

## Competition among students for innovative devices and software

Austria – UNIKATE

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

UNIKATE is a competition among a wide variety of students to solve every-day problems of persons with disabilities and the elderly. UNIKATE's mission is to use the creative potential of these students to invent tools and devices that support the specific needs of these persons, with the goal of constructing prototypes of the most promising ideas.

“UNIKATE brings together the individual needs of disabled persons and creativity of university students to find solutions to specific personal problems.”

—Irmgard BAUER, Project Coordinator

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2014 the third annual UNIKATE competition was held.
- A total of 16 projects have been nominated over the three competitions.
- 5 prizes have been awarded for the production of prototypes, none of which were already on the market.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

Technical innovations play a decisive role in supporting persons with disabilities to lead a full and independent life, but unfortunately persons with disabilities are seldom the target group of technology and software development. Thus, there is an urgent need for awareness-raising and innovation in this area.

### SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The idea is to combine the innovation, creativity, and technical knowhow of university students with the individual needs of people with disabilities and the elderly, thereby creating a win-win situation for

everyone involved. Students are supported by their teachers up to the implementation stage. The submitted ideas are evaluated by a body of experts and nominated for support in the form of prize money, which is paid out in two parts: the first part as recognition for the idea, the second after a successful implementation. School and university students receive support from AAT and ÖAR upon completion of their work. UNIKATE is organized by Österreichische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation (ÖAR); TU Wien, Institut für Gestaltungs- und Wirkungsforschung (IGW); Zentrum für Angewandte Assistierende Technologien (AAT); and UNIQA Insurance Group

## OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The concept of organizing student competitions can be developed in several different ways and in virtually any institution, and it can be done in a cost-effective manner with the help of outside support.

## CONTACT

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