


bonds

COMICS AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL INTERGRATION

THE BONDS (BOOSTER THE EMOTIONAL
DIMENTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR
IMMIGRANT MOTHERS AND CHILDREN) MODEL



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Introduction

Our risky and rapidly changing society demands a flexible and more innovative educational and lifelong learning system, in order to prepare students, as well as young and more experienced professionals, to adapt more easily to the new ecosystem of global crisis and digital economy. Arts-based teaching programs are gaining ground, as they “teach us to judge in absence of rules, to appraise the consequences of one’s choices and to revise and then to make other choices” (Eisner 2004). On the other hand, Jonathan Gottschall, in his book, *The Storytelling Animal*, (2013), argues that “stories accomplish the same evolutionary function as religion: defining groups, coordinating behavior and suppressing selfishness in favor of cooperation”. Comics is an efficient storytelling medium, having the power not only to tell the stories of creatures with supernatural powers, but also to transfer knowledge.

This book presents in detail the lesson plans developed during the BONDS Project. The aim of BONDS was to design and develop a specific training program for refugee and immigrant mothers and children. The educational model we developed aims to supply mothers/caregivers and children with a mix of soft skills, as well as language/cultural/social and civic competences. These competences will also provide women and children with opportunities for public voice, which are fundamental for a real social inclusion in the host community. The main methodology we used is Collaborative Comics Storytelling based on the following key concepts:

- Comics is a narrative form that combines two other forms of expression, words and pictures.
- Comics creation is nevertheless a co-creation process.
- Comics storytelling is a tool to foster collaboration, teamwork and creativity.

We hope that this book will travel in Greece and beyond and will inspire mothers, children and educators to tell more stories and to read more comics. We hope that comics storytelling will create a strong bond within communities.



1. Strengthening Oral and Written Communication

a. Mothers/Caregivers

Brief Description and Objectives: This workshop aims to help participants strengthen their oral and written skills. Using a non-verbal comic, participants are asked to interact with the story by adding words. Then, they become creators developing their own comic.

Gained Skills and Competences: Written and oral communication (describe experiences, events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest), express oneself, teamwork and collaboration, intercultural understanding.

Educational Tool: [New Place \(coloured version\)](#)
[New Place \(grayscale version\)](#)

Material and Equipment Needed: Flipchart, markers, blank papers, pencils, coloured pencils, comics, photocopies of the comics designed for the module.

Estimated duration: 3 hours

Suggested comics and reading material:

[A list of wordless comics](#)

[The arrival](#)

[Blood Song](#)

Lesson Outline:

- Begin with a warm-up introductory game. For example, ask the participants to tell their names and their favourite flavours.
- Ask them if they have ever read comics. If yes, ask them to name which they have read. If not, show some comics, give them comics to browse through.
- Ask them if they are familiar with comics heroes, writers, stories from their countries.
- Briefly explain that comics is a narrative form that combines words and pictures. Guide them through the history of comics.
- Warm Up Exercise: Draw a picture of a woman talking on the phone. Ask them to add words to the picture. Explain how the combination of words and pictures changes the meaning of the story.
- Briefly guide them through the basics of comics: panels, gutter, balloons
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw one panel picturing a phone ringing. Ask them to draw the next panel. Explain how gutter works.
- Show them the "New place" comic.
- Ask them to tell the story orally (both in their language and the host country's language)
- Ask them to write the story (both in their language and the host country's language)
- Ask them to add balloons with words to the comic.
- Ask them if they have been in a similar situation. Discuss feelings, challenges, experiences.
- Ask them now to continue the story. In teams of four (max) they have to create their own comic in four panels.
- Translanguage exercise: Ask them to write the words in different languages (their own, host country, English, other language they use).
- Display the comics and discuss the stories.



b. Children

Brief Description and Objectives: This workshop aims to help participants strengthen their oral and written skills. Using a non-verbal comic, participants are asked to interact with the story by adding words. Then, they become creators developing their own comic.

Gained Skills and Competences: Written and oral communication (describe experiences, events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest), express oneself, teamwork and collaboration, intercultural understanding.

Educational Tool: [Fox \(coloured version\)](#)
[Fox \(grayscale version\)](#)

Material and Equipment Needed: Flipchart, markers, blank papers, pencils, coloured pencils, comics, photocopies of the comics designed for the module.

Estimated duration: 3 hours

Suggested comics and reading material:

[Owly](#)

[Petit Poilu](#)

[Unspoken: A story from the Underground Railroad](#)

[The Girl and the Bicycle](#)

[The Snowman](#)

[The Only Child](#)

[The Lion and the Mouse](#)

Lesson Outline:

- Begin with a warm-up introductory game. For example, ask the participants to tell their names and their favourite animals.
- Ask them if they have ever read comics. If yes, ask them to name which they have read. If not, show some comics, give them comics to browse-through.
- Ask them if they are familiar with comics heroes, writers, stories from their countries.
- Briefly explain that comics is a narrative form that combines words and-pictures. Guide them through the history of comics.
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw a picture of a kid waiting at a bus station. Ask them to put words to the picture. Explain how the combination of words and pictures changes the meaning of the story.
- Briefly guide them through the basics of comics: panels, gutter, balloons
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw one panel picturing a phone ringing. Ask them to draw the next panel. Explain how gutter works.
- Show them the "Fox" comic.
- Ask them to tell the story orally (both in their language and the host country's language)
- Ask them to write the story (both in their language and the host country's language)
- Ask them to add balloons with words to the comic.
- Ask them if they have been in a similar situation. Discuss feelings, challenges, experiences.
- Ask them now to continue the story. In teams of four (max) they have to create their own comic in four panels.
- Translanguage exercise: Ask them to write the words in different languages (their own, host country, English, other language they use).
- Display the comics and discuss the stories.



2. Self Esteem/Teamwork and Collaboration/ Intercultural Understanding

a. Mothers/Caregivers

Brief Description and Objectives: Fantastic Four, Avengers and X-Men are some from the most popular superhero teams. What makes them so successful? And how can we be inspired by superhero teams in real life? If, for example, we take Avengers or X-Men, we can see the main characteristics of a successful team, as well as the stages of the development of a group turning into a team. "But, a group of individuals does not necessarily make a team. Teams customarily have members with complementary skills and generate synergy through a coordinated effort which allows each member to maximize his/her strengths and minimize his/her weaknesses" (McGhee, 2001). Through this workshop, we explore strengths, weaknesses and the power of collaboration.

Gained Skills and Competences: self-awareness and self-confidence, understanding their own strengths and weaknesses, teamwork and collaboration, intercultural understanding, empowering participation to community activities and better social integration.

Educational Tool: [Superhero Comic \(coloured version\)](#)
[Superhero Comic \(grayscale version\)](#)

Material and Equipment Needed: Flipchart, markers, blank papers, pencils, coloured pencils, comics, photocopies of the comics designed for the module.

Estimated duration: 3 hours

Suggested comics and reading material:

[X-Men](#)

[Wonder Woman](#)

[Qahera](#)

[Ms Marvel](#)

[Black Panther](#)

[List of Middle Eastern superheroes](#)

[12 Teams that Defined Superhero Storytelling](#)

Lesson Outline:

- Begin with a warm-up introductory game. For example, ask the participants to tell their names and a superpower they wanted to have.
- Ask them if they have ever read comics. If yes, ask them to name which they have read. If not, show some comics, give them comics to browse through.
- Ask them if they are familiar with comics heroes, writers, stories from their countries.
- Briefly explain that comics is a narrative form that combines words and pictures. Guide them through the history of comics.
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw a picture of a woman talking on the phone. Ask them to put words to the picture. Explain how the combination of words and pictures changes the meaning of the story.
- Briefly guide them through the basics of comics: panels, gutter, balloons
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw one panel picturing someone who needs to make a call but has low battery. Ask them to draw the next panel. Explain how gutter works.
- Talk about superheroes and show them some related comics. Discuss the need of people to create superheroes. Ask them who their superheroes in real life are.
- Exercise: Ask them to create their own superhero, deciding the powers, the name, the costume. Then ask them to draw the superhero and share it with the group. Finally, ask them to create a short story in four panels about the superhero's origin story (how he/she got the powers, what he/she decided to do with those powers). Discuss the stories. Do the stories relate to their own personal story? Do the heroes have similar characteristics with the participants?
- Exercise: Divide the group in teams of four. Show them the "Superhero Comic". Ask them to choose one character from the comic. Then, ask them to continue the story by solving the challenge. Note that they have to combine their powers.
- Display the comics and discuss the stories. How did they collaborate? Is collaboration and teamwork important? Why? Have they ever collaborated in order to address a challenge in everyday life?



b. Children

Brief Description and Objectives: Fantastic Four, Avengers and X-Men are some from the most popular superhero teams. What makes them so successful? And how can we be inspired by superhero teams in real life? If, for example, we take Avengers or X-Men, we can see the main characteristics of a successful team, as well as the stages of the development of a group turning into a team. "But, a group of individuals does not necessarily make a team. Teams customarily have members with complementary skills and generate synergy through a coordinated effort which allows each member to maximize his/her strengths and minimize his/her weaknesses" (McGhee, 2001). Through this workshop, we explore strengths, weaknesses and the power of collaboration.

Gained Skills and Competences: self-awareness and self-confidence, understanding their own strengths and weaknesses, teamwork and collaboration, intercultural understanding, empowering participation to community activities and better social integration.

Educational Tool: [Superhero Comic \(coloured version\)](#)
[Superhero Comic \(grayscale version\)](#)

Material and Equipment Needed: Flipchart, markers, blank papers, pencils, coloured pencils, comics, photocopies of the comics designed for the module.

Estimated duration: 3 hours

Suggested comics and reading material:

[Scooby Doo Team Up](#)

[Tiny Titans](#)

[Shazam: The Monster Society of Evil](#)

[Spider-Man](#)

[List of Middle Eastern superheroes](#)

[Superman Family Adventures](#)

[Zita the Spacegirl](#)

Lesson Outline:

- Begin with a warm-up introductory game. For example, ask the participants to tell their names and a superpower they wanted to have.
- Ask them if they have ever read comics. If yes, ask them to name which they have read. If not, show some comics, give them comics to browse through.
- Ask them if they are familiar with comics heroes, writers, stories from their countries.
- Briefly explain that comics is a narrative form that combines words and pictures. Guide them through the history of comics.
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw a picture of a woman talking on the phone. Ask them to put words to the picture. Explain how the combination of words and pictures changes the meaning of the story.
- Briefly guide them through the basics of comics: panels, gutter, balloons
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw one panel picturing someone who needs to make a call but has low battery. Ask them to draw the next panel. Explain how gutter works.
- Talk about superheroes and show them some related comics. Discuss the need of people to create superheroes. Ask them who their superheroes in real life are.
- Exercise: Ask them to create their own superhero, deciding the powers, the name, the costume. Then ask them to draw the superhero and share it with the group. Finally, ask them to create a short story in four panels about the superhero's origin story (how he/she got the powers, what he/she decided to do with those powers). Discuss the stories. Do the stories relate to their own personal story? Do the heroes have similar characteristics with the participants?
- Exercise: Divide the group in teams of four. Show them the "Superhero Comic". Ask them to choose one character from the comic. Then, ask them to continue the story by solving the challenge. Note that they have to combine their powers.
- Display the comics and discuss the stories. How did they collaborate? Is collaboration and teamwork important? Why? Have they ever collaborated in order to address a challenge in everyday life?



3. Intercultural Understanding/Understanding and Managing Emotions

a. Mothers/Caregivers

Brief Description and Objectives: This particular workshop aims to highlight the power and importance of sharing stories. Participants are guided through the basics of the sequential narrative and then they are becoming creators themselves. Using autobiographical comics, we discuss emotions, hopes and dreams. At the same time, by creating their own comics, they exercise in presentation skills.

Gained Skills and Competences: intercultural understanding, understanding and managing emotions, express oneself, presentation skills.

Educational Tool: [Dolmades \(coloured version\)](#)
[Dolmades \(grayscale version\)](#)

Material and Equipment Needed: Flipchart, markers, blank papers, pencils, coloured pencils, comics, photocopies of the comics designed for the module, needle, thread.

Estimated duration: 3 hours

Suggested comics and reading material:

[Persepolis](#)

[Embroideries](#)

[Maus](#)

[Relish: My Life in the Kitchen](#)

[The Arab of the Future](#)

[Welcome to the new World](#)

Lesson Outline:

- Begin with a warm-up introductory game. For example, ask the participants to tell their names and their favourite food or recipe.
- Ask them if they have ever read comics. If yes, ask them to name which they have read. If not, show some comics, give them comics to browse through.
- Ask them if they are familiar with comics heroes, writers, stories from their countries.
- Briefly explain that comics is a narrative form that combines words and pictures. Guide them through the history of comics.
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw a picture of a woman talking on the phone. Ask them to put words to the picture. Explain how the combination of words and pictures changes the meaning of the story.
- Briefly guide them through the basics of comics: panels, gutter, balloons
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw a panel of someone entering the bus and realizing it's the wrong one. Ask them to draw the next panel. Explain how gutter works.
- Show them the "Dolmades" comic.
- Discuss the story. Ask them if they have ever been in a similar situation.
- Discuss the power of telling your own story. Why is it important to share your story?
- Ask them to create in six panels their own personal story.
- Display the stories and discuss them. Are there similarities/differences?
- Ask them to create a new story (six panels) of how they imagine their life in five years from now.
- Follow the instructions to create their own comic book. Make photocopies and share with others within the community, or/and set up a mini exhibition. Take photos of the comics and post them online.



b. Children

Brief Description and Objectives: This particular workshop aims to highlight the power and importance of sharing stories. Participants are guided through the basics of the sequential narrative and then they are becoming creators themselves. Using autobiographical comics, we discuss emotions, hopes and dreams. At the same time, by creating their own comics they exercise in presentation skills.

Gained Skills and Competences: intercultural understanding, understanding and managing emotions, express oneself, presentation skills.

Educational Tool: [Stupid hit \(coloured version\)](#)
[Stupid hit \(grayscale version\)](#)

Material and Equipment Needed: Flipchart, markers, blank papers, pencils, coloured pencils, comics, photocopies of the comics designed for the module, scissors.

Estimated duration: 3 hours

Suggested comics and reading material:

[El Deafo](#)

[Smile](#)

[Ordinary People Change the World](#)

[Anya's Ghost](#)

[American Born Chinese](#)

Lesson Outline:

- Begin with a warm-up introductory game. For example, ask the participants to tell their names and their favourite game.
- Ask them if they have ever read comics. If yes, ask them to name which they have read. If not, show some comics, give them comics to browse through.
- Ask them if they are familiar with comics heroes, writers, stories from their countries.
- Briefly explain that comics is a narrative form that combines words and pictures. Guide them through the history of comics.
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw a picture of a woman talking on the phone. Ask them to put words to the picture. Explain how the combination of words and pictures change the meaning of the story.
- Briefly guide them through the basics of comics: panels, gutter, balloons
- Warm-Up Exercise: Draw a panel of someone entering the bus and realizing it's the wrong one. Ask them to draw the next panel. Explain how gutter works.
- Show them the "Stupid Hit" comic.
- Discuss the story. Ask them if they have ever been in a similar situation.
- Discuss the power of telling your own story. Why is it important to share your story?
- Ask them to create in six panels the story of their own stupid hit/or the story of their first toy ever.
- Display the stories and discuss them. Are there similarities/differences?
- Ask them to create a new story (six panels) of how they imagine their life in five years from now.
- Follow the instructions to create their own comic book. Make photocopies and share with others within the community, or/and set up a mini exhibition. Take photos of the comics and post them online.



New Place



Dimitris Antonopoulos ©



Superhero



Captain Strong

The strongest man in the team



The "Mind"

Has the power to move things with her mind



Major Tom

Has the ability to build and fix any machine.



Dynna Electric

Has the power to control the electricity.



He calls himself "Master of Chaos". He created a program that hacked every social media on the planet. He wants to block every way of communication on the planet!



We must stop him immediately! This is a job for... Miracle team!



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Dolmades



Divine Animapedia ©

Stupid Hit



Dimitris Adamopoulos ©



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