



MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning
Mobility Specialists / Transnational Project Management
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www.msbarcelona.com

Lifelong Learning Mobility Programming

MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning, the mobility specialists in Barcelona for transnational programming, has been an enthusiastic and capable partner in European projects since 2003. Our labour market preparedness programming through Leonardo da Vinci benefits both European youth and professionals; lifelong learning and mobility programming that focuses on the teaching and study needs of those in adult education and alternative education streams is sponsored through Grundtvig. Participants who successfully complete programming organized by MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning are able to transfer new skills, knowledge, contacts, and cultural awareness to their situations upon returning to their country of origin.

- Company History

MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning is the premiere transnational project management enterprise in Barcelona, Spain. An SME that specializes in transnational project management, MS Barcelona was created in response to the need for capable, efficient management of European projects. We have wide-ranging experience working with international organisations, from universities and colleges, Chambers of Commerce and government entities, to private enterprise and public-private ventures. While the bulk of our experience comes from organizing and managing mobility programming such as work placements, internships, socio-cultural discovery programming, observation study visits and professional exchanges, we have also partnered with other organizations in the design and development of Pilot Projects, Transfer of Technology and Reference Material projects. We are able to enter into partnerships in topics for most sectors, horizontal themes, and target groups. The staff of MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning has extensive experience in organizing, managing and certifying programming and hosting visits for mobility participants and in having created a strong network of contacts and relationships with local institutions in education and in the public and private sectors. As a result of this experience, we are well-positioned to provide the best possible services to people from across the world, to ensure that on their return to their country of origin, they can look back on an excellent and invaluable experience with the capacities to apply what they have learned during their time in Spain.

- Feedback about the collaboration with LLP Partners

By participating in the current cycle of Lifelong Learning Programmes, we have served as the Receiving Agent for a wide variety of beneficiaries from all the 27 EU Member States and EEAs as well as candidate countries. As it occurs with the growth and maturity of all SMEs, we passed through our learning curve of progress in the mastering of capabilities that allowed us to improve our ability to provide a high level of service. For IVT/PLM and work placements, we learned to develop training objectives and work with host companies to implement training plans, anticipate the needs of participants in terms of training needs and outcomes, provide in-country support, and fine-tune our programming for maximum benefits to both host organizations and participants. This has been a two-way street we have travelled with our LLP partners; without their efficient management of mobility programming and careful selection of candidates in the country of origin, our success rate would have been less than stellar. Their top-rate staff perform the pre-departure administrative functions needed to process good candidates for the programme. We work together well in assuring that all details are tended to for the smooth progression of programming activities – on their end, screening and interviewing candidates, orientation, travel preparations and funding; on our end, tending to the minutiae of IVT/PLM mobility projects.



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Work Experiences and Internship Programmes



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IVT / PLM Projects

Initial Vocational Training (IVT) and transnational placements in enterprises or training institutions for Persons in the Labour Market (PLM) projects are centered around organizing, monitoring, and certifying internship and work placements. While IVT projects are training placements consisting of vocational training and/or work experience, PLM projects aim to support transnational mobility of workers, self-employed or people available for employment (including graduates) undergoing a training period abroad in a vocational training context. MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning programming places participants of both projects in local companies, organisations and enterprises to gain real-world experience. Our history includes programming designed for high school and college students, recent graduates, those new to the job market, beneficiaries from marginalised communities, and those who are chronically unemployed and with low skills sets who seek training and work experience abroad. Our programmes provide benefits for both trainee and host company, and training objectives include:

- To support participants in training and further training activities in the acquisition and the use of knowledge, skills and qualifications to facilitate personal and professional development;
- To increase the understanding of the commercial and industrial culture within the country where the participant is placed and the workforce requirements of different industries and sectors;
- To assist beneficiaries in the development of his or her career, application of skills and knowledge in the job market and development of an improved Curriculum Vitae to contribute to future employment prospects;
- To contribute to the development of the placement host organisations through completing a range of different projects and working as a member of the team in a work environment, adding diversity to the work place, and increasing productivity;
- To develop a greater understanding of the use of foreign languages in a business context and gain fluency in the working language of the labour market.

Upon completion of the programme, participants will have gained practical training, skill enhancements and sector knowledge through their placements with the host companies, organisations and enterprises that sponsor their internship. Beneficiaries are able to integrate themselves into the work environment for a real-world work experience and achieve a wide-range of competencies in the work place, and they are able to return to their country upon completion of the programme with improved skills in reading, writing and understanding a foreign language. Additionally, some participants are able to practice the skills they had learned in an academic environment as applied in the work place while others acquire new skills altogether. All participants are able to acquire and/or improve Professional Skills such as Leadership, Teamwork, Influencing/Negotiating and Communication. These transnational programmes are especially successful at providing the participants with an opportunity to improve Business Skills, such as Flexibility, Adaptability, and Problem Solving within the environment in which they complete their internship. They master the skill of Planning, both in the workplace as well as in their private lives in a foreign country. Placements are also important to impart and fine-tune technical and specialty skills in their field of interest. Finally, all participants improve their Personal Skills, such as Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Motivation and Enthusiasm, Initiative, and Resourcefulness. Much of this improvement comes from having to live and work in a foreign country and negotiate their private lives in a totally-foreign environment, sometimes being away from their family or country for the first time and having to adapt to strange environments and people from other cultures. All in all, Lifelong Learning Programme participants return to their home country better equipped to meet the unique challenges of their field or profession with improved opportunities to become successful in the workforce.



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Work placements and Internships offer programme participants unique opportunities to practice a chosen career and gain practical experience in a real work environment while providing insights into business practices in Spain. The benefits of participating in a Work Placement are innumerable: ♦ **Benefits for the participants** – some of the most important benefits include improving skills and business capabilities, establishing critical contacts and references, communicating and interacting within a foreign environment, and learning how to live and work within a diverse setting for preparation of many facets of life. The experience improves communication, language and interpersonal skills, and helps the programme participants become more confident and successful in the future of their career. Work placements often provide the elements needed to create professional and personal bonds that last a lifetime.

♦ **Benefits for the hosts** – Students participating in Work Placement programming that have undertaken business and administrative studies are well prepared to hit the group running on projects that require the knowledge they have learned in the classroom from working with case studies, group projects and simulated business exercises. International interns bring an added diversity and cultural dimension to a local business venture that may want to expand beyond national borders, open markets for their products and services, or require the services of a global business consultant. Host organizations can access new ideas, knowledge and the latest innovations for application in their work environment and an improvement for their products and services from interns who can bring a fresh approach to the work environment. Additionally, interns can supplement existing staff to provide additional labour and skills needed to complete projects, initiate new activity or help meet deadlines while providing permanent staff an opportunity to gain supervisory experience.

Most Work Placements organized under the Lifelong Learning Programme are typically done so for a period of 10-15 weeks, but can be shorter or longer according to needs. We attempt to match the work environment to the Interns' specialty and interest. Because we are located in Barcelona, most of our Work Placements have been in the hospitality and tourism, retail, IT, and business administration sectors, but placements can also be arranged for many other industries, fields and specialties. We are also able to offer blended hybrid programmes that combine seminars on the subject matter of interest, language training for terminology of the sector and professional visits. These are organized for students, primarily younger students in high school, who are only able to come for a short period of time or are enrolled in specific vocational training that requires exposure to the working environments of their industries, with the majority of these projects lasting 1-2 weeks.

Take a look at the sidebar to find the sector that interests you and contact us to participate in the program.

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Popular Work Placements Sectors:

architecture and design * enology and wine production * business and commerce * tourism and ecotourism * sustainability * transportation and highway safety * retail * wholesale * logistics * biotechnology, nanotechnology and innovation * hotel management * catering * energy, solar energy and wind energy * theatre, dance, and music event productions * artistic and cultural presentations * art restoration * art gallery and museum docents * textiles and clothing * sport and leisure activities * telecommunications * recycling and waste management * pulp, wood, and paper products * multimedia * repair of motor vehicles and automobiles * mining, mines, metal products and metallurgy * media and communication * machinery installation, maintenance, and repair * NGOs and nonprofits * microfinancing * urban development and smart growth * just commerce * dental technology heating, ventilation, plumbing and air-conditioning * health and human services * graphics and marketing * publishing and printing * media and journalism * forestry * food and catering industry * fisheries * environmental protection * entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurial enterprises * rescue, defense and security * culture and arts * engineering * crafts and design * construction, building, and renovation * culinary arts * cleaning, chemical products, plastics, ceramics, other non-metallic mineral products * marine biology * conservation and biological diversity * microbiology and biotechnology * finance and economics * agriculture, viticulture, and horticulture * boating and maritime transportation * language training * translations and interpretations * office administration and management.....

Over the years, we have successfully identified appropriate work environments to fit the diverse interests and backgrounds of the participants, devise a training schedule of capacities to be developed or improved during the internship period, serve as liaison with their host companies, and process the placements, including managing, monitoring, evaluating and certifying placements. We are able to issue Europass documentation from the initiative sponsored by the European Commission that aims to make labour market skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood. Europass Mobility was established by the European Parliament for a single Community framework regarding the transparency of qualifications and competencies. The Europass Mobility certification process is monitored by MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning to record an organised period of time (mobility experience) that is undertaken for the purpose of learning or training. In our case, this refers to a work placement in a business enterprise or entrepreneurial venture, or a volunteer placement in an NGO, where real-world labour market skills are learned, developed or honed.





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IVT / PLM Projects

The Europass Initiative promotes transparency of qualifications in Europe, and brings together into a single framework several tools for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences. The Europass Mobility document contains information regarding the individual, the purpose and duration of the mobility experience, and the training and skills acquired during the placement. Specifically, it outlines the objective of the Europass Mobility experience, the sponsoring Initiative (which is usually the Lifelong Learning Programme), the qualification (if any) to which the education or training leads, any language training or cultural orientation completed and the countries involved. It contains a description of skills and competences acquired during the placement, including specifics regarding the activities, tasks and duties performed, the job-related skills and competences acquired, language skills, technology usage, organisational skills and competences, social skills and competences, and cultural competences.

In addition to the evaluations carried out by the host company supervisor, Work Experience programme participants receive an Activities and Achievements Progress Form for their supervisors to track their acquisition of skills and experiences in other areas throughout the course of their placement. Participants are evaluated on their progress once at the mid-point of their internship in order to make adjustments in their work where improvement is required. They are evaluated by their work supervisor from 1 to 10 on their performance against the training plan with an eye toward grading them on the following attributes: punctuality, presentation, attitude, flexibility, conduct, initiation, motivation and communication. The supervisor also has an opportunity at this point to make specific comments that are taken into consideration by the participant to improve his or her performance of the assigned tasks. Participants also receive a final evaluation at the end of their internship. Upon completion of the programme, participants are presented with the evaluation regarding whether he or she has successfully achieved an acceptable level of competency in several skills germane to mobility programme objectives and outcomes. They also receive a Certificate of programme completion as well as a certified Europass to be used for future employment searches.

We serve as the liaison between the participant and the host company to arbitrate problems, address any issues that surface and assure that compliance to the terms of the placements are met by both participant and host company. There have been several instances where the placement just does not work because of personality conflicts, motivational issues or a host of other reasons. In these cases, it was necessary for us to step in and reassign the participant to another placement, which required that we engage in the placement process more than once. We readily do this so that each participant will maximize the short period of time they have here to gain experience and training.

Our history of having secured high quality placements for their beneficiaries is unmatched – we work with enterprises that are both large and small, national as well as international, with a rich organizational and industry history as well as start-ups. There are certain industries where we are not able to organize placements. These include medicine (not dentistry, for we have successfully placed dental technology interns), toxic wastes, and chemical engineering. Additionally, we have not been able to place in the public sector or interns interested in public administration, as all official activity here is conducted in Catalan, and very few people outside our region of Spain have this level of language capabilities. Interns in all sectors are encouraged to participate in what turns out to be the most invaluable foreign work experience possible. And, of course, we make sure all certification and documentation is in order.

Our placement process takes place over several months. We require an application form accompanied by a CV and motivational letter from all applicants at least six weeks prior to their anticipated arrival. We look for indicators that inform us of the applicant's background, studies, interests and capabilities as well as his or her language fluency. With this information, we set in motion the search for appropriate host companies in the industries indicated in the application form. Once an appropriate host is identified, the negotiations spearheaded by MS Barcelona staff for the placement take place.

When participants become members of the host organization's workplace team, they work under the same environment and working conditions as normal employees. They must observe company policy with regards to timekeeping, discipline, standards of dress, health and safety. It is expected that participants work the same hours as are the regular business hours of the host company – in most cases that means 8h30 to 14h00 and 16h00 to 20h00, Monday through Friday. Except in the case where there might be weekend business hours, shift work (morning shift from 06h00 to 15h00 or afternoon shift 14h00 to 23h00 with an hour off for meals), or a special event the company is involved in, LdV interns pretty much have the weekends as free time. Under the Lifelong Learning Programme, beneficiaries are expected to work a minimum of 30 hours a week but cannot exceed 40 hours in their work week except by mutual consent between the beneficiary and the host company. We have found in our experience that many participants coming for work experience programming under LdV seek additional work during their time off to practice their Spanish, improve their skills, or earn some money with part-time paid employment.



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All beneficiaries must interview with their work supervisor for their placement. They will be accompanied to the interview by an MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning staff person for proper introduction, but must go through the interview unaccompanied – i.e. they must come with a level of Spanish sufficient enough to get through the interview. If they do not possess the sufficient language level to be successful in their placement, they can either enroll in additional language training or choose an internship where Spanish is not required, like marketing, IT, logistics or tourism. During the interview, work schedules are established, duties and tasks outlined and the review of the training plan takes place.

Prior to their arrival, language classes are scheduled according to a participant's level of comprehension and conversation in Spanish. The majority of beneficiaries coming from romance-language-speaking countries – Portugal, Italy, France, Romania – usually have a very good level of Spanish because of the similarities among our languages. Those from non-romance-language-speaking countries usually have engaged in language training in their home countries prior to arrival. Students are placed in group classes that focus on listening skills to enhance their conversation and comprehension, on the industry's terminology, and on interview techniques to help them with the interview process. Those with basic or beginning or intermediate Spanish partake of classes that are focused on comprehension and vocabulary. The host companies are advised that language training is an important component of the programme and are always willing to wait for their intern to complete the course.

In terms of accommodations, we started our partnership in LdV being able to offer shared housing for the groups. These included flats rented out for the specific purpose of accommodating LdV interns. Our experience with this housing scheme, however, proved to be less than favourable in terms of the personality conflicts that would arise, immature behaviour and destruction of property caused by the tenants. We resorted to identifying accommodations for the LdV interns of the later programmes with families and professionals. Most of these hosts were native Spanish or Catalan, which provided the additional benefit to the intern of being immersed in the culture and language of the host. Many were expatriates who wanted to participate as hosts, and we were able to accommodate those needing a more familiar environment and language with them. These types of accommodations, along with university residences, are the options we are now able to offer participants coming under LdV. For future groups, especially if the estimated number of beneficiaries to be sent is high, we will have to resort to more conventional student housing such as university residences. Our criteria for accommodations is that not only the place be safe, clean and close to public transportation, but that the participants have a place to cook their meals. This turns out to be a cost-saving measure of the project avoiding the need to eat out in expensive restaurants and bars/cafes.

We offer the services of a Welfare Officer, on-call 24/7 for any emergency. Many a times we have found ourselves sitting with a beneficiary in the emergency room of the local hospital for some health crisis. For this reason, it is imperative that all participants come with their European Health Card, as they are able to access the local healthcare system sponsored by the Catalan government. LdV interns are able to contact us at any time they need reinforcements of the emotional type, especially important for the younger interns and those away from home for the first time. They can also contact us if they have questions, concerns or even advice on how we can improve our services. We also intervene for problems they might have with their transportation passes, if they have become a victim of theft, or if they need our help. In other words, we are always there for them during their time in our care. We also offer a whole range of auxiliary services such as airport transfers, local transportation and cultural programming.

As a side note, one that is important to note: host companies are now requiring that all LdV interns come with an insurance policy against third party liability, as LdV interns come as trainees, not employees, and are consequently not covered under the company's insurance plan.

We are also able to offer blended hybrid programmes that combine seminars on the subject matter of interest, language training for terminology of the sector and professional visits. These are organized for students, primarily younger students in high school, who are only able to come for a short period of time or are enrolled in specific vocational training that requires exposure to the working environments of their industries, with the majority of these projects lasting 1-2 weeks.



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- Induction

Once the beneficiaries arrive and get settled in, they participate in an induction, or orientation session, that explains the programme. It is the time when expectations are expressed, concerns addressed, and questions answered. They will already have received their orientation material prior to their departure from their country of origin.

- Capacity

MS Barcelona Lifelong Learning organizes mobility projects throughout the year. These include both IVT/PLM work experience projects as well as VETPRO and professional exchanges such as trade missions and visits. In terms of being able to accommodate groups with specialized service, we can receive groups of up to 20 beneficiaries at one time for either placements or professional exchanges. These partnerships have worked extremely well, and we have a long list of success stories from participants successfully finishing the programme. We attempt to avoid scheduling VETPRO activity during the months of July and August in consideration of the traditional vacation time of Spanish enterprises and institutions. However, we encourage IVT/PLM programming during the summer months, as Barcelona is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe and, therefore, the time during which many work placements for specific industries can successfully take place.

- Timetable/schedule of the programme

Our personalized attention to the needs of participants begins with our introductory correspondence prior to their arrival, where they are informed of tentative placements and are given information on their project and a lot of information about Barcelona, its landscape, people, language and culture. Upon their arrival to Barcelona, they are met at the airport by our staff with their orientation packets of information. Participants will also receive information about the public transportation system for the metropolitan area and receive their passes for public transportation. This is an important note to make, as the success of their programme will depend on their ability to move around freely on public transportation, the most cost-effective and efficient transportation mode available. For this reason, we make sure that their accommodations are located within walking distance of a metro, bus or train where they can use the passes that are provided by the programme.

We have come to realize that having the public transportation option leads to participants achieving a more intense cultural experience during their time in Barcelona, as they are able to explore the different areas of the city, immerse themselves in the culture of the people, and improve their language skills as they visit with the natives. Barcelona is an important cultural centre and a major tourist destination with a rich cultural history. Particularly renowned are architectural works that have been designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and these are taken-in and savoured by participants visiting our city. They also take advantage of their weekends to travel throughout the region and many have taken the initiative to travel beyond our province to explore other areas of Spain. Augmenting these experiences are the cultural outings we organize for the groups to expose them to the uniqueness of our region.

We look forward to welcoming you to Barcelona.

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