

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:

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

Mr. Alexander Kalouti, Mayor of City of Dortmund

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

Prof. Dr. Christine Volkmann & Prof. Julius Heinicke, Speaker of German UNESCO Chairs

Dr. Sandra Garbade, President of Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

Dr. Songheang Ai, Center Director SEAMEO TED, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization

11:10 Photobreak

11:30 Keynotes

Dr. Wenxi Wu, UNESCO Chair on Digitalization in TVET, Shenzhen Polytechnic University, Digital transformation in higher education and TVET for sustainable development: perspective and practices from China

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

Prof. Dr. Olga Tsaryk, Director of the Centre for Culture and Development, West Ukrainian National University, **Prof. D. Mariana Sokol**, Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine, University of Rzeszów, Poland, Maintaining higher education in times of war

12:20 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:

Dr. Pinar Pamukcu Albers, UNESCO Chair in Human-Water-Systems, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany

Prof. Dr. Mingfang Zhang, University of Electronic Science and Technology of 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:

Dr. Friedrich Hübler, Head of 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

16:30 Coffee Break
16:45 Plenary: Wrap Up and outlook Day 2
17:15 “COLLAB postcolonial” **Prof. Dr. Silja Klepp / Prof. Dr. Julius Heinicke**
17:30 **Bus Transfer** to Training Center Zeche Hanseemann
18:30 **Conference Dinner** at *Training Center Zeche Hanseemann, HWK Dortmund, Barabarastrasse 7 | 44357 Dortmund*
Berthold Schröder, ZDH Vice, President
Dr. Friedrich Hübler, Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC
21:00 **Bus Transfer** to Dortmund City Center

Day 2 – Thursday, 1 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 media to foster Education for 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
Alicia Jimenez, Center of Education for Sustainable Development

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 Hassanali Bolakiah Institute of Education, Universiti Brunei Darussalam

12:00 Lunch break and Poster Gallery
13:30 World Cafe (Clustered Workshops)
15:15 Coffee Break
15:30 Plenary Session
16:15 Endnotes and Outlook
Prof. Dr. Christos Kalloniatis,
Dr. Friedrich Hübler,
Prof. Dr. Christine Volkmann & Prof. Julius Heinicke, Speaker
17:00 Farewell
Prof Dr. Dr. h.c. Thomas Schröder
18:00 Evening program
• *Guided Tour of St. Reinoldi Church (with organ music)*
• Theatre Tour and Public Ballet Rehearsal
17:15 German UNESCO Chair Meeting

Day 3 – Friday, 2 October

Excursions
• *DASA World of Work Exhibition*
• *Phoenix West Area (with "Phoenix Lumiere")*
• *Colliery Zollern (Industrial Heritage Icon)*
• *German Football Museum*
• *Dortmund U & Union Quarter*
• *Trainingscenter of Chamber of Crafts (Handwerkskammer Dortmund)*

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

Status: 09.09.2026

Conference Venue at TU Dortmund

30 September – 2 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 Hanseemann, HWK Dortmund
Barabarastrasse 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

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

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Gefördert durch:



Auswärtiges Amt

