment to community and dedication showcases the **transformative power of compassion** and purposeful living amidst a pandemic, as he embodies the belief that **making a positive difference** that benefits everyone involved, fostering **mutual growth and connection**.

The memory of **stepping onto the university campus** is engraved in all students' minds. Marked by a blend of excitement and joy with a bit of fear. In **Simón Ignacio Planas' case**, it was **a little different**. As the world was gripped by pandemic chaos, he found himself in front of a black mirror, entering the virtual world of academia. Instead of physically setting foot on campus for his first day, **he turned on his laptop** to welcome the new chapter of his life. And within this digital sanctuary, his first days at **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore** had started.

His **online community** became a beacon of hope to him during this uncertain time. Knowing that others were undergoing similar experiences provided him with the **motivation to persevere**. He **forged connections** with his peers and professors through **virtual classrooms**. Despite the physical distance separating them, he felt a **powerful sense of unity** with his peers, bound by their shared **resilience and determination to succeed** amidst adversity. As he immersed himself in his studies, Simón also sought out **opportunities to contribute** to his university's community by **engaging in discussions** that fostered **inclusivity and understanding**. This blend of academic pursuit and community engagement not only shaped Simón's experience at Università Cattolica but also **reinforced his commitment to making a positive impact**.

THIS BLEND OF ACADEMIC PURSUIT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

REINFORCED HIS COMMITMENT TO MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT.



**NO MATTER
WHAT
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During the challenges of a global pandemic, Simón refused to let uncertainty and isolation dampen his spirits. Reflecting on this tough time, he shares, "It was just a challenge to prove that if I set my mind to it, I can." So, rather than allowing adversity to pull him down, he saw this as an **opportunity to deepen his connections** with the **online community at Università Cattolica**. As the world slowly began to reopen, Simón left his home in the Dominican Republic to embark on the next chapter of his life. His **online connections** transformed into **tangible friendships**, providing a **sense of belonging** to a **new environment**. Despite the initial uncertainty of being a second-year student on campus for the first time, Simón found his footing and realised he had discovered **more than just a place to study**. For in the halls of academia and the embrace of community, Simón has learned that no matter what you may encounter, if you **push through** and have **people** around you who **believe in what you do, you can make a difference**.



Simón remained dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of others, **one small act of kindness at a time**. Reflecting on this, he emphasises "Even with the small things I do, I still have an impact. So even a grain of salt is a contribution." Simón's commitment to improvement extends beyond the walls of academia. In his working life, he has found ways to improve his skills and expertise to contribute to his community and beyond. Currently working as a **Business Executive** at **Banreservas' Madrid office**, the oldest commercial bank that was founded in the **Dominican Republic**, Simón plays a **pivotal role** in **shaping the financial landscape** and **driving economic growth**. Outside his professional and academic life, Simón remains actively engaged in building connections and helping others.

His time in Africa can be a testament to his commitment even in his earlier years. After graduating from high school, Simón decided to travel to **rural schools in Africa**, where



he selflessly **volunteered** as an **English and Mathematics teacher**. During his time there, he **shared his knowledge** and **led fundraising events** to provide essential supplies for the community. These **four months** became a **transformative experience**, profoundly **altering his perspective on life for the better**. Reflecting on his journey, Simón expresses gratitude for his family: "I am also happy because I know that my family is proud since they understand the whole journey, the struggles. I hope that one day I can give back their support." His dedication to making a positive impact shines through his multifaceted approach, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to leaving a **legacy of compassion and service wherever he goes**.

Simón's time at Università Cattolica has played a pivotal role in **shaping his commitment to social responsibility** and **global citizenship**. Immersed in the vibrant academic environment,

he has gained valuable **insights into economics and management**, understanding their role in **driving positive change in society**. Motivation was the element that served as Simón's compass during this time. It guided him towards his aspirations and energised him with purpose and determination. It is the unwavering **belief in the power of making** the difference that sparks his spirit each morning and serves as an example of **one of the skills a Worldbounder possesses**. Motivation drives him to push boundaries and embrace challenges. In the end, Simón's story is not just about the places he has been or the tough choices and the uncertainties. It is about the **people he met**, the **connections he forged**, and the **lives he touched** along the way, and his **unshakeable belief** that **by giving back to others**, he ultimately **gives back to himself**.

Dictionary Dreams to Medical Reality: Elena's Inspirational Voyage

Step into Elena's world and witness the incredible journey of resilience and determination she has embarked on. From navigating cultural challenges to pursuing her passion for medicine, Elena's story is one of unwavering courage. Follow along as she becomes a pioneer in the medical community, inspiring others with her leadership and advocacy. Through her experiences, Elena showcases the power of embracing diversity and fostering inclusivity.

In a world where we often try to fit into one certain identity, country, or nation, Elena chose to belong to many. Given her **multicultural background**, Elena experienced some challenges blending in while growing up. She attended a **French school in Tokyo** and spoke both **Italian and Japanese** within her household. Having to speak another language other than your native one in your social settings may be challenging for some people, but Elena powered through that. Going **to Rome** to study at **Università Cattolica's 6-year Single-Cycle MD in Medicine and Surgery** helped her in the process of **understanding herself**. While adapting to her unique environment, she discovered a **new aspect of herself** that felt more **aligned with her Italian background**.

Elena, despite not enjoying being in the spotlight, chose to confront this challenge by **immersing herself** more in **Università Cattolica's commu-**

nity. Among many things, she joined a **diverse group of international students**, gaining a deeper understanding of the concept of community. Of course, being fluent in four languages – **Japanese, Italian, French, and English** – helped her in this situation. By being the **first student from Japan to enrol in the Medicine and Surgery programme**, she **paved the way** for others who wanted to follow in her footsteps. She became **a bridge between continents**. Elena never believed she would be the person to achieve this, and as she started to become more active in the medical community, students from Asia started contacting her about how to enrol and become a part of this exciting experience.

As Elena shared her deep love for medicine, she remembered a special present from her parents: **a dictionary** given to her as a little girl. Its pages sparked her **interest in healing** and with each word she read, she took one step further in believing that one day, she would become **Dr. Elena Shimizu**. "I asked my parents for a dictionary when I was 7 years old, and I learned all of the medical terms that were in it by heart, like operating room tools." **She set her dreams high** ever since she was a little girl; there was never a plan B. She **stayed true to herself** and **overcame obstacles** to continue her path, the path she always dreamed of. Despite the challenges of balancing her studies with her new

She paved the way for others who wanted to follow in her footsteps.





As a true Worldbounder, she would continue to be a bridge to continents and foster understanding in the world.

responsibilities, Elena remained dedicated to her commitment to helping her community. She undertook **several roles in the emergency room**, including covering code reds, during her **internship** at the **“A. Gemelli” University Hospital**. She knew that these experiences would help her in the future when **joining the Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), in Japan**. A goal she aims to achieve as a doctor to **make a global impact**.

However, she did not simply undertake these tasks. During her **internship in Switzerland**, at the **end of her 6th year** of studying medicine, she was trusted with important roles. She had the chance to experience what **night shifts** at a hospital looked like and was able to **pre-scribe medication**. Being able to do all this helped her put into perspective how the rest of her life was going to look and **connect the dots** between **the theoretical and practical aspects of medicine**. Experiencing diverse countries and encountering various perspectives broadened her understanding of medicine. This

exposure she had to **different health-care systems and practices**, enhanced her approach to patient care and made her **thrive among her peers**.

Upon **returning to Rome** to **obtain her degree in Medicine and Surgery**, Elena came back with a **completely different mindset**. Her journey from a **shy student** to a **confident leader** and **cultural ambassador** inspired those around her to embrace their unique identities and **celebrate the diversity of Università Cattolica**. Throughout her time at the University, Elena actively engaged in various initiatives, **fostering connections**, and **advocating for inclusivity**. She positioned herself at the forefront of promoting understanding and acceptance, encouraging others to **embrace** their **individuality** and contribute to the rich tapestry of experiences that characterised the university community. And as a **true Worldbounder**, she would continue to be a bridge to continents and foster understanding in the world.



A dream on the verge of becoming reality.

Looking back on her journey, Elena could not help but notice how far she had come. From a young girl struggling to find her place to a **confident, compassionate doctor and advocate for change**, she has gone beyond expectations and achieved what she once dreamed of. As she prepared for the next chapter of her life, Elena knew she would face any challenges with the same courage and determination that had brought her this far. She looked at the dictionary her parents had given her and reminisced about her younger self, a girl who had big dreams. Elena recently undertook her **residency exam** to fulfil her **childhood dream of becoming a doctor in Japan**, a dream on the verge of becoming reality.



FLAVOURS OF



Leonardo's Worldbounder journey, driven by his passion for food development and sustainability, epitomises the transformative potential of international experiences. Overcoming cultural barriers and forging global connections, he emerges as a confident, globally-minded professional ready to tackle challenges and embrace diverse perspectives.

INNOVATION:

LEONARDO LATTANZI'S CULINARY JOURNEY FROM LOCAL ROOTS TO GLOBAL IMPACT

At the heart of Leonardo's story lies a **spirited pursuit of excellence**, paired with a **passion for food development** and the **role of sustainability** in the industry. As an **alumnus of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore's Cremona campus**, Leonardo's academic journey was not simply a progression of degrees, but a **transformative adventure** marked by uncertainty, courage and an unwavering commitment to **personal and professional growth**.

When beginning his **Master of Science in Food Processing: Innovation and Tradition at Università Cattolica**, Leonardo became immersed in an environment where **gastronomy met innovation**, and **tradition** intertwined with **sustainability**. It was here, amidst the dynamic academic

environment of Università Cattolica, that Leonardo's **journey as a Worldbounder** began to take shape. Leonardo found himself at a crossroads, uncertain and apprehensive, contemplating venturing beyond the familiar confines of his comfort zone. Driven by his insatiable curiosity and unwavering commitment to personal and professional growth, Leonardo made a pivotal decision to pursue his **Double Degree at ISARA-Lyon in France** – an engineering school specialised in agriculture, agribusiness and environment. Leonardo specialising in the **Sustainable Development of Food Systems**. While initially uncertain about the obstacles that lay ahead, Leonardo recognised the immense potential for personal and academic enrichment that completing a Double Degree programme could offer. Embracing this opportunity with courage, determination, and a desire to learn the ways to **revolutionise the approach to food production**, he set out on this metamorphic journey. Eager to harness the strength and knowledge it

Leonardo recognised the immense potential that completing a Double Degree programme could offer.



would afford him for his future, this pivotal decision was a testament to Leonardo's steadfast desire to **push the boundaries of his potential**.

As he embarked on this **dual academic endeavour**, Leonardo was propelled into a world of hardships and triumphs, where uncertainty and the unfamiliar became his companions on the **road to self-discovery**. Upon his arrival in Lyon, Leonardo faced formidable cultural barriers, from navigating language differences to adjusting to the **intricacies of the French food culture**. As an Italian with a passion for food, he found

himself in **uncharted gastronomic territory**. These obstacles tested his **adaptability and resilience**, yet he was able to find great solace and support among the **vibrant community of international students**, who like him have ventured far from familiar shores in pursuit of knowledge and growth. Together they navigated the complexities of their new environment drawing strength from their shared experiences and mutual connections. With the **support of a newfound community**, Leonardo embraced the challenges of the international experience as opportunities for **personal growth to share among his community**.

As an admirable Worldbounder who aims to **foster connections among diverse global communities**, Leonardo forged **meaningful relationships** not only with his peers from around the world but also with local French students. It was by immersing himself in this dynamic social environment that he **enriched**

his integration into French culture while simultaneously **broadening his international perspective**. As Leonardo looked back on this **inter-cultural exchange**, he couldn't help but pleasantly remember when, through the friendship fostered with some French students, he joined a trip to the mountains of France with everyone. "It was so much fun" he said, "everyone brought some food from their countries and after hiking we all shared the food and ate together." A smile illuminated Leonardo's face as he recalled this fond memory.

Emerging from his life-changing experience abroad, Leonardo carried with him **a new sense of confidence** and a **broader perspective on sustainable food systems and global issues**. Armed with these invaluable lessons, he proceeded onto the next chapter of his journey in **the Netherlands**, ready to face the challenge of **starting a career in a new country** with resilience and



determination. His time developing as a Worldbounder has not only enriched his academic and personal growth but also instilled in him a **sense of self-assurance** that would prove indispensable in navigating this unfamiliar new job and environment. When asked about the most relevant soft skills Leonardo developed throughout his experiences between Cremona, France and today in the Netherlands he replied, "What stands out the most is the **easy-going attitude I have developed**." With greater detail, he described how this attitude and modality was present everywhere "from simple friendships with new people to project presentations." This quality he developed proved to "invite a less concerned approach to the professional world and **it improved my ability to interact with people**," especially in an international setting. He followed by acknowledging the **problem-solving abilities** he gained throughout his experiences that served a vital role when navigating any personal, pro-

fessional or bureaucratic difficulties he faced. As he continues to journey forward as a Worldbounder in the Netherlands, Leonardo embodies this confidence and global perspective and is armed with invaluable lessons learned from past experiences abroad.

As we look back on Leonardo's story, we are reminded of the **transformative power of stepping outside one's comfort zone and embracing international experiences**. From his humble beginnings in Abruzzo to his bold decision to pursue academic excellence in Cremona and Lyon, Leonardo's story serves as a testament to the enduring **pursuit of knowledge, growth, and the boundless potential of becoming a Worldbounder**. His passion for food development and sustainability has been a guiding force, influencing his academic pursuits and professional endeavours. Through his unwavering commitment to personal growth, he has not only enriched his academic expe-

rience but has also emerged as **a confident, well-rounded individual with a global perspective**. Leonardo's success abroad underscores the **importance of internationalisation** in shaping a diverse professional. As he navigates his career, Leonardo inspires readers to consider the advantages of becoming 'Worldbounders' and emphasises **the value of embracing cultural exchange**. His journey serves as a beacon of inspiration, reminding us all of the **endless possibilities** that await those who **dare to step beyond familiar horizons and embrace the richness of the global community**.

His story serves as the testament to the enduring pursuit of knowledge, growth and the boundless potential of becoming a Worldbounder.



He carried with him a broader perspective on sustainable food systems and global issues.



EMBRACING CULTURES, ENRICHING LIVES: FRANCESCA'S STORY

Francesca Marelli's journey began in a **Tanzanian orphanage**, where her passion for cultural exchange flourished over her immersive **volunteer experience with World Endeavors**. After several years, she reconnected and transitioned into a **Programme Coordinator** role, guiding Italian students on similar paths. Her story epitomises the importance of **humility, flexibility, and personal growth** in international experiences, inspiring others to embrace **global opportunities** and foster **connections across borders**.



FRANCESCA DISCOVERED THE TRUE MAGIC OF INTERNATIONAL EXPLORATION.

As Francesca stepped into the vibrant classroom of class 1B at the **Tanzanian orphanage**, a symphony of excited voices filled the air. Children, their eyes wide with wonder and joy, eagerly rushed towards the volunteers. The room buzzed with **energy and warmth** as Francesca, with her infectious smile, embraced the eager students. Here, Francesca embarked on a **transformative journey**, immersing herself in the **rich tapestry of cultural exchange**, forming bonds that transcended language barriers and left an **indelible mark on her life**. It was within these walls, amidst the laughter and learning, that Francesca discovered the true magic of international exploration and the profound impact it would have on her life.

Meet **Francesca Marelli**, a passionate alumna of **Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore**, whose story as a Worldbounder began while completing her **Bachelors in Linguistic Sciences - Business Language Expert in Brescia**. In **2017** she **volunteered in Tanzania**, working as a childcare and orphanage assistant through the **International Volunteering programme** promoted by **Cattolica International and World Endeavors**. World Endeavors is an organisation that provides **immersive study, intern, volunteer, and group experiences around the world**. Unbeknownst to her at the time, this transformative adventure with the company would lay the

foundation for where she is today. Francesca's journey has been fueled by an overwhelming desire to learn and understand new and different cultures, build relationships, and make a difference. Since her studies, she has been driven by a **passion for immersing herself in diverse experiences** beyond the standard international fare. As a matter of fact, she dedicated her thesis to the understanding of different cultures, prejudices, and exchanges. It was this **thirst for cultural exploration** that led her to volunteer in Tanzania, seeking an entirely **new cultural perspective** and the opportunity to **forge local connections**.

Her gentle and caring personality illuminated every aspect of her experience transforming simple interactions into cherished moments of connection. Whether bidding "goodnight" in Swahili to the hostel staff each evening or starting the day with heartfelt greetings and high fives with teachers and children, she infused every encounter with her warmth and sincerity. These gestures fostered bonds that transcended language barriers. **Small yet meaningful moments of connection** made her exploration of cultural discovery resonate so deeply, perfectly complimenting her innate passion and dedication to uncovering and learning about new and different cultures. The following year, Francesca eagerly shared her experience at **Cattolica's International Week** as an **Outreach Assistant for World Endeavors**.



When asked about the main messages Francesca would share with students hesitant to embark on their first international experience she replied with enthusiasm when detailing the strength that exists within **the Worldboulder community**. Explaining how from the moment you arrive they are always at your shoulders, offering guidance and encouragement every step of the way. Francesca emphasised her personal journey of integration into a new community in Tanzania, she stressed the **importance of adaptation and reflection**, noting that her experiences abroad were enriched by the support and camaraderie of fellow Worldbounders. Together, they navigated the challenges of cultural adjustment, fostering mutual understanding and resilience. She made clear that a part of being a Worldboulder comes from the moments of **tremendous self-growth** that are developed when faced with unique challenges.

One particular moment stands out in Francesca's memory – an observation of different cultural practices in the classroom. The teachers' **strict disciplinary approach**, while unfamiliar to Francesca, prompted her to reflect on the diversity of cultural norms and values. Despite initial difficulty accepting these practices, Francesca embraced **the opportunity to learn and adapt**, recognising the **importance of respecting cultural differences**. She emphasised to students the **significance of being open-minded** and listening to others' needs, rather than imposing one's own beliefs. "You are there to support them" she reiterated, highlighting the fundamental qualities essential for anyone interested in embarking on a similar adventure. Francesca cherished the beauty of living this experience with peers in the same situation, where together they could overcome their initial hesitations and push themselves beyond their comfort zones.

SHE BECAME A PART OF A NEW COMMUNITY, EMBODYING THE ESSENCE OF A TRUE WORLDBOULDER.

As Francesca transitioned into post-graduate life, the impact of her international experience remained prominently etched in her mind. Venturing into the **fields of marketing, event planning, and communications in Milan and Brescia**, Francesca honed her professional skills but felt a persistent longing to reconnect with her passion for international experiences. Francesca found herself yearning for the sense of cultural immersion and global connection she had experienced during her time in Tanzania. This inner conflict propelled her towards a **pivotal moment in 2023** when she sought to align her professional endeavours with her values and passions. While navigating the challenges of these transitional pages Francesca became a **part of a new community, embodying the essence of a true Worldboulder**. Leveraging her international network and embracing opportunities for professional development, her journey led her back to World Endeavors, the organisation that facilitated her adventure in Tanzania. Through this

reconnection Francesca became a **Programme Advisor and Coordinator at World Endeavors**. In this position Francesca plays a **pivotal role** in mentoring and aiding **Italian students** embarking on World Endeavors programme **overseas**. She acts as a reliable support system, offering guidance and assistance at every stage of their trip, from pre-departure preparations to their time spent abroad.



Francesca's transformation from a curious and adventurous student volunteer to a purpose-driven Programme Coordinator at World Endeavors underscores the **profound impact of her international experiences**. They not only shaped her professional trajectory but also enriched her understanding of cultural diversity and empathy. Today, Francesca thrives in her position, fostering meaningful connections between participants and diverse global communities. Having navigated the challenges of solo travel, language immersion, and cultural adaptation herself, Francesca understands the initial apprehensions students may face. However, witnessing their transformative experiences, strong connections with locals, and reluctance to leave fills her with immense gratification, reinforcing the impact of stepping beyond one's comfort zone and discovering personal growth through international experiences.

Francesca reflects on her experience with profound insight, "having a **flexible attitude**, together with **humility** and an **openness towards learning and personal growth**, all paired with a **desire to make a difference** makes for the **perfect recipe** for students searching for themselves and what makes them happy." She underlines how these soft skills can both translate professionally and help prepare you for future challenges. Her words encapsulate the essence of her experience, highlighting the transformative power of embracing humility, flexibility, and a willingness to learn. Moreover, Francesca's involvement in different communities has added depth to her journey. From the existing community she became a part of during her time volunteering in Tanzania to her current position, where she's engaged with a new network of students, Francesca's experience is layered with diverse experiences of community integration and growth.

Francesca's story exemplifies the **remarkable journey of a Worldboulder** – someone who embraces **diverse global experiences**, fosters **meaningful connections**, and navigates **challenges with resilience and empathy**. Through her unwavering dedication to cultural understanding and personal growth, Francesca embodies the **spirit of a true Worldboulder**, leaving a **lasting impact** on those she encounters.



ALDO'S JOURNEY:

From Engineering Roots to Legal Heights

Experience Aldo's bold journey as he diverges from family tradition to study Tax Law at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. Overcoming linguistic challenges, he seizes opportunities and becomes an inspiration for pursuing dreams with determination. Through his persistence and commitment, Aldo reminds us of the transformative power of perseverance in the face of challenges.

IT WAS ABOUT BEING A PART OF A COMMUNITY WHERE HE COULD LEARN, GROW, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



"EVERY TIME I CHOOSE A WAY, I WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW IT AND NEVER GIVE UP."

Raised in a family of engineers, Aldo Gao made the bold decision to embark on a different path – a path that would lead him far from the comforts of his home and into the unknown. Having studied Italian Language and Business Management at Xi'an International Studies University with a semester abroad in Rome, which helped him adapt to this new culture he was going to call home for the next two years of his life. "I never want to give up because I am that kind of a guy. Every time I choose a way, I will continue to follow it and never give up." Being someone who never chooses to take the effortless way out, Aldo knew that studying a course in a language different from his mother tongue would be tough. He also understood that sometimes the hardest decisions lead to life-changing opportunities. In Aldo's case, discovering Università Cattolica and its community proved to be a stroke of luck, making him feel welcomed and fortunate.

Stepping onto the campus on the first day of his master's degree, he felt a mix of emotions. It was entirely new and somewhat daunting, yet he remained determined to seize every opportunity. Before setting foot on Università Cattolica's Piacenza campus, Aldo ventured into the entrepreneurial world, opening a bubble tea shop in Florence. This business endeavour,



while seemingly distant from legal studies, honed his understanding of the gap in the market for Chinese representation in the field of tax law. Recognising an opportunity to bridge this gap, Aldo made the bold decision to pursue further education in Tax Law at Università Cattolica, to contribute his expertise to the legal landscape.

As days turned into weeks and then into months at Cattolica, he found himself embraced by the amazing support of his peers and professors. He discovered new interests and grew

to be more confident in this process. But most importantly, he found a sense of purpose. It was not just about studying Tax Law anymore – it was about being a part of a community where he could learn, grow, and make a difference at the same time. The experience of owning and managing a business provided Aldo with invaluable insights into entrepreneurship, leadership, and customer relations. He learned to navigate the complexities of business ownership, from monetary management to marketing strategies, honing his skills as a strategic thinker



HE KEPT INSPIRING PEOPLE TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS AND REALISE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

and **problem solver**. All these skills helped him in the classroom as well while experiencing important personal growth. He navigated cultural differences, forming connections with classmates and professors from diverse backgrounds. Through mutual experiences and shared support, Aldo **developed lifelong friendships**, recalling the importance of **occasionally stepping out** of one's **comfort zone** to **grow and achieve goals**.

A **turning point** in his **professional career** happened during his thesis research. While drafting his thesis, he decided to **email Lorenzo Riccardi**, an author and recently elected **President of the China-Italy Chamber of Commerce**, to request to buy some of his books. Within five minutes, what began as a simple inquiry about purchasing books unexpectedly transformed into an offer for an **internship at a firm specialising in Italian and Chinese Tax Law**. The internship allowed him to apply his academic knowledge into practice. His experience had been nothing short of life. Throughout his internship, Aldo was exposed to a **variety of complex legal cases** and **intricate tax structures**. Despite the challenges inherent in the work, Aldo remained steadfast in his determination, driven by his passion for the subject and the chance to **apply his academic knowledge in a real-world setting**.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Aldo actively engaged in **community initiatives** and **extra-curricular**

activities such as taking part in the **International Tax Law Organisation in Milan**. Aldo's dedication and passion for what he did were clear to all, demonstrating **resilience, determination, and compassion**. As a mentor, friend, and co-worker, Aldo continually provided **support and encouragement, inspiring people to pursue their dreams and realise their full potential**. His acts of compassion, limitless generosity, and unwavering faith in community have left an **unforgettable mark on everyone** who has crossed paths with him.

The turning points he embraced throughout his journey at Università Cattolica, though they seemed different at first, came together to shape Aldo's path in the best way. **Each moment served as a stepping stone**. Reflecting on his journey, he felt thankful for all the experiences that had shaped him, realising that **each challenge** he faced only **made him stronger and more determined** as we look back on Aldo's story. And now, as he is pursuing his career as a **consultant in and engineering firm in China**, he cannot help but notice all the things he learned from all these experiences. Through the ups and downs, Aldo's story serves as a reminder that **staying faithful to your beliefs**, even in the face of scepticism or doubt from others, can lead to **achieving remarkable accomplishments**. Now, with hope filling his heart, he stands prepared to face whatever challenges lie ahead in the future.

STAYING FAITHFUL TO YOUR BELIEFS CAN LEAD TO ACHIEVING REMARKABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

MEET THE EXPERTS

TRAILBLAZERS IN HIGHER ED: CHAMPIONS IN SUPPORTING CAMPUS COMMUNITIES

How can we
bridge digital
communities
to foster real
connections
across
campus?
Dive into
their insights
to find out!



CULTURAL EVANGELISM: FINDING AND PREACHING TO YOUR BRAND'S CONGREGATION



Interview by **Nicole Brini**
International Reputation Manager
at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Marcus Collins is an award-winning marketer and cultural translator. He is a former **Head of Strategy at Wieden+Kennedy, New York**, and currently serves as a **marketing professor at the Ross School of Business, University of Michigan**. He is a recipient of **Advertising Age's 40 Under 40 award** and **Crain's Business' 40 Under 40 award**, and an inductee into the **American Advertising Federation's Advertising Hall of Achievement**. Most recently, he was recognised by **Thinkers50** with the **Radar Distinguished Achievement Award** for the idea most likely to shape the future of business management. He has also served as a jury for the **Cannes Lion International Festival of Creativity**. Prior to his advertising tenure, Marcus began his career in music and tech with a **startup he co-founded** before working on **iTunes + Nike sport music initiatives at Apple** and **running digital strategy for Beyoncé**. Marcus has authored a **best-selling book, For The Culture: The Power Behind What We Buy, What We Do, and Who We Want to Be**, which examines the influence of culture on consumption and unpacks how everyone, from marketers to activists, can leverage culture to get people to take action.



With a distinguished career bridging academia and industry, Dr. Marcus Collins has shaped marketing strategies through cultural insights. In this discussion, we explore how to 'find your congregation and preach the gospel' in marketing, a concept Dr. Marcus Collins champions. This approach underscores the significance of understanding and engaging deeply with targeted cultural groups. By aligning marketing strategies with the cultural values and social behaviours of these groups, brands can forge stronger connections and achieve greater impact.

The idea that our culture and identity, and our community (or congregation, as you refer to it), plays such a pivotal role in our lives and consumer actions, really resonates with me. I believe that as marketers we all know that the "hard sell/value proposition strategy" is not enough anymore to reach our goals.

In your book "For the Culture: The Power Behind What We Buy, What We Do, and Who We Want to Be" you write: "The power of a shared worldview provokes us to move because of who we are. This is referred to as identity-driven effects, where people tend to pay more attention to stimuli that relate to who they are. When a stimulus is aligned with who we are and how we see the world, we are more inclined to notice it, prefer it, select the media source that projects it, and adopt the behaviours associated with it." Given the identity-driven affects you discuss in your book, what approaches can universities adopt to take an active role in cultural conversations at both national and global levels?

It all starts with the university. First, we need to understand how universities perceive the world beyond their primary function of imparting knowledge. Most universities tend to view themselves just as institutions of higher education, with their main focus being knowledge acquisition and dissemination. However, universities must broaden their perspective and **acknowledge their role in shaping the world beyond knowledge**. By doing so, universities can actively participate in matters beyond education and make a significant impact on the world.

At the **University of Michigan Ross School of Business**, we strongly believe that **"doing good is good business."** This belief gives us the **freedom to express our opinions** on any issue related to **doing good**, not just on knowledge acquisition and dissemination based on our perspective. However, if we consider ourselves only as a school, then we limit ourselves to discussing school-related matters, just as a toothbrush brand can only talk about brushing teeth and not about broader worldviews. **Nike** and **Dove** are examples of brands that have identified their **unique worldview** and have been **successful in conveying it to the world**. In Europe, **Persil's "Dirt is good"** campaign through the message "Dirt is the receipt of a well-lived childhood" has helped it grow from a \$400 million business 10 years ago to a **\$4 billion business** today. Similarly, **institutions of higher learning** have the same opportunity to **express their worldview and beliefs**. Now we have an opportunity to weigh in on matters that go beyond knowledge acquisition and dissemination.

"UNIVERSITIES MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR ROLE IN SHAPING THE WORLD BEYOND KNOWLEDGE."

You often refer to the author and educator **C.C. Chapman**, quoting from your book "When we're trying to make emotional connections, our communications should start with soul and end with the sale." You state that the biology of decision-making and behaviour adoption reveals that people are not driven by rationality, they are driven by emotions, and nothing is more emotional than "US." Can you share an example of a brand that has successfully tapped into the identity of its community and fostered an emotional connection, and elaborate on how they achieved this?

In discussing popular brands, **Dove**, **Patagonia**, and **Nike** are often mentioned. However, let's shift the focus towards **Barbie**, which was created in the **1950s** as a representation of the idea that **girls could achieve anything**. **Ruth Handler**, the **founder of Mattel** and **creator of Barbie**, had two children, a boy named Kenneth and a girl named Barbara. She believed that due to societal norms, Barbara would face more obstacles and limitations than her son, which she saw as a tragedy. To counter this, she created the **Barbie doll**, which aimed to **inspire young girls to believe** in their **limitless potential** and Barbie has been a symbol of that

for decades. However, around 2014, the cultural landscape surrounding **women's body autonomy, body positivity** and **self-esteem** began to **change**. Critics argued that Barbie's unrealistic body proportions no longer aligned with the ideals she purported to inspire. **The Guardian** published articles questioning whether Barbie was still relevant. In response, Mattel started producing **dolls with more realistic body types** that represented a diverse range of people, **including those with disabilities**. This shift culminated in the release of the **2023 movie, Barbie**, the perfect distillation of Barbie's point of view about the world, and the cultural production that people who see the rules similarly to Barbie could use to communicate their own identity.

So here are **people** who have **invested** their **time, money, and identity in a plastic doll**. Not because of what it is, but **because of what it represents and what it means**. That meaning is culturally mediated, therefore some people

"THE GOAL OF STORYTELLING IS NOT JUST FOR OUR STORIES TO BE HEARD BUT TO HOPEFULLY CATALYSE OTHER PEOPLE TO TELL STORIES ON OUR BEHALF."

who identified with Barbie's message of empowerment saw the **movie as a way to communicate their own identity**. Others, however, viewed it as an **affront to contemporary manhood**.

It represented two different things and two different people. However, Barbie wasn't talking to those people who didn't "believe" Barbie's worldview; Barbie talked to its "believers," and those people took the brand and its work and used it to communicate their identity. The number of times people **quoted or reposted America Ferrera's speech** as the snapshot of that belief system is a testament to this.

You've worked with some top personalities and brands – to name a few: Beyoncé, Sprite, McDonald's, Eggo Waffles – and in your book you share both successful and failed strategies. Reflecting on the failures you've encountered, what is the single most valuable lesson you've learned?

I have learned that those who understand the underlying physics of humanity are more likely to win sustainably in the marketplace, whereas those who don't have to rely on luck. The more I understand people, the better my work as a practitioner and scholar has become. I believe that **understanding humanity** is the **cheat code** for anyone who wants to **engage with the social world**. Whether it's persuading people to buy, download, watch, subscribe, vote, recycle, enrol or take any action, the better we understand them, the more likely we are to succeed.

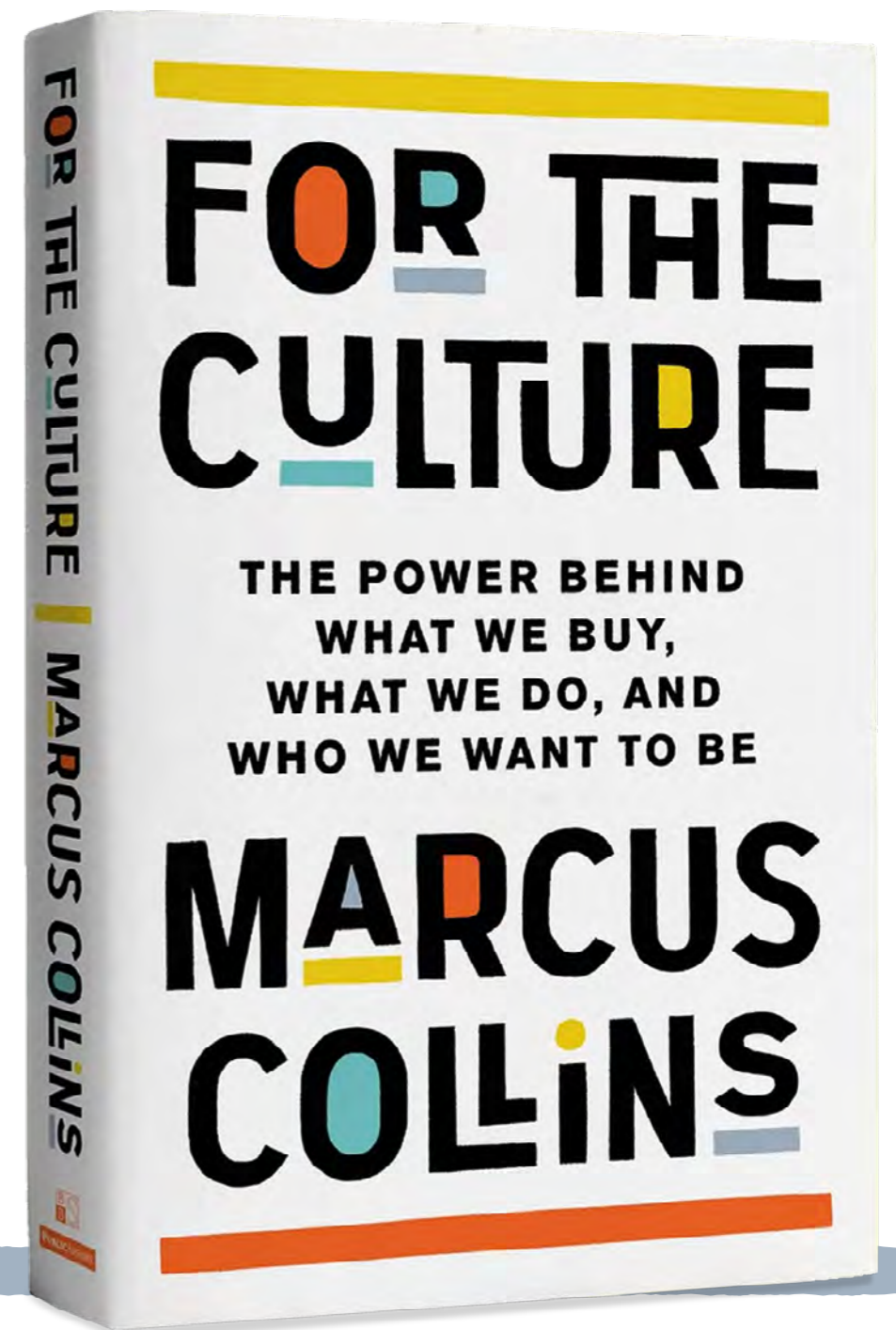
What is your top advice for recovering from a misstep?

Depending on the culture, people may have **space for redemption** when they **humble themselves, repent, and ask for forgiveness**. It may require you to fade to the back a little bit, maybe be "in the doghouse" for a while. These relationships are like our personal ones. If there's a true relationship there's typically space for redemption when one's apology is sincere to make things better. In purely transactional relationships, however, there is no investment, and forgiveness is less likely. **The more invested we are in a relationship, the more willing we are to forgive**. If we invest in our relationships, there is room for redemption and forgiveness, depending, of course, on the severity of the infraction.

There are over 26,000 colleges and universities in the world. It can feel daunting to be a higher education marketer sometimes. Having yourself a foot in the world of practice and a foot in the world of academia you understand very well the struggles of higher education institutions. Considering the unique challenges of higher education marketing, how do the strategies for "finding your congregation and preaching the gospel" compare or contrast with those used by consumer goods brands?

The challenge with higher education is that **most schools offer similar programmes**, making it **difficult** for students to **determine** which school is **the best fit** for them. While professors may differ in their teaching methods, **the content being taught is largely the same across schools**. Chem-

"I BELIEVE THAT UNDERSTANDING HUMANITY IS THE CHEAT CODE FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS TO ENGAGE WITH THE SOCIAL WORLD."



istry at one school isn't different from chemistry at another school. Entropy is entropy.

The experiences students have at a particular school (both inside and outside the classroom) can be the differentiating factor, but it's challenging for prospective students to determine which school will offer them the best experience. For many students, travelling to visit various schools is a privilege they cannot afford. This makes **relying on rankings and other forms of social proof necessary**. Schools that rank highly or have many applicants benefit from this, while lesser-known institutions may struggle to attract students, even if they offer an exceptional experience. And this is **true** not only with **university rankings** but with **Amazon reviews** or **Twitter trending topics** as well. To address this challenge, higher education institutions need to do a **better job of creating social proof**. They need to **activate networks of people**, including **current students, alumni, and other stakeholders**, to **promote the school** ("preach the gospel") and create those exogenous **shocks to the systems** to get **people's attention**. At the **University of Michigan**, we are well-known for our sports which is great. The challenge, though, is that we don't get a lot of attention when it comes to the **scholarly work** that we do even though people like **Daniel Kahneman** did a **postdoc** here and **Adam Grant** did his **PhD** at the University of Michigan. However, that's not the part of the talk about Michigan. So **not every gift, is a gift**, and everything has some trade-offs to it.

What strategies would you suggest for educational institutions to harness digital storytelling in a way that not only facilitates but also nurtures an inclusive community culture?

Storytelling is a **community act** that helps us **socialise information** about who we are and how we see the world. It works to our benefit by getting attention and capitalising interest among potentially like-minded people. Some stories retail as a school, brand, or institution that typically come across as advertising, and they get our attention. However, they may not always have a lasting impact. The **goal of storytelling** is not just for **our stories to be heard** but to hopefully **catalyse other people to tell stories on our behalf**. This is because those stories will benefit us, projecting our identity and reverberating to benefit the storyteller, whether it is a school, retailer or individual. For instance, when something great happens in Michigan, the University of Michigan will post something and people will take that post and share it to project their identity as a Michigan Wolverine, leaders and best, go blue, or Michigan difference. This projection of identity and storytelling benefits the storyteller, who gains more credence as more people see and hear the story.

"RATHER THAN SIMPLY REPORTING THE NEWS, BRANDS CAN OFFER THEIR POINT OF VIEW AND EXPLAIN WHY IT IS IMPORTANT."

You mentioned the University of Michigan as an example of higher education. Do you have any examples from the consumer goods industry?

Have you ever come across an advertisement for Zoom? Probably not. Yet, during the pandemic, hundreds of millions of people started using Zoom. This should have been the perfect opportunity for Skype or Webex to dominate the market, as they were the go-to technologies for years. However, without any advertising, we all found ourselves on Zoom. The question is, why did we choose Zoom? The reason is simple - **we joined Zoom because everyone else was on it**. This is also how we tend to create brand stories.

Similarly, we may not always see advertisements for a brand like Patagonia (except the famous Black Friday "Don't buy this jacket" ad). However, **we are influenced by people more than any marketing communication**, and we often **hear stories about the brand** through movies or headlines that people talk about. These stories **help us form a firm frame** of what Patagonia is as a brand and influence our purchasing decisions. As marketers, it is important to understand that **our story is not the entire story** but rather the **first chapter of stories** that **people will build on top of**. Therefore, **we should tell stories** not just for ourselves but **to catalyse others to tell stories on our behalf** so that our message can reverberate and benefit us.

Based on your expertise in the influence of culture, what guidance can you offer educational institutions aiming to boost their global reputation and appeal to a diverse student body with culturally responsive marketing?

Every day, there are **exogenous shocks to the system**, which can have a significant impact on society. As a result, people try to make sense of these events by interpreting them and deciding if they are acceptable to people like them. For brands, particularly institutions of higher education, these events present an **opportunity to communicate their perspective** on the situation. Rather than simply reporting the news, brands can **offer their point of view and explain why it is important**.

Nike believes that every human body is an athlete. When something happens in the world of athletes, Nike feels licensed to say something. They have a point of view on the world as these things happen in the zeitgeist and discourse happens. The brand goes, "Hey, here's our point of view on it based on how we see the world." Someone goes, "Yeah, I like that." That's how Nike sees the world. Should athletes be considered role models? What's the importance of failure? Why is it important that young girls play sports? What does it mean to be an elite black golfer in a world that is almost all predominantly white? These questions are important, and Nike has a point of view on them.

Similarly, for higher education institutions, no one sees an ad and says, "I'm applying to that school." There are **many stimuli in the world** that people bump into that **ultimately inform those decisions**, much like buying a car. Let's say someone has seen the brand of the car and they've seen a few people drive it. They've seen these ads. The alchemy of all these things ends up influencing their decision based on consumption. This is the same thing that happens with universities and higher education. So, the idea then is **what catalysts are we creating? What external shocks to the system? What stimuli are we creating that allows us to communicate our point of view on the world so that someone goes, "I have to go to that school."?**

"WHAT STIMULI ARE WE CREATING THAT ALLOWS US TO COMMUNICATE OUR POINT OF VIEW ON THE WORLD SO THAT SOMEONE GOES, 'I HAVE TO GO TO THAT SCHOOL'?"



JENNY LI FOWLER

Jenny Li Fowler is the director of social media strategy at the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** and author of **"Organic Social Media."** She oversees developing and executing Institute-wide social media initiatives and campaigns and provides social media consultation and direction for more than 260 departments, labs, and centres. She also manages MIT's flagship X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads, and TikTok accounts. Prior to MIT, she served as a Social Media Manager and Web Editor for the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Jenny is a recurring correspondent for Hubspot's IN-BOUND and a recognised voice across the social media marketing space.

BEYOND LIKES AND SHARES:

What are the foundational elements of building a successful online community for educational institutions, and how can they foster a sense of belonging among students and faculty?

In my experience, the foundation of a successful online community for educational institutions lies in **authenticity, and proactive engagement.** It's about creating a **platform** where students and faculty **feel seen and heard.** The key is to showcase a **wide array of stories** that reflect the **true diversity of experiences within the community.** This approach fosters a **sense of belonging** by highlighting that **everyone's story has value and a place.** To achieve this, I focus on active listening and open channels for story submissions, ensuring that we're **not just telling stories** but also **reflecting the community's voice.** Participation is encouraged through **interactive content and opportunities** for direct contributions, making the community not just an audience but **active narrators** of their own stories. This **sense of ownership** is crucial for building a connected and engaged online community.

How can social media strategies be tailored to effectively share the stories and experiences of a diverse university community, promoting cross-cultural understanding and engagement?

To effectively share the diverse stories and experiences of a university community, social media strategies must be as multifaceted as the community itself. This means **going beyond the surface** to find stories that showcase the rich tapestry of backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. It's not just about posting content; it's about **engaging in meaningful**

CRAFTING A DIGITAL CAMPUS THAT CONNECTS

conversations and **fostering connections.** I make it a priority to use a **variety of content formats,** from videos to written stories, to **ensure accessibility and relatability** across different segments of our community. Importantly, I focus on creating **content that sparks dialogue** and **brings people together,** promoting cross-cultural understanding and engagement. This approach involves **constantly evolving our strategies** based on community feedback and engagement patterns, ensuring that **our social media platforms are inclusive and reflective** of the diverse voices within our institution.

In the higher education sector, how do you evaluate the success of social media initiatives, and what metrics do you find most valuable in gauging community engagement and growth?

Evaluating the success of our social media initiatives in the higher education sector is multifaceted. While traditional metrics like engagement rates and follower growth are important indicators of reach and engagement, I delve deeper into the **impact of our content on the community.** To me, **success** is when our content sparks **meaningful conversations, strengthens connections,** and **enhances the sense of belonging** among students and faculty. I pay close attention to the **comments and interactions our posts generate,** looking for signs of positive impact and areas for improvement. Both direct and indirect feedback is invaluable. It informs our content strategy and helps us adjust our approach to better serve our community's needs. Ultimately, the most valuable metric is **the level of genuine engagement** and **the positive changes** we see in our community because of our social media efforts.

Given the rapid evolution of digital platforms, what advice would you offer to higher education professionals looking to stay ahead in leveraging social media for community building?

Staying ahead in the rapidly evolving digital landscape requires **flexibility, creativity,** and a **deep understanding** of your **community's needs.** My advice for higher education professionals looking to leverage social media for community building is to **remain authentic and focused on fostering meaningful connections.** It's essential to keep abreast of the **latest trends and platform updates,** but more importantly, to **listen to your community.** Their feedback and engagement are your most valuable guides. **Experiment** with different **content formats and storytelling approaches** to see what resonates best, but always ensure that your efforts are **inclusive and representative of the diverse voices** within your institution. Remember, the goal is to create a space where **everyone feels welcome and valued.** By prioritising authenticity and fostering community engagement, you can create a **dynamic and supportive online environment** that reflects the spirit and diversity of your institution.

"EVERYONE'S STORY HAS VALUE AND A PLACE."



THE GOIN' STORY

LARS MOLENAAR

Lars Molenaar, Co-founder of Goin' - Connecting your students, has a background in Economics and Law and he has a keen interest in progress and innovations. Lars is a strong believer of just starting to make things happen and is strongly driven by leveraging technology to make societal impact. But most importantly, he wants to enjoy life by surrounding himself with people who energise him.

Could you share the story behind the foundation of Goin' and what inspired you to create a platform dedicated to improving the university onboarding experience for students worldwide?

Cornelis and I were in a classroom with **70% international students** and we really saw them **struggling** before and after arrival. They all had gone through the same steps and were really **having to put in efforts to connect**. When there were three students from Hamburg who didn't know each other, it seemed odd and easy to resolve. We ran a **pilot** and then **Jessica Winters** (head of International Marketing at Utrecht University) came to us and wanted to use it for her admitted students already, as she knows that the **best marketing for universities** is by **giving** them a **warm welcome**. From that moment on, **we expanded rapidly**.

Goin' emphasises the importance of early social connections for incoming students. Could you elaborate on how your platform specifically facilitates these initial interactions and the impact it has on student satisfaction and retention rates?

On the platform, students are really in the **driver's seat** to see **how they want to make connections**. This can be done via **one-on-one chats**, via **groups**, via **events** etc. Also, students can easily **navigate the entire university via smart filters**. This way, students can find others on **very specific criteria**, such as Law Students who are also into playing football and want to go to the Gym together. That results into **a lot of friendships** of course.

FROM CLASSROOM IDEA TO STARTUP SUCCESS

Your platform offers a unique approach by creating exclusive, invite-only university environments. How do you ensure these digital spaces remain safe and inclusive, fostering genuine connections among students from diverse backgrounds?

We really stimulate students to **keep the conversations positive** and **talk with respect** towards each other. Students also have to accept our **Code of Conduct** so that they know what the rules are of the community. Also, we have **Community Managers** who keep an eye on the **group conversations**. Moreover, students can **report and block specific behaviour or content** so that we can act on that. Finally, we also even have **software** that can **detect and automatically hide specific words and content**. Of course, something could always happen, but this way it can be picked up and the university or we can act on it, which is better than if it's happening on the Big Tech social media platforms where there is little safety.

Feedback from users highlights Goin's role in easing the transition to university life, especially for international students. Can you share some success stories or specific features of the platform that have been particularly effective in supporting students during their move abroad?

Goin' Connect has indeed been **instrumental** for international students transitioning to university life. For instance, **Anastasia from Russia** created a running group through the app, which not only helped her meet classmates in Milan but also **alleviated feelings of isolation**. **Dina from Kazakhstan** found it invaluable for connecting with fellow countrymen, **enhancing** her **sense of belonging**. Moreover, students like **Adna from Bosnia** appreciate the app for its **ease in facilitating new friendships**, which enrich their study abroad experience significantly. **Katya from Mexico** has even built a **support network** that assists with both **academic and logistical queries**, like visa processes, which can often be daunting. The app's community-building feature appears to be a cornerstone in helping students feel more confident and less alone as they navigate this significant life transition.

"GOIN' CONNECT HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TRANSITIONING TO UNIVERSITY LIFE."

INSIDER NEWS



QS RANKINGS BY SUBJECT

The most recent edition of the QS Rankings by Subject, released in March, features Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in 19 subject rankings, two more compared to the 2023 edition. Moreover, it holds the 1st position in Italy for the subjects of Nursing as well as for Theology, Divinity and Religious Studies. Its best positioning worldwide is for Classics and Ancient History, for where Cattolica ranks 31st.

NEW DOUBLE DEGREE PROGRAMMES

UC Berkeley and Università Cattolica have recently established a double degree agreement allowing third-year students of the Laurea Magistrale a Ciclo Unico in Giurisprudenza to earn a Master of Laws (LLM) from Berkeley Law on top of their degree at Cattolica. Moreover, starting next academic year Cattolica will welcome students from the following new double degree partners: Atma Jaya Catholic University (Indonesia), Thuongmai University (Vietnam), Universidad de Montevideo (Uruguay), Universidad de Especialidades Espiritu Santu (Ecuador), Mahidol University International College (Thailand), Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (Peru), Wenzhou Medical University (China), Presidency University (India).



ITALIAN STUDIES IN ITALY

Starting next year, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore is set to welcome students from three Chinese universities who are pursuing degrees taught in Italian language in the fields of Arts Management, Communication, Languages and Linguistics. This initiative is part of a broader effort to foster international collaboration and cultural exchange. The programme will offer a comprehensive experience, immersing students in the Italian academic environment and the richness of Italian culture, language, and history. In addition to traditional classroom learning, students will benefit from hands-on experiences through field trips to historical sites and cultural institutions across Italy.

NEW MILAN CAMPUS

Università Cattolica has recently acquired a new building close to the main Gemelli campus, in the very heart of the historic centre of Milan. The building, constructed during the Napoleonic domination of the city, originally served as headquarters for the Royal Guard. It was dedicated to Giuseppe Garibaldi in the 20th century and has been hosting the State Police since 1981. Once renovations are completed, the building will feature 132 new classrooms, capable of accommodating a total of 10,500 students, over a surface area of 53,000 square feet.



A NEW MEDICINE AND SURGERY PROGRAMME IN BOLZANO

On 18th May 2024, the first batch of students for the new Medicine and Surgery programme in Bolzano underwent their admission test. This programme has been created with the support of the province of Bolzano to actively respond to the local need for doctors and healthcare professionals. The programme will be taught in English, and internships will be available in both Italian and German.

UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

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BA in Foreign Languages & Literature
Summer Abroad Programme at Boston University
Class of 2016

DAZN Senior NFL Content Manager
Global Flag Football Ambassador
Italian National Team Captain



NOT JUST GRADUATES. GLOBAL CHANGE MAKERS.



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WORLD BOUND



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No. 10

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FOTO/ILLUSTRATIONS

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Dear Colleagues & Friends,

Meet Università Cattolica Staff at the upcoming EAIE Annual Conference and Exhibition in Toulouse, France, in September 2024.

We look forward to meeting you!

Cattolica International