



TRACS – Civic Engagement & Service Learning

BUS

Bridge between university and students

The **BUS project** aims to contribute to greater educational equity and thus bring about positive change in the educational landscape. To achieve this, the project implements the service-learning approach (cf. McIlrath et al., 2016, p. 33), which envisages cooperation between students, experts in the field and lecturers on an equal footing.

This cooperation takes place: **Firstly**, in identifying the needs of partners in the field and mentors. **Secondly**, in the design of the ‘services’, i.e. in the practice of mentoring. **Thirdly**, in the definition of ‘learnings’, i.e. in the design of preparatory and accompanying workshops for knowledge transfer, for strengthening skills and abilities, and for linking knowledge and experience through explicit reflection processes.

BUS is thus a teaching and learning project in which students learn to critically examine and question themselves and their environment, to explain practical knowledge and to use it to shape their own profiles. This commitment and the skills acquired are recognised and made visible through the curricular anchoring and a certificate for the student mentors. The BUS project also helps teachers to design their teaching content and didactics in a practical and needs-based manner. Teachers can therefore make an active contribution to greater educational equity through their teaching and directly address the university's third mission.

Parallel to the development and implementation of the BUS programme, an evaluation concept is being developed to obtain targeted feedback – qualitative surveys – from practice partners, students and teachers throughout the entire project period. This is particularly relevant for evaluating the project's impact on the educational pathways of the students and on the learning and development process of the mentors. Part of the evaluation will also include the collection of key figures such as the number of active BUS participants and graduates and the duration of their involvement.

A final important aspect of the BUS project is the sustainable development of networks with and between practice partner organisations and students. These networks and the concepts developed within them can be used as a starting point for addressing other major social challenges and developing future project ideas.