



Press release

POPE FRANCIS IN RAI TV STUDIOS, NICOLÒ GOVONI: “TALKING ABOUT EDUCATION WITH HIM HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY DREAM”

The founder of Still I Rise met the Pontiff in the studios of “A Sua immagine” (In His image), during the recording of the episode La Forza della Vita, aired on the Italian TV channel Raiuno on Sunday, June 4.

ROME, 06/06/2023 - «It was an exciting and meaningful meeting, the greatest honor of my life so far». **Nicolò Govoni**, Executive Director of Still I Rise, commented on **the meeting with Pope Francis**, which took place in the Rai studios in Saxa Rubra, Rome. The broadcast was aired on Sunday, June 4 on the Italian TV channel Raiuno during the special episode of the program "A Sua immagine" (In His image), hosted by Lorena Bianchetti. It was a global event: it had never happened before that a Pontiff entered a television studio.

«Until five minutes before we went in, everything seemed extremely unreal, I couldn't believe what was about to happen, but when we met in the studio, everything became easier. **Talking about complex issues such as education, children's rights, and the challenges facing youth was simple**, easy, almost like conversing with an old friend», Govoni added.

In the segment dedicated to the issue "Joy and Restlessness," the recollection of his personal story began with the words of his grandmother, Mariuccia Malagutti, who talked about her grandson as a child and teenager who was "a rebel, who only wanted to do what he wanted." After turbulent years and many disappointments at school, Nicolò turned 20 and left for a trip to India that radically changed his life. This trip gave direction to his existential restlessness and led a few years later to **the birth of Still I Rise**, created to provide education and protection to refugee and vulnerable children in some of the world's most difficult areas.

«It was a truly incredible opportunity to be able to exchange views with the Pope on the importance of reforming the school and making it more human, more effective, in order to make it able to enhance the individual not only in his talents, but also in his restlessness. A restlessness to be seen not in its negative sense, but as the prelude and spark of change.» On the sidelines of the meeting, Nicolò Govoni gave

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the Pope two books, including "Through Our Eyes," the collection of photographs taken by refugee children in the Samos hotspot.

ABOUT STILL I RISE

Still I Rise is an international nonprofit organization founded in 2018: its goal is to provide education, safety and security to refugee and vulnerable children by making high-quality educational pathways accessible. It is headquartered in Italy, and it runs operations in Northwest Syria, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Colombia. The educational approach is twofold, depending on the context of intervention: the association runs Emergency and Rehabilitation Schools in volatile contexts (North West Syria and DR.Congo) and International Schools in the more stable ones (Kenya and Colombia, opening). Through the latter approach, Still I Rise has become the first nonprofit organization in the world to offer the International Baccalaureate pathway free of charge to children and adolescents in vulnerable conditions. In 2022 the organization received the prestigious **Mother Teresa Award for Social Justice** and in 2023 **was nominated for the [Nobel Peace Prize](#)** by two Council Members from the Republic of San Marino.

ABOUT NICOLÒ GOVONI

Nicolò Govoni, 1993, is the President and Executive Director of Still I Rise. At the age of 20, he began his first volunteer mission in an orphanage in India, where he stayed for four years, during which he graduated in Journalism. In 2018 he moved to the island of Samos, Greece, and co-founded Still I Rise. In 2020 Nicolò was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to the education and protection of refugee children and received the CIDU Award assigned by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. In 2023, the organization he founded also received a Nobel Peace Prize nomination. Nicolò currently lives in Kenya and directs the organization's operations on four continents.

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