

TIME puts Tec professor on list of 100 most influential people in AI



Tec professor Paola Ricaurte Quijano has been named one of the 100 most influential people in the world of artificial intelligence by TIME magazine.

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Valeria Quintero/TecScience

TIME magazine has included **Tec de Monterrey** professor **Paola Ricaurte Quijano** on its **TIME 100 AI 2025** list, which recognizes the most influential personalities in the world in the field of **artificial intelligence (AI)**.

Due to her work as a research professor at the **School of Humanities and Education**, Ricuarte was placed on the list in the **Thinkers category**, which recognizes those who question the tech industry and propose new ways of doing things in the future.

TIME 100 AI was created in 2023 due to the impact caused by the launch of **ChatGPT**, as a way to show that **the course of artificial intelligence is not determined by machines** but by the people behind them.

*“To my mind, this recognition is the result of a collective effort by many people in Mexico and Latin America who **seek to imagine and build fairer and more humane technological futures,**”* said Ricuarte in an interview with [CONECTA](#).



Born in Bogotá to Ecuadorian parents, Paola Ricuarte has adopted Mexico as both her home and a base for her technological activism. | Photo: Valeria Quintero / TecScience

What did TIME say about Paola Ricaurte?

The magazine singled out the research professor from the Department of Digital Culture and Media at the Tec's **School of Humanities and Education** due to her career in projects that seek to **transform the relationship between technology, human rights, and social justice.**

TIME mentioned her leadership in drawing up the [AI Decolonial Manifesto](#), a bilingual document rejecting “Western-centric” cultural biases in AI, and her co-founding of [Tierra Común](#), a network advocating for the **decolonization of data.**

It also discussed her role in the [Feminist AI Research Network \(FAIR\)](#), which promotes inclusive projects with social impact.

According to **TIME**, Ricuarte is now one of the **most influential voices from the Global South** in the technological debate.

Global South is a term that encompasses low and middle-income countries, chiefly in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, which are characterized by the shared challenges of development and inequality.

The publication highlighted her words on how **the AI industry reproduces colonial dynamics**:

*“The Global South is providing land, labor, and resources to feed this system that is based on processing data, and then selling this data to create new services and products. In a way, nothing has changed in the **international division of labor**.”*

In 2024, the researcher also published a report with Montreal-based institute **Mila** for the **OECD’s Global Partnership on AI**, comprising more than 200 interviews over two years.

“You cannot develop policy without working with the communities that are most affected by these systems. It’s just that simple,” cited TIME in its main summary.



Despite studying journalism in Russia, she never practiced it, being more attracted to mathematics, technology, and social activism from a very early age. | Photo: Valeria Quintero / TecScience

Paola Ricaurte among the 100 most influential people in AI

In an interview with **CONECTA**, Paola made it clear that this international recognition is the result of a collective effort:

*“This recognition is the result of a collective effort by many people in Mexico and Latin America who **seek to imagine and build fairer and more humane technological futures.**”*

The academic added that this visibility from TIME will open up new opportunities for projects that promote **technological innovation from a social, feminist, and socio-environmental perspective, which includes the decolonization of data**.

For Paola: *“innovation in AI must always be deeply rooted in a social commitment to **fair technological development.** Only then will we be able to respond to the*

enormous challenges facing society and humanity.”

These initiatives include the following:

- The [Decolonial Feminist Coalition for Digital and Environmental Justice](#)
- The [Feminist AI Research Network \(FAIR\)](#), and
- [Tierra Común](#)

She also had a message for young people:

“Don’t give up on your dreams or stop focusing on your passions; your honest vocation and commitment will turn your talent and energy into **a force for social transformation.**”

“This recognition is the result of a collective effort by many people in Mexico and Latin America who seek to imagine and build fairer and more humane technological futures.”



In 2020, during the pandemic, she helped draft the AI Decolonial Manifesto, a text that questions the “Western-centric” cultural biases in artificial intelligence. | Photo: TIME

Paola Ricaurte’s critical view of artificial intelligence

[In an interview with TecScience](#), the researcher explained how **AI models reproduce inequalities when trained on biased data** that chiefly come from the Internet:

“The artificial intelligence we use, in its most commercial form, is created according to the principles of financial gain, the market: it’s extractive, patriarchal, racist, and colonialist. There’s no correlation between what’s reflected by the Internet and who we are in the world.”

She warned that **these biases are not abstract: they can limit access to health services, education, or credit** and can even lead to discriminatory practices, such as algorithms that criminalize young people or systems that control women’s bodies.

According to the researcher, **AI reflects global inequalities**: while development is concentrated in the hands of the technological powers, Latin American countries provide natural resources without playing a decisive role in the debate.

She therefore emphasized **the importance of regional projects** that respond to **local and cultural needs**.

“I hold out a lot of hope for Latin America, where there are collectives that create technologies designed to solve specific problems, ranging from women’s access to justice to community monitoring of water in indigenous territories,” she said to TecScience.

The academic envisions a future in which AI is an inclusive tool, capable of rescuing ancestral wisdom and strengthening communities’ cultural and linguistic sovereignty.

*“One of my dreams is to garner more support for **indigenous communities to develop their own databases and technologies** to defend their cultures and languages, as well as preserve their knowledge.”*

About the TIME100 AI list

The **TIME100 AI** list was created in 2023. Every year since, **the magazine has recognized 100 figures** who, in different fields such as innovation, art, activism, politics, or research, are **transforming how this technology influences society**.

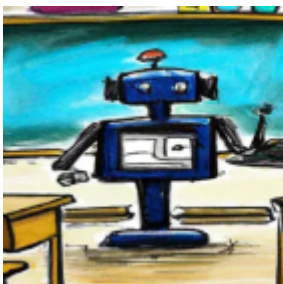
In its 2025 edition, TIME stressed how global competition over AI talent has risen to such a pitch that it resembles professional sports free agency.

Big Tech firms have offered nine-figure deals to attract prized researchers and developers.

However, at the same time, **the list also provides space to those who question the dominant dynamics and propose alternatives** with greater social commitment, such as **Paola Ricaurte**.

With information from TIME100 AI & TecScience

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