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FROM ACTION TO RECOMMENDATION PACK FOR STUDENTS

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

Students occupy a central position in education, society, and the future of the European Union because they are not merely recipients of knowledge but active contributors to social, economic, and democratic development. Within educational systems, students drive the purpose of teaching, learning, innovation, and institutional improvement, while their diverse experiences and perspectives enrich educational environments and foster more inclusive forms of knowledge production. At the societal level, students represent the next generation of citizens, workers, leaders, and change-makers whose competencies, values, and aspirations will shape social cohesion, economic prosperity, and democratic resilience. Their engagement in civic life, critical thinking, and participation in public debates is particularly important in addressing contemporary challenges such as social inequality, digital transformation, migration, climate change, and political polarization. For the European Union, students hold strategic significance as key actors in building a shared European identity grounded in democratic values, intercultural understanding, and social solidarity. Through educational initiatives such as mobility programmes, cross-border cooperation, and lifelong learning policies, the EU recognizes students as essential stakeholders in strengthening European citizenship, promoting social inclusion, enhancing competitiveness, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the European project. Investing in students therefore constitutes not only an educational priority but also a social, economic, and political imperative for Europe's future.

Migration and armed conflict cause profound and often long-lasting effects on children's educational trajectories, psychosocial well-being, and opportunities for social integration. Research consistently demonstrates that war-induced displacement disrupts school attendance, interrupts learning continuity, and increases the risk of educational exclusion, poverty, and social marginalization. The Syrian civil war and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have generated some of the largest child displacement crises in recent history, forcing millions of children to



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continue their education under conditions of instability, trauma, and uncertainty. Studies on Syrian refugee children reveal that language barriers, discrimination, interrupted schooling, economic hardship, and limited access to educational resources frequently hinder successful school integration and academic achievement (Çelik & İçduygu, 2019; Fazel et al., 2012; Guo et al., 2021). Similarly, research on Ukrainian children highlights how exposure to violence, displacement, prolonged online learning, school destruction, and psychological distress have negatively affected both educational participation and social-emotional development. Schools in host countries often serve as critical spaces for restoring routine, stability, belonging, and resilience among displaced children, yet significant inequalities remain in access to quality education and support services. Recent scholarship further emphasizes that educational institutions play a crucial role not only in academic recovery but also in trauma-informed care, identity reconstruction, and social inclusion for war-affected children (Boukhari, 2025; Kole, 2026; Miri, 2024). Consequently, education should be understood not merely as a service disrupted by conflict and migration, but as a fundamental protective mechanism that supports children's well-being, resilience, and future life chances in contexts of displacement and crisis.

The research outlines the significance of inclusive strategy and activities enrolled in schools and classrooms. However, the evaluation of inclusive and engaging-aiming activities, instructional methodology or intervention is seldom evaluated for policy recommendation. Single-case intervention programs or government-led policies are promising to improve inclusion for migration, yet the first needs generalization while the second needs authentic data for improved results. Thus, the implementation and DICOMI modules are put into evaluation process of stakeholders of education in small-scale meetings and workshops in WP4 of DICOMI project. The meetings and discussions outlined these key policy recommendations:

Inclusive Education as an Educational Philosophy

Participants from Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Türkiye, and Ukraine consistently emphasized that inclusive education should be conceived as a continuous educational aim and a guiding philosophy rather than a temporary policy initiative. Across the small-scale meetings, participants argued that inclusion must become an integral component of educational systems, embedded within curricula, teaching practices, school cultures, and institutional structures. They stressed that inclusive education should not be limited to addressing the needs of specific groups at particular moments but should instead promote equal participation, respect for diversity, and a sense of belonging for all learners. Participants viewed inclusion as a



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democratic educational principle that supports social justice and social cohesion in increasingly diverse European societies. In this regard, they called for national and European education systems to move beyond short-term policy responses and adopt inclusion as a sustained and overarching educational philosophy that informs educational decision-making at all levels.

A recurring theme across all countries was the importance of creating meaningful opportunities for students from different social, cultural, linguistic, and migration backgrounds to learn together and engage in collaborative activities. Participants highlighted the potential of digital comics as an innovative pedagogical tool for fostering dialogue, empathy, and intercultural understanding among students. By presenting diverse narratives and perspectives, digital comics can encourage learners to reflect on different life experiences, challenge stereotypes, and develop perspective-taking skills. Participants from Germany and the Netherlands particularly emphasized the value of narrative-based learning in promoting mutual understanding among students from diverse backgrounds, while participants in Sweden and Türkiye noted that collaborative digital storytelling activities can strengthen peer relationships and create more inclusive classroom environments. Across the meetings, participants agreed that educational materials should represent the diversity of contemporary societies and provide students with opportunities to recognize their own identities, experiences, and cultures within the curriculum. Such representation was considered essential for fostering a sense of belonging and validating the experiences of students who are often marginalized or underrepresented in educational settings.

Participants also devoted considerable attention to the educational experiences of children affected by migration, displacement, and armed conflict, particularly in light of the ongoing consequences of the war in Ukraine and broader migration movements across Europe. They emphasized that inclusive education requires not only equal access to learning opportunities but also continuous emotional, psychological, and institutional support. Participants from Ukraine highlighted the profound educational and emotional challenges faced by children displaced by war, including trauma, interrupted schooling, uncertainty, and difficulties adapting to new educational environments. Similar concerns were raised by participants from Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Türkiye, where schools have increasingly welcomed refugee and migrant students. Participants argued that teachers alone cannot meet the complex needs of war-affected children and stressed the importance of coordinated support involving school counsellors, psychologists, families, non-governmental organizations, community services, and



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specialized institutions. They maintained that inclusive education should adopt a holistic approach that addresses both academic and socio-emotional well-being, enabling displaced children not only to succeed educationally but also to rebuild a sense of safety, belonging, and hope for the future. In this sense, inclusion was understood as a collective and sustained responsibility requiring long-term commitment from educational institutions and society as a whole.

Comics as a Strong Instructional Method

Participants across the small-scale meetings agreed that digital comics provide an engaging, accessible, and pedagogically valuable medium for addressing topics related to migration, identity, diversity, and social inclusion. The combination of visual storytelling and narrative structure was considered particularly effective in helping students engage with complex social realities that may otherwise be difficult to understand through traditional instructional materials. Participants emphasized that digital comics can make abstract concepts more concrete and relatable by presenting them through personal stories, characters, and everyday experiences. As a result, comics were viewed as powerful tools for stimulating classroom discussions, encouraging critical reflection, and fostering empathy among both migrant and local students. Rather than being treated as standalone resources or occasional supplementary materials, participants recommended integrating digital comics across a range of subject areas, including language learning, social studies, citizenship education, and intercultural learning activities. Such integration would enable educators to connect academic content with students' lived experiences while promoting deeper engagement with issues of diversity, belonging, and social justice.

Participants further emphasized that digital comics should not be used merely as passive reading materials but as active and creative pedagogical tools that empower students to construct, communicate, and share their own narratives. Through the process of creating comics, students can transform personal experiences, emotions, and perspectives into meaningful stories, thereby strengthening both self-expression and communication skills. The visual and multimodal nature of comics was considered particularly valuable for students with diverse linguistic backgrounds, as it allows them to convey ideas beyond the limitations of language proficiency. Participants noted that visual storytelling often makes difficult social issues more engaging, enjoyable, and memorable than conventional texts, increasing students' motivation to learn and participate. Consequently, they argued that comics should be integrated



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as a core medium for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), enabling students to explore emotions, relationships, identity, and belonging in ways that are both creative and educational. By reading and producing comics, learners are encouraged to engage in perspective-taking and develop the capacity to “see through the eyes of others,” a skill that is essential for fostering empathy and intercultural understanding.

A particularly important theme emerging from the discussions was the potential of digital comics to support children affected by migration, displacement, and war. Participants highlighted that comics can help students process the emotional and psychological consequences of forced migration by providing safe spaces for reflection, dialogue, and storytelling. Through narratives depicting experiences of displacement, adaptation, and belonging, students can better understand the challenges faced by newly arrived peers and reflect on their own assumptions and attitudes. Participants stressed that local students should be encouraged to consider how unfamiliar schools, cities, playgrounds, languages, and communities may feel intimidating, hostile, or unwelcoming to children who have recently arrived in a new country. In this way, comics can promote greater sensitivity toward the experiences of migrant and refugee children while strengthening social cohesion within schools. Participants recommended that comics be used across multiple educational settings, including classroom lessons, workshops, group discussions, language activities, and project-based learning initiatives. They argued that these materials possess substantial educational value and should not be dismissed as entertainment or supplementary resources. Instead, digital comics should be recognized as meaningful pedagogical instruments that support empathy, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and intercultural competence—skills that are increasingly important for active citizenship and participation in diverse European societies.

Digitalization Movement through Comics

Participants viewed the DICOMI project as a valuable contribution to the digitalization of education because it combines innovative digital tools with engaging pedagogical content that encourages active learning. Rather than treating digitalization as the acquisition of technical skills alone, participants argued that educational digitalization should bridge the gap between technological competence and creative expression. In this regard, the DICOMI modules were considered effective digital learning tools that allow students to interact with technology in meaningful and purposeful ways. Participants emphasized that digitalization should support students in becoming active learners who use technology to communicate ideas, solve



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problems, and engage with social issues. Through the integration of digital comics into educational activities, students can develop digital literacy while simultaneously exploring themes such as migration, diversity, inclusion, human dignity, and democratic values. This dual focus was considered particularly important because it ensures that technological development remains connected to broader educational goals related to citizenship, social responsibility, and intercultural understanding.

A recurring recommendation across the meetings was that students should not be positioned merely as consumers of digital content but as creators of it. Participants highlighted the importance of using Web 2.0 tools and digital platforms that enable students to design, develop, and share their own digital comics. By creating stories, characters, and visual narratives, students actively engage in processes of digital content creation, communication, and self-expression. Participants argued that combining storytelling with interactive digital tools can significantly enhance student engagement while strengthening a range of competencies, including digital literacy, communication skills, creativity, collaboration, and self-confidence. The process of creating digital comics was seen as particularly valuable because it allows students to translate complex social issues into meaningful narratives, encouraging reflection and critical thinking. Through the production of their own stories, learners become active participants in knowledge construction, developing the ability to communicate experiences and perspectives in ways that are both creative and technologically sophisticated. Such experiences align closely with contemporary educational approaches that emphasize student agency, participation, and the development of twenty-first-century skills.

Participants further stressed that the successful implementation of digital comic-based learning depends on adequate institutional support and investment in digital infrastructure. While digital comics and interactive modules offer significant educational opportunities, participants noted that their effectiveness can be limited when schools lack appropriate technological resources, reliable internet access, or suitable digital devices. Consequently, they argued that schools and educational authorities should modernize digital infrastructure to support innovative learning environments and ensure equitable access for all students. Equal access was considered particularly important for reducing digital inequalities and ensuring that students from different socioeconomic and migration backgrounds can benefit from digital learning opportunities. Participants emphasized that carefully planned integration of digital tools can contribute not only to the development of digital competences but also to more



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inclusive and participatory forms of education. In this sense, the DICOMI project was viewed as a model for how digitalization can be harnessed to promote both technological proficiency and meaningful engagement with democratic values, social inclusion, and intercultural dialogue within contemporary European education systems.



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