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FROM ACTION TO RECOMMENDATION PACK

**Erasmus+ KA220-SCH Strategic Partnership in School
Education DIGITAL COMICS OF MIGRATION
2023-1-TR01-KA220-SCH-000166103**



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The Project

Digital Comics of Migration Project (DICOMI) aimed to improve educational experiences of children whose parents are displaced because of war conditions. The war started in Ukraine resulted in calls for positive educational response in Europe to improve the educational and social experiences of Ukrainian students. In 2023-2024 school year, more than 115.000 students moved to other countries to study higher education. In 2008-2009, this number was 21.000 (Stadnyi, 2025). This fivefold increase in migrating higher education students is also reflected in asylum seeking Ukrainians in OECD countries, reported to peak in 2015 by 25.000 people (OECD, 2026). At the end of April 2026, the number of Ukrainians under protection because of war is estimated at 4.37 million around Europe (Eurostat, 2026). Czechia, Poland and Slovakia have the highest number of protection beneficiaries, respectively. The high numbers of migration and temporary protection resulted in significant changes in Ukrainians' life and educational opportunities.

The rates of tertiary education graduates display a clear advantage of the nationals over other European countries (Eurostat, 2027). Also, home owning is between 70-50% for nationals of the reporting country while it is between 35-42% for other European country citizen who migrated to the reporting country. Although median income is similar for nationals and other EU citizens, exclusion, poverty and unemployment risks are higher when a European migrates to another European country. These circumstances affect Ukrainian immigrants, who are displaced because of war from their hometowns and countries.

War as a cause for migration is also valid for Syria, Palestine, Uyghur, Iran, Iraq, and many other countries. Although they are not European countries, they are also affected by the war and migration in terms of education and life conditions. Türkiye has been home to a great number of Syrians since 2011, the Arab Spring. The national statistics of the Ministry of Interior of Turkish Republic report 2.280.542 Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye. As this is a high number for a single country, the demographics, population, educational opportunities and experiences are affected greatly for both Syrian students whose families were displaced because of war and the national Turkish students.

The educational policies in Europe and Türkiye respond to war-caused migration both for Europe and Türkiye. Türkiye provides education, health and social services to Syrians under temporary protection free of charge. Syrian students under temporary protection are enrolled in schools for K12 education, provided with coursebooks for free. Also, projects such

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as PIKTES (Promoting Inclusive Education for Kids in the Turkish Education System) respond positively and engage Syrian students under temporary protection with inclusive activities. The project provide financial aids for families under temporary protection, Turkish language courses for students who struggle in terms of language. The needs of the people, especially women, under protection are analyzed (Yücel et al., 2018) analytically, national and international projects such as “Project for Strengthening the Social and Economic Stability and Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls Under Temporary Protection”, “Child Protection, Protection Project Focusing on TCDS (Turkish Civil Aviation Authority) and Economic Empowerment” are performed successfully.

The national and international projects for migration and inclusion improve the educational experiences of students. However, national and international statistics and data are not explanatory for the experiences and the educational opportunities of students whose parents migrated because of war and other compelling reasons. The real experiences of students whose families migrated needs to be improved across Europe, where inclusion and integration are significant objectives of the European Union (EU). Thus, DICOMI Project aimed to improve inclusion and integration of students whose families migrated because of war and other compelling reasons. The project is one of a kind in its design and strategy. It uses digital comics, a powerful and engaging reading genre for children, pupils, youth and adults. Moreover, DICOMI Project includes real stories of immigrant families as a powerful source of information and bonding.

Comics are labeled as the seventh art and an engaging reading genre that combines text, image and motion on papers. It was introduced as an instructional method in the second half of the 1900s , as comics are not only language teaching materials but cognitively engaging instructional tools that improve students’ understanding and participation (Sones, 1944). Although comics are criticized by some scholars for having limited words, they provide readers with a context full of meaning with every color, item, motion, sound and image in addition to words, which are not many but meaningful (Bramlett et al., 2016). Experimental research on comics also displays positive outcomes in students’ motivation and academic performance (İlhan & Oruç, 2019), critical thinking skills and understanding (Tekin & İlhan, 2026), and participation. They are used in a variety of subjects from literature (Tekin, 2026) science (Koutníková, 2017), mathematics (Tay et al., 2024), social studies (İlhan & Sin, 2024), history (İlhan & Oruç, 2019), and others. Instructional designs integrating comics boost



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students' motivation, participation and academic achievement, engage their 21st century skills such as critical thinking and creativity.

DICOMI Project used comics as the main instructional method to engage students in lessons where migration and integration were targeted. To improve students' understanding and empathy for migration and war, the Project used testimonies of families who migrated because of war and other compulsory reasons. The first activity of the project entailed all partner countries (Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Türkiye and Ukraine) to interview families who migrated because of war and other compulsory reasons. In these interviews the migrating stories of these families were targeted to be understood. The reasons of migration, the process of deciding to migrate, the migration process (both legal process and the migration journey), and the experiences after migration in terms of integration, family life and education were asked to 47 immigrant families who reside in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Türkiye, Ukraine, and other European countries. The families were from Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and other disadvantaged countries. Each interview was recorded and transcribed in the project to reach authentic information for migration.

Migration stories included difficulties in terms of legal processes, applications for passport, Visa and asylum seeking. Not interestingly, most stories included serious trauma for these families either before the migration because of war conditions, during migration because of extremely painful travelling conditions, or after the migration because of difficulties of integration and financing. These stories were adapted to instructional stories that would both reflect the real stories with authentic instances from the interviews and meet the educational objectives and criteria. Special attention was paid not to traumatized any student whose family migrated or arouse feelings of pity or shame for the migrating students and families.

After the stories were adapted, educational objectives were determined in alignment with these three main project goals:

- Improving inclusiveness and integration of students whose families migrated because of war in Ukraine and other war-experiencing countries, or other compulsory reasons
- Developing key competences such as social inclusion, literacy, digital competences, cultural awareness, and active citizenship through digital comics and social and emotional learning objectives of DICOMI modules



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- Supporting teachers, school leaders and other teaching professions through teacher training and introducing DICOMI Modules as a powerful source for comics-enriched instruction and education for social inclusion

These objectives guided the creation of DICOMI Comics, which reflect the real stories of immigrant families. Each comic was designed with special attention to every wording, image, symbol and coloring to meet the project goals. 10 comics were created as a result of the interviews, each of which is integrated in DICOMI modules themed as:

1. Migration is for every moving creatures
2. Cultural diversity
3. Migration journeys
4. Migration policies
5. Forced migration
6. Integration and belonging
7. Migration and school (language and friends)
8. Development and migration
9. Multiple belongings
10. Migration and climate change

The comics were used as the main tool of instruction in teacher training and student implementation in all partner countries with at least 2 teacher and 10 student participants. The implementation process of the Project were successfully performed by each partner, with total 31 teacher and 116 participants.

This report is prepared as a policy recommendation on the basis of DICOMI project and its results. DICOMI project aimed at meeting the stakeholders and end-users of education with small-scale meetings in five partner countries: Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Türkiye, and Ukraine. The small-scale meetings included teachers, graduate students, school principals, vice-principals, parents, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGO), entrepreneurs from small and medium-size enterprises, policy makers, and academicians. Having participants from diverse backgrounds, the modules of the project are evaluated to generate policy recommendations. On the light of these discussion and results, Funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. However, European Commission and Turkish National Agency cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein



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the policy recommendations are divided under four target users, each of which is organized as a single pack:

- From Action to Recommendation Pack for Students
- From Action to Recommendation Pack for Families
- From Action to Recommendation Pack for Teachers
- From Action to Recommendation Pack for Decision-makers

Participants

Small-scale meetings aimed at reaching to stakeholders and end-users of education to evaluate DICOMI project modules for their effectiveness in improving academic achievement and reducing early school leaving. In 5 different countries (Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Türkiye, and Ukraine), 154 participants attended small-scale meetings. Participants were primary and secondary teachers, NGO representatives, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, school principals and vice-principals, academicians, researchers, graduate students, and policy makers.



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