

Ulrike Reinhard

Social Entrepreneur · Connector · Speaker · Author
Working across cultures, systems, and communities

Heidelberg, Germany

<https://www.ulrikereinhard.com>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulrike_Reinhard

Profile

Ulrike Reinhard is a German social entrepreneur, connector, speaker, and author whose work moves between digital culture, social innovation, and grassroots transformation.

Her life has unfolded across very different worlds — from being a member of the German national basketball team to participating in the early culture of the internet, and later initiating a widely recognized grassroots project in rural India.

Rather than following a linear career path, she has built a body of work rooted in trust, long-term relationships, and lived experience across cultures and systems.

Key Focus Areas

Digital culture · Social innovation · Grassroots transformation · Complexity · Cross-cultural collaboration

Selected Institutions & Organizations

Ulrike Reinhard has collaborated with and spoken for organizations including:

NATO · Google · Bertelsmann Foundation · Kiel Institute for the World Economy · MIT Media Lab · Harvard University · MIT

Speaking

Ulrike Reinhard delivers reflective, story-driven talks that challenge conventional thinking without prescribing simple solutions.

Her talks explore:

- Complexity and non-linear change
- Trust, self-organization, and leadership without control
- Cultural transformation and grassroots innovation
- Learning from failure and uncertainty
- Rethinking success, impact, and responsibility

She has spoken at international conferences including **nine TEDx events**, as well as at corporate leadership gatherings, cultural institutions, and leading universities.

Digital Culture, Networks & Business

Media Work with German Public Broadcasters ZDF & SDR — 1980–1985

Early involvement in television production during the emergence of digital technologies in broadcast media.

Member, The WELL — since 1987

Early participant in internet culture and digital communities.

Founder, whois Verlag & whoiswho Platform — 1994–2014

Publishing and networking initiative in German-speaking countries combining company profiles with editorial coverage of digital culture, innovation, and emerging industries.

Advisor & Sparring Partner to Leaders and Organizations — since 1995

Working with entrepreneurs, executives, and organizations navigating complexity and transformation.

Social Innovation

Founder, we-magazine — 2007–2017

Non-commercial publication exploring the idea of the “WE” as a social and cultural practice. Content translated into Chinese and Arabic.

Initiator, DNA digital & Reboot_D — 2008–2010

Community-driven platforms focused on participation, social innovation, and collective agency.

Community-based work in rural India — 2012–2020

Extensive on-the-ground collaboration with local communities, educators, and young people.

Founder, Janwaar Castle — since 2014

Internationally recognized grassroots project in rural India using skateboarding, education, and self-organization to catalyze social and cultural change.

Sport & Early Formation

Professional Basketball Player, German National Team — 1970–1980

Competitive sport as an early foundation for leadership, resilience, teamwork, and decision-making under pressure.

Skateboarding as a Cultural & Educational Tool — since 2012

Using skateboarding as a tool for youth empowerment and self-directed learning, particularly in community-based initiatives.

Writing & Publications

Ulrike Reinhard has written extensively on digital culture, social change, and transformation since the late 1980s.

Through her publishing house **whois Verlag**, she published numerous books and publications on new media and the evolving internet.

Selected works include:

Skater Girl Asha: When You Dare to Dream (2023)

A true-story narrative about Asha Gond, an Adivasi girl from rural India whose life changed through skateboarding and education.

The Nomad – My Journey from Good Girl to a Freer Soul

A memoir exploring encounters, reflections, and lived experience across cultures and social systems.

Media & Public Dialogue

Reinhard has conducted numerous interviews with leading figures in business, culture, technology, and social innovation.

She was a contributor to **Google's Think Quarterly (2011)**, where she authored three articles alongside internationally recognized writers.

Her work spans essays, long-form interviews, books, and public conversations on complexity, culture, and responsibility.

Distinctive Strengths

- Connecting people across cultures, sectors, and disciplines
- Bridging corporate, academic, and grassroots contexts
- Comfort with ambiguity, conflict, and uncertainty
- Long-term relationship building and trust-based collaboration
- Translating lived experience into insight without abstraction

Languages

German (native), English (fluent), French (basic).