



Moving the needle on global mobility

At Centrum PUCP in Peru, a new international summer exchange programme is seeking to bring the format into modern times, through its focus on generating lasting solutions for societal challenges and local communities. The programme's creator, **Fernanda Falcone Pino**, provides the details

For decades, exchange programmes have been one of the most visible expressions of internationalisation in higher education. They have broadened students' global perspectives, strengthened intercultural competence and enriched learning beyond the classroom. Today, however, the international exchange is at a turning point: it must no longer be assessed primarily by destination, duration or the numbers involved, but by its purpose, equity and impact. In a landscape shaped by the carbon footprint of travel, the ethical tensions associated with academic tourism and growing demands for more responsible experiences, the concern is not so much about where students visit, but rather what they transform when they travel.

With this conviction, Centrum PUCP created the Summer Programme: Mobility for Positive Impact, an initiative that aims to redefine international mobility as an applied, ethical and results-oriented learning experience. Taught in English, the programme is designed for international MBA students, participants

in specialised master's programmes in business and young professionals from Latin America, Europe, Asia and beyond. It is aimed at proactive, adaptable and collaborative students who are interested in sustainability, innovation and leadership. Typically, they will be between 22 and 30 years old with at least one year of work experience, as well as a passion for responsible business practices.

The programme is grounded in a clear principle that when students are brought together from different locations and backgrounds, each experience should generate demonstrable value for the host community. In this way, international mobility becomes understood not simply as cultural observation or physical displacement, but as a responsible intervention aimed at co-creating solutions, strengthening local capacities and fostering transformative learning. It is internationalisation with purpose and evidence.

Creating lasting value

Delivered over three weeks, the programme operates as an intensive, interdisciplinary and intercultural taskforce, centred on a real-world impact challenge developed in collaboration with local organisations. Each challenge seeks to address critical areas such as social development, economic growth and environmental sustainability. The curriculum, meanwhile, combines applied, field-based learning with three MBA-level courses. Innovability is a module examining the integration of innovation and sustainability in the design of responsible business solutions (worth five credits in the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, or ECTS). Ethics (worth 2.5 ECTS) explores ethical decision-making in relation to governance, stakeholder engagement and sustainability. Finally, Leadership (five ECTS) focuses on developing self-aware and ethically grounded leaders equipped to navigate complex global environments.

International participants work in multicultural teams alongside local stakeholders to analyse challenges related to innovation and sustainability. They identify priorities, test potential solutions and deliver actionable proposals supported by implementation roadmaps designed to generate positive impact. With learning firmly rooted in real-world contexts, participants act as consultants-in-training responsible for creating tangible value beyond the classroom. The academic experience is then enriched further through networking opportunities and cultural activities that deepen intercultural awareness and broaden professional networks.

A distinctive feature of the model is the incorporation of Peruvian students as local facilitators within each team. Their contribution is substantial as they facilitate cultural interpretation, contextualise evidence and connect participants with key stakeholders. They also strengthen the relevance, feasibility and ethical grounding of a team's proposed solutions, while reducing the risk of international teams formulating 'imported' approaches that are disconnected from local realities. The model also provides continuity, enabling relationships with partner organisations and project follow-ups to continue through the local consultants once the international cohort has returned home. This greatly strengthens the sustainability of the student projects' impact.

Partners in positive impact

In July 2025, the first edition brought together 13 international students and four Peruvian students in Lima to work collaboratively on five challenges linked to organisations including the international nonprofits, TECHO, World Vision and Casa Ronald McDonald, as well as Peruvian circular economy startup EsBueno. Each team's challenge was co-designed with their host organisation, in alignment with the programme's broader focus on sustainability, leadership and positive impact. For the inaugural Summer Programme, Centrum PUCP also introduced the Eco-lution Challenge, a campus-based initiative aimed at developing sustainable solutions for the school environment. Here, the winning proposal – to install solar panels on the roofs of the campus parking areas – illustrates the programme's emphasis on practical, locally grounded and implementation-oriented solutions.

Although the programme is open to students from all universities, the first cohort of international participants came from institutions with which Centrum PUCP maintains collaborative relationships, including Universidad Privada Boliviana in Bolivia, Universidad de La Sabana in Colombia, Universidad Internacional del Ecuador, ITESO – Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara in Mexico and Johannes Kepler University Linz in Austria.

This year, the programme expects to welcome around 20 students from across the world for its second edition. Participation fees have been differentiated by region and complemented by early-bird rates and group pricing, reflecting a deliberate commitment to accessibility and international inclusion. The goal is to keep costs comparatively affordable in relation to traditional mobility formats, thereby widening participation and creating opportunities for students who may not otherwise be able to access an international learning experience.

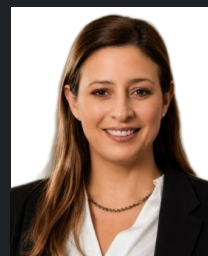
More than movement

The programme's overall approach also aligns with Centrum PUCP's strategic positioning on the global stage across the following three key dimensions:

- **Pedagogical innovation:** applied, results-oriented consulting projects represent a new take on traditional courses focused on international mobility
- **Global awareness:** changing mindsets by engaging with Global South challenges and addressing social and environmental dilemmas from the field
- **Tangible impact:** a focus on ensuring that each cohort leaves behind strengthened capacities, transferable proposals and feasible improvements for participating organisations

Centrum's Summer Programme offers an operational response to one of the most pressing dilemmas facing business schools today. Namely, how to preserve the benefits of mobility – intercultural competence, networks and experiential learning – while responding to contemporary demands for sustainability, legitimacy and contribution to the public good. Here, internationalisation is no longer measured by movement alone, but also by capacities developed and verifiable results generated with and for the surrounding community.

At a time when many institutions are seeking to develop business leaders who can act as agents of change in society, the Summer Programme: Mobility for Positive Impact offers a sustainable and purpose-driven model of global learning. 



Fernanda Falcone Pino is a specialist in higher education internationalisation and led the development of the summer programme entitled, *Mobility for Positive Impact* at Centrum PUCP, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú