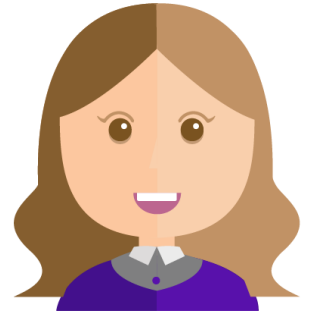
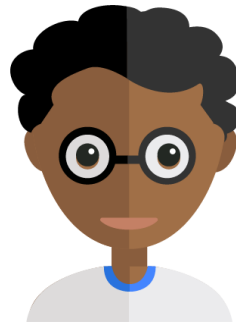
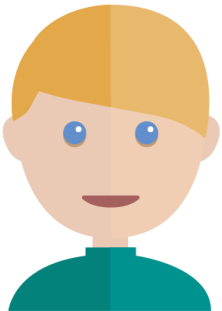




ODISSEU



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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Transnational Impact Assessment Report & Policy
Recommendations
Compiled by Kopin



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Introduction

This Transnational Impact Assessment and Policy Recommendations Report was developed in the framework of the project “**Online gaming and Digital tools to promote the asylum seekers Integration and increase awareneSS amongst schools of the refugees' crisis in Europe - ODISSEU**”, co-financed by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The action has been implemented by a consortium of six organisations from different EU countries: **Oxfam Italy** (Italy), **Meath Partnership** (Ireland), **ILI-FAU** (Germany), **CARDET** (Cyprus), **UPIT** (Romania) and **Kopin** (Malta).

The goal of the ODISSEU project has been to produce a holistic and inclusive Online Simulation Game to explain forced migration, which would allow broad participation across the whole school, including integration into the curriculum, provision for skills development and shifts in pedagogy and mindset by participating teachers, and a genuine involvement of asylum seekers as active agents of change throughout the project.

This report was elaborated by Kopin, through the compilation and analysis of the main findings from the National Impact Assessment and Policy Recommendations Reports provided by the partner organisations.

The aim of the Transnational Impact Assessment Report and Policy Recommendations is to assess and build on the outcomes from the previous Intellectual Outputs realised within the project and to produce a set of policy recommendations for policy makers to assist them in achieving the following:

- Through education, to promote humanist and civic values, freedom of thought and expression, social inclusion and respect for others, as well as to prevent and tackle discrimination in all its forms;
- To assist young people and asylum seekers - in close cooperation with refugee communities, parents and families - to become active, responsible, open-minded members of society.

This report consists of two parts:

1. ODISSEU Project's Impact Assessment
2. Policy Recommendations

The first part of the report is based on data obtained from questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with target beneficiaries and partners who took part in project activities. This part offers an overview of the project activities' impact on beneficiaries vis-à-vis the needs identified through the needs assessment carried out at the beginning of the project and explores how the project objectives have been met, including best practices, benefits and experiences of participants.

The second part of the report offers an overview of the policies, strategies and practices focusing on the themes addressed within ODISSEU at national level, and presents a set of transnational policy recommendations resulting from recommendations collected at national level.





1. ODISSEU Project's Impact Assessment

Overview of the activities realised within ODISSEU at National level with direct beneficiaries and information on feedback collection

Within the ODISSEU project, a number of Intellectual Outputs were developed as follows:

IO1: Needs Assessment

IO2: Curriculum and Storyboards for the Game

IO3: Digital Manual for Teachers

IO4: ODISSEU Game

IO5: E-library of real-life stories of refugees and asylum seekers

As part of the realisation process for each Intellectual Output, partners regularly collected feedback from National Peer Groups comprising target beneficiaries of the project (teachers, students and refugees and asylum seekers) as well as other relevant stakeholders as needed.

Furthermore, activities with direct beneficiaries were implemented at national level by each partner organisation. Following the implementation of the activities, standard questionnaires to collect feedback from each category of beneficiaries were administered either in-person or through online means.

This impact assessment report is based on the analysis of feedback collected through online questionnaires filled in by participants to project activities (training for teachers, pilot testing of resources with students and a storytelling training with asylum seekers and refugees) as well as through Peer Groups and other relevant meetings.

Training for teachers

Training sessions for middle and secondary school teachers and educators were carried out in Italy, Malta, Cyprus, Romania, Germany and Ireland by project partners. The sessions focused on the use of the ODISSEU game and resources developed, specifically the Digital Manual for Teachers and the Curriculum. All training sessions took place online between September and December 2020.

The first training sessions were carried out over two days in **Germany** and **Cyprus** in September, with a total of 22 and 20 participants, respectively. A 2-day online training took place in October in **Romania**, with 42 between teachers and educators coming from 17 different schools from two different counties. A total of 16 teachers and educators from different middle and secondary schools took part in two training sessions organised online in **Malta** between November and December. In **Italy** and **Ireland**, the teacher training was





conducted in December over the course of two sessions, with a total of 23 teachers from three secondary schools in Italy and 15 participants overall from Ireland.

Pilot testing of resources with students

A series of pilot testing of the ODISSEU resources (the online game, as well as activities from the Digital Manual and the Curriculum) was carried out in the countries of the project with middle and secondary school students, either by trained teachers or with the support of ODISSEU partner organisations.

In **Ireland**, a pilot testing session with students was held on 3rd March with 14 participants; furthermore, all teachers who had taken part in the teacher training committed to testing the online game with their students. Feedback was collected via phone calls with the teachers, with this further testing reaching 33 additional students. In **Malta**, pilot testing of the ODISSEU Game and resources in the classroom was carried out through teachers and educators who participated in the training in the spring semester of 2021. A total of 28 middle school students' questionnaires (average age between 11 and 13 years old) were received by May.

On the 4th of May, the ODISSEU game was tested with a total of 46 pupils from grades 5 and 7 (average age between 12 and 14 years old) in **Germany**. In **Cyprus**, feedback was collected on the pilot testing carried out between April and May by teachers from participating schools; the ODISSEU game was evaluated by a total of 50 pupils through an online questionnaire. In **Italy**, students from a lower secondary school were engaged in ODISSEU testing and activities in class and remotely throughout the scholastic year, with a total of 50 questionnaires collected by May, detailing their feedback on the ODISSEU game and resources.

In **Romania**, three pilot testing sessions of the online game took place in May 2021, involving 53 students from the "Alexandru Odobescu" National College. Teachers who tested the online game with students had previously participated in the training sessions organised within ODISSEU. The piloting activities were held online over the course of three days.

Storytelling workshop with refugees and collection of real-life stories

One of the resources made available through the ODISSEU website consists in an e-library of real-life stories of people who went through forced displacement (asylum seekers and refugees). To this end, the ODISSEU partners organised storytelling workshops and collection of real-life stories with refugees and asylum seekers in each partner country, sometimes in collaboration with local organisations working in adult learning and migration support.

In **Cyprus**, the storytelling workshop was conducted in collaboration with the Migrant Information Centre in Nicosia in May 2021. The workshop took place face-to-face, with





eight participants in total. In **Ireland**, the partner organisation also conducted the workshop in person, in June 2021, with a total of eight participants as well. In **Romania**, the collection of real-life stories of refugees and asylum seekers was carried out through phone conversations with eight participants between March and April 2021, with the support of a partner organisation working within the field of migration.

In **Italy**, the workshop was conducted by operators and educators within two different reception centres in a number of sessions throughout May and June.

In **Germany**, the storytelling workshop took place online in May with a total of 13 between refugees and asylum seekers taking part. Likewise, the workshop was offered online in **Malta**, with a session organised at the end of May with five participants, whilst another real-life story was collected in a separate online session at the beginning of June.

A number of different methodologies were used for the collection of stories, such as the “Tree of Life” method, the Hemingway-inspired six-word story, or using prompts such as images, sounds and videos. Two toolkits were produced with a variety of resources and activities which can be used to implement a storytelling workshop, one targeting adult educators and the other addressing refugees and asylum seekers themselves.

Assessment of ODISSEU activities’ and outputs’ impact on target beneficiaries of the project in relation to needs identified at National level

Following the implementation of the activities, participants were presented with a number of statements - through a physical or online form, or focus group - related to their participation to the activity, as well as the resources developed within the ODISSEU project, to which they were asked to give feedback on a scale from 1 (Completely Disagree) to 5 (Completely Agree). Further qualitative feedback was collected through open-ended questions. Moreover, additional feedback which is presented in this section was collected throughout the project during the Peer Groups’ meetings focusing on specific outputs of ODISSEU.

Impact on teachers

In **Italy**, the teachers’ training was evaluated positively by the participants. At least 70% of the teachers **fully agreed with improved knowledge on issues related to forced migration** as a result of their participation in the activity. The variety of tasks and the large pool of methods were also rated particularly well.

At least 70% of the teachers declared the **teaching and learning materials developed through the project are helpful** in addressing the school curriculum **learning objectives**.

The main strengths of ODISSEU training and teaching tools were identified as follows:

- innovative learning model
- absence of strong generalisations
- mobilisation of young people as catalysts for transformational change





- Pupil-oriented
- entertaining and instructive

It was a shared opinion that the training and teaching tools would require more time to be well developed and included in the curriculum by educators, and ultimately, the restrictions related to Covid-19 did not give teachers the opportunity to explore and test all the activities produced in the project.

Some of the needs identified by teachers at the beginning of the project **Malta** comprised the need for awareness-raising on specific issues related to forced migration among educators and schools staff; the need for more specialised training on the topics for educators themselves; the need to have available resources that adopt a blended approach in addressing forced migration (i.e. digital resources in connection with more participatory learning methodologies) and are easy to use and age-appropriate.

The majority of the respondents from the participants to the teacher training in Malta agreed that the **objectives of the training** (to offer tools to educators in order to address forced migration and combat hate speech in the classroom; to increase students' civic engagement, media literacy and ICT skills; to develop students' intercultural competences) **had been completely or almost completely reached** and assessed positively both the atmosphere as well as the dynamic within the group.

With statements intended to measure the **impact that participation in the ODISSEU activities (training and use of resources) had on the teachers and educators**, once again the majority of respondents highlighted a high to very high level of agreement in relation to the following:

- **Improved level of knowledge on issues related to forced migration**
- Improved skills and knowledge on the use of online tools for teaching and learning
- Provision of **useful teaching tools** to address controversial issues in the classroom
- High quality and **usefulness in terms of addressing learning objectives** of the educational resources developed through ODISSEU
- Developed materials are easy to use and **likely to be integrated during teachers' lessons in class or online**

A somewhat more mixed result in terms of feedback was received for a statement indicating improved understanding of Global Education and participatory learning methodologies, where a little over one third of the respondents indicated their neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement – although the majority still indicated a score between 4 and 5 in terms of agreement with the statement.

In terms of **qualitative feedback**, some strengths identified by the participants for the ODISSEU tools were:

- The fact that the **game was visually appealing**, simple, practical and **user-friendly**
- The flexibility for teachers, who are able to use the different materials developed as needed





- The presence of **accurate information on forced migration** and background readings and information for teachers in the manual
- The fact that all materials are **readily available to be used online**

Moreover, from previous feedback collected during the testing of earlier versions of the resources, teachers generally **expressed positive views in relation to the materials and declared these to be useful within their subjects**, especially in relation to PSCD, Ethics, Social Studies and Citizenship.

In **Germany**, a number of design suggestions for the ODISSEU resources were put forward during the needs assessment phase - the resources were to present simple rules that required little explanation, lack of generalisations, include clear causes for forced migration, be pupil-oriented, entertaining and instructive.

The teacher's manual and the activities were **evaluated very positively by the teachers**. The variety of tasks and methodologies presented within the resources were rated very positively by the participants. Having a **digital tool readily available to be used** represented an added value to educators during the Covid-19 pandemic and laid a foundation for the further use of the materials produced in the project. A more precise adaptation of the resources to the German curriculum (LehrplanPlus) could be further developed.

Within the needs assessment phase, teachers in **Ireland** identified a significant need to raise awareness and “fight” against often inadequate negative approaches to refugees and asylum seekers among secondary school pupils, which arises most of the time from a lack of information about their background, culture and past and creating opinions based on “negative stories” heard from the news or in their home environment. Moreover, teachers had indicated an overall lack of training and continuous professional development in connection with interculturalism.

Teachers taking part in different activities of the project recognised the importance of using **new technologies** in order to introduce their students to the topics of **migration and interculturalism**, as this method has been identified by the students as a preference, and expressed their willingness to incorporate new features and teaching methods in the future, although this will also depend on the flexibility of the curriculums and IT equipment available to the students within the educational institution. The idea of **gamification of topics related to global issues, including migration**, greatly impacted the teachers' view on designing teaching plans and activities on these topics in the future. Moreover, teachers considered and rated the **resources of ODISSEU as very useful** and declared they are going to include them within their teaching in order to raise awareness about migration and interculturalism. The opportunity to take part in activities of the project had a very positive impact on the target group, countering a lack of opportunities for professional development dedicated to these topics. The content of the resources developed and introduced to teachers as part of the project widened their scope of resources available to support their future **professional development** in order to be able to transfer this knowledge and information to their students.





Teachers and educators in **Romania** initially identified the needs for more interactive resources to address the issues of interculturalism and forced migration with students, as well as tools for the educators themselves to better understand the topics and be able to provide support within intercultural classes.

Participants to the training session deemed the activity to have an appropriate and inspiring structure. The topics discussed were judged to have **great applicability in the classroom**, being in accordance with the analytical curriculum of several disciplines (civic education, intercultural education, education for society, Romanian language and literature, English language and literature, biology, geography, leadership, practical skills, history, geography, etc.). Moreover, the materials offered, including the game, were considered to be **easily integrated into existing lessons**. The training session provided teachers with **access to the practical educational tools needed** in the classroom to address the issues of forced migration and integration, with educational resources that were appreciated, considered useful, interesting and complete, as well as adaptable to the students' needs. In particular, teachers noted that the lesson plans **help develop students' skills**, such as communication, language, cooperation, appreciation of human dignity and human rights, the ability to use scientific information in appropriate contexts and to learn. The teachers considered that the activities proposed by the project brought them important benefits in terms of improved **knowledge on the issue of forced migration** as well.

In **Cyprus**, participants evaluated the resources and the activities very positively. Teachers were very happy with the materials produced and the fact that these were **readily available online**, which helped them a lot during the pandemic. They also appreciated the fact that they had the opportunity to go through the material at their own pace.

Impact on students

The ODISSEU project was evaluated positively by the students in **Italy**, following the pilot testing of activities during the lessons. At least **80% of the students fully agreed with the statements presented in the survey**, ranging from impact on their **knowledge on forced migration** and interculturalism to the **development of critical thinking skills and empathy**. The activities were rated positively by an average of 84% of participants.

The ODISSEU project has been able to show **a clear change in attitudes towards the topic of migration in students**. The positive feedback from the students reflects the needs and design preferences identified during the needs assessment phase for the ODISSEU game and materials, which were to help the students understand the causes of forced migration through the first-person experience in the game.

In **Malta**, some of the needs identified for this target group included: the need for awareness-raising on issues related to forced migration; the need to incorporate real-life stories within the game and that educational resources stimulate critical thinking and foster empathy among students; the need for project-based learning and interactive materials for students.





The feedback collected after the pilot testing focused on the impact the activities and game had on students' knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to the issue of forced migration, including aspects such as prejudice, discrimination and hate speech.

In terms of impact on students' **knowledge on the subject of forced migration**, the majority of respondents agreed or completely agreed to the following:

- Over 78% of the respondents indicated that **they had learnt more about the causes of forced migration and issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers**, as a result of their participation to ODISSEU activities and use of the game
- Over 2/3 of the respondents (67.9%) declared they had learnt the difference between a migrant and a refugee
- 75% of the respondents had the opportunity to **learn about different cultures and countries** through the use of ODISSEU materials

When it came to aspects related to **critical thinking and the fostering of empathy** among participating students, the results were as follows:

- Over 70% of respondents indicated that the ODISSEU Game helped them putting themselves into someone else's shoes
- **75% of the students reflected upon issues of inequality and discrimination** as a result of their involvement in ODISSEU
- Over 70% declared their participation to ODISSEU activities made them **reflect upon hate speech and stereotypes towards refugees**
- Over 80% of respondents had the opportunity to **reflect upon their own prejudices** towards a number of issues related to forced migration

Finally, when it came to measuring the level of interest arisen in students by the implementation of activities and use of the ODISSEU Game, **82% of respondents declared the activities interesting**, whilst 75% indicated the ODISSEU Game as interesting for them.

Similarly, in **Germany** students gave an overall positive feedback on the activities and materials following the pilot testing phase. At least **80% of the students fully agreed with the statements** presented in the survey in relation to improvement of knowledge on the topic of **forced migration** as well as **changes in attitudes and critical thinking**. The activities proposed were rated somewhat less positively with an average of 68%. Overall, as it was the case in other countries, the **project outputs were aligned to the needs presented during the assessment phase by the students**, and activities proposed resulted in a change in attitudes on issues related to forced migration.

Students in **Ireland** identified the need to improve their knowledge on the issue of forced migration, as well as to make use of more interactive, online and game-based resources within their learning process, at the beginning of the project.

The outputs of the project resulted to be entirely in line with the needs this target group identified in the first research. The project contributed to **further the development of the students' IT skills in an educational context**, whilst they had the opportunity to learn





about **different reasons of forced migration** and traumatic life events that many refugees and asylum seekers experience and face throughout their journeys. Overall, the activities of the project **raised awareness of the students** about the topic, developed a **higher level of empathy towards refugees and asylum seekers** and provoked curiosity to further explore the topic on educational and personal grounds.

A series of requirements for the ODISSEU game to be useful and interesting to young people were identified by students in **Romania** during the needs assessment phase of the project. These ranged from the game and resources developed to be as realistic as possible to the activities being designed in a way that would offer students the possibility to develop their empathy, decision-making and critical thinking skills.

Overall, throughout the implementation and testing of the project, students provided **favourable feedback to the game and resources offered** during the Peer Group meetings, including remarks on the simple structure of the game and user interface. Moreover, following the pilot testing of activities in the classroom, students declared their participation in this **improved their knowledge on the issue of forced migration**, by providing accurate information through the use of real-life stories. Students **reflected on their own prejudices towards refugees** and asylum seekers and showed an **increased level of empathy** as a result of their involvement in the ODISSEU activities.

In **Cyprus**, students participating in the pilot testing gave an **overall positive feedback** and rated the interactive game as interesting in **80% of the questionnaires**.

Participating students mentioned an **increased awareness about refugees and issues of migration** and expressed an interest in getting to know more about the situation worldwide. Teachers implementing the activities noted that, as a result, **students became more aware and got closer with children from different countries and backgrounds**.

Impact on refugees and asylum seekers

In **Italy**, at least 67% of the respondents declared that, through their participation in the storytelling workshop and the sharing of their story, they felt they **contributed to shaping the narrative on forced migration** in schools and among young people. Furthermore, the respondents believed that sharing their own story can bring a positive change and **help reduce stereotypes and hate speech** towards asylum seekers and refugees.

A total of **83% of the respondents stated that the participation in the workshop was overall a positive experience**. The workshop was evaluated as a safe space where refugees and asylum seekers taking part could share opinions, knowledge, and points of view without feeling judged.

The respondents were grateful for sharing their own stories, as an action for transformational change.

One of the needs identified at the beginning of the project in **Malta**, in relation to the topics of ODISSEU, was to address stereotypes on asylum seekers and refugees by sharing real-life stories to combat discrimination and promote integration





Overall, participants to the storytelling workshop for refugees and asylum seekers in Malta enjoyed the workshop, as this was positively rated in terms of overall experience and the creation of an **interactive safe space**.

All the respondents indicated they agreed to statements regarding the impact their participation to the workshop had in relation to the following aspects:

- The **development of useful personal skills** that can be applied in different situations
- Their active contribution in **shaping education on forced migration** in schools
- The belief that sharing real-life stories can bring about positive change and **combat stereotypes and hate speech** towards asylum seekers and refugees

Most qualitative feedback revolved around the positive experience participants had during the workshop, as well as the methodology used for the collection of their stories, which was appreciated. A further indication of the satisfaction of participants can be found in the fact that they all agreed to share their personal stories as part of the collection of real-life stories on the ODISSEU website for educational and awareness-raising purposes.

In **Germany**, participants were presented with the following statements to be evaluated by participants after the storytelling workshop:

- My participation in the workshop helped me develop useful skills that I can apply in other situations.
- Through my participation in the workshop and the sharing of my story, I feel I am contributing to shaping education on forced migration in schools and among young people.
- As a result of my participation in the workshop, I feel more empowered to share my story.
- I believe that sharing my story can bring a positive change and help combat stereotypes and hate speech towards asylum seekers and refugees.
- Participating in the workshop was overall a positive experience for me.
- During the workshop, I felt I could share my opinions, knowledge and point of view in a safe space.

A total of **92% of the respondents fully agreed with the above statements**. Specifically, the "Six-Word-Story " approach was highly valued and evaluated as a creative, but at the same time challenging method. The sharing of the stories created a sense of community among the participants, whilst the use of new online-based tools to record the stories promoted digital competences.

Addressing negative perceptions and stereotypes against refugees and asylum seekers was one of the needs identified during the research phase of the project in **Ireland**. Awareness raising initiatives among young people were deemed to be key to address the issue, whilst at the same time a number of refugees and asylum seekers could use the provision of spaces and resources to improve their communication and language skills to facilitate their integration in the host country.





Following the implementation of the activity, the participants rated the project as a **very positive contribution** and initiative that could be very useful in terms of supporting their integration by **raising awareness about forced migration** and creating better understanding of this topic.

In **Romania**, one of the main aspects highlighted during the needs assessment phase related to the integration of refugees and asylum seekers within the host society as well as school environments.

Throughout the project, participants to the Peer Group with a displacement background evaluated positively the tools developed by ODISSEU as these could represent a way for students to **better understand what refugees and asylum seekers go through** and reflect upon the issues they face. The game, specifically, was identified as an effective awareness raising tool. Following the implementation of the storytelling workshop, feedback collected from participants showed that they enjoyed the activity and **felt safe sharing their stories** through the project. Moreover, they deemed that sharing real-life stories could help students **change their behaviour towards refugees and asylum seekers**, as well as other people that are perceived as “different”. They felt the sharing of their stories was useful, as it enhances the understanding of the difficulties and trauma a number of displaced people go through.

Participants of the storytelling workshop in **Cyprus** showed an interest in the game and materials developed during the project, and pointed out that they **found similarities between the stories of the three characters and their own**. Participants were glad to share their stories after being reassured of the possibility of doing so anonymously, and **rated the workshop positively**, especially in regard to the following statements:

- The workshop gave me the opportunity to share my story
- We can share our story and **educate people on how refugees are living in Cyprus**
- Overall, my participation in the session was a positive experience
- I felt **comfortable sharing my thoughts**, knowledge, and point of view in a **safe environment** during the training

Assessment of ODISSEU’s impact on partner organisations and project staff

A series of online interviews were held in February and March 2021 by Kopin with project partners involved in the implementation of ODISSEU, to measure the impact the action had on the organisations and their project staff in different areas of work.

A total of seven individuals were interviewed, with one staff each taking part for all partner organisations, with the exception of Oxfam Italy, the lead partner, for which an interview was carried out with both the project manager and educational officer for the project. The rest of profiles of the interviewees included project managers and researchers, as well as trainers and technical staff. The majority of staff members involved in the interview had been part of the ODISSEU team since the inception of the project (Kopin, ILI-FAU, UPIT, Oxfam Italy), whilst others (CARDET, Oxfam Italy and Meath) had joined the project at a later stage, between 2019 and 2020.





The interviews consisted of two parts, the first of which contained questions aimed at collecting information on the impact that ODISSEU had on the partner organisations, whilst the second focused on the project staff and how their overall expertise and capacities were affected by their participation in ODISSEU.

Impact on partner organisations

All respondents declared their respective organisations had previous experience in implementing projects related to the themes of ODISSEU, such as global education, migration, social inclusion and online learning. According to all partner organisations, ODISSEU fit very well within their wider work and project portfolios and gave them the opportunity to build upon existing and previous work with the same target groups and to deepen their expertise in certain areas. For a number of partners, the project represented an opportunity to work on themes and methodologies which were new to them, with some respondents mentioning storytelling methodologies and gamification of educational tools.

In terms of Erasmus+ projects, all partner organisations had previous experience in developing or implementing projects within the programme, but all declared their implementation of ODISSEU presented them with an opportunity to strengthen their expertise and capacities in this area. In particular, this was the first time for **Oxfam Italy** to lead an Erasmus+ consortium on a project focusing on gamification of educational resources.

The work on ODISSEU resulted in the development of further expertise, knowledge and skills in different areas of work for the partner organisations. ODISSEU represented an opportunity for the development team of **CARDET** to deepen their work on gamification of educational contents, as well as their research on inclusive technology, adapting some of the educational materials for students with visual impairment. Gamification and e-learning represented an area of work for which **UPIT** and **Kopin** acquired expertise through their participation in ODISSEU, whilst **Meath** was able to deepen its knowledge on global education as a new aspect of their work. A number of partners mentioned the acquisition of further expertise in methodological aspects related to storytelling as a result of their participation in ODISSEU. For **ILI-FAU** and **Meath**, a result of their involvement in ODISSEU was represented by improved networking skills and deepened knowledge in working with schools. As a general remark, partners mentioned the fact that they could acquire competences through the partnership, as different actors brought in a variety of experiences and expertise in specific areas and methodologies of work.

The project represented an opportunity for partner organisations, as it provided a variety of resources that directly or indirectly led to capacity building and strengthening of expertise on certain topics and in different areas, including dissemination, networking and visibility.

Interviewees were asked to assess the impact the implementation of ODISSEU had on their respective organisations in terms of capacity building. For **ILI-FAU**, the project represented a stepping stone into working in the field of migration, providing a foundation in the area of forced migration. Similarly, **CARDET** and **Meath** noted how the materials





developed through ODISSEU helped strengthen the knowledge on forced migration within the organisation, as staff from different departments were involved in the development and use of the resources; this contributed to building a culture of empathy and understanding within the organisations. **UPIT** saw the consolidation of their skills and knowledge on e-learning methodologies and forced migration issues, whilst within **Oxfam Italy** the project represented an opportunity for its departments working on education and migration to collaborate more closely. ODISSEU tools helped build the staff's capacity to use different approaches and methodologies, such as storytelling, in their work with refugees and asylum seekers within **Kopin**.

Furthermore, the work carried out within the project supported all partner organisations in reaching out to new target groups and stakeholders, as well as consolidating existing relationships at local and national level with relevant actors in different fields. Through its participation in ODISSEU, **Meath** became a member of an umbrella organisation focusing on global citizenship education, thanks to the project having a specific focus on global education, whilst they also reached out to new categories of beneficiaries who were not previously targeted, such as teachers and students. Schools and teachers represented new categories of beneficiaries also for **ILI-FAU**, who managed to consolidate its collaboration with a teacher training centre operating within the FAU, as well as a volunteering centre offering services to migrants and migrant organisations they were able to connect with thanks to ODISSEU activities. **Oxfam Italy** built upon their collaboration with teachers and schools, and managed to reach out to additional beneficiaries within this category, starting a collaboration with an organisation working on theatre methodologies with migrants in Italy within the project. Their involvement in ODISSEU resulted in both **UPIT** and **Kopin** strengthening their relationship with authorities at local and national level: in Romania, **UPIT** consolidated its working relationship with the School Inspectorate to reach out to target groups, whilst **Kopin** furthered its collaboration with the Migrant Learners' Unit and reached out to stakeholders it had not worked with before, such as the Directorate for Digital Literacy within the Ministry of Education. Refugees and asylum seekers were a new category of beneficiaries **UPIT** reached out through ODISSEU. As a result of its involvement in the project, **CARDET** reached out to additional schools and NGOs at national and European level, building synergies with existing projects targeting the same categories of beneficiaries and stakeholders and focusing on similar issues.

Finally, staff interviewed were asked to indicate how they would rate the overall impact the participation in the ODISSEU project had on their organisations, on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). All organisations rated the level of impact as having been medium to high, citing the fact that the project brought about a high level of engagement with partners, improved staff capacity on working together, resulted in collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders and target groups and strengthened links with institutions in the field of education and migration. Moreover, for some partners, ODISSEU provided the opportunity to engage with additional categories of beneficiaries and opened the possibility of further work and projects in the fields of engagement, as it resulted in the development of high quality resources and activities. Overall, through the project, partners improved their expertise and understanding on themes related to global education, forced migration and e-learning and consolidated their competences in working on European projects with diverse partner organisations.





Impact on project staff

When it comes to the impact on the team working on the project, interviewees were asked to give a brief overview of their involvement in the action and to highlight positive and negative aspects they had encountered throughout the implementation of ODISSEU.

Some of the challenges mentioned by the project staff who joined at a later stage included the difficulty to catch up on work already started on specific outputs, as well as the need to work with partners online only, due to the impossibility of face-to-face meetings brought about by the pandemic since February 2020. The latter was a challenge mentioned by almost all interviewees, although some mentioned the partnership was able to adapt well through the establishment of an efficient communication system. Other challenges specifically mentioned by team members included issues with the involvement schools as the topics addressed were considered delicate in some countries, and challenges with the realisation of peer groups and recruitment of members, as well as piloting phases which were rendered more work-intense due to the need for online adaptation.

Staff members highlighted a number of positive aspects related to their experience in implementing ODISSEU in different roles, such as the amount of learning in relation to all aspects of the project (global citizenship education, e-learning, storytelling, gamification and forced migration were specifically mentioned) and the fact that the action resulted in the development of readily-available educational resources which can be used in different contexts, well after the end of ODISSEU.

Almost all members of the ODISSEU project team had previous experience in implementing projects related to the themes of ODISSEU, such as forced migration, global education and e-learning. Those who were new to these areas or to the implementation of European projects noted how this experience represented a fruitful opportunity to enhance their competences in different areas of work and to learn how to work in a multidisciplinary and multicultural team. Moreover, most partners noted how they could develop additional skills and improve their capacity in areas and methodologies which were new to them through the exchange of expertise with their team members, as a number of staff declared they had previously worked in one or more areas addressed through ODISSEU, but did not possess competences in all of them. The project represented an occasion for professional development for all members of the team and their colleagues involved in the realisation of ODISSEU.

Whilst some of the project staff were already familiar or had vast experience working within the framework of Erasmus+ projects, for others ODISSEU represented their first approach to an action falling within the programme. This resulted in less experienced staff learning how to navigate the implementation and administrative structure of Erasmus+ projects, including working in a team made up of professionals with diverse expertise and backgrounds and hailing from different countries. For staff within the lead partner organisation, this also meant becoming familiar with specific processes and platforms related to Erasmus+ grants at national level, including communication and coordination with the National Agency. Other members of the team had previously been involved in actions co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme which focused on different themes, and





had the opportunity to work in the areas of forced migration and global education through ODISSEU. Overall, partners felt their participation within ODISSEU enhanced their competences and consolidated their knowledge on EU-wide and co-financed actions, regardless of their previous level of experience within the Erasmus+ programme.

Project staff declared they either obtained or developed additional skills and knowledge as a result of their involvement in the action. More specifically, team members interviewed mentioned enhanced problem-solving and improved communication and networking skills, as well as the building of resilience. Enhanced experience and expertise in project management, including financial management and evaluation were also mentioned by some partners. All team members noted how they acquired additional knowledge on methodologies and areas which were not previously familiar to them, specifically in relation to storytelling, the development of online educational games and resources and forced migration.

Best practices resulting from the implementation of activities and outputs of ODISSEU at National level, which could be replicated in different countries or at EU level

The ODISSEU partnership identified some best practices that resulted from the implementation of the activities and use of resources at national level within the project, which could potentially be replicated elsewhere.

In more than one country, a key aspect in relation to the ODISSEU project is its provision of information and interactive resources which can be used to raise awareness among different age groups on the topic of forced migration. As such, ODISSEU can be promoted within existing public events and campaigns, such as World Refugee Day (**Cyprus**), or serve as an inspiration and provide source material for students organising activities in connection with school-wide initiatives related to forced migration, as part of the, as it was the case in **Germany**.

One of the main strengths of the ODISSEU project lies with the fact that its Intellectual Outputs are largely online-based, thus being readily-available to be used by educators and professionals within and outside the countries participating in the project.

This made it possible for the partners to promote the educational resources widely, especially at a time when most of the learning processes, including in-class learning, had to be moved to online live settings due to restrictions implemented in different countries with the surging of the Covid-19 related pandemic.

Moreover, the different components of the educational materials for ODISSEU were developed in a way that allows educators and professionals to choose which materials to use independently from the rest, and adapt it easily to their needs and methodologies of delivery, as well as their teaching subjects. In **Romania**, the educational resources were used on a regular basis by teachers during a variety of classes (English, history, civic and intercultural education), and proved to be especially useful in language teaching contexts, with educators actively participating in the project.





Background readings for teachers and educators and step-by-step instructions on how to deliver the activities included in the tools allow for wide use of the ODISSEU materials by professionals not directly involved in the project, according to feedback collected in **Malta**.

In **Ireland**, the two integral parts of the project that received the most positive feedback and which could be replicated in different countries or at EU level were deemed to be the use of real-life stories and the gamification of the topic of forced migration. The stories presented in the game were successfully used to counter negative discourse and approaches on forced migration often present in the media. Real-life and personal stories proved to be successful as they serve as credible and authentic sources contributing to a better understanding of the topic and helping to create a more empathetic and welcoming society. The game helped to present the topic in a very visual and interesting way that is easy to comprehend and at the same time creates the opportunity to relate to journeys of refugees and asylum seekers with many different backgrounds.

Finally, the use of a bottom-up approach in promoting the ODISSEU resources and word-of-mouth dissemination among teachers and educators proved to be a successful strategy in **Italy**. Participating teachers recommended the ODISSEU game and activities and showed the added value of the project to colleagues who gladly accepted to get involved in spite of their workload being pretty intense during the scholastic year 2020/2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Considering the high level of adaptability of the educational resources of ODISSEU, and their versatility to be delivered through different mediums and for different learning goals, these can easily be used within and outside the countries involved in the project and the activities can be replicated successfully by anyone who can access the project's website across Europe and outside.

Challenges encountered in the realisation of ODISSEU activities at National level and mitigation measures employed

During the implementation of ODISSEU, a number of shared challenges emerged for the partnership, most of which directly related to the situation generated by the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide. This applied not only in terms of practical implementation of the activities vis-à-vis the restrictions put in place in the different countries (i.e. schools closing and moving toward online lessons), but also in relation to the uncertainty brought about by the pandemic itself, with a number of activities having to be postponed or adapted more than once, resulting in added workload and slight delays in the action in some contexts.

A common challenge identified by some partners towards the beginning of the project related to the recruitment of participants for the peer groups, which were supposed to meet regularly about every six months in order to test the resources developed and give feedback on those. The variety of resources developed meant that the composition of the group had to vary from meeting to meeting, and the issues relating to bringing together such a diverse groups of participants (teachers, students, stakeholders and refugees), as well as difficulties with long-term commitment, meant that partners had to adjust and collect feedback from groups having different compositions as required, as well as adapt





the collection of feedback from face-to-face to online once Covid-19 related restrictions kicked in.

Another major challenge was represented by the restrictions applied to face-to-face events in all countries. For the majority of the partnership, this meant having to adapt activities and resources, previously meant to be implemented in-person, to online delivery through a variety of platforms and tools, which required additional workload and time. Moreover, in some countries, schools had to suddenly stop in-class activities and faced a number of challenges related to the adaptation of lessons to an online environment. This resulted in a number of constraints for teachers who had to face extra workload to prepare the lessons and, in some partner countries, difficulties arose with the integration of ODISSEU learning materials due to the situation. On the other hand, teachers declared they will make use of these in the upcoming scholastic year.

The pandemic also made it difficult for partners to reach out to target beneficiaries, especially categories of beneficiaries lacking access to proper equipment or IT skills. The latter was mostly the case with refugees and asylum seekers, for which some partners collaborated with NGOs and organisations offering reception and information facilities to migrants in their countries, in order to be able to carry out the storytelling workshops face-to-face. Other partners opted to involve educational institutions and NGOs in their efforts to reach out to participants for this activity, managing to implement the workshop online with refugees and asylum seekers who had the availability of equipment and skills to actively participate.

The storytelling workshop itself presented the challenge to engage with and collect feedback from participants whilst being careful not to trigger potential past trauma in relation to the collection of real-life stories. The activity was successfully implemented through the application of a participatory approach and the provision of a safe and informal space for participants, who could choose whether to share their experiences or not, as well as remain anonymous in their contributions.

Other challenges were mentioned in relation to the lack of physical meetings for the partnership itself for almost half of the project lifespan, although the online communication strategy put in place to mitigate this issue was deemed effective by the partners.

Whilst the need to adapt activities to online delivery brought about some degree of disruption in the course of the project, it is to be noted that most partners mentioned being able to reach out to target beneficiaries and stakeholders who would not necessarily have been able to attend certain events should these (training, workshops, dissemination) have happened face-to-face. They were consequently able to expand their outreach at national and European level.





2. Policy Recommendations

Existing legislation, policies and strategies in the partner countries relating to (i) online learning, (ii) intercultural and global education and (iii) awareness raising on forced migration and integration in educational settings

In **Malta**, a number of policy documents and strategies published by the **Ministry for Education and Employment** (MEDE) address both the themes of digital literacy in relation to active citizenship and education for diversity as comprising intercultural education.

The document “**A National Curriculum Framework for All 2012**” (NCF) includes both Digital Literacy and Education for Diversity among five cross curricular themes for the Junior and Secondary school cycles of education; such themes contribute to the NCF overall aim to “ensure that formal, informal and non-formal learning will serve as a means to secure a commitment towards social justice, personal growth, active citizenship and employability.”. The document goes on to state that Education for Diversity “provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society”. Specific sets of learning outcomes for both **Digital Literacy** and **Education for Diversity** are available within the **Learning Outcomes Framework**; these comprise different aspects, including online citizenship, awareness of cultural diversity online and cooperative learning in multicultural contexts. A dedicated Directorate for Digital Literacy and Transversal Skills exists within MEDE, with Education for Diversity falling within the remit of the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes.

Moreover, in May 2020, the online portal “**Teleskola**” was launched by MEDE, as a means to facilitate access to lessons and educational resources for students and parents alike, as a response to the closure of schools brought about by Covid-19. However, it is stated in the portal that Teleskola will “keep operating in the future as a central front-facing resource, lesson and activity information hub for all curricular matters”. A set of guidelines for **online teaching** for school leaders and educators was developed by the Department for Digital Literacy and Transversal Skills following the closure of schools in March 2020.

Following an open consultation by MEDE, “**A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools**” was launched in 2019. The document tackles diversity and intercultural education throughout, with the first of its 10 goals being “to anticipate, value and support diversity and learner differences”. Within its principles, the policy specifically mentions the eradication of discrimination and racism, whilst a reference to students from ethnic minorities and asylum seeking students is present in the categories outlined by the “diversity wheel”, highlighting the need to adapt education models to different categories of learners. Through its Education Malta foundation, MEDE is also the national focal point for the Global Education Network Europe (GENE).

Within MEDE, a dedicated **Migrant Learners’ Unit** provides a range of activities and services to foreign students and their families “to promote the inclusion of newly arrived learners into the education system”. Among other services, the Unit provides language induction to foreign students through dedicated Hubs for Primary to Secondary school students and through support services to students within mainstream schools in Malta.





The **Migrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan** outlines a series of measures to be put in place to foster integration of foreign nationals in Malta (EU citizens, Third Country nationals, refugees and asylum seekers), including the delivery of Maltese, English and cultural orientation courses and ad hoc training for cultural mediators in public services, among others. Within the Strategy, an **Integration and Anti-Racism Unit**, which is responsible for the implementation of the strategy itself, has been set up within the Human Rights Directorate (under the Ministry for Justice, Equality and Governance).

Ireland, as a country well-known for its positive and welcoming attitude towards migrants and refugees, has in place a wide range of policies, strategies, legislation, projects and other initiatives supporting raising awareness in the field of civic engagement, intercultural education and also digital strategies supporting this process. “**The Action Plan for Education 2016-2019**” is a main strategic document developed by the Department of Education and Skills Strategy Statement of Ireland with a vision “to provide the best education and training system in Europe”. The education and training services set out in this Strategy and Action Plan are based on the core values that inspire those who work in education and training.

There are a number of key national education and training strategies that underpin activities carried out within the Action Plan for Education and which drive the significant changes that are being planned and implemented across the continuum of education. The integration and progress of the implementation of these strategies is being continuously monitored as they each contribute towards the vision for education and training. These strategies are: National Skills Strategy 2025; National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020; Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020; Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019; National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030; Framework for Junior Cycle; National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland, 2014-2020; 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030. All of the above strategies include areas focusing on the topics dealt with within the project, however the **Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020** and the **Framework for Junior Cycle** (relevant to students 12-16 years of age) cover and maintain the topics most relevant to the project. The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) outlines the curriculum and assessment arrangements that provide students with learning opportunities that achieve a balance between learning subject knowledge and developing a wide range of skills and thinking abilities.

Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) is one of the compulsory subjects in the Junior Certificate course in Ireland. CSPE is an important part of a wellbeing programme within junior cycle as it enables students to feel connected to and take responsibility for the wellbeing of others. It also develops students' confidence, agency and engagement which are important characteristics of student wellbeing. CSPE resources include various civic, social and political topics.

The central legislation on integration which includes measures focused on education and educational provision in Ireland is the **Migrant Integration Strategy by the Department of Justice and Equality (2017 - 2020)**. The Strategy was due to end in 2020 but, due to





the impact of COVID-19 on implementation, the Minister has decided to extend the lifetime of the Strategy to end in 2021. The Migrant Integration Strategy which was published on the 7th February, 2017 sets out the Irish Government's approach to the issue of migrant integration. It envisages a whole-of-government approach involving actions by all Departments including Education. The Strategy is intended to cover EEA and non-EEA nationals, including economic migrants, refugees and those with legal status to remain in Ireland. It also encompasses those who have become naturalised Irish citizens, but who were born outside of Ireland. The aim of the Strategy is to work towards the creation of a society that is equipped to **support integration both collectively and individually**. It is a four-year strategy which is intended as a crucial step towards a longer-term vision in which integration is a strongly embedded principle of Irish life. The longer-term vision is that Ireland thirty years from now will be a society in which migrants and those of migrant origin play an active role in communities, workplaces and politics. It sees the guiding principles for Ireland of the future as those of solidarity and shared identity as members of Irish society.

The Strategy contains 76 actions under a variety of themes including citizenship and residency, access to public services and social inclusion, education, employment and pathways to work, health, integration in the community, political participation, promoting intercultural awareness and combating racism and xenophobia, volunteering and sport. The 76 actions are being delivered by Government departments, local authorities, public bodies, local communities, the business sector, sporting and arts organisations and NGOs.

In **Italy**, through the decree "La Buona Scuola", the Italian Government announced the innovation of the school system and the development of students' digital skills. The **National Digital School Plan** (PNSD) is the policy document from the Ministry of Education, University and Research focusing on the launch of an overall innovation strategy for the Italian school and for a new positioning of its educational system within the digitisation sphere. This was further expanded during the pandemic period.

With the additional agreement "**Guidelines for Integrated Digital Education**", the Ministry of Education pointed out that educational institutions needed to outline an overall picture of their needs. The educational institutions must organise the didactic activities complementing in-presence and online teaching, as an inclusive tool for the students.

"Italian Intercultural Pedagogy" is a progressive product of the changes introduced in the Italian school system in recent decades. It is structured in three phases: the reception phase, the integration device phase and the phase of inclusion.

Today, Italian Intercultural Pedagogy works to:

- Leave behind the "myth of emergency" and to consider instead cultural diversity as a reference model for the schools, which requires a "continuous and structural" intercultural design and implementation and no longer an approach considered "temporary and special";





- Enhance the presence of students with a foreign background as "a precious opportunity to rethink the first educational, relational and organisational models and to question them;
- Maintain **intercultural education** as "one of the elements of a broader process of renewal of educational theory and practice" that is "necessary for everyone, for the new generations that live in a complex and globalised world".

The Charter of Citizenship and Integration Values was adopted in 2007 to highlight the fundamental principles of Italian legal system that regulate collective life, both of citizens and immigrants, trying to focus on the main issues related to the theme of **integration**. The Charter was designed according to the principles of the Italian Constitution and the main European and International Charters of Human Rights.

In October 2017 Italy adopted the **National Integration Plan for people who are entitled to international protection**. This approach draws up a multi-level and multisectoral systematic action to which regions, local authorities and civil society must contribute, through a greater coordination, to allow the full integration of foreign nationals into the host communities. The path proposed by this Plan concerns the commitment of some institutions and private entities that operate in different contexts, starting from two priority axes: (i) interreligious and intercultural dialogue and (ii) language training and access to the educational system.

In **Romania**, the digitalisation of the education and training system has been a priority since 2016, with the launch, by the Presidential Administration, of the "Educated Romania" country project. At the moment, Romania has a **Digitalisation Strategy for Education, SMART-EDU** (in public consultation until February 2021), a concept focused on the following key concepts: Modern, Accessible School, based on Digital Resources and Technologies.

As in other states, the pandemic emergency required the introduction of major changes and the reconfiguration of educational practices from face-to-face interactions to the online environment. The use of online teaching-learning-assessment resources has become the best solution for further education. In this context, the Ministry of Education implements the **Continuing Education** portal, an online information tool, in order to improve the online teaching activity. This portal is dedicated to all those interested in the educational and health context in which the school and academic year 2020/2021 takes place, as a result of the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, and includes methodological landmarks, educational resources, guide for school counsellors, and practical tools for students.

The **Strategy for modernising the educational infrastructure**, implemented by Romania in 2017-2023, is another document that has as a priority the investment in infrastructure for the modernisation and internationalisation of University centres in areas with growth potential by building and modernising research and innovation infrastructure, learning materials, new technologies and ICT support.

As for **intercultural education**, the policy makers are aware of the necessity of training for teachers to become proper professionals in the field. In Romania, ethnic minorities are recognised to have an important role in society. Since 1995, the **Education Law** (Law





84/1995, art. 8) has given minorities the right to study in their mother tongue through the entire curriculum. This right is preserved nowadays, according to the updated Education Law no. 1/2011. Moreover, The Ministry of National Education has a special department – **General Direction for Minorities** and The Relationship with the Parliament - which deals with the education for minorities. Mainly, the idea of intercultural education is not exactly determined in the Romanian educational policies. The civil society takes action in order to introduce in the national policies the idea of intercultural education. A very active institution is the **Intercultural Institute from Timisoara**. From 2010, according to the Ministry of Education ordinance no. 5817/2010, each school has got the freedom to introduce in the individual school curricula the discipline “**Intercultural Education**”. According to the Ministry’s suggestions and curriculum for this discipline, schools introduced the following topics in the curricula: multicultural and intercultural society, principles and values of an intercultural society, the society and the individual in the intercultural society, intercultural education as a dialogue between different cultures. These curricula are for each high-school grade. This solution comes to cover the limits of the national curriculum, which has been going through many changes during a number of years, and which is still not in a finalised version today. The changes in the society will indeed lead to the introduction of the topics mentioned above in the national curricula.

In **Germany**, with the **Digital Pact**, the German Federal Government and the German Bundestag announced in 2018 their intention to support digitisation in general education schools with 5 billion euros. The starting point for this on the part of the schools should be a pedagogical concept and a precise idea of how the school wants to develop over the next few years - with and through the use of digital media in the classroom. The IT equipment is derived from these goals. This pact was further expanded due to the pandemic.

With the supplementary agreement, the states, for their part, undertake for the first time not only to expand the **digital in-service training of teachers**, but also to take stock of this and report to the Federal Government. This shows the amount of efforts that are being made for the qualification of teachers, so that digital technology is used in schools in a pedagogically targeted manner. The agreement was triggered by the improvements in the digital school infrastructure for digital learning in recent months, which were made possible in particular by the funds provided by the federal government in the DigitalPakt Schule. At the same time, these measures increased the demand for on-site technical support. The federal government is therefore now investing another 500 million euros to promote the training and financing of IT administrators who are to take care of the technology on site. This is an essential building block to accelerate the **digitisation of schools** in the near future.

Germany is an export nation and an immigration society - that is why **intercultural education** is relevant for the entire society. For this reason, intercultural learning has also gained curricular importance in recent decades. The following points are emphasised:

- productive engagement with other perceptions and ways of expression
- critical questioning of one's own images of others





- knowledge of and reflection on the social framework conditions for the creation of such images
- relativisation of one's own standpoints and values through engagement with other cultures, religions, world views and traditions
- appreciation of cultural diversity in connection with the broadening of one's own horizons of experience and action
- promoting multilingualism as a prerequisite for intercultural communication and knowledge acquisition

Curricula weigh the topics of **migration and integration** differently depending on the state and the subject. In geography, migration is particularly often thematically linked to urbanisation, global disparities and population growth, whereas in history the topics are displacement, war and colonialism as well as the process of European integration. In the subject of politics, questions of identity formation, racism and tolerance as well as human rights and Europe are often discussed in connection with migration.

Migration and integration phenomena are predominantly linked to crisis developments. However, crisis scenarios and narratives can obscure the fact that migration, from the recruitment of guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s to the migration of skilled workers, has long been an integral part of the political process in Germany. This narrative also fails to recognise the importance of integration as a task for society as a whole. For this reason, many gaps can currently be identified on the topic of awareness raising on forced migration and integration in educational settings.

Cyprus became an immigration destination in the mid-1980s, due to its economic growth and the subsequent demand for a foreign labour force. Most **integration programmes and projects** implemented since then have been co-financed by EU funds and were run by civil society organisations or local authorities.

The **Refugee Law** was passed in 2000 and the Cypriot government took full responsibility for refugee issues, including the asylum application procedure as of 1 January 2002. The cornerstone of the legislation is the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of a person to a country where his or her life or freedom is in danger or at risk of being subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or persecution. In addition to that, according to Article 21B of the Refugee Law of the Republic of Cyprus, recognised refugees have **equal rights to work as the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus**. In other words, recognised refugees are not subject to any restriction with regard to the areas of employment nor is any approval procedure required by the Labour Department.

An excellent EU project initiative is the project “**Geia Xara**”. The program is specifically designed to meet the **needs and expectations of TCN students**. The programme “**Greek Language Program and Mediation Services for Minor Third-Country Nationals**” (TCNs) («Γεια Χαρά!») targeted students attending primary education classes, and has been in place for the school years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. The programme has been implemented by a consortium comprising NGOs and educational institutions in Cyprus and was financed by the EU AMIF programme.





Recommendations on policies and practices for online learning, intercultural and global education and education on forced migration and integration, based on the existing national framework, ODISSEU project's experiences and stakeholders' feedback

The recommendations provided henceforth stem from discussions and feedback provided by target groups in the different EU countries participating in the ODISSEU project. Such feedback was collected and elaborated by partners either throughout the course of the project or during multiplier events involving a number of stakeholders, which were organised at national level towards the end of ODISSEU.

One of the main points that emerged from consultation with stakeholders in some project countries centred around the lack of explicit reference to the topics of intercultural education, migration and integration within the schools curricula (as in **Ireland** and **Romania**). This results in the topics rarely finding their ways within lessons, unless educators address these on their own initiative, as is the case in **Cyprus** and **Germany**. In some cases, intercultural education is explicitly mentioned in the curriculum at national level (**Malta**), although in practice the lack of awareness, time and resources related to the themes of forced migration, lead to the latter topic being overlooked. In other instances, most activities focusing on intercultural education remain confined to the extra-curricular realm, as it is the case in **Italy**.

In all project countries, it was noted how ODISSEU provided much-needed resources for educators and practitioners to address the issues related to forced migration in schools, as the **shortage or lack of thematic resources and training constituted a common trait**. The tools produced through the project were deemed to be useful across the board, as they can be easily integrated into daily teaching as well as informal education activities. Moreover, the activities combine the development of digital skills in students with learning about a wide variety of topics in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary way.

In some instances, the project helped to create a network among schools, local organisations and institutions, promoting the creation of a stronger social network. This was the case in **Italy** where, however, the health emergency shed light on the serious situation of the school system and dramatically brought attention to the consequences deriving from the failure to **adopt solid public policies to improve and enhance the school service**. The health crisis exacerbated inequalities and highlighted the **need to advance the country's digitalisation process**. There was a clear difference between those who had access to tools to communicate, work and study and who could consequently react to the crisis, and those who did not.

Stakeholders from **Romania** highlighted how the resources developed within ODISSEU are of particular importance in the current context related to international migration, as well as the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

People with a migration background are **significantly underrepresented** in curriculum committees in **Germany**. Likewise, academic expertise on the subject is rarely integrated into the development and revision of curricula and newer concepts for dealing with





diversity in a sensitive way are hardly taken into account. These issues result in reservations and **uncertainties when dealing with migration-related topics** in schools.

Malta's school population has seen an increase in diversity in the recent decade and, although a number of strategies and policies have been out in place to address this, including the recruitment of community liaison officers with a migrant background, the **lack of cultural diversity in the teachers' cohort** was highlighted as an issue by stakeholders, who suggested policies should be out in place to allow for such diversification.

Stakeholders working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as well as teachers in **Ireland** would recommend to **involve speakers with a migrant, refugee and asylum seeker background** to different events or classes to talk about their experience.

Based on the above, the ODISSEU project partners have formulated **a set of recommendations for educational stakeholders and policy makers** in relation to **online learning, intercultural education and awareness-raising on forced migration and integration**, which could be adopted in different EU Member States facing the same challenges and with similar systems as those involved in the project:

- Formulate policies and enable strategies which **reduce the digital divide** among students and learners within the country, to ensure equal access to participation and learning
- Develop and offer **continuous professional development** and training opportunities on **intercultural education, forced migration and integration** to educators and practitioners at national level, in collaboration with experts from civil society, academia and those with a forced displacement background
- Include the topics of **intercultural education, forced migration and integration within school curricula and subjects** at national and regional level
- **Promote and integrate** already **existing educational resources** and tools addressing issues of forced migration and engage in the provision
- Formulate policies that support the **inclusion of educators with a migration background** within the teachers' cohort at national level
- Implement strategies and practices that **actively promote the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers** in the **development of and participation to educational activities and resources** addressing forced migration, integration and intercultural education





Conclusions

ODISSEU project goals had been formulated as follows since its inception:

- 1: To develop, adapt and transfer an innovative online simulation game to increase understanding and raise awareness on refugee issues amongst secondary school students while developing life skills;
- 2: To develop online education resources to support secondary school teachers to engage young people in informed discussion about migration and asylum in the EU;
- 3: Promote a positive interaction and active participation of asylum seekers and refugees by engaging them to participate in local communities' life, telling their stories and helping others understand their perspectives;
- 4: Enhancing young people's critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the Internet and social media, in order to develop resistance to of discrimination and indoctrination

Looking at the feedback collected and analysed in the first part of this report, it emerges how the ODISSEU activities and resources fulfilled the objectives set out by the partners prior to the beginning of the project. Moreover, it is clear that the resources and activities provided through the project contributed to fill gaps and respond to needs identified by target groups and stakeholders at the very beginning of the action.

ODISSEU activities registered a positive impact on the beneficiaries of the project (educators, students, asylum seekers and refugees) within all partner countries, with the educational resources and tools provided being likewise appreciated across the board.

This was possible also thanks to the continuous engagement of beneficiaries and stakeholders with project partners through Peer Groups, which proved to be a key element for the development and adaptation of high quality, flexible tools which could be easily integrated in formal learning activities. As such, the establishment of Peer Groups of beneficiaries to engage with throughout the course of a project can be considered a good practice stemming from the action and could be replicated in similar actions at national and European level.

Another successful element of the action, which could potentially be replicated in future projects, consisted in its active involvement of participants with a forced displacement background, as highlighted by project partners and stakeholders alike.

Moreover, ODISSEU proved to be a useful initiative which provided much needed online-based resources at a time when most schools in Europe (and the world) were forced to switch to online and remote learning. Whilst the situation brought about a number of challenges, it is to be noted that project partners - and especially the project team - reacted swiftly, implementing the changes needed and, in doing so, acquired additional skills, as underlined in the impact assessment with project staff. The action had an overall positive impact on the work of the organisations and institutions involved.





Whilst ODISSEU fits well within the existing policy and strategy frameworks in relation to digital and intercultural education and education on forced migration within the partner countries - where these are present -, similar challenges recognised by partners in collaboration with stakeholders led to the identification of gaps within policies and practices at transnational level.

The set of transnational policy recommendations formulated by the project partners in response to these gaps will contribute, if taken up by relevant decision-makers, to enhance social inclusion and prevent discrimination among youth, as well as promote the active integration of asylum seekers and refugees within the host society.

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