



Introductory Remarks by the President of WAAS

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Each one of us today has more information accessible on our cell phones than was available to all of humanity in earlier times. Yet, our education system still largely follows the model introduced at the University of Bologna in 1088, at a time when all knowledge was in the possession of a very small number of scholars, transfer of information could only be done through oral lectures, and books were hand-written and so rare that they were kept chained to library shelves.

The 2nd international conference on Future Education, held in Rome on November 16-18, 2017, recognized the need for a radical paradigm shift in the way we teach and learn in order to meet the multi-dimensional challenges confronting global society in the 21st century. It concluded that a massive quantitative extension and a radical qualitative shift in education are indispensable.

In conferences spanning the last five years, the World Academy of Art & Science has been repeatedly asking the same critical question, “If you want to create an accessible, affordable, relevant and world class system of higher education open to all human beings, how would you do it?” The founding of the World University Consortium in 2013 marked a milestone in a long search for effective answers to this question.

The Rome Conference is the second in the series which began in October 2013 at University of California at Berkeley. More than 300 speakers and participants came together in Rome to discuss important questions, formulate conclusions and practical recommendations designed to transform the educational system to enhance its reach, accessibility, quality, relevance and employability to meet human needs, fully develop human potential, and prepare today’s youth for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

The Rome Conference was organized by WAAS, WUC and Roma Tre University (RTU) in collaboration with the International Association of University Presidents, Kyung Hee University (Korea), Person-Centered Approach Institute (Italy), The Mother’s Service Society and Global Institute for Integral Management Studies (India), InterUniversity Centre (Croatia), and others.

The uniqueness of this multi-stakeholder conference lay in the fact that it brought together eminent thinkers, researchers, university administrators, professors of education and other disciplines with representatives from the business community, labor unions, international NGOs and government. It also included large groups of students from Roma Tre University and Kyung Hee University in Seoul representing the voice of the future. Students are the consumers and beneficiaries of the educational system, whose future lives would be powerfully affected by the type and speed of evolution in the global educational system.