

## 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:

**tbn**, City 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*

**tbn**, West Ukrainian National University, *Maintaining higher education in times of war*

12:40 Lunch break and Poster Gallery

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

**Prof. Dr. Junmin Li**, Vocational Education with a Focus on Empirical VET Research, Osnabrück University

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

tbn. UNESCO-UNEVOC, Bonn, Germany



**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 *Training Center Zeche Hansemann*,  
HWK Dortmund, Barbarastrasse 7 | 44357 Dortmund

## Day 2 – Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> 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  
**Prof. Dr. Junmin Li**, Vocational Education with a Focus on Empirical VET Research, Osnabrück University

**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 Lunch break and Poster Gallery  
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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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  
Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), Bonn, Germany  
German UNESCO Commission  
Chamber of Crafts (HWK) Dortmund  
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 – 2<sup>nd</sup> 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  
Training Center Zeche Hansemann, HWK  
Dortmund  
Barbarastrasse 7 | 44357 Dortmund

## Registration and Information

For general questions about conference organization, registration or accommodation, please write to:  
**E-Mail:** [unescochairconference2026.fk12@tu-dortmund.de](mailto: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  
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Gefördert durch:



Auswärtiges Amt