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FROM ACTION TO RECOMMENDATION PACK FOR FAMILIES

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

This pack is designed exclusively for families, a key role in education that is disregarded mostly in educational policy. Schooling and education target students/children in the first place, and mostly leave the familial effect and attributes behind. Thus, this policy recommendation report targets policies that target families.

Families play a fundamental role in shaping students' educational experiences, academic achievement, and long-term commitment to learning. Research consistently demonstrates that parental involvement is positively associated with students' academic success, school engagement, educational aspirations, and motivation across different age groups and educational contexts (Eker & Yildizli, 2025; Shute et al., 2011; Wilder, 2014). Parents influence learning not only through direct support with school-related activities but also by establishing educational expectations, fostering positive attitudes toward learning, and creating home environments that value education. Research indicates that parental involvement has a significant positive relationship with academic achievement (Jeynes, 2024), with the strongest effects emerging when parents communicate high educational expectations, maintain regular discussions about school, and actively encourage learning rather than merely assisting with homework. Furthermore, parental engagement contributes to students' sense of belonging and participation in school by strengthening motivation, self-confidence, and educational commitment. Beyond individual academic outcomes, families serve as essential partners in promoting educational equity, reducing the risk of disengagement and early school leaving, and supporting students' social and emotional development.

Families play a decisive role in shaping the educational inclusion of migrant and refugee children, particularly in situations of forced displacement caused by war. Family support influences whether children successfully adapt to new educational environments, develop a sense of belonging, and participate actively in school life. Parents often serve as the primary



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mediators between children and host-country institutions by facilitating school enrolment, encouraging attendance, communicating with teachers, and helping children navigate unfamiliar educational systems. Research demonstrates that refugee children whose families maintain strong educational aspirations and actively engage with schools tend to exhibit higher levels of school participation, academic motivation, and social integration (Parmigian, et al., 2023). Conversely, families experiencing severe economic hardship, housing instability, trauma, or language barriers may face difficulties supporting their children's educational adjustment, which can negatively affect school engagement and inclusion (Andueza-Imirizaldu, et al., 2024). Thus, educational inclusion is not solely an individual process but is deeply embedded within family resources, expectations, and capacities.

The experiences of families displaced by the war in Ukraine provide a particularly relevant example. Since 2022, millions of Ukrainian children have entered educational systems across Europe, often accompanied by mothers, grandmothers, or other caregivers while fathers remained in Ukraine because of military obligations. Research and policy reports indicate that family decisions regarding language learning, school enrolment, participation in host-country education, and continued engagement with the Ukrainian curriculum significantly influence children's educational trajectories. Many Ukrainian families have attempted to balance integration into host-country schools with maintaining connections to Ukrainian education and identity. Families frequently view schools as important spaces for socialization, psychological stability, and rebuilding routines disrupted by war. At the same time, concerns about language barriers, uncertainty regarding return migration, and the emotional consequences of displacement may complicate children's inclusion in host-country schools. Studies have shown that successful inclusion is more likely when schools establish strong partnerships with families, provide language support, and recognize the cultural and educational backgrounds that refugee families bring with them.

Beyond academic support, families play a critical role in fostering resilience and emotional well-being among children affected by war and forced migration. Ukrainian refugee families have often served as children's primary source of emotional security while simultaneously coping with their own experiences of loss, uncertainty, and trauma. Research highlights that children benefit when families are supported by schools, counsellors, community organizations, and social services that work collaboratively to address educational and psychosocial needs. Family–school partnerships are particularly important for helping children

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overcome feelings of isolation, develop friendships with local peers, and build a sense of belonging within host communities. In this respect, educational inclusion should be understood as a shared responsibility involving families, schools, and broader support networks. Strengthening family engagement not only promotes academic achievement but also contributes to social inclusion, psychological well-being, and the successful integration of migrant and refugee children into their new educational environments.

The Turkish experience with Syrian children under Temporary Protection demonstrates a similar central role that families play in promoting educational inclusion among refugee students. Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, Türkiye has become the largest host country for Syrian refugees, with millions of displaced children entering the Turkish education system. Research indicates that family characteristics significantly influence whether children enrol in school, attend regularly, develop a sense of belonging, and successfully adapt to their new educational environments. Parents who value education, maintain high educational aspirations, and actively communicate with schools are more likely to support their children's academic engagement and social integration. However, many Syrian families face substantial challenges, including poverty, precarious employment, language barriers, housing insecurity, and limited familiarity with the Turkish education system, which can hinder their ability to participate in their children's schooling. Studies have shown that parental Turkish language proficiency and school-family communication are particularly important factors facilitating educational inclusion and reducing barriers to participation. Furthermore, families often serve as crucial sources of emotional support that help children cope with the trauma of displacement, experiences of discrimination, and the difficulties of adapting to a new cultural and linguistic context. In cases where schools establish strong partnerships with Syrian families and provide accessible channels of communication, students tend to demonstrate higher levels of school participation, academic motivation, and social belonging.

In fact, most countries with the cases of migration and migration caused-by-war experience similar processes. Thus, DICOMI project targeted families as critical actors to improve educational experiences of students whose families migrated because of war and other compulsory reasons. Through active integration and inclusion of parents, students can be integrated into national schools and informal learning environments. Thus, small-scale meetings targeted discussions for family effect on students' inclusion and improving key



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competences. The discussions in small-scale meetings in five countries resulted in these policy recommendations both for nations and the European Union:

Effective Integration of Families into School Activities

Participants in the small-scale meetings consistently emphasized that families should be actively integrated into learning cycles and school life in order to strengthen both inclusion and the quality of education. They argued that educational inclusion cannot be achieved solely through classroom-based interventions, as families play a critical role in supporting students' academic engagement, social participation, and sense of belonging within school communities. Participants highlighted that when schools establish meaningful partnerships with families and create opportunities for parental involvement in educational activities, communication between home and school is strengthened, enabling students to feel more connected to their learning environments. This was considered particularly important for migrant and refugee students, whose successful integration often depends on the extent to which their families are welcomed and engaged by schools. Participants noted that families frequently serve as bridges between students and educational institutions, helping children navigate new educational systems, develop trust in schools, and build relationships with teachers and peers.

Participants stressed that parental participation in school activities can also generate important benefits for families themselves. Through engagement in parent meetings, school events, workshops, and collaborative educational activities, parents gain a better understanding of school expectations, educational policies, and the norms and values that shape the host country's education system. Such participation is as an important mechanism for strengthening civic competencies, including communication, democratic participation, intercultural understanding, and awareness of rights and responsibilities within society. Participants argued that schools should be seen not only as places where children learn but also as spaces where families can acquire knowledge, skills, and confidence that facilitate their broader social integration.

Participants further emphasized that the benefits of parental involvement extend across generations. As parents become more familiar with educational processes, civic norms, and community expectations, they are better positioned to transmit this knowledge to their children and support their adaptation to the host society. Families were therefore viewed as key agents in the development of civic values, social responsibility, and active citizenship among young



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people. In the context of migration and displacement, participants noted that parental engagement can help children understand the cultural, social, and democratic practices of their new communities while maintaining a sense of continuity and support within the family.

Comics as an Instructive Materials for Families

Participants highlighted the considerable potential of comics as a resource for strengthening family participation in education. Unlike many traditional educational materials, comics are accessible, visually engaging, and capable of communicating complex ideas across linguistic, cultural, and educational differences. This accessibility makes them particularly valuable for involving families from diverse backgrounds, including migrant and refugee families who may face language barriers or have limited familiarity with the host country's education system. Participants emphasized that comics can serve as shared educational experiences that encourage parents and children to read, discuss, and reflect together. Through their combination of images and narratives, comics create opportunities for meaningful intergenerational dialogue, enabling families to engage with educational themes in ways that are both approachable and enjoyable.

Participants further noted that comics can act as powerful tools for fostering communication between schools and families. By sharing comics with parents as home-learning resources, schools can extend educational activities beyond the classroom and create opportunities for family engagement without requiring extensive educational expertise from parents. Comics addressing themes such as migration, identity, diversity, belonging, and inclusion can encourage discussions about personal experiences, values, and social issues within the family environment. For migrant and refugee families, comics can provide opportunities to share their own stories and cultural experiences, helping children connect their family histories with school learning. At the same time, local families can gain greater awareness and understanding of the experiences of newcomers, contributing to empathy and intercultural dialogue. Participants argued that because stories are often easier to discuss than abstract concepts, comics can create safe and supportive entry points for conversations that might otherwise be difficult to initiate. As DICOMI provides all materials and learning content free at its website (<https://dicomiproject.eu/#>), the participants emphasized the possible positive effect of the project on families and family participation.



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Another important advantage identified by participants was the capacity of comics to empower families as active contributors to educational processes. Rather than positioning parents solely as recipients of information from schools, comic-based activities can encourage families to become co-creators of knowledge and narratives. Through family storytelling projects, collaborative comic creation, and reflection activities linked to digital comics, parents and children can work together to express experiences, memories, aspirations, and cultural traditions. Such activities not only strengthen family–school partnerships but also validate the knowledge and cultural capital that families bring to educational settings. Participants believed that this approach can enhance students’ motivation, sense of identity, and belonging while simultaneously fostering parental engagement, civic participation, and community cohesion. As a result, comics were viewed not merely as educational materials but as inclusive tools capable of building stronger connections between schools, families, and diverse communities.

In addition to these two significant policy recommendations, participants in five different countries explicitly emphasized these points to be taken into consideration:

- Families could be informed about the aims of the DICOMI programme before or during school implementation.
- Family engagement should always be voluntary and sensitive, especially when migration experiences may be personal or painful.
- Materials for families should use clear and accessible language.
- Future DICOMI activities could include short family reflection prompts connected to selected comics.
- Organizing family-oriented workshops introducing digital comics and storytelling.
- Creating opportunities for dialogue between migrant and local families through educational activities.



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