





WP4 – SMALL SCALE MEETINGS REPORT

GIRES-GLOBAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION and SCHOLARSHIP

THE NETHERLANDS

Erasmus+ KA220-SCH Strategic Partnership in School Education

-DICOMI-

DIGITAL COMICS OF MIGRATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the DICOMI – Digital Comics of Migration project, GIRES – Global Institute for Research Education & Scholarship, based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, organised two small-scale stakeholder meetings under Work Package 4 – Recommendation Programme.

The purpose of these meetings was to present and discuss the work carried out by GIRES within DICOMI and to collect feedback from stakeholders on the project's educational, social, digital, and methodological value. The meetings provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the digital comics, the learning modules, the use of real migration stories, the creation of the oral archive, and the possible future development of the programme.

The stakeholders were invited to share their views on how they understood the DICOMI approach, how useful they found the materials, what aspects of the programme could be improved, and how its outputs could be used in schools, families, teacher training, and wider educational or policy contexts.

The GIRES meetings placed particular emphasis on one of the most distinctive aspects of DICOMI: the fact that the comics and educational materials are rooted in actual stories and lived experiences of people with migration backgrounds. Stakeholders considered this a major strength of the project. They noted that the use of real testimonies gives the materials authenticity, emotional depth, and educational credibility.

The meetings also highlighted the importance of the oral archive created through the project. Stakeholders were impressed by the richness and quality of the collected testimonies and underlined that the archive should be seen not only as a source for the current comics, but also as a valuable resource for future educational, cultural, and research activities. Several participants observed that the archive contains enough material and potential to support a possible continuation of the project, including a future DICOMI 2.

Therefore, the GIRES small-scale meetings confirmed both the relevance of the common DICOMI approach and the need to further develop the project's most innovative dimensions: testimonial learning, visual storytelling, digital education, and inclusive classroom dialogue.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The small-scale meetings organised by GIRES brought together a total of 30 stakeholders. The first meeting was held face to face with 8 participants. The second meeting followed a hybrid format, with 10 participants attending in person and 8 participants participating online. This format allowed GIRES to include both local stakeholders and participants who were able to contribute remotely.

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In detail:

- First Meeting: 8 participants
- Second Meeting: 18 participants, including 8 participants attending in person and 10 participants joining online on open call.

A total of 26 participants attended the meetings.

(This hybrid format also reflected a wider post-COVID tendency in the Netherlands, where many stakeholders increasingly prefer to attend professional and educational events remotely when this option is available. In addition, GIRES fully respected participants' privacy and GDPR requirements and since most of participants did not consent to the public use of identifiable images, the faces of all participants and adults were blurred in all visual documentation intended for reporting or dissemination.)

Participants included individuals with an interest in education, migration, inclusion, digital learning, intercultural dialogue, youth work, research, and creative pedagogical methods. Their different professional and educational backgrounds allowed the discussion to cover several perspectives, including classroom use, social inclusion, digital innovation, family engagement, migration awareness, and policy relevance.

The stakeholders were not involved as passive observers. They were invited to respond to the DICOMI work critically and constructively. They discussed what they found effective, what could be strengthened, and how the DICOMI materials could be adapted for different educational contexts.

The diversity of the participants was important for the meeting. Since DICOMI addresses migration and inclusion, it was necessary to collect feedback from people who could understand the project from different positions: as educators, researchers, community actors, cultural mediators, and people familiar with diverse learning environments.

Participants showed particular interest in the connection between real-life stories and educational comics. They appreciated that the project did not approach migration only as a general topic, but through personal experiences transformed into visual and digital learning materials. This helped the discussion move beyond general comments on digital education and towards deeper reflections on testimony, memory, empathy, and responsible storytelling.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE MEETING

During the meetings, GIRES presented the main aims and outputs of the DICOMI project. The discussion included the project methodology, the digital comics, the learning modules, the oral archive,

and the wider educational purpose of using comics to address migration, diversity, empathy, and inclusion.

Stakeholders responded positively to the overall concept of DICOMI. They found the project relevant because it addresses migration in a way that is accessible, human-centred, and suitable for educational settings. Participants noted that migration is often discussed through statistics, political debates, or simplified narratives. In contrast, DICOMI presents migration through stories, emotions, memories, and personal experiences.

A central point of discussion was the use of real testimonies. Stakeholders found it very important that the comics were based on actual stories from people. They considered this one of the strongest and most original elements of the project. In their view, this gives the materials a different quality from fictional scenarios because students and teachers can understand that the stories are connected to lived realities.

Participants also highlighted that the testimonial foundation of DICOMI creates a more respectful and meaningful educational experience. The comics do not speak about migrants from a distance. Instead, they give space to experiences of movement, adaptation, identity, loss, resilience, family, language, memory, and belonging.

Another important point raised during the meetings was the quality of the oral archive developed within the project. Stakeholders were impressed by the richness of the collected material and by the possibility of using it in different ways in the future. They noted that the archive should not be treated only as a background resource, but as one of the major intellectual and educational achievements of DICOMI.

Participants observed that the oral archive contains much more material than could be included in the current comics and modules. This was seen as a clear opportunity for future development. Stakeholders suggested that the archive could support new comics, additional learning activities, teacher-training resources, digital exhibitions, audio-visual materials, research outputs, and a possible DICOMI 2.

The meetings also generated useful feedback on possible improvements. Stakeholders suggested that future versions of the programme could include clearer teacher guidance, more flexible classroom activities, short explanatory notes on the real-story basis of the comics, and more opportunities for students to respond creatively to the materials. They also underlined that the project could be strengthened by connecting the comics more explicitly with family dialogue and wider community engagement.

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Overall, the meeting showed that stakeholders understood DICOMI not only as a project about digital comics, but as a broader educational model. They saw it as a way of connecting lived experience, oral history, visual storytelling, digital learning, and inclusive education.

3.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Stakeholders considered the DICOMI materials highly relevant for students because they offer an accessible way to engage with migration and inclusion. The comic format was seen as particularly useful for young learners, as it combines images, text, emotion, and narrative development.

Participants recommended that students should not only read the comics, but also be encouraged to reflect on them actively. They suggested that classroom activities should guide students to think about the feelings, choices, fears, hopes, and challenges of the characters.

Stakeholders underlined that the use of real stories can help students understand migration as a human experience rather than as an abstract topic. This was considered especially important in classrooms where students may have different levels of knowledge or personal connection to migration.

The following recommendations were identified:

- Students should be encouraged to discuss the stories through guided reflection questions.
- Activities should help students understand the emotional and social dimensions of migration.
- The comics should be used to support empathy, perspective-taking, and respectful dialogue.
- Students should be invited to compare different experiences of migration without creating stereotypes.
- Creative response activities should be included, such as drawings, short written reflections, classroom posters, digital storyboards, or group discussions.
- Students should be encouraged to think about inclusion and belonging in their own school environment.
- The real-story basis of the comics should be explained carefully so students understand the testimonial value of the material.

Stakeholders also proposed a more innovative student-centred approach based on three steps: listening, reflecting, and creating. First, students encounter a story based on lived experience. Then

they reflect on its emotional and social meaning. Finally, they create their own response through writing, drawing, discussion, or digital media.

This approach would help students move from passive reading to active learning. It would also allow them to develop empathy, creativity, communication skills, and social awareness.

3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAMILIES

Stakeholders emphasised that families can play an important role in extending the impact of the DICOMI learning programme beyond the classroom. Since migration, memory, identity, and belonging are often connected to family experiences, participants suggested that the project could create more opportunities for family engagement.

The comic format was considered suitable for this purpose because it is accessible and can be understood by people with different educational, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds. Stakeholders noted that comics can open conversations at home in a less formal and less intimidating way than traditional educational texts.

The following recommendations were identified:

- Families could be informed about the aims of the DICOMI programme before or during school implementation.
- Selected comics could be shared with parents or guardians as optional home-reading material.
- Schools could organise informal family sessions around themes such as migration, memory, diversity, and inclusion.
- Parents could be invited to discuss how stories help young people understand different life experiences.
- 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.

Stakeholders also noted that DICOMI can help build bridges between school and home. When students discuss the stories with their families, the project can encourage intergenerational dialogue and help families reflect on migration, belonging, and cultural diversity.

However, participants stressed that family involvement should be handled carefully. Not all families may wish to speak publicly about migration or personal experiences. Therefore, DICOMI should offer opportunities for dialogue without creating pressure or exposure.

3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Stakeholders agreed that teachers are central to the successful use of the DICOMI materials. The comics and modules have strong educational potential, but their impact depends on how teachers introduce, guide, and contextualise them in the classroom.

Participants recommended that teachers should continue receiving practical guidance on how to use the materials, especially because migration can be a sensitive topic. Teachers need support not only in using the digital platform or comics, but also in moderating discussions around identity, exclusion, displacement, belonging, and empathy.

The following recommendations were identified:

- Teachers could use the comics to compare different migration experiences across several stories, helping students recognise both shared challenges and different personal journeys.

- Teachers could organise peer-to-peer dialogue sessions, where students discuss selected themes in small groups before sharing their observations with the wider class.

- Teachers could connect the stories with broader classroom topics, such as stereotypes, discrimination, language barriers, friendship, adaptation, and the meaning of belonging.

- Teachers could use the comics as starting points for classroom debates on inclusion, focusing on how schools can become more welcoming environments for all students.

- Teachers could guide students to examine the role of memory in the stories and reflect on how personal memories shape identity, family history, and cultural understanding.

- Teachers could use the real-story basis of the comics to introduce the idea of ethical listening, helping students understand how to listen to someone's experience with respect, without judgement, simplification, or stereotyping.

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- Teachers could connect the DICOMI stories with local realities by inviting students to reflect on migration, diversity, and inclusion in their own city, neighborhood, or school community.

- Teachers could work with selected keywords from the comics, such as home, fear, hope, language, border, family, friendship, loss, and belonging, and ask students to explore how these words change meaning across different migration stories.

- Teachers could identify students who engage strongly with the materials and involve them in peer-led or school-level awareness activities, such as presenting DICOMI themes to other classes or supporting intercultural dialogue initiatives.

- Teachers could collect students' reflections on what themes, experiences, or perspectives they feel are missing from the current materials, using this feedback to inform possible future DICOMI resources or a DICOMI 2.

Stakeholders also suggested that teachers should be encouraged to present the comics as part of a broader testimonial learning process. This means that students are not only reading stories, but learning how to listen to experiences, interpret them respectfully, and respond thoughtfully.

Participants considered this one of the strongest possible contributions of DICOMI. It offers teachers a way to address migration through human stories without reducing the topic to statistics, stereotypes, or political debate.

3.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION MAKERS

Stakeholders considered that the DICOMI project has relevance beyond individual classrooms. They suggested that decision makers in education should recognise the value of digital comics, oral history, and testimony-based learning as serious educational tools.

Participants noted that migration, inclusion, and intercultural understanding are important themes for contemporary European education. DICOMI offers a practical and creative way to address these themes while also strengthening digital and visual literacy.

The following recommendations were identified:

- Decision makers should support the use of creative and digital methods for teaching migration and inclusion.

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- Testimony-based educational resources should be recognised as valuable tools for intercultural learning.
- Schools should be encouraged to use materials that combine empathy, digital skills, and social awareness.
- Teacher-training programmes should include guidance on how to address migration through stories and visual materials.
- Educational institutions should support the long-term use of project outputs after the end of the project.
- Cooperation between schools, universities, research organisations, cultural institutions, and civil society should be strengthened.
- Future funding and project development could support a continuation of DICOMI based on the oral archive.

Stakeholders placed particular emphasis on the potential of the oral archive. They suggested that decision makers should understand the archive as a resource with long-term educational and cultural value. It could support future modules, exhibitions, teacher resources, public-history activities, and research-based educational tools.

Several participants highlighted that the richness of the archive provides a strong basis for a possible DICOMI 2. Such a continuation could expand the number of stories, develop new comics, create more classroom activities, and explore additional digital formats.

Stakeholders also noted that DICOMI contributes to wider European priorities, including inclusion, digital transformation, citizenship education, cultural diversity, and social cohesion.

3. CONCLUSION

The small-scale stakeholder meetings organised by GIRES in Amsterdam provided valuable feedback on the work carried out within the DICOMI project. Stakeholders responded positively to the project's aims, materials, and methodology, and recognised its relevance for education, migration awareness, digital learning, and inclusive classroom practice.

The meetings confirmed that digital comics can be effective tools for discussing complex and sensitive topics with students. Stakeholders found the comics accessible, engaging, and suitable for encouraging reflection on migration, diversity, empathy, identity, and belonging.

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A particularly important finding was the strong appreciation of the fact that DICOMI uses actual stories and lived experiences. Stakeholders considered this one of the project's most valuable and innovative features. The real-story basis of the comics gives the materials authenticity and helps students understand migration as a human experience rather than as an abstract concept.

The meetings also highlighted the exceptional value of the oral archive created through the project. Stakeholders were impressed by the quality and richness of the testimonies and noted that the archive has significant potential for future educational, cultural, and research activities. They observed that there is enough material to support additional outputs and possibly a future DICOMI 2.

The feedback also identified areas for improvement. Stakeholders recommended clearer teacher guidance, more student reflection activities, stronger links with family engagement, and further development of the oral archive as a long-term resource.

Overall, the GIRES meetings showed that DICOMI is not only a digital comics project, but a wider educational approach that connects testimony, visual storytelling, digital learning, and inclusion. The project has strong potential for sustainability and future development, especially if the oral archive continues to be used as a foundation for new materials, new activities, and new forms of testimonial learning.

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