

The Matanel Sefarad Seminar (560)

Activity Report 2026

Name of the Program: The Matanel Sefarad Seminar (560)

Year of activity: 2026

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Number of active participants in the program: 175

This includes 41 fellows, 34 researchers and faculty members, and approximately 100 educators and cultural practitioners who participated in workshops and sessions open to the wider public.

Estimated number of impacted participants: approximately 800 - 1,000

A conservative long-term estimate, including the broader educational, academic, cultural, and community circles reached indirectly through the program's direct participants and their subsequent professional, educational, and public activities.

Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):

Summer 2026 marked the second edition of the Matanel Sefarad Seminar, implemented this year, as planned, through two complementary program formats:

Format 1 – Sephardic Studies In Barcelona: (second year) was a four-week cycle, academic program held in June 1-26 (for up to 20 fellows).

Please see - <https://www.ejbarcelona.org/matanel-sefarad-seminar-2026>

Format 2 – Belchite Heritage Laboratory (first-year pilot) was a field-based research and experiential learning program held June 29-August 8. consisted of three consecutive two-week cycles (up to 10 fellows per cycle).

Please see - <https://www.ejbarcelona.org/seminarsefaradbelchite>

Both formats showed demand, with 41 fellows graduating in Summer 2026.

The programs were successfully implemented in terms of academic content, teaching, management, logistics, and participant experience.

Evaluation results indicate high participant satisfaction and achievement of the program's main objectives.

The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):

During summer 2026, the Matanel Sefarad initiative successfully implemented two intensive fellowship programs. Their delivery required effective administration, careful coordination, and the development of a broad network of academic, cultural, and institutional partnerships. The successful implementation of both programs, in accordance with the planned schedules and objectives, represents a significant organizational achievement and demonstrates the EJB team's growing operational capacity.

A major achievement has been the continued growth and internationalization of the program, reflected in increased interest and a broader geographical distribution of applicants and participants.

The program has also strengthened its local academic infrastructure, establishing a growing Barcelona-based faculty through cooperation with local academic institutions, including UAB and UCV, while continuing to attract the participation of leading international scholars in the field.

At the international level, EJB has expanded and consolidated cooperation with academic institutions and networks in Europe and beyond, including Paideia – The European Institute for Jewish Studies, the Network for European Philosophy and the Jewish Tradition at the University of Antwerp, and the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Denver.

Another important achievement has been the consolidation of several components originally developed within the Sefarad Seminar into independent initiatives with their own academic, cultural, and educational value and clear potential for further development. These include the inter religious Beit Midrash (Convivencia), the International Kabbalah Research Workshop, the Piyyut Micro-Festival, and the Jewish–Islamic Cultural Center. This evolution demonstrates the program's capacity not only to deliver a successful annual seminar, but also to generate sustainable new platforms for research, education, and cultural exchange.

A particularly distinctive achievement in 2026 was the successful launch of the Difficult Heritage Laboratory in Belchite, an experimental program combining archaeological fieldwork - recovering a medieval synagogue with critical study of heritage, memory, and ethics. The program has generated considerable interest and has emerged as a particularly promising educational model with significant potential for future development.

Overall, the 2026 results demonstrate both the consolidation and refinement of the Sefarad initiative. They support its continued development as a leading framework for Sefarad Studies in Europe.

The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):

The evaluation of the program was based on a structured monitoring system combining weekly online feedback questionnaires, a comprehensive final evaluation form, and regular individual and group conversations with participants and teaching staff. The assessment examined the academic quality of the program, relevance of the content, quality of teaching and facilitation, organization, participant engagement, and the program's contribution to participants' knowledge, professional development and future initiatives. Overall results were very strong, with an average evaluation score of 9.2/10, while all principal evaluation categories scored 8.6/10 or above. Compared with the previous edition, the results indicate both consistently high levels of satisfaction and improvement in the program's structure, coordination, interdisciplinary approach and opportunities for exchange between participants and faculty. Qualitative feedback also confirmed the value of combining academic study, site-based learning and direct interaction with researchers and cultural practitioners. For future editions, the evaluation supports maintaining the program's core methodology while further strengthening opportunities for participant-led exchange, follow-up activities, alumni networking and the longer-term dissemination of knowledge generated through the seminar.

For further details, please refer to the attached Evaluation report.

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

Following the initial consolidation of the program's academic structure, faculty, and logistical and administrative infrastructure, the coming year will focus on two parallel priorities: ensuring the high-quality preparation and implementation of the 2027 summer programs, and further strengthening the program's academic and institutional standing.

A central objective will be to expand and deepen partnerships with academic institutions with the aim of advancing formal academic recognition of the program within the European Accumulation System (ECTS). Discussions toward this goal are expected to take place during the coming year with the Institute for Medieval Studies at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) and, in parallel, with the Heidelberg University of Jewish Studies (Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg).

In addition, significant effort will be devoted to diversifying the program's funding base and identifying additional financial partners, with the objective of securing the long-term continuity and sustainable development of the project from 2028 onward.

We, at the EJB, are sincerely grateful to the Matanel Foundation for its trust, generosity, and continued support, and to its dedicated team for the thoughtful and attentive way in which it has accompanied the program. We value this relationship greatly and look forward to another year of fruitful collaboration, shared learning, and continued growth.

Please see attached (as PDF documents)

1. Evaluation Report
2. Financial Report
3. List of the Graduates
4. Campus BCN Academic program
5. Campus Academic program
6. 5 Participates Testimonials

Attached are also:

- 6 Photos (as JPG files)
- Drive Links to the Matanel Sefarad Seminar 2026 movies
- :

- Barcelona campus

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cpDF1Ri-GHf1lF1J4CmzN24U0aenmLWr/view?usp=sharing>

- Belchite campus

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10UULyl3waDClsIqtCwgnjRsJbmZZ_I72/view?usp=share_link