

REPORT OF THE EXCHANGE WORKSHOP BETWEEN NAVARRE AND THE FRENCH DEPARTMENT OF PYRÉNÉES-ATLANTIQUES ON THE INTEGRATED PROVISION OF ACTIVATION SERVICES FOR GUARANTEED INCOME / ACTIVE SOLIDARITY INCOME RECIPIENTS

21 November 2017

Pamplona

1. Background: ERSISI Project and Ley Foral 15/2016 of Navarre

This exchange workshop was conducted within the framework of the project entitled **Enhancing the Right to Social Inclusion through Service Integration** (hereinafter, ERSISI) promoted by the Department for Social Rights of the Government of Navarre and financed by the EC under the EaSI Programme.

ERSISI proposes to test in two areas in the region of Navarre (Tudela and Western Sakana valley) a formula for the integrated provision of social and employment services based on pairs of case handlers with a multi-disciplinary profile providing individualised support to beneficiaries of the project, mostly beneficiaries of the Guaranteed Income scheme.

The project has strong links with the development and operational implementation of Ley Foral 15/2016 of 11 November 2016 governing the rights to Social Inclusion and Guaranteed Income. With this Law the financial amounts of the GI have been increased and the personal circumstances and the period during which beneficiaries are entitled to the GI have been extended.

As regards the exercise of the right to social inclusion, the following sequence is foreseen:

Co-diagnosis → Personalised programme → Social inclusion convention

The Law provides for a set of employment incentive mechanisms, such as employment incentive measures and mechanisms for the temporary suspension of the GI. Further additional guarantees have been introduced in cases of infringement.

2. Objective of the workshop

The main purpose of the exchange workshop was to give experts from the regional and local authorities of Navarre (operating in the fields of social rights, social services and employment) the chance to reflect on and to draw conclusions from the experience of service providers in charge of managing the *Revenu de Solidarité Active* (or “RSA”, i.e. the Active Solidarity Income) and the activation measures implemented in the French Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

3. Participants

The profile of participants was in general that of experts and technical personnel from the authorities having competences in the field of social services and employment in the Chartered Community of Navarre and in the French Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques relating to GI or RSA.

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A) Participants from Navarre:

- Technical personnel from the Basic Social Services departments from Tudela and Alsasua, as well as from other municipalities.
- Technical personnel from the Employment agencies of Tudela and Alsasua.
- Mixed teams of case handlers (ERSISI).
- Technical personnel from the Social Rights Department of the Government of Navarre and the Employment Service of Navarre.
- Personnel from the Public University of Navarre (UPNA) involved in the evaluation of ERSISI.

In all 37 people participated in the event.

B) The Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques secured the presence of technical personnel with proven experience and direct knowledge on the contents of the workshop.

- Julien Latour, Director for Cross-border Cooperation of the Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques.
- Marie-Christine Nigou, Integration Manager.
- Valérie Malavolti, Head of Service from Ustaritz.
- Muriel Etchepare, Local promoter of employment initiatives from Hendaye.
- Céline Dublanc, Social Service Assistant, specialising in RSA.

4. Contents

The contents covered during the workshop were based on three axes:

- Overview of the institutional framework and organisation of social policies in France and in the Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques.
- Access system to Guaranteed Income.
- Tools for granting people access to the scheme, socio-occupational responses and paths.

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5. Methodology

The workshop followed an interactive methodology, combining presentations by speakers with interventions and questions by the audience. Each of the three content axes was approached during the morning session as follows:

- A brief intervention by experts from the Social Rights Department of the Government of Navarre or from ERSISI, highlighting the main issues currently being discussed in Navarre regarding the implementation of GI and the right to social inclusion.
- Interventions by the French counterparty, describing the framework and practice, the lessons learned and certain critical points identified in the implementation of their model.

During the afternoon session, after lunch, the personnel directly related to ERSISI discussed certain practical aspects of the French experience that may be inspiring for Navarre.

6. Summary of the morning session

TABLE 1: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND ORGANISATION OF SOCIAL POLICIES

Julien Latour, Director for Cross-border Cooperation and Marie-Christine Nigou, Integration Manager, presented the framework of the institutional aspects of RSA and integration-oriented actions.

In France the central government retains competences on employment policies, whereas regions enjoy competences on education and vocational training. The “départements” (as administrative sub-divisions of the regions) have competences on so-called integration policies: management of RSA and accompaniment measures for labour-market integration.

In the domain of economic transfers, there are three key benefits:

- Elderly people (*Allocation personnalisée d'autonomie*)
- Persons with disabilities (*Prestation de compensation du handicap*) (being supplementary benefits to State aids).
- Active Solidarity Income (RSA): addressed to people over 25 with no income or people under 25 with dependent children. It is not a universal or permanent benefit, but is coupled to accompaniment measures for integration, the objective being allowing people to leave the RSA scheme. It is based on an integration contract and each recipient is assigned a single reference person once the recipient has received guidance and has participated in the making of their own diagnosis.

The Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques has a multiannual Integration Programme for 2017-2021 on social and employment measures that sets out the principles of said policy. The approach of this Programme seeks to put in contact three fields: social, employment, housing. For this purpose, they rely on multidisciplinary teams as a key element to tackle complex issues in a coordinated fashion. Since 2017 the department is divided into 7 territories pursuant to a new form of spatial organisation. Each of them relies on multidisciplinary teams, which the director of the territory is in charge of. Departmental authorities have policy managers whose task is to secure the implementation of the integration policy. These managers operate in support of the territories.

Main profiles within the aforementioned multidisciplinary teams:

- Multipurpose reference persons (social work).
- Financial and family advisers who focus on financial issues whilst paying special attention to preventing/reducing debt.
- Employment Initiative Community Workers (ALIE) who deal with labour-market integration projects with a strong focus on increasing the employability of RSA recipients.
- Nursing (may also be appointed as single reference persons). Part of RSA recipients have few employment prospects due to health problems. These professionals provide health accompaniment (physical and psychological).
- Further profiles in charge of administrative aspects.

Efforts are being currently made to enhance the connection (“bridging”) between reference persons.

Employment is in principle a substantial concern for all the people intervening in the programme. Not necessarily an obligation, but an objective to be pursued. However, as some people are so remote from employment, priority is given in such cases to other social aspects.

In terms of approach of the intervention, certain key elements were highlighted:

- Emphasis is put on getting the person concerned to play a leading role in their own path.
- Efforts are made to get a full picture of all the services and tools available to the person concerned, for sometimes they do not fully grasp the meaning of the integration contract.
- Efforts are made to increase preventive measures (i.e. preventing their entering the RSA scheme) as one of the objectives of the policy. For this purpose it is necessary to reinforce the partnership with the agents who specialise in this type of prevention

TABLE 2: ACCESS TO GUARANTEED INCOME

Marie-Christine Nigou, Integration Manager, presented in this section aspects regarding the preparatory work and subsequent guidance under the RSA.

The first contact with RSA can be made through many public bodies and associations, and the application may be filed online. The preparatory stage is made by especially commissioned institutions. The programme seeks to get institutions specialised according to different problems or profiles.

RSA is a right to which people with no income are entitled to, but it entails certain duties too. “Access is granted not for you to stay – but to leave”.

Departmental authorities are not only in charge of managing benefits – they must have an integration programme too. The programme is used to finance supplementary and sometimes specific actions (e.g. payment of driving licence fees, etc.) as well as subsidies granted to associations. The territories identify needs, upon which decisions are made regarding eventual projects/responses and then a financial assessment is made on the possibility of implementing them. The challenge is to align demands with needs. Selection criteria prioritise closeness to the territory and their providing solutions.

A budget line is made available for “integration projects” although a priori nothing may be settled yet. This allows to use the funds flexibly for activities that may come up (“*boite à outils*” or toolbox).

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There is an “activity bonus” for workers with very low levels of income, although it is handled by the State and has no links to the RSA, being an income supplement. There is also a simplified system which is directly managed through tax incentives.

There is also a special committee which makes decisions on the granting of RSA in exceptional cases when the applicant does not meet all the requirements. The committee also makes decisions regarding bans and suspensions in case of infringement, and it requests the refund of any RSA unduly received. Fraud is estimated to be 3%. No person can be banned from the scheme without being summoned before the committee. The committee should include representatives of users, although difficulties are recognised in this respect – albeit courts have ruled that this question must be solved.

All the actions are subject to evaluation. However, it is recognised that only minor progresses have been made as regards assessing the impact of the actions on the actual final leaving of the RSA scheme by beneficiaries.

TABLE 3: ACCESS TO THE SCHEME, responsES AND PATHS

During this table several presentations were made by Valérie Malavolti, Head of Service from Ustaritz, Muriel Etchepare, Local promoter of employment initiatives (ALIE) from

Hendaye, and Céline Dublanc, Social Services Assistant, specialising in RSA. The main topics covered from their respective practices were guidance, diagnosis and integration paths.

There are several levels of GUIDANCE provided by professionals with different profiles within the “guidance cell”:

- people who are very remote from the labour market: when there are far too many obstacles a social worker is appointed.
- Guidance for employment: when the person concerned is autonomous they are referred to the *Pôle Emploi* (or “Employment Pole” under the French Public Employment Service)
- Guidance for employment with need for local reinforcement: in partnership with associations.
- Socio-occupational guidance: Provided by the local promoter (ALIE).
- Nursing: when there are health problems.

Roughly speaking, 60% of the guidance provided is of occupational nature, whereas 40% is social.

The guidance is agreed and provided with the person concerned. A guidance sheet is filled out where the person in question can include their own comments. The sheet is then signed and submitted to a reference person (whether a professional within the guidance cell, or the local government or a private body) that will act as single reference person. After the contract is signed, the law requires that the person concerned be followed up on a bimonthly basis.

When social work guidance is the option, the service focuses on basic needs: housing, health, etc. From this level specialised interventions may be occasionally required (ALIE, nursing, etc.). The guidance stage seeks to identify the person's competences and their shortages, in order to reinforce such competences and to try to overcome eventual barriers in those aspects where weaknesses are identified.

The diagnosis describes the situation, identifies the rights and duties; plus, RSA recipients are asked to write down their own objectives and the actions they wish to complete. The social worker describes what the public service is going to do regarding the recipient's personal objectives. Other professionals may also participate in this process for certain specialised aspects.

Where the profiles are very remote from the labour market and the situations comprise diverse problems, a stronger emphasis is put in the question of confidence. Sometimes this involves working on “self-esteem” in groups of four people led by a coach. This activity has yielded good results.

Another activation programme relies on hiring by way of small jobs (e.g. “green jobs”) to help develop certain competences.

One of the problems that come up over and over again is the need for child care. To tackle this issue contacts are made and maintained with all the actors concerned with child care.

Efforts are made so that no more than 3-4 months elapse since the information stage and the preparatory and guidance stages. The integration contract is signed for a maximum term of 18 months; however it may be renewed if the person concerned is still in difficulty.

The ratio of cases handled by reference persons is 30 per each reference person in the social field. For ALIE, the ratio may sometimes amount to 100, although this number is deemed excessive.

The Directorate for Integration of the Département has no gender- or population-group-specific approach, the main approach being individual-oriented. Gender policies are mostly managed by the State and the CAF (or “Caisses d'allocation familiale” - Family Allowances Funds).

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7. Conclusions of the afternoon panel

The participants in the afternoon panel held first a brainstorming session on the aspects of the French experience they considered more significant or inspiring regarding the implementation of the Guaranteed Income scheme and the development of ERSISI in Navarre.

- High degree of coordination between fields of work.
- The Guidance Cell as one-stop shop of a local nature.
- Application of different intervention approaches – from social work for people being more remote from the labour market to the integration promoters (ALIE) for people with actual prospects.
- The existence of different structured paths, each with their own resources depending on the level and nature of the need of the person concerned.

- The importance given to having one single reference person for each person concerned.
- The different techniques used to draw RSA recipients closer to companies: meeting between companies and RSA recipients to make contacts and hand out Cvs; sponsorships, individualised mentoring, etc.
- Preventive work. It is proposed that the GI scheme in Navarre integrates a preventive approach.
- Different forms of ACCOMPANIMENT should be envisaged.
- The multi-disciplinary committee which is set up before the end of the term of the benefit – including the actual recipients.
- The possibility for single reference persons to come from private bodies, which could be replicated in Navarre with certain NGOs.
- Different access points to apply for aids and the fact that the application for the benefit can be filed online.
- The existence of immediate aids facilitating employability.

Then a debate was held on three aspects:

▶ **The coordination and embedding of case handlers within the local institutional context**

This is considered a rather complex issue and it is hoped that the practical unfolding of the project will lead to a sustainable model. This is important, as ERSISI is a testing project and therefore the crux of it is not so much how coordination is currently arranged but rather to secure that all the project's achievements are not lost following its completion. It is necessary to obtain lessons that may be replicated in other areas without the need to generate new structures. ERSISI must be oriented to simplification and effectiveness.

▶ **Co-diagnosis**

The debate helped highlight certain advantages of co-diagnosis as it is being implemented under ERSISI:

- Greater involvement by the persons concerned in their own diagnosis.
- Areas for improvement are identified more easily.
- Helping people to have greater expectations.

How do we get a person involved in their diagnosis? By getting the person concerned to formulate a positive picture of themselves and their potential. Plus, having two complementary profiles (case handlers) perform the diagnosis makes it easier for the person concerned to become more aware of their reality and their situation.

As regards the tools used for co-diagnosis purposes, it was highlighted that their application is “generous” - in the sense that few people end up with a high vulnerability level. The employability tool is under way and areas for improvement are being identified.

► **Proposals to offer specific activation responses**

- Immediate activation: choice of activities fro activation, imaging, walks to get to know the resources available at local level and bite-sized information.
- “Occupational tastings” allowing for a first contact with different occupations.
- Involving the business network:
 - Raising the awareness of businesses on the advantages of hiring GI recipients and having responses in store regarding “what they may ask from us”.
 - Advancing towards common references with companies (“we tell businesspeople the same this from different viewpoints”).
- CONTINGENCIES FUND: Building on a technical and professional assessment, the fund may be allocated flexibly to a variety of immediate needs felt by the persons concerned and that will have an impact on their employability. For instance:
 - 1:1/group training.
 - Individual/collective transport.
 - Aesthetic aspects (glasses/teeth).
 - Group child care.
 - Mentoring for retaining employment.

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— Coaching.

In **CONCLUSION** to the panel, certain short-term **CHALLENGES** were identified in the horizon of ERSISI:

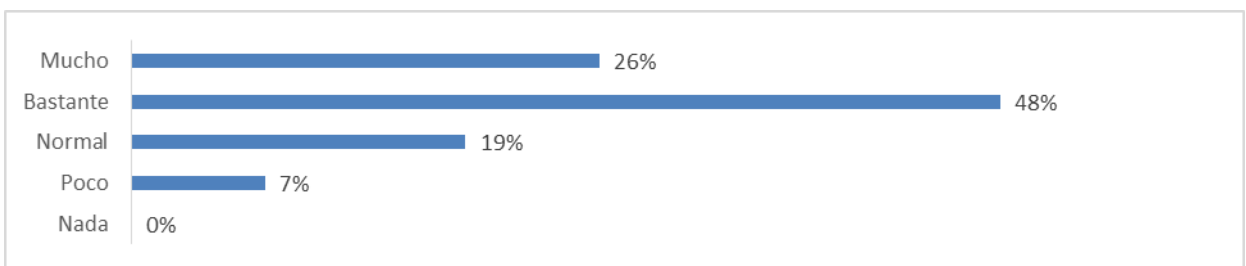
- The know-how of case handlers is acknowledged and highlighted, as well as the impetus they have given to the project. However it is deemed convenient for case managers to obtain a little more institutional support to maintain such impetus.
- Working in actual and effective connection with the business world.
- Bigger efforts need to be made to adapt the range of training.
- Streamlining and coordinating subsidies managed both by Social Inclusion and the Employment Service of Navarre to support the socio-occupational integration of population groups with special difficulties.

8. Evaluation

My expectations regarding the reason why I have participated in this seminar have been met (n=27)

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Mucho → A lot
 Bastante → Quite
 Normal → Average
 Poco → Little
 Nada → Not at all

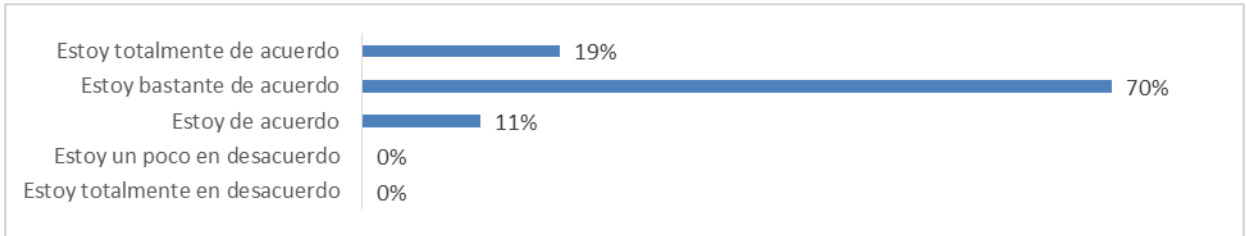


The objectives set forth in the programme have been met (n=27)

Estoy totalmente de acuerdo → I fully agree
 Estoy bastante de acuerdo → I quite agree
 Estoy de acuerdo → I agree

Estoy un poco en desacuerdo
Estoy totalmente en desacuerdo

→ I quite disagree
→ I fully disagree

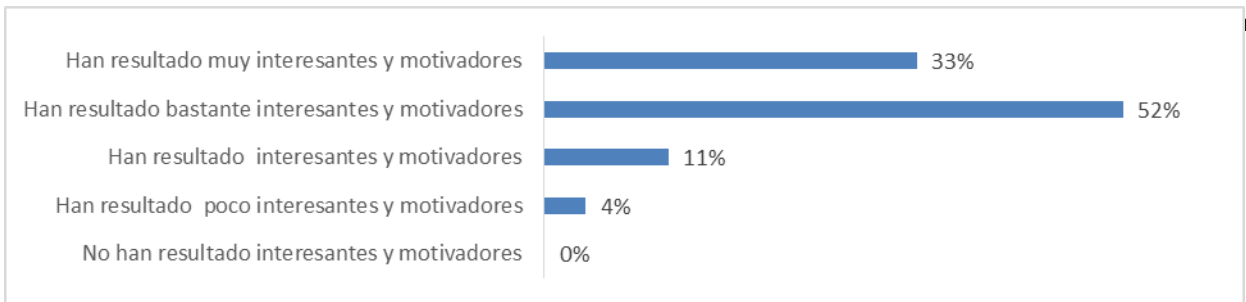


The contents developed have been interesting and motivating (n=27)

Han resultado muy interesantes y motivadores
Han resultado bastante interesantes y motivadores
Han resultado interesantes y motivadores
Han resultado poco interesantes y motivadores
No han resultado interesantes y motivadores

→ Very interesting and motivating
→ Quite interesting and motivating
→ Interesting and motivating
→ Hardly interesting and motivating

Not interesting and motivating at all



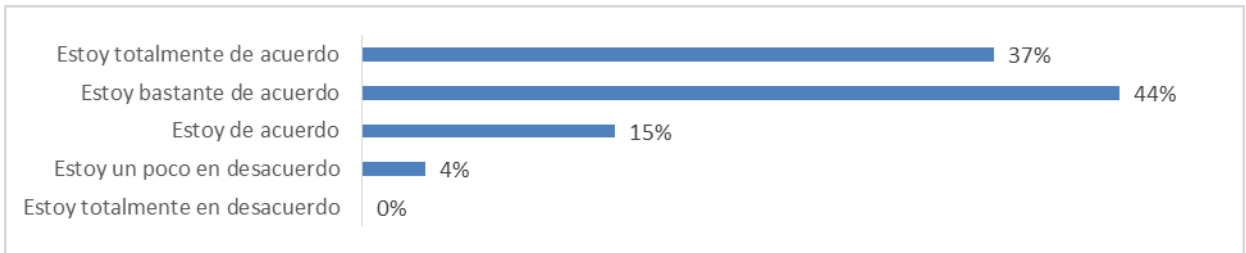
The issues covered are useful for my job (n=26)

Mucho → Very
Bastante → Quite
Algo → A bit
Un poco → Hardly
No → No



The round table on the advances and prospects of ERSISI has been interesting because of the contents and the methodology used (n=27)

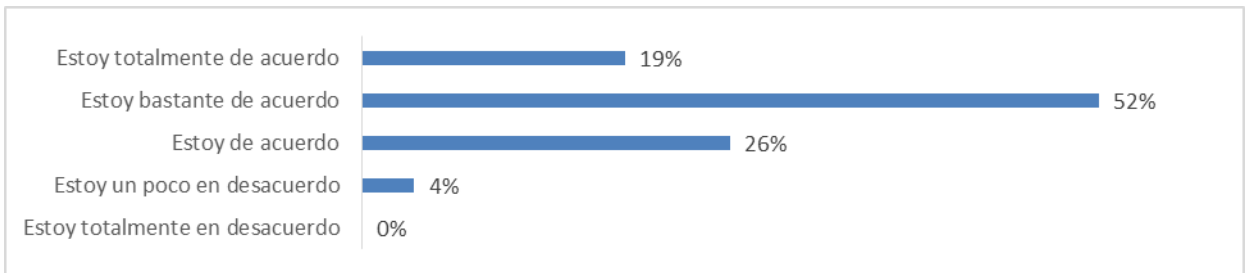
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 Estoy de acuerdo → I agree
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 Estoy totalmente en desacuerdo → I fully disagree



The presentation of the experience conducted by the team from Bayonne has been interesting and inspiring for making improvements in the future (n=27)

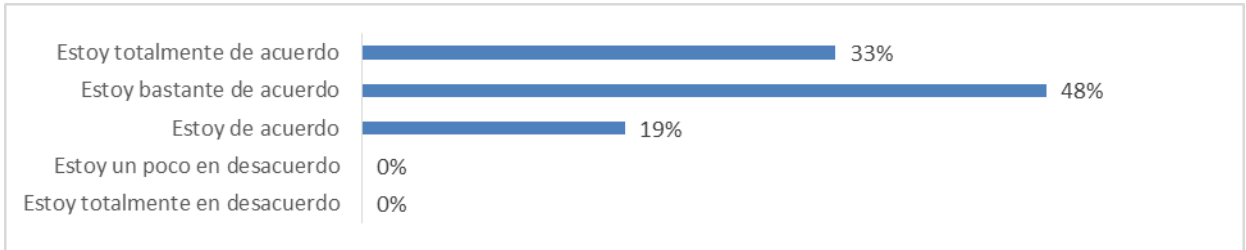
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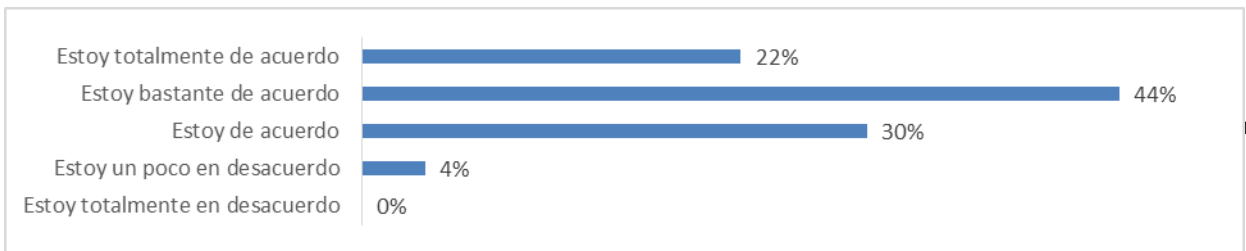
The afternoon debate has been interesting and inspiring for making improvements in the future (n=27)

Estoy totalmente de acuerdo → I fully agree
 Estoy bastante de acuerdo → I quite agree
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 Estoy un poco en desacuerdo → I quite disagree
 Estoy totalmente en desacuerdo → I fully disagree



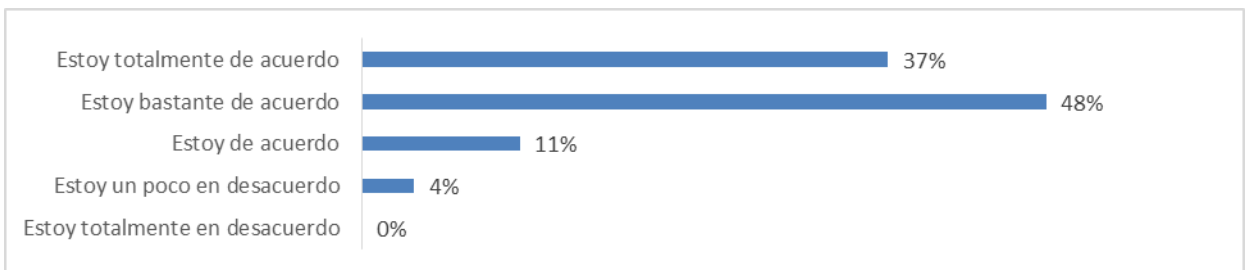
The duration of the different sessions has been appropriate (n=27)

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 Estoy bastante de acuerdo → I quite agree
 Estoy de acuerdo → I agree
 Estoy un poco en desacuerdo → I quite disagree
 Estoy totalmente en desacuerdo → I fully disagree



In general, the event has been organised appropriately (n=27)

Estoy totalmente de acuerdo → I fully agree
 Estoy bastante de acuerdo → I quite agree
 Estoy de acuerdo → I agree
 Estoy un poco en desacuerdo → I quite disagree
 Estoy totalmente en desacuerdo → I fully disagree



Observations:

- “All OK. It has been a pleasure to share this day with highly competent and strongly committed people”
- “Too large”
- “Considering this an integration project between the Social Services Department and the Employment Service of Navarre, employment issues are not too visible – let alone intermediation with companies.”
- “Room is too big for number of participants – bad acoustics”