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Schindler Award: Small Contribution – Huge Change

The “Access for All” principle demands that all human beings should be able to use the designed environment independently and with equal rights, regardless of their mental and physical abilities. At first glance, this would seem to be relevant primarily for people with disabilities. In fact, however, this perception falls short of the true intention. In order to pay full tribute to the “Access for All” approach, it is necessary to give the concept of “disability” a far wider definition. Attention is drawn especially to the global trend that people are living longer. Elderly people are less mobile, their eyesight tends to become weaker and their hearing less acute. Consequently, the “Access for All” precept for this growing segment of the population is becoming increasingly important. And one day this will apply to us all.

— *“Design for All” enables “Access for all”*: The “Access for All” principle is committed to finding solutions that will help everybody rather than concentrating on measures for specific forms of disability. For Schindler, this means planning and constructing our products in the sense of the “Design for All” philosophy. This principle has been a determining factor in our product development for some years and has had a considerable influence on the company’s self-image. Over the past twenty years, Schindler has changed from an industrial production enterprise into a service enterprise with service to the customer well into the foreground. And “Design for All” is an important element.

Although Schindler continues to produce elevators and escalators, our real product is mobility. Worldwide, Schindler provides over 700 million people daily with safe, reliable and comfortable mobility in multistorey apartment blocks, shopping centers, office buildings, airports, underground railway stations, etc. Our service products ensure that this mobility is at everybody’s disposal twenty-four hours a day. In this context, it is clear that “Design for All” inevitably embraces “Access for All.” Schindler is proud of the fact that the company is a trendsetter within the elevator and escalator industry. In 2001, our consistent approach was rewarded with the “Breaking Barriers Award”, which was instigated by the European Commission in collaboration with the European Disability Forum. In 2003, Schindler reinforced their commitment and became one of the twelve European partner enterprises for the European Year of People with Disabilities. At the same time, Schindler created the first Schindler “Access for All” Award for Architecture.

— *Schindler Award for Architecture – the motives*: What good are elevators developed according to the rules of “Design for All” if the architecture in which they are integrated does not obey the same rules? What good are highly developed technologies such as the “Miconic 10” destination control and the “Schindler ID” if the conception of the building prevents someone in a wheelchair from entering the building in the first place?

Although the norms and standards have made great strides forward, there are still too many barriers for people with disabilities. In order to eliminate these impediments, we need a change of paradigms in the direction of consistent implementation of the “Access for All” philosophy in architecture and a proactive use of intelligent technical solutions. Schindler is convinced that architecture that is pervaded by the “Access for All” philosophy must, by definition, represent a better kind of architecture. Good solutions for people with disabilities are always the best solutions for the nondisabled.

The Schindler Award represents a small contribution in the process towards a huge change. With this competition for students, Schindler is deliberately setting its sights on future architects. Along with them, our intention is the creation of a better-designed world in which well-considered architectural design and intelligent elevator technology overcome the remaining barriers. This is the aim of the Schindler Award. Schindler Management Ltd., Corporate Communications

Organization

- > Initiator & sponsor: Schindler Holding Ltd.
- > Competition management: Nüesch Development; Andreas Binkert, Tobias Reinhard, Dagmar Ross, Florian Jennewein
- > Communication & coordination: Schindler Management Ltd.; Ivo Zimmermann, Cathérine Voltz, Nicole Gehrig, Willy Gsell