

Erasmus Employment Plus Project

Facilitator Pilot Report

IO5 / Implementation Pack for action learning pilots in each country

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Consortium Members:

15billion (Applicant Organisation)

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Introduction

The objective of this document is to provide the results of the pilots. This report is composed by partners reports from each country of the consortium. The aim of the report is to summarise the feedback from the facilitators of the pilot training on one hand, and the feedback from the participants, on the other. The report contains qualitative (feedback given by trainers) and quantitative part (feedback given by participants – guidance professionals).

The document gives guidance to the partners how to adjust the learning materials where necessary and to improve the overall quality of the Facilitators guidelines and the Workbook. The feedback is more general in places. More specific comments are included in the peer reviews done by partners and reflect their observations for every particular learning activity piloted by each of them.

The information gathered during the feedback exercises at the end of each session from every country is the basis of this document.

Outline of the pilot training and participants

The pilot training took place in 6 countries, with total number 102 practitioners who took part in the pilot trainings. 38 participants have completed Module 1 and Module 2, 33 completed Module 3 and Module 4, 31 participants have completed the entire training.

The initial duration of the piloting was designed to take half day per module, however due to the circumstances with the COVID-19 situation the adaptations were introduced by each partner as appropriate.

In each country the training took place at different dates as following:

Austria: Nov. 23rd 2020; Nov. 24th

United Kingdom: 16th July & 6th August (1st group), Module 1 session 29th Oct; Module 2 , 5th Nov; Module 3 , 12th Nov; Module 4, 26th Nov (2nd Group);Module 4,;

Spain: 19th of November 2020;

Bulgaria: 5th and 6th of November 2020;

Poland: 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th of November 2020.

All of the practitioners who participated in the piloting were employed and actively working with target group of low-qualified clients. The participants possess various qualifications related to their work and as well degree level qualifications.

As for experience gained or how many years they have worked in this field the spectrum is very broad, there were participants who have not been doing this for a long time - for example 6 months - 1 year, but there were also practitioners with 15+ years of experience. Some of them were quite senior, some with more junior roles, such as employability adviser or trainee.

The occupied positions listed by the participants were career counsellors, coaches, mediators as well as HR managers, directors of departments, psychologists, etc.

Some of the participants declared they work with clients with more specific issues, including Autistic clients, refugees, youth NEETS.

They all deal with job seekers who fall into the category of low skilled and low qualified.

The consequences of Covid-19 pandemic measures

The pandemic situation changed the initial plans rapidly. The original design of the materials and the piloting were for face-to-face training which is also the format the practitioners usually use.

The measures undertaken due to Covid-19 changed this from face-to-face to online training.

Everything had to go online suddenly, which was challenging for the partners in terms of recruitment of participants, adaptation of the learning materials and the piloting itself.

The partners reported difficulties related mainly to:

- Technical equipment of the both sides – trainers and participants
- Technical skills for both trainers and participants
- Flexibility and engagement issues, due to new situation
- More challenging to run interactive activities online and keep interest high, participation level high, attention and feedback ;
- The covid-19 restrictions have resulted in a large time lag.
- The trainer entrusted with the EEP workshops switched their training to online formats at the beginning of the year and have since been busy teaching other consultants and trainers the digital skills they need to continue their work.

However, some of the partners were also able to name a positive impact from the Corona virus crisis as way of development professionally in terms of better flexibility, improving skills for conducting online trainings, stress resilience and at the end of the day, improved self-confidence.

During the training various platforms and applications were used according preferences of the partners/trainers: MS Teams, Zoom, Miro to name a few. Additional materials such as

worksheets and handouts were uploaded in the platforms during the pilotings, and some files were sent via email.

Did you have to make alternative arrangements for the delivery of your piloting, if yes please explain here what measures you put in place and how well they worked:

Alternative arrangements for the delivery of the pilot training were undertaken by the partners:

- The alternative precautions were the complete conversion of the method workshops into a digital format and before that a modified 2-stage registration process for participation.
- In order to receive the necessary number of feedbacks for the EEP methods and thus the corresponding number of participants who also meet the technical requirements and digital skills, a very high number of interested parties were initially allowed to register with abif (n = 36).
- The workshop trainer has set up a further registration process in the "ZOOM" conference tool provided for the workshops to ensure that only participants with a current and complete software version via PC / laptop will participate in order to ensure a high level of activity.
- The main issues were making sure that participants in the piloting realised that the sessions would need to be recorded and we would require screenshots to add to the attendance sheets for evidence and of course could not collect signatures.
- Adapted some of the exercises to take into account the virtual nature of the delivery.
- Prepared for several scenarios as the circumstances didn't allow to focus on one scenario.
- If we had been able to deliver the training face to face, we were planning to do it in small groups in four sessions. Finally, we were invited to deliver online into one big group on one day. We struggled sometimes with the University internet connection as it wasn't stable, but we managed to interact almost as we were face to face.
- Since it was last minute cancellation (due to a new regulations from the Ministry of health, banning gatherings in training centers, etc) we had to send an email to all the participants + to phone call to some to ensure that everybody has received the new programme and place.
- The programme was reduced from one full day, to half a day, in order to keep the motivation high, and also because the interaction during an online training was less intensive in comparison to face-to-face setting so less time consuming. Also some the excersises were not adaptable for online setting so they dropped off.
- Some of the handouts needed to be put into ppt format, and some of the activities also needed to be adapted (peer discussions into group discussions).

The participants comments

What did participants like about the training materials?

- Exercises with groups discussions

- Working in groups
- Sharing professional experiences with other guidance practitioners
- Self-reflection
- Interactive (online) tools
- Nice atmosphere
- Handouts
- Links to additional materials
- Explanation how to run the exercises

What did participants **not like** about the training materials?

Most of the participants didn't have a negative feedbacks they found the exercises very helpful and saw it as a way to refresh their skills and they reflected really positive on their practice.

They found difficulties when inviting clients to talk about their trauma and distinguished between the role of guidance practitioner and counsellor/therapist.

Some of them think that one of the exercises had a long questionnaire. Given the time we had and the theory that was given before answering the questionnaire, made this one a though one to do. So, a lot of adjustments for the learning activity 'Pillars of Identity'.

The greatest negative tenor related to high-threshold formulations in some worksheets. The participants, especially the inexperienced, would have liked to get to know methods on themselves that can also be used 1: 1 in practice. This has often been criticized and is documented in the feedback on the modules.

On other hand some of the very experienced participants said that they had learned nothing new.

The approach to the methods with "Instruction Manual" + "Workbook" initially triggered some uncertainties among all participants. (NB author: this exact introduction to methods is unfortunately no longer practiced very often)

Some comments which needs attention

Some of the exercises were not recognised as appropriate for the target group of low qualified clients.

Some formulations in the German translation still have to be adapted or corrected. On the basis of the feedback, as support for counselors, thought can be given to making a recommendation in the exercises, which exercises are only suitable for counselors and which exercises can also be used directly with clients.

The materials need a full proof read in English as some of the translations are not accurate or direct translation does not make sense in English.

Sometimes there are unnecessary options in exercises and these can be 'streamlined' particularly the VARK exercise.

It would also be useful to explore more fully the use of the reflective sheets and if these should be adapted at all.

Identifying competences: The "my qualities" and "making competencies visible" materials are not included. If these materials are not available any longer, the exercise needs to be redone.

WOOP, HARD, SMART: Needs to apply more strict rules that lead into the activity goal. At the end of the exercise, some of the participants were missing the goal of the activity.

My learning ability: Needs to be rethought as some instructions are missing.

Exercise:

- Hurdles
- Overcoming obstacles
- It's my choice
- The cards are reshuffled
- What boost my energy and what drains my energy?

The duration of the pilot training

There were diverse answers to the question if the duration was right.

- Many of the participants would have liked longer sessions and agree it would have been nice not to feel so rushed and cover more of the exercises in each module.
- Piloting should not be longer - 4 hours for each module was enough.
- Everybody agreed that the timing was the right one, and are looking forward for face-to-face session.
- As a consensus opinion, time given to do the activities/ exercises was too short. As a facilitator, the time felt a little bit short, but it allowed having dynamic exercises and keep everyone attention on the materials.

The trainers comments

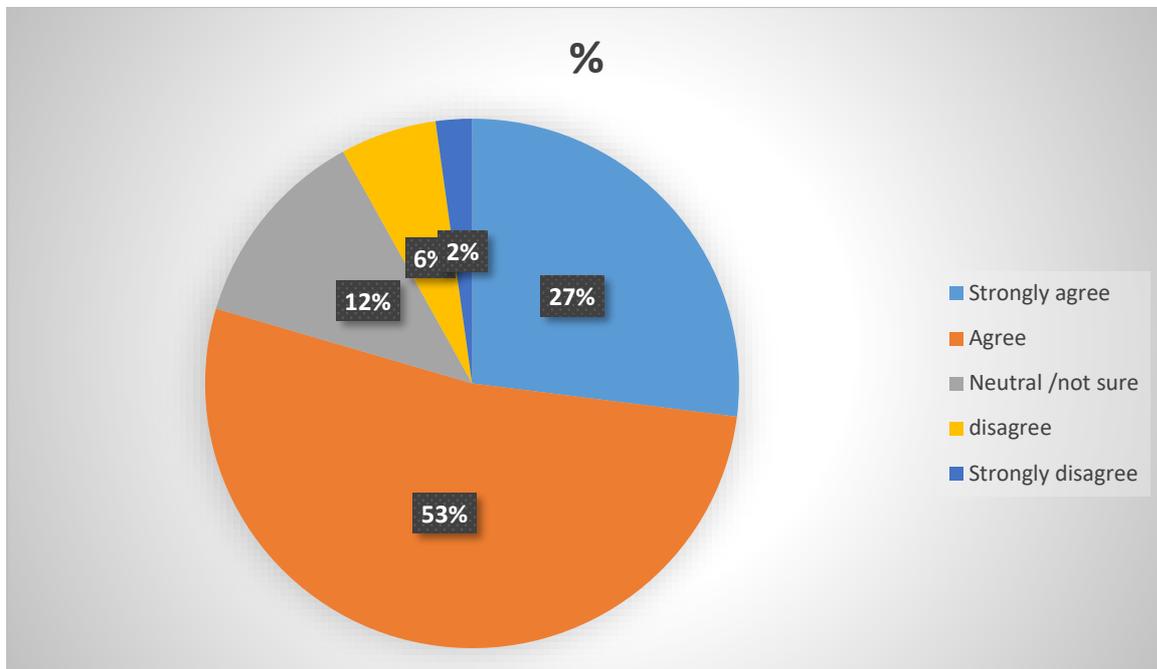
The technical issues are crucial – they can both facilitate and ruin the process. In our case (Bulgaria) some of the participants didn't have cameras, and few didn't have mics which was a serious obstacle for the dynamics.

One of the biggest consideration for improvement is the guidelines in a facilitators guide. In a facilitators guide you need to give more frames for times and sometimes more theory than just a link to deepen your information. There were a few learning activities by which you can't facilitate

them just as they are now with the given information in the facilitators guide. Its fine to add ‘links’ for more information if you want to. But the basics need to be in the guide lines written for the facilitator. As well as a suggested time frame. There can be a note that adding information will expand the time needed for the learning activity. A facilitator needs to do his own preparation anyway, but especially for the less experienced facilitators we want these guidelines also to be useful, I think. (The Netherlands)

Quantitative analysis

I feel that I have gained knowledge after the completion of this piloting.

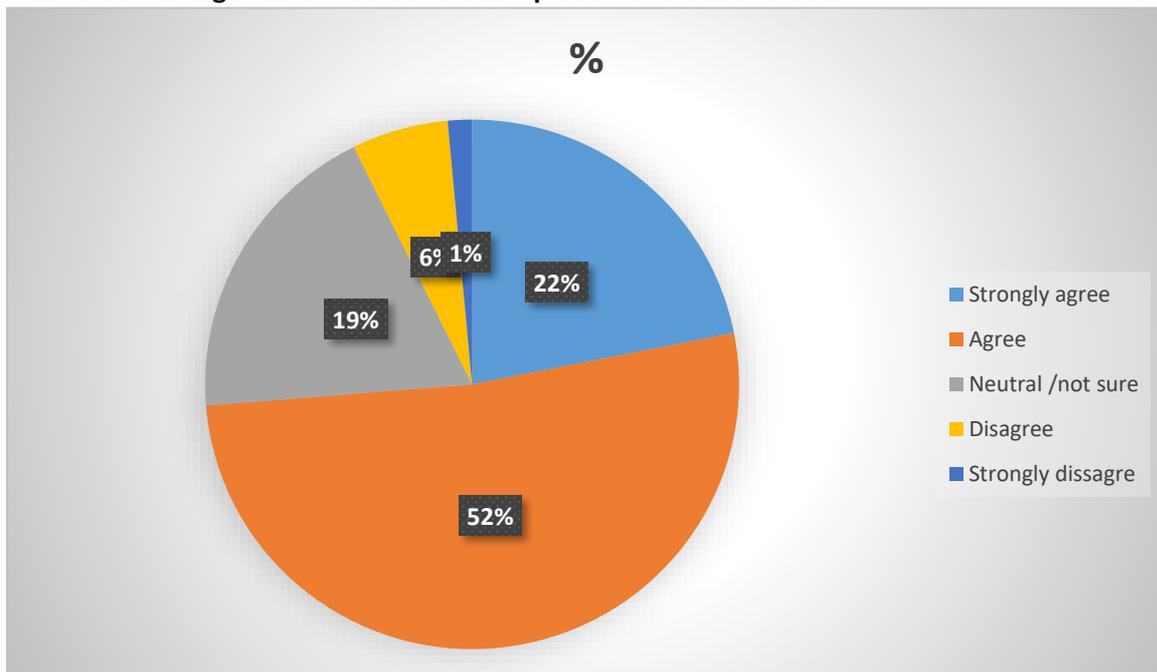


80% of the participants who completed the survey noted that they either strongly agreed or agreed that they have gained knowledge that could be useful to them in the future for their practice.

However, there is a small process (8%) that does not agree with and thinks that they have not learned anything new or that this is something they already knew and it has not been useful to him.

12% of the participants stayed neutral to their opinion.

I feel that I have gained skills after the completion of these exercises.



Again, most of the participants (74%) who completed the survey noted that they either strongly agreed or agreed that they have gained skills after the completion of these exercises that could be useful to them in the future for their practice.

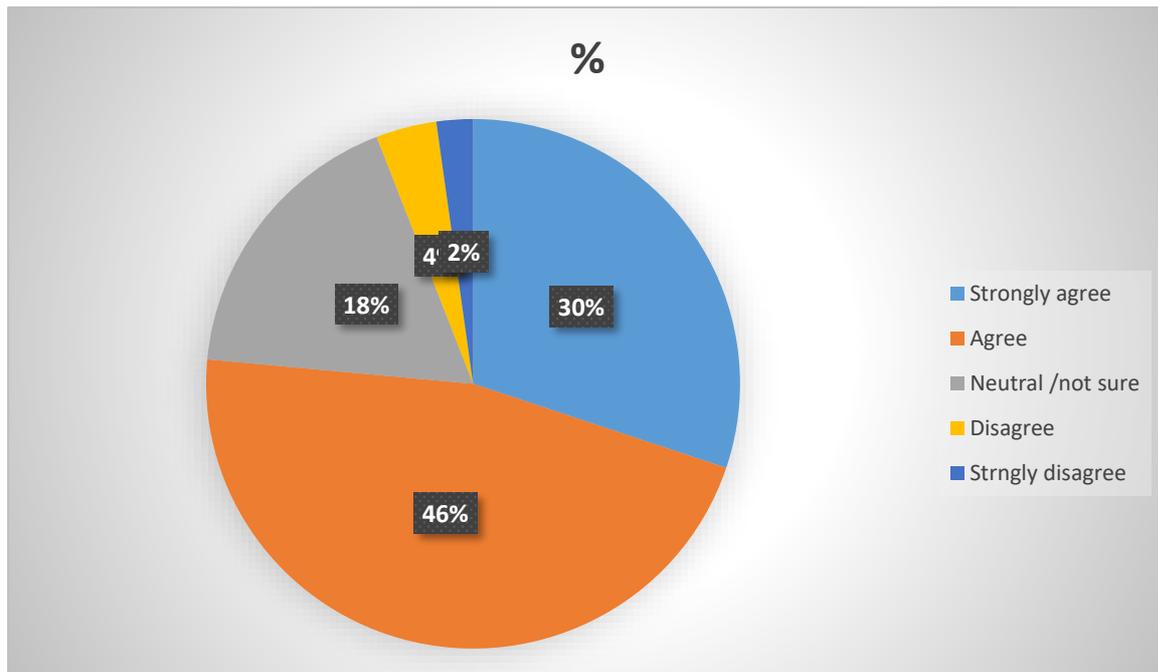
The participants really liked the interactive nature of learning and listening to each other's experiences about how others dealt with different issues and experiences in their own practice. They think that the thinking activities were interesting how they would approach differently based on their experience.

They liked the fact that each exercise provided an opportunity to take away ideas and possibly valuable resources that they could use or adapt for their own work.

7% of the participants who are not satisfied with the exercises believe that when the training is online, the cases they are working on should be more visualized.

Some of the participants with negative answers believe that more time is needed for each exercise. Because they felt that they had learned more during reflection than in group activities and discussions.

The activities developed are appropriate for developing my competences as a guidance practitioners.

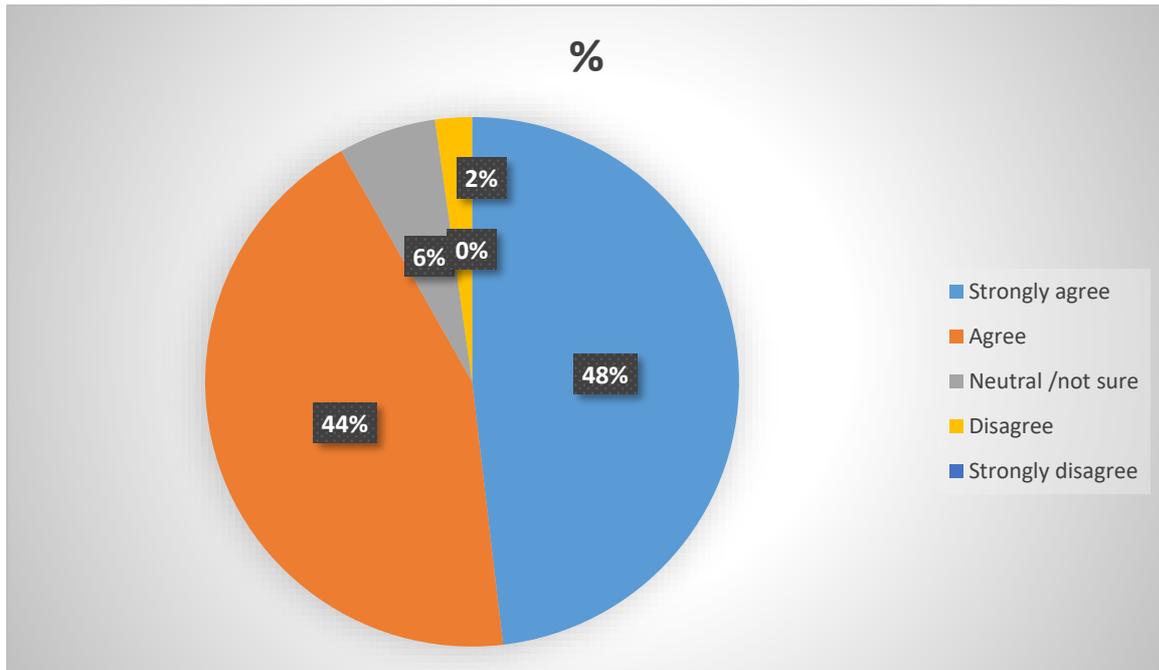


The highest percentage (76%) agrees that the activities developed are appropriate for developing their competences as a guidance practitioners. They found that it would help them to consider their own practice and reconsider how they could approach certain situations in the future, what other options and ways are there.

18% have remained neutral on the question with no further explanation.

6% of the participants disagree that they have developed appropriate competences, and the issue with the time left for the implementation of the tasks is again mentioned. Participants feel that the execution time is too short and have the feeling that they are doing things too fast and fail to process the information to execute things differently and do it automatically.

Action learning and self-directed learning activities were well balanced across the thematic area.



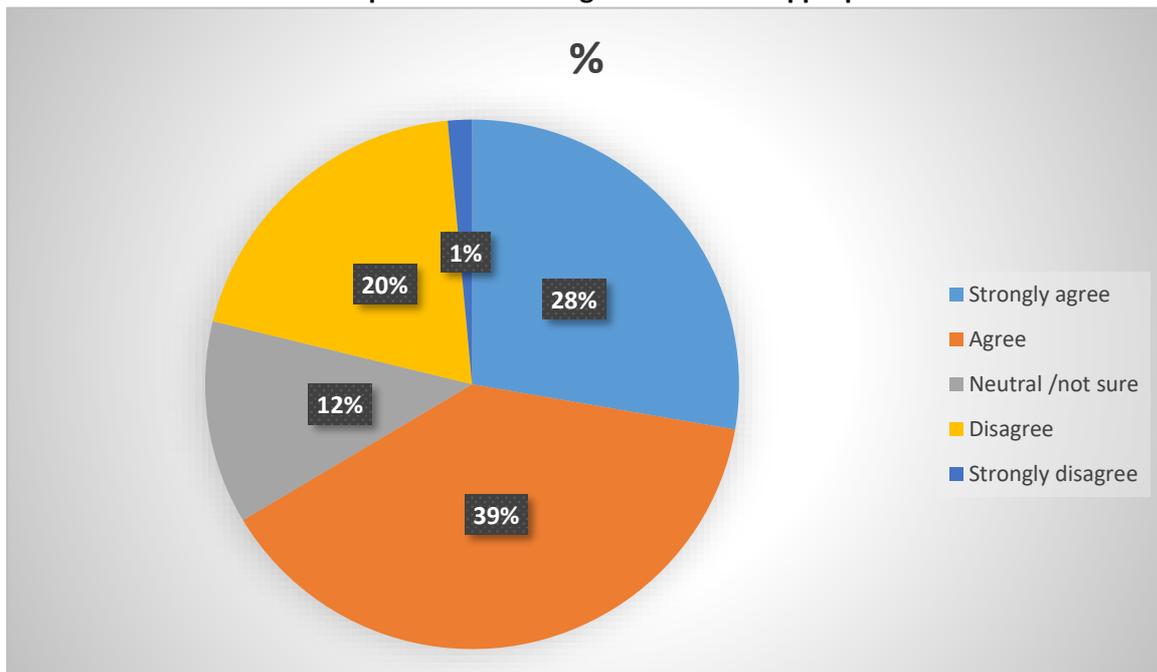
A very large part (92%) either completely agree or agree with the fact that the learning activities were well balanced.

Specifically, they believe that they have gone through a conscious process of thinking about work stress and health problems (Module 4). The coaches gave them time to discuss and listen.

They enjoyed the visual element of measuring the basics and judging whether it kept them balanced in all areas of their lives.

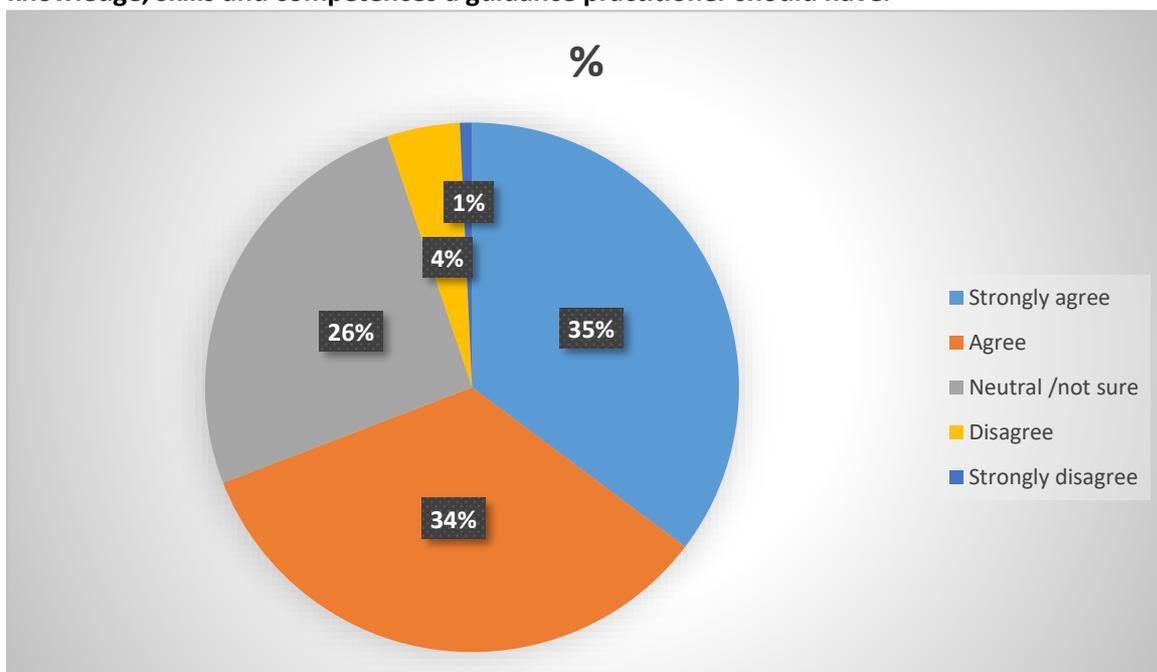
A very small percentage disagree (2%), and this is because the exercises that were given to do on their own they think it would have been more interesting to have done in the group.

The time allowed for the completion of learning activities was appropriate.



Despite the challenges of online learning, they 67% believe that time has been well allocated. However, 21% believe that the time spent was not well distributed. The majority point to the lack of time for the exercises as main issue.

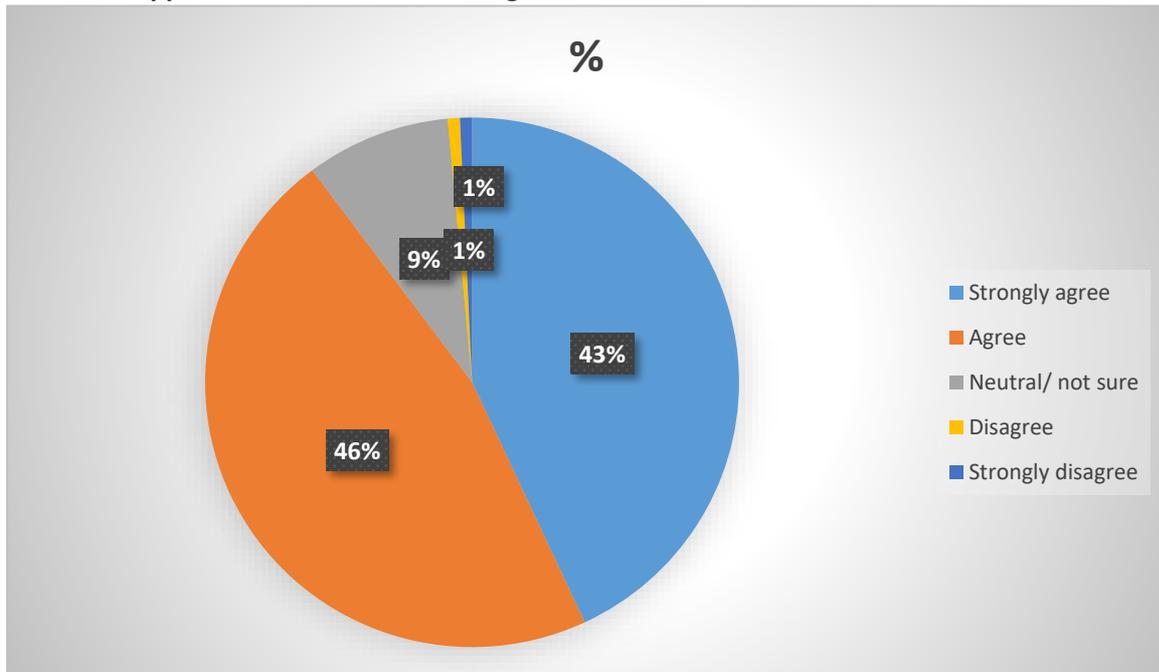
The learning outcomes identified within this thematic area present a holistic approach of the knowledge, skills and competences a guidance practitioner should have.



69% of those who completed the survey agree that the learning outcomes identified within this thematic area present a holistic approach of the knowledge, skills and competences a guidance practitioner should have.

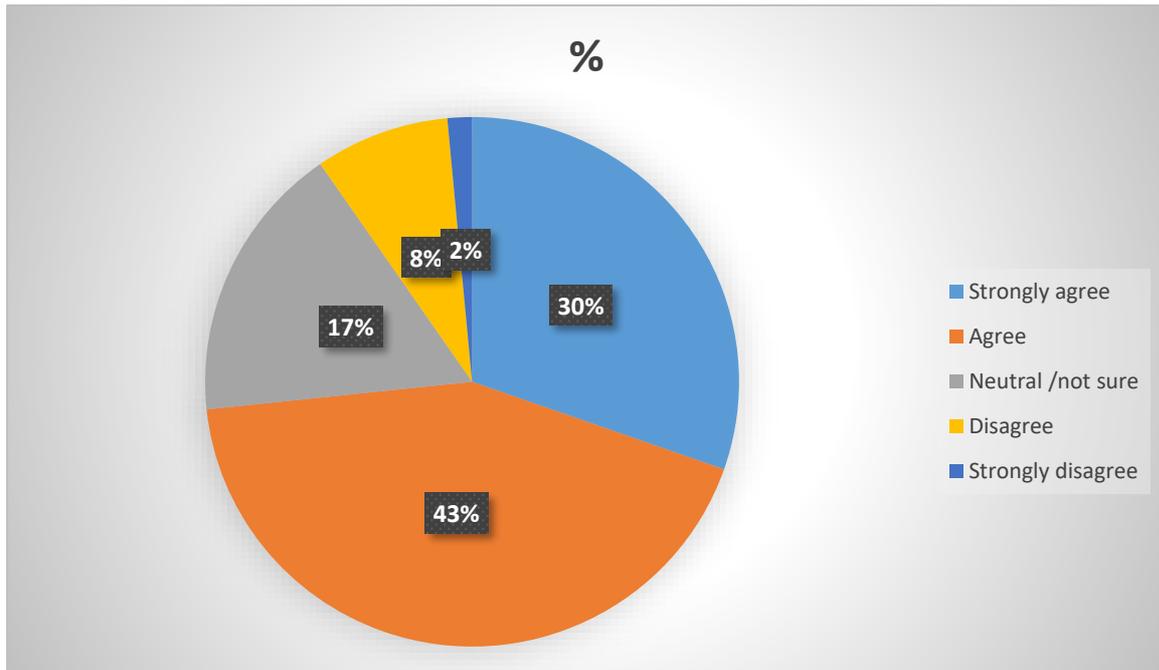
However, 26% of them, did not express their opinion. There are 5% who disagree with this statement.

I liked the approach of the action learning activities.



On this pie we see that 89% liked the approach of the learning activities and 11% in total are those without whom they are neutral and those who do not agree or simply did not like the approach.

The learning activities prepared me well for supporting clients who are low skilled and low qualified.

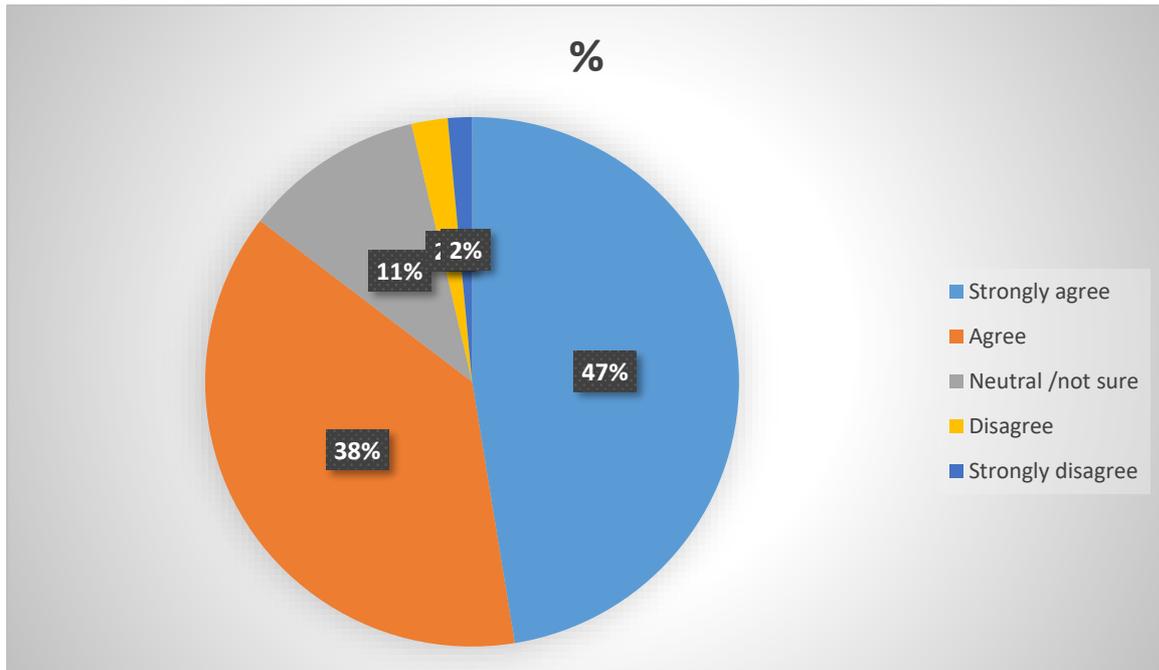


73% think that the training activities have prepared them well to support low-skilled and low qualified clients.

They liked that during the exercises there were sometimes debates that reminded them and allowed them to see different perspectives, that there are many external factors that clients may face that they may not be aware of. E.g. lack of support and understanding from family members.

Those who disagree think that it is very difficult to get a client to talk about their problems or injuries, and it is even more difficult when they start talking and you have to differentiate things / roles of counselor and therapist.

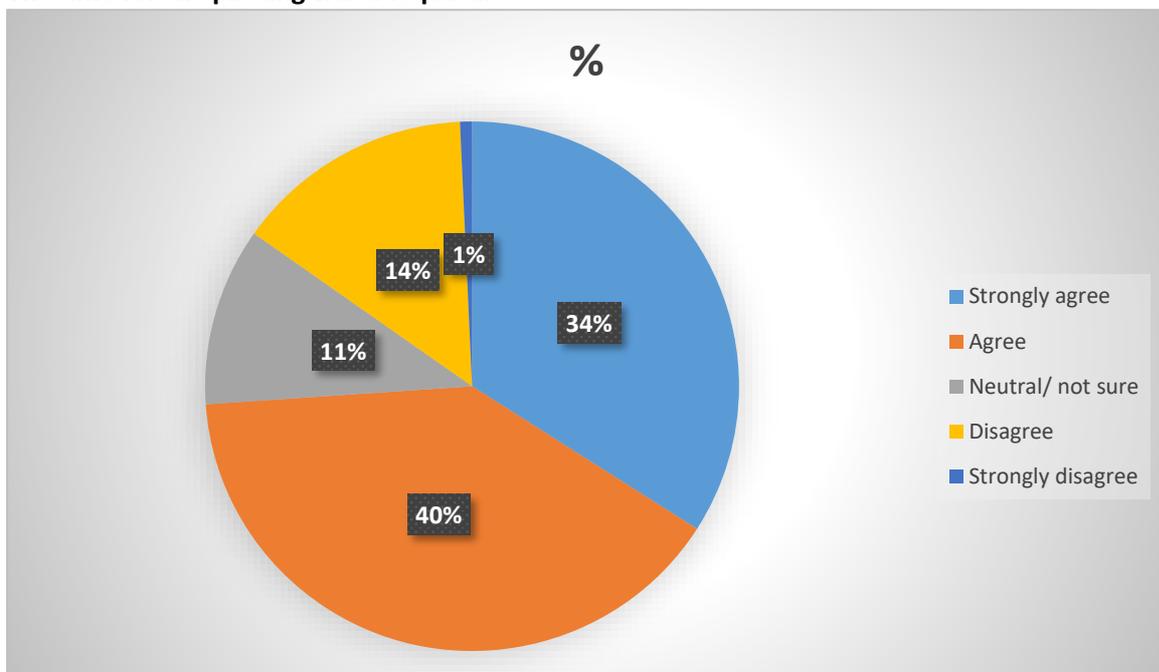
The communication and information provided prior to starting the pilot was sufficient for my needs.



85% from the participant who took part of the piloting answered positively to the question if the communication and information provided before the start of the pilot was sufficient for their needs.

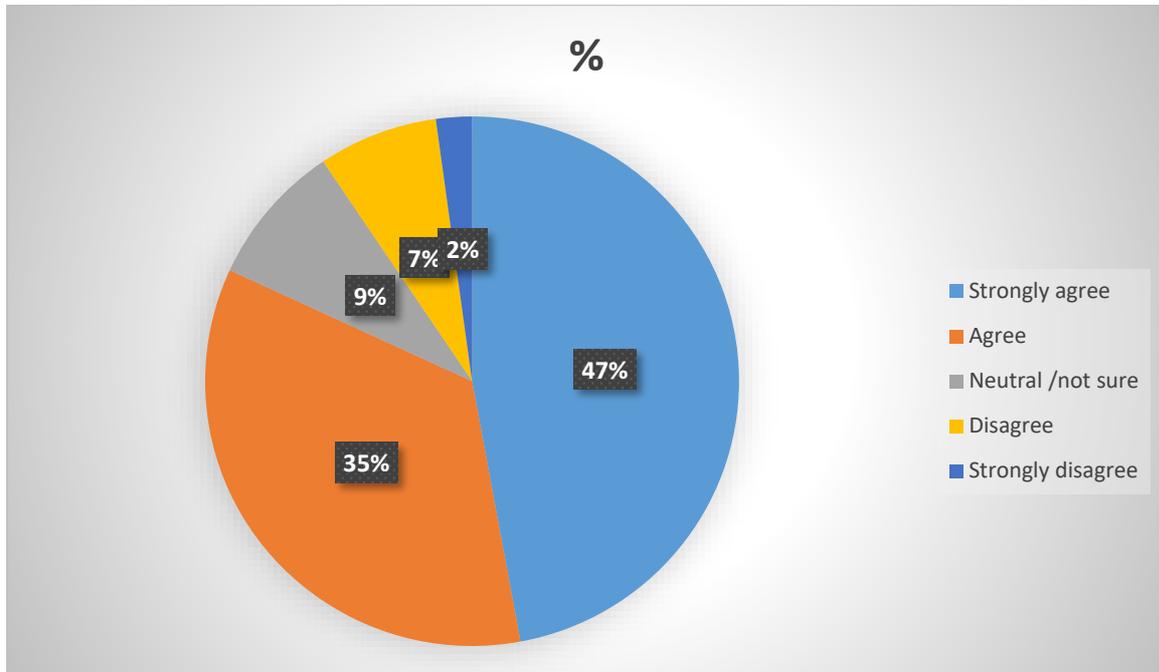
11% said they had no opinion on the matter, and 4% disagreed and thought that information and communication were not enough for their needs.

The time for the piloting was adequate.



73% of the participants think that the time for the pilot activities was completely adequate and well distributed. 11% are neutral in this respect. The remaining 15% disagree and believe that time could have been better and more adequately divided.

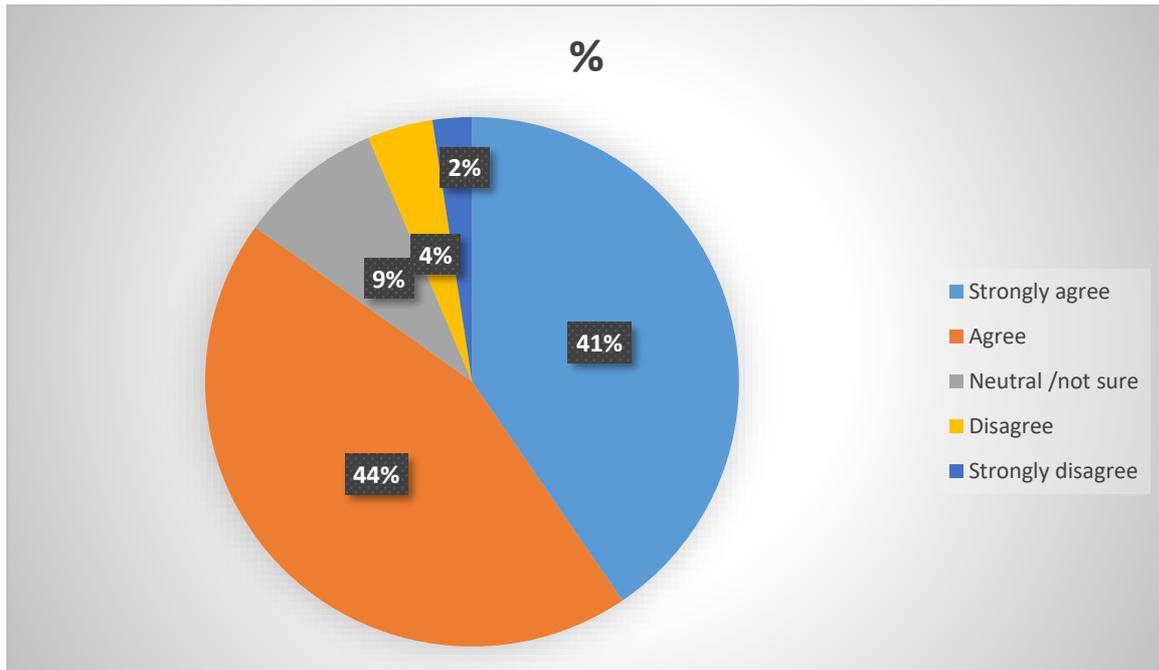
The communication during the piloting period was effective.



82% of the participants agree on this question. They think that the communication during the pilot was very good and useful, it affected them well and they saw the views of other specialists their professional field. They were very pleased with the exercises in which they shared their experience with others in an open and supportive way. They liked that they could share it with people who had been in similar situations, or at least could understand it, which gave them the opportunity to be honest.

9% have no opinion on the matter. The remaining 9% disagree because they think that the exercises they have to do as a group have not learned / understood as much as the ones they had to do on their own.

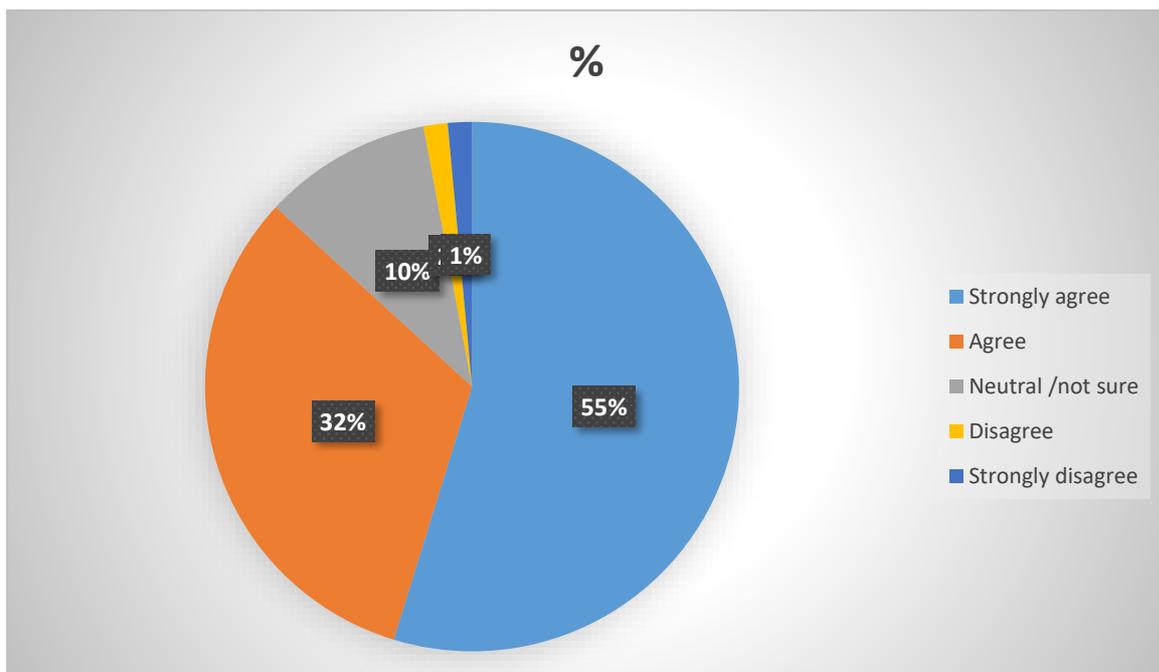
The materials provided were of a good quality for the piloting phase.



85% of the participants agreed that the submitted materials were of good quality for the pilot phrase. They found the materials interesting, they liked that there was group work and discussions, interactive tools and most of all a nice atmosphere.

9% have no opinion on the matter. The remaining 6% disagree, looking at the feedback comments, we see that the reason for this opinion is that either the translation was not good, the questionnaires were too long or the time to complete the task was too short.

In general, I have enjoyed the pilot activity for this work area.



87% are satisfied and have enjoyed the activities that were included in the pilot activity. They think that all the training has been useful and in one way or another they have learned something new and broadened their vision and learned how to deal with difficult situations. 10% have no opinion on the matter.

3% disagree and are of the opinion that they have not learned anything new and do not think that group exercises have helped them in any way.