

DESIGN THINKING FOR GOOD

*Where Design
Meets Humanity*

d.conference'25

18 & 19 September 2025
Izmir, TURKIYE



YASAR
UNIVERSITY





Event Description and Purpose

d.confence 2025 is the annual conference-festival of the Global Design Thinking Alliance (GDTA), held each year by a different member institution of the network. In 2025, the conference will be hosted by Yaşar University in Izmir, Turkey.

The event is designed to promote the positive impact of design-oriented thinking and to contribute to the sustainable and human-centric development of cities. It brings together academics, designers, entrepreneurs, civil society actors, public institutions, and private sector professionals to foster an inspiring environment for interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration.



Global Design Thinking Alliance (GDTA)

GDTA is an international network of institutions and individuals that provide education, conduct research, and continuously develop the methods and perspectives of design thinking.



42

Member Institution

25

Countries

5

Continents



GDTA Annual Conference

The annual GDTA conference is held in different countries, in collaboration with local stakeholders and host institutions. This conference provides an opportunity to explore how design-driven thinking methodologies are applied in various sectors, organizations, and communities.

AI AND DESIGN THINKING:

A Global Dialogue on Future Skills

2024 - @HPI Potsdam

SCALING THE DESIGN THINKING MINDSET:

Upskilling The Current and the
Future Workforce

2023 - @PennState
University

DESIGN THINKING IMPACT

2022 - @ d-school AFRIKA

POLICY INNOVATION LAB

From Local To Global

2021 -@ HPI School of
Design Thinking - Virtual

RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

2020 -@ HPI School of
Design Thinking - Virtual

LIFELONG LEARNING IN TIMES OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

2019 - @ HPI NYC

2025 Conference Theme

Design Thinking For Good

Innovative and sustainable solutions to the complex problems facing today's world require placing the concept of "goodness" at the center of the design thinking process. The theme of "**Design Thinking for Good**" is a global call to create solutions that improve the quality of life for individuals and communities. With this theme, we will explore how to mobilize design thinking tools for social, environmental, and economic betterment.





Purpose and Goals



Knowledge Sharing:

The conference shares the latest research, case studies, methods, and tools in the field of design thinking with the participants.



Inspiration and Creativity:

Prominent speakers, hands-on workshops, and panel discussions help participants develop new ideas, find creative solutions to problems, and transform the way they work.



Networking:

The conference creates an international community, laying the groundwork for new collaborations, joint projects, and joint research between institutions and individuals.



Sustainable Impact:

The conference, which covers not only the business world but also social and environmental issues, encourages the use of design thinking for the benefit of people and the planet.

Target Audience



Academics and Researchers:

Scientists from design thinking, innovation management, social entrepreneurship, architecture, engineering, business, psychology, and related disciplines.



Civil Society and Public Sector:

Non-governmental organizations, local governments, government agencies, urban design and policy makers.

Expected number of participants:

500+ national and international experts, professionals, and students.



Professionals and Business Representatives:

Product managers, designers, innovation leaders, HR managers, strategy consultants, service designers.



Students and Young Professionals:

University students, recent graduates, entrepreneurs, young members of design communities.



The Potential and Contribution of Izmir to the Event



D.Confest 2025 offers an ideal platform to strengthen the "Design Thinking for Good" theme with Izmir's unique features.



The city's historical heritage, cultural diversity, and strong entrepreneurial ecosystem enable the transformation of design-oriented thinking into concrete projects.



The sustainability and social innovation vision of the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality perfectly aligns with the event's goals.



The city's private sector and civil society organizations are ready to bring the idea of "design for good" to life.

The workshops and field visits in the event program provide an opportunity to closely experience Izmir's cultural and economic dynamism, while the interaction between historical sites and modern innovation centers creates an ideal environment for creative solutions. D.Confest 2025 will stand out as a platform for an experience that extends from theory to practice with the city's innovative and participatory spirit.



18-19 September 2025

Organization Details

1 September 18, 2025:

Open Symposium (Yaşar University) An open, international-level symposium with speakers. Topics: Sustainable Design, Social Innovation, City and Society, Technology and the Cities of the Future.

2 September 19, 2025:

Half-Day Workshops Interactive workshops where participants can develop projects and learn new methods. Site Visits Visits to design and innovation centers, social enterprises, and related urban areas in Izmir. On-site observation and review of best practices. Evening Entertainment A social event to bring participants together.

18 September 2025

Symposium

400 Participants On Site + Online Live Stream Audience | **Ticket A**

Content Highlights

- **Keynote Sessions & Panels:** Renowned speakers from academia, industry, and civil society will present on “Design Thinking for Good.”
- **Audience:** Open to students, professionals, and the wider community, ensuring a broad and diverse audience.
- **Focus:** Cutting-edge research, case studies, and success stories in social innovation, sustainability, and user-centric solutions.

18 September 2025 - Thursday

09:00 - 09:30 Arrival

09:30 - 10:00 Welcome & WarmUp

10:00 - 11:00 Key Note : **Sean Carney**

Design For Good

11:15 - 12:15 Panel I

Design for Transformation

13:30 - 14:00 Welcome Back

14:00 - 15:00 Panel II

Design in Complexity

15:15 - 16:15 Panel III

Designing for Good in Learning Experiences

16:30 - 17:30 Key Note : **Srini Srinivasan / Don Norman**

Donald Norman Design Award

17:30 - 18:00 Closing Words

18 September 2025

Symposium

Online Q&A Session



Don Norman
Design Guru

Designing for Humanity: Reflections and Challenges

In this special live session, Don Norman – **one of the world's most influential** design thinkers – will engage directly with participants, reflecting on three core challenges shaping the future of design and society. Together, we will explore:

Design Education for the 21st Century:

Why we must evolve beyond narrow specialization and foster multidisciplinary, collaborative leadership among designers who can help shape companies, governments, and societies.

The Shift from Human-Centered to Humanity-Centered Design (HCD to HCD+):

How design must reckon with its impact on the environment, culture, and digital well-being – and how designers must take responsibility for sustainable, ethical outcomes.

UN's SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals:

The need for an international, low-barrier network of practitioners, where knowledge-sharing and collaboration drive progress on complex global challenges.

18 September 2025

Symposium

Key Note Speakers



Sean Carney

Co-Founder & Trustee Design for Good.
Design & Innovation Advisor and Board Member
Former CDO & EVP Philips

Design for Good: Creating lasting impact through collaboration

Some of the world's most pressing challenges - climate change, water scarcity, access to education, and personal health - are complex and interconnected. In just three years, Design for Good has successfully mobilised over 1,600 designers across 30 countries to create lasting, measurable impact for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on a scale only achievable through worldwide collaboration. Learn how Design for Good implements five guiding principles to accomplish this: Designing with affected communities; building cross-functional, collaborative global teams; training and mentoring creatives; and making all products and services open source for anyone to use.

18 September 2025 Symposium

Key Note Speakers



Srini Srinivasan

CEO of Don Norman Design Award (DNDA)
Prof of Design/COO at
Design Innovation Institute Shanghai (DIIS)

How Design Thinking Enhances Community Development Policies

Design thinking transforms community development from top-down planning to collaborative placemaking. By treating policies as hypotheses and residents as co-designers, cities can create more responsive, equitable, and effective solutions to complex social challenges such as affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization.

18 September 2025 Symposium

Panel I - Design for Transformation

How do organizations truly change, not just on the surface, but in mindset, culture, and structure?

This panel brings together transformation leaders from diverse sectors and countries who have reshaped organizations using Design Thinking. From universities and global enterprises to education reform and cultural renewal, this session offers deep insights into how design-led approaches can turn uncertainty into opportunity and create meaningful, lasting change.



Uli Weinberg

GDTA Board

Moderator



Monika Frech

HPI d.school



Linlin Shui

Communication University of China



Mehmet Aktaş

CEO of Yasar Holding

18 September 2025 Symposium

Panel II - Design in Complexity

Design Thinking as a compass for navigating uncertain, interdependent, and rapidly evolving challenges.

How do we make sense of complexity, ambiguity, and competing priorities when tackling “wicked problems”? This panel gathers practitioners and researchers who apply Design Thinking to address interconnected social, environmental, and technological issues. From urban development and healthcare systems to digital transformation and sustainability strategies, this session will explore how design methods can help teams and institutions embrace complexity with creativity, empathy, and resilience.



Richard Perez

d.school Cape Town

Moderator



Gordon Adomdza

China Europe International Business
School (CEIBS)



Nalin S. Kumar

SNS iNNovation Hub



Levent Kandiller

Yaşar University

18 September 2025

Symposium

Panel III - Design for Good in Learning Experience

Design Thinking as a tool to reimagine education for relevance, inclusion, and lifelong impact.

How can we rethink learning environments to meet the needs of a diverse, dynamic, and rapidly changing world? This panel invites education leaders and innovators who are shaping the future of teaching and learning through Design Thinking. From classroom experiences to institutional strategies, they will share how learner-centered design can foster agency, equity, and engagement — ensuring education serves both individuals and society at large.



Hoda Mostafa

The American University in Cairo

Moderator



Matt Parkinson

PennState Collage of Engineering



Jacob Reeves

Western University



Yasin Özarslan

Yaşar University Distance Education

Center

19 September 2025

Design in Action

100 Participants | Ticket B

Content Highlights

- **Morning Workshops:** Hands-on, half-day sessions led by experts focusing on real-world challenges, interactive problem-solving, and rapid prototyping.
- **Innovation & Cultural Tours:** Visits to local design studios, social enterprises, and community-driven projects.
- **Evening Social Event:** A collective gathering to foster networking, cultural exchange, and celebration.

19 September 2025 - Friday

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|---------------|---------------------|
| 09:00 - 09:30 | Arrival |
| 09:30 - 10:00 | Welcome & WarmUp |
| 10:00 - 12:00 | Workshops |
| 12:00 - 12:30 | Closing Reflections |
| 12:30 - 13:30 | Lunch |
| 13:30 - 17:00 | Safari |
| 17:00 - 19:00 | Design Cruise |
| 19:30 - 20:00 | Closing Words |
| 20:00 - 22:00 | Closing Event |

19 September 2025

Workshop



Monika Frech & Team
Co-Head HPI d.school

Paving The Road Designing the present from the future

Based on the keynote from the previous day, we want to reflect the scope and **limits of „good“ design, especially in an intercultural context.** Based on a specific case, we discuss different roles designers and their stakeholders can (or should?) have during the design process and afterwards. We use the case to explore different approaches to manage and measure intended and unintended impact and design backwards from projected outcomes. The workshop ends with a discussion of participants own experiences and best (or worst) practices and ideas how to transfer insights to their own contexts.

19 September 2025

Workshop

Design Thinking + AI Augmenting Creative Problem-Solving with EVA

This 4-hour, hands-on session introduces participants to the convergence of Design Thinking and Generative AI. Teams will work through a condensed design sprint, using EVA (<https://eva.echos.cc>), our AI-powered assistant that supports innovation workflows. Participants will leave with a practical understanding of how to apply AI tools to enhance creativity, empathy, and strategic foresight.



Ricardo Ruffo
Echos | Desirable Futures Lab

19 September 2025

Workshop

Playing the Future.

How to apply future trends for generating breakthrough ideas?

A practical tool for product and service design teams to generate ideas based on future trends. At the workshop participants will get a fresh overview of current trends in tech, CX, business and culture and will apply them to create Great Ideas for Good with trend constructor Playing the Future. A Trendwatching Game.



Maria Stachenko
Design Thinking Center Asia

19 September 2025

Workshop

Design for People Epic Projects to Engage the Community

The workshop include use cases from 3 programs: the Design for People challenge I facilitated last year at ULBS D-School to integrate people with motor disabilities into extracurricular activities in the community, a project aimed to engage students and researchers in community projects using service learning and research and University Innovation Fellows where students use design thinking to implement new ideas on campus.



Raluca Mihaela Bârsan
Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
ULBS D-School

19 September 2025

Workshop

Institutional Innovation

Design Thinking as a Scaffold and Vehicle for Institutional Innovation

This workshop introduces educators, higher education leaders, and design thinking practitioners to how human-centered methodologies can drive institutional transformation and innovation in universities and colleges. We will share our experience with user research, cross-stakeholder facilitation, co-creation, and prototype development for academic planning and co-design of new projects. We will discuss how designing for institutional projects can help build leadership skills across teams and within your own teams



Hoda Mostafa
American University in Cairo

19 September 2025

Workshop



Prof. Fiona Chambers

StrategicDesign@UCC,

University College Cork, IRELAND



Anirban Bhattacharya

The Painted Sky, INDIA

THE JANUS MOVEMENT

CREATING THE HISTORY OF THE FUTURE OF DESIGN THINKING

To quote the Chinese proverb, “we are living in interesting times”, to put it mildly. In fact, we are currently middle of the seventh mass extinction. Unlike previous extinction events caused by natural phenomena, this is driven entirely by human activity. Our anthropocentric growth may have led to material wealth creation, but our unsustainable practices have left us vulnerable to the impact of climate change and environmental degradation.

Interestingly, our ancestors not only faced similar complex challenges, but they also successfully solved them using ancient wisdom which has been tried and tested for thousands of years. We have reached a polycrisis point for people and planet and our current innovation through design thinking praxis is not fit for purpose. What if we chose to lean into and learn from ancient and indigenous design knowledges? Could we transform our approach to innovation, sustainability, and human-centred design. We think we can and are calling this a Janus approach - looking to the past and future in the same moment to solve complex problems. This playshop offers an opportunity to explore a Janus approach to innovation for sustainability, using harvested case studies of storied ancestral wisdom from Ireland and India.

In this polycrises of climate change, pandemics, geopolitical turbulence, economic instability (Tooze, 2023), we need to ‘break free from design thinking as usual’. This playshop is perhaps a first tentative step on that journey.

19 September 2025

Safari

Route 01:

From Creativity to Heritage

Originn Creative Hub brings together startups, designers, and change-makers in a co-working and co-creation environment. At Anadolu Efes Innovation Atelier, you'll discover how a major beverage company embraces design and innovation to shape the future of experiences. Finally, Yeşilova Höyüğü, one of İzmir's oldest settlements, offers a glimpse into 8500 years of urban history and continuity.

Route 02 :

Urban Culture and Collective Imagination

Darağaç Art Collective transforms a historic neighborhood into a living gallery of contemporary art and collaboration. At the Havagazi Factory FabLab, explore how the Metropolitan Municipality and İzmir Planning Agency support citizen-driven innovation. The Chamber of Architects provides insights into the spatial and cultural dynamics of the city. We end at BonVivant, a creative café where food, design, and community meet.

Route :

History, Innovation, and Social Impact

Begin your journey at the Agora of Smyrna, an ancient archaeological site in the heart of the city. Then visit Kontak Learning Hub, where new approaches to education and creativity are prototyped. TARKEM shares its mission to restore and reactivate İzmir's historical urban core through sustainable development. The tour concludes at the beautifully restored Portuguese Synagogue, now home to EGiAD's Cultural and Social Events Center.

19 September 2025

Design in Action

Design Cruise

Set sail through İzmir Bay with fellow participants, local creatives, and international guests. The Design Cruise offers a unique view of the city's coastline while highlighting İzmir's creative industries, with storytelling, music, and refreshments on board.

Closing Event

An informal evening gathering to celebrate the connections, ideas, and energy of D.Conference 2025. Expect music, light refreshments, and good company as we close the day with joy and inspiration.

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