

UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA del Sacro Cuore

# WORLDBOUND

N° 1 - 2019

Cover story

## THE GREAT DIVE

How the quest for employability  
is changing higher education.

Alumni

### THE ROAD TO A MILLION-DOLLAR MODEL

How one feedback brought Tommaso  
Migliore to found MDOTM Ltd

Research

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

When have adults stopped believing  
in their dreams and started fearing the  
future instead?



## MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

Travelling has a transformative power, the impact of which can still be measured even after a long time. It connects human beings, it constitutes the basis for an honest, open-hearted exchange of ideas and allows to create bridges based on dialogue and cooperation with other peoples.

Young people nowadays should be encouraged to travel and experience life abroad to widen their horizons and learn to live in a globalized world. Universities give students the chance to do this, offering opportunities to study and work in other countries.

The mission of our University is not only to train competent professionals, but to shape responsible adults, respectful of other people's beliefs, but at the same time willing to stand up for their own, committed to the research of the common good and open to others and to the world. We want our students to imagine and build their future, not just for themselves but for the generations to come, and to be citizens of the world.



The goal of this magazine is very simple: we want to tell the stories of our students and our institution and spread them all over the world. The word 'Worldbound' refers to the awareness that, nowadays, the destination of a journey is always the 'world'. It doesn't matter whether you are heading to York or New York, Venice Beach, CA or Venice, Italy.

The choice to use English as lingua franca for our magazine was made so as to speak to and be heard by the widest audience possible. Internationalization nowadays is not an option; it is a matter of fact and a peculiar trait of our time.

Worldbound will be published in 3 issues per year, and each of them will address a different topic. We have decided to start talking about employability, how students perceive it, what the labor market expects from them, and what we as a higher education institution can do to satisfy both sides' requests and needs.

As a Rector, I am very proud of this new project and I hope you will enjoy it too. I trust you find inspiring stories in this magazine that will encourage you to feel "worldbound" so as to start seeing the world as an interconnection of people and their stories.

Professor Franco Anelli

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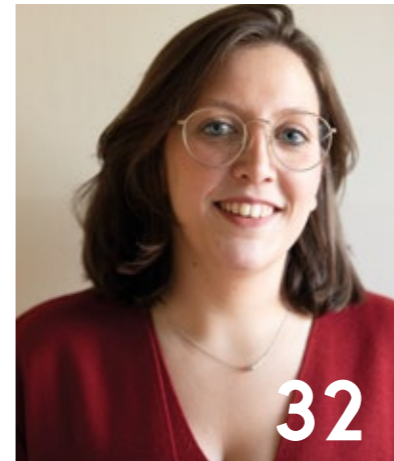
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## MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR, PROF. FRANCO ANELLI

Our mission is to enable students to raise their voices for what is right and have an impact on today's world, and we try to fulfill that mission not just by handing out syllabi and testing their knowledge.

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COVER STORY

# THE GREAT DIVE

HOW THE QUEST FOR EMPLOYABILITY  
IS CHANGING HIGHER EDUCATION

Università Cattolica is the 3<sup>rd</sup> university in Italy for talent scouting. But what is academia expected to give to students in order to prepare them for the labor market? What does it mean, from a student's perspective, to be employable? Many researchers have tried to answer those questions, and yet their findings are still inconclusive.

In this article, we have tried to take stock of the various opinions on the matter, also by asking some of our students who have interned abroad what they most liked about their experience and what it has taught them.

# MEASURING EMPLOYABILITY

**JOB** hunting can be exciting, but it can also be a dreadful process. Fresh graduates find themselves building up their CVs with experiences and achievements. They want to stand out so they fret to write down their long list of credentials. And although an impressive background can help them land their dream job, this, in of itself, may not mean they have a complete skillset. Hundreds of how-to articles online provide advice on how to ace an interview. But the underlying focus of these tips only sheds light on what managers and prospect employers really seek in their future employees: skills.

The constant building of new skills and the updating of old ones is crucial for anyone active in searching for a job. Adaptability and flexibility to the demands of future employers are the qualities that set candidates apart from hundreds of other applicants. Add special personal attributes to the mix, and one's contribution to a company's workforce can be quite significant. But efficient work skills are still the most desirable attributes for any employer.

It is advisable to have some way to demonstrate to prospect employers one's work ethic and habits. In fact, any skill one has already acquired is seen as an advantage as companies would much rather invest on someone who has already proven to know how to work properly as opposed to having to teach or train someone new with the basics of what it means to operate in a professional environment.

In a research on the subject, Mantz Yorke defines employability as 'a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy'. He stresses how important it is to acquire the right skills and hone the ideal personal attributes as they contribute to a collective improvement of society, and there is no better place to try and achieve these goals than at university, the perfect breeding ground.

Employability is naturally a matter of concern for higher education institutions. The ever increasing demands of globalization exert great pressure on universities and colleges to form ideal work candidates out of their students. There is a call to include professional experience opportunities in the curricula to expose students to skill building during their formative years and prior to engaging in work. There is in fact an assumption that this is already a widespread practice, but in truth curricular internships and other professional training activities are not as common as one would think.

The means to be exposed during one's studies to professional environments are multiple, but universities do tend to over complicate things with heavy administrative processes. It is also more common for universities to offer internships or other types of professional training as add-ons, and therefore extra-curricular activities, and not as activities integrated into the academic curriculum. Furthermore, other forms of exposure can also favor employability, such

## CREATIVE NEGOTIATORS

as access to student organizations or clubs. Participation in activities outside of the classroom should be promoted and actively encouraged.

Embedded activities in the classroom, such as public speaking, team-based tasks, professional reporting, collective interaction, and peer corrections and inputs, are becoming popular as well. They allow, with the help of professors, for the development of the students' work ethics and skills to be applied toward their future professional prospects. The activities to be put out in order to achieve these employability objectives lie on the plans of the professors to assimilate the system with their outputs.

Alex Tymon's research looks at the issue of employability from the students' perspective. The students find that internship opportunities, on-campus career advising and job centers are effective means to help them hone the sought-out skills for employment. A full-immersion experience into any work environment, one with specific apportioned job responsibilities, is an unparalleled training opportunity. Their interactions with colleagues, their superiors, and the company culture reinforces their skills and personal attributes and prepares them for further career opportunities.

The students' limited opportunities to be actively challenged while at university in engaging in work skill development, will negatively impact their success in the professional world. Universities and colleges should take further steps to get a comprehensive picture of company recruitment criteria and integrate the appropriate training tools and content in university curricula, or to engage companies directly in the teaching of their students.

The particular academic-professional world relationship is a focus of the QS Graduate Employability Ranking, which is used to determine a university's standing based on its graduates with respect to their employability. In addition to a university's active partnerships with employers, the QS methodology also incorporates Employer Reputation Alumni Outcomes, Employer/Student Connections, and Graduate Employment Rate. The survey results that are then published provide a glimpse of the level of engagement a university has in regards to its students' employability, and could consequently be influential in prospect student recruitment for universities, and prospect employees for employers.



Employability becomes a controversial issue when it comes to guarantee on job placement. Yuzhuo Cai notes in his graduate employability research that harnessing the right skills during the course of one's studies does not assure immediate employment upon graduation. It certainly increases the possibility of employment when it comes to adapting to continuous changes to employment criteria. However, this should not be used as an excuse for universities and colleges to disregard or minimize the importance of pre-employment training in the classroom.

## PROBLEM SOLVERS



# CRITICAL THINKERS

In 2016, Pathik Pathak, the Founding Director of the Social Impact Lab at University of Southampton, published an article.

For the World Economic Forum about the Top 10 Skills employers look for in graduates. By 2020, the desirable skills that contribute to higher chances for employability are complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people

Università Cattolica ranks  
**#101-110**  
QS Graduate Employability Ranking

management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision-making, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility. These soft skills should be among the learning objectives articulated in universities' and colleges' academic programs.

In the present progressive era, the factors that each company needs to keep into account for its recruitment agenda will keep evolving along with the labor market. To ensure that university graduates meet the fundamental demands of the various job profiles of the future, universities and colleges will need to keep close contact with various employers and companies to have, from a workforce perspective, an overview of the skills that are and that will be in demand. The information passed on between the two institutions will produce an extensive knowledge base on future strategic skills that will be sought and needed, and at the same time allow for the expansion of networks and collaboration opportunities between institutions of higher education and the professional world.

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore operates in a global employability context as the university consistently expands its networks and options for its students both locally and abroad. Based on the opinions of 40,000 recruit-

ers, Cattolica ranks #1 in Italy for its strong employer-student connections. Renowned multinational corporations and companies participate, in collaboration with Cattolica, in the annual job and career fair on campus. The event links students to internship opportunities or directly to their future employments while they are still studying toward their degree.

Università Cattolica has long established its brand as a reputable and reliable source for the recruitment of prospect employees for agencies, companies and organizations in Italy. It reached 3rd rank in Italy as the preferred Italian university for talent scouting in the country. The university's comprehensive curricula, adapted to the emerging needs of the international labor market, tap and uncover the students' skills thanks to both embedded classroom activities and volunteering opportunities outside of class. The outcomes of these smart-devised activities bring about well-equipped students ready for employment.

Università Cattolica's mission is intrinsically linked to an internationalized vision of the future. Its international student community of over 4,000 students from 100 differ-

**#1** in Italy  for  
"Employer-Student connections"

ent countries take part in university degrees and mobility programs, either taught in English or Italian. Its 4 campuses, Milan, Piacenza-Cremona, Brescia and Rome, are home to 12 faculties with over 26 English-taught programs. Its twice-a-year International Day introduces students to a wide range of opportunities abroad via seminars and workshops about semester and summer programs abroad, tailored internship and work placement, language learning, and international volunteering opportunities.

# CREATIVE MINDS

Università Cattolica has maximized its networks and partnerships around the globe, establishing close connections with both leading corporations, companies, and academic institutions. In the QS Graduate Employability Ranking, the university placed 89th in the section for Partnership with Employers, which is a strong indication of how connected employers value the relationship with the university.



*(Ilaria, second to the right, with fellow participants of the COMAU summer program in Shanghai, China)*

Università Cattolica is engaged in the consistent upgrade of its research into its labor market and system of opportunities formulated for the students. The university caters to the needs of every student and that includes the support for the development of its students' professional careers. In addition to the information that is provided on the occasion of its International Day, Università Cattolica manages a 'Stage and Placement Portal' where students can find internships locally or abroad, as well as job announcements, thus facilitating direct contact between the students and employers.

As Università Cattolica continues to gain recognition internationally, it has become a fundamental means for students to explore opportunities abroad. Like many other higher education institutions abroad, Cattolica sends its students to various countries across the globe to study for a semester or a year, either for academic or language study purposes. Besides lectures, students can start experiment-

## Università Cattolica ranks **#89** in the world for "Partnership with Employers"



ing life as an employee with the international work program. Personal career advice is provided by the university for those students who are uncertain about which country destination to select or which type of job to look for.

Ilaria, 23, and International Management student at Università Cattolica, flew to Shanghai, China to join the People Project Management School for a summer program in order to gather substantial experience to become a future Human Resource Manager. "I was anxious before the trip since it was my first long journey alone. But when I got there during the first day of the course, I was more than prepared," she shared. "One of the speakers said 'to go beyond one's comfort zone is the best way to improve one's self' and I absolutely agree with this. I carry this phrase with me whenever I go as a sort of reminder to myself."

Economics student Vittoria got involved during the summer in an international volunteering project in Buenos Aires, Argentina, offered by Università Cattolica. Even as a young child she had a strong conviction that she could contribute to make a better living environment for less fortunate

## DECISION MAKERS

# STUDY ABROAD IMPACT LAB

## THE PROGRAM

Università Cattolica offers its short-term mobility students the opportunity to follow a new complementary extracurricular course: Study Abroad Impact Lab - a 5-steps special content course set up to maximize their study abroad experience and focus on building the skills needed to land their dream job.

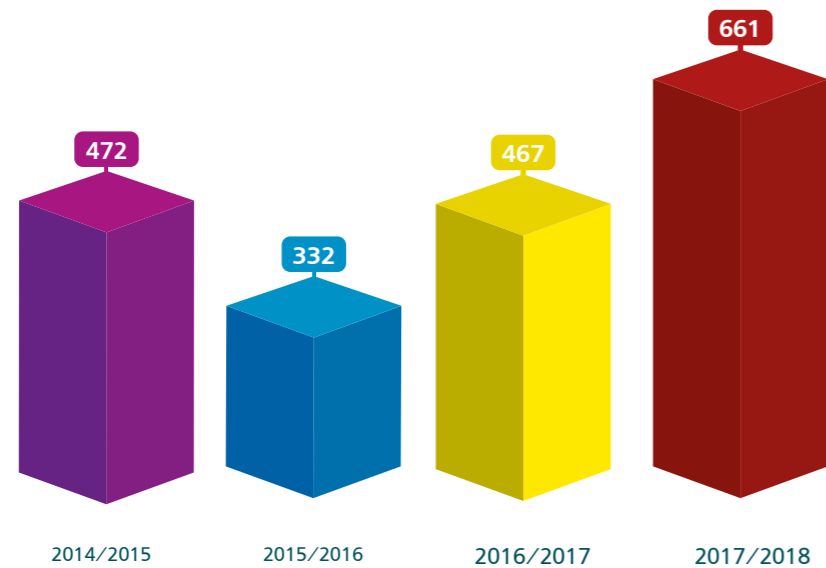
Study Abroad Impact Lab, is led by an impressive group of professors and professionals who will help students:

- identifying the values of their study abroad experience
- helping them develop cross-cultural competencies
- selecting and implementing the skills conveyed in their CV
- managing the "YOU" brand
- "reselling" their study abroad experience to different companies

At the end of the course, students will be given the opportunity to put into practice the concepts discussed in the course during one-to-one mock interviews with different companies/agencies.



## NUMBER OF CATTOLICA STUDENTS WHO DID AN INTERNSHIP ABROAD



persons. "I worked in a small village where I had seen a culture different from mine, from customs and habits to daily lifestyle," she shared. "The experience taught me how to adapt to a situation which I'm not familiar with, to communicate using a foreign language, and to behave in respect to the culture and rules of the country."



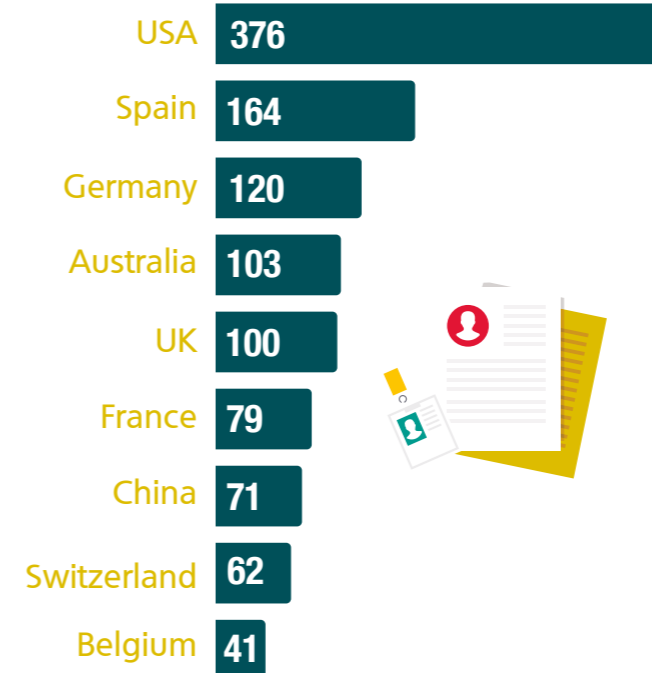
(Vittoria in Argentina)

Law student Miriam selected Tanzania as her destination. Her international volunteering experience helped her realize how much assistance she could provide and the huge impact she could make to the lives of the local children. "I know that I could've done my volunteering experience in Italy, but I would've stayed in my comfort zone, limiting my understanding of how the world works," she said. "I got more than what I'd asked for in this experience. I have understood then how my help is needed in other places and I can't risk the chance not to do it"

Boston-based student Erin studies International Business and Global Supply Chain and chose Università Cattolica as vehicle for an international internship program to Italy. Working with a start-up company in Milan allowed the 21-year-old student to get first-hand experience of what she will be working on full-time in relation to her course. "This hands-on experience has taught me a lot not only about myself, but also the capabilities of an enterprise and how much goes into working in a business," she said. "Balancing work and studies is not a problem, but even heightens my experience abroad. With work, I am able to see how Italian businesses operate whereas in my classes, having an international curriculum, I study in an international environment which is an added cultural value."

The extensive push Università Cattolica has made to student-centered internationalization explains why the university ranked 101-110 in the QS Graduate Employability Ranking. It places students at the forefront and creates an environment that is suitable for every kind of learner. The teaching and learning of hard and soft skills are integrated into degree programs, which contribute to making Cattolica graduates that are ready to join the work force.

## TOP DESTINATIONS FOR INTERNSHIPS ABROAD



As we move toward a more complex employment market, the global need for constant updates and upgrades is accelerating. Students have become the primary focus of the labor market, thus demanding a sustained and strategic approach of higher education institutions toward the preparation of their learners with the most up-to-date skills for the best possible professional careers.

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore has worldwide recognition for providing employment connections and opportunities to its students. Its wide range of programs invites and encourages students to pursue their future careers through substantial field experience. As a guiding institution, it continues to realize its internationalization mission and vision for its students by helping them take the necessary step toward successful international mobility and employability.

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# PEOPLE MANAGERS



# WHAT MAKES SOMEONE EMPLOYABLE?



Ameyali

“ Build a good image: your personal brand means a lot from your picture to your social media accounts. It's a gate for your potential employers to know more about you. Learn how to properly build your CV too: it needs to be focused on the career you want to pursue. Tailor it by job and don't just send templates. Companies look for candidates who share their enterprise values such as teamwork, being responsible, honesty, and diversity, just to name a few. But I think they look more on the human values of a candidate: the soft skills. The way you communicate to others, be always at someone's disposal, or be respectful; it is more on your personal skills. Of course, you need to get the hard skills to complete the job, but your soft skills will take you further in your day-to-day routine. ”



Cristiano

“ There's a wide range of elements that makes a person interesting. Obviously, the CV can be a starting point. It speaks about your university acquaintances, academic background, and internship experiences. It immediately gives an impression of who you are. You should be adaptable to certain skills, even flexible around them. Fluency in a particular language, especially the language used in the workplace, is crucial because I think companies today weigh soft skills over hard skills: leadership, managerial, and communication skills. All these skills together make you stand out from those who have superior academic background. The challenge now is your ability to tell your story or market yourself. ”



Sofia

“ Nowadays, it's not only about what you learn in school. They teach us how to fit for the job, but not how to get the job. Yes, it is important that when you do your job, you should have all the necessary skills to do it well. But you also need some sort of support to help you finish the job and that means you need to use your soft skills. During the hiring process, you're going to get interviewed not because they want to know if you have the hard skills to do the job (they already know you have them), but because they will test and see your soft skills, and I think this is vital. ”



Susana

“ Let's talk about passion and your capacity to relate with your colleagues. I think today we focus on these two qualities more than ever. We no longer look for a good-paying job, but one in which we are happy; it's no longer just about who wants me, but what I want too. I think passion is essential because it fuels your work and boosts your empathic relationship with the company and with your colleagues. It helps you work towards the common objective of everyone in the company. Gone are the days where we only wanted the job position. Today, we want to be in a position, in a workplace, where we belong too. ”

“ Leave room for improvements. No matter how skilled you might be at your job, if you remain static, if you don't change, if you don't get better, it's not a plus factor to you, to your employer, and to the company. I think it's also important to stress out during the interview how willing you are to take criticisms and to take responsibility for your actions. You need to be adaptable too: you have multiple people telling you multiple things, and you have to find the middle ground of not disobeying others, but to respect all the sides. Technical skills can be learned with enough practice, but soft skills? They take a lot of mental energy. If you're someone who has the heart and willingness, even if you don't have all the required hard skills, but you're willing to learn them, then I think you're up for the job. ”



Amy



Aleksandra

“ You have to know who you are: your needs, your desires, your goals. I think it's the most important thing. Your charisma and reputation can be factors too. With skills, you need to find a way to connect to people, to be open, to know what's good and what's bad. It's about your behavior, your personality. International experiences are now valued because you learn about cultural sensitivity skills. When you get your degree, you seem the same as the other candidates: you almost have the same academic background. But you need to be special and to stand out. You need your soft skills to do that. ”

“ I think we can rely on three basic elements to become employable: the knowledge we gained through studies and practices, the capacity to build interpersonal relationships and to cooperate with others, and the ability to lead both the team and yourself. If we develop these basic elements, we will gradually develop for ourselves and the company. We can see a mixture between hard skills and soft skills in these elements. I think we should find a sort of equilibrium between these two skills to bring out the best results we can do. ”



Elahe

“ In an international workplace, it's not only about the job responsibilities, but also on your communication skills, your flexibility towards your work and colleagues, and your ability to be a team player. We are starting to rethink and value soft skills. You have to be open-minded, to be accepting of different cultures, to try and learn new things, to get out of your comfort zone. It doesn't matter too how skilled you are, if you don't have the basic manners, you might not be employable. Skilled people or people who can learn new skills can be found easily, but those who have good manners are difficult to find. ”



Antonio

# INTERNATIONALIZING THE CAREER

How Cattolica is leveraging study and work abroad experiences to enhance its students' employability skills. A conversation with Nannette Ripmeester and Jérôme Rickmann.



# CAREERPROFESSOR



**Nannette Ripmeester** is director of Expertise in Labour Mobility (ELM). ELM specializes for over 20 years in customising solutions for international labour mobility. Together with her team, Nannette works under the motto of 'making mobility work'. She is considered an expert on global mobility trends and how to enhance the connection between recent graduates and their future job opportunities.

## Why did employability become an area of focus of your work?

As part of my Master's Degree in European Studies at the University of Amsterdam, I had to write a thesis. At that moment, there was a big problem on the labor market in the Netherlands and I thought how interesting it would be to look at the mismatch between what the universities provided and the labor market required. Since I was studying European Studies at that time, I focused on the European mismatch regarding this subject. It was the beginning of my research. Since then, I have always been interested in labor mobility, how to connect people to the labor market, and what roles do universities, societies and companies play in this space.

## How does globalization influence the progress of employability?

One of the effects of globalization on employability gives rise to the assumption and reflection that skills are the same everywhere when it is not. When you ask employers from other countries what set of skills do they look for in a candidate, you hear that they look for slightly different skills. I think globalization is here to stay. It also shows us how vulnerable our society is now that we are interlinked. Even though the world is getting more cosmopolitan, I think almost the opposite happens. Regionalization becomes more important because people want to belong to something. People want to belong to smaller entities.

## What's the difference between 'Hard Skills' and 'Soft Skills'?

Hard skills are the set of skills you learn at university. These are the skills required for your job. It is interesting, however, that if you talk to certain employers, they'll say that students need to learn "how to learn and how to deal with the information." For instance, computer hardware company IBM was present in Liverpool for the EAIE, a conference for higher education, and one of its recruiters pointed out to "stop teaching [the students] all the knowledge because by the time they graduate, it's outdated knowledge." What we need is people who are able to pick up new things quickly and have developed all the other skills that they need to fulfill their job responsibilities. Maybe we should stop calling it "soft skills" and start referring to them as "professional skills" since these skills are essential for people's professional futures. "Soft skills" is how people describe them; it is how we interact as human beings. However, if you say "soft", it sounds as if it doesn't matter, but it matters quite a lot. I think if you look at how recruiters select, they look at the CV and it has to contain indications of the subject matter knowledge plus the skills you need to be able to do the job. In job interviews, they will briefly test whether you have these hard skills, then they'll spend most of the time trying to sense: does this person have the skills that I believe will allow him or her to function within my team, within the environment of our organization? Will this person be able to deal with clients, work under pressure, and meet deadlines? I think universities can train them

also simply by having people work in teams or on certain group assignments. There are a lot of methods you can use to train people (almost) in a playful manner without them knowing that they're acquiring a skill.

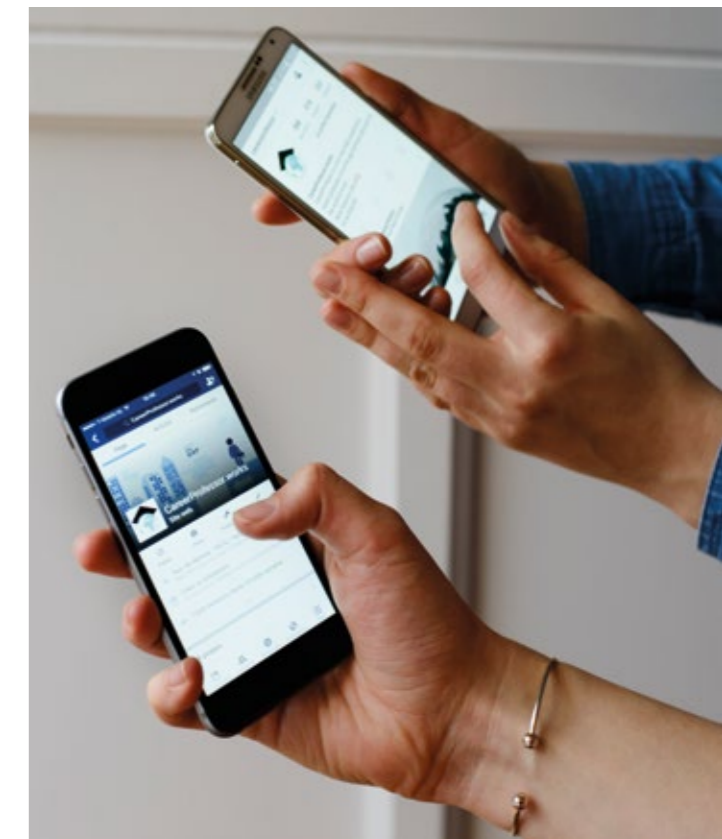
starting salary, CV or resume models, the main employers in that country, how feedback is given, and how teamwork works in that country. That's the whole idea about it: to think and understand how people do things differently in different countries and cultures.

## How can international experience affect the employability of the students?

I think it is essential because you learn something that you won't learn anywhere else; all the things that help a person to grow. It is certainly helpful when it comes to employability and creating a better employability portfolio. I think for international programs, we have to ensure that the students are aware of the skill-learning activities and have real programs where they experience valuable and employability-related situations. What the employers often mention is the ability of a student to tell his or her story. Even if you have (very) little exposure to international programs and experiences, but you are well-integrated in the international (student) community and do all kinds of services and assistance there, you might still be able to tick off all the boxes within the criteria. In such cases, you have to talk, to share your experience, in a manner that will make the employers say, "Wow! This is the person I'm looking for!"

## What does the CareerProfessor app offer to students?

CareerProfessor trains intercultural employability skills that make you successful in a global world. We want students to understand that there are three different areas: job hunting, social interaction, and doing business. We use gamification in CareerProfessor: in a rather playful manner, we encourage students to learn about cultural differences and think about differences. The idea of the game is not to choose the right answer, but to think and realize that people do things differently. The app also has a reward system: students can win an "unlock another country" reward and those country profiles will tell you the top employability skills,



Learn more: [www.careerprofessor.works](http://www.careerprofessor.works)

# ECCE NETWORK



**Jérôme Rickmann** has been working in international higher education for about 12 years. He is a Università Cattolica CHEI PhD Student and currently works as Head of Global Insights & Engagement Strategies for Finland University Inc. He is Project Lead for the 2015 newly formed "European Centre for Career Development & Entrepreneurship" - a transnational career service consortium involving Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Regent's University London, Paris School of Business and EBC Hochschule.



## Why did employability become an area of focus of your work/research?

We come to a point in life where we ask ourselves certain questions: who will pay for the life I want to live? How do I become employable to employers? Also, as years pass by, many are utterly frustrated in their jobs – so the question becomes prominent, how do I stay attractive for other employers or how can I create my own business? Depending on your life situation, these questions and often fears can become quite existential – and that fascinates me. One of my first jobs – still in university – brought me in a position where I was expected to assist students with finding internships and study abroad opportunities – so somehow this laid the basis for my later career, where I always had the luck to be able to combine work around Higher Education Internationalization and employability questions.

## How does globalization influence the progress of employability?

Globalization in terms of employability carries a progressive effect to many. You can ask yourself: where will the economic powerhouses of tomorrow be? To an extensive degree, the indicators point to Asia and in many ways, it is a fact. I often feel that people in Europe who haven't traveled Asia may know about this fact but they don't understand it really because they haven't experienced it, they haven't really seen what's going on. Students never had as many opportunities as now to see those changes, to be part of designing this new landscape and make clever decisions for their own career. I think today is an exciting time to

witness and experience the variables of the globalization and employability.

## Which skills are valuable from an employer's perspective?

In the end, employers want problem-solvers, so one has to develop relevant know-how, be able to understand the problem at hand, translate knowledge into smart answers and be able to implement the solution. Depending on the job field the necessary skill set may differ but understanding this basic process and adapting to it will ensure your relevance in the world of work.

## How can international experience affect the employability of the students?

If done right, international experiences will help to develop adaptability, understanding and critical thinking also towards your own culture. Your horizon will become broader, you'll appreciate nuances of different ways of doing things more and this can enable you again to become a more skilled problem solver because you might know more ways to achieve a goal, you might have the necessary local insights or networks, a better cultural understanding or language skills, you might be a more independent thinker. All these things are real development opportunities but they won't automatically happen just because you are in another part of the world – you will still actively have to seek ways to utilize the opportunity of a different context to the most. But if you do that the world is open for you.

## What does the ECCE Network offer to students?

The ECCE Network is a medium for university students of our partner higher education institutions to search internship opportunities and job offers across different cities in Europe, most especially in Germany, UK, France, Italy and Spain. Our group provides students with helpful resources, endless support, and information about the internship or job they are looking for, and their chosen destination. We inform them on employment trends, norms and precautions, CV and interview standards, professional and social networkings and connections, job and internship hubs, and living abroad guides and cultures. Information on enterprise opportunities to connect and present your business ideas are also facilitated by the network.

**“STUDENTS NEVER HAD AS MANY OPPORTUNITIES AS NOW TO BE PART OF DESIGNING THIS NEW LANDSCAPE AND MAKE CLEVER DECISIONS FOR THEIR OWN CAREER. I THINK TODAY IS AN EXCITING TIME TO WITNESS AND EXPERIENCE THE VARIABLES OF THE GLOBALIZATION AND EMPLOYABILITY.”**

Learn more: [www.ecce.network/en](http://www.ecce.network/en)

STORIES

# STUDENT AND ALUMNI STORIES

Travel and cultural experiences? Check. Boost in skills to become the ideal candidate for the dream job? Double check. How about a self-made CEO? Triple check! Pack your bags and join the adventure of the students as they share their stories about their international experiences and local successes.

PASSION LED US HERE

# FROM PASSION

# TO ACTION

## HOW VERONICA CORBELLINI CHANNELS HER LOVE TO WORK

Veronica has the soft aura that calms the strained ambiance of a room. Her tenderness speaks through her actions and words, and this is not a surprise at all, not when she has grown fond of children and fostered empathy.

Veronica Corbellini snatched a small object from her purse and handed it to me. She had taken off her long, black coat, hung it on the back post of the wooden chair, before she announced her news. "I have something for you. I'm not sure if you'd be with your family these coming holidays, but I want to share with you the spirit of this season," she said as I gazed at the chocolate cake pop coated with silver candies, a perfect resemblance of Christmas in winter. I looked at her, speechless and in awe, and witnessed pure joy in her eyes.

Veronica's tenderness speaks through her actions and words, and this is not a surprise at all, not when she has grown fond of children. Her love for them brings her on a mission to understand the nature of their growth and development. It was one of the reasons she pursued Developmental Psychology at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore for her Master's degree. "If you want to make a difference, you have to start from the roots," shared Veronica. "I focus my field of expertise on children from this philosophy. If I want to create the best possible environment for them where they could prosper for a long period of time, I have to start understanding the early phases of their lives."

The sense of desire to further her studies provoked Veronica to explore her options abroad. Through the international programs of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, she found a calling outside her solid ground and set on a journey which would expose her to new cultures and crowds.

Her first stop was the University of California, Los Angeles. For three months, she continued her studies on psychology, digesting theories about children and maternal relationships, but all the while, she felt the desire to do more. "I felt like something was missing, but then I found out what it was," said Veronica. "I had a friend in Bolivia doing a volunteering project with children the same time I was in UCLA. When we came back to Italy, she shared her experience with me and I was beyond amazed. I told myself, 'I wanted that. I wanted an experience like that.'"

herself in a one-month long volunteering program with children at orphanages. She quickly fell into a routine working five days a week at two different orphanages, of which one was for HIV infected children.

A flash of longing sparked in Veronica's features as she recalled the modest home of the children. I watched as her pride unraveled with how she helped them clean the house, prepared the food, took them to the park, taught them English, and played with them. "It was an eye-opening experience," she said. "Despite their lifestyle, they live

**"It wasn't easy to leave the place now that I'd gotten used to it, but I knew I would be back."**

Veronica clasped her hands together and beamed at me. Her adventurous spirit gleamed as she revealed how she wanted to feel a new environment far from that of her upbringing. "That's what I want to do: to volunteer. I had no idea when or how, but I knew I wanted to do it. The following year, I applied for a volunteering project. After receiving my 'go' signal, I packed my bags and went to India."

While in India, she witnessed the high hopes in children's eyes, contrasting with the underlying background of limited resources and unfavorable lifestyle they live. She immersed

every day with a smile on their face. They give you all that they have, even if they almost have nothing. On our last day, my co-volunteers and I brought our things to the orphanage, shared with and gave them to the children as a gift. It wasn't easy to leave the place now that I'd gotten used to it, but I knew I would be back."

Right after Veronica returned from her international volunteering experience in India, she flew to New York to join the NGO "Catholic Medical Mission Board" for her four-months internship program. She devoted her time to organizational projects on maternal and child depression,

and increasing the motivation of health workers for a productive workplace. "It was an amazing experience," shared Veronica as she held her smile. "The continuous exposure to find solutions to help the children of underdeveloped countries inspired me to always do my best to contribute and to make the children's lives easier. I knew then it was the path I wanted to take in the future."

**"The continuous exposure to find solutions inspired me to always do my best to contribute and to make the children's lives easier. I knew then it was the path I wanted to take in the future."**

In spite of the thriving episodes of Veronica, her shortcomings took form during the first days of her New York journey. "In the first few weeks, I had a hard time. I'd had expectations of what I would do. When I got there, I was not able to figure out everything. It was tough and I felt



lost," she shared. "Then, I realized how time had its ways, how I had all the means. Eventually, I settled with ease, but not without my own persistence. I started the conversations. I asked around. I became curious and always initiated the first step. I braved through it all. In the end, I achieved wonderful results."

When I asked her about her future destinations to volunteer, Veronica sat upright and looked pleased as she said, "Peru and Kenya." The timeframe is uncertain, but she knows for sure she will get to these two countries. "For now, I have to finish my practicum in children neuropsychiatry at Policlinico di Milano and aim to take part in the national board exam to become a full-fledged, licensed psychologist by this summer," shared Veronica.

A strong yet empathic individual: a description Veronica owns through the collective international experiences she has garnered. She learned how to continuously challenge herself and take risks in an environment where she had to fend for herself. "When you go abroad, not just to travel, but for a specific purpose, you grow up," she said. "You learn new things and you get a new perspective on life. You take it all in and it becomes a part of you."



# The road to a **MILLION-DOLLAR MODEL**

How one feedback brought Tommaso Migliore to found MDOTM Ltd

"Your true enemy is not the market. It's not your competitors. It's not your colleagues. It's yourself", shared Tommaso Migliore, CEO and Founder of MDOTM, as he began the sit-down interview to talk about the birth story of his brainchild project and how it was shaped in the form it has today.

At the age of 24, Tommaso, together with his best friend Federico Mazzorin, developed the first quantitative model of MDOTM, while attending his master's degree in Finance at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. As he nurtured his algorithm-based model in its early stage, Tommaso tried to seek validation on his project. Tommaso said "hello" to his first real feedback when an asset manager handed two options to him: follow the academic route and publish the findings as a research, or dismiss the former and get 10 to 15 million euros from the same research.

The feedback pushed Tommaso to build a strong foundation for MDOTM. Together with his co-founder they shaped their firm's future where they would lead the global financial markets through its research and technology. "Until that moment, we only focused on the product itself", said Tommaso. "We didn't have any idea about the markets,

That feedback gave us a clear view about the path to take — a vision in which we saw the product come to life."

From a start-up reaching out to financial investment audience, MDOTM today has grown to a fully regulated investment advisory company, offering its AI-driven investment strategies to banks, asset managers, insurance and family offices worldwide. It has become a go-to artificial intelligence partner for institutional investors to help them in their investment decision process.

Together with his team, Tommaso welcomed their winning prize as the only European Fintech startup to join the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Blackbox Connect program in collaboration with Google for Entrepreneurs. "Participating at Blackbox has deeply transformed the way in which I envision my business growth and scope in the next few years," said Tommaso. "I realized how important it is to always have an ambitious vision and to think big on a global scale."

Tommaso traced the fruitful unfolding of his character to his years of playing professional ice hockey. "My experience as a professional hockey player taught me to take the matters at hand with human values: it is essential to listen,

motivate and encourage your teammates, guiding them towards achieving their goals. Individually we might be good but only the team can win" he said. Gradually, these human values shaped MDOTM and they are now part of the company's mission and vision.

Throughout his success, one word lingers on Migliore's mind: Innovation. "To innovate means you are willing to question the status quo and that the result does not always equate with an invention, but rather with an evolution," he said. He sees himself as an innovator and an 'heir' at the same time as he revolutionizes the contributions of the past renowned personalities in the finance field.

Tommaso shares two tips to remember for those who want to enter the job market: stand out in the best way possible and have a set of crystal-clear objectives in what you do, but adapt to the necessary means to achieve them. "Today we live in an extremely competitive world," said Tommaso. "We have to work on ourselves and develop the skills that will distinguish us from the rest. We have to be flexible and tactical enough to reach our goals and to always keep an eye on the target."

As a relentless innovator, Tommaso treats skills as the lifeline of his work. Without his decision-making and inquisitive skills, he wouldn't retain the free flow of his work ethics. In the finance game, those who have a ground knowledge in mathematics, statistics and information technology can keep innovating valued ideas and not be left behind on anything. "The job market is changing by the minute and there's a great need for people who can improve his or her necessary work skills such as problem solving, data gathering and presentation, and ability to take constructive criticisms," he said.

Tommaso Migliore locked his hands together as he reflected on the feedbacks he had received since the beginning of his adventure. "We receive hundreds of 'no' in our lives and careers, but just a few 'yes' episodes can really drive us forward. Those 'yes', especially the ones that give you the chance to explore new adventures—to accelerate your speed—are those that should always be remembered", he added.

## ABOUT MDOTM

MDOTM develops AI-driven investment strategies for the financial markets. They apply Artificial Intelligence and advanced statistical techniques to vast amounts of financial data to develop investment strategies that exploit market inefficiencies. MDOTM works closely with its clients, which are exclusively institutional investors, to support them with high-level technology in their investment decision process.

› [www.mdotm.eu](http://www.mdotm.eu)





**PRACTICE**

*makes*

**PERFECT**



When have adults stopped believing in their dreams and started fearing the future instead? Something happens between grade 5 and 6, which is what Chiara Grecchi has tried to comprehend in order to find ways to intervene in children's lives to help them grow up as more conscious and self-confident adults.

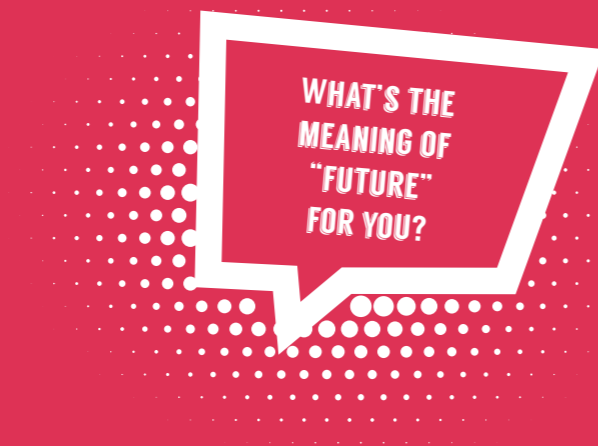
# SELF-ESTEEM GRADUATES

Chiara Grecchi, Università Cattolica Alumn, and Professor Antonietti, Dean of the Faculty of Psychology, recently developed a new research program related to 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their life skills abilities, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and positivity. This set of skills can greatly impact one's employability, much more than a sophisticated LinkedIn profile. Chiara's research has originated from a question: when have adults stopped believing in their dreams and started fearing the future instead?

Chiara Grecchi, Università Cattolica Alumn, and Professor Antonietti, Dean of the Faculty of Psychology, recently developed a new research program on 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and life skills abilities: self-esteem, self-efficacy, and positivity. This whole set of skills is what can really boost your employability, which is not just a matter of how cool your LinkedIn profile is. Chiara's research has originated from a question: when have adults stopped believing in their dreams and have started fearing the future instead? Self-confident adults of tomorrow.

Chiara Grecchi is an advocate of life skills empowerment. The 26-year old Psychologist takes piles of blank papers, writes down mini-personality quizzes, and wraps them around her hands to give to her participants. But it's not the typical ambush interviews you find on the streets or some signed, sealed, delivered survey sheets right at the comfort of your home. In 2018, she strode into a brazen color-filled room, dropped the stacks of papers she was holding, and prepared herself to find out the changes and improvements in skills. And her target participants? 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.

You would think that questions like "what's the meaning of 'future' for you?" or "what would you do to help the integration among people?" are better answered by adults, but Chiara had a different to-do list on her agenda. She handpicked the students taking their last year of elementary school in Cornate, a town in the province of Monza and Brianza.



The project took place for 8 meetings in the classroom of the students. More than the questions, Chiara pursued an end goal of fostering the students' abilities as early as their age. She worked relentlessly with the students throughout the project, witnessing the gradual changes in their abilities and slowly hitting the bull's eye of her target.

But Chiara is not a fan of the term "abilities" to describe the potentials of the students. She rather prefers to call them "life skills" which, as she explains with a chuckle, "a sort of 'must' to survive life and its obstacles." She spoke about the need to give the young students a dose of reality on life skills, and guide them on acquiring and improving the right set of skills they will need in the (near) future. As a devotee of life skills empowerment, she believes that life skills should be developed among children as early as possible to help them be prepared for their future life and career.

One does not want to wake up one day and realize that his or her opportunities to improve on life skills have run out. Chiara encourages everyone to not delay any further. She lives by the principle that putting order to one's messy life is a vital assignment one has to complete to secure a fulfilling future. "These soft skills are not widely taught; not by the faculties, not by the subjects, not by academic institutions, and perhaps not by anyone. But we need to be aware of their essence. They serve as the key to expound life experiences."

It's not enough for Chiara that the young students learn text-book definitions of words or the formula to solve mathematical and scientific problems. Drawing an image, writing solutions on the board, or doing one's homework are passive learning, and Chiara tries to break the pattern by putting the young participants in situations where they would reinforce the use of various skills. "Sports is a perfect example," said Chiara. "Life skills can be discovered and trained through sports. They put you in groups to work together, to ask you to organize strategies, or to resolve problems. These activities are a ground where you can train your life skills. One of those, for instance, is your critical-thinking skills: you are plagued with questions whether to seize the moment or leave your teammates behind. You are somewhat obliged to make a decision spontaneously. It's a start of your skills training." But no sports are involved in this experiment with her students! "At least not in this particular research," she added.

Chiara had high hopes for her social experiment with her 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Her goal was to document changes and improvements in the students' self-efficacy, self-esteem, and positivity, the three variables of her research. She devised interaction-based activities to get the students working in pairs or small groups. Instead of check-the-applicable-boxes questionnaires, Chiara thought of an efficient method to test the creative minds of the students, that is a sort of role-play in a story.

Four lead characters led the short story, working as secret agents for an International Secret Service Organization. The students had to go through the story, joining forces with the four secret agents to achieve the common goal of defeating the evil, wicked villain named "Sfiducius". Sfiducius tried to steal the "Spark" of the students, a symbol of the three variables for the social experiment. But the agents' International Secret Service Organization needed more than four helping hands. In order to protect themselves from any harm, the four secret agents recruited the students as their co-secret agents to save the world and themselves, but the agents didn't possess any superhuman powers other than their own abilities, a.k.a Life Skills.

Day after day, Chiara devoted her time to try and understand the capacity of her 5<sup>th</sup> graders towards skills empowerment. Her experiment finally started showing some concrete results. "At the end of the project, one of the teachers asked them to write a short essay about their experiences. Words like 'I have learned that I've grown up' or '6<sup>th</sup> grade isn't different from 5<sup>th</sup> grade by any means. I'm the one who's different and I'll keep changing' can't be measured, no. It was priceless. Looking at the where we were at that point, I couldn't help but tell myself, 'ha! You've done a great job!'" shared Chiara.

Chiara had to keep reminding herself of the core objective of her research: observe and mark the changes, whether a leap or a shift, in the students' life skills. Even a game as simple as puzzle-building enhanced the way the students interacted with each other and placed the problem-solving skills as more important than practice. "I witnessed how the small changes unfolded. For instance, a once timid student no longer finds it difficult to work in pairs," she stated with excitement.



**"LIFE SKILLS CAN BE DISCOVERED AND TRAINED THROUGH SPORTS. THEY PUT YOU IN GROUPS TO WORK TOGETHER. THEY ASK YOU TO ORGANIZE STRATEGIES, OR TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS. YOU ARE PLAGUED WITH QUESTIONS WHETHER TO SEIZE THE MOMENT OR LEAVE YOUR TEAMMATES BEHIND. IT'S A START OF YOUR SKILLS TRAINING."**

"Other activities were intimate and personal too. At the end of the training, I asked them to imagine a piece of luggage and to fill it with everything they had learned and thought they could use in 6th grade. Then, I asked them to think of their own treasure chest and fill it with learned lessons they thought they could use for 6th grade, although many were those lessons they were not ready to bring along just yet." It was successful. The time of reflection helped the students figure out which life skills they needed to be aware of for their imminent future use.

The level of trust Chiara built with the students has become a treasure she strongly values to this day. It would have been a pointless research if she had not connected with the students with that degree of confidence that allowed them to be more open and thus resulting in a more effective means to observe the changes in their life skills. Chiara watched as the true objective of the project slowly manifested itself through the way the students interacted with each other compared to the first day of the training: at first



they took decisions on their own, then they consulted their peers to help them get through the obstacles and found ways to compromise on some of the matters at hand. It was enlightening to hear Chiara say, "having a strong self-consciousness is another key to improving and discovering your life skills." After all, without the awareness of how to get things done, or shaking yourself from a day-dream to tell yourself "you have this skill!" one can easily neglect one's own potential.

When Chiara guided the students to become aware of their skills, she did so in an implicit way until it was the students themselves who told Chiara they had realized that the activities were meant for their skills. Chiara admitted her fondness to observe people in their growth and development. This has turned into a basic human instinct, thanks to her background in Psychology during her graduate degree at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. Although she's taking a short break from research, her mind keeps running with ideas on her future topics.

She shared that her next target would be on mindfulness among the sportsmen of a volleyball team. "Mindfulness is a self-awareness technique which calls for your other life skills to be enabled. Somehow, you should first practice the necessary life skills before achieving mindfulness. You have to think that you can create such environment for yourself, and through this, self-efficacy and self-esteem enter the field too," said Chiara.

Whether you are in the phase of exploring your skills or discovering any of them, what matters to Chiara is your progress in strengthening your life skills and the awareness you have throughout the process. But to stay present and be in a routine where you relentlessly practice the life skills are the constant goals you should keep in mind, regardless of your age. "In the end, life skills help you throughout your whole life to be better for yourself and for others. They are not something that you forget about or drop after you have learned them. Instead, they become a part of yourself, of who you are, and that's a treasure you keep," she said.

**"LIFE SKILLS HELP YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR WHOLE LIFE TO BE BETTER FOR YOURSELF AND FOR OTHERS. THEY ARE NOT SOMETHING THAT YOU FORGET ABOUT OR DROP AFTER YOU HAVE LEARNED THEM. INSTEAD, THEY BECOME A PART OF YOURSELF, OF WHO YOU ARE, AND THAT'S A TREASURE YOU KEEP"**

## ACHIEVEMENTS

# INSIDER NEWS

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore continues its strides toward internationalization by creating a professional hub to complement its learning environment. How is progress so far? Changes have been made. Actions have been taken. Milestones are being reached. This is Cattolica today!



1

## PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Università Cattolica has recently signed the following agreements with top universities around the globe:

- University of Toronto (QS ranking: #28)
- King's College (QS ranking: #31)
- London School of Economics and Political Sciences (QS ranking: #38)
- Monash University (QS ranking: #59)
- Universidade de Sao Paulo (QS ranking: #118)

We welcome our new partners in our extended network of over 600 institutions across the world.

## CHANGE STARTS HERE

The Systemic University Change Towards Internationalization (SUCTI) is a project funded by the European commission that aims at making the universities' administrative staff a core change element for internationalization.

66 members of our administrative staff have taken part in this project, interacting with each other and thinking about how to effectively transform their home institutions into internationalized universities.



2

## E4IMPACT

This university alliance was founded by ALTIS (Graduate School of Business and Society) of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in 2010. Its aim is to create and promote entrepreneurship programs in the developing world, in order to support the start-up and growth of local businesses. Since 2010, E4Impact has trained about 700 entrepreneurs, 33% of whom are women. 73% of the alumni have now a business in place and they created 3500 jobs.



3

# 4



## CHEI

The Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) at Università Cattolica promotes and conducts research, training and policy analysis to strengthen the international dimensions of higher education.

One of the projects CHEI is now leading is the EMI (English-medium instruction), a 2-modules course aimed at supporting Università Cattolica academic staff in internationalizing the higher education starting from their own classroom.

EMI explores approaches, strategies and techniques for teaching international classes in English. **84 members of the academic staff** have taken part in the EMI so far since 2016, 36 of which just in the first months of 2019. This is a clear sign of how important internationalization is and is perceived by teachers and professors.

## IN & OUT STATS

In the Academic Year 2017/2018, Università Cattolica welcomed **4369 international students**, while **2627 domestic students** travelled abroad for study or work experience. The top destinations were: USA, UK, Spain, and Germany.



# 5



# 6

## GOING GLOBAL

2019 is a big year for Università Cattolica as three new overseas representative offices have been opened in Shanghai (China), Melbourne (Australia) and Washington DC (USA - East Coast).



# 7

## SUBJECT RANKINGS

The QS World University Ranking by Subject 2019 has finally been released. Università Cattolica saw the subject Agriculture and Forestry getting its way up in the chart, being now in the top 200 universities in the world. We also find Cattolica in the top 150 for Medicine and in the top 200 for Psychology, Economics, Accounting & Finance and Communication & Media Studies.

# WORLD BOUND



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Dear Colleague & Friends,

Meet Università Cattolica Staff at the upcoming NAFSA 2019 Annual Conference. Stop by our booth and collect your invitation for a special Milanese Aperitivo in Washington DC.

We look forward to meeting you!

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