

Transition Design: discussing design and sustainability at the Tec



The forum, co-organized with Carnegie Mellon and the University of Palermo, focused on perspectives from the Global South in systemic change through design.

13/07/2026

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From July 8 to 11, 2026, the Tec's Mexico City campus received **global leaders** in **design** and **sustainability** at the fifth edition of the [Transition Design Conference: Weaving Regenerative Futures](#), a forum co-organized by [Tecnológico de Monterrey](#), [Carnegie Mellon University](#), and the [University of Palermo](#).

The aim of the conference was to promote **international collaboration** and exchange experiences on topics such as the **ethics of care**, **socio-ecosystemic regeneration**, social justice, and democracy.

Through keynote speeches, workshops, and panels, over **200 attendees** discussed **design** as a tool for **systemic change**, focusing on generating **scalable solutions** to “**wicked problems**,” bearing in mind the **perspectives of the Global South**.

Mariana Amatullo mentioned the importance of co-constructing knowledge during the international forum held at the Tec. Photo: Esteban Saavedra



Four themes for imagining a fairer future

Mariana Amatullo, National Dean of the School of Architecture, Art, and Design, said that design should be a force for imagining and materializing fairer, more regenerative, and more resilient futures.

*“The transitions that we seek don’t belong to a single institution or a single discipline: **they’re a collective effort**. These meetings are so important precisely because of this, as they remind us that **knowledge is constructed in the community and from the community**,” she added.*

In this fifth edition, the conference addressed four core themes:

1. **Projects for Transitions:** proposals for projects, strategies, and systemic change for long-term transformation toward sustainability and **regenerative futures**.
2. **Cosmopolitan Localism:** exploring regenerative futures through local-global perspectives, integrating indigenous knowledge with **contemporary design** thinking.
3. **Mindsets for Transition:** mental models, attitudes, and visions of the world necessary for enabling and sustaining transitions toward **fairer and more regenerative systems**.
4. **Education for Change:** syllabuses, tools, frameworks, and pedagogical approaches to educate students and professionals for **long-term systemic change**.

“Transitions don’t belong to a single institution: they’re a collective effort.” - Mariana Amatullo

The keynote speakers included:

Alfredo Gutiérrez Borrero, leader in sustainable design and systemic transitions; **İdil Gaziulusoy**, researcher on complex systems and cultural change; **Anand Pandian**, pioneer in systemic thinking; and **Terry Irwin**, professor and Director of the [Transition Design Institute](#) at Carnegie Mellon University and co-creator of **Transition Design**.

How to address problems in a pluriversal context

During her keynote speech, Terry Irwin highlighted that both **Mexico** and the **Global South** are at a critical point for ensuring a **more pluriversal evolution** of practice to tackle problems such as climate change and inequity that, although they are not new issues in this region, **are manifested differently in each culture**.

And these problems, which at one point were only regional, now have global ramifications through **ecological, political, technological, and economic systems**, most of these problems actually being consequences of **higher order** problems.

Irwin therefore proposes a set of diverse strategies for achieving a **regenerative future**, starting with strengthening **connections between institutions**, something she calls “**islands of coherence.**”



The academic from Carnegie Mellon University emphasized that Mexico and the Global South are experiencing a critical moment for redefining design to tackle “wicked problems.” Photo: Esteban Saavedra

*“In this way, we’ll increase our collective capacity to **intervene in systems** and contribute to the great transitions that we wish to see,” she reflected.*

Moreover, she proposed an **educational paradigm** of universities that exist to serve the community and the region, as well as **generating connections** with local

government, decision makers, activists, and the community, which have transdisciplinary laboratories so that they operate as spaces for co-learning between students and faculty.

Finally, Irwin proposed changing how designers tackle a problem, and instead of seeking **a single solution**, learn to **“dance with systems.”**

*“Working with systems isn’t about certainty, prediction, or control. It’s about **dancing with a system** through attitudes of speculation, experimentation, improvisation, and **adaptation**.*

*“Dancing means welcoming **unconventional perspectives and collaborators**, openly sharing values, and resisting the temptation to cling too strongly to a single method, framework, or ideology. If there’s a mindset to cultivate, it’s one of imagining that **things can be radically different**,”* concluded Terry Irwin.

“If there’s a mindset to cultivate, it’s one of imagining that things can be radically different.” - Terry Irwin

What is Transition Design?

The [Transition Design Institute](#) at Carnegie Mellon is a resource for those working toward positive change at systemic level.

21st century societies are facing innumerable **“wicked problems.”**

Transition Design forms part of a growing global movement of academics, researchers, and professionals who believe that communities, organizations, and societies as a whole should deliberately transition toward **futures** that are more **sustainable, equitable, and desirable**.

With information from Lorena Marquina and the Transition Design Institute.

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