Musical encounters as a stepping stone for social exchange and participation - this is the principle pursued by the Master’s degree “Community Music” at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (KU), whose concept for practical projects by students under the direction of Prof. Dr. Daniel Mark Eber-hard has now been awarded the international “Uniservitate Award” for service learning projects. A total of 200 applicants hoped to win the accolade which has been awarded for the first time for seven world regions by the international Uniservitate network this year.

The network is supported by the Porticus Foundation and promotes Service Learning at Catholic universities. Service Learning describes a basic principle which links academic studies with civic engagement and lets students reflect on their volunteering experiences under the guidance of their lecturers. Since 2020, the KU has been one of seven global Uniservitate centers and acts as a regional hub for academic partners in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Middle East. The Global award will be presented at a Uniservitate symposium in Rome at the end of October.

“This prize honors our students who were so creative and committed to their projects and filled them with life,” says Prof. Eberhard. The prize money will be used to implement the 14 projects worldwide. In the project headed by Mr Eberhard, Master’s students develop a collaborative music project as part of their project semester. Service learning didactically accompanies the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of the project. Some students have initiated a “community music orchestra” in Salzburg and Innsbruck respectively. These have created meeting spaces for people who otherwise might never have met. The participants are very diverse as far as age and population group are concerned. In Salzburg, men and women on the rim of society, namely sellers of the street journal “Apropos” are involved, but also persons with middle-class jobs.

Yet another student has initiated the project “Music for Everybody” that is meant to enable cultural participation in times of the pandemic. It caters specifically to the needs of women who have formerly suffered from homelessness and inhabitants of an inclusive group home in Munich by visiting them to make music.

The jury honored the fact that these and further projects (with special needs children, refugees, prison inmates, persons with mental disorders, etc.) not only had a focus across generations, abilities and cultures, but that they could also contribute to the promotion of democracy in our society and sought to overcome social inequalities.

The Ukrainian Catholic University (UKU) Lviv and the John Paul II (KUL) University of Lublin have also been awarded - that means two universities within the Uniservitate hub the KU administers. Within the project “Me - the Other” at the UKU, students have collaborated with persons with mental and physical disabilities to organize and stage a play. The inclusive theater project wants to overcome stereotypes towards people with disabilities and strengthen their rights to social participation using the artistic medium of acting. Two special awards acknowledge projects that have come into being in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and the Russian aggression on Ukraine. The KUL in Poland is honored for a project for the promotion of education offers for pre-school children and the UKU for a project to support inland refugees.
The submitted applications for the Uniservitate Global Award underwent a three-week procedure: In two evaluation rounds, recognized international experts identified the best projects. These were then put before a jury of three international experts, who decided which were most deserving.

For information on the international projects that were given an award, please see www.uniservitate.org/award-winners/. For more information on Service Learning at the KU and on our Uniservitate project, please see www.ku.de/studium/lehrprofil/service-learning.

URL zur Pressemitteilung: http://www.uniservitate.org/award-winners/
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