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FROM ACTION TO RECOMMENDATION PACK FOR DECISION-MAKERS

**Erasmus+ KA220-SCH Strategic Partnership in School
Education DIGITAL COMICS OF MIGRATION
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From Action to Recommendation: Pack for Decision-Makers

Decision-makers play a critical role in shaping the conditions under which educational inclusion, key competence development, and digital transformation occur. Through policies, funding priorities, curriculum frameworks, teacher education regulations, and support services, national and local decision-makers influence the educational opportunities available to students and the extent to which schools can respond effectively to diversity. Research on educational governance consistently demonstrates that inclusive educational outcomes depend not only on the efforts of individual teachers and schools but also on systemic policy environments that promote equity, participation, and access to resources (Ainscow, 2020; European Commission, 2023). Decision-makers are particularly influential in determining whether schools possess the institutional capacity to support students from migrant and refugee backgrounds through language assistance, psychosocial services, family engagement initiatives, and inclusive pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, policy decisions regarding curriculum content, citizenship education, and digital learning shape students' opportunities to develop key competences such as communication, critical thinking, intercultural understanding, digital literacy, collaboration, and democratic participation. The development of these competences is increasingly recognized as essential for social cohesion and active citizenship in culturally diverse European societies (European Council, 2018).

The importance of decision-makers becomes even more pronounced in contexts of migration and forced displacement. Research on refugee and migrant education indicates that successful inclusion is strongly influenced by policy frameworks governing school access, language support, teacher preparation, recognition of prior learning, and family participation (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Pastoor, 2017). Decisions made at national, regional, and local levels affect not only students but also teachers and families, shaping their educational and social experiences



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within host societies. For example, policies that support multilingual education, intercultural dialogue, and family–school partnerships can facilitate inclusion and belonging, whereas fragmented or short-term approaches may contribute to educational inequalities and social exclusion. Similarly, investments in digital infrastructure, teacher professional development, and educational innovation directly influence schools’ capacity to provide equitable digital learning opportunities. Research following the rapid expansion of digital education has shown that meaningful digitalization requires coherent policy support, sustained investment, and strategic leadership rather than the mere provision of technological equipment (Tondeur et al., 2017; Selwyn, 2021). Consequently, decision-makers are central actors in creating educational systems capable of responding to the social, cultural, and technological challenges associated with migration and contemporary societal change.

Within this context, the DICOMI project offers significant benefits for decision-makers seeking evidence-informed approaches to inclusion, digitalization, and intercultural education. Through its digital modules and real-life-based comics, DICOMI provides practical examples of how educational innovation can support social inclusion, empathy, intercultural dialogue, and digital competence development simultaneously. The project demonstrates how migration-related topics can be addressed through pedagogically structured and age-appropriate learning materials that encourage critical reflection, perspective-taking, and active participation. For policy-makers and educational administrators, DICOMI offers a transferable model that connects European priorities related to inclusion, democratic citizenship, social cohesion, and digital transformation. The project also provides insights into how schools can engage students, teachers, and families in collaborative learning processes that extend beyond the classroom and strengthen community relationships. Furthermore, DICOMI illustrates how digital storytelling and comics-based learning can be integrated into existing curricula while supporting the development of key competences identified in the European Reference Framework, including cultural awareness, communication, citizenship, personal and social competence, and digital literacy.

For decision-makers, one of the most valuable contributions of DICOMI lies in its potential to inform policy development and educational planning. The project generates concrete examples of inclusive practices that can be scaled, adapted, and integrated into teacher training programmes, curriculum reforms, digital education strategies, and family engagement policies. By providing evidence of how narrative-based and digital approaches can support the inclusion



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of migrant and refugee learners, DICOMI helps bridge the gap between policy aspirations and classroom realities. It also highlights the importance of combining technological innovation with human-centred educational values such as empathy, dignity, participation, and social justice. Participants therefore viewed DICOMI as more than an educational intervention; they regarded it as a policy-relevant initiative capable of supporting decision-makers in designing more inclusive, digitally competent, and socially responsive education systems that benefit students, teachers, families, and wider communities across Europe. The discussions in small-scale meetings in five countries led to these policy recommendations:

Comics as an Instructional Material

Participants in the small-scale meetings consistently identified the integration of comic-based learning and digital storytelling into educational curricula and extracurricular activities as an important policy priority for decision-makers. They argued that contemporary education systems should move beyond traditional instructional approaches and embrace innovative pedagogical methods that simultaneously support academic learning, digital competence development, social-emotional growth, and intercultural understanding. Participants emphasized that comics and digital comics offer unique educational value because they combine narrative, visual, and digital elements in ways that engage diverse learners and make complex social issues more accessible. Consequently, schools should be actively encouraged to adopt learning materials that integrate empathy, digital skills, creativity, and social awareness. In particular, participants highlighted the potential of comics to help students explore topics such as migration, diversity, inclusion, discrimination, belonging, and democratic citizenship while also developing critical thinking, communication, and digital literacy skills. They argued that educational policies should provide schools with both the flexibility and institutional support necessary to incorporate such resources into everyday teaching and learning practices.

Participants further stressed that comic-based learning should not remain confined to isolated projects or supplementary activities but should be formally integrated into national educational frameworks. They strongly recommended that decision-makers recognize digital comics as an innovative and effective pedagogical approach capable of supporting learning across multiple subject areas. Participants noted that comics can be used cross-curricularly in subjects such as social studies, language education, history, citizenship education, arts, and even digital literacy courses, enabling students to engage with academic content through multimodal forms of learning. The visual and narrative nature of comics was viewed as particularly



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effective for fostering empathy, perspective-taking, and understanding of diverse life experiences, while digital comic creation activities provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop creativity, collaboration, and digital content production skills. Participants argued that formal curricular recognition would increase the legitimacy of comics as educational resources and encourage teachers and schools to utilize them more systematically as part of inclusive and innovative teaching practices.

To support the successful integration of comic-based learning, participants also recommended that educational authorities reconsider existing approaches to assessment and evaluation. They noted that current assessment systems often prioritize traditional text-based forms of knowledge demonstration, which may not fully capture the range of competencies developed through visual storytelling and digital creative work. Participants therefore called for assessment frameworks that recognize multiple forms of expression and allow students to demonstrate learning through comics, digital narratives, and other multimodal products. Such adaptations would enable schools to evaluate not only academic knowledge but also important outcomes related to social-emotional learning, creativity, empathy, communication, critical thinking, and digital competence. Participants argued that by broadening assessment practices and formally recognizing visual storytelling as a legitimate educational approach, decision-makers can help create learning environments that better reflect the diverse skills and competencies required in contemporary societies. In this regard, the integration of comic-based learning was viewed not merely as a pedagogical innovation but as a strategic policy measure capable of supporting inclusion, digital transformation, and the holistic development of learners across European education systems.

Inclusive Education as a Policy

Participants in the small-scale meetings emphasized that improving inclusive education requires more than classroom-level initiatives; it demands sustained support through coherent and well-funded educational policies. They argued that innovative pedagogical approaches such as digital storytelling, testimony-based learning, and comic-based education can only achieve long-term impact when they are formally recognized and supported by decision-makers. Participants recommended that educational policies should explicitly validate and utilize the cultural capital of both migrant and local students by incorporating diverse life experiences, including migration narratives, into official curricula, learning materials, and educational programmes. Such an approach was considered essential for ensuring that students from different backgrounds see their identities, histories, and experiences represented within



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education. Participants stressed that the inclusion of real-life migration stories can challenge stereotypes, promote empathy, and create learning environments in which diversity is understood as a resource rather than a problem. In this regard, testimony-based educational resources were viewed as particularly valuable because they provide authentic perspectives that help students understand the human dimensions of migration, displacement, belonging, and social inclusion while fostering intercultural dialogue and critical reflection.

Participants further highlighted that policies supporting inclusive educational practices should address not only pedagogical needs but also the social and emotional dimensions of learning. They argued that schools increasingly serve students who have experienced migration, displacement, discrimination, or social exclusion, and that educators require structured support to respond effectively to these realities. Consequently, participants recommended that educational authorities mandate and adequately fund pedagogical and psychological support modules within schools, ensuring that teachers, counsellors, and other educational professionals have access to the resources, training, and expertise necessary to address sensitive topics such as forced displacement, xenophobia, prejudice, and identity-related challenges. Such support mechanisms were viewed as essential for creating safe learning environments where difficult social issues can be discussed constructively and where all students feel respected and valued. Participants noted that without appropriate institutional support, teachers may struggle to facilitate meaningful conversations about migration and diversity, limiting the potential of inclusive education to promote understanding and social cohesion.

Participants also stressed the broader societal significance of policies that promote inclusive educational practices for both migrant and local students. They argued that inclusive education contributes not only to individual educational outcomes but also to the development of more cohesive, democratic, and resilient societies. By supporting educational approaches that encourage empathy, perspective-taking, intercultural understanding, and respect for diversity, decision-makers can help reduce social polarization and strengthen social cohesion within increasingly diverse communities. Participants emphasized that testimony-based resources, real-life migration narratives, and other experiential learning materials should be formally recognized as valuable tools for intercultural learning because they enable students to engage with complex social realities in meaningful and human-centred ways. Such resources can help young people develop a deeper understanding of diversity, challenge exclusionary attitudes, and cultivate the civic and social competencies necessary for living together in pluralistic societies. Therefore, participants viewed policy support for inclusive and innovative



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educational practices as a strategic investment not only in educational quality but also in the social well-being and democratic future of European communities.

Investment in Digitalization

Participants in the small-scale meetings consistently emphasized that meaningful digitalization in education requires sustained investment in both digital infrastructure and teacher training. They argued that the successful implementation of innovative learning approaches, including digital comics, digital storytelling, and interactive Web 2.0 activities, depends on the availability of modern technological resources and supportive educational environments. Participants identified a critical systemic challenge: many schools continue to face limitations related to outdated technological equipment, insufficient digital devices, inadequate software, and unreliable internet connectivity. As a result, the educational potential of digital learning resources cannot be fully realized, and inequalities in access to technology may further disadvantage already vulnerable student populations. Participants therefore recommended that policymakers prioritize the modernization of school digital infrastructure by allocating sufficient financial resources to ensure that all schools have access to the technological capacity required to support interactive and multimedia-rich learning experiences. Such investments were viewed as essential not only for improving educational quality but also for ensuring equal opportunities for all students to engage with digital comics, online collaboration tools, and other forms of digital content creation.

Participants further stressed that access to technology alone is insufficient to achieve effective digital transformation. They argued that digitalization should be accompanied by comprehensive policy measures that strengthen schools' institutional capacity to integrate technology into teaching and learning in meaningful ways. In particular, policymakers were encouraged to support the development of accessible digital platforms that provide educators and students with high-quality learning resources, collaborative tools, and opportunities for creative digital production. Participants noted that centralized or shared digital platforms could facilitate the dissemination of innovative materials such as DICOMI modules and digital comics while promoting greater consistency in access across schools and regions. Such platforms were viewed as important mechanisms for reducing digital inequalities and supporting the widespread adoption of innovative educational practices.

In addition to infrastructure development, participants emphasized the need for continuous professional development programmes that strengthen teachers' digital literacy and pedagogical use of technology. They argued that many educators have not received sufficient

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preparation to integrate digital tools effectively into classroom practice, despite growing expectations that they support students' digital competence development. Consequently, policy-level support should be directed toward establishing long-term and sustainable training initiatives that equip teachers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to use digital technologies creatively and inclusively. Participants highlighted that training should extend beyond technical skills and include pedagogical approaches for using digital tools to foster collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, inclusion, and social-emotional learning. By simultaneously investing in infrastructure, digital platforms, and teacher capacity building, policymakers can create the conditions necessary for a more equitable and effective digital transformation of education, ensuring that all students benefit from innovative learning opportunities regardless of their socioeconomic or geographical circumstances.

Recommendation for Policy Development Nature

Participants in the small-scale meetings emphasized that effective educational policies should be grounded in research evidence and developed through sustained cooperation among a broad range of stakeholders. They argued that complex educational challenges such as migration, inclusion, digital transformation, and social cohesion cannot be addressed successfully through isolated policy decisions but require collaborative approaches that bring together the expertise and experiences of schools, universities, educational NGOs, local authorities, and civil society organizations. Participants highlighted that universities can contribute research-based knowledge and evaluation expertise, while schools provide practical insights into classroom realities and student needs. Educational NGOs and civil society organizations were viewed as particularly important partners because of their experience working with vulnerable populations, migrant communities, and socially disadvantaged groups. Local authorities were also identified as key actors in coordinating resources, supporting community engagement, and ensuring that educational initiatives respond to local needs and contexts. Participants therefore recommended that decision-makers establish mechanisms for regular consultation, partnership-building, and knowledge exchange among these stakeholders in order to develop more responsive, evidence-informed, and sustainable educational policies.

Participants further stressed that future educational initiatives should adopt a broader and more inclusive stakeholder approach. In particular, they recommended that policy-makers actively support projects that involve parents, families, and private educational institutions alongside public-sector actors. Parents were viewed as essential partners in educational inclusion because their participation can strengthen students' engagement, support social



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integration, and improve communication between schools and communities. Participants argued that policies should encourage the systematic involvement of families in educational planning, implementation, and evaluation processes, particularly in projects addressing migration, diversity, and inclusion. Similarly, private educational institutions were considered important contributors to educational innovation, resource development, and the dissemination of good practices. By engaging a wider range of stakeholders, educational initiatives can benefit from diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources while fostering a stronger sense of shared responsibility for educational outcomes.

Participants also noted that collaborative policymaking can enhance both the quality and legitimacy of educational reforms. Policies developed through dialogue and partnership are more likely to reflect the realities experienced by students, teachers, families, and communities, increasing their relevance and effectiveness. Moreover, stakeholder cooperation can facilitate the exchange of innovative practices, support the scaling of successful interventions, and strengthen social trust among educational actors. Participants therefore called for policy frameworks that promote long-term partnerships across sectors and encourage the co-creation of educational solutions. Such approaches were viewed as particularly important in addressing emerging challenges related to migration, digitalization, inclusion, and democratic participation. By supporting future projects that engage schools, universities, NGOs, local authorities, civil society organizations, parents, and private educational institutions, decision-makers can contribute to the development of more inclusive, evidence-based, and socially responsive education systems capable of meeting the needs of diverse European communities.

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