



Isabel Behncke

Scientist, TED Fellow, public speaker, adviser of organisations, start-ups and think-tanks

Isabel Behncke (MSc University College London, MPhil, Cambridge University; PhD, Oxford University) is a New York and Oxford based behavioural and evolutionary scientist working on the nature of social animals... including humans.

Isabel's biography

Isabel Behncke's background

Isabel Behncke is a scientist, TED Fellow, public speaker, adviser of organisations, start-ups and think-tanks, as well as a host & curator of conferences. Her work and public speaking applies the principles of evolutionary biology to enable organizations, companies and individuals to better create, connect and adapt within an increasingly complex world. These insights will surprise, delight and [positively challenge any audience](#) that is looking for how and why to change.

After walking 3000+ km in the jungles of Congo observing the social behaviour of bonobo apes – our closest living relatives – in field research, Dr. Behncke now applies an evolutionary lens to questions that lie at the core of social life and creativity: Why do we go to festivals? Why trust requires risk taking? Why adults need to play in order to not just feel alive, but also maintain health, [creativity](#) and social bonds? Why cities need to be not just 'smart' but also enjoyable, and crucially why is it that the more digital we get, the more understanding of evolution we need.

She enjoys consulting and engagement in different forms. Has spoken at WIRED, the G20, House of Lords, United Nations, twice at the main TED event, and around the fire in Patagonia. She also has been part of numerous radio programmes, including NPR and BBC Radio 4. She has been featured in a number of television documentaries (BBC and National Geographic) and independent cinema (e.g., 'Bounce: How the Ball taught the World to Play').

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