THE DECADE AHEAD

QUESTIONS THAT WILL SHAPE OUR WORLD.

How emerging trends and critical issues in education, AI, migration, and sustainability will influence the future of global development.

IN A DATA-DRIVEN FUTURE, WILL TRUST BE THE MOST VALUABLE ASSET?

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST DISCOVERY IN PHYSICS OF OUR TIME AND HOW WILL IT SHAPE OUR FUTURE?

WHAT WILL THE CLASSROOM OF THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

HOW WILL INNOVATIONS IN PERSONALISED MEDICINE REVOLUTIONISE PATIENT CARE OVER THE NEXT DECADE?

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 11ᵗʰ edition of *Worldbound* – a future-facing issue that invites us to look ahead, question boldly, and explore **The Decade Ahead.**

As we navigate a time of rapid transformation, this edition turns our attention to the critical questions shaping our shared future. What kind of world are we preparing for? What role will education play amid the rise of artificial intelligence, the urgency of climate change, and shifting demographic and geopolitical landscapes? These are just some challenges that demand more than technical solutions – they call for responses rooted in both knowledge and values, cultivating not only skills, but the capacity to lead with integrity.

At Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, we believe that education must extend far beyond the classroom. It must cultivate not just competence, but character; not just innovation, but insight. Our mission challenges us to prepare students not only to succeed in the world as it is – but to help shape the world as it could be.

The voices in this edition reflect the diversity of thought, expertise, and experience that define our academic community. From ethical questions around AI to the future of healthcare, from cultural preservation to economic reinvention, the topics explored here span disciplines while converging around a shared purpose: building a more resilient, inclusive, and imaginative future.

The *Worldbounder* community profiled in these pages – scholars, alumni, and global experts – are not merely observers of change. They are agents of it. Through research, dialogue, and public engagement, they offer perspectives that challenge assumptions and inspire new possibilities.

This issue is both a reflection and a provocation. It invites each of us to embrace complexity with clarity, to meet uncertainty with curiosity, and above all, to keep asking the questions that matter most.

Welcome to Worldbound.
Welcome to The Decade Ahead.
Are you ready to challenge the answers?

Warm regards,

Worldbound Editorial Team

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Beyond Knowledge: Universities and Their Role in Shaping Society

More than places of learning, universities today must be spaces where ethical leadership, critical thinking, and bold imagination converge — where students are not only trained to succeed but equipped to navigate complexity with purpose and integrity.

What defines a meaningful education in uncertain times? How do we nurture minds — not merely for careers — but for responsibility, creativity, and the courage to ask deeper questions?

At **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore,** we believe the **path forward** is not found in easy answers, but in **bold questions.** As our **Rector, Professor Elena Beccalli,** reminds us, **the future belongs** not to those who rush to answer, but **to those who dare to question deeply.**

Looking toward the future means exploring the crucial themes that define our times: artificial intelligence, migration, sustainability, and the evolution of education itself. These issues invite us to consider **questions** that extend far **beyond technical exper-** **tise,** touching on moral, cultural, and fundamentally human perspectives. *What kind of intelligence do we value in an era driven by technology? How do we define justice in a world of shifting borders? What models of growth are sustainable when our planet demands careful steward- ship?* Ultimately, we must reflect on the evolving **role of universities** — not only as **places of learning** but as **institutions capable of shaping broader society.**

Learning to Question, Leading to Serve

In an age marked by distraction and superficial engagement, **Professor Andrea Gaggioli** reminds us that education must reclaim its essence: the capacity "to create possible worlds." Historically, the Greek skholē signified leisure, contemplation, and the joy of discovery. **Can we return to such roots?** At Università Cattolica, we believe it is essential. **A universi- ty's mission is not to standardise thought, but to liberate it.**

We also recognise that **universities must broaden** their **self-perception beyond** their primary function of **imparting knowledge.** Traditionally, universities have viewed themselves primarily as institutions dedicated to knowledge acquisition and dissem- ination. However, it is crucial that they embrace a wider role — actively shaping the world beyond academia.

"Our ambition is not only to stand among the leading universities globally but to actively contribute to the betterment of the world."

By expanding their vision, **universi- ties can meaningfully contribute to global dialogues and actions, impacting society far beyond the classroom.**

This commitment is clear in our interdisciplinary research and global collaborations. It guides our **Edu- cational Pact for Artificial Intelli- gence,** ensuring technology enhances human flourishing. It breathes life into our **Africa Plan** — partnership built on reciprocity, empowering local leader- ship and integral development across borders. It resonates in the work of alumni such as **Lorenzo Accon- ciamessa,** whose advocacy at the **European Court of Human Rights** reminds us that justice, like education, must be defended every day.

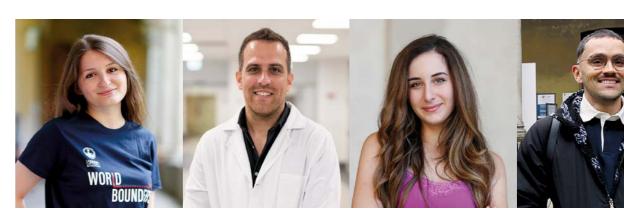## Universities as Forces for the Common Good

The next decade poses significant challenges to educational institutions, demanding thoughtful reflection on their broader societal role. **Univer- sities** must move beyond merely equipping students with knowledge and skills, embracing instead the **responsibility to cultivate ethical leaders** who can **positively influ- ence the world** around them. **Rector Elena Beccalli** emphasises this com- mitment, stating clearly:

"Our ambition is not only to stand among the leading universities glob- ally but to actively contribute to the betterment of the world."

This vision requires **educating stu- dents** not simply to **adapt,** but to **lead with imagination and responsi- bility** — navigating complexity and envisioning new possibilities.

The future of education isn't just digital or global — **it is fundamen- tally human.**

Let's not only explore the future: let's question it, shape it, and serve it, together.

Not just graduates. Global changemakers.

As higher education undergoes rapid global change **universities must redefine their role in shaping the future.** At Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, this means **going beyond academic excellence** to **cultivate ethical leadership, interdisciplinary collaboration,** and a **strong commitment to the common good.**

In this conversation, **Rector Elena Beccalli** shares her **vision for the University's future:** embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI) with responsibility, **expanding global partnerships,** and **equipping students** with the **knowledge** and **values** to **drive meaningful change.** She discusses how Università Cattolica is not just **responding to transformation** but **actively shaping** the **solutions** that will **define** the **coming decades** – through **pioneering research, internationalisation,** and an **unwavering focus on human-centred education.**

"Our goal is to be the best for the world."

These are pivotal times to lead a higher education institution, especially as the world is experiencing rapid technological, social, and environmental changes. How do you see Università Cattolica contributing to answering the questions that will shape the coming decade and beyond?

At Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, we see **education** as a **force for societal transformation.** Our **goal** is not simply to **be among the best** universities **in the world,** but to **be the best for the world** – a place where **knowledge serves** the **common good** and **shapes** a more just, **sustainable future.**

This commitment drives our approach to today's major challenges. Through **interdisciplinary research, ethical leadership,** and **global engagement,** we prepare **students** not just to **adapt to change,** but to **lead it with responsibility** and **vision.**

One key initiative is our **Educational Pact for Artificial Intelligence,** which ensures that **AI enhances human judgment** rather than replacing it. Additionally, our **Africa Plan expands educational access** in underserved regions, fostering **knowledge exchange** and **opportunity** on a **global scale.**

Beyond career preparation, we believe universities must **cultivate critical thinkers and ethical leaders.** Through rigorous research, inclusive education, and international collaboration, Università Cattolica is not only **responding to today's questions** – it is **shaping** the **answers** that will **define the decades ahead.**

In a recent interview, you have emphasised interdisciplinarity and innovation as central to Università Cattolica's mission. How do you foster dialogue between disciplines to address today's complex challenges?

Interdisciplinarity is **central to our mission,** ensuring that academic fields collaborate to tackle complex global challenges. We **integrate diverse disciplines** through initiatives such as **research hubs** and **cross-faculty projects.** To strengthen research collaboration, we invest in **cross-faculty research hubs** tackling societal challenges.

We also participate in **SACRU,** a **global network** of **Catholic universities,** to foster **international research collaborations.**

More than structural changes, fostering interdisciplinarity requires a mindset shift. **We encourage curiosity, critical thinking,** and **collaboration** so that students and faculty can navigate complexity with a broad yet integrated vision.

Università Cattolica's Africa Plan

The **Africa Plan** is an ambitious initiative designed to **expand** the University's presence and commitment across the **African continent** through various **projects** and **collaborations.** Its main goal is to **foster development** and **tackle inequality and poverty,** working hand in hand with **African Catholic universities** to enhance **local leadership training.** Rooted in the principle of equal partnership, the Plan advances **integral human development** in line with the **social doctrine of the Church.**

Encompassing more than **120 projects,** the Africa Plan currently involves **292 African students** from **38 nations** and **104 Italian students** across **13 countries.** These initiatives encompass fields such as **health, agriculture, economic development,** and the **promotion of African culture.** The University maintains a **presence in sub-Saharan, northern,** and **southern regions** – across English, French, and Portuguese-speaking countries – where it facilitates student and lecturer **exchanges, joint programmes,** and **master's degrees** in collaboration **with local universities.**

Research forms **another cornerstone** of the initiative, with **European and African scholars** joining forces on various topics. **Solidarity and volunteering opportunities** are also **key components,** reflecting the Plan's broad engagement in areas ranging from **agribusiness and environmental sustainability** to **food security, health, education,** and **economic advancement.**

Equally important, Università Cattolica aims to serve as a **key partner** for the **social advancement** and **cultural enrichment** of **African diasporas in Italy.** The Africa Plan is funded through various sources, including the Italian government, the European Commission, and the University itself.

"Africa Plan: Sharing knowledge across borders."

"Università Cattolica is shaping the answers that will define the decades ahead."

Internationalisation is a core part of Università Cattolica's vision. How does global engagement enhance the University's mission?

Our **network** spans **over 600 partner institutions** in **82 countries,** offering students opportunities for **exchanges, double-degree programmes, international internships,** and **service-learning projects.** These **experiences** are not just add-ons; they are **essential** in **preparing** students to **think critically, collaborate across borders,** and **address global challenges** with a multidisciplinary approach.

Beyond student mobility, our international engagement strengthens research innovation. Through **strategic alliances** − such as our leadership in the SACRU network − our **faculty and researchers collaborate** on **pressing issues,** from **sustainability** and **bioethics** to **digital transformation** and **social justice.**

By fostering **deep academic and cultural exchange,** we ensure that **Università Cattolica** is not merely present on the global stage. It plays an **active role** in **shaping** the **discourses** and **solutions** that **define our shared future.**

Artificial Intelligence is disrupting the higher education sector as well. How do you see Università Cattolica adapting to these changes and maintaining its relevance in this new AI era?

AI is **reshaping how we teach, learn,** and **conduct research.** At Università Cattolica, we aim to guide this transformation responsibly, **ensuring technology serves human development** rather than replacing it.

Our **Educational Pact for AI** integrates **AI into education** in a way that **upholds intellectual integrity** and **human dignity.** We

are exploring AI-driven personalised learning, enhanced research methodologies, and accessibility improvements while addressing risks such as bias and misinformation.

We also serve as a **hub for interdisciplinary AI research,** bringing together philosophers, ethicists, data scientists, and social scientists to **shape a responsible technological future.**

Beyond technical expertise, **we prepare students to thrive in an AI-driven world** with critical thinking, ethical responsibility, and a commitment to social good.

"Our graduates are leaders, innovators, and ethical change makers."

At **Università Cattolica, we believe our graduates are not just graduates – they are global changemakers.** Whether studying medicine, business, education, or humanities, we see their contributions as drivers of positive change. How do you envision the impact of our graduates in the world, and how do you see Università Cattolica fostering this role?

Indeed, **our graduates** are more than professionals − they are **leaders, innovators,** and **ethical changemakers.** Education at Università Cattolica is not just about **knowledge acquisition** but about **learning how to serve society.**

To cultivate this impact, we focus on:

Values-Based Education − Rooted in Catholic social thought, we ensure that **graduates lead with integrity** and a **commitment to the common good.**

Real-World Experience − Through internships, service learning, and research projects, **students tackle societal challenges before they graduate.**

A Global Perspective − Our network of over 600 partner universities and initiatives like the Africa Plan encourage students to **think beyond borders and collaborate on global solutions.**

Most importantly, we instil a **lifelong responsibility.** Our graduates step into the world not just to succeed, but to **make a difference,** knowing that their **education** is a **foundation** for **continuous growth, ethical action,** and **meaningful change.**

"Fostering interdisciplinarity requires a mindset shift."

Driving Positive Change

At **Università Cattolica**, our **students** and **alumni** are more than **professionals**—they are **global changemakers.** Equipped with a **values-based education**, **practical experience**, and a **truly global perspective**, they carry **integrity** and **ethical commitment** into every field they enter. Whether impacting healthcare, business, education, or the humanities, **they serve society and inspire transformation worldwide.** Discover how their journeys reflect the **core mission of Università Cattolica: empowering graduates** not only for **professional success**, but for **lifelong responsibility** and **meaningful contributions** to the common good.
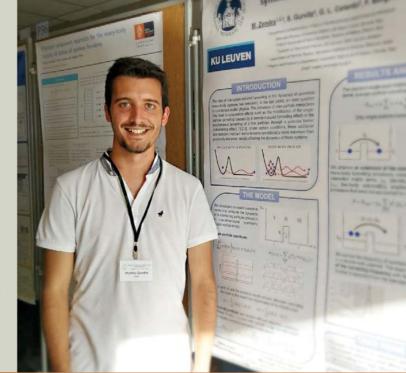
What do you think is the biggest discovery in physics of our time and how will it shape our future?

One of the most remarkable breakthroughs in modern physics involves **understanding how electrons behave within quantum materials**—mysterious substances that could **revolutionise energy transmission and computing**. This pioneering research could **redefine** the **boundaries of technological innovation**, enabling ultra-efficient energy systems, advanced computing power, and sustainable transportation solutions previously thought impossible. Exploring these exciting developments reveals how **today's science** can fundamentally **transform tomorrow's world**, **turning** once-theoretical **possibilities** into **tangible realities** that could **reshape** our **daily lives** in profound and **unexpected ways.**

"Physics is a universal language."

INSIDE QUANTUM PHYSICS: MATTEO ZENDRA'S PHD RESEARCH ON ELECTRON BEHAVIOUR

What fundamental forces are shaping the world around us in ways we are only beginning to understand? Beneath the surface of everything we touch, see and use, a **hidden dance of particles moves and interacts** according to rules that often defy our intuition. These tiny mysteries are **shaped by forces** that are both **seen and unseen** and they **shape our reality** in profound ways. **What is compelling them, and what motivates them?** They behave in a certain way because **they have reasons**, and **I want to understand them.** Generations of scientists have been driven by questions like these, and the boundaries of human knowledge have been pushed.

In this area of paradox and potential, the story of Matteo Zendra unfolds and surprises us. The strange and unpredictable behaviour of quantum materials has been understood by Matteo, who is a **final-year PhD student** at **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore** and **KU Leuven.** His work has established **theoretical physics**, revealing how **electrons move in ways that can change energy transmission and computing power.**

From a **young age**, Matteo's **interest in learning about the universe** was sparked by a fascination with its smallest components. Captivated by the **behaviour of particles** and the **forces that govern them**, Matteo's inquisitive nature became the **foundation** from which his passion and expertise grew. While pursuing his **master's in physics** at **Università Cattolica's Brescia campus**, this curiosity found its **focus in quantum materials**, a field that challenges established physics with its unpredictable and enigmatic behaviour. This fascination led him to embark on a **PhD** dedicated to **developing theoretical models** that help explain and predict the complex behaviour of electrons within these unique materials.

However, **Matteo's work** goes beyond theoretical models; it thrives on a **spirit of collaboration** that spans borders and cultures. Through his **joint PhD programme** with **Università Cattolica** and **KU Leuven**, he has been a significant part of **unique exchanges of ideas.** This **collaborative approach** has not only propelled his research forward but also **deepened** his **connection**

to the **global physics community.** His **first international conference** in **Prague** in **2022** was a **pivotal moment**, where, despite the initial nerves of presenting his findings after a year of research, Matteo left with a **profound sense of belonging** within a **collective of passionate researchers.** For Matteo, it underscored how *"physics is a universal language,"* bringing together **people from diverse backgrounds** to **push the boundaries of knowledge.** It was a powerful reminder of the importance of collaboration and the global pursuit of discovery that defines his work.

Both challenges and breakthroughs have marked Matteo's journey navigating the complex terrain of quantum materials. His **research** focuses on **developing theoretical models** that explain **how electrons interact and behave** within these materials, with **potential implications for new supercomputing technologies.** To work within this intricate field, a deep understanding of complex systems is needed alongside the ability to face the reality that many lines of inquiry may not lead to immediate answers. In fact,

"Discovery is a shared pursuit."

covery of high-temperature superconductors, which operate at comparatively warmer conditions like -150°C, represented a breakthrough, even if it remains far from practical room temperature use.

Matteo emphasises the **profound potential** that lies ahead: *"If we can make **superconductors work** at even higher temperatures, for example, **room temperature**, we could **create ultra-efficient power transmission**, make **transportation more sustainable** with **technologies like magnetic levitation**, and **change the way we interact with the world.**"* His research delves into the movement and pairing of electrons in quantum materials, an effort that contributes to this overarching goal. For Matteo, **the promise of these materials** is not just theoretical - it represents **a pathway to reshaping energy use**

and efficiency on a global scale. Answering such questions, however, is a **collective effort** that builds on decades of research and collaboration. *"It's a process no one alone can do,"* he acknowledges, highlighting how **generations of scientists read and build on each other's work** to inch closer to revolutionary discoveries. **This shared pursuit of knowledge defines the heart of Matteo's journey in physics.**
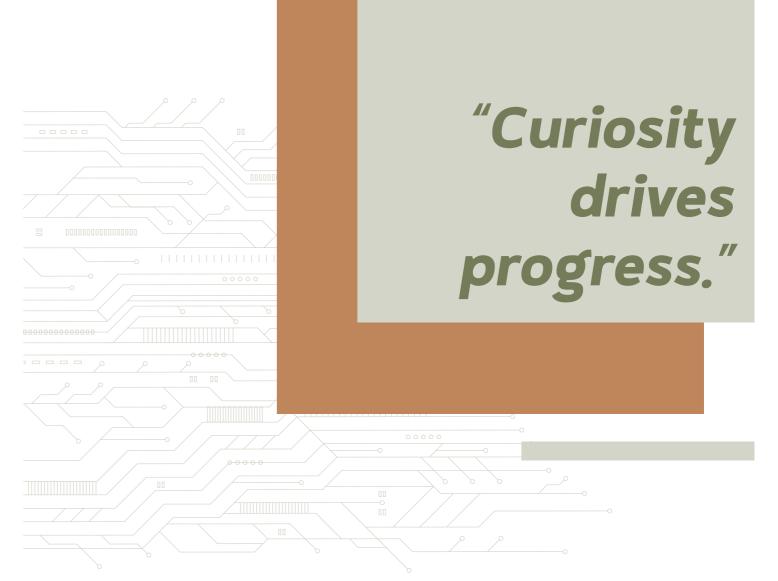
Matteo Zendra stands at the threshold of completing his PhD, and he **represents the essence of a scientist** who is dedicated to **pushing the boundaries of human understanding** and **exploring new frontiers** in the **pursuit of knowledge.** His work in quantum materials highlights the **complications, challenges,** and **deep potential of**

modern physics, driven by a passion that began in childhood. His **theoretical models on electron behaviour** show us just **how science can shape our future.** Yet, he knows that true progress requires collaboration and perseverance. In a world where groundbreaking discoveries often emerge from decades of shared research, **Matteo's contributions** are part of a broader narrative, and they are a **testament** to how the **collective effort** of scientists can **pave the way for revolutionary change.** Physics brings together diverse minds to tackle the greatest challenges and reimagine what is possible in today's world. For Matteo, the **promise of reshaping energy use**, **transportation,** and **technology** is not just theoretical; it is a **vision for a better future,** built one discovery at a time.

accepting inconclusive results was initially difficult for Matteo. *"So even if there's **not a discovery involved at the end of the day**,"* he reflects, *"you're **paving the path for future discoveries** to be made."* This mindset has driven him to **view setbacks as opportunities,** often leading to **new questions** and **deeper insights.**

When asked about what he considers the **biggest discovery in physics today** and **how it will shape our future,** Matteo Zendra's response is both deeply rooted in current scientific progress and a vision for transformative change. He points to the **advancements in high-temperature superconductors,** which first emerged in the 1980s. *"So right now, it's very inconvenient to have those kinds of materials working at such low temperatures,"* Matteo explains, noting that **traditional superconductors require extreme conditions close to absolute zero.** The dis-

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Many-body tunnelling effects in nonstandard Hubbard models

Preliminary Defence
November 15th, 2024
KU Leuven

PhD candidate: Matteo Zendra
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"Curiosity drives progress."

Could the rise of AI-powered translation tools bring us closer to a universal language for global communication, or might it contribute to the extinction of minority languages and erode the rich diversity of human expression?

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded in our daily communication, the relationship between language and technology rapidly evolves. Machine translation and Natural Language Processing promise seamless global interaction, but they also raise urgent questions about cultural identity, nuance, and the preservation of minority languages. In this era of linguistic automation, we are challenged to consider not just how we communicate – but what might be lost, or gained, when language becomes data.

From Early Tech Curiosity to Linguistic Computing in Milan

*What happens when a **tech-savvy creative** leaves the corporate world to **follow her curiosity**? Sandra Mickwitz, a **student at Università Cattolica**, traded her **job in Germany for a new start in Milan.** Now pursuing a **Master of Science in Linguistic Computing,** she's applying her skills in **Natural Language Processing at Human Technopole** – and proving that **it's never too late to reinvent your path.***

Time is finite, and true coincidences are rare. **Every decision you make today could set off a butterfly effect that changes your life.** Just ask **Sandra Mickwitz** – a **tech-driven creative** who found her next chapter in **Milan** through the **master's programme** in **Linguistic Computing** at **Università Cattolica.**

Imagine arriving in Milan during **2020:** travel restrictions, city in lockdown and social distancing – a **difficult start to the Italian *dolce vita*.** This is what Sandra Mickwitz, and her Italian partner experienced, as any would, Sandra started thinking: **What will I do next?** What can I even accomplish in these circumstances?

Let's look back at how she got there:

In a **Swedish-speaking** town in **Finland,** a young Sandra learned how to type her name with a computer keyboard before she could pick up a pencil. Maybe it was the memories of her dad taking apart computers and making sure the PC had all the updates or her early tech proficiency, but **technology has always been a red thread weaved through her life.**

Studying **Computer Sciences** at the **University of Stockholm,** she met **her Italian partner,** another red thread she began to weave, **unaware of just how far it would take her.**

But **her life story** isn't made of red threads alone, it's also **shaped by opportunities she created.** Sandra describes herself as **curious** and **creative,** believing that **your only limit is your creativity** and **it's up to you to make things happen.** This mindset is tied to her life philosophy: saying yes, which she describes as another red thread:

*"A **red thread** for me has been saying **yes to opportunities** when they arise sometimes even **without** completely **knowing what it completely**

*includes. I think this has been crucial in helping me figure out what I truly want to do, and **trying to say yes to as many things as possible.""***

After relocating to **Germany** alongside her partner, she landed a **corporate position** in Germany, working for the **American company EBSCO:** an opportunity she pursued on her own initiative, and she said yes to without much information. While she **enjoyed her time there** and feels **fulfilled** by the knowledge, experiences, and contributions she made, with the move to Italy among pandemic struggles, she took a **step back** to think about **what to do next.** She shared with us a thought that helped her come to a decision:

"If I had all the money in the world, what would I choose to do, and would that be what I am doing currently, or would it be something else?"

Her **everlasting thirst for learning** is how she discovered the **Linguistic Computing master's programme** at **Università Cattolica** – an **ideal fit** for someone with a **tech background** and a **passion for language;** Sandra explains that her **computer science degree** was **approached** from a **humanities perspective,** which made the **programme at Cattolica** all the more **appealing to her.**

She highlights how **her experience** coming **back to academia** has given her a **different perspective** to **ground herself** and **focus on what's really important: learning.** The **international community at Cattolica** has also been a **source of comfort and help** whenever she's needed. Sandra, **always searching for her next adventure,** started an **internship** at **Human Technopole,** where she is currently **working** on her **dissertation** and **exploring real-world applications** of **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** in the **public policy sector.**

Sandra's journey through Linguistic Computing mirrors the **promise and challenge of AI-powered translation tools.** While these **technologies** can **bring us closer** to **seamless global communication,** they also prompt **critical questions** about **cultural identity** and **preserving minority languages.** As Sandra explores the **intersection of technology and language,** her work highlights an **essential responsibility:** ensuring that **advances in AI** do not just streamline communication but also **honour** and **protect** the **invaluable richness of human linguistic diversity.**

"If I had all the money in the world, what would I choose to do?"

How can the European Court of Human Rights ensure that member states uphold their human rights obligations amid rising political and social tensions around migration?

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) faces one of the most complex legal and moral challenges of our time: upholding human rights obligations while respecting national sovereignty. As migration surges due to conflict and economic hardship, tensions rise between humanitarian responsibilities and national interests. The Court plays a crucial role in ensuring states protect migrants' rights, balancing legal enforcement with flexibility and adapting its approach to evolving political and social landscapes.

From Cattolica to the Court: How Lorenzo Defends Human Rights Across Borders

*Lorenzo Acconciamessa is an **Assistant Professor** of **International Law** at the **University of Palermo** and an **alumnus** of the **Faculty of Law** at **Università Cattolica.** He worked at the **European Court of Human Rights,** advocating, among others, **for vulnerable individuals unable to access the judicial system.** His work has highlighted the **importance of protecting human rights,** regardless of migration status or political discourse. Through his teaching, Lorenzo continues to **inspire the next generation** to **advocate for human rights** and emphasise the **importance of international law.***

Over the last few years, news outlets and social media have been flooded with **breaking news** and **developments** about the **influx of migration** into **Western Europe.** With conflicting opinions, disparaging remarks, and an overwhelming amount of information, it is **easy to lose track** of the **current situation** and **what truly matters: human rights.**

To explore this sensitive topic, we spoke to **Dr Lorenzo Acconciamessa,** a **lawyer and alumnus** of Università Cattolica, who currently serves as **Assistant Professor** of International Law at the University of Palermo.

Lorenzo's five-year academic journey began with the **Master of Law** at **Università Cattolica's Milan campus,** where he developed his **passion for human rights** and **international law.** He particularly recalls the **International Public Law course** taught by **Professor Pasquale De Sena**, his thesis supervisor and mentor, and the **Human Rights Law course** taught by **Professor Francesca De Vittor.**

During his time at Cattolica, Lorenzo participated in **several international programmes:** he completed a **summer school programme** at Utrecht University in the Netherlands in 2015, spent a year in Valencia, Spain, on an **Erasmus+ exchange,** undertook a period of study at the Institute for International and European Studies of the Panthéon-Sorbonne University in Paris through the **International Thesis programme,** and attended the **summer school** of The Hague Academy of International Law.

After graduating, Lorenzo pursued a **PhD** in **International Human Rights Law** at the **University of Palermo.** During his research, he successfully applied for an **Assistant Lawyer** position at the **European Court of Human Rights,** where he spent three years drafting judgments, analysing cases with judges, and contributing to the Court's decisions.

Lorenzo has conducted **extensive research** in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. This is why we asked him a few in-depth questions to gain a **deeper under-** standing of migration, its **complexities,** and the **Court's role** and **involvement** in this area.

He mentions that historically the **court** has been **very cautious in interfering** with migration regulation because it wants **states to have as much freedom as possible,** especially in migration due to personal or economic reasons.

*"It is very **hard** to **find strict obligations** in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights concerning **regularised migration,** regarding their **inclusion in society** and **support for their needs. The Court starts** from the assumption that **States are,** in principle, **free to manage migration as they wish.** In contrast, there are **stricter obligations** concerning **support** for the **life** and the **well-being** of **refugees** who are **under the control** of the **authorities,** but when it comes to **other migrants,** it is much more **complicated** to **find specific obligations."***

Lorenzo noted that there have been **important developments** in the **Court's case-law since 2020.** During that year, the Court issued a **contro-**

"Migration must be managed in compliance with human rights obligations."

versial judgment that appeared to suggest there were **no meaningful restrictions** on States' **migration management policies.** In the more recent years, the Court has progressively **shifted** from allowing states considerable flexibility in handling migration **to enforcing stricter compliance with human rights standards.**

One of Lorenzo's **main focuses of research** has been: **access to justice** for **children** and **vulnerable individuals.** Lorenzo has done extensive research on this topic, and he found that **countries** are **required** to be **increasingly flexible** in **allowing** them to **access the judicial system,** with the **help of Non-Governmental Organisations** which are now **permitted to file legal applications** on behalf of **children** and **other vulnerable individuals.**

His research and publications about these topics not only provide him with the **knowledge** and **legal capacity to answer** these **questions** but also, as a lawyer who can discuss judgments and provide different perspectives to those making the decisions, **make him** an **advocate for those who may lack one.**

The **impact of his research** does not stay in academia; it **extends to people who need that voice.**

Human rights in the case of migration have been a topic of controversial debate in social and political environments. However, **Lorenzo,** above all, **believes in protecting human rights in all instances.**

"Irrespective of any political opinion, there are human rights obligations that states have decided to undertake. So irrespective of which political opinion you may have about migration, **migration must be managed in compliance with human rights obligations."**

How can the next generation advocate for international human rights? When we asked Lorenzo, he shared that he recently became an Assistant Professor of International Law at the University of Palermo. Although he valued his role at the Court, teaching was always his dream, and he embraced this new opportunity knowing the Court could remain part of his future.

Lorenzo stressed that **international law courses** are **essential for all lawyers and international relations professionals.** Today, **no lawyer** – whether civil, criminal or administrative, and irrespective of whether they deal with purely "national" cases – **can ignore international law.**

"I think that **Università Cattolica** *does an* **excellent job emphasising** *that* **International Law** *and* **European Union Law** *are not distant or irrelevant topics, but rather* **essential elements** *that nowadays* **impact every field of law."**

Lorenzo Acconciamessa's journey from Università Cattolica to the European Court of Human Rights, and now as an Assistant Professor, shows how **passion,** paired with **commitment,** can **lead to work** that **influences** both **individuals** and **institutions.** His career highlights that **advocacy and using our voice** can **meaningfully affect others,** whether individually or broadly, and reminds us that **our passions** can become our **profession with perseverance.**

"International law impacts every field of law today."

What are the consequences of climate-induced migration? How will climate change and technology impact global politics and social inequalities?

Climate-induced migration intensifies global inequalities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups through displacement, poverty, and limited access to healthcare, education, and housing. Politically, it strains international relations, sparking conflicts over borders and resources. Climate change deepens these issues by destabilising communities and exacerbating socio-economic disparities. Although technology can support migration management and resource distribution, without committed political action and equitable investment, technological solutions risk worsening rather than resolving social inequalities.

Climate Migration and Human Rights: Monica Iyer's Journey from Università Cattolica to Global Advocacy

Monica Iyer, an international law professor at Georgia State University and alumna of Università Cattolica's ASERI Graduate School in Milan, dedicates her career to human rights, with a particular focus on climate migration. After studying international cooperation and development in Italy, Monica worked with the United Nations before moving into academia to educate and inspire future advocates. Her work highlights the connection between climate change, social inequality, and human rights, emphasising justice, dignity, and practical solutions to protect vulnerable communities globally.

Choosing to **dedicate your life** to **making the world a better place** is undeniably a **bold choice.** For **Monica Iyer,** this decision was not just a path but a **calling** – one that has profoundly **shaped her academic and professional journey,** driving her unwavering commitment to **protecting human rights,** especially those who are often overlooked.

Monica Iyer, currently a **lawyer** and **international law & human rights professor** at **Georgia State University,** is also a proud **Università Cattolica** *alumna.* Her academic journey began at the **University of Chicago,** where she earned a bachelor's degree in international studies in 2002, driven by an idealistic desire to make meaningful contributions using her skills. She continued at **New York University,** earning her **Juris Doctor degree** in **2010,** which opened doors to work in **public service** at the **New York Attorney General's Office.**

In **2015,** Monica and her husband chose to start a new chapter of their lives by moving to **Milan.** Seeking to enrich her international perspective by adding sociological and economic dimensions to her legal expertise, Monica was admitted to the **specialising master's in International Cooperation and Development (MICAD)** offered by **Università Cattolica's ASERI Graduate School of Economics and International Relations** *(Alta Scuola di Economia e Relazioni Internazionali).*

During her time at Università Cattolica, Monica **expanded her worldview** significantly beyond her legal background. Not only did she add onto the economics background she had from the University of Chicago but also saw the **relationship between human rights and economics issues.** *"Doing the masters in this area really helped give me a broader understanding of the dynamics that influence migration and my other subjects of study,"* she reflects.

A key highlight of Monica's experience at Università Cattolica was the **community she built – lasting connections** with professors and fellow students who remain **valuable** to her **professionally and personally.**

In addition, the **specialising master programme** focuses on helping students gain knowledge through **practical experiences.** As a result, Monica had the opportunity to do an **internship at the Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR).**

This set her on the path to having a full-time position, **she excelled** in her role and with recommendation of her colleagues, she worked as a **consultant before securing a full-time position as Humans Rights Officer.**

Monica enjoyed working at the **United Nations,** as it is a **way to be involved** in the **innovative discussions** to **set global norms around international issues.** While working for an international organisation can be very rewarding, it can be **challenging** at the same time due to the inherent **instability of the international political landscape.** Seeking greater stability and long-term engagement, she transitioned to the **world of academia,** a field she was interested in since law school. For Monica, the **best way to use her skills** is to **inspire** her **students** in the classroom:

"We must work harder with what we already have."

"Teaching is a multiplier of your impact; I engage with all of these students who are so brilliant and dedicated, and will probably have the potential to be much more impactful than I could ever be."

Teaching also allows Monica **more time to explore and dive** into human rights topics that she has always been interested in like **environmental migration,** one of her **main focuses right now** and a topic she is enduringly **passionate** about. **Climate-induced migration** is a topic that is **relatively new** to the international relations conversations, and it is a field that still holds a **lot of speculation around it.** Monica, having worked on this for the past few years, highlights how **challenging** this **topic** is, not just because of its **novelty**, but because of the **language used,** the **nuances** and the **socio-economic factors** that must be considered **alongside environmental ones.**

Environmental migration is the movement of a person **due to climate disasters** and **other environmental factors;** this movement can be within a country or abroad. This **phenomenon** is **multi-causal,** Monica reiterates, a lot of **social inequalities** go hand in hand **with it** and we can even, unconsciously, turn

it into a **political discussion,** when the **focus** should be **on protecting the human rights** of those who are **vulnerable to the phenomenon.**

Monica's approach to studying environmental migration is **focused on dignity, justice and agency,** of those affected by it. She says, *"What I can say with confidence is that there are a lot of people who are increasingly vulnerable to human rights violations, people in danger of losing access to housing, health care, and education".*

Preventing these outcomes through better **legal and social structures** is one of Monica's **passions.**

When asked about legal developments to protect vulnerable individuals, Monica raised an important question: **Do we really need more laws? Or do we need to better enforce existing law?** Utilising the human rights tools already in our legal framework, would address the challenges faced by people who are moving in the context of climate change.

Beyond legal tools, Monica mentions how we should **focus on** also **addressing the root of the issue: climate change.** She believes **technology** could **help us transform** our **energy systems** and **control fossil fuels exploitation.** However, Monica identifies a **critical gap in political will and economic investment** alongside necessary individual lifestyle changes.

While acknowledging the value of technological innovation, Monica insists that action should start with available resources: *"We don't need shiny new innovations; we must work harder with what we already have."*

She sees **potential** in **digital tools** to **support migrants,** though she is **skeptical** about their role in **raising public awareness** due to the **increase of misinformation.** Yet, Monica highlights **practical initiatives,** such as the USA Hello platform, a non-profit organisation where she serves on the board, providing essential information to migrants arriving in the United States (i.e. immigration procedures, enrolment to school, obtaining a driver's license, etc.).

Looking ahead, Monica remains **cautiously optimistic about the future.** Despite significant political and environmental challenges, she finds **hope in advocacy movements** and **youth-led initiatives,** such as Pacific Island students advocating for legal opinions on climate obligations at the International Court of Justice. She firmly believes **advocacy** and **active participation** will **build a sustainable future:** *"The next generation holds potential beyond what we can imagine."*

"The next generation holds potential beyond what we can imagine."

In a data-driven future, will trust be the most valuable asset?

As technology advances and data becomes increasingly essential to every aspect of life, trust will emerge as a key factor in how information is shared and utilised. From business decisions to personal interactions, the growing reliance on data raises important considerations around privacy, security, and transparency. As we move forward, the way trust is built and maintained will influence not just technological development, but also broader societal and ethical dynamics.

Trust, Data, and Determination: Niccolò's Rise in the World of Finance

*Niccolò Giuliacci is a **finance professional** currently working at **Exor,** an investment holding company based in **Amsterdam.** As a Università Cattolica alumnus, he completed a **double-degree programme** and a **joint pathway** in Banking and Finance: a bachelor's degree awarded jointly by **Università Cattolica and Bangor University,** and a master's degree joint pathway with **London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)** leading to a degree issued by **LSE and** one by **Università Cattolica.** His career, thanks to roles at HSBC, Cassa Depositi e Prestiti and now Exor, gave him **experience** both as a **client** and **advisor.** Through these experiences, he highlights the **importance of trust in finance,** emphasising transparency and data quality for navigating a data-driven world. He encourages students to **believe in themselves** and **follow their curiosity,** reminding them that **bold choices can lead to excellence.***

The summer before his final year of high school, a **student interning at a bank** might have admitted that he **didn't have** a **clear career goal.** Driven by curiosity and a willingness to explore, he decided to **try out banking** and went on to pursue a **bachelor's degree** in **Banking and Finance** at **Università Cattolica.**

The programme at Cattolica strongly focused on banking from the start, which was a driving factor for him. Driven by an **insatiable desire to learn,** he seized the opportunity to pursue two **Double Degree programmes** offered **by Cattolica:** a **bachelor's degree** jointly awarded **with Bangor University in Wales,** and a **master's degree** in partnership **with** the prestigious **London School of Economics and Political Science.**

His **ambition** was **relentless,** but it **wasn't easy** – he was away from family and friends, his free time was limited, and he was travelling between London and Milan when an **internship** at **HSBC** turned into a **full-time offer.**

However, he has **no regrets** – the positives far outweighed the negatives: **networking** with people from around the world, **learning to be independent,** and **improving** his **English.** It is an experience that he recommends to everyone. It **changes the way you look at life** and the **world.**

*"The **biggest challenge was managing myself.** For those six years, I didn't have much free time – but it was something I chose to do. Looking back, **I'm very happy with the choices I made.** They allowed me to **earn four degrees** and **work for prestigious firms."***

Niccolò Giuliacci, once an intern with doubts, became an **international professional** in **Banking and Finance.** This, along with his **unwavering determination,** led him to land a position at **Cassa Depositi e Prestiti in Rome,** where he learned the workings of a government-related entity for the first time and the hardships that came with it.

Yearning for a change and a new place to conquer, Niccolò set sail to a **new experience** at **Exor,** an investment holding company in the **Netherlands.** There he focuses on **corporate finance** and **investor relations.** The transition to Amsterdam had its personal and professional bumps, but Niccolò's **desire to enjoy** this **new experience** pushed him to **never demoralise** himself and remember that **all negative feelings come to an end.**

Niccolò's diverse experience, **working** both **as client and advisor,** is a perspective he considers **crucial** for a **successful career in finance.** This has given him **valuable insight** into the **complexity of finance** and the **importance of trust,** one of the most **delicate aspects** of **working with money.**

The **conversation of "trust"** is more **relevant** than ever in an **era** where **personal data** is always being **collected** and **stored by companies,** the **financial industry** in particular, handles **sensitive data** that requires a **higher level of trust.** Niccolò emphasises that **investors** are **people first,** and people appreciate **transparency and trust,** alongside **open communications;** these aspects are **key** if we want to **maintain trust** in a **data-driven future.** He mentions that while **data** is **essential,** its **volume** can be **overwhelming** which can lead to **con-**

"Those scary leaps can lead to excellence."

fusion. This is why Niccolò, and his current company are **prioritising quality information over quantity,** and **meaningful, transparent data** can be **key to fostering trust.** Trust is also reinforced by regulations set by financial market authorities, whose oversight is widely recognised and respected; the point is to **provide information** that is **clear** and **useful** and **not information for** the sake of **disclosure.**

The importance of trust is evident when we look at what happens in its absence. Niccolò points out how **banks have collapsed** due to a **loss** of **public confidence.** Trust is fundamental, and maintaining it requires **constant vigilance** to **avoid** actions that could **damage credibility.**

Data cannot exist without trust: in the data, in those who manage and in those who use it. **Trust** is **needed** not only in **data collection** and **processing,** but also in **oneself** when pursuing a **career in finance.** Had Niccolò not trusted himself, his path might have been very different.

Trusting yourself is Niccolò's **most important advice** for young students who are aiming for a career in banking and finance. You'll hear **plenty of opinions, advice,** and **unwanted comments** about your **future** – but while it's important to listen, at some point you need to step back, reflect, and **make your own decision. Studying** is an **investment,** and you'll need to **capitalise on it** eventually and you will do that **yourself.** Always try to consider **studying abroad,** do **international experience** and **take the leap** – Niccolò can tell you firsthand how those **scary leaps can lead to excellence.**

Niccolò's story is like a **road with different exits** that each have their **own uniqueness** and **flair** about them, through his **international mobility** he has become a **well-rounded professional** and **developed valuable personal skills** that he **implements** in his work **every day.**

"Trust is fundamental - in data, in others, and most importantly, in yourself when making career choices."

ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE, INSPIRING INNOVATION

At the heart of **Università Cattolica** lies a **vibrant research community** dedicated to **exploring new frontiers** and **addressing the most pressing global challenges. Our faculty** leads the way with **groundbreaking studies** in ethics, artificial intelligence, medicine, agriculture, psychology, demographics, and digital culture. Through collaboration and interdisciplinary exchange, **they transform knowledge into real-world solutions, opening new horizons for society.** Explore their stories, ideas, and discoveries—and see **how they are creating lasting impact and inspiration far beyond academia.**

LEADING THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE: INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND IMPACT

How will innovations in personalised medicine revolutionise patient care over the next decade?

*Personalised medicine is **transforming healthcare** through **AI-driven diagnostics, advanced imaging,** and **cutting-edge technology.** Professor Evis Sala explores **how** these **innovations enhance patient care, improve efficiency,** and **bridge** the **gap** between **rapid advancements** and **regulation.** At Università Cattolica, she is pioneering **medical education and research,** equipping future doctors with the **skills to integrate AI and personalised medicine into clinical practice.** As technology evolves, today's **medical students** will drive the **next revolution** in **patient-centred care.***

> "IF MY TEAM EXCELS BEYOND ME, I'VE DONE MY JOB."

PROFESSOR EVIS SALA

Professor Evis Sala is a pioneering figure in oncologic imaging, seamlessly **blending AI** with **advanced radiology** to **redefine cancer diagnostics.** As **Full Professor of Radiology** at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and **Director of Diagnostic Imaging and Oncologic Radiotherapy Department** at the **Gemelli Hospital,** she spearheads **innovative research** shaping **precision medicine.** Formerly at the University of Cambridge and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre, her expertise bridges **academia and clinical excellence.** Her groundbreaking work integrating AI with genomics has earned **global recognition,** including honorary memberships from the **Radiological Society of North America and the Japanese Society of Radiology.** A prolific scholar and thought leader, Professor Sala continues to drive the **future of oncologic imaging,** reinforcing **Università Cattolica's standing** at the **forefront of medical innovation.**

Professor Evis Sala's journey into medicine began with a **childhood curiosity** for **understanding people** and **problem-solving.** Initially pursuing a PhD in **Epidemiology and Biostatistics** her career took a decisive turn toward **radiology** after a **transformative experience** in **Cambridge,** exploring early forms of **artificial intelligence in medical data.** Inspired by a pioneering female radiologist and propelled by the challenges of the Albanian Civil War, Professor Sala embraced radiology, finding a path that **merged innovation with clinical excellence.** Her story highlights a personal and professional evolution deeply shaped by resilience, mentorship, and an **unwavering commitment** to **advancing patient care.**

Could you share some of the challenges you have faced as a pioneer in your field?

One of the biggest challenges is **overcoming resistance to change and innovation,** especially in traditional systems like Italy's healthcare. Being a **woman with international experience** can feel **isolating,** but it is also **empowering.** I have learned to draw confidence from the obstacles I've faced.

How do you balance being a professor, a researcher and a practitioner while also innovating in your area?

Multitasking in medicine is a **learned skill,** but **trust in your team** is key. Delegation, leadership, and mentorship are essential. If my **team members excel beyond me, I've done my job well.**

What unique opportunities do you think Università Cattolica provides students who are interested in innovative medical technology?

We have taken **time to develop information** and **communication technologies** that are **tied to AI** and **innovation.** We meet every two weeks to look at new software, new ideas and the latest technology. One **challenge** is the **gap** between **technology's rapid evolution** and **slow regulatory adaptation.** To bridge this, we introduced an **English-taught course** on **Technology, AI, and Innovation in Medicine.**

We are creating opportunities. We are sending residents to take part in programmes and research in London, across Europe, and in the USA, we have many guest lecturers and professionals, visitors from Erasmus+ and other programmes because they recognise our internationalisation efforts and how much we keep up with technologies. We have **received research grants** that have helped our **residents** be **exposed** to **experimental procedures** and **new tools** in the **international arena,** we are nurturing them to be the best there is.

How will the new Master's in Female Pelvic Imaging prepare students for the future?

The **master's** in **Female Pelvic Imaging** at Università Cattolica's Rome Campus launched in November 2024. It is a **pioneering programme** combining **AI, innovation,** and **advanced imaging technology.** We use platforms to train students on the **latest AI models** with a thorough **hands-on experience.** Our goal is to **prepare students** for **forward-thinking medical practice** both in terms of **technology** and **international exposure.**

How do you envision AI influencing patient-doctor interactions in the future?

AI will **improve medical efficiency** and **doctor-patient interactions.** In Italy, many hospitals still rely on CDs for medical imaging, which is outdated. We will have **more time** to **focus on the patient** as we are using **AI** to **reduce** the **workload** making **doctors more efficient.** For patients, **AI** can produce **patient-friendly reports,** making **complex information easy to understand.**

How do you think medical professionals who introduce AI in their practice, can ensure that this innovation is a support rather than a replacement?

AI is not replacing doctors – it is an assistant. **History has shown that we are not replaceable.** Those who will not use AI won't evolve and those using AI will thrive.
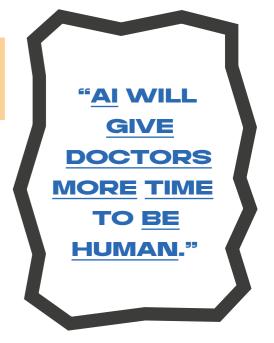
What may be the potential risks of using AI in medicine?

AI will make mistakes; it is **not infallible** because it is **trained on human performance** and it's only human to make mistakes. AI will **not eliminate medical errors** – but it can **help reduce them.** Medicine is about probability and risk management and AI will not change that.

What are you most excited about in the future development of AI? What can the field of medicine expect shortly in terms of improvement?

If I had to pick one thing to be excited about, it would be **AI-driven drug development.** It will **cut the time** that you develop a drug; it will **reduce the length of trials** that previously took 10 years and it will make **screening** of the drugs **quicker.** Then, we can expect **more automation,** AI will **improve** the **patient flow** and the **quality** and **speed of imaging** and doctors will have **free time** to spend **more quality time with** the **patient.**

As medicine evolves, **integrating AI, personalised diagnostics,** and **advanced imaging** will be **essential** to **delivering precise, patient-centred care.** With a focus on innovation, research, and global collaboration, Università Cattolica is **preparing** the **next generation** of **medical leaders** to harness these breakthroughs. The **future of healthcare** will be **shaped by** those who **embrace technology** while **maintaining** the **human touch** at the **core of medicine.**

> "AI WILL GIVE DOCTORS MORE TIME TO BE HUMAN."

CERZOO: A MODEL OF INNOVATION FOR THE FACULTY OF AGRICULTURAL, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

At Università Cattolica, we see CERZOO as a model of innovation and a concrete response to the urgent questions agriculture must face today – climate change, sustainability, animal welfare, and food quality among them. What are the key challenges ahead for the sector, and how does CERZOO contribute to addressing them?

*CERZOO tackles these challenges by **integrating research and practice** in areas like precision livestock farming, regenerative agriculture, and environmental sustainability. It **empowers students and researchers** to develop concrete, scalable solutions for the future of food systems.*

"SEVENTY YEARS OF AGRI-FOOD EXCELLENCE, LOOKING FORWARD."

GIANANTONIO BISSARO
Managing Director of the Invernizzi Foundation

PROFESSOR PIER SANDRO COCCONCELLI
Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences at Università Cattolica

PROFESSOR ERMINIO TREVISI
President of CERZOO
Faculty member in the Department of Animal, Food and Nutrition Sciences (DIANA) at Università Cattolica

The Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences at Università Cattolica has two main campuses: one in Piacenza – its original home – and another recently established in Cremona, housed in the newly renovated former convent of Santa Monica. **Yet the Faculty's history stretches further back in time: classes first began in Piacenza 72 years ago, on 19 January 1953.**

Recent celebrations in 2024 marking this milestone brought back many memories, including the laying of the foundation stone on 30 October 1949, by Father Agostino Gemelli, one of the founders of Università Cattolica, and then-President of the Republic, Sandro Pertini. During those commemorations, **Professor Pier Sandro Cocconcelli,** Dean of the Faculty, explained: *"Studying Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences reflects*

the fact that these three areas are closely interconnected: *food production, its transformation into consumable goods, and the impact on the planet. This interconnectedness is also reflected in the research we conduct in Piacenza and Cremona. We have a group of researchers who are among the best in the world. Thanks to them, we produce* **applied research that can be quickly transferred to the field,** *even on a global scale."* In this context, one particularly outstanding example is CERZOO, an experimental agricultural company that focuses primarily on eight research areas:

• **Agroecology,** with agronomic research aimed at improving soil fertility and health, increasing organic matter, enhancing resource efficiency, boosting biodiversity, and integrating digital technologies in precision agriculture.

• **Physiology,** with studies on the transition period, drying-off strategies, metabolic diseases, alternatives to antibiotics, calf health and growth, digestive functionality, and indicators for assessing animal welfare.

• **Milk Quality,** including research on chemical-nutritional, health, and dairy-processing quality, as well as diagnostic evaluations.

• **Dairy Technologies,** improved microbial starter cultures and innovative processes for the safety and sustainability of cheese and fermented dairy processes.

• **Feeds,** with studies on the quality and preservation of hay and silage, as well as on mycotoxins and other natural toxins.

• **Nutrition, Nutrigenomics, and Epigenomics,** encompassing research on feed supplements, comparisons between different feeds and diets, digestibility studies, and optimisation of digestive fermentation.

• **Zoo-environmental Studies,** investigating how to minimise greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions, as well as the management and valorisation of livestock effluents.

• **Precision Livestock Farming,** developing new sensors to assess animal welfare and milk quality, along with the application of precision devices to collect data on animals and their environments.

In September 2022, CERZOO underwent significant renovation thanks to the support of the **Guido and Enrica Invernizzi Foundation,** with the goal of creating an agro-livestock study centre rooted in sustainability and animal welfare.

"For our Faculty," notes **Professor Erminio Trevisi,** President of CERZOO and faculty member in the Department of Animal, Food and Nutrition Sciences (DIANA) at Università Cattolica, *"It is invaluable to have a research facility capable of answering society's questions about sustainable* **agri-live-**

stock production, food quality, and most importantly, environmental care and animal welfare. *CERZOO serves as a crucial training ground for students, doctoral candidates, and researchers. It is already bearing fruit, as evidenced by various ongoing studies that are exploring innovative solutions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving soil fertility through conservation agriculture techniques. The project, supported by the* **Invernizzi Foundation,** *aims to develop solutions for every phase of dairy cattle farming, in pursuit of full environmental and economic sustainability."*

"In the countryside of Piacenza, in the heart of the Po Valley and just a few kilometers from the Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, this centre stands out for its ambition to bridge knowledge, research, and practical application," added **Gianantonio Bissaro,** Managing Director of the Invernizzi Foundation. *"We aim to identify and test production techniques that support human progress and environmental improvement. We are proud that our contribution can sustain the efforts of so many skilled individuals committed to this goal."*

Within CERZOO, several **Living Labs** have been established spaces designed for field experimentation with new agricultural techniques and approaches. Most recently, the **Animal Welfare Living Lab** was launched, with the goal of developing innovative precision livestock farming tools and technologies that improve animal welfare through continuous monitoring of behavioral and physiological parameters. These data, collected via sensors, help improve animals' quality of life and ease the work of professionals across the supply chain.

Another newly launched initiative is **SHARE,** an acronym for **Soil Health & Regenerative Agriculture.** This Living Lab aims to combine regenerative agricultural practices with advanced monitoring technologies to improve soil quality and promote carbon sequestration.

CERZOO has also recently inaugurated a **mini dairy facility,** using milk from cows raised on-site. The dairy serves two main purposes: to support research in the dairy and livestock sectors, and to offer educational opportunities for students. Study areas range from dairy technology and microbiology to food safety, with a focus on milk-derived products such as cheese, ricotta, and cream.

From a teaching perspective, the mini dairy represents a valuable resource. **Students can observe the full cheese-making process up close and take part in every stage of the milk-to-dairy-product transformation.** In the current academic year, dairy production has already begun in collaboration with students, and the resulting products are being used to conduct shelf-life studies involving different microbial contaminants.

These are just a few of the many initiatives that CERZOO has undertaken since its renovation. In a world that increasingly demands environmental responsibility, **Università Cattolica is proud to count on a centre of excellence like CERZOO** and to place it at the service of the Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences. This commitment brings students closer to the world of **work in a conscious, scientifically rigorous, forward-thinking way** – always with deep respect for the broader concept of **agricultural welfare.**

As the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences, Professor Pier Sandro Cocconcelli, states: *"Today, research and higher education in the agri-food sector increasingly require physical spaces where innovative solutions can be tested and hands-on learning can take place. This is precisely the mission of our Faculty:* **to equip students with a strong foundation of theoretical knowledge and extensive practical skills,** *while also providing young researchers with access to* **top-tier infrastructure to advance their studies.** *CERZOO fully meets both needs, offering a cutting-edge environment here* **education and research come together to drive innovation in the agri-food sector."**

ETHICS IN THE AGE OF AI: RESPONSIBILITY, BIAS, AND HUMAN VALUES

In an era where AI is closing in on human-like cognition, is this technology about to spark the defining ethical debate of the next decade—and forever change how we define progress?

*Professor Ciro De Florio challenges us to view **AI** not as a simple imitation of human intelligence, but as a **continuum of adaptive systems** that pose both **age-old and novel ethical questions.** As AI evolves, so must our global discourse on **responsibility, inclusivity, and openness.** By recognising both the promise and the limits of AI, we can better harness its strengths to **serve the collective good** – without mistaking a powerful tool for a cure-all solution.*

> **"AI DOESN'T IMITATE HUMANS— IT ADAPTS. THAT'S WHERE WE MUST FOCUS: NOT FEAR, BUT FORESIGHT."**

PROFESSOR CIRO DE FLORIO

Ciro De Florio is an **Associate Professor** of Logic and Philosophy of Science at **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore** in Milan. His research focuses on **mathematical logic,** philosophy of logic and mathematics, and **philosophy of science.** He is particularly interested in **higher-order logical systems,** characterisations of the standard model of natural numbers, **formalisations of logical consequence,** and the logical analysis of the truth predicate. Currently, he is working on **systems of pragmatic logic,** characterising the **nexus of logical consequence** in terms of **conceptual grounding**, and **models** of **temporal logic.** De Florio is also a **member** of the **Humane Technology Lab** at the University, where he explores the **philosophical implications** of **artificial intelligence** and **technology.**

Professor De Florio, your academic interest in AI goes back well before the widespread adoption of large language models such as ChatGPT. AI's rapid evolution raises philosophical questions about what it means to be human. In your opinion, what ethical risks arise when AI starts to mimic human intelligence?

A key point is that we often presume AI imitates our intelligence, which is a rather anthropocentric view: we look at **AI** and say, "It's imitating us." However, many experts in engineering or cognitive science regard **intelligence** as a **capacity for massive adaptation** to an environment in **pursuit** of **certain goals.** Under this definition, even simple devices show basic forms of intelligence. A thermostat displays very basic intelligence by adapting to temperature changes. A robot vacuum shows more intelligence since it can navigate rooms and clean them. A cat shows even more intelligence, and a human shows the most. So rather than **AI** being just an imitation of human thinking, it exists on a **spectrum of systems** that can **adapt to their environments** - from very simple to very complex.

When talking about **ethical risks,** I would **distinguish** between:

1. **Common Technology Risks:** The kind of **misuse** or **unintended consequences** we see with any technological innovation. Fire, for example, can cook meals but also burn down a village.

2. **AI-Specific Risks:** Challenges heightened by **AI's autonomy and scale.**

> **"AI WON'T 'SOLVE' CLIMATE CHANGE OR CANCER. THE REAL WORK STILL DEMANDS HUMAN COLLABORATION."**

Autonomy matters because it **complicates accountability.** If a system makes decisions automatically – screening job applications, predicting health diagnoses, or performing large-scale data analysis – there can be **real difficulty** in **assigning responsibility** if something goes wrong. This is different from using a conventional tool, where it is easier to see the chain of cause and effect.

Another factor is **scale:** a biased AI tool in one organisation is problematic; but if everyone uses that same flawed tool, the bias becomes a large-scale societal issue. So, while bias, misuse, or misinformation are not new ethical concerns, **AI's speed and autonomy magnify** those existing **problems.**

Some AI leaders predict that, within the next decade, AI will help solve complex challenges – from cancer treatments to climate change. Do you share their optimism?

I would recommend **being cautious** with broad...long-term predictions – especially sweeping claims that AI will solve climate change or cure 95% of cancers. When **technology** is experiencing a **boom,** there is a tendency to **extrapolate** current **trends** indefinitely and **assume they'll yield miraculous results.**

AI can certainly help with data-intensive tasks like protein folding or drug discovery. If we **focus on** a **specific, concrete application** – say, using AI to accelerate the analysis of molecular interactions – then yes, that's **where the technology truly shines.** But the statement "AI will eradicate cancer" is simply too general. Cancer encompasses many different diseases requiring multiple interventions – biological, medical, and social.

Similarly, we cannot solve climate change just by telling an AI system, "Fix global carbon emissions." Climate change is a complex mix of technology, geopolitics, and social behaviour. AI tools can assist with energy optimisation, predicting weather patterns, or designing better batteries, but they do not eliminate human conflict, inequality, or the need for political cooperation.

In short, **AI** is invaluable as a **sophisticated problem-solving aid,** not a magic wand.

> **"AI IS INVALUABLE AS A SOPHISTICATED PROBLEM-SOLVING AID, NOT A MAGIC WAND."**

You are part of a group of professors at Università Cattolica who are running a multidisciplinary introductory AI course for all first-year students. Given your academic background, how do you see the role of universities in shaping the ethical discourse surrounding AI? What responsibilities do institutions like Università Cattolica have in educating future leaders on the ethical implications of AI and its societal impact?

Universities should think of **AI not merely as a single subject** – like a **stand-alone course** – but as a **transversal competency** that pervades **many fields.** AI is ultimately about **how we process and interpret information.** In that sense, it's akin to "writing" or "mathematics": useful in nearly every domain.

At the same time, we must ensure our students (and faculty) understand how AI works. **Technical awareness** is **crucial for responsibly using AI** – if you give it the wrong prompt or apply it to the wrong task, you'll get flawed outcomes. From this standpoint, I believe universities should **promote:**

1. **Technical literacy** – Teaching data fundamentals, algorithmic concepts, and the nature of training sets.

2. **Ethical sensitivity** – Encouraging students to grapple with questions about fairness, transparency, and societal impact.

3. **Critical thinking** – Helping future professionals distinguish genuine innovation from marketing hype.

Without this **balanced approach,** we risk a scenario where only a **small group understands AI deeply,** and **everyone else** treats it as a **mysterious black box.**

AI is global, yet cultural perspectives on ethics vary widely. How important is international collaboration for setting AI standards or guidelines?

It's very important, but also **extremely challenging.** "Ethics" itself **can mean different things** in different cultural contexts. Even broadly shared values like "inclusiveness" can diverge sharply from one society to another.

Additionally, AI research is dominated by a few large companies with enormous resources. Most advanced AI algorithms are proprietary. This raises **concerns** over whether **international guidelines** can genuinely **influence development** – **or** whether **market forces** and **corporate interests** will remain **decisive.**

Yes, we can strive for global frameworks, much like nuclear treaties or climate accords, but true consensus demands honest dialogue and willingness to reconcile diverse viewpoints. You **can't simply impose one region's definition of "ethical AI" everywhere.** Universities can contribute by championing open research, open-source platforms, and cross-cultural dialogues. At the same time, we must recognise that **AI research** is heavily **concentrated** in just a **few tech hubs,** and we need to think about **how to protect** the **public interest** without stifling legitimate innovation.

Is there a movie or a book you would recommend for understanding AI's deeper challenges or opportunities?

I recommend the film, **Her** (directed by Spike Jonze). It shows how an AI chatbot, designed to converse with humans, sparks questions about emotional attachment – people may start attributing true thoughts and feelings to a system that simply sounds human.
As for books, **classic science fiction** can be quite insightful. **Do**

Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick explores the nature of identity and empathy in a world where androids and humans coexist. **Asimov's work** examines the **concept of "programmed ethics"** and how it might conflict with human intentions. These narratives remain strikingly relevant because they remind us that **advanced technology can amplify** not just our **hopes** but also our **biases and ethical dilemmas.**

> "AI'S 'LOGIC' ISN'T HUMAN— IT'S A DANCE OF NODES AND DATA. OUR JOB IS TO CHOREOGRAPH IT ETHICALLY."

CIRO DE FLORIO

DOPAMINE, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE FUTURE OF ENTERTAINMENT

In today's dopamine-driven culture, where attention has become the new currency, how is our brain being rewired – and what are the implications for communication, media consumption, and education?

*In **today's** so-called **"dopamine culture,"** our brains are being rewired to **seek constant, fast rewards** – weakening our ability to **focus** and **shortening** the **average attention span.** **Communication** increasingly favors **brief, emotionally charged messages; media** become **fragmented** and **distracting;** and **education** must confront the **challenge** of **moving beyond performance metrics.** As Professor Andrea Gaggioli suggests, the **answer isn't to reject technology,** but to **rebuild meaning around it, through it,** and **because of it. Education** should foster **mental freedom** – a space where **students and teachers** co-create learning experiences and **imagine new futures together.***

"6 SECONDS …THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO CAPTURE ATTENTION TODAY."

PROFESSOR ANDREA GAGGIOLI

Andrea Gaggioli is a **Full Professor** of General Psychology at **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore,** where he **directs** the **Research Centre in Communication Psychology** (PSICOM) and the **master's programme** in **User Experience Psychology** (UxP). He also leads the **ExperienceLab research group** and coordinates the **Research Unit in Psychology of Creativity and Innovation.** With a background in psychobiology and industrial research, his work explores **human experience, digital artifact design,** and the **cognitive mechanisms behind creativity.** His research contributes to the **fields of UX, human-centred technology,** and the **psychology of innovation.** Gaggioli is also engaged in **scientific outreach,** collaborating with media partners to **translate research into impact.** His work addresses **how emerging technologies shape attention, creativity,** and **meaning making** in an increasingly digital world.

Let's begin this conversation by discussing a concept that has particularly dominated psychological, and user experience studies in recent years, namely the "dopamine culture." Could you briefly explain how the dopaminergic cycle works and what this expression entails?

In very simple terms, **dopamine** is a **neurotransmitter produced by our brain.** It plays a role in **how we feel pleasure and rewards.** It's a significant part of our unique human ability to think and plan. It **helps us focus, work toward goals,** and **find interesting things.**

The term **"dopamine culture"** refers to the fact that today people constantly **seek more immediate gratification,** especially in their use of **technological devices.** The pursuit of pleasure is fueled by the brain's reward system, where dopamine plays a major role, among other mediators and neurotransmitters.

Psychology and neuroscience have played a **crucial role** in shaping the **scientific foundations** behind the **reward mechanisms** that drive **social networks and beyond:** apps, notifications, online games, streaming platforms, and smartphones are designed to provide **continuous and rapid stimuli,** which trigger dopaminergic impulses, creating **moments of pleasure** that foster a **form of addiction.** This continual search for quick gratification significantly **reduces** the **ability to maintain focus and attention** or **to engage in long or demanding activities.**

This collective cognitive shift resulting from the decline in attention has **two main consequences:** first, those who **seek** the **attention of others must adapt** to this limitation. Think, for example, of the length of advertisements: today, it's impossible to consider running an ad longer than 30 seconds, given that the threshold for capturing attention is around 6 to 7 seconds.

Another consequence of the reduced attention span is the **emergence of compulsive behaviours** like doom-scrolling or binge-watching. **Eminent scholars** have **warned** about the **impact** of this **on** the **mental health of young people** – I'm thinking of Jonathan Haidt, B.J. Fogg and several others.

In my view, the very notion of "dopamine culture" is paradoxical: **dopamine** is a **neuroscientific concept** associated with immediate gratification yet **using it as a lens to define our era risks oversimplification.** Explaining contemporary society solely in these terms offers a r**eductive perspective** that falls short of capturing its complexity. In this sense, the concept of **"dopamine culture"** is itself a **product of the very phenomenon it seeks to describe** – an attempt to distill a multifaceted issue into the influence of a single molecule.

How can we escape this vicious cycle?

I believe we need to deepen our understanding of this issue by becoming **more aware** of the **underlying cultural mechanisms** and recognising that **such critiques have a long history.** Take, for example, the concept of the **"attention economy"** - essentially a precursor to the idea of "dopamine culture." This notion was **first introduced** by **Nobel Prize-winning economist Herbert Simon** in **1978,** highlighting how **attention** itself has long been viewed as a **scarce and exploitable resource.**

Simon had already noted that in a **world rich in information,** the **scarce commodity** isn't the information itself but the **human attention necessary to process it.** From this comes his famous slogan: **"A wealth of information**

"ENTERTAINMENT IS DISTRACTION ENGINEERED FOR MICRO-MOMENTS OF PLEASURE."

"DOPAMINE CULTURE FUELS A CONTINUAL SEARCH FOR QUICK GRATIFICATION."

creates a poverty of attention." It seems to me that **this prediction has come true.** In the 1970s, there was no social media and no smartphones, yet it was already evident that **an economy** and **a marketing system based on media were developing,** and that media were devouring attention.

In his article "State of the Culture," Ted Gioia talks about another interesting concept that describes how we consume content today: the Post-Entertainment Society. Gioia uses this expression to indicate that the largest sector of the cultural economy is no longer entertainment but, on the contrary, distraction. He states: "Everything is getting turned into TikTok – an aptly named platform for a business based on stimuli that must be repeated after only a few ticks of the clock." Do you agree? What entertains us today, and why does it entertain us?

Yes, I agree. I also interpret the **post-entertainment era** as a cultural phase in which **entertainment** is **replaced by shorter, more focused experiences** designed for immediate gratification. This concept is closely tied to that of dopamine culture.

In my view, this **phenomenon** can be understood as a **form of "cognitive encapsulation,"** where our **daily experience** about the **digitalisation of our lives** becomes increasingly **fragmented and segmented.**

Let me give you an example: if you look at your schedule, you'll see your day as a series of time slots, a succession of **"temporal capsules."** If

you could observe your schedule **over time,** you would notice that the **frequency of these capsules increases. This applies** not only to daily commitments but **to the entire cognitive agenda of people:** since we don't always use the same technology or medium, our experience becomes more fragmented. At one moment, we listen to music; on another, we hear a podcast; then we use an app; then we're on TikTok, and so on.

The problem, therefore, isn't allocating attention to each fragment, but rather, from such a fragmented experience, reconstructing a pattern, a general sense. To use a metaphor, **the issue isn't the tree but the forest:** we should **reflect on our ability to build meaning and significance** within a society that tends to encapsulate our experience. So, **rather than demonising technologies,** perhaps we should **shift** the **focus** and ask: **how can we help people build meaning?**

To answer this, I would start by being radical and looking at the **etymology of the word "school,"** from the Greek "skholē," which originally meant **lei-** sure or the **idea of spending free time pleasantly.** Eventually, it came to mean the place where education was provided.

This is a meaningful reference because **universities and higher education have become non-places** – liminal spaces where people know they must pass through because, in the end, they'll receive a stamp that will help them find a job. I believe this narrative needs to be profoundly altered. The **period of education should be an experience,** and this experience should be **as little restricted as possible** because it is the **time when** the **mind needs to savour its freedom.** This is the **purpose of education:** not to give you a prefabricated world, but **to put you in a position to create possible worlds** – because otherwise, **how can we build the future?** In my opinion, **this is the definition of creativity.**

I believe an inspiring principle should be: **how do we equip this place with imaginative, creative, and inspirational capacities?** A practical way to follow this principle would be to **focus on** the **mental well-being of teachers** as well as **students.** Their **journeys** are **simultaneous and parallel,** and the **generational gap** isn't just **demographic** – it's **anthropological.** We, as teachers, can get frustrated when we see students drifting away from us, but at the same time, they see us pulling away. **Recovering meaning** means **setting different foundations** for **designing** the **learning experience,** even for teachers. That's why I say **mental well-being is important;** otherwise, **teachers** are **seen as** a sort of **"cognitive proletariat,"** expected to **"fill"** students, who are **measured** solely **on their performance,** with information. We need to **rediscover** the **sense of building a community capable of creating possible worlds.**
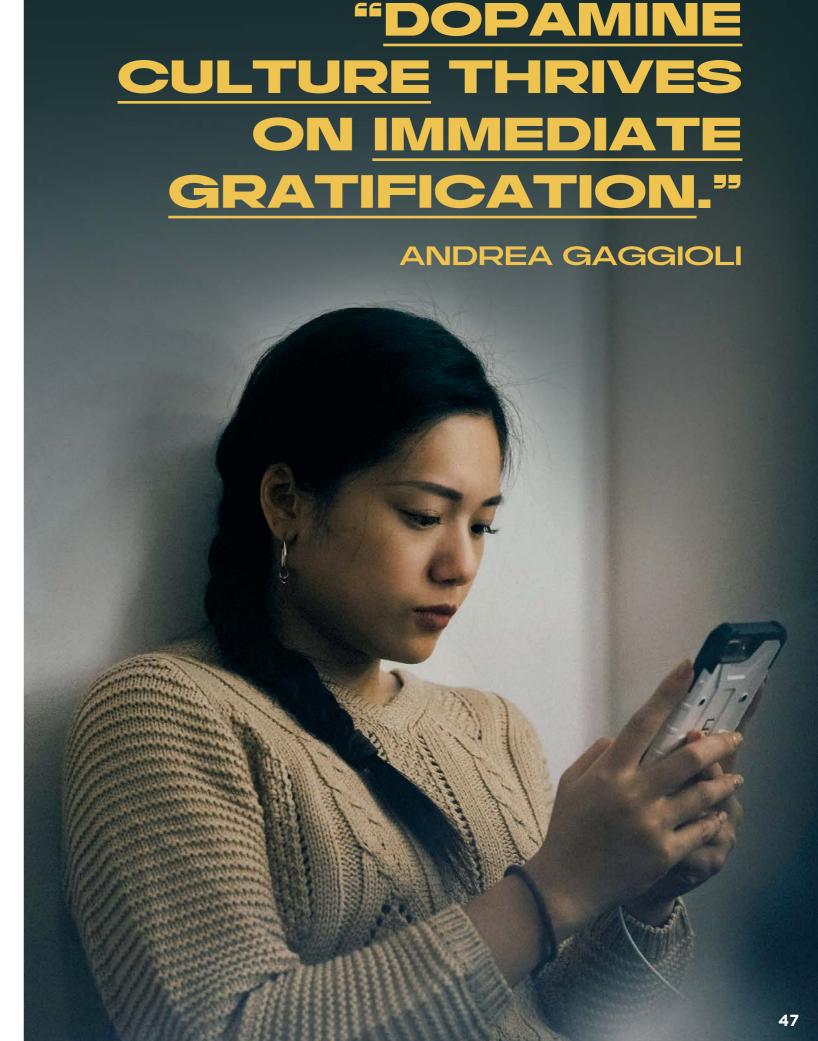
I believe **a future trend** will not be so much **about** content or taste but about the **evolution of the media in general:** I think we are **moving towards** an immersive meta-medium, something we could call **"extended media."**

Just as the Internet has encapsulated other media, I think we'll see the **development of increasingly immersive media that will encapsulate other media.**

Another **relevant trend,** in my opinion, is **generative artificial intelligence.** I believe that generative artificial intelligence can **interact with** the **media** to the extent that it can **enhance** the **personalisation of content,** which is already happening on platforms, thanks to predictive mechanisms like algorithms. **I think we'll move from the idea of prediction to the idea of generation.**

YOUTHFULNESS AND THE FUTURE: BEING 20 IN 2025

As populations age and younger generations become fewer, economies must find new ways to sustain growth, productivity, and social welfare. What are the economic implications of this shift, and how can societies create opportunities for youth to thrive in this changing demographic landscape?

Demographers are not clairvoyants, but they have the expertise to anticipate population growth and ageing trends long before they unfold. Not only that, but they can also interpret numbers and trends to reveal the spirit of the times. Above all, they recognise that being 20 today is vastly different from 1970, when young people were more numerous, and opportunities seemed more abundant. To discuss these and other themes, we interviewed Professor Alessandro Rosina.

> **"FEWER YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD MEAN MORE VALUE—YET WE INVEST LESS."**

PROFESSOR ALESSANDRO ROSINA

Alessandro Rosina is a **Full Professor of Demography and Social Statistics** at the Faculty of Economics, **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore** in Milan, where he also directs the **Centre for Applied Statistics in Business and Economics.** A leading scholar in demographic trends and youth studies, he serves as the **Scientific Coordinator** of the **Youth Observatory** at the **Toniolo Institute** and the **Youth Condition Observatory** for the **Lombardy Region.** His expertise has informed **European Commission** initiatives, **ISTAT research groups,** and **ministerial policy reforms** on youth, labour, and social welfare. Additionally, he is an **expert advisor to CNEL,** appointed by the President of the Republic of Italy.

> **"YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THE RISKS— BUT ALSO THE SOLUTIONS."**

You coined the term "dejuvenation," which has also appeared in international journals, such as the Journal of Italian Studies, where you explain: "Dejuvenation is considered in two dimensions:

• the reduced share of young people (aged 0–29) in a country and the decline in the qualified presence of young generations in society and the economy. It is an unprecedented phenomenon, as historically young people have always been the majority in all populations (Livi Bacci 2011);
• the main source of economic growth and a major push for social innovation." Thus, dejuvenation is not simply a way to describe the progressive ageing of the population but a weakening of the perspective and expectations that youth typically bring toward the future.

Could you tell us more about this phenomenon?

The term **"ageing"** describes the **increasing number** of **older adults,** while **"dejuvenation"** highlights a **different yet complementary aspect** – namely, that as the elderly population grows and lives longer, the **number of young people is declining.** This occurs when **fertility rates fall below two children per woman,** the threshold needed for generational replacement. When this happens, **each new generation** is numerically smaller than the **previous one,** and over time, **this gap widens.**

The fact that younger generations are smaller than their predecessors is a completely new situation because, in the past, fertility rates were consistently above two children per woman. **Italy** fell below two children per woman in the late 1970s and reached **below 1.5 by 1984.** With such a low birth rate, even **immigration** flows were **no longer sufficient** to make up for the decline in births. Therefore, **dejuvenation** and the **ageing** of the **population** have an **impact** not only in terms of **numbers** but also **socially** and **politically:** a society with fewer young people loses their energy and enthusiasm, experiences a decline in youth presence in the workforce, and sees a reduction in their electoral power and influence in collective decisions about their country's future.

This is where the **paradox** emerges: according to basic economic principles, scarcity should increase value and investment. Yet, despite fewer young people, **Italy** and other mature economies **have not significantly increased investments in education, housing, or innovation** – the very areas that would support youth.

Another key factor is longevity: thanks to improvements in health and well-being, people are living much longer than before. But what impact does this have on society?

Longevity is a good thing, but declining birth rates should not be seen as an unavoidable fate. We must **balance** longer lifespans **with sustainable birth rates** to ensure a **higher quality of life.** If older adults have adequate pensions, care, and support, they can remain self-sufficient, contributing to society while reducing social costs. But to make this possible, **we need resources** that should come **from new generations entering the workforce.** However, if few young people are adequately trained and valued, the workforce shrinks, and they cannot sustain on their own the unavoidable expenses such as pensions and healthcare for the elderly. So, **how do we compensate for the lack of resources typically provided by young workers?** Unfortunately, the

> **"A LONG ACTIVE LIFE AND LIFELONG LEARNING GO HAND IN HAND."**

savings often come at the **expense of young people** themselves and their education. This illustrates how **dejuvenation** has both a **qualitative** and **quantitative dimension:** by **investing** in **qualitative actions** that improve the condition of young people, helping them **develop skills** to **innovate** and **create new jobs** through their ideas, we inevitably create a **positive quantitative impact.**

Let's talk about education systems. How do you see them changing in the future?

Future education delivery must consider **new technologies** and a **new way of understanding humanity.** As new generations' learning styles evolve, the traditional asymmetrical model, where knowledge flows one way from teacher to student, can no longer function as it has. Young people **need to learn using** the same **technologies they use daily,** applied within the educational context as well. Moreover, it's no longer valid to think that there is only one phase of life dedicated to learning or that what you study once will suffice forever: **a long active life and lifelong learning go hand in hand.**

From the perspective of dejuvenation, how are other countries responding? Are there international best practices being developed?

Dejuvenation affects all advanced economies, nearly all of which are experiencing a decrease in young people and thus **face the dual chal-**

lenge of educating their own youth well and attracting new youth from other countries. This battle for talent is just beginning. A well-educated youth is key to a nation's competitive edge, driving growth and development. Countries that fail in this task will not only struggle to attract young people from abroad but will also lose their own.

For example, Scandinavian countries invest heavily in education and active policies. Germany, which has demographic imbalances like Italy's, is much more proactive with its youth and implements solid immigration policies. Despite its low birth rate, Germany has a very low rate of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Looking at Asia, Japan and South Korea face significant challenges with low birth rates, yet both countries are making substantial investments in innovation, particularly in robotics and automation.

If you were to imagine human geography ten years from now, where would young people be?

Certainly, we'll see an **increase** in **migratory flows** between **Europe and Africa,** which are in **opposite demographic situations.** Africa is amid a demographic transition, with a larger youth population than the development opportunities available. In this context, **migration flows,** if properly managed, **could benefit all. International agreements** should be established that are not dictated by the immediate needs of a single

country. By **investing** in **youth education** in their countries of origin, when they arrive in their destination countries, **they will** already **be qualified** for **market opportunities, appropriately compensated,** and thus **welcomed and integrated.**

Together with the Toniolo Institute, you compile an annual report on young people. What portrait emerges?

It's a **mixed picture:** today's young people, when comparing themselves to previous generations, see both a **future full of great risks** and a **world they want to shape** and **actively engage in.** They are aware that only with their **innovations and ideas** can the **world improve,** yet they are often **overwhelmed** by a **sense of powerlessness** because they perceive the **challenges ahead as too daunting.**

So, it becomes even more **important** to have a **supportive environment:** only then will young people start to **believe in themselves** and have **confidence in institutions and the future,** allowing them to **find direction.**

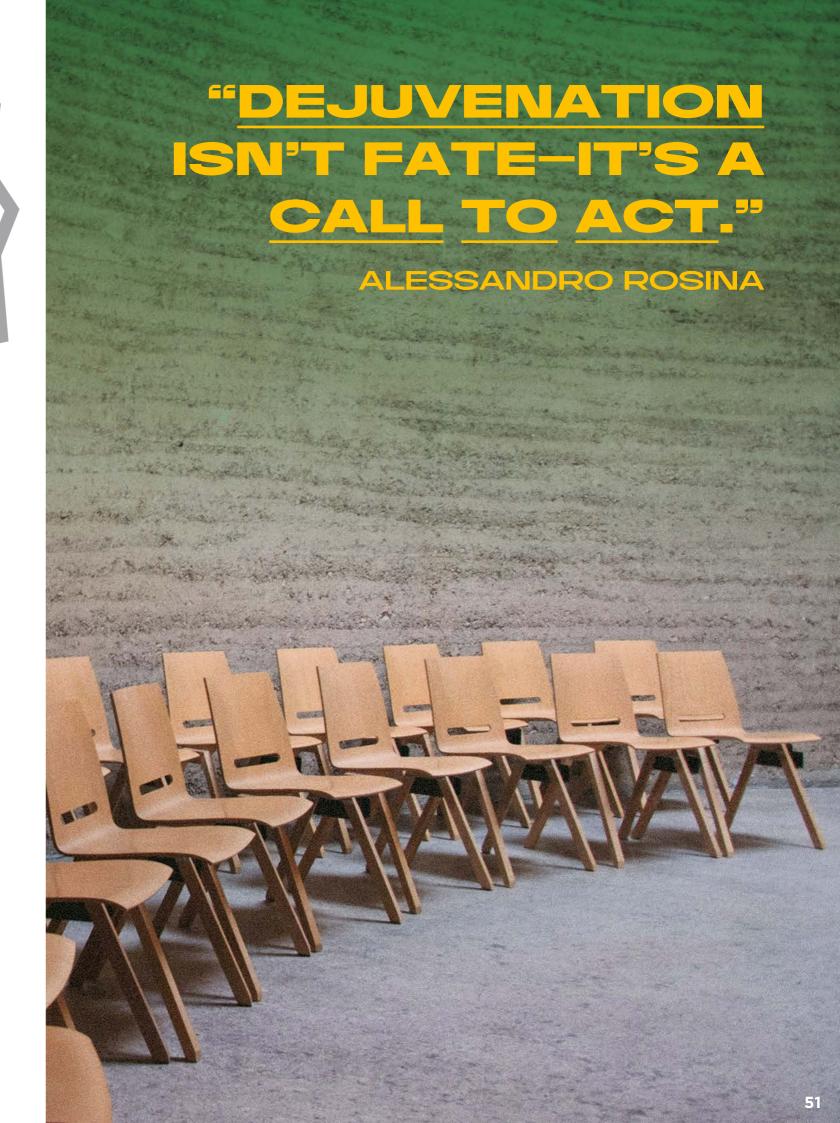**But let's talk about something positive. Will we get through this?**

The **positive side** is that **these challenges** are now at the **forefront of public debate,** prompting discussions on how to adapt and respond effectively. The **impact of dejuvenation** is **no longer a distant concern** – it is unfolding now, placing growing pressure on businesses and economies. For decades, labour markets thrived on large working-age populations, particularly those born before the decline in fertility rates. In the past, hiring was easy, but **today,** with fewer young people entering the workforce, **companies must work harder to attract and retain talent.** This shift demands **strategic investment** in education, career development, and policies that **empower younger generations.** The **good news** is that **awareness is growing,** and **countries that act now** can **turn this challenge** into an

opportunity. Italy, for instance, has access to resources from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), offering a critical moment to invest in the future and reshape its social and economic foundations.

As the **global population ages,** the challenge lies in **adapting economies and societies** to this demographic shift. **Investing in young people** – through education, innovation, and opportunity – is **essential** for **sustainable growth** and a **thriving future.**
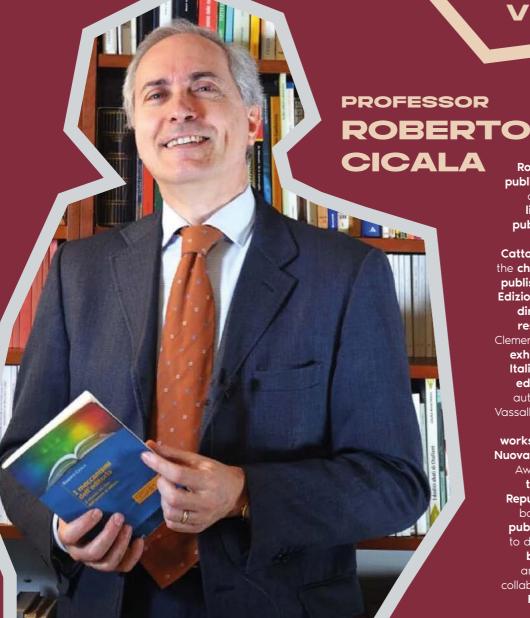
THE FUTURE OF PUBLISHING: DIGITAL INNOVATION MEETS CULTURAL HERITAGE

How are emerging technologies like audiobooks, eBooks, and open access platforms reshaping storytelling and academic publishing, and what impact do they have on the future of knowledge sharing and education worldwide?

*As publishing continues to evolve, the challenge lies in **harnessing technology** while **preserving** the irreplaceable role of **human creativity, storytelling,** and **scholarly exchange.** Roberto Cicala's insights reveal a **publishing industry in transition** – one that must **balance digital innovation** with **cultural preservation.** By embracing technological advancements while upholding the essential role of human creativity and mediation, the **future of publishing** can remain **both dynamic** and **deeply rooted in tradition.***

> **"CULTURE SHOULD NOT BE DICTATED SOLELY BY COMMERCIAL VIABILITY."**

PROFESSOR ROBERTO CICALA

Roberto Cicala is a **professor, publisher,** with Interlinea Edizioni, and **scholar** with expertise in **literature, bibliography,** and **publishing studies.** Since 2002, he has taught at **Università Cattolica** in Milan, where he holds the **chair of book and multimedia publishing.** He founded **Interlinea Edizioni** in 1991 and is its **editorial director.** Cicala has conducted **research on poetry,** especially Clemente Rebora, and has **curated exhibitions** and **publications** on Italian literary heritage. He has **edited works** by contemporary authors like Soldati, Rodari, and Vassalli. In addition to his academic role, he **directs publishing workshops** and contributes to the **Nuova informazione bibliografica.** Awarded the **Culture Award of the Presidency of the Italian Republic** in **2006,** Cicala's recent books explore the **evolution of publishing,** from traditional print to digital and AI, focusing on the **balance between innovation** and **cultural preservation.** He collaborates with **newspapers "la Repubblica"** and **"Avvenire".**

Can you tell us about your journey in the publishing world? What inspired you to establish *Interlinea Edizioni*?

My journey is rooted in a **lifelong passion for books,** beginning in childhood. A pivotal moment was receiving and reading an illustrated book by Gianni Rodari, *Favole al telefono,* which made me **appreciate** the **power of words.** During university, I supported myself by **writing for cultural newspapers,** immersing myself further in the literary world. Being a voracious reader, I noticed **many valuable works** were **no longer** being **reprinted,** and with a friend, I decided to **challenge this.** One evening in foggy Novara, Italy, we resolved to **publish those overlooked texts,** distributing them to schools and small bookstores. What began as a **personal passion** gradually evolved **into a publishing house,** driven by the belief that **culture should not be dictated solely by commercial viability.**

What role did Università Cattolica play in shaping your approach to publishing studies and innovation?

Università Cattolica played a crucial role in transforming my **interest in culture** into a structured understanding. My **education,** guided by mentors like Professor Giuseppe Billanovich, instilled a **deep respect for texts,** particularly the **origins of Italian literature.** Though publishing studies didn't exist at the time, I often **attended book presentations** and **explored antique book stalls,** prioritising experiential learning. In **2002,** I introduced **one of Italy's first publishing courses,** bridging classical **education with practical industry skills.** Through the publishing labora-

tory I founded, **students created books** that were **reviewed and sold** – an experience that mirrored real-world publishing and fostered innovation.

How have traditional publishing and digital platforms evolved over the past three decades?

Publishing has undergone a **dramatic transformation.** Publishing has transitioned from **physical materials** like paper and print to **digital formats,** with content appearing on screens of all sizes. Until recently, **typesetting** was sometimes carried out using movable type; **today,** however, it is **entirely digital.** This transformation has created **tremendous opportunities** but also **challenges,** such as **piracy** and the **erosion of copyright protections.** Despite these changes, the **essence** of publishing remains **cultural mediation.**

Your book *Andare per i luoghi dell'editoria* explores Italy's literary heritage. What message do you hope to convey to readers?

The book views publishing as a physical and symbolic space where stories, people, and emotions converge. My book explores the **unique Italian publishing landscape,** characterised by small, culturally rich publishers that serve as bastions of literary heritage. Through the **concept of "bibliodiversity,"** I emphasise the **importance of preserving** this **cultural richness,** as it reflects the **diverse** and **layered nature** of Italian society.

What strategies do you recommend for bridging the gap between academic publishing and the needs of modern readers?

Bridging this gap requires a responsible and sustainable approach that values teamwork and collaboration. I advocate for a **new digital humanism** that **integrates technological advances** while **preserving** the critical role of **human creativity and judgment.** The editorial process – from editors to designers – must function cohesively, recognising that the **final product** is the **result of collective effort.**

> **"DIGITAL TOOLS SHOULD ENHANCE STRATEGY, NOT JUST INCREASE OUTPUT."**

How has the growing popularity of audiobooks, eBooks, and open access platforms transformed publishing, particularly academic publishing?

New consumption habits, such as listening to audiobooks while commuting, have made **content more accessible.** For **academic publishing, digital platforms** have **widened** the **dissemination of research,** particularly benefiting young scholars. However, **maintaining cultural mediation** and **protecting copyright** remains **critical.** The role of **publishers** as curators of knowledge must **not** be **undermined** by the **convenience** of **digital access.**

The pandemic significantly influenced teaching and learning models. How has the pandemic influenced traditional publishing?

The pandemic **accelerated** the adoption of **e-learning** and **digital tools,** showing that publishing must adapt to an **increasingly hybrid environment.** However, true transformation requires thoughtful design and creativity. **Digital tools** should **streamline processes** and **enhance strategic planning** rather than simply increase output, ensuring that **innovation serves meaningful objectives.**

> **"PUBLISHING HAS MOVED FROM PAPER TO SCREENS OF ALL SIZES."**

How can universities and publishing houses, as places where culture has always been created, preserve their identities while preparing for the future?

Both universities and publishing houses must **embrace innovation responsibly** while ensuring their **impact** remains **profound and enduring.** Like a stone carefully chosen and thrown into a pond, the **ideas they produce** must create ripples that spread far and wide, **touching lives in meaningful ways.** The "stone" represents the careful selection of ideas, books, or cultural projects, and its ripples symbolise the lasting impact of their work on society. Only with **thoughtful precision** can these ripples carry their **identity and values into the future.** At the same time, they should **adapt to digital trends** – such as social media and crowdfunding – **without compromising** their **creative essence. Success** lies in **understanding niche audiences** and **leveraging digital tools** to **expand reach** while **maintaining authenticity.**

How do you envision the role of academic institutions like Università Cattolica in fostering innovation and collaboration in the publishing sector?
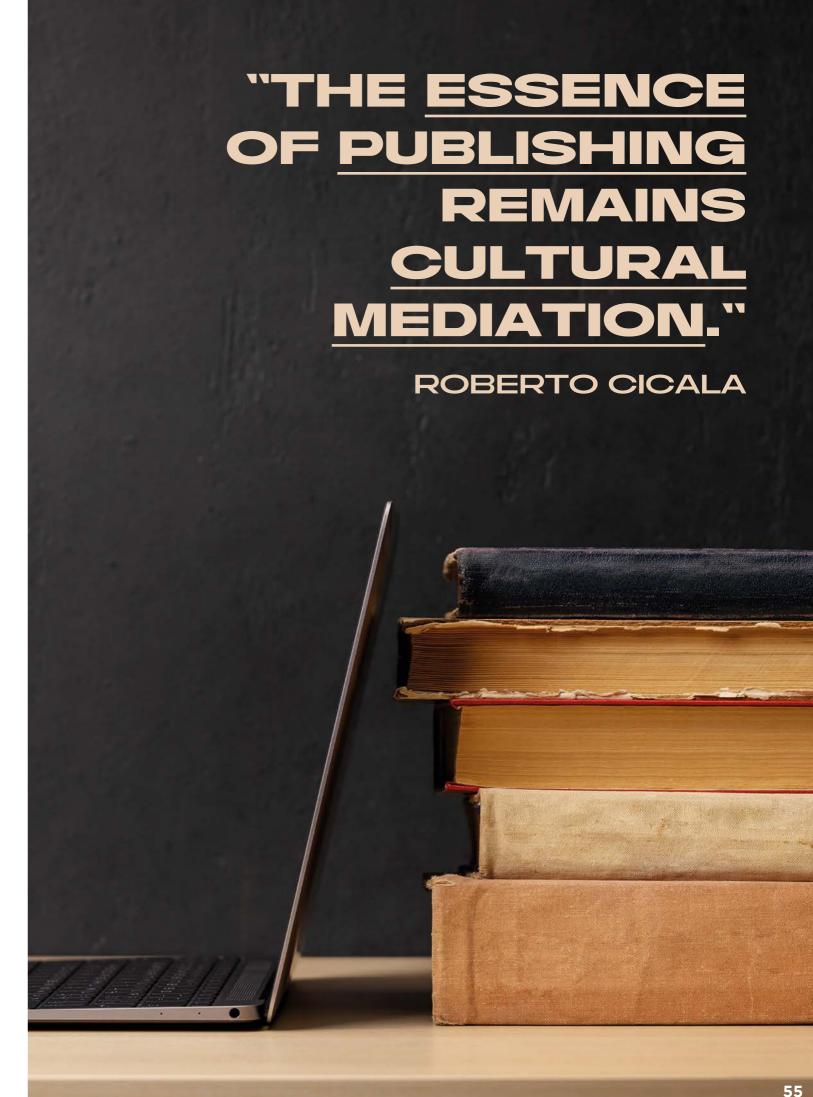
Universities should serve as incubators for experimentation, even within the humanities. By **integrating theoretical** and **practical training,** they can **prepare students** to **navigate technological** and **cultural transformations. Publishing education** must **engage directly with readers,** fostering a **more dynamic relationship** between **academia** and the **public.**

"UNIVERSITIES MUST SERVE AS INCUBATORS FOR BOLD EXPERIMENTATION."

What advice would you give to publishers facing the rapidly evolving landscape of storytelling and digital media?

Remain **humble,** stay **open to learning,** and be **adaptable.** Constant **self-improvement** and **market analysis** are **crucial.** In a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, **creativity** and **originality** are **more important than ever.** Passion for the craft should guide efforts to **produce meaningful, impactful work.**

"BIBLIODIVERSITY PRESERVES OUR CULTURAL RICHNESS AND COMPLEXITY."

"THE ESSENCE OF PUBLISHING REMAINS CULTURAL MEDIATION."

ROBERTO CICALA

THE TIMES ARE CHANGING. IS EDUCATION KEEPING UP?

What is the future of education, and how will it respond to the political, social, and technological shifts we are experiencing? Professors Simeone and Locatelli have some insights to share.

In this issue, dedicated to the big questions shaping our future, we have devoted a significant space to the theme of education. The major **political, social, and technological shifts** of recent years are profoundly **impacting** not only **universities** but **education systems** as a whole. People are changing far more rapidly than institutions that should take care of their knowledge and learning. So, **where are we headed, and how can we move toward the future without being overwhelmed by it?**
We asked two experts to help us reflect on these very questions: *Professor Domenico Simeone,* Dean of the Faculty of Education and Director of the UNESCO Chair "Education for Human Development and Solidarity among Peoples," and *Professor Rita Locatelli,* Researcher in Theories and Science of Education and Social Education and member of the Scientific Committee of the UNESCO Chair.

"LEARNING TO LEARN HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT."

PROFESSOR DOMENICO SIMEONE

PROFESSOR RITA LOCATELLI

Rita Locatelli is **Researcher** in **General and Social Pedagogy** at the **Faculty of Education** of the **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore** (Milan). She is a **member** of the **Scientific Committee** of the **UNESCO Chair** in **'Education for Human Development and Solidarity among Peoples'** and of the **Academic Board** of the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation **(CHEI).**

Domenico Simeone is **Full Professor** of **General and Social Pedagogy** at the **Faculty of Education** of the **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore** (Milan), where he teaches **General Pedagogy** and **Family Pedagogy.** He is **Dean of the Faculty of Education, Director of the UNESCO Chair** in **'Education for Human Development and Solidarity among Peoples'** and of the **Observatory for Education and International Cooperation.**

Mapping pedagogical knowledge

In 2024, under the editorial supervision of Dean Simeone, the first Italian Dictionary of General and Social Pedagogy was published. Within this dictionary, Professor Locatelli authored the entry on education as a common good. What is the significance of this dictionary, and how can education be understood as a common good?

Domenico Simeone
The **dictionary identifies topics** that are, so to speak, **emblematic landmarks in pedagogical research.** It's a bit like taking a walk through the world of pedagogy and marking out some significant places – the milestones of this intellectual landscape. It was **conceived as a map** for scholars, educators, pedagogues, and, more broadly, for anyone interested in education, enabling them to **chart their own path** while exploring both expert perspectives on key concepts and how these ideas are applied and brought to life today.

Rita Locatelli
The term '**education as a common good'** is **currently highly relevant** in both Italian and international debates because it allows us to **rethink the paradigm** that should **underpin educational systems worldwide.**
It goes beyond the more conventional notion of education as a public good – that is, education primarily provided by public institutions – and **incorporates relational and community dimensions** that reinforce democratic processes.

"EDUCATION IS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL ENDEAVOUR — IT'S A COLLECTIVE ONE."
Domenico Simeone

The UNESCO Chair

Since 2018, the Faculty of Education has held a very important distinction: a UNESCO Chair. Could you tell us more about what it is and what it involves?

DS
The UNESCO Chair is an **acknowledgment granted to universities or research centres** distinguished by their **academic and international cooperation efforts** on topics such as education, human rights, sustainable development, and a culture of peace.
The idea of applying for the Chair was born in 2017, during a conference held at Università Cattolica's Brescia campus to mark the fiftieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio,* the encyclical by Pope Paul VI.
On that occasion, I imagined that launching a UNESCO Chair could be **a way to give tangible expression to the message of the encyclical.**

RL
Officially founded in **2018,** the Chair is titled **Education for Human Development and Solidarity Among Peoples.** It contributes to the **achievement of Goal 4 on Quality Education of the UN 2030 Agenda,** focusing on the right to education, international cooperation, and democratic and citizenship education. Core activities include scientific research, the promotion of projects of international cooperation – such as Maison de Paix in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – training in the field of international cooperation, participation in national and international forums, and the dissemination of key UNESCO Global Education Reports. The Chair also **collaborates with the Observatory for Education and International Cooperation of Università Cattolica.**

Learning to learn in a world of information

We've cited a 2015 UNESCO document titled Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good? It argues that learning to learn has never been more important. In a time of abundant and easily accessible information, have we truly learned how to learn?

"THE IDEA OF MULTIPLE POSSIBLE FUTURES IS CENTRAL."
Rita Locatelli

DS
As the philosopher Edgar Morin said, echoing Montaigne: "Better a well-made head than a well-filled one." From this idea of a well-made head, we can draw the **importance of equipping younger generations with the tools to know, to navigate, and to move confidently through the world.**
Learning to learn becomes the **foundational key competence needed to acquire other essential skills in a rapidly evolving world.** It's also a gateway to critical thinking, a **tool of freedom** that **empowers individuals to make informed choices.**

RL
Considering that, statistically, there are currently over 700 million illiterate people in the world – most of whom are women – **literacy is a crucial issue.** It is **essential** if we truly want **to advance that paradigm of education as a common good we discussed earlier.**
Without literacy, people struggle to participate consciously in public life. In this sense, all the **current international developments surrounding the management of Digital Commons are especially significant.** They offer a horizon for development and tools that can facilitate learning while accounting for technological innovations.

Education and social justice

What can we do, and how can we work toward building education systems that prioritise social justice and equity, especially in contexts marked by stark inequalities?

DS

In his well-known book *Il paese sbagliato* (The Wrong Country), Mario Lodi reflects on his post-war experience as a teacher. In a letter to a young woman preparing to become a teacher, he wrote that every day we must choose whether to direct our educational work toward slavery or liberation - toward conforming people to societal demands or giving them the tools to be agents of a new, fairer, more inclusive world.

I believe this is true today. **Education can lay the foundation for a democratic process that empowers individuals,** gives them the **means to express themselves, to participate in public life,** and **to claim their agency.**

Conversely, education can also become **a tool for control and restriction.** When we introduce profit into this dynamic, we must ask: **what values guide an education system whose goal is profit?**

RL

That's a difficult question to answer. But **the fact that we can continue reflecting on it** – collaborating not just as a university, but also through the

> "EDUCATION CAN LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS."
>
> Domenico Simeone

UNESCO Chair, which operates within a framework inspired by principles centred on human development – **keeps us committed to generating new knowledge and research.**

Communities and education

There's a famous African proverb that says, "It takes a village to raise a child." Is this reality, or is it just a saying?

DS

Education is not an individual endeavour – it's a collective one. Parents often see their role and responsibility as a private matter, but we know **education is a social act and needs community.** Every child, every adolescent, needs a community to grow. That community might be a vil-

lage, a neighbourhood, a virtual network, or a city. **It's the quality of the relationships we build that guarantees a child the chance to grow and be educated.**

RL

I immediately thought of villages as plural. In **UNESCO's recent report Reimagining Our Futures Together, the idea of multiple possible futures is central.**

So, we might imagine **several possible "villages,"** where – recalling what the professor said about education being a social act – **different social and educational actors come together,** depending on the context, but **united by shared values** such as human rights, dignity, justice, and equity.

> "WITHOUT LITERACY, PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO PARTICIPATE CONSCIOUSLY IN PUBLIC LIFE."
>
> Rita Locatelli

LEADING INSIGHTS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION'S EVOLUTION

Discover transformative visions shaping the future of higher education through conversations **with our international experts.** This section highlights how universities adapt to **technological disruption, global competition,** and **evolving student expectations.** Gain insights into how **universities** worldwide are **redefining education** to meet the challenges of an **increasingly interconnected world.**

What will the classroom of the future look like?

To meet the demands of a rapidly evolving world, future classrooms **must become inclusive, agile ecosystems** that **transcend physical and cultural boundaries.** By combining human – centred learning with digital innovation, institutions can **cultivate global awareness, adaptability, and purpose.** Picture a **learning environment** that **empowers** every student: where **technology enhances,** not replaces, **connection,** and **education** becomes a **lifelong platform** for **impact, equity, and transformation.**

KINNARI SEJPAL

Kinnari "Kin" Sejpal is the **Vice President, Marketing and Communications** and **Chief Marketing Officer** at **University of Redlands,** overseeing brand, digital marketing, web, and content strategy. With progressively responsible roles at Rochester Institute of Technology and Purdue University prior to Redlands, Kin is a seasoned higher education professional who believes in its power for social, economic, and national mobility. As a strong advocate for higher education marketing, she holds leadership roles with CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) and AMA (American Marketing Association). Kin has an MBA in Marketing and Strategic Management, and an MA in Communications from Purdue University. She received her bachelor's degree from Narsee Monjee College in Mumbai, India. In her spare time, Kin mentors international students, demonstrating her commitment to nurturing the next generation of global leaders.

You have often spoken about the transformative power of higher education on individuals and communities. In your view, how will the classroom of the future harness this transformative potential, particularly in a world increasingly influenced by technology and global challenges?

The transformative power of higher education will only **continue to expand** – provided we **recognise** and **embrace** the **evolution** of the **classroom.** The ways in which instruction is delivered, and the types of higher education being pursued, are diversifying rapidly. Adult learners, degree completers, corporate upskilling programmes, virtual modalities, fast-paced credential and certificate programmes, and non-traditional baccalaureate and associate degrees all represent the broadening landscape. **The classroom of the future must cater to this diverse, global population** – one that is **growing rapidly** and **increasingly expects access** to **education without the barriers of location.**

Having moved from India to the US, you have first-hand experience of international education. How do you see the future of international student marketing and recruitment evolving, especially in the face of increasing competition among universities and the shifting dynamics of global mobility?

I see the future offering **more opportunities and options** for international students – whether that means pursuing global education from their home countries or traveling across continents to study. From a **marketing and recruitment standpoint,** we must recognise that for these students, **the world is their oyster.** The **competition** is no longer just among institutions, but **among countries** themselves, making factors

like **global rankings increasingly influential.** Additionally, **pathway programmes between countries** present **opportunities** for **more collaborative,** less competitive **approaches** to international education. As stewards of educational values, it is incumbent upon us to **provide opportunities to all students, regardless of any barriers to access** – whether they be financial, political, or geographical.

With your expertise in innovative communication, how can universities improve their marketing strategies to attract students in the digital/AI age? How should universities engage with prospective students from diverse cultural backgrounds?

Digital advancements, including AI, should be seen as tools that **make marketing and communications more efficient** – without compromising the authenticity of the university's brand personality, value propositions, and core values. When engaging with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, **universities should adopt a "glocal" approach** – one that blends global messaging with sensitivity to local cultures, beliefs, and values. The key lies in **identifying which aspects of the global brand resonate locally** while ensuring alignment with the university's ethos.

Higher education is at a **crossroads,** with **rapid technological advancements,** shifting student demographics, and changing societal expectations. From your perspective, what are the **biggest challenges** and **opportunities** that **higher education institutions** are likely to **face** over the **next ten years,** and how can they **adapt** to continue providing **transformative education** in this evolving landscape?

Higher education has always **faced both challenges and opportunities,** and with digital transformation, changing demographics, and evolving societal expectations, this **reality is now more constant than exceptional.** Institutions must **find ways to be nimbler;** we witnessed this adaptability during the pandemic pivot – it can be done. The true test will be **sustaining** a culture of **innovation and responsiveness** while **keeping pace with continuous change.** Ultimately, **the future** of higher education's sustainability and longevity **will depend on its ability to adapt** without losing its transformative essence.

"HIGHER EDUCATION MUST ADAPT WITHOUT LOSING ITS ESSENCE."

What (and how) should educators be teaching the future workforce?

To nurture tomorrow's workforce, institutions must deliver **holistic, future-ready learning** that merges critical thinking, intercultural fluency, and creativity. By **partnering closely** with **industry stakeholders** and **integrating real-world challenges into teaching,** we empower students to adapt, innovate, and flourish. Imagine **shaping a globally resilient generation of deeply engaged, impactful professionals.**

THE TWO SIDES OF TALENT:
EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS FOR SHARED SUCCESS

SANDRA SLOTTE

Sandra Slotte is **Senior Policy Advisor, Internationalisation,** at **Arcada University of Applied Sciences** in **Helsinki.** She has been Steering Group Member of the EAIE Expert Community for Strategy & Management 2022-24 and has been appointed as Member of the EAIE Thematic Committee for Strategy, Leadership and Policy for 2024-26. She is also a Working Group Member of the ENIS network and a PhD student at the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) in Milan.

Let's explore how universities can design practical programmes or partnerships to ensure that students – especially international students – not only gain the necessary skills for a rapidly changing job market but also successfully integrate into the workforce?

Many international **degree-seeking students** study abroad for better career prospects, yet they're **hired less frequently** than local peers. Universities traditionally focus on **"employability"** – CV writing, LinkedIn profiles, and interview preparation – but that only addresses the **candidate's side. Employers,** especially **SMEs,** may lack resources or experience in hiring internationally. That inspired the **INTERLOCALITY project,** an **Erasmus+ initiative** co-funded by the **EU,** whose primary aim is to **increase the local employability** of international students. As part of this project, we used the term **"employer-ability"** to describe an employer's **willingness** and **capacity** to recruit international graduates.

Within **INTERLOCALITY,** we developed **free online courses** on **intercultural sensitivity, guidance and counselling,** and **employer-ability** to help **employers, higher education staff,** and **third-sector organisations** collaborate. **Crucially,** these efforts should be embedded into the **curriculum,** so all students—not just those who opt into workshops—learn how to navigate **evolving job markets.** When these efforts are **fully integrated,** universities can significantly boost graduates' **career outcomes.**

You are also involved in Finland's Talent Boost initiative that aims to attract and retain global talent. What systemic changes are needed for real impact, and how can higher education, employers, and stakeholders better support global talent?

Finland's Talent Boost, launched in **2021** by the **Ministries of Education and Culture** and of **Economic Affairs and Employment,** aims to **attract and retain global talent.** Initially, the focus was on attracting international talent, but true success relies on **retention:** supportive **policies,** inclusive **communities,** streamlined **immigration processes,** and tangible **job opportunities.**

Universities play a central role in this effort. Since introducing **tuition fees** for **non-EU students** in 2017, Finnish institutions compete for **international enrolments.** While not directly responsible for employment outcomes, they recognise that opportunities to **secure work** during or **after studies** are **critical to attracting** and retaining international students. **Collaboration** with **employers**—especially **MSEs** (micro and small enterprises with fewer than 50 staff), which account for over 90% of European companies—is key. **Talent Boost** brings together universities, municipalities, government agencies, employers (both from the private and public sector), NGOs, as well as international talents in one **ecosystem.** Addressing **racism, unconscious bias,** and **language barriers,** plus offering **intercultural training** and ongoing **graduate support,** builds the framework needed to retain international graduates **long-term.**

As technology and globalisation rapidly reshape the workforce, how can higher education "future-proof" students' careers? What role do transferable skills and cross-cultural competencies play?

Rapid **technological change** demands **adaptability.** Transferable **"soft skills"**—**communication, teamwork, critical thinking,** and **intercultural fluency**—are essential for multiple career shifts. **"Future-proofing"** means preparing students not just for a **first job,** but for **lifelong development** in a global context.

At **Arcada,** we introduce these ideas from **day one.** During **orientation,** we highlight **"global competencies,"** urging students to connect meaningfully with people from **diverse backgrounds.** These interactions foster **collaborative** and **creative mindsets** that employers increasingly value. Both **international** and **local students** benefit from **cross-disciplinary** and **intercultural experiences. Crucially,** we embed such training in the **curriculum** rather than treating it as an optional add-on. By doing so, every student acquires the fundamental skills demanded by today's **global workforce.**

In many institutions, resources are limited. How can universities sustain long-term engagement with graduates while fulfilling their broader educational mission? What is your vision of lifelong career support?

Lifelong career support must be embedded into an institution's **strategy, not** treated as a **temporary project.** Dedicated staff for **career counselling, employer relations, alumni engagement,** and **entrepreneurship**—working closely with **faculty, external service providers** and **employers**—is essential. **Continuous learning** is now a priority: graduates return to **upskill** or **pivot,** and universities can serve as ongoing hubs for personal and professional growth.

Fostering strong **alumni networks** creates mutual benefits, as former students often become **ambassadors, collaborators,** or **future employers.** For **international students,** it's ethically crucial to follow through on promises of a **brighter future;** assistance with **job searching, entrepreneurship,** or **re-skilling** shouldn't end at **graduation.** By embedding **career guidance** into curricula, partnering with **external organisations and employers,** and building robust **alumni support,** universities help ensure **individual success** and advance their **broader mission.**

INSIDER NEWS

ELENA BECCALLI APPOINTED RECTOR OF UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA

On July 1, 2024, Professor Elena Beccalli assumed office as Rector of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, becoming the first woman to lead the University in its over 100-year history. A full professor and Dean of the Faculty of Banking, Finance and Insurance Sciences since 2014, she was elected with 93% of faculty support. Her vision emphasises innovation grounded in tradition, international outreach, and interdisciplinary education.

On June 6, 2025, she was also appointed as president of the European Federation of the Catholic Universities (FUCE), the European section of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU). Professor Beccalli will lead the academic network that encompasses 62 catholic universities, 56 of which in 17 European countries and 6 in Lebanon.

NOBEL LAUREATE OPENS ACADEMIC YEAR AT UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA

Università Cattolica inaugurated the **2024–2025 Academic Year** with a special address by newly appointed Rector Elena Beccalli and the presence of **Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Leymah Gbowee.** Known for her peacebuilding work in Liberia, Gbowee was joined by Ghanaian economist Ernest Aryeetey, Archbishop Mario Delpini, Minister Anna Maria Bernini, and Cardinal Peter Turkson. Their contributions brought critical insight to a **ceremony dedicated** to **rethinking** the **role** of **higher education** in addressing **today's global challenges** – with **courage, responsibility, and vision.**

TOP RANKINGS FOR STUDENT MOBILITY IN EUROPE

In the **QS World University Rankings: Europe 2025,** Università Cattolica has been recognised as **#1 in Italy and #5 in Europe for outbound exchange students,** reflecting the University's strong international engagement. It also ranks **#3 in Italy for inbound exchange students,** confirming its **growing appeal** among **international peers.** These results highlight the University's **ongoing commitment** to fostering **global opportunities** and **meaningful academic exchanges** for students across disciplines.

GEMELLI HOSPITAL RANKS AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore's teaching hospital, **Gemelli Hospital,** has been ranked **44th in the World's Best Hospitals 2025 list by Newsweek.** This international recognition places Gemelli Hospital not only among the most prestigious healthcare institutions globally but also affirms the University's integrated mission of scientific excellence and human-centred care. Born from the vision of Father Agostino Gemelli in the 1950s, the hospital and the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery have since grown into a singular ecosystem – distinct yet inseparable. **From daily care to moments of global visibility – such as when Pope Francis was treated here – Gemelli stands as a hospital with the same care for all.**

WORLD BOUND

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Global Engagement
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

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UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA del Sacro Cuore

APAIE 香港 HONG KONG
2026 港 23-27 February

Dear Colleagues & Friends,

Meet Università Cattolica Staff at the upcoming APAIE Annual Conference and Exhibition in Hong Kong, China, in February 2026.

We look forward to meeting you!

Cattolica International