

Service Learning – Linking academic study and service to community in Konstanz



At the University of Konstanz, social engagement is highly-valued as a driver for responsible research and study. We are committed to the idea that fulfilling higher education's responsibilities to society equals to ensuring that research and study have an impact beyond the University's walls and that the societal changes and challenges of today inform our projects and activities.

Facilitating knowledge exchange between academic participants and communities, gaining insights into effective strategies for overcoming barriers and prejudice, and creating conversations that deepen participants' cultural, social, and self-awareness -- these are some of the learning outcomes which can be experienced intensively through service learning activities with community partners outside the University.

The University of Konstanz together with the Centre for Transferable Skills is offering international students two creative and collaborative ways to participate in different social programs in the greater Konstanz area, and accordingly, to earn Credits for their academic curricula at the same time.

1. Semester-based Service Learning program

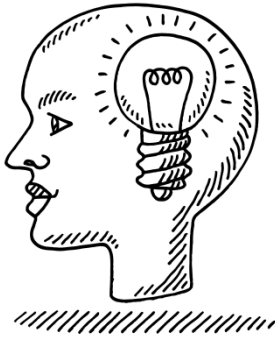
Students coming to the University of Konstanz during our regular lecture period (April to September / October to March) have the opportunity to participate in our semester-based Service Learning Program, which includes the following:

- introductory sessions at the beginning of the semester, providing theoretical insights and practical strategies regarding working supportively with people affected by conflict and displacement
- a total workload of 25-50 hours throughout the semester, the number of credits will vary accordingly (6 ECTS minimum)
- various social projects to choose from
- weekly sessions dedicated to critical reflections upon the service learning experiences
- final reflective paper



2. Service Learning Summer Project 2020

For those interested to enhance their practical and social/civic competencies during the summer, University of Konstanz offers an intensive Service Learning project for international students.



Key figures

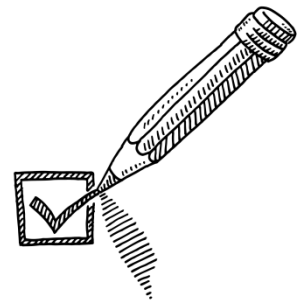
- duration: 8 weeks (from June to July)
- 20 hours of social engagement per week
- in the first week: start of the intensive German language course + thematic seminar providing the participants with theoretical insights based on relevant research and practical strategies for social working
- during the program: accompanying German language course (2 hours per week)
- complementary, the thematic project seminar will encourage participants to reflect upon their service learning experiences within the social project they chose to engage with
- total credit amount: 9 ECTS

Application requirements:

- Basic knowledge of German (beginner level, A1)
- Letter of Motivation focusing on one of the below-described projects (one page)

Necessary Formalities:

- Health insurance for Germany including liability insurance
- Valid passport for the duration of stay in Germany



Costs:

- ✓ Housing* and personal expenses to be paid individually. The entire program, as well as the German language course, are paid by the University of Konstanz.
*Costs for housing vary depending on accommodation availabilities
(might range between 500€ and 1000€/month)

Service Learning Community Partners

“Café Mondial”



Café Mondial offers non-commercial room for intercultural exchange: Refugees and Konstanz' Locals come together, help each other and organize multiple cultural events such as creative workshops, cooking sessions or readings or discussion. The place lives from mutual exchanges between inhabitants of the city and the newly arrived. Also, Café Mondial collaborates with many other groups in the region with the aim to influencing and enriching our society in a positive and diverse way of a "welcoming culture".

Students can e.g. engage in the organization of the many different events the Café offers.

→ <https://cafe-mondial.org/>

„Freundeskreis Asyl Radolfzell“



The local association in a town ca. 15 minutes away from Konstanz supports refugees and asylum seekers in many different ways according to their needs: From general information about living in Germany and various classes, workshops and mentoring programs to providing support with applying for a job or an accommodation. The association also organizes a Café International as an opportunity for intercultural encounters, coordinates a local gardening project and provides a bicycle repair studio.

Students are able to participate in various working groups: For example they may organize recreation offers, help out in the storing place for donations, get in contact with refugees at the Café International, be the helping hand in the bicycle repair studio, participate in the gardening project and engage with other various open activities.

→ <https://fk-asyl-radolfzell.org/de/>

“Save me”



Save me, as a local initiative, aims to contribute to a culture of understanding and stands up against racism. The association, funded in 2013, welcomes refugees in their new home town and offers support in many different concerns like housing, language acquisition, child care and mobility.

Students will have the opportunity to engage in many different activities, for example, working with children of refugees and assist them with their homework. They may also participate in the regular monthly meetings of Save me, aiming to bring together refugees and locals by organizing cultural programs and events (like music events, talks etc.), and can help in the bicycle repair studio.

→ <https://www.save-me-konstanz.de/>

What students say about the program

"I'm really glad to have taken this seminar as it gave me the opportunity to do something useful and practical for other people and related to my studies, which also helped me to confirm that this is the kind of work I want to do in the future. With this project I gained more experience and achieved more knowledge than in any other subject during my career".

"Also, this experience made me conscious about my own stereotypes. We all want to believe that we don't have stereotypes and that we're already the best version of ourselves. But this isn't true, we can (and must) always improve and even we don't want to, we have stereotypes, but facing them is how we can learn and get rid of them. I realized that I had stereotypes about the culture and about how refugees will behave or treat me, but after interact with them I saw that, of course, they are all different and that at the end, despite the difference of the situation, they look for the same things as everyone: social interaction, friends, happiness or entertainment".



"I am so grateful to be offered this opportunity to volunteer with refugees and have enjoyed it so much that I will be continuing to volunteer at Radolfzell [...]. I think that the fact that Universität Konstanz offers such a module, valuing volunteering as well as the refugee crisis, is excellent and would thoroughly recommend it to any future students. Especially internationals who are also likely, like me, to come from countries that do not accept as many refugees as Germany does".

Contacts

Sibylle Mühleisen, Centre for Transferable Skills, University of Konstanz
sibylle.muehleisen@uni-konstanz.de
<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/sq/service-learning/>

Alina Timofte, University Lecturer for Transferable Skills
alina.timofte@uni-konstanz.de

Tina Bebensee, International Office, University of Konstanz
exchange.programs@uni-konstanz.de
<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/international-office/>