



Erasmus Plus 2016

**Mobility Programming
Hybrid Projects**



**PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK
2016**



WORK EXPERIENCE, INTERNSHIPS AND MOBILITY PROGRAMMES

The Barcelona-based team at Global Skills Network scp welcomes you to our lovely corner of Spain. We are looking forward to work with you to ensure that your stay is as beneficial and enjoyable as possible, and as you expected. If you have any queries or any problems, please do not hesitate to contact us. We stand ready to serve you before your arrival, during your visit, and after you return home.

WHO WE ARE

Global Skills Network scp is a transnational project management firm. Our primary services are directed toward European mobility and professional exchange programmes. We have wide-ranging experience working with international organisations, from universities and colleges, Chambers of Commerce and Government entities, to private enterprise. The staff of GSN has extensive experience in organizing and hosting programmes 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, and to ensure that on their return to their country of origin, they can look back on an excellent and valuable experience. We have been working with European Commission-sponsored programming since 2003, and lend our extensive experience to the success of these types of projects, where we hope the participants will achieve maximum benefit from their stay.

LOCATION

Barcelona is an excellent destination for people of ages to enjoy. Situated on the Mediterranean Sea, Barcelona as a cosmopolitan city is full of museums, theatres and cinemas, extensive nightlife, and a wide range of sport activities. The diverse range of commerce and industry present in this region of Spain make it an excellent place for work, study, rest, play and inter-cultural exchange.



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PROGRAMMING

Initial Vocational Training (IVT) and Persons in the Labour Market (PLM) Transnational Placements in Enterprises or Training Institutions projects are centered around organising, 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. Global Skills Network Lifelong Learning programming places participants of both projects in local companies to gain real-world experience. Our history includes organizing, managing and certifying programmes for 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 development;
- To increase the understanding of the commercial and industrial culture within the country where the participant is placed
- To assist beneficiaries in the development of his or her career, apply skills and knowledge in the job market and develop an improved Curriculum Vitae to contribute to future employment prospects
- To contribute to the development of the placement companies through completing a range of different projects and working as a member of the team in a work environment
- To develop a greater understanding of the use of Spanish (or English and German in the cases of internships in specific sectors such as tourism, marketing or information technology) in a business context and gain fluency in the working language

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 GSN staff for the placement take place.

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. We will have received the curricula of a programme participant prior to his or her arrival, and will have found adequate placements that match the background and/or interest of the programme beneficiaries. Potential host companies will have received the CV of the participant prior to the initial interview. All beneficiaries must interview with their work supervisor for their placement. They will be accompanied to the interview by a 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 level of Spanish, 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. Once the participant has been placed with a host company and signs the LLP placement contract, there are no changes allowed unless under extreme circumstances of having been placed in a host company that is not compatible with the objectives of the programme.

When participants become members of the host company'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

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Friday. Except in the case where there might be weekend business hours such as with hospitality or tourism, 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, interns pretty much have the weekends as free time. Under the Erasmus Plus 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 Erasmus+ seek additional work during their time off to practice their Spanish, improve their skills, or earn some money with part-time paid employment.

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.

When placements in host companies is not possible for whatever reason – size of group, incongruency between subject matter and host company, inaccessibility, etc. – a hybrid project will be developed. The underlying premise of a hybrid course is that successful professional practice requires an integration of theories and skills in the application of strategies and decisions, and coursework. This is structured around applicable case studies and market research, coupled with professional visits to host companies in the field of study. These professional visits give the participants an opportunity of experiencing the real-world working environment of their chosen subject matter. A study visit is an encounter — but it is first and foremost a journey in small groups (participants are constantly on the move visiting places of importance to their fields). This allows participants to meet and interact with specialists in the host country. In preparation for these visits, we ask participants to learn about the host company in advance in order to participate in the Q/A sesión at the end of the visit. A predetermined time and place for grouping will be announced to the Group. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THESE TIMES BE HONORED, as it is disrespectful to the host Company that has made time to accommodate the visit. Latecomers will not be accommodated when the Group travels together.

Upon completion of the programme, participants will have gained practical training, skill enhancements and sector knowledge through their work at their host companies, organizations and enterprises. With Spanish or Catalan being the working language of most environments in which participants are placed during their stay in Barcelona, they are able to return to their country upon completion of the programme with improved language skills in a foreign language. 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 placement. Additionally, some participants are able to practice the skills they had learned in an academic environment 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 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 or hybrid programme. They master the skill of Planning, both in the workplace as well as in their private lives in a foreign country. These projects are also important to impart and fine-tune technical and specialty skills in their field of

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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, 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.

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 programming material prior to their departure from their country of origin.

UTILIZING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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.

BENEFICIARY WELFARE

Probably the most important element of all of our programmes is the welfare and safety of the Work Experience Programme participants coming to Spain on their mobility work experience programme. We assign a programme Participant Welfare Officer (PWO) to every project, whose job it is to provide contact and support to the participants throughout their stay. He or she acts as the liaison between the programme participant and his or her host company and is responsible for the completion of evaluative exercises on the participant's progress in the work placement or during in-class activity. Please contact your programme coordinator at the first sign of problems.

IN CASE OF ILLNESS

Programme participants are expected to come to Spain with insurance coverage for illnesses, accidents and travel incidents. Persons who are residents of the 28 EU- and EEC-countries are entitled to participate in the health services programme that covers reciprocal clinical services in Spain. The EHIC can be used to cover any necessary medical treatment due to either an accident or illness within the European Economic Area (EEA). It does not cover liability or work-related accidents, which must be covered by a separate policy. These work experience programmes are not considered paid employment and, therefore, are not covered under the social security and other employee coverage plans.

The card entitles the holder to state-provided medical treatment within the country they are visiting and the service provided will be the same as received by a person covered by the country's 'insured' medical scheme. This may not cover all of the services you would expect within your country of origin, and you may have to make a contribution towards the care you receive, but most basic health services and emergency care are covered while you are in Spain. In the event that you do not acquire the European Health Insurance Card prior to starting the programme, any expenses incurred as a result are at your own expense. If you are not a citizen of the EEU or EEC, you must bring a health insurance policy to cover illness and

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accidents. Likewise, all medications need to be paid for by the programme participant. You will find a local pharmacy very close to your accommodations or place of work. There are hundreds of pharmacies in Barcelona, and we have in place a 24-hour system where there is always a pharmacy in every neighbourhood on call.

PERSONAL SECURITY

During their stay in Spain, we advise programme participants to be careful and look after their personal possessions (e.g. credit card, passport). It is best not to carry a lot of money and travellers cheques. It would be a good idea to keep a record and photocopy of information about passports or National Identification Documents and also of credit cards. We advise them to keep these at their accommodations in case the originals are lost or stolen. The photocopies will be of help if they need to report any stolen documents. Although Barcelona is one of the safest cosmopolitan cities in Europe, better to exert caution. The local police -- Mossos de Escudra -- are the most wonderful resource we have for safety. But please beware of avoiding potentially unsafe situations: do not travel alone after dark, especially in the "Raval" sector of town. Never surrender your personal property to persons posing as police officers. And be vigilant of pickpockets, especially in the heavily congested tourist areas such as Las Ramblas or metro stations. Bringing a laptop is advisable, but please leave your valuables and jewellery at home, as we cannot be responsible for loss of personal property. The beneficiary will be responsible for submitting a police report for theft and will be expected to go the police station unaccompanied to fill out the paperwork, which can last up to 3 hours, outside work hours.

It is advisable to refer to safety recommendations. For example, the ongoing travel safety campaign operated by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) encourages British nationals to be better prepared for their overseas trips with a view to avoiding common travelling traumas, risks and dangers. We strongly advise that you visit the **Know Before You Go** website (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/>) to learn more about general travel safety advice and information specific to your destination. Alternatively, you can call 0845 850 2829.

Below are some general safety tips that should help you avoid any unpleasant situations:

- If travelling alone, do not advertise it. Normally you can trust people with this information but, when in doubt, say you're with friends or a tour group.
- Be careful about giving the name of your accommodation to strangers. When you meet someone you'd like to see again, arrange a public place to meet.
- Before you go out with a new friend, get some information about him or her. Leave this information with another member of your group, or just leave it in your room. Your instincts will tell you if this person is safe, but leave evidence in case your instincts are wrong.
- Limit your alcohol intake to what you can easily handle without becoming impaired - keep an eye on your drink and never leave it unattended.
- Ask if it's safe to use public transportation after dark.
- After dark, try to walk on well-lit streets with other people around.
- When you are out and about, be alert, not fearful, and not caught up in daydreams. Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you.

Remember that people have been travelling internationally forever and the vast majority of international travel experiences are exceptionally rewarding and problem-free. Remember to use your common sense, err on the side of caution, and if in doubt, seek advice.

TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL

Barcelona is serviced by three airports. The main international airport is BCN El Prat, located approximately 45 minutes from the city center. Two smaller airports (Girona to the north and Reus/Salou to the south) serve as hubs for reduced-rate airlines operating flights to other cities

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in Europe. These both are located approximately 1.5 hours away from Barcelona and are serviced by regularly-scheduled buses that meet the arrival/departure of flights.

We always suggest that participants limit their luggage and to pack light in case you have to navigate the public transportation system with your luggage. While on the subject of local transportation, our best advice to you is to familiarize yourself with the public transportation system to gauge the time and distance between your accommodations and work, etc., and take into consideration that there may not be a direct route and you will have to switch metro and/or train lines. You will be able to use your transportation passes on the TMB buses and NIT buses, the TMB metro system and trams, the FGC and RENFE local trains, and the rack rail to the Montjuic teleferico (an additional charge) and up to the top of Tibidabo from the FGC train station at Peu de funicular. Passes cannot be used on the Tibidabo rack rail, blue tram or Tibibus from Pl. Catalunya; the bus turistic, the Aerobus from the airport, or the teleferico on Montjuic or across the harbour.

ORIENTATION MEETING

Your group will be met upon arrival at the El Prat International airport, airport transfers have been secured to take the group to your accommodations at the hotel, ready for your arrival. This project includes local transportation, so participants will be given your transportation passes at the airport.

Following your arrival, we will meet with you to review the programme planned and will be reviewing an itinerary of activities, as well as the nuances and logistics of the programme,

LANGUAGE TRAINING

Prior to their arrival, language classes can be scheduled according to a participant's level of comprehension and conversation in Spanish for ease of living in Spain for an entire month. The coursework is in English, and participants are expected to come with an acceptable comprehension level.

We strongly recommend that you start to develop your language skills as much as possible before you leave. The better your language skills, the more enriching your experience will be. There are many ways in which you can develop your language skills, here are a few ideas:

- Sign up to a language course; maybe a local college runs evening classes,
- Try studying online, here are a few websites that offer great courses:
 - o www.bbc.co.uk/languages
 - o www.linguanet-europa.org
 - o www.champs-elysees.com
 - o www.meetups.com
- Meet up with other programme participants from your country and help each other practice.
- Hire foreign language CDs and DVDs.
- Listen to foreign language radio stations or Internet podcasts.
- There are many people recently-arrived from European countries who would relish the opportunity to improve their language skills in return for helping you. You may be able to find suitable 'tutors' at a local language college, put an advertisement in your local newspaper, or refer to a number of online listing services such as www.loquo.com and www.craigslist.org. Please ensure that you arrange such meetings take place in a safe and responsible manner.

As an absolute minimum, make the effort to learn the basics so that you can at least be polite and courteous when you first arrive. Don't forget, the more you can communicate, the better your overall experience will be.

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PRACTICAL TIPS

If you have a “free” mobile phone that is not under contract, you will be able to purchase a sim card for local calls; if not, it is advisable to purchase a calling card available at any tobacco shop or Internet café once you arrive. Alternatively, you can purchase a phone with local service at the Corte Ingles or any of the mobile phone companies in the area. WhatsApp is a free communication mechanism of text messages sent from mobile to mobile, highly recommended.

A note of advice, you should not expect to wear inappropriate such as cut-off or ragged jeans, especially for professional visits. Please come neatly groomed. Good walking shoes are a must for exploring the many offerings Barcelona has in terms of tourism and culture. Luggage weight is regulated on most airlines, so pack light. You might also leave room in your bags to bring home the souvenirs you might want to collect during your stay.

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Global Skills Network has extensive experience of running international work experience and volunteer programmes and regularly receive phone calls from worried parents who have not heard from their children who joined international programmes. We are very aware that programme participants are adults and perfectly capable of looking after themselves; however, your parents might not necessarily think the same as we do.

On arrival, please make the effort to:

- Contact your family and friends to let them know you have arrived safely.
- Ensure they have the address and contact telephone number.
- Tell them about your project and what you are doing.
- Share your new experiences and help them feel involved.

GSN Lifelong Learning staff is here to support you, but we are not:

- A message service
- A postal forwarding service
- Counsellors for parents who haven't been contacted

Emergency funds / other funds:

Please ensure that you have access to sufficient funds to cover any emergencies. You are also advised to take other funds for your living allowance. The amount you should take entirely depends on your diet and how you choose to spend your free time.

Many participants rely solely on their bankcard as the only means of access to their funds – unfortunately some of them have either lost or had their cards stolen leaving them in a position where they cannot access their account. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that participants have an alternative form of access to your funds such as money wires from home.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

The Work Experience programmes sponsored by Global Skills Network are designed to provide opportunities for young people to live and work in other European countries. The future success of the programme is reliant on current participants behaving in a professional and courteous manner at all times during the programme. Inappropriate behaviour could potentially jeopardise future plans for the programme and reduce future opportunities.

Please remember that we receive many applications and as such participants are in a very privileged and trusted position. Please make the most of your position by behaving in a professional and courteous manner.

At your accommodation: Please respect the environment in which your accommodations have been selected. Please report any damages to us or to your host as soon as possible. Also,

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please ensure that you respect your flatmates and other local tenants and keep noise to a minimum.

Global Skills Network reserves the right to maintain the integrity and professionalism of our programmes and if necessary will remove participants whose personal conduct is deemed inappropriate. Please ensure that you have read and fully understand the terms and conditions, which are enclosed as an annex to this handbook.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL AND SOCIAL POLICY

We aim to promote sustainable behaviours both in our office and with our host companies locally and our partners abroad. We actively work towards sustainable behaviours, and to promote environmentally-sensitive behaviour with all participants. Therefore, we attempt to maximise the use of web-based information and minimise the use of paper-based documentation. We also aim to promote the use of local business for all supplies including transport, food, accommodation, materials etc,

Global Skills Network projects both directly and indirectly support both the environment and the community. We attempt to organize placements with participants from various countries to develop and promote cross cultural understanding and empathy. Our indoctrination provides the participants with an opportunity to understand local cultures, traditions and sensitivities. We also promote opportunities for participants to interact with local communities at grass roots level to enable participants to have a better understanding of local lifestyles away from the well-trodden tourist circuits.

Here are some tips on how participants can be a responsible traveller:

Before you travel:

- Do as much research as you can - the more you know about a destination and its culture before you depart, the more you'll enjoy your experience and the more successfully you'll integrate into the local environment.
- Learn at least some basic phrases in the local language; please, thank you, how are you etc are always a good start, although be aware that the use of please and thank you may be different to the way you might be used to?
- How do you intend to travel, do you have to fly, maybe you could travel by train or boat?
- Whatever form of travel you are taking, you can always offset your carbon emissions.

Cultural Awareness:

- Always remain mindful that you are visiting another country and culture; if you are not sure how to behave, take a look around and see how local people are acting.
- Accept your local surroundings; you'll probably soon recognise that different cultures have a different concept of time, don't get too hung up if people are late!
- Your personal space may be very important to you, however some cultures regard leaving a "visitor" alone the height of rudeness, so be prepared to have constant company!
- Dress appropriately. Again if you are not sure what the local protocol is, take a look around; if you are the only person wearing shorts and a skimpy t-shirt, its probably regarded as inappropriate dress! As a general rule, dress conservatively and avoid leaving too much skin on display.
- Be conservative with resources; water, firewood, electricity, etc., may be in short supply.
- Buy locally, and can be confident that your money is supporting the local economy.
- Hire local guides. Enrich your experience by choosing local guides who are knowledgeable about the destination.

It's when you make those cross-cultural connections - even though initially you may have thought you had nothing in common - that it hits you again: people are the same wherever

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they're from; we all have the same needs and desires, aspirations and affections. Revelling in that realisation is the holy grail of travelling.

Environmental sensitivity:

- No matter how sensitive you are, there is always an impact, so be mindful to “tread lightly”.
- Be considerate with the use of water, it may be in short supply.
- Consider your modesty while washing; you may enjoy bathing “au natural”, however others may not enjoy watching you do so.
- Consider the type of cleaning products you use, especially if you are washing in a stream – remember this may also be somebody’s drinking water.
- Be careful not to damage any flora, particularly in the Pyrnees region and environments where plants take a long time to grow.
- Under no circumstances should you leave any rubbish – take everything home with you, even if it is biodegradable.

On your return:

- Distribute your responsible travel tips. In addition to telling family and friends about the wonderful memories you made, also consider sharing tips on how they too can be a responsible traveler.
- Share your photos. Pictures can say a thousand words. Show us and tell us about your experiences.
- Responsible travel is not the full or only answer to the future sustainability of tourism. But unless we shift our attitudes to tourism and travel we'll lose the wild places, the traditions and the eccentricities of the world. Life will be far more homogenised and far less surprising, and our spirit will be the poorer for it.
- We strongly recommend that you continue to research and develop your understanding of Responsible Travel.

Recommended reading:

Lonely Planet “Code Green” is all about travel experiences that will challenge, change and inspire you. It's about making a connection with people who lead very different lives to you, and connecting in a sustainable way, so that the same opportunities will be there for the future. Code Green draws together almost 100 responsible travel experiences from across the planet, all linked by three defining principles; tread lightly on the environment, immerse yourself in the culture and have a positive economic benefit for the local community”.

And finally.....

Global Skills Network Lifelong Learning programmes, are all about your personal development. The more you put into your programme, the more you will gain.

* * * * *

In closing, please know we stand ready to make your work experience the most valuable possible. We look forward to welcoming you to Barcelona and are available to help in whatever we can to make your visit both beneficial and fun. We look forward to bidding you a hearty welcome.

Good luck – we hope you have a great experience.

Barcelona, 2016

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