

pulse

Promoting Unique Learning
Strategies in Entrepreneurship



Multimedia report

Study Visit to Spain

Hosted by:



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Project Coordinator: Mundus

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1. Introduction

Main objective of the Study Visit

From 20 to 24 April 2026, representatives from the partnership of the EU-funded **PULSE project**, coming from Spain, France, Greece, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya, spent a week in Bilbao, Basque Country, for a Capacity Building Week and Study Visit hosted by **Calasanz Santurtzi VET School**.

The week aimed to **share innovative VET methodologies developed in the Basque Country**, strengthen the capacity of VET trainers in entrepreneurship education, and showcase a regional model recognised as a European reference in practice-oriented vocational training and entrepreneurial learning.

Through institutional visits, classroom workshops, peer exchanges, and immersion in the Basque entrepreneurial ecosystem, partners were able to understand how a coherent regional strategy – combining schools, public agencies, universities, innovation hubs, and the productive sector – can foster entrepreneurial mindsets and improve youth employability.

Context and project description

PULSE (Promoting Unique Learning Strategies in Entrepreneurship) is an EU-funded project under the Erasmus+ programme that tackles the critical challenges of youth unemployment and skills mismatch in the Southern Mediterranean region. The project focuses on enhancing the capacities and methodologies of vocational education and training (VET) trainers to foster entrepreneurial competences among young learners.

After the diagnostic Study Visit in **Tunis (IMSET)** and the methodological training week in **Ben Guerir (UM6P, Morocco)**, the Bilbao meeting marks the third major capacity-building moment of the project, focused on the transfer of innovative Basque pedagogical methodologies – particularly **ETHAZI** and **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** – to partner VET centres across North Africa.



2. Partners of the project

Host of the Study Visit

Calasanz Santurtzi (Santurtzi, Basque Country, Spain) – a well-established VET centre in Bizkaia with a long tradition in practice-oriented teaching and vocational education. The centre offers programmes linked to healthcare, social services, administration, and marketing, with a strong focus on employability and the development of practical, transversal competences.



Visiting partners

- Mundus (Zaragoza, Spain) – Project Coordinator
- GIP FIPAN (Nice, France)
- Odyssea (Athens, Greece)
- Institut Maghrébin des Sciences Économiques et de Technologie – IMSET (Tunis, Tunisia)
- AMTA Academy (Sfax, Tunisia)
- Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique – UM6P (Ben Guerir, Morocco)
- École Supérieure des Industries du Textile et de l'Habillement – ESITH (Casablanca, Morocco)
- College of Industrial Technology (Misrata, Libya)
- INVESTORTECH (Misrata, Libya)



3. Agenda



Dates and key locations

Day	Date	Main activities
Day 1	Sunday 19 April	Arrival of participants at Bilbao Airport and check-in at Hotel Occidental Bilbao
Day 2	Monday 20 April	Institutional welcome at Calasanz Santurtzi · Presentation of Basque Country entrepreneurship education programmes (IKASENPRESA – ETHAZI – TKNIKA – ITINLANT, ENPRESARI – DEMA, STARTINNOVA) · Tour of Calasanz VET School
Day 3	Tuesday 21 April	Workshop on innovative methodologies – <i>Creating ETHAZI Challenges in the VET Classroom</i> and <i>WBL vs ETHAZI</i> · PULSE Project progress review and Training Course Materials & Platform · Official project dinner at Bocadero Bilbao
Day 4	Wednesday 22 April	Study visit and entrepreneurial workshop at B Accelerator Tower (BAT) in Bilbao city centre · Bilbao guided tour (Casco Viejo, Guggenheim, riverside) · Boat tour along the Nervión estuary
Day 5	Thursday 23 April	Study visit to 42 Urduliz – a disruptive, non-formal programming campus based on peer-to-peer learning · Free afternoon (Sopelana Beach)
Day 6	Friday 24 April	Visit to DeustoKabi , the University of Deusto Business Incubator · Visit to Lan Ekintza Bilbao Entrepreneurship Service · Institutional visit to the Palacio de la Diputación Foral de Bizkaia · Closing lunch and departures

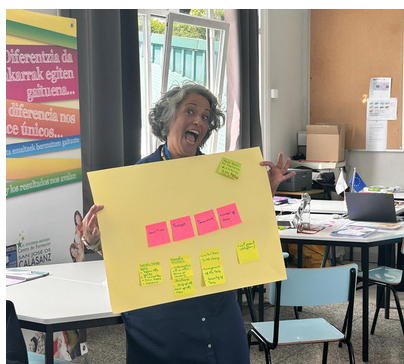
4. Highlights of the Study Visit

Calasanz Santurtzi – The Host VET School

The week opened with an institutional welcome at **Calasanz Santurtzi** and a guided tour of its facilities. Participants discovered a VET centre rooted in the local community, with a long tradition of practice-oriented teaching across healthcare, social services, administration, and marketing pathways. The host team presented how the school articulates entrepreneurial competences across diverse vocational programmes, and the role that international cooperation projects such as PULSE play in its strategy.

Key takeaways

- **A community-anchored VET model:** Calasanz illustrates how a mid-sized VET school can become a strategic local actor by combining solid academic delivery with employability and entrepreneurship services.
- **Leadership in international cooperation:** the centre's active role within PULSE shows how regional VET providers can take ownership of European cooperation projects, not only as recipients but as hosts and contributors of methodologies.
- **A reference for partner institutions:** participants left with a concrete image of a VET school comparable in scale to several of their own, making transferability of practices more realistic.



Basque Country Entrepreneurship Education Programmes

A dedicated session introduced the constellation of regional programmes that have made the Basque Country a European reference in VET-based entrepreneurship education:

- **IKASENPRESA – ETHAZI – TKNIKA – ITINLANT:** the Basque ecosystem of challenge-based collaborative learning, supported and researched by TKNIKA, the Basque Centre for Research and Applied Innovation in VET.
- **ENPRESARI – DEMA:** programmes promoted by DEMA, the entrepreneurship development agency of Bilbao City Council, to nurture entrepreneurial mindsets among young learners.
- **STARTINNOVA:** a regional initiative connecting students with real innovation challenges proposed by companies, fostering applied creativity and intrapreneurship.

Key takeaways

- **Coherent regional strategy as the key enabler:** the Basque case shows that systemic results come from a coordinated architecture – schools, regional research centres (TKNIKA), municipal agencies (DEMA), and private partners – rather than from isolated initiatives.
- **Strong public investment in VET R&D:** the existence of TKNIKA as a dedicated VET research and innovation centre is a structural enabler that partner countries may consider replicating in some form.
- **Programmes are complementary, not redundant:** each Basque programme covers a specific layer (in-class methodology, mindset, school–company connection) and they reinforce each other.

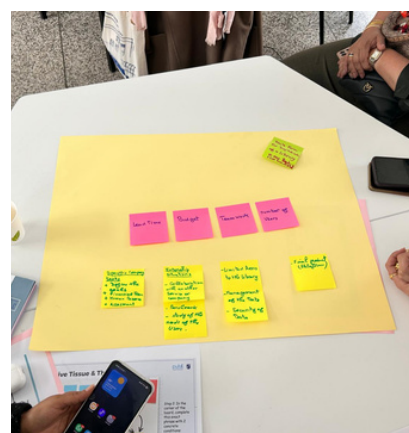


Workshops on Innovative Methodologies – ETHAZI and WBL

Two hands-on workshops focused on the practical application of the **ETHAZI methodology**, a Basque approach to challenge-based, collaborative VET learning. The first session walked participants through the design of an ETHAZI challenge for a VET classroom; the second examined ETHAZI in comparison with **Work-Based Learning (WBL)**, exploring strengths, complementarities, and contextual fit.

Key takeaways

- **A shift in the teacher's role:** ETHAZI repositions the teacher from content deliverer to facilitator of student-led problem-solving – a shift that requires deliberate teacher training and institutional support.
- **An analytical framework, not a recipe:** the ETHAZI / WBL comparison gave partners a clear lens to decide what to adopt, what to adapt and what to hybridise in their own VET environments.
- **Both methodologies anchor learning in reality:** but they differ in how the learning environment is structured (in-classroom challenge teams vs. company placements) and how outcomes are assessed.
- **Direct transferability potential:** among all the elements observed during the week, ETHAZI emerged as the most readily transferable methodology for piloting within partner VET centres.



B Accelerator Tower (BAT) – Bilbao's Innovation Hub

Located in Bilbao city centre, **B Accelerator Tower (BAT)** is one of the largest entrepreneurship and innovation hubs in southern Europe. Partners explored how a tower-format hub brings startups, corporates, public institutions, and education actors together under one roof, and how it supports founders through acceleration, mentorship, and access to capital.

Key takeaways

- **Physical density generates ecosystem:** concentrating startups, investors, training providers and public services in a single building creates serendipitous collaboration that fragmented services cannot replicate.
- **A model of public-private hybrid governance:** BAT illustrates how a hub can be sustained through a balanced mix of public anchoring and private dynamism.
- **An open opportunity for VET–hub bridges:** most innovation hubs remain weakly connected to VET schools; PULSE partners identified this as a strategic area for future cooperation.

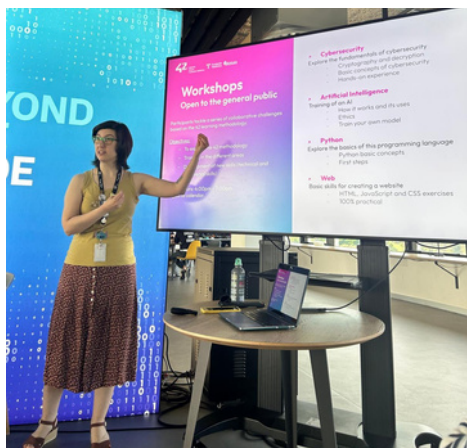


42 Urduliz – A Disruptive, Peer-to-Peer Programming Campus

The visit to **42 Urduliz** introduced participants to a radically different model of education: a tuition-free, fully peer-to-peer programming school with no teachers, no formal classes, and no fixed schedules. Students progress by solving projects collectively, with no traditional diplomas but with very high employability outcomes.

Key takeaways

- **Non-formal, peer-driven learning works:** in fields where intrinsic motivation and self-direction matter most, the 42 model demonstrates remarkable results.
- **A productive challenge to formal VET assumptions:** the model questions core elements of traditional VET – assessment, teacher roles, certification, scheduling – and invites reflection on which conventions are truly necessary.
- **Selective adaptation, not wholesale import:** while the 42 model is not directly transferable as a whole, components such as peer correction, project-based progression, and gamified learning paths can inspire pilot initiatives within partner VET schools.



DeustoKabi – University-Based Business Incubator

At the University of Deusto, partners visited **DeustoKabi**, the university's startup incubator, which supports students and graduates in transforming ideas into viable businesses. The visit highlighted the connection between higher education and entrepreneurial activity.

Key takeaways

- **A structured incubation model:** DeustoKabi offers mentoring, coworking space, and tailored services that could be partially adapted to VET centres seeking to develop their own incubation structures.
- **An education-to-venture pipeline:** the visit illustrated how universities can systematically channel student talent into venture creation, a pathway that VET centres can begin to develop.



Lan Ekintza – Bilbao City Entrepreneurship Service

Lan Ekintza is the public entrepreneurship and employment agency of Bilbao City Council. It provides advice, training, and support to local entrepreneurs and jobseekers, working closely with private sector actors and VET institutions.

Key takeaways

- **The municipal layer is critical:** city-level entrepreneurship services are closer to citizens than national or regional structures and play a complementary role that should not be overlooked.
- **VET–municipal alignment amplifies impact:** strong coordination between local government and VET schools multiplies the reach of both, an insight directly applicable to partner cities.



Palacio de la Diputación Foral de Bizkaia – Institutional Closing

The institutional visit to the **Provincial Council of Bizkaia** offered participants insight into Basque institutional architecture and the role of sub-national bodies in shaping VET, employment, and economic development policies.

Key takeaways

- **Sub-national institutions matter:** in the Basque case, the Provincial Council and the Basque Government are major actors in VET policy. Understanding this institutional architecture helps partners identify analogous actors at home.
- **A symbolic closing:** hosting the institutional moment in one of the territory's most emblematic buildings underlined the seriousness of the regional commitment to VET cooperation.



Cultural Immersion – Bilbao Old Town, Guggenheim, Nervión Estuary

A guided cultural tour through the **Casco Viejo**, the **Guggenheim Museum** area, and a boat tour along the **Nervión estuary** illustrated Bilbao's transformation from a declining industrial city into a global reference in urban regeneration and culture-driven economic development.

Key takeaways

- **A tangible case study in regeneration:** the Bilbao transformation showed how strategic public investment, culture, and urban regeneration can revitalise a regional economy – a lesson with strong resonance in partner regions facing similar transitions.
- **Trust-building beyond the classroom:** cultural moments strengthened informal exchange among the consortium and contributed to a stronger network of personal trust, an intangible but decisive asset for the project.



5. Key Insights of the Study Visit

- 01 Systemic regional strategies make the difference**
 The Basque model demonstrates that what works is not isolated programmes but a coherent regional architecture – TKNIKA, ETHAZI, IKASENPRESA, ENPRESARI-DEMA, STARTINNOVA – connecting schools, public agencies, universities, and the productive sector.
- 02 Methodology can be transferred, but not copied**
 ETHAZI and WBL are not off-the-shelf tools. They require teacher training, institutional buy-in, and contextual adaptation. Partners left with a clearer understanding of how to selectively adapt rather than replicate.
- 03 Diverse models broaden the menu of options**
 From a community VET centre (Calasanz) to a university incubator (DeustoKabi), an innovation tower (BAT), a disruptive non-formal campus (42 Urduliz), and a municipal service (Lan Ekintza), partners observed a wide spectrum of approaches – useful for diagnosing which gaps to fill in their own contexts.
- 04 Public-private partnership is structural, not optional**
 Across every visit, the recurring pattern was strong cooperation between public institutions and private actors. The lesson for partner countries is to actively build these bridges rather than wait for them to emerge.

Overall Conclusions

The Bilbao Capacity Building Week & Study Visit delivered concrete methodological tools – especially ETHAZI – exposure to a mature regional VET and entrepreneurship ecosystem, and deeper consortium cohesion. It complements the diagnostic work begun in Tunis and the methodological foundations laid in Morocco, equipping partners with a richer toolkit to pilot back home. The visit reaffirmed PULSE's vision of supporting innovative, inclusive, and demand-driven VET practices across the Mediterranean.



6. Ressources and contacts



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We warmly thank the Calasanz Santurtzi team for hosting the PULSE study visit in Spain, as well as for the excellent organization. Their professionalism and dedication were essential to the success of this meeting.



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