



Young Leaders 2025 Cohort



Giulia Aloisio Rafaiani specialises in international communications and public relations, currently working as Director of Communications & Strategy at the consultancy firm Strategic Partners.

She graduated in International Politics and Sociology at City University of London, where she also got her MA in Television Journalism. After working as a journalist in London, writing and producing news for several media outlets, Giulia became a consultant at Brunswick Arts UK. She was appointed as Edizione Holding's Head of Communications in 2019, before joining Aeroporti di Roma as Head of International & EU Relations; in addition, she

later became Head of the Group's Communications Planning as well, while contributing to manage digital strategy and special projects linked to communities' engagement. Through her experiences, Giulia has developed a solid expertise in the sectors of infrastructures, healthcare, sustainability, arts and innovation.



Beatrice Bergami is a passionate advocate for both Italian and British culture, bridging two distinct worlds through her professional journey in cybersecurity and her dedication to fostering international collaboration. Born and raised in Rome, she moved to London to pursue higher education, earning a BSc in Computer Science with Management from King's College London. With a deep interest in cybersecurity, Beatrice began her career in London in PwC's Ethical Hacking team, consulting clients across multiple

industries and performing security assessments, and red team exercises. She later



transitioned into a Security Architecture role at Goldman Sachs, further honing her expertise in securing global financial systems. Beyond her technical contributions, she is a vocal advocate for diversity in Tech, earning recognition as a TechWoman100 in 2023 for her efforts to empower women in the industry.

As a Young Leader, Beatrice is committed to strengthening the ties between the UK and Italy by fostering dialogue, cultural exchange, and innovation in the digital space. Her journey reflects a dedication to cross-border collaboration, professional growth, and the collective goal of making the digital world a safer place. Beyond her technical contributions, she is a vocal advocate for diversity in Tech, earning recognition as a TechWoman100 in 2023 for her efforts to empower women in the industry.



Nathalie Biancheri is a writer/director based between London and Italy. She began her career at the BBC where she spent seven years in documentaries. Her latest fiction feature film *WOLF* (2022) premiered at Toronto Film Festival and was distributed by Focus Features in the US and Universal for the rest of the world. The film stars George MacKay (*1917*), Lily-Rose Depp (*Un Homme Fidele*) and Paddy Considine (*House of Dragons*). Indiewire deemed the film “absolutely astonishing”. Her micro-budget feature film debut *Nocturnal*, starring Cosmo Jarvis (*Shogun*) premiered at the BFI London Film Festival in 2019 to great critical acclaim and won awards at DA Barcelona Film Festival, MONS, Sofia, Les Arcs and many others. Nathalie has

made a number of short and artist films which have all travelled extensively to festivals around the world winning numerous awards (Edinburgh, SWSX, Rhode Island, amongst others). Indiewire and The Irish Times named Nathalie as one of top filmmakers to watch.



Marcello Brognoli is an Italian Navy Officer currently assigned to the Navigation Team of the aircraft carrier HMS PRINCE OF WALES, the UK's Flagship, as part of the Personnel Exchange Programme between the Royal Navy and the Italian Navy.

Prior to this, he was the Navigating Officer of the Italian destroyer ITS CAIO DUILIO. During his time in this role, he was awarded a Commendation for exceptional professional achievements in navigational planning and the operational execution of an overseas national mission in the Baltic Sea. He also participated in national and international activities, including NATO deployments (e.g., Operation Brilliant Shield, Exercise Neptune Strike), and managed the first integration of

an Italian warship into a US Carrier Strike Group, where he focused on the navigation and telecommunication side. For his performance, he was evaluated as the 1st junior officer out of 14. He joined the Italian Navy in 2014 (at the Italian Naval School Morosini in Venice) and commissioned from the Naval Academy in 2020. He holds a master's degree *cum laude* in Maritime Studies from the University of Pisa. His academic achievements include graduating within the top one per cent of his class, for which he received the "*Condecoración al Mérito Facultativo Naval*" from the Chief of Naval Staff of the Mexican Navy, as well as representing the Italian Navy at the 2020 US Naval Academy Leadership Conference in Annapolis. Passionate about LEGO, he's an avid tennis player and runner, and enjoys reading fantasy novels, skiing, and hiking in his free time.



Carlo Andrea Cattaneo is a Chartered Engineer and a Member of the Royal Aeronautical Society. Born and raised in Napoli, Carlo holds a Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Naples “Federico II” and a postgraduate diploma in Civil Aviation Management from the University of Rome “La Sapienza”.

After his studies - between Napoli, Delft and Rome - Carlo moved to the UK to join Rolls-Royce in its Aerospace business, where he is currently a Programme Delivery Manager on the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP). In his current role, Carlo is part of the wider leadership team delivering a complex multi-national programme with the UK, Italy

and Japan. During his years at Rolls-Royce, Carlo has held several technical and programme leadership roles on a variety of multi-national programmes, including EJ200 and the Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT).

Carlo also has 20+ years’ experience as a competitive sailor, mostly spent as a bowman on various types of boats ranging from double-handed dinghies to 40-footers and classic yachts. Outside of this, Carlo enjoys building long-lasting memories with his children.



Dr Meganne Christian FRAeS is Reserve Astronaut / Commercial Exploration Lead at the UK Space Agency, developing strategy on human and robotic spaceflight in the post-ISS landscape. In November 2022, she was selected from a pool of over 22,500 applicants across Europe to be one of the 17 members of the European Space Agency’s first astronaut class in 13 years. She holds a Bachelor of Engineering and a PhD in Industrial Chemistry from the University of New South Wales. From 2014 to 2023 she was a materials science researcher at the National Research Council of Italy and participated in two parabolic flight campaigns to test graphene coatings for thermal management in satellites.

She has also undertaken two missions, including a winter-over, to Concordia Station in Antarctica, where she was a research scientist in charge of atmospheric physics and meteorology.



Daniel Colaianni is the CEO & Co-Founder of Unicorn by AIXR, a platform dedicated to unifying technology ecosystems. His work bridges the gap between platform providers, developer communities, and industry leaders, streamlining engagement through gamified challenges and strategic networking. At 17, he secured his first six-figure deal with AMD, setting the foundation for a career focused on building technology ecosystems that empower startups and enterprises. Before founding Unicorn, he

launched a digital marketing agency, created the largest international awards show for virtual and augmented reality, and built a global technology network. He also designed and led a large-scale metaverse initiative in Saudi Arabia with Saudi Aramco and Ithra. His expertise in standards development with BSI and UK government-backed digital transformation projects gives him a unique perspective on regulatory alignment and innovation policy. As part of the UK-Italy Young Leaders Programme, Daniel aims to strengthen cross-border collaboration in venture funding, digital education, and technology policy, ensuring both nations stay competitive in the evolving AI-driven economy.



Riccardo D'Andrea is a civil servant who has been working for the Italian Government for over a decade, mainly dealing with international and EU affairs. Mr. D'Andrea is also adjunct professor of International Politics and, prior to joining the Government, worked for the United Nations and the European Union.

After graduating in Spain from an international high-school and obtaining a bachelor's degree in criminology and a master's degree magna cum laude in international relations, Mr. D'Andrea specialized in diplomacy, MENA geopolitics and international law. Fluent in English, Spanish, and French, Riccardo is a

former professional tennis player who still loves playing and following the game,



together with travelling, reading John Grisham and spending precious time with his family and friends.



Melania Edwards is the Managing Partner of Limitless, a boutique agency that powers impactful investment communities. With over 15 years of experience in finance and venture capital across the US, Europe, and Asia, she has built a reputation for connecting capital with innovation. Previously, Melania was part of the Global Investment Team at 500 Global, a venture capital firm with \$2.7 billion in assets under management. She also led investor relations at Unreasonable and has advised Fortune 500 companies on corporate innovation. As a strategic investor, she has backed high-growth startups affiliated with Oxford University and served as Vice President for HSBC's Venture Capital coverage team.

Beyond finance, Melania has worked at the intersection of investment, impact, and leadership. She sits on the Advisory Board of the Club of Florence, a leading sustainability and climate non-profit, and is the Founder and Curator of TEDxCheltenham. An advocate for international collaboration, she has engaged with global leaders across business, government, and philanthropy to shape conversations on innovation and impact.

Melania holds a BA and MA in Economics and Management from Oxford University.



Matteo Forte is a tech entrepreneur with experience in building and leading technology startups. He is the Founder and CEO of SWITCH (www.getswitch.io), a Berkeley Skydeck company specializing in AI-powered solutions for shared mobility and logistics and serves on the board of ADPM Drones (www.adpmdrones.com), a company developing autonomous B2B drone solutions.

Recognized in the *Italian Book of Innovation* (Rizzoli), Matteo was selected as a YTI

Fellow and Board Member by the U.S. Department of State. He is a Global Executive MBA Candidate and holds an Executive Master in IoT and Industry 4.0 Management from LUISS Business School.

He has been an advisor for incubators, venture capital funds, and companies on startup assessment, business development, and fundraising. He has also been a guest lecturer at universities, sharing insights on entrepreneurship and innovation.



Jonathan Heywood is the Media Relations, Marketing & Communication Director of Prysmian, the world's leading cabling solutions provider, operating in over 50 countries worldwide. Prysmian is listed on the Milan stock exchange, with a turnover of circa 15 billion euros in 2023.

In his role, Jonathan is responsible for media relations, marketing, communication and institutional relationships for Prysmian on a global basis, including the coordination with teams around the world.

Prior to joining Prysmian, Jonathan spent ten years at Generali, one of the world's largest insurers and asset managers. While at Generali, he covered a number of roles, including leading international media relations, communication for Europ Assistance – a global leader in travel insurance and assistance services - and supporting the transformation of Generali Investments. Jonathan studied Politics at the University of Liverpool, Politics and Economics at the University of Milan and is supporting the Master of Media Relations at the Catholic University of Milan with sessions exploring media relations and communication in a B2B and international context.



A proud Liverpudlian, Jonathan is a dual Italian-British national and traces his Italian roots to Bardi (PR), which has been one of the focal points for Italian-British cultural exchanges for generations.



Federica Onori has a background in scientific studies carried out at Italian and foreign universities, including the Technical University of Munich and the Universite' Paris Dauphine. After graduating in Mathematics, she then obtained a PhD in Statistical Sciences at the Sapienza University of Rome. She has gained experience through internships and consultancy work with international organizations such as the UN FAO

and the IFC of the World Bank Group. Additionally, she worked as a statistical assistant at the European Commission. In the 2022 Italian general elections, Onori was elected in the Europe constituency and is currently the head of the Italians Abroad division of the Azione Party (Renew Europe). In the 19th legislature, she serves as a member and secretary of the III Commission (Foreign and Community Affairs) at the Chamber of Deputies and chairs the Committee on the Implementation of the 2023 Agenda. She is also a member of the Committee on Human Rights and the Committee on Italians in the World. Onori is actively involved in parliamentary diplomacy, chairing the Italy-Spain Inter-Parliamentary Union and participating in several other bilateral parliamentary groups. She is also part of the Italian delegation at the OCSE Parliamentary Assembly and various international networks, including the World Bank Global Young MP Initiative and the UNITE Parliamentary Network for Global Health.



Dr. Antony A. Pellegrino is a final year Urology resident at San Raffaele Hospital in Milan and a current Research Fellow in Data Science & Biostatistics at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) in New York. His expertise lies in minimally invasive and robotic surgery, with a strong focus on improving oncological outcomes in urological cancers. Born in London and raised in Rome, Dr. Pellegrino completed a BSc in Pharmacology at Newcastle University before earning his medical degree summa cum laude from Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, where he remained to pursue his

Urology residency under the guidance of Prof. Francesco Montorsi and Prof. Alberto Briganti.

His training has spanned globally renowned institutions, including clinical and research fellowships at MSKCC, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Pitié-Salpêtrière University Hospital in Paris. He also conducted research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, where he studied the genetic drivers of aggressive prostate cancer. Beyond his clinical and research work, Dr. Pellegrino is passionate about the intersection of healthcare, innovation in patient care, and the transformation of healthcare systems. His work explores how data science, surgical advancements, and strategic decision-making can optimize patient outcomes and improve the efficiency of healthcare delivery.



Fabian Piga holds a Master of Science with Distinction in Defence, Development and Diplomacy from Durham Global Security Institute and a First-Class Honours Degree in Modern Languages and Cultures from the University of Durham. He was selected in the prestigious ‘UK Male Undergraduate of the Year’ by Target Jobs and awarded a contract with L’Oréal’s Head Office in the Luxe Division. During his studies, he pursued research placements at Sorbonne University, Paris, and at the University of

Havana, and produced a top-scoring thesis discussing the efficacy of citizenship deprivation in countering global terrorism. Fabian currently leads on transport policy in the Cabinet Secretariat, where he advises, negotiates and brokers agreements on policy proposals between Ministerial Private Offices and No10, and issues final clearances. He has been seconded to the Prime Minister’s Press Office. His expertise in crisis management has supported the UK’s response to major global events, from overnight consular assistance during the Afghanistan Evacuation (Operation Pitting) to acting as the UK-NATO Liaison Officer during the onset of the conflict in Ukraine. Before joining the Cabinet Office, Fabian gained diverse experience in the public and private sectors, both in the UK and overseas – he served as Economic and Political Analyst at the Embassy of Poland to Cuba, Business Manager at a City-based Asset Management Firm, and Senior Policy Advisor at various UK Government Departments, covering national security, Brexit and economic affairs. Fabian's commitment to public service extends beyond his professional endeavours. He continues to publish articles on policymaking and foreign affairs, including co-authoring an UN-commissioned weekly report on Global Hazards. He also volunteers with Standout, a charity helping men in prison to prepare for employment after release and leads stakeholder engagement for the Civil Service Languages Network to improve cross-government language capabilities. Fabian speaks six languages and studies Modern Standard Arabic at Imperial College, London.



Chelcie Poole is a British strategist and growth operator based between Milan and London, working at the intersection of creativity, consumer insights and innovation. With a background in venture building, strategic partnerships and brand and product innovation, she has helped organisations - from startups to global corporations – successfully design, launch and scale new products and businesses across Europe, Asia and the US. Currently, Chelcie leads growth and experience at Limineer, a tech platform designed to optimise

smart portfolios of business opportunities. She also partners with deep-tech VCs, consumer brands, and corporate innovation teams on go-to-market strategies, brand positioning, and scaling initiatives. An INSEAD MBA and St Andrews graduate, Chelcie is a hands-on execution partner for organisations navigating emerging opportunities, helping them craft sustainable businesses with real impact.



Simone Venturini is a young political leader with significant experience in public administration and management of complex organizations. He graduated in Law from the University of Padua, and he was elected Venice City Councillor in 2010 at 22 years old, serving as group leader. Re-elected in 2015, he was appointed Deputy Mayor for Social Welfare, Health and Social Care, Work and Infrastructure and Economic Development. In 2020, he was re-elected in the City Council and assumed the role of Deputy Mayor of

Venice responsible for Social Welfare, Health and Social Care, Tourism, Housing Policies, Work and Economic Development. Throughout his tenure, he has held key positions in national and local commissions working on social innovation, the fight against poverty and new policies for tourism. He coordinated social interventions during the Covid-19 emergency, working together with the Public Health Department on the vaccination campaign. He led the Municipality of Venice efforts in welcoming Ukrainian refugees during the first months of the war. He is chairman of the Destination Management Organization of Venice which brings together economic and cultural stakeholders to promote high-quality tourism. He has spearheaded groundbreaking tourism policies, including the introduction of the Access Fee System for day visitors and the new regulations for walking tour groups.