

# TED<sup>x</sup>Universität Heidelberg

x = independently organized TED event

We are absolutely thrilled to reach out to you through our newsletter.

In this first letter we'll introduce our team, and give a glimpse on our theme, venue and the upcoming promotional events through which we intend to directly reach out to you and hopefully have a great time introducing our event, the concept of TED and what it stands for and most importantly answering your questions and taking your feedback and suggestions.

## Who we are:

TED is interdisciplinary, diverse and intergenerational, and so we are.

We are a group of students at the Heidelberg University; we originate from 3 different continents, study in the various campuses of the Heidelberg Uni and represent multiple fields of study and all phases of education from bachelor to PhD.

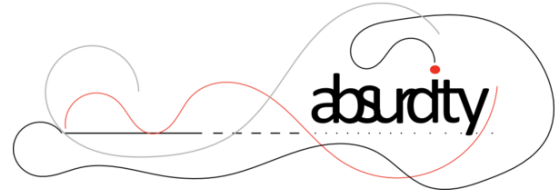
We all enjoy TED talks, and our desire to bring TED -with all what it stands for- into our university and city, is what brings us together.

In addition to and further than the upcoming TEDx event, we are aiming at creating a long lasting atmosphere of curiosity, passion for learning and exchange of novel ideas and experiences. Ideally we would like to use the TEDx event to catalyse the initiation of a medium of diverse interested people, from numerous disciplines and fields of knowledge, whose interaction should lead to further exchange of thought and experience in form of further TEDx events, or any other suitable setups.

As students of the Heidelberg University we see the true opportunity that could arise from a flexible, open and permanent platform for exchanging thoughts and experiences, and we hope that the community that will gather around our first TEDx event will become the mediators and participants in a long-lasting interdisciplinary platform of communication, dialogue and exchange.

Stay in contact with us:  
[contact@tedxunihd.de](mailto:contact@tedxunihd.de)

## Our theme: Absurdity



According to existentialists, life is inevitably absurd, and its absurdity underpins our collective and individual sense of anguish and angst. With that said, absurdity is arguably what makes life so thrilling, unique and rich in possibilities.

While life's absurdity troubles and anguishes us as individuals, it also motivates our greatest quests. It is, for example, a common motive behind space travel and longevity research, the first aimed at extending our spatial limits and the second our temporal ones. And one thing is guaranteed; more absurdity awaits us in every new time or space we might be destined to conquer. In this sense, absurdity becomes an unlimited source energizing and motivating our endeavours; it becomes the infinite that we have always strived.

Perhaps it is therefore that Albert Einstein suggested absurdity, as an essential criterion for judging new ideas

**"If at first the idea is not absurd,  
then there is no hope for it."**

## Our Venue: The Marsilius Kolleg



We are delighted to have the privilege of organizing our event in the premises of the Marsilius Kolleg. The Marsilius Kolleg is a core institution of the Heidelberg University aimed at promoting interdisciplinary communication in order to better address and solve contemporary issues. It is therefore; in its model of organization and location at the heart of Neuenheimer Feld Campus an institutional and physical embodiment of the TEDx's concept of interdisciplinary communication and exchange. We believe that this collaboration with the Marsilius Kolleg will greatly reflect on the success of the event, and the later and bigger goal of sustaining the atmosphere of exchange and communication that our event will hopefully create.

## Upcoming promotional and outreach events:

Altstadt: Triplexmensa; 26.04.17

Neuenheimer Feld: Zentralmensa; 03.05.17

## Inspirational corner: A tribute to Hans Rosling

On 7th Feb 2017, humanity lost one of its most prominent figures of global public health and sustainable development with the death of Professor Hans Rosling.

Professor of international health at the Karolinska Institute, an outstanding statistician, 'in whose hands the data sings', a global health specialist and activist for a healthier and less unequal world.

From Mozambique, where he worked as a public-health advisor and also the only doctor for 300,000 inhabitants, to Cuba where he used data and facts to candidly convince the government officials to end a deleterious protein rationing policy. Professor Rosling saved no effort in helping to improve health care for the poorest and fully neglected. Big data was always his favourite companion through his endeavour for a healthier world, and according to him; data always pointed at one particular culprit in tragic health crises:

**"Extreme poverty produces diseases. Evil forces hide there."**

It is also worth mentioning that Hans Rosling was one of TED heroes, he used the platform to communicate his message to an international audience. His first TED talk in 2006 made the world better aware of him and his quests, and since then he delivered 10 very exciting and perspective-changing TED talks. It hasn't been an easy choice, and I would definitely recommend all of Hans Rosling's TED talks. Nevertheless, a choice had to be made. So I went for an issue that is -in my humble opinion at least- a matter of great concern and alarm. In the following TED-talk (2010, Cannes) Hans Rosling uses his captivating data presentation skills to address one of the most troubling issues of our time; the population crisis. And as usual for him, the data paves a way to de-escalating population growth and bringing the world population to a desired and sustainable homeostasis.



For further information on Hans Rosling's brilliant career and admirable life and achievements, I suggest the following two links:

- <http://www.nature.com/news/three-minutes-with-hans-rosling-will-change-your-mind-about-the-world-1.21143>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/feb/07/hans-rosling-obituary>

On behalf of me and all my friends and fellows in the TEDxUniversitätHeidelberg organising team, I would like to thank you very much for your interest in our forthcoming TEDx event and for bearing with me through this newsletter. We absolutely look forward to further and closer communication with all of you within our emerging TEDx community. Your feedback is most welcome, and we would delightfully receive and consider your suggestions on all the matters related to the forthcoming event in July, and/or further aspects concerning our community.

*With kindest regards,*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Ali Ghanem*