

## 2\_Conceptual Abstracts

### SERVICE-LEARNING IN BUSINESS EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COURSE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION IN GERMANY AND UKRAINE

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.36059/978-966-397-609-9-45>

**Keywords:** service-learning; business education; tourism education; international teaching tandems; community engagement

#### Abstract

While service-learning (SL) has gained momentum across various academic disciplines, its systematic integration into business education remains comparatively underdeveloped and often insufficiently aligned with clearly defined learning objectives (Black, 2002). At the same time, numerous publications consider SL to be a valuable component of business education (Belinne, 2023; Crutchfield, 2017; Lamb et al., 1998; Moran, 2024; Rathore & Mahesh, 2025; Veiga et al., 2025).

This contribution examines the potential of SL to enhance business education by drawing on practical experiences from international teaching tandems established within the ServU project and courses in Germany. It focuses on the design, implementation, and comparative reflection of SL initiatives in Germany and Ukraine, highlighting both pedagogical challenges and added value for students, educators, and community partners. Four different courses will be showcased to illustrate how service-learning can be embedded in business education in practical and context-specific ways.

On the one hand, the contribution draws on experiences from Work Package 4 of the Erasmus+ project “Service-learning in Higher Education for Ukraine’s Recovery” (ServU), in which two international teaching tandems were established between a German university and two Ukrainian teachers in the fields of Entrepreneurship & Digital Business Communications and Personal Finance. The aims of the international teaching tandems

were studying and sharing the experience and best practices between partners, developing, presenting and improving a Syllabi and piloting the SL courses. This collaboration enabled the joint development and reflection of service-learning components across different institutional and national contexts. The project in the course “Entrepreneurship & digital business communications” aimed to rebuild critical skills among displaced persons through targeted training and professional development while simultaneously fostering entrepreneurial thinking within the local community. Students were actively engaged in designing and delivering digital business solutions, thereby linking theoretical knowledge with real-world impact. The second case focused on Personal Finance education. Students co-created and implemented a financial literacy training program for schoolchildren, addressing an urgent societal need to improve financial competencies among younger generations. This project illustrates how SL can contribute to community resilience by equipping participants with essential life skills while enhancing students’ ability to translate academic knowledge into accessible educational formats.

On the other hand, the contribution draws on experiences from two cases from business education in Germany. Both courses were conducted in the field of tourism with a strong background in business education. They demonstrate how existing practice-oriented approaches in business and tourism education can evolve into structured SL formats. In one of the presented cases, students collaborated with hosts in three German nature parks and one national park to explore the role of local stakeholders in regenerative development and tourism. The project investigated hosts’ expectations, existing knowledge, and implicit sustainable practices, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of community-based tourism development. The other course addressed rural mobility in cooperation with the department of diversification of the Bavarian State Research Center for Agriculture. Focusing on farm-based tourism, students analyzed current mobility challenges, identified barriers and potentials, and developed recommendations to improve accessibility for both residents and tourists.

A comparative perspective is applied to examine how service-learning is conceptualized and implemented in business education courses in Germany and Ukraine. While German business and tourism programs

have previously incorporated practice-oriented and community-based projects, these are increasingly being further developed into structured service-learning formats. In contrast, the ServU courses in Ukraine offer insights into the intentional integration of civic engagement and community resilience within higher education with a strong focus on immediate societal impact under conditions of crisis and recovery. In these cases, the international teaching tandem model proved to be a key enabler for knowledge exchange, pedagogical innovation, and intercultural learning.

The findings highlight key challenges, including the alignment of service activities with learning outcomes, institutional constraints, and differing academic cultures. At the same time, the international teaching tandem model emerges as a valuable framework for mutual learning, pedagogical innovation, and the co-creation of service-learning practices. The contribution discusses the added value of this approach for students, educators, and community partners, particularly in fostering intercultural competencies, societal relevance, and social responsibility within business education. The findings suggest that SL in business education benefits from clear alignment with course objectives, strong community partnerships, and structured reflection processes. Moreover, international collaboration enhances the transformative potential of SL by integrating diverse perspectives and addressing global challenges through locally grounded action.

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