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WP3 – "DIGITAL COMICS OF MIGRATION"

LEARNING PROGRAM

29 MAYIS UNIVERSITY

TÜRKİYE

Erasmus+ KA220-SCH Strategic Partnership in School Education

-DICOMI-

DIGITAL COMICS OF MIGRATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

Work Package 3 (WP3) focused on the training of teachers and the classroom implementation of the DICOMI modules developed under WP2. These modules combine migration-related themes with digital comic-based learning to enrich educational experiences and support the academic achievement, school belonging, and social inclusion of students from migrant backgrounds. The ten DICOMI modules were developed in line with the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) approach and the 3E Framework (Enhance, Extend, and Empower).

This report presents the teacher training activities and student implementation process carried out by 29 Mayıs University as the coordinating institution of the project. It provides information on the participants, dates, locations, and content of the activities, supported by visual evidence and relevant documentation.

2. TEACHER TRAINING

The teacher training programme was developed to strengthen teachers' capacity to create inclusive learning environments, particularly for disadvantaged students and those from migrant backgrounds affected by war and displacement. It also aimed to enhance teachers' ability to integrate digital tools and resources into their teaching practices and to effectively use comics and digital comics as innovative educational materials.

The DICOMI teacher training curriculum consisted of ten classroom implementation modules and an additional introductory module, Module 0. While the ten modules were designed to support classroom practice, Module 0 provided foundational knowledge on inclusion, digitalisation, and the pedagogical use of comics. It introduced key concepts and practical strategies that teachers could apply not only during the implementation of DICOMI modules but also across a wide range of subjects. The module was designed as a cross-curricular resource applicable to disciplines including history, language education, mathematics, science, and physical education.

Prior to the training, project partners identified schools willing to participate in the implementation phase. Teachers who volunteered to deliver the DICOMI modules were invited to attend the training programme in order to ensure high-quality implementation and maximise the impact on students. A public middle school in Sancaktepe, Istanbul agreed to implement the DICOMI modules with a seventh-grade class during the 2025–2026 academic year. In addition, a teacher from a private school expressed interest in the programme and participated in the training activities.



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The training was scheduled during the summer break to enable teachers to participate without competing school responsibilities and to dedicate sufficient time to professional development. Two teachers representing different school types attended the online training sessions held between 20 and 21 July 2025. The programme was delivered remotely and was completed with the full participation of both the teachers and the trainers.

2.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

One teacher participating in teacher training was social studies teacher working at a state school in Kucukcekmece, İstanbul, Türkiye. The other participant was a special education teacher working in İzmir, Türkiye. They were both male teachers and both of them had Master's degrees. In their undergraduate and graduate degrees, both teachers took Comics in Education course from Genç Osman İlhan, the coordinator of the Dicomi Project. They both had previous knowledge and experience in designing educational comics. They were both interested in the project as they had students whose families migrated in their classrooms.

2.2. TRAINING EFFECT ON DIGITAL SKILLS

The DICOMI teacher training programme contributed significantly to the development of the participants' digital competences by introducing them to a range of digital tools and methodologies for creating, adapting, and implementing digital comics in educational settings. The social studies teacher reported that the training expanded her understanding of how digital storytelling and comic creation tools could be integrated into citizenship, history, and migration-related topics. She noted that the training moved beyond basic technology use and demonstrated how digital tools could be employed to promote student engagement, critical thinking, and intercultural understanding. Reflecting on her experience, he stated: *"Before the training, I mainly used digital tools for presentations and communication. DICOMI showed me how students can become creators of digital content and use comics to explore complex social issues from different perspectives."*

The special education teacher emphasized that the training improved his ability to select and adapt digital resources to meet diverse learning needs. He found the visual and interactive nature of digital comics particularly valuable for supporting student participation, communication, and comprehension. The teacher also highlighted that the training increased his confidence in using digital applications that make learning more accessible and engaging for students with different abilities and learning profiles. According to him, *"The comic creation tools were easy to use and highly adaptable. I can now design activities that allow students with different learning needs to express themselves creatively and participate more actively in lessons."* Overall, both participants



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reported increased confidence in using digital technologies and recognized the potential of digital comics as an inclusive and innovative educational approach.

2.3. TEACHERS' REACTION TO COMICS IN EDUCATION

The DICOMI teacher training programme enhanced participants' understanding of comics as an effective instructional tool that can support inclusion, literacy development, and civic learning. The social studies teacher reported that the training helped him recognize the educational value of comics beyond their traditional use as entertainment. He emphasized that comics can make complex social issues such as migration, identity, diversity, and citizenship more accessible to students while encouraging empathy and critical reflection. According to the teacher, the visual narratives and relatable characters presented opportunities for students from different backgrounds to engage in meaningful discussions and express their perspectives. As he explained, *"I realized that comics are a powerful way to teach citizenship and social issues. They help students understand different experiences, discuss sensitive topics more openly, and develop empathy for others."*

The special education teacher highlighted that comics provide an inclusive learning medium that supports literacy and participation among students with diverse learning needs. He observed that the combination of visuals and text can reduce barriers to comprehension and increase students' motivation to read, communicate, and collaborate. The teacher also noted that comic-based activities create opportunities for students to share their own experiences and strengthen their sense of belonging within the classroom. Reflecting on the training, he stated, *"Comics make learning more accessible because students can follow ideas through both images and text. They are especially effective for improving literacy skills while giving every student a voice in the learning process."* Both participants agreed that comics represent a highly effective pedagogical tool for fostering inclusion, supporting literacy development, and promoting civic skills such as perspective-taking, dialogue, and respect for diversity.

2.4. TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES/REACTIONS ON MIGRATION AND EDUCATION

The DICOMI teacher training programme increased participants' awareness of the educational implications of migration and forced displacement, particularly in relation to students affected by the wars in Ukraine and Syria. Both teachers reported that the training helped them better understand the challenges migrant and refugee students may encounter in schools, including language barriers, social exclusion, interrupted schooling, and emotional difficulties associated with displacement. The social studies teacher emphasized that the training provided practical ways to address these topics in the classroom while promoting empathy, intercultural understanding, and respect for diversity. He



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noted that migration is often discussed through statistics and political debates, whereas the DICOMI approach helped humanize these experiences by focusing on personal stories and everyday realities.

Both participants highlighted the unique role of comics in depicting the experiences of war, migration, and resettlement. They explained that the combination of visual narratives and storytelling allowed complex and sensitive issues to be communicated in a way that was both powerful and accessible to students. The social studies teacher stated, *“The comics presented the realities of war and migration in a very strong and memorable way. Students can see the emotions, challenges, and hopes of displaced children rather than simply reading facts about migration.”* He added that this approach has the potential to encourage meaningful classroom discussions about human rights, citizenship, and social responsibility. The teachers agreed that comics can help students engage with difficult topics while maintaining an age-appropriate and supportive learning environment.

The special education teacher emphasized that the visual nature of comics makes it easier for students with diverse learning needs to understand the human consequences of conflict and displacement. He observed that stories related to the wars in Ukraine and Syria can sometimes be difficult for students to comprehend through traditional texts alone, whereas comics provide a more accessible and emotionally engaging format. Reflecting on the training, he explained, *“The visual stories made the impact of war and migration much more visible. Comics allow students to connect with the experiences of others, develop empathy, and better understand why inclusion and support are so important in schools.”* Overall, both teachers reported that the training strengthened their capacity to address migration-related issues in education and convinced them that comic-based learning is an effective tool for fostering empathy, inclusion, and awareness of the experiences of children affected by war and displacement.

3. ANALYSIS OF STUDENT IMPLEMENTATION

The student implementation phase involved the delivery of the ten DICOMI modules in a classroom setting. Teachers who had completed the training programme were invited to implement the modules using the educational materials and digital comics developed within the project. However, only one teacher was able to obtain the necessary approval from the school administration to carry out the implementation. As a result, the DICOMI modules were delivered in a seventh-grade classroom in Küçükçekmece, Istanbul, involving 25 students.

The participating teacher received all relevant project resources, including instructional materials, printed documents, and ongoing support from the project team. The schedule and frequency of implementation were aligned with the school's curriculum requirements and lesson timetable. All ten

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modules were integrated into social studies lessons and were delivered directly by the trained teacher throughout the implementation period.

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The participants of Dicomi implementation were 7th grade students in a public school in Sancaktepe, Istanbul, Türkiye. Their ages varied between 10-11. Among the 25 participant students, 14 were female and 11 were male students. They all lived in Istanbul, Türkiye.

3.2. DIGITAL SKILLS

One of the key objectives of the DICOMI implementation was to strengthen students' digital competences through meaningful and engaging learning experiences. Throughout the implementation process, the teacher integrated the digital comics and online resources developed within the project into classroom activities. Although the technological infrastructure of the school was limited, the classroom was equipped with a smart board, which enabled students to interact with the digital comics in a visually rich format. According to the teacher, students reacted very positively when they first encountered the comics on the smart board. The colourful visuals, digital storytelling elements, and realistic characters immediately attracted their attention and increased their engagement with the lessons. The teacher observed that students remained highly focused during the activities and demonstrated a strong interest in the digital materials used throughout the modules.

All ten DICOMI modules included digital components designed to improve students' digital literacy and familiarity with educational technologies. Students interacted with digital comics, explored multimedia content, and participated in activities that required them to use digital resources for learning. A particularly valuable experience was the introduction of digital comic creation. After being introduced to the DICOMI comics and receiving guidance on comic design, students were encouraged to create their own short digital comics using the Pixton platform. Many students continued experimenting with the tool outside school hours and produced additional comics at home, demonstrating increased confidence in using digital applications for creative expression. Through these activities, students developed skills related to digital content creation, visual communication, online navigation, and the responsible use of digital tools.

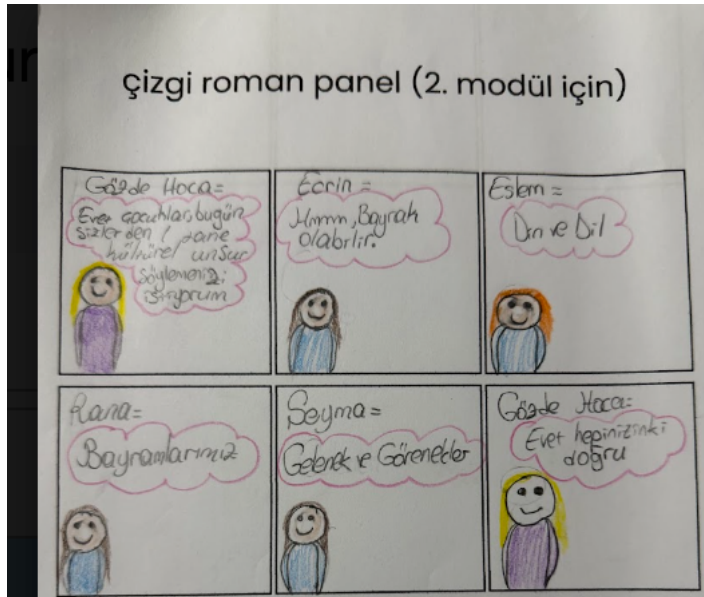
The implementation also familiarized students with digital assessment environments. Both the pre-test and post-test questionnaires were administered through Google Forms, allowing students to gain experience with online data-entry tools and digital surveys. Since the forms were completed at home, parents were often involved in the process, creating an additional opportunity for digital

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engagement within families. Feedback collected from students indicated positive developments in their perceived digital skills. The majority of students reported increased confidence in using digital tools, creating digital content, and accessing online learning materials after participating in the DİCOMİ activities. These findings suggest that the project successfully contributed to the enhancement of students' digital competences while simultaneously supporting creativity, communication, and active participation in learning.

3.3. STUDENTS' REACTION TO COMICS IN EDUCATION

Students were already familiar with comics prior to the implementation, with 55% reporting that they enjoyed reading them (Figure 1). In addition, over 50% of participants stated that they had previous experience reading comics before taking part in the project activities (Figure 2). Following the implementation of the DİCOMİ modules, the proportion of students who expressed a positive attitude towards comics increased to 80% (Figure 3). Furthermore, more than 75% of students reported reading comics outside the classroom and at home (Figure 4). These findings suggest that the implementation not only strengthened students' interest in comics but also encouraged comic reading as a regular activity beyond the school environment.





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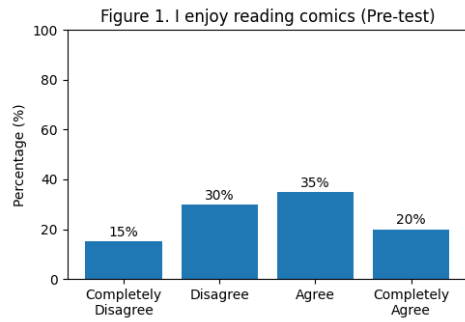


Figure 1. Like/dislike comics pre-test

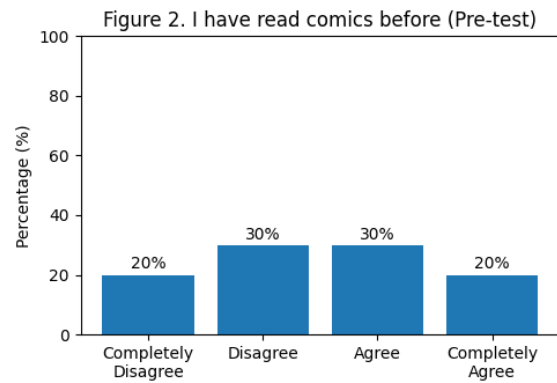


Figure 2. Reading comics pre-test

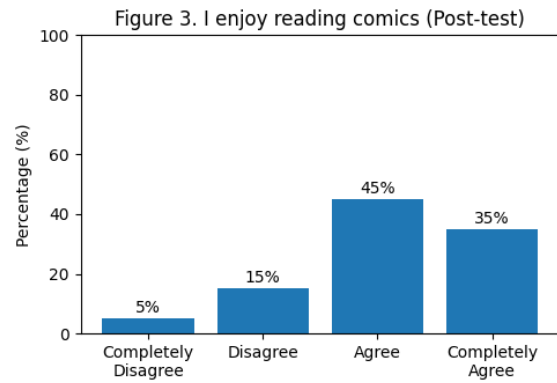


Figure 3. Like/dislike comics post test

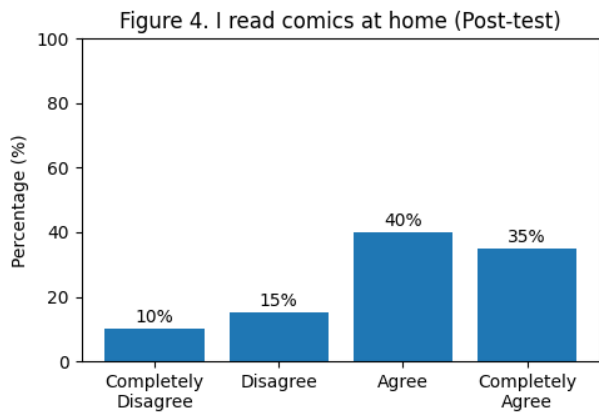


Figure 4. Reading comics post test

The implementation process also influenced students' perceptions of the educational value of comics. Prior to the DICOMI activities, more than 60% of students agreed that comics were primarily a source of entertainment (Figure 5). Following the implementation, students' views became more nuanced, with over 50% disagreeing with the statement that "Comics are only for fun" (Figure 6). This shift suggests that students increasingly recognized comics as educational tools that can support learning, reflection, and discussion. A considerable proportion of students remained undecided, which may reflect their growing awareness that comics can serve both recreational and pedagogical purposes. As a result of their experiences with the DICOMI modules, students appeared to develop a broader understanding of the role that comics can play in education.

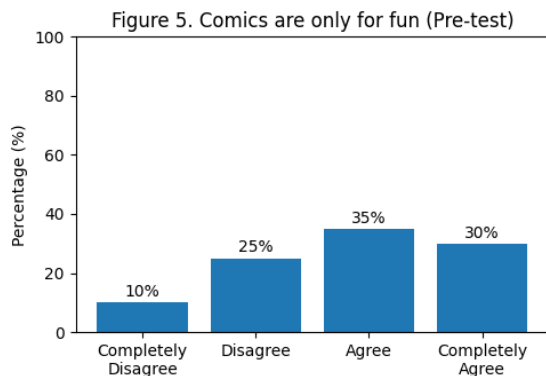


Figure 5. Comics only for fun pre-test

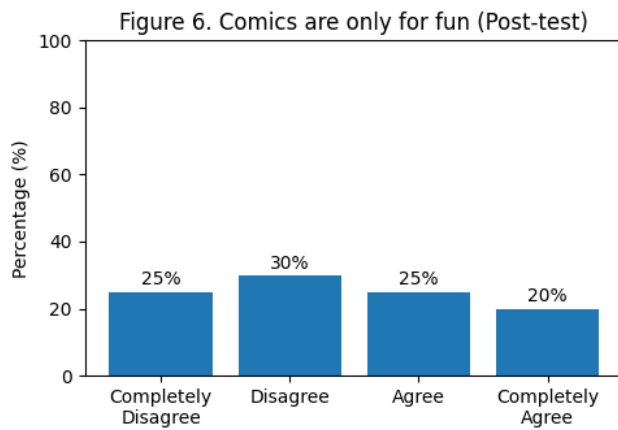
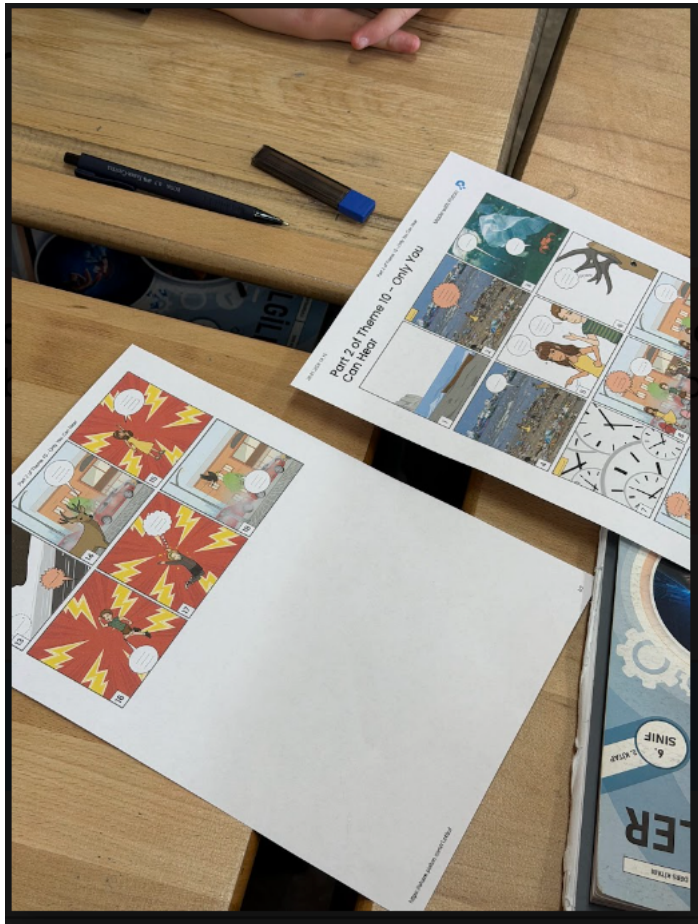


Figure 6. Comics only for fun post-test

3.4. EMPATHY AND SOCIAL SKILLS FOR MIGRATION (STUDENTS)

The implementation of the DICOMI modules had a positive impact on students' empathy towards migrants and refugees. Through digital comics presenting stories of children and families affected by migration, displacement, and conflict, students were encouraged to view migration from a human perspective rather than as an abstract social issue. The visual narratives enabled students to better understand the emotions, challenges, and aspirations of people who are forced to leave their homes. Classroom discussions revealed that many students became more aware of the difficulties migrants face when adapting to a new country, learning a new language, and building new social relationships. As one student reflected, *"When I read the comics, I imagined how difficult it would be to leave my home and start a new life somewhere else. I felt sorry for the children who had to do that."*

The modules also contributed to the development of students' perspective-taking skills, an important component of empathy and social competence. By following the experiences of comic characters from different cultural and social backgrounds, students were encouraged to consider situations from viewpoints other than their own. Activities requiring students to discuss emotions, motivations, and possible solutions to challenges faced by migrant children helped strengthen their ability to understand and respect diverse experiences. One student explained, *"The comics helped me see that migrant children have feelings and dreams just like us. We should try to understand them before judging them."* Such reflections suggest that the DICOMI activities fostered more positive attitudes towards diversity and social inclusion.



The implementation further supported the development of students' social skills by promoting communication, collaboration, and respectful dialogue. Throughout the modules, students worked together on group tasks, discussed migration-related scenarios, and shared their opinions about the stories presented in the comics. These activities created opportunities for students to practice listening to different perspectives, expressing their ideas respectfully, and cooperating with classmates. Teachers observed that students became more willing to engage in conversations about diversity and inclusion and demonstrated greater sensitivity towards the experiences of others. The collaborative nature of the activities helped create a classroom atmosphere in which all students felt encouraged to participate and contribute.

A particularly important outcome of the implementation was the strengthening of inclusive attitudes within the classroom. Students increasingly recognized that everyone deserves equal respect and opportunities regardless of their background, nationality, or migration experience. Many participants reported that the comics helped them understand the importance of welcoming newcomers and supporting peers who may feel excluded. As one student stated, *"If a migrant student came to our class, I would want them to feel accepted because everyone should feel that they belong."* Another student commented, *"The comics showed that our differences make us stronger. We can learn many things from people who come from different places."* These responses indicate that DICOMI



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successfully promoted empathy, social skills, and inclusive values while encouraging students to view diversity as a positive aspect of school and society.

The quantitative findings further demonstrate the positive impact of the DICOMI implementation on students' understanding of migration and their ability to empathize with people who are forced to relocate. Prior to the implementation, 55% of students agreed with the statement that "Nobody should leave their country" (Figure 9), reflecting a limited understanding of the circumstances that may compel individuals and families to migrate. Following the implementation of the DICOMI modules, students' perspectives became more informed and empathetic. More than 50% of participants disagreed with the same statement in the post-test (Figure 10), suggesting that they had developed a greater awareness of the social, economic, and political factors that can make migration unavoidable. These findings indicate that the DICOMI activities helped students move beyond simplistic views of migration and fostered a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of migrants and refugees.

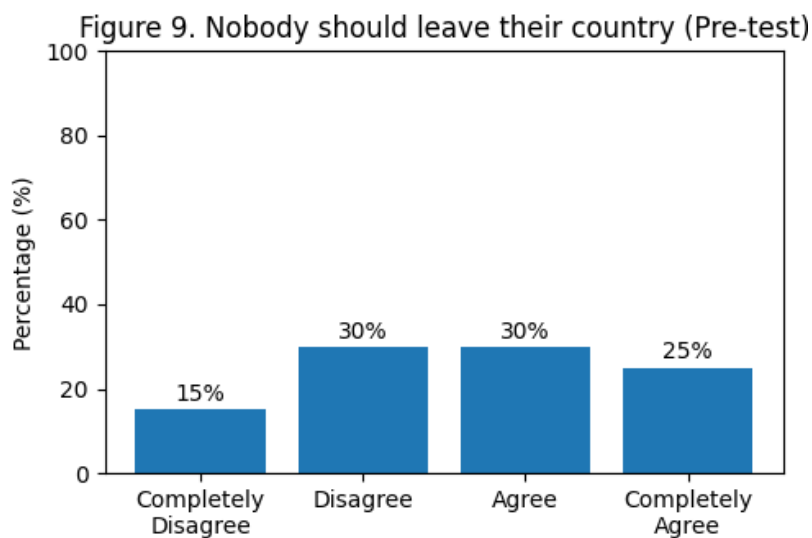


Figure 9. Nobody should leave their country pre-test

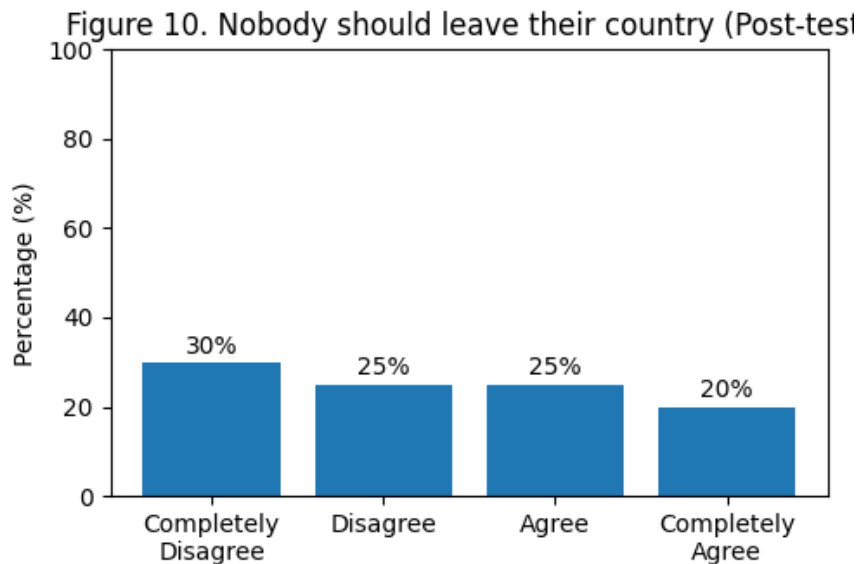


Figure 10. Nobody should leave their country post-test

4. CONCLUSION

The DICOMI teacher training and student implementation activities were successfully carried out, involving two teachers and a seventh-grade class of 25 students. The training programme strengthened teachers' competences in inclusive education, digital pedagogy, and the educational use of comics. Both participating teachers emphasized that the modules provided practical and innovative approaches for addressing migration-related topics in the classroom while simultaneously supporting students' digital and social development. They particularly appreciated the interdisciplinary nature of the materials and the opportunities provided to discuss migration, diversity, and inclusion through engaging and age-appropriate learning activities. The teachers also highlighted the value of receiving professional development in an area that is often underrepresented in conventional teacher training programmes.

The student implementation phase demonstrated the effectiveness of DICOMI in achieving its three main objectives: promoting the educational use of comics, enhancing digital competences, and fostering social inclusion. Students showed increasing interest in comics throughout the implementation process and developed a greater appreciation of comics as tools for learning rather than merely sources of entertainment. The use of digital comics, online assessments, and comic-creation activities enabled students to engage with educational technologies in meaningful ways and strengthened their confidence in using digital tools for communication and creative expression.



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Students actively participated in digital learning activities both in school and at home, extending the impact of the project beyond the classroom environment.

The findings further indicate that DICOMI contributed positively to students' empathy, understanding of migration, and inclusive attitudes. Through stories depicting the experiences of migrants and refugees, particularly those affected by conflict and displacement, students developed a deeper awareness of the challenges faced by individuals who are forced to leave their homes. Changes observed in the pre- and post-test results suggest that students became more open-minded towards migration and more willing to consider the social realities that can make migration necessary. Classroom discussions, student reflections, and learning products also revealed increased empathy, respect for diversity, and a stronger commitment to welcoming and supporting peers from different backgrounds.

Overall, the results demonstrate that DICOMI provides an effective educational approach for combining digital learning, comic-based pedagogy, and inclusive education. Both the qualitative feedback from teachers and students and the quantitative findings from the evaluation process indicate that the project successfully supported digital skill development, strengthened the pedagogical use of comics, and promoted empathy and social inclusion. The positive outcomes achieved during both the teacher training and student implementation phases suggest that the DICOMI modules represent a valuable and transferable resource for schools seeking to address migration, diversity, and inclusion through innovative educational practices.