

International UNESCO Chair Conference 2026

International Cooperation in Higher Education and TVET – bridging the gap between theory and practice of SDGs

**30 September - 2 October 2026,
at TU Dortmund University, Germany**

hosted by

TU Dortmund University and German
Commission for UNESCO

UNESCO Chair on TVET and Competence
Development for the Future of Work, TU Dortmund
University

Background

Since 2022, the UNESCO Chairs in Germany have been holding biennial conferences on topics relevant to their specific area of expertise and to the United Nations' Agenda 2030.

The 2026 International UNESCO Chairs Conference 'International Cooperation in Higher Education and TVET: Bridging the Gap Between the Theory and Practice of the SDGs' will bring together experts from academia, policy and practice to discuss addressing global sustainability challenges through practical, research-based solutions.

The conference aims to highlight innovative approaches to higher education and TVET which actively support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through research, development and implementation strategies, as well as teaching and learning practices.

The conference will feature keynote speeches and workshops led by UNESCO chairs in their respective fields of expertise. Participants will have the opportunity to take part in excursions to the Ruhr region, exploring sites that are relevant to the SDGs.

The conference aims to facilitate contact between researchers and policymakers from Germany and abroad, with a special focus on Southeast Asia, to promote cross-regional collaboration in advancing the SDGs in higher education and TVET.

Conference Program

Day 1 – Wednesday, 30 September

09:00 Reception and registration
10:30 Opening ceremony:

Mr. Alexander Omar Kalouti, Mayor of Dortmund
tbn, Federal Foreign Office

Prof. Dr. Christoph Wulf, Vice President of German UNESCO Commission

Prof. Dr. Manfred Bayer, President of TU Dortmund University

Ms. Birgit Thomann, Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

11:15 Break and photo
11:30 Keynotes

Dr. Friedrich Hübler, Head of UNESCO UNEVOC, *Innovation and Excellence in TVET*

Dr. Wenxi Wu, UNESCO Chair on Digitalization in TVET, Shenzhen Polytechnic University

Prof. Dr. Mariele Evers, UNESCO Chair in Human-Water-Systems, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, *Transdisciplinary research - bridging the gap between theory and practice for sustainable water management*

12:30 Poster Gallery and Lunch break
14:00 Workshops Day 1

WS 1.1 Urban development - Strategies for a sustainable transformation for the city and region of tomorrow, organized and chaired by:

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Christa Reicher, UNESCO Chair for Cultural Heritage and Urbanism, RWTH Aachen University, Germany

Dr.-Ing. Javier Ostos Prieto, UNESCO Chair for Cultural Heritage and Urbanism, RWTH Aachen University, Germany

WS 1.2 Human-Forest-Water Linkages: Towards Sustainable and Resilient Socio-Ecological Systems, organized and chaired by:

Prof. Dr. Mariele Evers, UNESCO Chair in Human-Water-Systems, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany

Prof. Dr. Qiang Li, Northwest A&F University, PR China

WS 1.3: Beyond the SDGs 2030 - which new SDGs 2050 for a more equal world?!, organized and chaired by:

Prof. Dr. Silja Klepp, UNESCO Chair for Integrated Marine Science, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel University, Germany

Prof. Dr. Julius Heinicke, UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policies for the Arts and Transformation, University of Hildesheim, Germany

WS 1.4: TVET's contribution to social and technological sustainability, organized and chaired by:

Prof. Hongjie Chen, Director of China Doctoral Education Research Center, Peking University, PR China

Dr. Junmin Li, UNESCO Chair on TVET and Competence Development for the Future of Work, TU Dortmund University, Germany

WS 1.5: UNESCO's Practical Guide on the Integration of AI in TVET, organized and chaired by:

tbn. UNESCO-UNEVOC, Bonn, Germany

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WS 1.6: Digital Literacy and Circular Economy, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Dr. Christos Kalloniatis, Department of Cultural Technology and Communication, University of the Aegean, Greece
Prof. Dr. Alexandra Bounia, Department of Cultural Technology and Communication, University of the Aegean, Greece

WS 1.7: Doing Justice to the Past? Memory Politics and Education in Transnational Perspective, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Dr. Johannes Drerup, Chair of Philosophy of Education and Educational Theory, TU Dortmund University, Germany
Dr. Miguel Zulaica y Mugica, Chair of Philosophy of Education and Educational Theory, TU Dortmund University, Germany

16:45 Plenary: Wrap Up and outlook Day 2
19:00 Conference Dinner at Dortmunder U (top floor),
Leonie-Reygers-Terrasse | 44137 Dortmund

Day 2 – Thursday, 1st of October

09:00 Reception
09:30 Workshops Day 2

WS 2.1: Leadership for Holistic Implementation of Education for Sustainable Development in Schools and Universities, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Dr. Daniel Fischer, UNESCO Chair in Higher Education for Sustainable Development, Leuphana Universität, Lüneburg, Germany
Prof. Dr. Harald Hantke, UNESCO Chair in Higher Education for Sustainable Development Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, Germany

WS 2.2: Virtual Reality in Competence Development for SDGs Virtual Reality for an SDG-related Competence Development, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Dr.-Ing. Heribert Nacken, UNESCO Chair on Hydrological Change and Water Resources Management, RWTH Aachen, Germany
M.Sc. Florian Balmes, UNESCO Chair on Hydrological Change and Water Resources Management, RWTH Aachen, Germany

WS 2.3: TVET's contribution to social and technological sustainability, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Hongjie Chen, Director of China Doctoral Education Research Center, Peking University, PR China
Dr. Junmin Li, UNESCO Chair on TVET and Competence Development for the Future of Work, TU Dortmund University, Germany

WS 2.4: Potential of modern digital Geomedia to foster Sustainable Development, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Dr. Alexander Siegmund, UNESCO Chair on Observation and Education of World Heritage and Biosphere Reserve, Heidelberg University of Education, Germany
Prof. Camilo del Rio, PhD, Atacama Desert Centre & Institute for Geography, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

WS 2.5: Cultural Entrepreneurship and Policy, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Dr. Christine Volkmann, UNESCO Chair in Entrepreneurship and Intercultural Management, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Germany
Prof. Dr. Julius Heinicke, UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policies for the Arts and Transformation, Universität Hildesheim, Germany

WS 2.6: Limits of Change? - Industrial Heritage between preservation and sustainable development, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Dr.-Ing. Michael Kloos, UNESCO Chair on Historic Urban Landscapes and Heritage Impact Assessments, Hochschule Rhein-Main, Wiesbaden, Germany
Friederike Hansell, World Heritage Focal Point, Germany

WS 2.7: Work-integrated Learning and Competence Development - the Future of Work and Learning?, organized and chaired by:
Prof. Dr. Philipp Grollmann, Chair on Education in the context of Work and Occupation, TU Dortmund University, Germany
Prof. Dr. Adeline Goh Yuen Sze, Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah Institute of Education, Universiti Brunei Darussalam

12:30 Poster Gallery and Lunch break
14:00 World Cafe (Clustered Workshops)
16:00 Summary and Outlook
18:00 Evening program
• *Guided Tour of St. Reinoldi Church (with organ music)*
• Theatre Tour and Public Ballet Rehearsal

Day 3 – Friday, 2nd of October

09:00 Excursions
• *DASA World of Work Exhibition*
• *Phoenix West Area (with "Phoenix Lumiere")*
• *Colliery Zollern (Industrial Heritage Icon)*
• *German Football Museum*
• *Dortmund U & Union Quarter*
12:00 Free time/Guided walk through Dortmund
14:00 German UNESCO-Chairholder Meeting

Please note that full and additional information on workshops and conference is available on the conference homepage!

In cooperation with:

Asian Academic Society for Vocational Education and Training (AASVET), Indonesia

Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB), Bonn, Germany

Malaysian Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (MyRIVET), Batu Pahat, Malaysia

Perkumpulan Ahli dan Pendidik Teknologi dan Kejuruan Indonesia (Paptekindo), Indonesia

Regional Association for Vocational and Technical Education in Asia (RAVTE), Bangkok, Thailand

Research Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Technical Education Development (SEAMEO TED).

UNESCO UNEVOC, Bonn, Germany

Conference Venue at TU Dortmund

30 September – 2nd of October 2026
TU Dortmund University,
Seminar Building I (SRG I)
Friedrich-Wöhler-Weg 6 | 44227 Dortmund

For further information:
<https://veranstaltungen.tu-dortmund.de/en/unesco-chair-conference-2026/home/approach/>

Conference Dinner

30 September 2026, 19:00 / 7:00 pm
Dortmunder U (top floor)
Leonie-Reygers-Terrasse | 44137 Dortmund

Registration and Information

For general questions about conference organization, registration or accommodation, please write to:
E-Mail: unescochairconference2026.fk12@tu-dortmund.de

Conference Homepage

You can find further information on our homepage:
<https://veranstaltungen.tu-dortmund.de/en/unesco-chair-conference-2026/home/>

Link to Registration via ConfTool

<https://www.conftool.net/unesco-chair-conference-2026/>

Contact

UNESCO Chair on TVET and Competence Development for the Future of Work
Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Thomas Schröder
E-Mail: thomas-werner.schroeder@tu-dortmund.de

Gefördert durch:



Auswärtiges Amt

