

## PRESS RELEASE

### Student Project Wins Social Project Contest 2017 with Innovative Clothing for Wheelchair-users

For the second year in a row, student initiatives of the University of Mannheim were called to hand in social project proposals to compete in the Business School's "Social Project Contest". The project "Clothing the Gap" of the initiative Enactus Mannheim convinced the jury and receives 1,010 Euro seed money. The project aims to offer suitable pants for wheelchair-users.

**Mannheim, September 17<sup>th</sup> 2017:** Great success for the student initiative Enactus Mannheim with its social project "Clothing the Gap": The concept of the group to produce and sell suitable pants for wheelchair-users was convincing and thus chosen as the winning project of this year's "Social Project Contest" of the Business School of the University of Mannheim.

"The project's name hints at the existing gap in the market: Suitable, affordable and fashionable clothes are unfortunately a rare find for people with disabilities, who depend on a wheelchair." Pauline Machtolf, one of the project leaders of "Clothing the Gap" and student of Economic and Business Education, knows what she is talking about: Ever since a sports accident, her best friend is paraplegic and Pauline intensively informed herself about the daily challenges handicapped people are dealing with.

#### Custom-made pants for wheelchair-users rare

Together with other *Enactus* members she started to take action one year ago. The group discovered that, for wheelchair-users, pants have to fulfill other requirements than conventional jeans: they have to be comfortable without hip pockets, have a waistband that goes high enough while sitting, longer pants legs, a magnetic fastener, in case the wearer has trouble buttoning up, and straps to support pulling the pants up. However, the range of suitable clothes is very limited and overpriced. Most of the models cost between 100 and 120 Euro. Often wheelchair-users are

forced to wear sweatpants which some perceive as degrading.

### **Start-up produces pants**

Thus the group worked on “Clothing the Gap” to produce a comfortable and affordable pair of pants. The first model are women’s denim blue pants, more models and colors are in development. A fashion-startup from Karlsruhe soon shall start serial production of the pants. Therefore, the funding provided by the “Social Project Contest” comes just at the right moment: With this financial help, the prototype of the pants can be further optimized. Another crowdfunding-campaign is scheduled to start this fall and around Christmas time at the latest “Clothing the Gap” wants to sell their first pants

### **About the Social Project Contest:**

In June, the Business School was looking for student projects at the University of Mannheim, which aim at developing solutions for social problems but miss startup funding. The winning projects receive the profits from the graduate wine sale, which is being sold at the annual Bachelor’s graduation ceremony. The amount of profit is then doubled by the Mannheim Business School gGmbH. This year’s donation amounts to 1010 Euro. “The Social Project Contest proves how much potential exists among the students of the University of Mannheim. This year again we received great applications of projects, which all deserve funding. The decision was not an easy one, but with “Clothing the Gap” we are supporting an important and unique project,” Dr. Ingo Bayer, Managing Director of the Business School, explains.

**The winning project of the "Social Project Contest 2016": "Coffee to go - Drink it, keep it!"**

### **About the University of Mannheim, Business School:**

*With its 42 professors, more than 150 research assistants and 4,000 students, the Business School is one of the largest and most prestigious Business Schools in Europe. Key features of the Mannheim success story are research and teaching on a top-tier level, continuous quality management, internationality, extended practical orientation an excellent study environment. Together with the Business School gGmbH the University of Mannheim, Business School is among*

*the one percent of Business Schools accredited by the three leading business education institutions (AACSB International, EQUIS and AMBA).*

**Press pictures:**

You can find a picture of the project winners here:

<https://www.bwl.uni-mannheim.de/de/presse/pressefotos/>

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