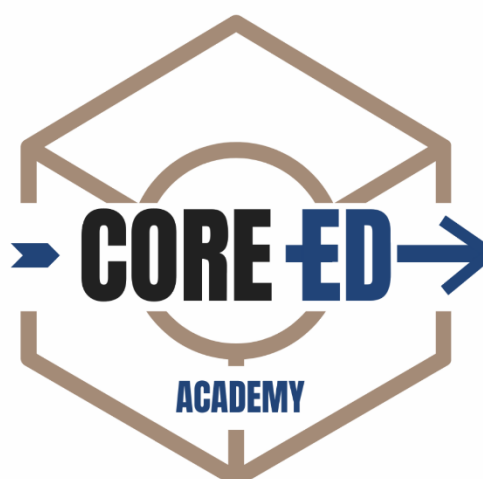




D3.1. Synthesis Report on “CORE-ED” Findings

Project: 101179359 — CORE-ED ACADEMY — ERASMUS-EDU-2024-CBHE



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1. Introduction and Methodology

1.1. Importance of the topic

Correctional staff working with children in conflict with the law play an important role in supporting their rehabilitation, protecting their rights, and contributing to their emotional and social development. These professionals help guide young people who are often vulnerable and easily influenced. Professionals working with youth in correctional settings require specialized skills, including healthy flexible communication, trauma awareness, and the ability to adapt interventions to each child's developmental and personal background. Comprehensive, structured, and consistent training is essential to ensure they can provide effective support, uphold young people's rights, and manage challenging situations with professionalism. However, inconsistent training programs and varying educational standards across countries continue to limit the effectiveness of these efforts in promoting rehabilitation and reducing recidivism.

This synthesis report constitutes the broad background research from partner countries under the CORE-ED project for a comprehensive study on the current challenges, current training areas, potential training needs of correctional services working with children and juveniles in conflict with the law across the Western Balkans. Through an in-depth analysis of juvenile justice legal frameworks, occupational profiles, and current competency standards, the report highlights qualification requirements and training gaps between the required competencies and the available training for correctional and supervision staff from the juvenile justice professionals' and civil society's perspective. It integrates perspectives from practitioners and civil society gathered through interviews and questionnaires, identifying both commonalities and country-specific challenges. By offering a unified overview of the sector's needs, this report supports the development of standardized, ESG-informed educational training programs and competency frameworks aimed at enhancing both higher education and in-service curricula for prison and probation officers, students, NGO workers, and volunteers. The goal is to equip all stakeholders with a shared foundational knowledge, ensuring consistency, equity, effectiveness, and professional excellence which will promote the protection of children in conflict with the law across the Western Balkans.

Standardized educational training ensures that all potential and current staff members across the Western Balkans have the same level of knowledge and skills, promoting consistency in practices. Additionally, a unified training approach helps prevent discrepancies in applications, ensuring that all children in custody receive equal opportunities for growth and development. By establishing common core competencies, the Western Balkans can also enhance the sharing of best practices among countries, encouraging collaboration and continuous improvement in juvenile justice systems across borders.

1.2. Research Methodology

The present research adopted a carefully structured methodology to provide current, targeted, and relevant insights into the training needs of correctional and supervision staff across four key countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, and Montenegro. To further enhance the understanding of this relatively under-researched topic, additional comparative insights were drawn from two EU Member States, with Greece and Romania explored more deeply through Develop A Curriculum (DACUM) workshops. These countries were chosen based on their relevance to the Western Balkans context and the research team's expertise in analyzing them. This synthesis report brings together findings from several interviews and around 100 questionnaires from each West-



ern Balkan country, integrating the needs analyses conducted in each country. To meet the research goals, a comprehensive and multi-layered data collection and analysis strategy was developed, combining desk research, field interviews, and questionnaires for four Western Balkan countries, and DACUM workshops conducted in six aforementioned countries. This mixed-methods approach enabled data triangulation, enhancing the accuracy and trustworthiness of the results while reflecting a broad range of perspectives from stakeholders working in the juvenile justice sector.

The questionnaire and interview questions were translated into the four national languages. Although the questionnaires cannot be deemed representative, it enhances informatively the research in this under-studied area. Table 1 presents a structured summary of the total number of participants involved in each core data collection method including questionnaires, interviews, and DACUM workshops across the countries.

Table 1. CORE-ED research activities per country

Country	Questionnaire Participants (N)	Interview Participants (N)	DACUM Sessions (N)
Albania	153	11	1
BiH	127	18	1
Kosovo	92	4	1
Montenegro	98	10	1
Greece	N/A	N/A	1
Romania	N/A	N/A	1
Total	469	43	6

To present a comprehensive view of the situation and capture a range of relevant perspectives, the research team made a deliberate effort to include a diverse group of key stakeholders as respondents. These included professionals such as correctional service staff, social workers, criminal judges, and others. The detailed information of these participants for each country will be provided in relevant section of this report. The findings offer valuable insights into the views of those with direct experience in the field, shedding light on the main obstacles to achieving child-friendly outcomes for juveniles in correctional system.



2. Brief Overview of the Juvenile Justice System in Western Balkans

2.1. Comparative Overview of Juvenile Criminal Law Frameworks in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro

Across the Western Balkans, juvenile justice systems have undergone significant reform since the 1990s, shaped by post-socialist legal transitions, democratization, and alignment with international norms. This chapter compares the historical development, legal foundations, and operational features of juvenile criminal law in four countries: Albania, BiH, Kosovo, and Montenegro. While each jurisdiction exhibits unique institutional configurations, they share a commitment to protecting the rights of minors, prioritizing education and reintegration over punitive measures, and gradually operationalizing child-friendly justice.

2.1.1. Common Foundations

a. **International Norms as the Backbone:** All four jurisdictions have incorporated key international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹, the Beijing Rules (1985)², and the Council of Europe's Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice³. These documents have guided the shift from punitive to rehabilitative approaches and emphasize the best interests of the child, the proportionality of measures, and the use of detention only as a last resort.

b. **Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility:** Each country sets the minimum age at 14, in line with international standards. Below this threshold, children cannot be held criminally liable and may instead be referred to social welfare systems.

c. **Diversion and Alternatives to Custody:** Diversion, mediation, and educational measures are embedded in all systems as preferred responses to juvenile offending. Detention is explicitly treated as a last resort, and non-custodial sanctions are widely endorsed.

d. **Specialized Institutions:** All four countries have developed specialized judicial structures and roles for trained professionals (judges, prosecutors, social workers, and probation officers) who deal specifically with juvenile offenders.

2.1.2. National Frameworks and Distinctions

a. Albania

The legal framework has evolved from a repressive socialist approach to a rights-based model through three distinct legal eras. The key reforms in this process were introduced with the adoption of the Criminal Justice for Children Code (Law No. 37/2017)⁴, a consolidated statute unifying all juvenile justice components. The system features certified personnel, including judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers, with the mandatory involvement

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/united-nations-standard-minimum-rules-administration-juvenile>

³ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/child-friendly-justice>

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/criminal-justice-children-code>





of psychologists and social workers, supported by a dedicated national strategy⁵. Notably, it places strong emphasis on restorative justice and offers structured diversion options, such as electronic monitoring, suspended prosecution, and community-based sentences aimed at rehabilitation and reintegration.

b. Bosnia and Herzegovina

The juvenile justice system operates within a complex governance structure, being decentralized and governed by separate laws for the Federation BiH⁶, the Republic of Srpska⁷, and Brčko District⁸. Its legal framework is based on the Laws on Protection and Treatment of Children and Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings⁹ at the entity level, incorporating multiple layers of law at the state, entity, and district levels. However, this fragmented governance results in implementation disparities, with some inconsistencies in the application of rights and procedures across regions.

c. Kosovo

The development of the juvenile justice system has been phased over time. During the Yugoslav era, it was characterized by minimal specialization and a predominantly punitive focus. The UNMIK period (1999–2008) marked the introduction of modern principles through the 2004 Juvenile Justice Law¹⁰. In the post-independence phase, the Juvenile Justice Code (2010, revised in 2018) fully incorporated international standards¹¹. The legal framework includes age differentiation, prohibiting punitive sanctions for children under 16 and applying rehabilitation-focused sanctions for those aged 16–18. Institutional maturity has been strengthened through the establishment of specialized juvenile panels and the training of personnel, despite earlier capacity limitations.

d. Montenegro

The Law on the Treatment of Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings (2011)¹² marked a legal milestone by institutionalizing a comprehensive juvenile justice framework in the post-independence period. The system places strong emphasis on education and reintegration, supported by the establishment of special courts and diversion mechanisms. A distinctive feature is its unified national structure, free from internal political fragmentation, which enables smoother policy implementation.

⁵ <https://euralius.eu/index.php/en/library/albanian-legislation>

⁶ Zakon o zaštiti i postupanju sa djecom i maloljetnicima u krivičnom postupku („Sl. novine FBiH“ broj 7/14 i 74/2020)

⁷ Zakon o zaštiti i postupanju sa djecom i maloljetnicima u krivičnom postupku („Sl.glasnik RS“ broj 13/10, 61/13)

⁸ Zakon o zaštiti i postupanju sa djecom i maloljetnicima u krivičnom postupku „Sl.glasnik BD BiH, broj 44/11

⁹ „ Smjernice za prikupljanje podataka u oblasti maloljetničkog prestupništva u Bosni i Hercegovini“, op.cit., strana 7.,https://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska_prava/djeca_bih/Smjernice%20za%20prikupljanje%20podataka%20u%20oblasti%20maloljetnickog%20prestupnistva%20BiH.pdf, pristupljeno: 12. 03. 2025.

¹⁰ See Regulation no. 2004/32 on the promulgation of the anti-discrimination law adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo. Available at: https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/regulations/02english/E2004regs/RE2004_32.pdf

¹¹ Code No. 06/1-006 Juvenile Justice Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo / no.17 / 18 October 2018, Pristina, Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=18019>

¹² Law on the Treatment of Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings, Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 001/18 (Zakon o postupanju prema maloljetnicima u krivičnom postupku, Službeni list Crne Gore, br. 001/18)



Table 2. Comparative Insights Across Four Countries

Feature	Albania	BiH	Kosovo	Montenegro
Age of Responsibility	14	14	14	14
Unified Legal Framework	Yes (2017 Code)	No (entity-based)	Yes (2018 Code)	Yes
Specialized Institutions	Extensive (nationally certified)	Present (but varies by entity)	Present	Present
Use of Diversion	Strongly prioritized	Encouraged	Institutionalized	Codified
Restorative Justice Emphasis	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Legal Evolution Drivers	EU & UNICEF-led codification	Treaty alignment via UNCRC	Post-conflict reconstruction	Post-independence reforms
Challenges	Implementation capacity	Legal fragmentation	Institutional maturity, but resource strain	None systemic

2.1.3. Conclusion

The juvenile criminal law systems of these four countries are increasingly converging toward a shared normative framework grounded in international children's rights law. Despite structural and procedural differences most notably BiH's decentralization and Albania's codified integration commonalities include the prioritization of non-custodial measures, mandatory legal protections, and child-centered rehabilitation. Yet, persistent challenges remain. BiH faces coherence and consistency issues due to its fragmented legal system. Kosovo continues to build institutional capacity post-conflict. Albania, while normatively advanced, must ensure sustainability of reforms. Montenegro presents a relatively stable model, but like others, must continually invest in training and inter-sectoral coordination. In all cases, sustained political commitment, adequate funding, and inter-institutional collaboration are essential to ensuring that reforms move from legal text to effective, rights-based practice for all juveniles in conflict with the law.

2.2. Juvenile Justice Criminal Sentences in the Western Balkans

Across the Western Balkans, juvenile criminal justice frameworks emphasize restorative justice, rehabilitation, and social reintegration. All four countries progressively moved away from retributive models, implementing a three-tiered sanctioning structure consisting of (1) diversionary measures, (2) educational and therapeutic measures, and (3) penal sanctions as a last resort. Though bound by common international standards such as the UNCRC, Beijing Rules, and European human rights frameworks, country-specific distinctions exist in the application, institutional structure, and range of available measures.

Table 3. Comparative Juvenile Sentencing Approaches by Country

Country	Diversion Measures	Educational / Therapeutic Measures	Penal Sanctions	Institutional Support
Albania	Warnings, mediation, apology, vocational training, foster care, electronic monitoring	Probation with rehab plan, compulsory schooling, semi-open facility (max 2 years)	Custody only if other options are “manifestly inadequate”; max 12.5 years	National Justice for Children Strategy, Probation Service, Kavaja Institute
BiH	Educational recommendations (under 3-year offenses), reconciliation	Supervision, judicial reprimand, placement in correctional homes	For older juveniles only (max 10 years); suspended sentences prohibited	Entity-level courts and social services; institutional variations
Kosovo	Reconciliation, compensation, school attendance, therapy, police warning	Admonition, increased supervision, institutional care (3 months–2 years)	Only for 16–18 years; fines, community service, imprisonment (suspended possible)	Juvenile panels, specialized probation, psychologists
Montenegro	Mediation, reconciliation, voluntary training	Supervision by family/institution, addiction treatment, placement in educational home	For serious crimes (16–18); conditional or custodial	Juvenile court panels, welfare centers, correctional institutions

Each country’s juvenile justice system rests on a shared foundation. The minimum age of criminal responsibility is set at 14, and diversion is prioritized to reduce judicial involvement and the risk of criminal labeling. Non-custodial solutions place education, psychological support, and family involvement at their core, while custodial sentences are applied sparingly, subject to age thresholds and judicial discretion.

Albania’s model, rooted in *Law 37/2017*, is notable for its tiered sanctioning logic, requiring judges to exhaust all non-custodial options before imprisonment. Probation supervision is central, with personalized rehabilitation plans, and electronic monitoring is available for low-risk offenders. BiH’s system is legally sophisticated but fragmented, with distinctions between younger (14–16) and older (16–18) juveniles. Suspended sentences are explicitly prohibited, and educational recommendations may be applied at the prosecutorial level. Resocialization remains the core goal, yet institutional variation across three entities complicates uniform implementation. Kosovo’s system is structured by the 2018 *Juvenile Justice Code*, emphasizing dual pathways: diversion (pre-trial alternatives) and educational (post-trial rehabilitative) measures. Penal sanctions are limited to older juveniles and are explicitly excluded for those under 16. Montenegro employs a blended model of diversion, educational, and therapeutic responses, administered through specialized juvenile panels. Emphasis is placed on psycho-social interventions, coordinated by social welfare centers and implemented with judicial oversight.

All four countries demonstrate a common policy shift from punitive juvenile sentencing to individualized, child-centered models that prioritize diversion, therapy, and community reintegration. While Kosovo and Albania present more codified and systematically implemented frameworks, Montenegro offers a streamlined but well-aligned model. In contrast, BiH’s approach, though principled, reflects the challenges of decentralization and consistency. Continued progress will depend on strengthening probation and case-management systems, enhancing access to psychological and educational services, ensuring training for juvenile justice professionals, and



standardizing implementation across fragmented jurisdictions. Each system's commitment to restorative justice and the developmental needs of minors is evident, yet effective realization requires sustained coordination, adequate resources, and consistent monitoring.

2.3. Juvenile Correctional Settlements

Juvenile correctional settlements in the Western Balkans represent a spectrum of custodial, semi-open, and community-based interventions designed to balance accountability with rehabilitation. While each system reflects national legal frameworks and capacities, they share a commitment to education, reintegration, and child-sensitive treatment. The following synthesis outlines the types, legal bases, and core functions of juvenile correctional settlements across Albania, BiH, Kosovo, and Montenegro.

Table 4. Comparative Juvenile Correctional Settlements by Country

Country	Main Settlement Types	Legal Basis	Core Features & Programs
Albania	Kavaja Institute; semi-open education centers; pre-trial juvenile wings; therapeutic homes	Law 37/2017; Decision 552/2009; Decision 444/2018	CBT, carpentry/IT, psychosocial counseling, family mediation, community service; minors placed progressively based on risk
BiH	Educational-correctional homes; juvenile prisons; educational centers	Law on Criminal Sanctions Execution	Focus on therapy, education, emotional/social skills; varying degrees of restriction based on offense severity; reintegration emphasized
Kosovo	Juvenile Correctional Centre (Lipjan); Educational-Corrective Centre	Law No. 08/L-131	Age- and gender-separated units; on-site schooling, therapy, vocational workshops (IT, plumbing, cooking); reintegration plans; 24/7 secure and semi-open options
Montenegro	Detention centers; Ljubović (non-institutional); residential therapeutic facilities; community programs	Law on Juvenile Proceedings (2011)	Educational/vocational training, psychological therapy, partial liberty; lacks dedicated correctional institution-gap noted in enforcement

Albania operates under a tiered correctional model with a clear principle of *detention as ultima ratio*. Most juveniles begin in community or semi-open settings, while high-risk cases are placed in the Kavaja Institute which is a pedagogically focused facility^{13,14}. Therapeutic homes cater to minors with mental health or addiction needs. Restorative justice and educational continuity are emphasized across settings. BiH maintains a diverse institutional landscape in its juvenile justice system. Educational-Correctional Homes combine therapy, education, and discipline, while Juvenile Prisons provide secure environments for serious offenses but still prioritize resocialization. Educational Centers support gradual reintegration through individualized pedagogy, psychological assistance, and skills training. However, the country's fragmented governance structure necessitates entity-level oversight, leading to regional variability in the provision of services and the enforcement of standards. Kosovo has developed a dual-institution model in Lipjan. The Juvenile Correctional Centre¹⁵ houses both sentenced juveniles and those in

¹³ <https://uprdoc.ohchr.org/uprweb/downloadfile.aspx?file=Annexe4&filename=768>

¹⁴ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/a/470814.pdf>

¹⁵ See <https://shkk.rks-gov.net/qendra-korrektuese-per-femra-dhe-te-mitur-ne-lipjan/>





remand, while the Educational-Corrective Centre¹⁶ caters to those under educational orders in a semi-open format. In 2024, 149 individuals (juveniles and adults) completed certified vocational training¹⁷. These centers implement structured school programs, therapy, life-skills training, and gender-sensitive care, guided by Article 21 of Law No. 08/L-131¹⁸. Montenegro faces structural limitations, as no specialized correctional institution currently exists for institutional educational measures. As a result, courts sometimes resort to imprisonment to fulfill correctional mandates, a practice inconsistent with international standards. The only available non-institutional facility is Ljubović, a semi-open center. Additional services include community programs, therapy, and residential care for select cases.

In conclusion, while Kosovo and Albania have developed functionally diverse and policy-aligned juvenile correctional networks, Montenegro faces infrastructural constraints that hinder full compliance with juvenile justice standards. BiH's system is well-structured, though implementation varies across entities. Across all four countries, the trend is toward a rehabilitative model, with strong emphasis on education, therapy, and reintegration, but continued investment in infrastructure, staff training, and program monitoring is needed to close the gap between legal frameworks and actual practice.

¹⁶ See <https://shkk.rks-gov.net/qendra-edukuese-korrektuese-ne-lipjan/>

¹⁷ Correctional Service of Kosovo, Annual Work Report, 2024, pp.30-31 Available at: https://shkk.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Raporti%20Vjetor%20i%20Pun%C3%ABs%2C%202024_com-pressed.pdf

¹⁸ Law no. 08/l-131 on Kosovo Correctional Service, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo / no.20 /8 August 2022, Pristina. See article 5-6. Available at: <https://md.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2FDA74C4-CE92-4018-8031-23893DEF8CB.pdf>



3. Overview of Juvenile Justice Reform in Western Balkans

Recent juvenile justice reforms across the Western Balkans have focused on aligning domestic legal frameworks with international human rights standards, notably the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and European child-friendly justice guidelines. Albania, BiH, Kosovo, and Montenegro, have each made legislative, procedural, and institutional changes to ensure that juvenile justice systems emphasize rehabilitation, education, and reintegration over punishment. This synthesis summarizes and compares key developments in the four countries.

Table 5. Legislative Reform and Codification

Country	Key Reform Laws	Scope of Reform
Albania	Criminal Justice for Children Code (Law 37/2017); Execution of Criminal Sanctions Law (2020) ¹⁹	Unified CRC-compliant code; introduced diversion as default option; individualized reintegration planning
BiH	Laws on Protection and Treatment of Children and Juveniles (2010–2014)	Entity-level adoption of unified juvenile law; still facing inconsistent implementation
Kosovo	Juvenile Justice Code (2018); Correctional Service Law (2022); Probation Law (2022) ²⁰ ; Criminal Sanctions Execution Law (2022) ²¹	Comprehensive reform of sentencing, detention, probation, and diversion procedures; full alignment with EU standards
Montenegro	Law on the Treatment of Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings (2011)	Created standalone juvenile regime; integrated child-rights principles and diversionary tools

3.1. Sentencing, Detention, and Alternatives

Albania and Kosovo have prioritized non-custodial sanctions, including community service, mediation, and therapeutic programs. Detention is considered a last resort, and legal thresholds for imprisonment have been clearly codified. BiH and Montenegro have taken similar legal steps, but Montenegro lacks institutional capacity for specialized correctional education, and BiH's fragmented governance impedes consistent application across entities. All four countries emphasize proportional sentencing and restrict custodial options to juveniles aged 16–18 in serious cases only.

¹⁹ Republic of Albania, Law No. 79/2020, "For the execution of criminal decisions" (2020). Retrieved from https://www.pp.gov.al/rc/doc/Ligj_nr_79_dt_25_6_2020_5350.pdf

²⁰ See Law No.08/l -129 on Kosovo Probation Service, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, No.20/8AU-GUST 2022, Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=61156>

²¹ See Law no. 08/l-132 on the execution of criminal sanctions, official gazette of the Republic of Kosovo / no.21 /10 august 2022, Pristina. Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8867&langid=2>



Table 6. Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs Across Countries

Country	Reform Measures
Albania	Mandatory reintegration plans; national electronic tracking; Kavaja Institute offers CBT and life-skills
BiH	Rehabilitation varies by region; educational homes offer therapy, education, but post-release care is limited
Kosovo	Post-release care through Lipjan Centre; vocational training and schooling
Montenegro	NGO-supported reintegration (education, counseling); municipal life-skills projects

3.2. Institutional and Stakeholder Capacity

Albania leads in mandatory training: 40 hours/year for correctional officers and maintains specialized juvenile benches. BiH lacks specialized pre-trial and police units for juveniles; staff training and infrastructure remain critical gaps. Kosovo has developed probation and correctional infrastructure with regional offices. Montenegro offers periodic stakeholder training with UNICEF and EU support.

3.3. Rights, Procedural Safeguards, and Monitoring

All systems ensure mandatory legal aid and guardian presence during interrogations. Albania introduced a case-tracking system and underwent UN UPR in 2024. Kosovo amended its criminal laws to reinforce protections. Montenegro and BiH protect privacy but lack robust monitoring systems.

3.4. Conclusion

Albania and Kosovo present highly structured, multi-tiered systems supported by legal reforms and modern data tools. Montenegro has a solid legislative base but limited facilities. BiH's reforms are aligned with international standards but inconsistently applied. All countries must continue investing in training, community alternatives, and monitoring to ensure a child-sensitive, rehabilitative justice system.



4. Overview of Juvenile Justice Professionals in Western Balkans

4.1. Profiles and Functions of the Juvenile Justice Professionals

A well-functioning juvenile justice system relies on the coordinated efforts of trained professionals across legal, psychosocial, and correctional domains. In the context of juvenile justice reform and child-friendly justice standards, it is crucial to define, systematize, and compare the professional roles and responsibilities across different national systems. The comparative analysis of four countries reveals both shared foundational structures and distinct country-specific implementations that reflect legal frameworks, institutional capacity, and international compliance efforts.

4.1.1. Shared Core Roles Across Jurisdictions

All four countries maintain core legal roles essential to juvenile justice processes: juvenile judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, police officers, social workers, and psychologists. These professionals function under legal mandates that recognize the distinct developmental and psychosocial needs of children in conflict with the law. Juvenile judges and prosecutors are mandated to apply diversion measures, ensure due process, and guide the juvenile through rehabilitative rather than punitive procedures. Defense attorneys play a critical role in safeguarding the child's procedural rights and ensuring the best interest principle is upheld throughout the proceedings. Psychosocial professionals including social workers and psychologists, are instrumental in conducting assessments, drafting intervention plans, and monitoring reintegration. Their multidisciplinary collaboration with courts, police, and educational institutions is a legal requirement in all four countries, while in Albania it is supported by structured certification programs.

4.1.2. Divergences in Structure and Professionalization

Despite shared roles, the extent of professional specialization, training, and institutional embedding varies significantly. Albania has developed one of the most detailed and standardized systems, supported by the 2017 Criminal Justice for Children Code²² which mandates juvenile-specific certification for judges, prosecutors, police officers, and even prison educators. The integration of restorative justice practitioners and NGO mentors as recognized actors illustrates Albania's move toward a multi-actor model of juvenile rehabilitation²³. In contrast, BiH operates a fragmented system due to its complex governance structure. While juvenile justice legislation is harmonized in principle, implementation depends on entity-level coordination, often limiting consistent access to specialized professionals or services across regions²⁴. Kosovo occupies a middle ground with clear role definitions and minimum qualifications for juvenile professionals, especially judges and prosecutors. However, gaps remain in standardized training for psychosocial staff and a full integration of community-based restorative programs.

²² <https://euralius.eu/index.php/en/library/albanian-legislation>

²³ https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/4396/file/NARC%202021-2026_ENG.pdf

²⁴ Krivični zakon BiH ("Službeni glasnik Bosne i Hercegovine", br. 3/2003, 32/2003 - ispr., 37/2003, 54/2004, 61/2004, 30/2005, 53/2006, 55/2006, 8/2010, 47/2014, 22/2015, 40/2015 i 35/2018); - Zakon o krivičnom postupku BiH, Glava X ("Službeni glasnik Bosne i Hercegovine", br. 3/2003, 32/2003 - ispr., 36/2003, 26/2004,



4.1.3. The Importance of Clarity in Role Definitions

Clearly defined professional roles are not only administratively beneficial but also essential for ensuring children's rights and judicial integrity. Ambiguity or inconsistency in responsibilities can result in procedural delays, inappropriate sentencing, or failure to provide adequate psychosocial support. Moreover, the absence of role clarity impedes effective multidisciplinary collaboration, which is the cornerstone of child-sensitive justice. For example, Albania's requirement for probation officers to receive certified restorative justice training could inform future capacity-building initiatives in BiH and Kosovo. Conversely, BiH's legislative emphasis on cooperation between judiciary and social services though inconsistently implemented provides a legal model for institutional integration.

4.1.4. Conclusion

The mapping of juvenile justice professionals across countries illustrates that while legal alignment with international child rights standards is advancing, full professionalization and operational coherence remain uneven. To improve outcomes for children in conflict with the law, policymakers should:

- Ensure specialized training and certification for all professionals engaged in juvenile cases.
- Institutionalize multidisciplinary teams within courts and correctional facilities.
- Support cross-country learning exchanges and capacity-building mechanisms.
- Promote legal harmonization where administrative divisions present obstacles, as in BiH.

Ultimately, investing in a competent, well-defined, and child-sensitive workforce is essential to actualize the rehabilitative goals of juvenile justice systems and protect the long-term well-being of vulnerable youth across the region.

4.2. Sociodemographic Features of the Juvenile Justice Professional Participants

Table 7. Characteristics of the individuals who completed questionnaires

	Category	Albania	BiH	Kosovo	Montenegro*	Total
Participants (N)		164	145	96	98	503
Gender	Female	92 (56.1%)	70 (48.3%)	57 (59.4%)	80 (81.6%)	299 (59.4%)
	Male	72 (43.9%)	75 (51.7%)	39 (40.6%)	18 (18.4%)	204 (40.6%)

63/2004, 13/2005, 48/2005, 46/2006, 29/2007, 53/2007, 58/2008, 12/2009, 16/2009, 53/2009 - dr. zakon, 93/2009, 72/2013 i 65/2018)



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Age	Mean or Range	41.8 ± 8.4	18–67	Mean ≈ 33	37.3	—
Education	High School or Below	—	57 (28.2%)	4 (4.2%)	41 (41.9%)	61 (12.1%)
	Bachelor	66 (40.2%)	87 (43.1%)	53 (55.2%)		247 (49.1%)
	Master	98 (59.8%)	44 (21.9%)	34 (35.4%)	57 (58.1%)	176 (35.0%)
	PhD	—	10 (5.0%)	5 (5.2%)		15 (3.0%)
Field of Study	Law	27 (16.5%)	30 (19.4%)	62 (64.6%)	20 (20.4%)	139 (27.47%)
	Psychology	32 (19.5%)	11 (7.1%)	5 (5.2%)	19 (19.4%)	67 (13.24%)
	Social Work	52 (31.7%)	7 (4.5%)	—	2 (2.0%)	61 (12.05%)
	Educational/Pedagogy	19 (11.6%)	23 (14.83%)	—	4 (4.08%)	46 (9.09%)
	Sociology/Social Sciences	—	27 (19.36%)	10 (10.4%)	48 (48.9%)	85 (16.79%)
	Security Studies	13 (7.9%)	—	13 (13.5%)	2 (2.04%)	28 (5.53%)
	Health Sciences	4 (2.4%)	8 (5.17%)	-	2 (2.04%)	14 (2.76%)
	Other	17 (10.4%)	42 (27.1%)	6 (6.3%)	1 (1.0%)	66 (13.04%)
Current Occupation	Social Worker	52 (31.7%)	24 (16.67%)	10 (10.4%)	40 (40.8%)	126 (24.09%)
	Psychologist /counselor	31 (18.9%)	19 (13.19%)	—	11 (11.2%)	61 (11.66%)
	Legal Professionals	24 (14.6%)	7 (4.9%)	41 (42.7%)	16 (16.3%)	88 (16.82%)
	Educators / Trainers	12 (7.3%)	23 (16.0%)	6 (6.3%)	7 (7.1%)	48 (9.17%)
	Correctional Staff / Police	22 (13.4%)	62 (43.06%)	26 (27.1%)	1 (1.0%)	115 (21.98%)
	Health Staff	-	9 (6.25)	-	2 (2.04%)	11 (2.10%)
	Other	23 (14.0%)	23 (15.9%)	13 (13.5%)	15 (15.30%)	74 (14.14%)

Workplace Type	Social Services	57 (34.8%)	33 (24%)	4 (4.2%)	45 (45.9%)	139 (28.08%)
	Justice / Courts	22 (13.4%)	6 (4.1%)	38 (39.6%)	28 (28.6%)	94 (18.98%)
	Educational Institutions	—	14 (10.2%)	5 (5.2%)	6 (6.1%)	25 (5.05%)
	Correc-tional Insti-tutions	31 (18.9%)	70 (51.2%)	29 (30.2%)	-	130 (26.26%)
	NGOs	37 (22.6%)	—	-	5 (5.1%)	42 (8.48%)
	Other	17 (10.4%)	14 (10.2%)	20 (20.8%)	14 (14.29%)	65 (13.13%)
Professional Experience	Median / Distribu-tion	8 years (IQR 5–14)	10 years (IQR 4.5–16)	4 years (IQR 1–15)	10+ years: 39%	—

*Montenegro country report does not include detailed demographic data for interview participants.

The overall sample comprised 503 participants, predominantly female (59.4%), with the highest female representation in Montenegro (81.6%). Mean ages varied, with Albania averaging 41.8 years, Kosovo approximately 33, and Montenegro 37.3, while BiH's participants ranged from 18 to 67 years. Educational attainment was generally high, with 49.1% holding a bachelor's degree and 35% a master's degree; Albania recorded the highest proportion of master's holders (59.8%), whereas BiH had the largest share of high school or below (28.2%) and PhD holders (5%). Law was the most common field of study overall (27.47%), dominating in Kosovo (64.6%), while social work was most prevalent in Albania (31.7%) and sociology/social sciences in Montenegro (48.9%). In terms of occupation, social workers formed the largest group overall (24.09%), especially in Albania (31.7%) and Montenegro (40.8%), while correctional staff and police were most numerous in BiH (43.06%), and legal professionals were most prominent in Kosovo (42.7%). The most common workplace settings were social services (28.08%) and correctional institutions (26.26%), with the latter particularly concentrated in BiH (51.2%), while justice and court positions were most common in Kosovo (39.6%), and NGOs were notable in Albania (22.6%). Professional experience ranged from a median of four years in Kosovo to ten years in BiH, with 39% of Montenegro's participants reporting over a decade of experience.

Figure 1. Gender Distribution of participants in questionnaires

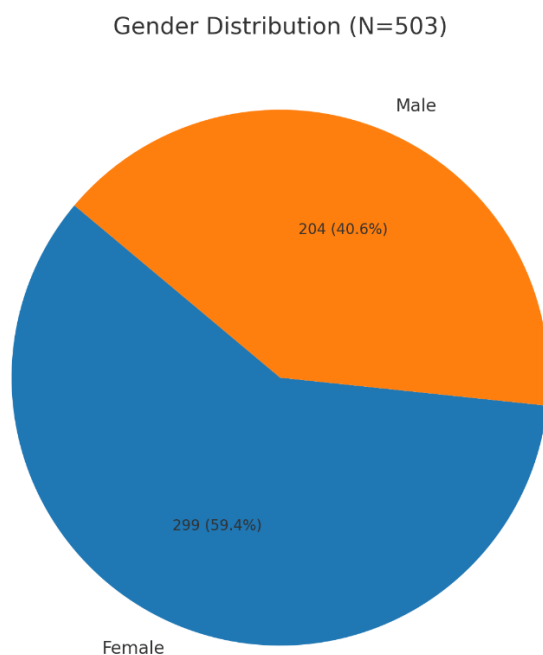


Figure 2. Education distribution for participants in questionnaires

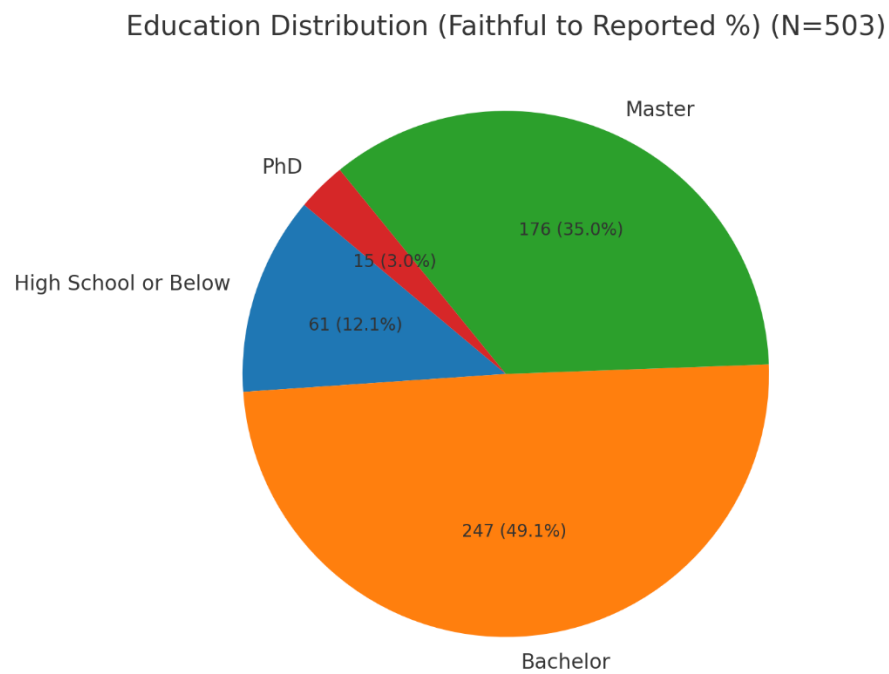


Figure 3. Field of study distribution for participants in questionnaires

Field of Study Distribution (Faithful to Reported %) (N=503)

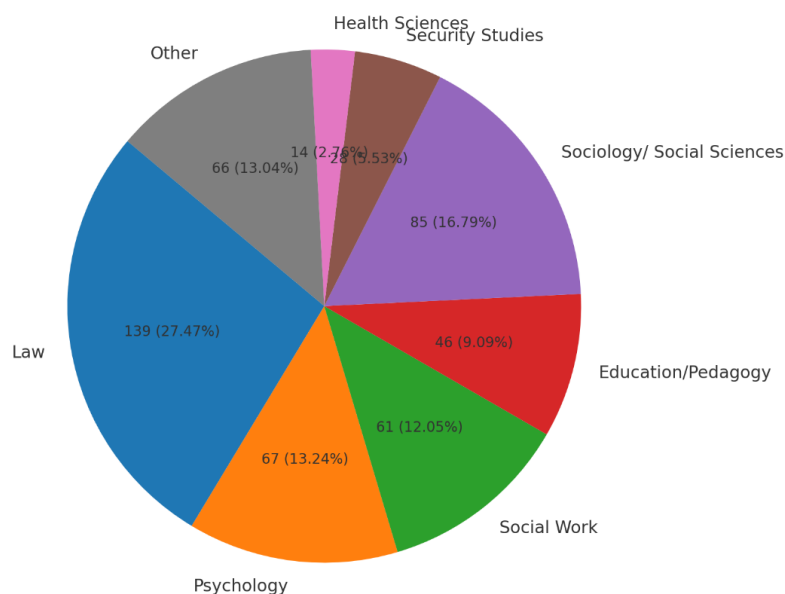


Figure 4. Current occupation distribution for participants in questionnaires

Current Occupation Distribution (Faithful to Reported %) (N=503)

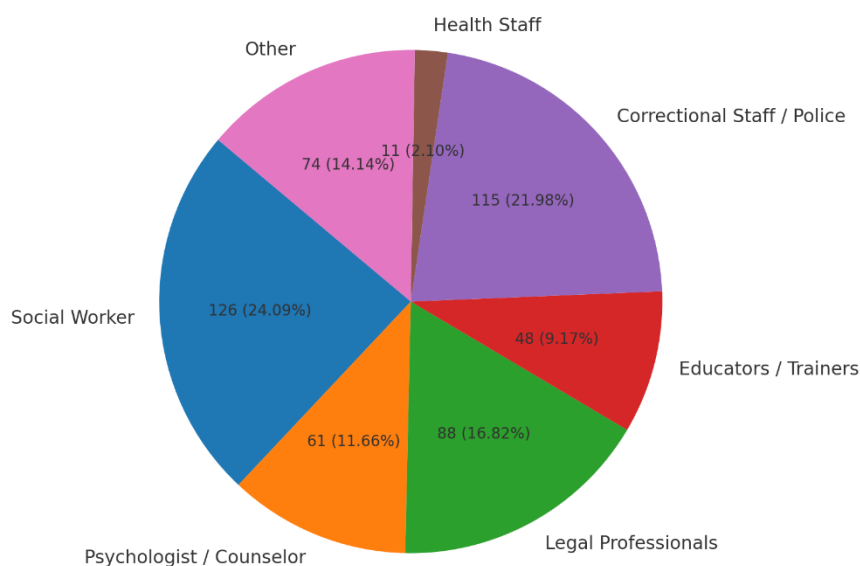
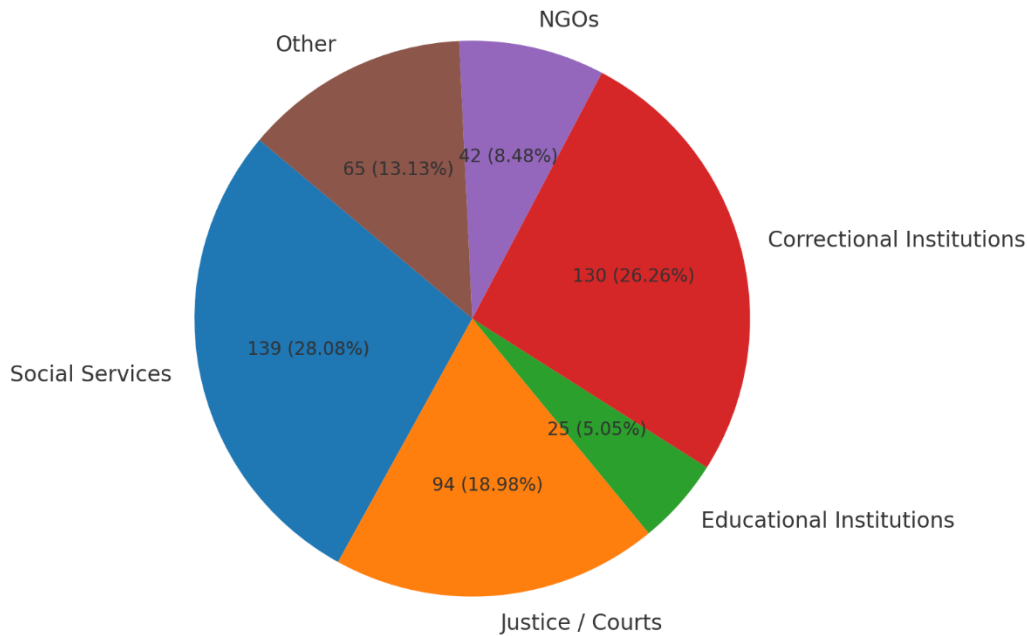




Figure 5. Workplace type distribution for participants in questionnaires

Workplace Type Distribution (Faithful to Reported %) (N=503)



4.3. Educational requirements, qualifications and assessments of the Juvenile Justice Professionals

4.3.1. Educational Requirements

All four countries require university-level education as the baseline for employment in juvenile justice roles, although the depth, structure, and specialization of such education vary considerably.

- Albania: Entry pathways differ by role. Judges and prosecutors hold an integrated five-year law degree followed by a two-year magistrates' program. Probation officers require a bachelor's in a relevant field and attend a six-month induction. Psychologists and social workers must have a master's and professional license.
- BiH: Respondents unanimously reported the requirement of a university degree in fields such as law, social work, psychology, or criminology. This was typically followed by a traineeship or internship. Candidates are commonly subjected to a merit-based selection process that includes written and oral examinations, practical tests, and structured interviews designed to assess both professional competence and interpersonal skills.
- Kosovo: The legal framework mandates clear academic requirements. Judges and prosecutors must have a Law degree and pass national jurisprudence exams. Psychologists must hold a Master's degree and cer-



tification from the Kosovo Chamber of Nurses. Kosovo mandates a 12-month judicial/prosecutorial training at the Academy of Justice. University-level educators acknowledge that current curricula lack practical juvenile justice competencies.

- Montenegro: Professionals generally possessed degrees in psychology, law, or pedagogy. However, they reported gaps in initial curricula, particularly the lack of practical, child-centered training. This is echoed across various roles, including social workers and court advisors.

While formal education is a baseline across all countries, Albania and Kosovo show more institutionalized post-graduate training. BiH and Montenegro highlight a gap in pedagogical and practical child-focused content.

4.3.2. Qualification and Competence Appraisal

- Albania: Appraisal systems are more structured. Probation officers are assessed annually using a 12-item scorecard linked to outcomes. Correctional staff undergo physical and legal tests yearly. Educators are evaluated through classroom observation and learning portfolios.
- BiH: Hiring processes include professional exams, structured interviews, and health screenings. However, 16 of 19 professionals reported no formal assessment of role-specific competencies during hiring. Appraisals focus more on procedural compliance than outcomes.
- Kosovo: The legal professions undergo structured qualification processes, including mandatory 12-month training post-appointment. However, continuing education specific to juvenile justice is limited and mostly donor-driven.
- Montenegro: Similar gaps exist. Although professionals have foundational knowledge, they express a need for ongoing training in child psychology and restorative justice. Assessments of skills are minimal, especially during recruitment.

Albania stands out for its outcome-based assessment mechanisms. BiH and Montenegro lack standardized competence evaluation, and Kosovo offers structured legal training but limited juvenile-focused appraisal.

4.3.3. Hiring Processes and Role Clarity

- Albania: Role definitions are embedded in institutional structures. Judges and prosecutors undergo periodic peer reviews. Probation officers and educators follow clear procedural paths, including ongoing appraisals.
- BiH: All interviewees emphasized legal compliance in hiring. Yet, many roles especially in court systems were undefined at the point of hiring. Social work roles were clearer.
- Kosovo: Judicial roles are clearly structured with defined entry conditions. Professors and stakeholders advocate for greater practice-oriented curricula and clarity, especially regarding juvenile-specific content.
- Montenegro: Similar discrepancies were noted. Social work roles had defined expectations, while court advisors lacked clarity. Some professionals had to volunteer for extended periods before gaining permanent roles.

Kosovo and Albania demonstrate structured entry and clearer role definitions. Montenegro and BiH face ambiguities, particularly within court-based roles.



4.3.4. Ongoing Training and Professional Development

- Albania: Systems exist for refresher modules and continuing education tied to performance appraisals. However, gaps remain in learner-centered pedagogy.
- BiH: Training is recognized as necessary but is unevenly applied. Emphasis is placed on legal knowledge rather than rehabilitative practices.
- Kosovo: Training is more legalistic, with less focus on psychosocial aspects. Juvenile-specific continuing education remains rare.
- Montenegro: Participants identified the need for updated, specialized training in trauma-informed care, child interviewing, and digital risks. Burnout and lack of psychological support were common concerns.

Albania leads with structured, periodic evaluations tied to performance. Kosovo provides formal legal training but lacks juvenile-centered continuous education. BiH and Montenegro are more reactive, with limited systematic training provisions.

4.3.5. Professional Role Comparisons Across Countries

- Social Workers:
 - In Albania, their roles are clearly defined, with mandatory licensing and periodic case audits.
 - In BiH and Montenegro, social workers often lack clear initial training and rely on field experience.
- Judges/Prosecutors:
 - In Albania and Kosovo, clear legal pathways and training through judicial academies exist.
 - In BiH and Montenegro, role definitions are less precise at onboarding, affecting institutional coherence.
- Psychologists:
 - All countries require university education.
 - Only Albania and Kosovo have structured licensing and ongoing competence review mechanisms.
- Correctional Officers:
 - In Albania, these staff undergo structured physical and legal assessments.
 - In BiH and Montenegro, such assessments are not standardized.

4.3.6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite a shared normative commitment to protecting children in conflict with the law, the four countries differ substantially in how they operationalize educational standards and professional readiness for juvenile justice professionals. While all require formal academic qualifications, there are notable disparities in post-entry training quality, role definition, and institutionalized appraisal systems.

Key Common Challenges:

- Overemphasis on legalistic knowledge over psychosocial or pedagogical competence.
- Weak or non-existent outcome-based evaluation mechanisms.



- Inconsistent onboarding, especially in new or hybrid institutional roles.
- Limited, donor-reliant continuing education opportunities.

Recommendations:

- Embed child-centered content in curricula: Integrate modules on child development, trauma-informed care, restorative justice, and international juvenile justice standards into undergraduate and postgraduate programs in law, psychology, social work, and pedagogy.
- Enhance practical training: Establish mandatory clinical placements, mock trials, supervised internships, and practice-based modules to ensure graduates acquire real-world juvenile justice competencies.
- Standardize qualification frameworks: Develop regionally aligned competency standards and entry examinations that assess not only legal/procedural knowledge but also interpersonal, psychosocial, and child-protection skills.
- Institutionalize competence appraisal systems: Expand structured, outcome-based evaluations (e.g., probation officer scorecards) across all professional groups, linking appraisal results to career progression and targeted training.
- Clarify professional roles: Codify job descriptions for all juvenile justice roles, particularly court advisors and correctional staff, to avoid ambiguity and ensure institutional coherence across the system.
- Mandatory continuous professional education (CPE): Introduce legally binding requirements for ongoing, accredited professional training, reducing reliance on donor-driven short courses.
- Expand specialized training content: Prioritize refresher courses in trauma-informed practice, child interviewing techniques, digital risks, and restorative justice, tailored to the evolving challenges of juvenile justice.
- Strengthen supervision and peer learning: Establish structured mentorship schemes, peer-review systems, and regional training exchanges (e.g., Western Balkans training hubs) to promote cross-country learning and quality standards.
- Integrate wellbeing and resilience measures: Provide psychological support and burnout prevention programs for juvenile justice staff, recognizing the emotional demands of the work.
- Ensure EU alignment and accountability: Link educational reforms to EU requirements and international conventions on child rights, and empower inspection/accreditation bodies to monitor the quality of training and education provision.

4.4. Comparative Overview: Current Education Level and Qualifications of the Juvenile Justice Professionals Across Western Balkans

4.4.1. Formal Entry Requirements and Competencies

All four countries reviewed in this analysis impose specific academic and practical requirements for professionals entering the juvenile justice field. While there is considerable variance in implementation, several commonalities emerge:



- Minimum Education: A university degree (typically Level VII or VIII) is universally required, especially in disciplines such as law, psychology, social work, or pedagogy.
- Specialized Knowledge Areas: Professionals are expected to possess expertise in child development, communication with vulnerable populations, child rights, and trauma-informed care.
- Assessment and Screening: Most systems require interviews, psychological evaluations, and medical examinations as part of the hiring process.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD): Institutional support for ongoing training varies, with Albania offering structured CPD, while Kosovo and BiH often rely on non-structured training initiatives.

Country-specific examples:

- In Albania, magistrates follow a mandated 180-hour "Justice for Children" curriculum.
- In BiH, a certification process is required through judicial education centers, yet professionals note a disconnect between legal education and juvenile justice practice.
- Kosovo mandates a 12-month initial judicial training and values prior juvenile experience for judge and prosecutor appointments.
- In Montenegro, probation and social workers must have direct child-related experience and expected competencies include knowledge of child centered approaches.

4.4.2. Education and Perceived Readiness

Formal Academic Background

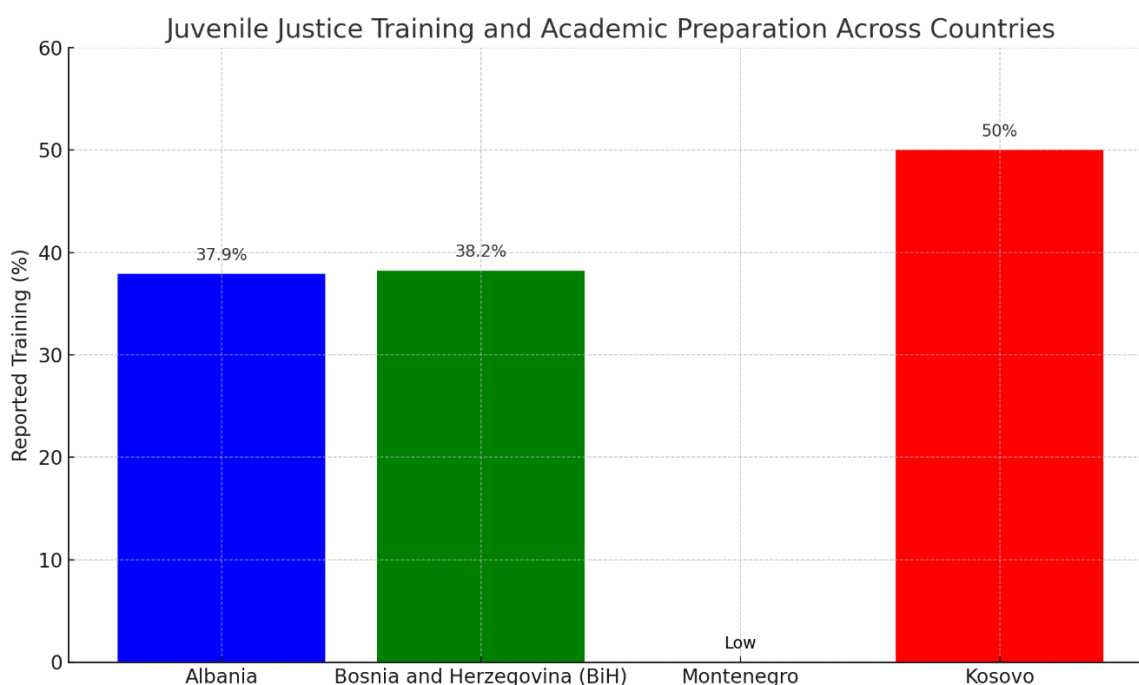
All countries report that the majority of juvenile justice professionals hold at least a bachelor's degree, with a strong representation of master's or integrated five-year law degrees:

- Albania: 59.8% hold a master's or integrated 5-year law degree.
- BiH: Majority hold university degrees in social sciences or law.
- Kosovo: Psychologists and social workers must hold master's degrees.
- Montenegro: Professionals often hold VII level qualifications.

Specialized Postgraduate Training

- Albania: 37.9% report formal post-qualification juvenile justice training (e.g., School of Magistrates).
- BiH: 38.2% report university-level juvenile justice courses.
- Kosovo: >50% of professionals report insufficient academic preparation, advocating for postgraduate certification.
- Montenegro: Interviewees report low exposure to specialized coursework, relying on encouraged in-service training.

Figure 6. Perceived Adequacy of Academic Preparation



Across all countries, the gap between theoretical education and practice is a recurring theme: Professionals express confidence in legal knowledge but highlight deficiencies in pedagogy, communication, and digital practice.

- Albania: 49% consider themselves "adequate but in need of further CPD"; 24% feel their qualifications are "inadequate".
- BiH: Practical competencies gained via internships, volunteering, and non-formal training.
- Kosovo: Self-initiative and international trainings fill the void left by inadequate academic offerings.
- Montenegro: Foundational psychological and legal knowledge exists, but practical skills are underdeveloped.

Participation in Juvenile Justice Training

- Albania: Top certifications included restorative justice (42%) and case management/ risk assessment tools (38%) and child rights interviewing (34%).
- BiH: 38.2% had formal training; topics covered included child psychology (34.7%), human rights (32.7%), and child needs (30.7%).
- Kosovo: Responses from the web-based survey confirmed a broad consensus on existing gaps in the educational preparation of juvenile justice professionals. Professionals working directly with children (judges, prosecutors, psychologists) indicated that they rely heavily on on-the-job learning, self-initiative, or international training opportunities.

- Montenegro: Only 21.4% received juvenile justice courses during university. The large majority (78.6%) had no such academic training, indicating a significant gap in formal education relevant to juvenile justice practices.

Figure 7. Participation in Juvenile Justice Training in Albania

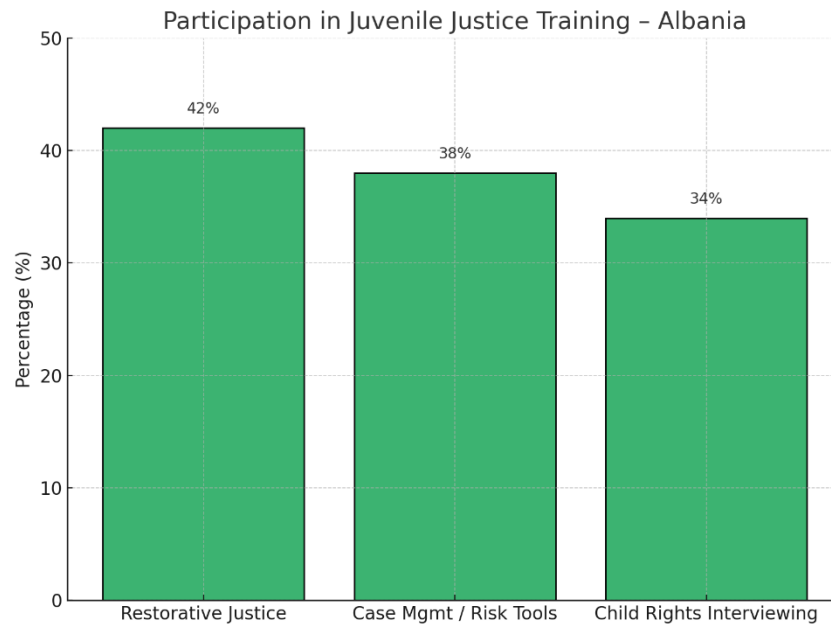


Figure 8. Participation in Juvenile Justice Training in BiH

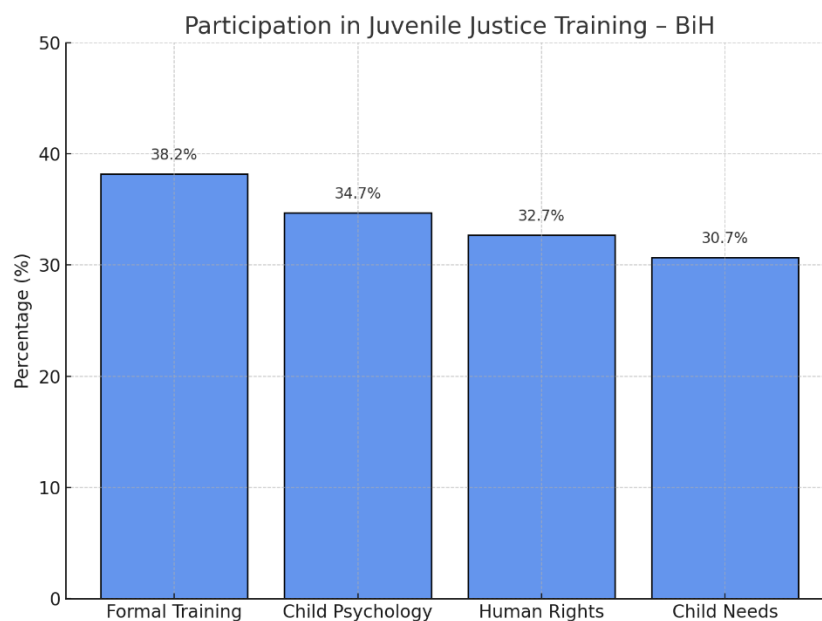
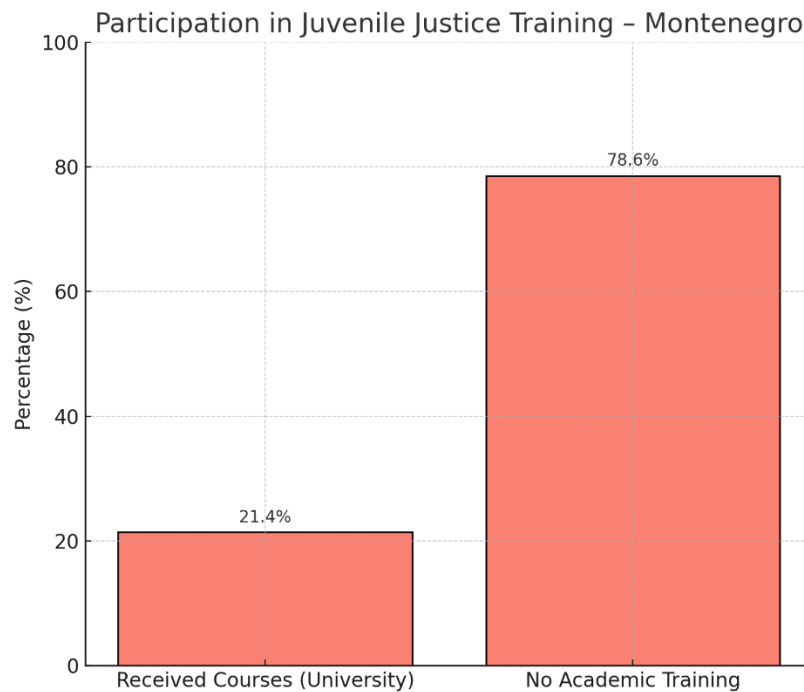


Figure 9. Participation in Juvenile Justice Training in Montenegro



Themes from Interviews

- Inadequate support for correctional staff (Albania)
- Informal learning outweighs academic instruction (BiH)
- Need for more hands-on training in order to improve practical skills (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro)
- Emphasis on the need for trauma-informed, crisis response, and child communication training (Montenegro)

4.4.3. Employment Prerequisites

Responses across countries show an emphasis on:

- Testing & Assessment (psychological, written, interviews): e.g., 83.7% in Montenegro
- Formal Education (university degree): e.g., 78.6% in Montenegro
- Medical Examinations: Seen in BiH (33–35%)
- Experience: Required in all countries but less consistently prioritized in questionnaires (<6%)
- Soft Skills: Connections, personality traits, or recommendations play a minor role.

4.4.4. Summary and Implications

Despite clear statutory requirements, juvenile justice professionals across the region report insufficient practical training at the academic level. While educational backgrounds in psychology, law, and social work are common, few professionals receive dedicated instruction on juvenile justice systems or child-specific communication. As a



result, knowledge and confidence are largely acquired through experience, ad hoc training, or external postgraduate certifications.

To bridge this gap, countries should:

- Integrate specialized juvenile justice content into undergraduate and graduate curricula
- Ensure regular structured CPD opportunities through accredited, state-supported channels
- Clarify institutional expectations and harmonize hiring standards across sectors.

This comparative analysis reveals an urgent need for competency-based education reform aligned with real-world practice in juvenile justice, as echoed by professionals across all four countries.

4.5. Continuous and Systematic Training of the Juvenile Justice Professionals

a. Albania

Legal System:

Albania mandates both probationary and continuous training across all roles:

- Judges/Prosecutors: Two-year School of Magistrates with 180h child-track.
- Probation Officers: Six-month School of Public Administration (SoPA).
- Correctional Officers: 400h youth-specific training + 12-week block.
- Psychologists/Social Workers: 60h specialization; 30h biannual CPD.

Field Results:

- Probationary Training:
 - 78% confirmed completing the full induction.
 - Evaluation: strong for judges/prosecutors, weaker for prison staff.
- Continuous Training:
 - Only 42% fulfilled the mandated CPD load in 2023.
 - Topics:
 - Child-rights interviewing (46%)
 - Crisis de-escalation (38%)
 - Electronic monitoring (29%)
- Average CPD Hours: 24 hours/year (IQR: 16–32)
- Satisfaction:
 - CPD satisfaction (Likert 1–5): 3.1 average.
 - Frustrations: fragmented schedules, overreliance on donor initiatives, and weak practical training.
- Assessment & Advancement:
 - Although required, annual competence appraisals had tangible career impact for only 58%.
 - Performance-based incentives (e.g., salary increments) are rare.



b. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Legal System:

Training is statutorily grounded across all major professions. Judicial and prosecutorial education is governed by the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council via the Centers for the Education of Judges and Prosecutors. Entity ministries (Justice, Internal Affairs, Labor, Health) share responsibility for training social workers, mediators, and legal staff.

Field Results:

- Probationary Induction: 77.9% of respondents reported having completed formal induction. Primary training content included:
 - Human rights (39.8%)
 - Conflict resolution (33.3%)
 - Communication skills (31.7%)
 - Report writing (26%)
 - Children's rights (25.2%)
- Continuous Training:
 - 70.6% had received any in-service training.
 - Top topics of in-service training: Human rights (31.1%), conflict resolution (29.5%), child-specific needs (26.2%), communication skills (27.9 %).
 - Voluntary basis: 56.6%
 - Required/organized by workplace: 37.5%
- Concerns:
 - Trainings are outdated, poorly coordinated, and disconnected from institutional developments.
 - Training courses should cover a wide range of topics, including sociological and psychological aspects, mental health and stress management, child psychology, pedagogical and didactic methods, communication skills, safety, delinquency prevention, as well as practical examples from the field. Additionally, education on working with children in conflict with the law, supervision, development of socio-economic skills, and strengthening interinstitutional cooperation were highlighted.

c. Kosovo

Legal System:

All justice professions are subject to training mandates. Legal foundations are embedded in Law No. 06/L-054 (Judiciary), Law 05/L-125 (Probation Service), and Law 04/L-149 (Correctional Service).

Field Results:

- Induction Training:
 - ~70% received formal probational or induction training,
 - The Justice Academy provides 12-month dual-phase training: theory + in-court practice.
- In-Service Training:
 - 37% participated in CPD within the last 2 years.



- Median training time: 24 hours
- Focus areas:
 - Juvenile rehabilitation & reintegration (36%)
 - Anger management (29%)
 - Communication with minors (24%)
 - Legal/procedural skills (17%)
- Institutional Challenges:
 - Trainings remain heavily donor-funded.
 - Follow-up assessments are weak; performance evaluations are often symbolic.
 - No significant link between training and career advancement.

d. Montenegro

Legal System:

There is no harmonized statutory mandate for probationary or in-service training across sectors. Existing practices rely on institutional guidelines (e.g., police academies, social welfare mentorships). Article 14 of the Law on the Treatment of Juveniles encourages education but lacks enforcement power. Training frequency, quality, and evaluation vary widely, and not all professionals receive regular or specialized education in juvenile justice topics.

Field Results:

- Initial Training:
 - Only 36.7% of respondents had received structured onboarding.
 - The rest (63.3%) began their posts without prior training.
- Training Content:
 - Communication & soft skills: 90.5%
 - Legal and rights-based: 81%
 - Practical risks: 57.1%
 - Psychological topics: 40.5%
 - Systemic/administrative: 33.3%
- Continuous Training Access:
 - Only 33.7% confirmed receiving CPD.
 - Common topics: Emergency and risk (38.3%), Communication (27.7%), Psychological content (14.9%), Legal themes (12.8%).
- Delivery:
 - Voluntary training dominates (56.8%).
 - Training is mostly organized by the employer (45.5%) and in-person (31.8%). Self-financing rare (13.6%), indicating strong dependence on employer/NGO-led programs.
- Issues:
 - Psychological and developmental topics (14.9%) were present but less dominant, suggesting that while mental health is addressed, it may not be the central focus of ongoing training.



- Training in Legal & Rights-Based content (12.8%) and Administrative/Systemic areas (6.4%) was notably lower, revealing potential gaps in understanding legal frameworks, procedural consistency, and system-level operation.
- Performance evaluation systems are inconsistent, limiting the potential of professional development.
- Staff express a lack of institutional support, especially in high-stress positions (social workers, court staff). Lack of systematic psychological support like stress relief due to burnout is reported. Access to mental health resources (like relaxation workshops), should be embedded into institutional culture.

Table 8. Cross-Country Comparison Highlights

Indicator	Albania	BiH	Kosovo	Montenegro
Received Probation Training	78%	77.9%	~70%	36.7%
Continuous Training Participation	42%	70.6%	37%	33.7%
Median CPD Hours	24	N/A	24	N/A
Voluntary Nature of CPD (%)	58%	56.6%	Predominantly	56.8%
Training Most Commonly on...	Child rights	HR, conflict	Rehabilitation	Communication
Evaluations Impact Promotion (%)	~58%	~58%	Limited	Rare
Mental Health Support	Fragmented	Weak	Limited	Minimal

4.5.1. Recommendations for improvement

Across all four countries, reforms are needed to move from fragmented and donor-dependent initiatives toward institutionalized, practice-oriented, and outcome-driven training systems. Albania's structured training framework can serve as a regional model, but gaps in CPD and weak performance incentives must be addressed. BiH should modernize and harmonize curricula, expanding beyond human rights and legal knowledge to include child psychology, pedagogical methods, stress management, and restorative practices, while linking training more clearly to career progression. Kosovo requires a shift from heavily donor-funded, legalistic modules to comprehensive, juvenile-focused continuing education, with follow-up assessments and integration of training outcomes into performance reviews. Montenegro faces the most critical challenges: the absence of a statutory training mandate, low induction coverage, and reliance on voluntary initiatives highlight the need for a national training framework with mandatory induction, regular CPD, and embedded psychological support systems. Regionally, all four countries would benefit from standardized regional curricula, cross-border training hubs, and mentorship programs that reinforce child-centered, interdisciplinary skills and align professional development with EU and international child rights standards.



4.6. Child-friendly Justice” among Juvenile Justice Professionals in Western Balkans

This section presents a comparative synthesis of findings from desk research and interviews conducted with juvenile justice professionals in all four countries: Albania, BiH, Kosovo, and Montenegro. The analysis focuses on the implementation of child-friendly justice (CFJ), professionals’ competencies, training systems, and observed gaps in practice.

4.6.1. Legal and Institutional Frameworks

All four countries have taken significant steps to align their juvenile justice systems with international CFJ standards, notably those of the UNCRC and the Council of Europe Guidelines on CFJ.

- Since the adoption of the Criminal Justice for Children Code in 2018, Albania has made substantial progress in institutionalizing CFJ through legal safeguards, infrastructure, and training. Key advancements include the establishment of child-friendly hearing rooms in seven district courts, the opening of a Barnahus center in Tirana, procedural guarantees such as mandatory legal and psychological representation for minors, and accelerated, private hearings. The School of Magistrates and UNICEF have played central roles in capacity-building, including specialized forensic interview training.
- As of 2023, BiH has made significant strides in implementing CFJ in line with international standards such as the UNCRC and the Council of Europe Guidelines. Child-friendly services have been integrated into 28 institutions, including courts, prosecutor’s offices, and police stations, supported by legislative reforms and coordinated training initiatives. However, challenges remain, including inconsistent implementation across different administrative levels, insufficient disaggregated data, and barriers faced by minority, migrant, and disabled children.
- In Kosovo, CFJ principles are embedded in the Juvenile Justice Code (Law No. 03/L-193), which emphasizes adapting judicial processes to the age, maturity, and needs of minors while upholding their rights to participation, dignity, and protection.
- Montenegro has made notable progress in aligning its juvenile justice system with CFJ principles, supported by organizations such as UNICEF, the Norwegian Embassy, and the Council of Europe. Key institutional reforms include the establishment of child-friendly rooms in courts and prosecutors’ offices across major cities, designed to reduce stress and support child participation. Additionally, Montenegro is implementing the Barnahus model, which offers a multidisciplinary, trauma-informed approach for children who are victims or witnesses of violence, enabling professionals from various sectors to work together in a single, safe environment. In parallel, targeted training initiatives such as the HELP course on CFJ have been introduced to build the capacity of judges and prosecutors, focusing on European standards and child rights protection.

Across Albania, BiH, Kosovo, and Montenegro, efforts to advance CFJ have gained momentum, supported by legislative reforms, international partnerships, and targeted training initiatives. All four countries have aligned their juvenile justice frameworks with international standards, established child-friendly spaces (e.g., Barnahus models, interview rooms), and introduced training modules addressing children's rights and procedural safeguards.



4.6.2. Professional Training and Competence

Training on CFJ principles and children's rights is widespread but varies in depth, accessibility, and institutionalization.

- **Albania:** In contrast to the legal framework, field data reveal significant disparities: while 78% of judges and prosecutors have received training, only 29% of correctional police and 24% of prison educators have done so. Self-assessed competence remains modest, especially regarding communication with children with disabilities. Gaps persist in the practical application of child-friendly standards in custodial settings, and training remains donor-dependent and uneven across regions.
- **BiH:** Interviews with juvenile justice professionals reveal varying levels of expertise: approximately 40% report high knowledge, 45% moderate, and 15% low. There is broad consensus on the need for continued education, practical experience, and enhanced communication skills to ensure effective support for children in conflict with the law.
- **Kosovo:** Despite a strong legal foundation, effective implementation remains inconsistent. Practical challenges include variable treatment of minors, fragmented and donor-dependent training programs, and limited institutionalization of child-sensitive practices. Initial and in-service trainings often led by the Kosovo Academy of Justice and international NGOs, cover topics like diversion, restorative justice, and communication with minors. However, these are typically voluntary and unevenly accessed. Approximately 50% of surveyed professionals had attended at least one training, with most considering themselves only “sufficiently” prepared. Key gaps include a lack of specialized training for correctional and probation staff, insufficient protocols for everyday interactions with minors, and minimal practical tools for working with vulnerable children, such as those with disabilities or trauma. The field data reveals strong professional willingness for further development, particularly in child psychology, rights-based practices, and age-appropriate communication.
- **Montenegro:** Interview data from juvenile justice professionals underscores the importance of applied skills such as age-appropriate communication, psychological insight, legal literacy, and teamwork across disciplines. Furthermore, professionals identified practical needs including specialized training in child interviewing, tools for psychosocial assessment, and preparation for digitally influenced offenses like cyberbullying. While structural advancements are evident, the overall effectiveness of CFJ in Montenegro hinges on continuous, context-sensitive professional development that bridges the gap between legal standards and day-to-day practice.

Despite the efforts performed in the CFJ framework regulations, substantial disparities remain in implementation. While magistrates and core judicial staff have generally received structured training, frontline personnel particularly correctional officers, probation staff, and educators often lack access to consistent, mandatory, and practice-oriented education. Moreover, practical gaps persist in daily routines, trauma-informed communication, and support for children with disabilities or digital risk exposure. Training remains fragmented and donor-dependent, particularly in Kosovo and Albania, and the application of child-sensitive procedures outside capital regions is uneven in all four contexts. To address these challenges, a unified and scalable regional training strategy must deliver role-specific, experiential modules that reach all levels of the justice system, embed consistent standards into daily operations, and ensure that child-friendly justice is not only a policy ambition but a lived practice across all professional domains.



4.6.3. Comparative Reflections on Professional Feedback

Feedback from similar occupational groups reveals country-specific concerns:

- **Social Workers:** In BiH and Montenegro, social workers emphasized family interaction and structural clarity in roles. In Albania and Kosovo, they highlighted training deficits and poor standardization.
- **Judges/Prosecutors:** Better trained and more confident in Albania and BiH. In Kosovo, despite training access, some expressed uncertainty in applying CFJ standards practically.
- **Correctional Officers and Police Staff:** Most undertrained group across countries. Albania and Kosovo respondents particularly stressed the absence of hands-on CFJ exposure and guidelines for daily routines.

Recommendations

Despite varying levels of institutional development, all four countries demonstrate a shared recognition of CFJ principles and a commitment to international standards. However, the actual realization of these standards diverges significantly:

- Albania leads in system-wide integration and structured training, but has yet to reach all relevant front-line staff.
- BiH benefits from coordinated national efforts but struggles with consistency and data monitoring.
- Kosovo has a robust legal framework but remains the most dependent on external actors and informal mechanisms.
- Montenegro presents a balanced but early-stage model, with promising multidisciplinary initiatives (e.g., Barnahus).

4.6.4. Key Recommendations for CORE-ED Curriculum Development

- Develop modular, role-specific CFJ training adaptable to local institutional needs.
- Prioritize outreach to frontline staff (e.g., correctional officers, police units).
- Support sustainable, institutionalized training schemes beyond donor dependency.
- Ensure practical, scenario-based training in trauma-informed communication, child-sensitive procedures, and multidisciplinary cooperation.

This comparative assessment underscores the necessity of a harmonized and inclusive training approach to close the gap between CFJ policy and everyday practice in juvenile justice systems across the region.

5. Overview of Educational and Training Needs in Juvenile Justice System in Western Balkans

Table 9. Comparison between countries in level of existing knowledge

Country	Scale Used	Mean (SD)	Level
Albania	5-point (1–5)	3.3 (0.80)	Majority rated as <i>moderate</i> (46.4%) to <i>high</i> (28.1%).
BiH	4-point (1–4)	2.42 (0.90)	Most rated themselves as <i>moderately</i> competent.
Kosovo	5-point (1–5)	3.3 (0.85)	Highest frequency at "moderate" level (47.8%), room for growth.
Montenegro	Not numerically specified	N/A	Described as <i>moderate to good</i> in theory, weaker in practice.

Across all four countries, self-assessed knowledge levels clustered around the moderate range, though with some variation in mean scores and distributions. In Albania, using a 5-point scale, the mean score was 3.3 (SD 0.80), with nearly half of respondents (46.4%) rating themselves as moderate and 28.1% as high. BiH, assessed on a 4-point scale, recorded a mean of 2.42 (SD 0.90), with most participants describing their competence as moderate. Kosovo, also on a 5-point scale, matched Albania's mean of 3.3 (SD 0.85), with the largest share (47.8%) selecting the moderate level, indicating scope for further development. Montenegro's results, although not presented numerically, were described as reflecting moderate to good theoretical understanding but weaker practical skills, echoing a broader regional pattern where theoretical knowledge tends to surpass applied competence.

Table 10. Cross-Country Observations and Insights on Level of Knowledge

Level of Knowledge	Albania	BiH	Kosovo	Montenegro
% Self-rated as High or Very High	35.3%	13%	32.6%	N/A
% Self-rated as Low or Very Low	18.3%	15.4%	19.5%	N/A
Confidence in Theoretical Domains	Stronger	Medium	Stronger	Strong
Confidence in Applied Skills	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Weak

Albania and Kosovo show relatively higher proportions of participants rating their knowledge as high or very high (35.3% and 32.6%, respectively) compared to Bosnia and Herzegovina (13%). Low or very low self-assessments are most frequent in Kosovo (19.5%) and Albania (18.3%), with BiH slightly lower at 15.4%. Confidence in theoretical domains is strongest in Albania and Kosovo, moderate in BiH, and reported as strong in Montenegro. However, applied skills confidence is consistently weaker, with Albania and BiH indicating limited capability, Kosovo showing moderate confidence, and Montenegro reporting weak performance in this area. Overall, the findings suggest a regional pattern where theoretical knowledge often outpaces applied skills, highlighting a clear need for practice-oriented training interventions.



5.1. Overview of Professional Challenges in Juvenile Justice Work

Across all four countries, professionals working with children in conflict with the law encounter multifaceted challenges that stem from both systemic gaps and case-level complexities. Despite contextual differences, a common set of themes emerges:

- Albania: While statutory frameworks exist, application outside urban centers like Tirana is weak. Professionals lack training in handling child-centered communication, trauma, and crisis management.
- BiH: Respondents cite limited implementation of juvenile-specific protocols and gaps in inter-agency cooperation. Emotional burden, legal complexity, and the lack of specialized training intensify stress among professionals.
- Kosovo: Crisis de-escalation, particularly in institutional settings, remains high. Inadequate application of child-friendly interviewing techniques and inconsistent use of risk assessment tools are major concerns. Probation and court professionals feel unprepared for cases involving neurodevelopmental disorders.
- Montenegro: Challenges center around resistance from juveniles, poor family engagement, and inadequate inter-institutional coordination. Staff report difficulties in building rapport with youth, implementing court measures, and involving dysfunctional families.

5.2. Competencies and Skills Needed to Address Challenges

The findings from interviews and questionnaires consistently highlight critical professional development needs:

- Albania: Competency gaps include pedagogy in confinement, trauma-informed care, and designing individualized vocational programs. Legal professionals seek training in trauma-sensitive courtroom practices, use of Virtual Reality (VR) technologies, and inter-agency coordination.
- BiH: Top competencies include age-appropriate communication, emotional intelligence, collaboration with other institutions, knowledge of juvenile-specific legal procedures, and pedagogical methods.
- Kosovo: Practitioners emphasize the need for training in trauma-informed communication, gender- and disability-sensitive interviewing, motivational strategies for youth, and use of digital/VR tools for education.
- Montenegro: Required competencies include communication adapted to youth, trauma-informed care, emotional regulation, and the ability to coordinate across sectors. Court and probation staff require training in restorative practices and risk assessment.

5.3. Recommended Training Program Content

Across the four countries, there is consensus on the need for regular, structured, and practice-oriented training.

Table 11. The key thematic training needs

Country	Training Needs
Albania	Pedagogical methods in confinement, crisis de-escalation, digital education, risk assessment and suicide prevention, vocational training design, family communication
BiH	Communication skills, mental health, social skills development, conflict resolution, legal procedures,
Kosovo	Restorative justice, digital/VR pedagogy, mental health first aid, gender-sensitive practices
Montenegro	Trauma-informed interviewing, preventive programming, family engagement, crisis de-escalation, legal education

5.4. Role-Specific Observations: Training and Knowledge Gaps by Profession

Prison Staff:

- Albania: Significant shortfalls in meeting CPD standards; gaps in mental health first aid, suicide prevention, crisis de-escalation, vocational training modules, and pedagogy within confinement.
- BiH: Require pedagogical and preventive techniques regarding mental health, stress management, and burnout prevention; limited exposure to CFJ models.
- Kosovo: Emphasis on non-violent control, mental health, vocational education, and adolescent-adapted rehabilitation.
- Montenegro: Moderate knowledge, lacking in psychological training; need mental health first aid, crisis management, and child-focused methods.

Probation Staff:

- Albania: Emphasis on advanced risk/needs tools, motivational techniques, digital diversion programs, and restorative justice conferencing.
- BiH: Need structured educational methods on mental health, communication, and inter-agency collaboration skills.
- Kosovo: Call for restorative-justice conferencing, risk assessment tools, substance use prevention, and digital resources.
- Montenegro: Require training in family dynamics, motivational interviewing, and risk assessment.

Court Staff:

- Albania: Desire for proportional sentencing, trauma-sensitive approaches, and coordination post-judgment.
- BiH: Require restorative justice training, emotional regulation, legal updates.
- Kosovo: Need trauma-informed questioning and integration of social background data.
- Montenegro: Strong theoretical base, limited child-engagement strategies. Needs multi-disciplinary coordination.



5.5. Perspectives on Systemic Improvement

When asked which measures could improve juvenile justice systems:

- Albania and Kosovo: Emphasis on trauma-informed, child-centered communication, restorative justice, and VR tools suggests a desire to modernize and humanize intervention approaches.
- BiH: 59.5% advocate better training for police, judges, and social workers; 58.1% emphasize enhanced prison/probation training; 57.4% call for improved health/social cooperation.
- Montenegro: Respondents stress mandatory, applied training; especially regarding trauma and communication.

5.6. Summary and Strategic Implications

The comparative assessment of 4 countries reveals a region-wide commitment to advancing juvenile justice, yet persistent gaps in practical competencies, interdisciplinary coordination, and reasonable training access. Self-assessed knowledge levels vary: BiH reports the lowest mean score (2.42/4), with a notable percentage rating their competence as low or very low, indicating acute awareness of unmet training needs. Kosovo and Albania both reflect moderate confidence (mean = 3.3/5), yet professionals highlight limited application of skills in trauma, digital literacy, and child-centered communication. Montenegro lacks numerical data but describes a notable discrepancy between theoretical understanding and practical execution.

Across all countries, professionals face shared systemic and case-level challenges, including weak inter-institutional coordination, underdeveloped trauma-informed practices, limited skills in managing developmental conditions, and regional discrepancies in access to training especially outside capital cities. Albania and Kosovo, while more confident in theory, display similar shortcomings in daily operationalization. BiH and Montenegro highlight the emotional burden and lack of case-specific methods among staff.

The findings identify critical competency gaps common to the region: age-appropriate communication, trauma-informed care, restorative justice methods, mental health support, use of digital tools (e.g., VR), motivational interviewing, and pedagogical skills in custodial settings. Role-specific training needs show that prison staff often lack psychological training and CPD compliance, probation staff require tools for risk assessment and family-based interventions, and court staff need strategies for trauma-sensitive hearings and post-judgment coordination.

Strategic Implications

- Urgent Need for Standardized, Practice-Based Training:

The data strongly support the development of structured, mandatory training programs tailored by professional role. Training must move beyond theoretical content to emphasize applied competencies in trauma-informed practice, mental health first aid, digital interventions, and crisis de-escalation particularly for custodial and probation personnel who are often the least trained.



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- **Decentralization and Equity in Capacity-Building:**

A key barrier across all four countries is the concentration of training and reform initiatives in urban centers. Strategic efforts must ensure equal access to professional development in rural and under-resourced regions. Mobile training units, e-learning platforms, and regional mentorship hubs can address these disparities.

- **Integration of Interdisciplinary and Digital Tools:**

Increasing demand for child-centered, modernized justice systems in Albania and Kosovo (e.g., VR applications, gender-sensitive tools) indicates a shift toward more humane and engaging modalities. The strategic inclusion of interdisciplinary collaboration and tech-based methods in curricula can modernize justice practices and improve outcomes for minors.

- **Policy Alignment and Institutional Commitment:**

Finally, the data highlight the importance of embedding training within national strategies and ensuring it is not donor-dependent. Institutional ownership, sustainable budgeting, and performance-linked CPD mandates are critical for long-term, systemic improvement.

Despite varying levels of self-rated competence and institutional maturity, the Western Balkan countries exhibit a shared readiness to enhance their juvenile justice systems. To convert this readiness into measurable progress, a regionally coordinated, role-sensitive, and practice-oriented training strategy is essential. Aligning national reforms with cross-border knowledge exchange and leveraging digital innovations will be key to professionalizing juvenile justice and ensuring the rights and well-being of children in conflict with the law across the region.

6. Brief Overview of Civil Society on Juvenile Justice in Western Balkans

Table 12. Sociodemographic Features of Civil Society Participants in field research

Variable	Category / Statistic	Albania (N=10)	Bosnia (N=14)	Kosovo (N=5)	Montenegro (N=5)
Gender	Female (%)	60%	64%	60%	N/A
	Male (%)	40%	36%	40%	N/A
Age (years)	Range	27–54	27–59	33–68	N/A
	Mean $\pm$ SD	39.7 $\pm$ 7.5	43.5 $\pm$ 8.94	46.2 $\pm$ 12.1	N/A
Highest Degree	Doctorate / PhD (%)	0%	13.3%	20%	N/A
	Master's / Integrated (%)	70%	73.3%	60%	N/A
	Bachelor's / Other (%)	30%	13.3%	20%	N/A
Occupation	Most frequent role(s)	Lawyer / Psych. / NGO	Pedagogue / Psychologist / Social-Worker	Lawyer / NGO	NGO (100%)
Years in JJ work	Median (IQR)	8 (5–12)	14.57 (10–18)	7 (5–13)	N/A
Type of involvement	Most common forms	Diversion / Legal Rep. / Advocacy	Direct psychosocial support (79%)	Legal aid / Policy adv. / Reentry (40%)	N/A

In terms of gender distribution, females comprised the majority in Albania (60%), BiH (64%), and Kosovo (60%), with no gender data reported for Montenegro. Average ages ranged from 39.7 years in Albania to 46.2 years in Kosovo, with BiH averaging 43.5 years; age ranges were widest in Kosovo (33–68 years). Educational attainment was generally high, with master's or integrated degrees most common in all three countries with available data (60–73.3%). Doctorate-level qualifications were reported in BiH (13.3%) and Kosovo (20%), but not in Albania. Occupational profiles varied: in Albania, lawyers, psychologists, and NGO staff were most frequent; in BiH, pedagogues, psychologists, and social workers dominated; in Kosovo, lawyers and NGO staff were common; while in Montenegro, all respondents were NGO-based. Median years of juvenile justice work experience ranged from seven years in Kosovo to over fourteen years in BiH. The nature of involvement also differed: Albanian



respondents were most engaged in diversion, legal representation, and advocacy; BiH counterparts primarily provided direct psychosocial support (79%); and Kosova respondents were active in legal aid, policy advice, and reentry support. No detailed data were provided for Montenegro on experience or involvement types.

6.1. Civil Society Perspectives on Juvenile Justice Professionals in Western Balkans

This part offers a comparative analysis of civil society perceptions regarding the competencies, challenges, and training needs of juvenile justice professionals in all four countries. The data are derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with civil society stakeholders (NGO staff, legal advocates, psychologists, educators), focusing on five key domains: (1) Competence and qualifications, (2) Communication with children and families, (3) Understanding of children's needs, (4) Systemic and inter-agency dynamics, and (5) Priority areas for training and development.

6.1.1. Competence and Qualifications

Civil society stakeholders across all four countries emphasized significant disparities in professional qualifications among juvenile justice actors.

Albania presented a somewhat more optimistic view, particularly regarding the judiciary. Juvenile judges were praised for creating child-friendly courtroom climates. However, pedagogical and psychological support staff, especially outside Tirana, were found lacking in expertise and presence.

Bosnian respondents highlighted the role of formal education (in psychology, pedagogy, criminology) as a strength, complemented by practical and life experience. However, they also reported systemic issues, including the lack of regular performance evaluations and limited access to continuing education.

In Kosovo, legal foundations were perceived as strong, but many professionals, particularly correctional staff and police officers, were said to lack specialized training tailored to children and adolescents. Court staff were seen to struggle with implementing diversion and rehabilitation measures effectively.

In Montenegro, although some professionals were seen as committed and well-trained, especially those in specialized units, there was a noted gap in foundational knowledge areas such as child psychology, restorative justice, and trauma-informed care. Training was reported as sporadic and unevenly distributed.

6.1.2. Communication with Children and Families

Communication practices emerged as a core area of concern, especially in Kosovo and Montenegro.

Albania stood out for improvements in courtroom communication. Judges were said to speak the child's language and reduce procedural formalities. However, communication gaps persisted between institutions, especially during transitions like post-release.

BiH emphasized challenges in engaging children who are mistrustful or unmotivated. The absence of child-friendly infrastructure (e.g., interview rooms) further impeded effective interaction.



In Kosovo, the inconsistency in child-sensitive practices was pronounced, particularly in rural areas. Interviewees noted that police and court environments often remained intimidating or disengaged from the child's perspective.

In Montenegro, civil society respondents criticized communication as formal and rigid. Professionals were reported to struggle with adapting language and approach to the emotional and developmental levels of the child.

6.1.3. Understanding Children's Needs

Stakeholders in all four countries expressed concern that professionals often lack the tools or training to holistically understand the social and psychological contexts of the children they serve.

Albanian civil society actors pointed to disparities in service availability, particularly outside of urban centers. They also cited weak gender and disability sensitivity.

BiH emphasized the importance of psychological and social understanding, yet identified deficiencies in mental health training and burnout prevention.

In Kosovo, interviewees criticized the system for treating adolescents like adults, with inadequate appreciation for the distinct emotional and cognitive needs of youth.

Montenegro respondents noted that decisions were sometimes made without consulting the child or considering background factors such as poverty, trauma, or family violence.

6.1.4. Systemic Barriers and Inter-Agency Cooperation

The interviews reveal systemic challenges and a fragmented institutional landscape in all countries.

Albania was reported to have better NGO engagement and judicial practice, but post-release coordination between probation services and municipal services was described as inadequate.

Bosnian professionals suffered from administrative overload, a lack of career pathways, and poor institutional support for professional development and wellbeing.

Kosovo stakeholders noted that inter-agency collaboration largely depended on personal initiative, rather than formal protocols. Probation officers were overstretched, reducing their ability to offer meaningful reintegration support.

In Montenegro, accountability for poor communication and rights violations was limited, and procedures for ensuring child participation were not standardized.

6.1.5. Training Priorities and Recommendations

Despite national differences, a shared training agenda emerged:

- Trauma-informed care: Prioritized across all countries, especially for correctional and probation staff.



- Communication skills: Emphasized in BiH, Kosovo, and Montenegro including age-appropriate, empathetic engagement.
- Child development and psychology: Core knowledge area lacking across systems.
- Legal and procedural knowledge: Especially in Kosovo and BiH, where training lags behind legal reforms.
- Inclusive and gender-sensitive practices: Especially needed in Albania and Kosovo.
- Mental health and staff wellbeing: Addressing burnout and stress is a consistent concern, notably in BiH.
- Scenario-based and hands-on training: Advocated by BiH and Kosovo to bridge theory and field challenges.

Civil society evaluations across the four countries converge in identifying both dedication and gaps among juvenile justice professionals. While legal frameworks have generally improved, practical implementation is inconsistent. Professionals often lack the training, institutional support, and inter-agency coordination needed to uphold CFJ standards.

These shared deficits could be addressed by offering modular, context-sensitive curricula in the areas of trauma-informed practice, psychological and pedagogical competencies, inclusive communication, and systemic cooperation. Civil society voices reinforce the need to professionalize not only knowledge but also empathy, reflexivity, and collaboration in juvenile justice systems across the Western Balkans.



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7. Exploration of the Sectoral Needs Under the Lens of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Factors

The CORE-ED project undertakes a multi-country assessment of juvenile justice systems, civil society involvement, and professional development needs across Albania, BiH, Kosovo, and Montenegro. This ESG-focused report synthesizes qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate how well the juvenile justice sectors in these countries align with ESG principles, identifying systemic gaps and opportunities for sustainable, inclusive, and accountable reform.

7.1. ESG Analysis for Albania

a. Environmental (E)

Albania's juvenile justice system has minimal direct environmental impact, as its facilities and interventions are primarily legal and social rather than industrial. The Kavaja Juvenile Institute (the only national closed facility) and semi-open educational centers maintain small footprints due to their limited capacity (≈ 40 residents in Kavaja and several semi-open units). However, formal environmental programs within juvenile facilities are not institutionalized. Environmental activities occur indirectly, through: Community service and diversion measures under Law 37/2017 (Criminal Justice for Children Code), which occasionally include: Park cleaning, Maintenance of municipal green areas, Light eco-community engagement tasks in collaboration with NGOs like *Terre des Hommes*²⁵ and *CRCA/ECPAT*²⁶; Educational and vocational programs at the Kavaja Institute, which include: Carpentry, IT workshops, and limited vocational modules, Sporadic green activities (gardening, recycling workshops) facilitated by donor-funded initiatives (*UNICEF*, *OSCE*²⁷, *Terre des Hommes*); Legal and policy framework: No explicit green correctional policy exists for juveniles, Environmental standards are indirectly addressed through national environmental legislation and EU-alignment strategies, but not integrated into juvenile-specific regulations, The *National Justice for Children Strategy (2017–2020)*²⁸ and its successor in the *National Agenda for the Rights of the Child 2021–2026*²⁹ focus primarily on CFJ and reintegration, without environmental child impact indicators.

Albania lacks systematic eco-rehabilitation or sustainability-linked programs in juvenile justice. Integration of environmental education, green vocational training, and eco-community service could strengthen environmental compliance.

²⁵ Terre des Hommes Albania. Through Children's Eyes: Participatory Review of the Juvenile Justice System in Albania. 2022. Available at: <https://www.tdh-albania.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Through%20child-rens%20eyes.pdf>

²⁶ CRCA/ECPAT Albania. Barnahus Albania – Integrated Services for Child Victims. Available at: <https://www.crca.al/en/barnhaus/>

²⁷ OSCE Presence in Albania. Support to Juvenile Justice Reform – Final Evaluation Report. 2020. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/a/470814.pdf>

²⁸ UNICEF Netherlands. Child Notice Albania. 2021. Available at: <https://www.unicef.nl/files/Albania-Child-Notice-2021.pdf>

²⁹ UNICEF Albania. National Agenda for the Rights of the Child (NARC) 2021–2026. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/4396/file/NARC%202021-2026_ENG.pdf





b. Social (S)

Albania's juvenile justice system demonstrates a strong social orientation, grounded in a child-centered and restorative approach³⁰. The unified legal framework, primarily articulated in Law 37/2017 (Criminal Justice for Children Code), consolidates all provisions related to juveniles and mandates a diversion-first philosophy³¹. Prosecutors and courts are required to prioritize mediation, counselling, and community service over custodial sentences, with deprivation of liberty applied strictly as a measure of last resort³². Custodial sanctions are primarily served in the Kavaja Juvenile Institute or semi-open educational centers. The system includes structured rehabilitation and reintegration processes, featuring mandatory educational and vocational programs, psychological support, and substance-abuse interventions. The probation service plays a central role, overseeing non-custodial measures, drafting reintegration plans, and facilitating community engagement. Despite these strengths, several social gaps persist. Pedagogical competence among custodial staff remains limited, with a prevailing custodial rather than rehabilitative mindset. Regional disparities are evident, as comprehensive child-friendly services are largely concentrated in Tirana, leaving rural and smaller facilities underserved. Family engagement and aftercare coordination are inconsistently implemented. Moreover, access to CPD remains constrained, with much of the training donor-dependent and fewer than half of custodial staff having received adequate instruction in child-sensitive justice. Opportunities exist to strengthen the system through the development of practice-oriented CPD modules focusing on trauma-informed communication, pedagogical security, crisis de-escalation, and family and community conferencing. Furthermore, post-release mentoring programs, especially those in partnership with NGOs, could play a crucial role in reducing recidivism and supporting sustainable reintegration.

c. Governance (G)

Albania demonstrates robust governance structures within its juvenile justice system, anchored in a comprehensive and CRC-compliant legal framework. Law 37/2017 consolidates substantive, procedural, and enforcement provisions related to juveniles, and is complemented by Law 79/2020 on the Execution of Criminal Sanctions, Decision 289/2020 regulating prisons and mandating 40 hours of CPD for juvenile officers, and Decision 444/2018 governing semi-open educational centers³⁰. Institutional specialization is a marked strength: district courts include dedicated juvenile chambers, and specialized roles such as prosecutors, probation officers, educators, psychologists, and correctional police are formally integrated into the system. Moreover, modern monitoring mechanisms have been adopted, including an electronic Juvenile Criminal Justice Data System via the e-Albania platform, and the implementation of the Barnahus model in Tirana, which ensures integrated and child-friendly procedures. Despite these advances, several governance challenges persist. CPD implementation remains uneven: although formal training requirements of 20–40 hours annually are in place, less than half of frontline custodial staff receive full coverage. Furthermore, training achievements are seldom linked to career progression or salary incentives. The system also continues to rely heavily on donor-funded projects for advanced CPD and regional implementation. To address these gaps, Albania could institutionalize performance-based CPD mechanisms, expand Barnahus-type models and electronic monitoring tools to regional centers, and integrate child impact indicators into the performance appraisal frameworks for all juvenile justice personnel.

³⁰ CEP Probation. Probation in Albania – Chapter Overview. 2021. Available at: <https://www.cep-probation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Chapter-Albania-final-1.pdf>

³¹ European Commission. Albania 2022 Report. Brussels: Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022. Available at: <https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Albania%20Report%202022.pdf>

³² EURALIUS – European Union Legal Approximation Project. Albanian Legislation Library. Available at: <https://euralius.eu/index.php/en/library/albanian-legislation>

Table 13. Albania ESG Summary Table

Dimension	Key Factors	Risks / Gaps	Opportunities / Recommendations	Legal / Policy Basis
Environmental (E)	Small-scale facilities (Kavaja ≈40 residents, semi-open centres); community service tasks with ecological components (park cleaning, gardening); vocational training (carpentry, IT, recycling workshops); indirect environmental impact	No formal green rehabilitation or sustainability-linked programs; lack of integration of environmental child impact indicators; eco-activities sporadic and donor-driven	Introduce structured eco-rehabilitation programs; integrate green modules in vocational training; systematize environmental community service	Law 37/2017 (Criminal Justice for Children); National Agenda for Rights of the Child (2021–26); National Environmental Strategy (indirect)
Social (S)	Diversion-first approach (mediation, counselling, community service); structured rehabilitation and reintegration (schooling, vocational programs, psychological support); probation central to reintegration	Custodial staff lack pedagogical training; regional disparities; aftercare and family engagement inconsistent; CPD access limited and donor-dependent	Develop CPD modules (trauma-informed care, pedagogical de-escalation, family conferencing); strengthen NGO-led post-release mentoring	Law 37/2017 (Criminal Justice for Children); Probation Services Regulation; National Justice for Children Strategy (2017–20)
Governance (G)	CRC-compliant framework (Law 37/2017, Law 79/2020); specialized roles (juvenile judges, prosecutors, psychologists); e-monitoring via e-Albania; Barnahus model in Tirana	CPD unevenly implemented; <50% of custodial staff trained; limited linkage between CPD and promotion; donor-reliant capacity building	Institutionalize performance-linked CPD; scale Barnahus and e-monitoring regionally; introduce child-impact indicators in staff evaluation	Law 37/2017; Law 79/2020 (Execution of Sanctions); Decision 289/2020 (Prison CPD); Decision 444/2018 (semi-open centres)



7.2. ESG Analysis for BiH

a. Environmental (E)

BiH is a complex federal state comprising the Federation of BiH (FBiH), Republic of Srpska (RS), and Brčko District, each with authority over environmental management, correctional infrastructure, and public health standards. This creates heterogeneity in environmental standards and facility conditions. The Environmental (E) dimension considers infrastructure, sanitation, energy efficiency, environmental health, and compliance with international standards. The legal and policy framework for environmental compliance in the context of correctional and juvenile justice institutions in BiH is grounded in national legislation and aligned with international standards. Firstly, the Law on Execution of Criminal Sanctions, Detention and Other Measures obliges institutions to ensure sanitary and safe conditions, including provisions for water, ventilation, lighting, and hygiene³³. The Criminal Codes and Criminal Procedure Codes at all jurisdictional levels also encompass child protection obligations that are indirectly linked to environmental and safety standards in custodial settings³⁴. Furthermore, specific laws on the protection and treatment of children and juveniles in criminal proceedings emphasize the importance of rehabilitation in environments that are both safe and humane³⁵. Environmental and health standards are detailed in the Law on Environmental Protection at both state and entity levels, and the Framework Law on Environmental Protection, which harmonize domestic regulations with EU directives concerning air, water, and waste management³⁶. Additional rulebooks govern sanitary conditions in penal-correctional facilities, particularly focusing on ventilation, waste disposal, and hygiene³³. Despite these frameworks, recent EU Progress Reports (2021–2024) have consistently highlighted infrastructure deficiencies and environmental compliance gaps, especially within juvenile units at the entity level³⁷. From a child rights perspective, UNICEF Advocacy Briefs emphasize the significance of environmental factors in custodial and residential settings for children's well-being³⁸. Similarly, the evaluation of the Justice for Every Child Project (2013–2017) concluded that overcrowding and poor facility conditions directly undermine efforts toward rehabilitation³⁹. The Council of Europe Child-Friendly Justice Guidelines and EU accession frameworks reinforce these concerns by linking facility standards with broader child protection and environmental safety obligations⁴⁰. Juvenile offenders in BiH are typically accommodated in designated correctional facilities located in Tuzla, Orašje, and Zenica (Federation of BiH); Banja Luka (Republic of Srpska). The physical and environmental conditions across these institutions reflect notable discrepancies in standards and infrastructure quality. The infrastructure is generally fragmented and aging, with marked inconsistencies between entities. Ventilation, heating, and natural light provision are especially problematic in older RS facilities, while waste and water management practices exhibit only partial compliance with EU norms³⁹. The management of

³³ Law on Execution of Criminal Sanctions, Detention and Other Measures (BiH Official Gazette 22/16).

³⁴ Criminal Codes and Criminal Procedure Codes (BiH, FBiH, RS, and Brčko District).

³⁵ Laws on the Protection and Treatment of Children and Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings (FBiH 7/14 & 74/2020; RS 13/10 & 61/13).

³⁶ Law on Environmental Protection (State and Entity levels); Framework Law on Environmental Protection.

³⁷ European Commission. (2021–2024). Bosnia and Herzegovina Progress Reports. <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina%20Report%202023.pdf>

³⁸ UNICEF, Introduction to the Five Advocacy Briefs on Child Justice & Child Friendly Justice: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/27681/file/Five%20Advocacy%20Briefs%20on%20Child%20Justice%20%26%20Child%20Friendly%20Justice%3A%20Introduction.pdf>

³⁹ Council of Europe, European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT). Report to the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the visit carried out from 29 September to 9 October 2015. Strasbourg: Council of Europe; CPT/Inf (2016) 17. Published 5 July 2016. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/pdf/1680760883>

⁴⁰ Council of Europe Child-Friendly Justice Guidelines; EU accession frameworks



hazardous waste remains under-monitored and insufficiently addressed in official oversight frameworks. Although outdoor spaces for recreational use are formally available, they tend to be minimal in size and are frequently underutilized (juveniles often have restricted daily outdoor time (<2 hours/day)³⁹. Efforts toward improving energy efficiency though present are largely donor-driven through EU IPA and similar mechanisms and are not embedded in institutional policy or budget frameworks.

b. Social (S)

The juvenile justice system in the observed context demonstrates strong alignment with key social sustainability criteria, as confirmed by both DACUM analysis and the national country report. The system is broadly aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Beijing Rules, the Riyadh Guidelines, and relevant European child protection standards. A clear emphasis is placed on rehabilitation and reintegration, rather than punitive measures, reflecting international norms for child-friendly justice. Challenges remain in ensuring equal access and support for minority, migrant, and disabled children within the justice system. DACUM findings have emphasized the importance of practitioner competencies such as communication skills, emotional intelligence, and trauma-informed practices. These competencies are essential for fostering inclusive, equitable, and socially responsible service delivery. Staff are frequently exposed to stress and burnout, with limited access to structured mental health support systems. This concern is echoed in civil society assessments and in DACUM's identification of "critical abilities" needed in the field. Additionally, the absence of continuous professional training and supervision limits the long-term social sustainability and effectiveness of the juvenile justice workforce. Both DACUM results and the national report highlight the significance of intersectoral cooperation and family reintegration in juvenile justice. These factors are crucial for enhancing community-based responses and ensuring long-term social reintegration and resilience for the affected youth.

c. Governance (G)

The governance structure of the juvenile justice system is characterized by a formalized yet fragmented framework that impacts effective policy implementation and institutional coordination. Juvenile justice in BiH operates under separate legal frameworks across the country. While these laws are partially harmonized, notable discrepancies persist in implementation. This legal fragmentation poses a governance risk, particularly in the consistent application of CFJ standards across jurisdictions. Although legal provisions define professional qualifications, the actual mechanisms for performance evaluation and role-specific competency assessment remain underdeveloped. Findings from DACUM analyses and survey data highlight this gap. Moreover, governance transparency is undermined by limited data collection mechanisms and the absence of a systematic framework for impact monitoring and evaluation. The DACUM findings advocate for structured lifelong learning, reflective practice, and competency-based development, aligning with policy recommendations for continuous training and enhanced inter-institutional cooperation. Current legislative reforms and the gradual adoption of diversionary and restorative justice approaches indicate a governance orientation toward internationally recognized ESG standards.

Table 14. BiH ESG Summary Table

Dimension	Key Factors	Risks / Gaps	Opportunities / Recommendations	Legal / Policy Basis
E – Environmental	Facility conditions, sanitation, waste/water management, energy efficiency, outdoor rehabilitation spaces	Aging & fragmented infrastructure; inconsistent standards; some community-service options include cleaning public spaces and minor maintenance; no systemic green programs.	EU & donor-funded modernization; eco-rehabilitation & green vocational programs	Law on Execution of Criminal Sanctions (BiH 22/16); Entity Environmental Laws; UNICEF Child Justice Briefs; EU Reports 2021–2024
S – Social	Juvenile rehabilitation, psychosocial support, reintegration services	Fragmented juvenile justice system with entity-level differences; overcrowding; limited psychosocial programs outside major cities; increasing diversion and probation use but still high reliance on custodial measures; gaps in family engagement and structured after-care.	Expand community-based and trauma-informed programs	Law on Protection & Treatment of Children/Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings (FBiH & RS); UNICEF reports
G – Governance	Multi-level justice governance, transparency, inter-agency coordination	Multi-entity governance creates complexity; juvenile codes exist but uneven implementation; limited CPD and monitoring mechanisms; dependence on donor projects.	Harmonize standards, digital monitoring, and EU-aligned inspections	Criminal Codes & CPCs (State, Entity, Brčko); EU Progress Reports (2021–2024)



7.3. ESG Analysis for Kosovo

a. Environmental (E)

Kosovo's juvenile justice sector is gradually integrating environmental and infrastructural standards aligned with European and UN frameworks. While the legal basis primarily addresses justice administration and detention standards, several indirect environmental aspects are evident in the management of facilities, rehabilitation programs, and community-based measures. Key environmental and infrastructural factors include; the Law on the Execution of Criminal Sanctions (08/L-132, 2022)⁴¹ mandate that juvenile correctional facilities ensure hygiene, safety, and health standards, thereby indirectly contributing to environmental responsibility. The Code of Juvenile Justice (06/L-006, 2018)⁴² and the Probation Service Law (08/L-129, 2022)⁴³ enshrine diversion and community-based alternatives for juveniles. By reducing reliance on long-term detention, these legal instruments indirectly mitigate the environmental footprint associated with custodial infrastructure. The Kosovo Probation Service facilitates diversion and reintegration programs such as community service in public spaces, environmental cleanup, and urban maintenance, which generate both social and ecological benefits. The Juvenile Correctional Centre (Lipjan) and Educational Correctional Centre (Lipjan) operate under semi-open models where compliance with UN CRC and European Prison Rules includes adequate environmental conditions (e.g., ventilation, natural light, outdoor space, hygiene)⁴⁴. Annual reports (2024) underscore the role of vocational training (e.g., carpentry, construction, gardening) in fostering environmentally responsible skills among juveniles. Diversion measures often entail community service in environmental maintenance, such as local park cleaning, gardening for municipalities, recycling initiatives, and basic infrastructure repair. Collaboration with municipalities and NGOs enables juvenile offenders to engage in eco-projects, reinforcing restorative justice principles with environmental co-benefits. Juvenile justice laws lack explicit environmental provisions; current environment related efforts are mostly indirect and implemented through facility management or community-based sentencing. Energy efficiency and waste management practices in Lipjan centers are largely donor-driven, lacking integration into a national strategic framework. There is an absence of systematic environmental reporting within correctional service annual reviews, indicating a need for institutionalization of such monitoring. Similar to BiH and Montenegro, Kosovo's juvenile justice system demonstrates low direct environmental impact. However, it offers a notable opportunity to strengthen environmental responsibility through the expansion of community-based environmental service activities, particularly within the scope of diversion measures. Such initiatives already present in the form of park maintenance, urban clean-up, and gardening could be systematized and scaled up to enhance both restorative justice goals and environmental sustainability.

b. Social (S)

Child-Centered and Restorative Orientation Kosovo has a strong legal framework for juvenile justice, underpinned by the Juvenile Justice Code (2018)⁴⁵, which prioritizes rehabilitation, diversion, and education over punitive measures. Specialized facilities located in Lipjan, namely the Correctional and Educational-Correctional Centres,

⁴¹ See Law no. 08/L-132 on the execution of criminal sanctions, official gazette of the Republic of Kosovo / no.21 /10 august 2022, Pristina. Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8867&langid=2>

⁴² Code No. 06/L-006 Juvenile Justice Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo / no.17 / 18 October 2018, Pristina, Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=18019>

⁴³ See Law No.08/L-129 on Kosovo Probation Service, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, No.20/8AUGUST 2022, Article 4. Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=61156>

⁴⁴ <https://shkk.rks-gov.net/qendra-korrektuese-per-femra-dhe-te-mitur-ne-lipjan/>

⁴⁵ See Code No. 06/L-006 Juvenile Justice Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo / no.17 / 18 October 2018, Pristina, Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=18019>



deliver a comprehensive range of services including formal schooling (grades I–XII), vocational training in areas such as IT, culinary arts, electro-installation, and first aid, as well as psychological and reintegration support. The system emphasizes community-based sanctions and probation with a focus on reintegration and reducing stigma. Despite legislative advances, several social and institutional challenges persist. Approximately 50% of frontline professionals lack specialized training tailored to children. Correctional and probation staff frequently report limited competencies in trauma-informed care and effective family engagement. Family involvement, particularly in rural regions, remains inconsistent. Insights from civil society reveal that inter-agency coordination is often fragmented, and outcomes depend heavily on the commitment of individual professionals rather than institutional procedures. Moreover, staff burnout is a growing concern, especially among probation and social workers, who face high caseloads and minimal access to structured mental health support. Judges and prosecutors must meet clearly defined qualifications, including a law degree, professional exams, and completion of a 12-month training at the Academy of Justice. However, practical training focused on juvenile justice is underdeveloped. While 70% of staff report receiving induction training, only 37% report participation in recent in-service training. The majority of training remains donor-driven and voluntary, lacking full institutional integration. DACUM-aligned needs include modules in trauma-informed care, conflict de-escalation, non-violent management, risk assessment, case planning, and interdisciplinary coordination. While the legal framework incorporates principles of child-friendly justice and anti-discrimination, implementation varies by region. Rural courts and smaller municipalities demonstrate weaker adherence to child-sensitive practices. Civil society feedback highlights that children with disabilities and those from marginalized families receive insufficient support. Kosovo's juvenile justice workforce exhibits a clear alignment with the DACUM-identified skill gaps. While legal structures are strong, practical capacities particularly in trauma responsiveness, family engagement, and restorative practice are underdeveloped. Correctional and probation staff would benefit from targeted, institutionalized training in motivational interviewing, interdisciplinary collaboration, and mental health first aid.

c. Governance (G)

Kosovo's juvenile justice framework is anchored in a comprehensive and updated set of legal instruments, including the Juvenile Justice Code (2018)⁴⁵, the Correctional Service Law (2022), the Probation Service Law (2022), and the Criminal Procedure Code (2022/2023)^{46,47}. These laws explicitly integrate standards from the UNCRC, the Beijing Rules, and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), ensuring alignment with international best practices. The Kosovo Probation Service (KPS) and the Correctional Service of Kosovo (CSK) operate with clear mandates and structured regional offices, contributing to governance effectiveness. Annual reports such as the 2024 KPS Annual Report improve transparency and monitoring capacities. Nevertheless, challenges persist. Training and performance evaluations are inconsistently applied and are rarely tied to career development incentives. Furthermore, inter-agency cooperation continues to depend largely on informal networks and external donor projects rather than institutionalized protocols. The establishment of two specialized juvenile facilities in Lipjan reflects a commitment to child-centered and gender-sensitive practices. However, the system faces sustainability challenges. Much of the training and capacity-building infrastructure remains reliant on donor funding, raising concerns about long-term institutional resilience and self-sufficiency. DACUM analysis underscores the need for standardized onboarding, structured continuous professional development, and robust inter-institutional coordination mechanisms. These recommendations align closely with the current gaps in Kosovo's juvenile justice governance landscape, particularly the overreliance on donor-driven initiatives and fragmented training systems.

⁴⁶ See Law no. 08/I -187 on amending and supplementing the Criminal Procedure Code No.08/I-032. Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo / no. 23 / 23 november 2023, Pristina. Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=61759>

⁴⁷ Code No.08/I-032 criminal procedure code. Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo/no.24 /17 August 2022, Pristina. Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=61759>

Table 15. Kosovo ESG Summary Table

Dimension	Key Factors	Risks / Gaps	Opportunities / Recommendations	Legal / Policy Basis
E – Environmental	- Semi-open correctional centres (Lipjan) ensure hygiene, ventilation, outdoor space. - Community-based diversion measures include park cleaning, gardening, urban upkeep. - Vocational workshops foster eco-skills (gardening, carpentry, construction).	- No formal environmental policy in juvenile justice. - Energy efficiency and waste practices remain project-based and not institutionalized. - Environmental reporting is absent in annual correctional reports.	- Systematize eco-diversion programs with municipalities and NGOs. - Institutionalize green facility management. - Integrate environmental KPIs in reporting.	Law 08/L-132⁴⁸ (Execution of Sanctions) Juvenile Justice Code 06/L-006⁴⁹ Probation Service Law 08/L-129⁵⁰
S – Social	- Strong legal base for rehabilitation and diversion. - Lipjan centres provide education, vocational training, and psychosocial care⁵¹. - Probation services emphasize reintegration and reduce stigma.	- 50% of staff lack child-focused or trauma-informed training. - Family involvement weak, especially in rural areas. - Fragmented inter-agency coordination. - Burnout and limited mental health support for staff.	- Institutionalize training in trauma-informed care, risk assessment, interdisciplinary coordination. - Expand family engagement models and rural service coverage. - Scale up community-based sanctions.	Juvenile Justice Code (2018) Academy of Justice Training Standards UNICEF & DACUM-informed capacity development reports
G – Governance	- Strong legal architecture integrating UNCRC, ECHR, and Beijing Rules. - KPS and CSK	- Training/performance reviews inconsistent and not linked to advancement.	- Standardize onboarding and CPD across roles. - Formalize inter-ministerial	Juvenile Justice Code (2018) Correctional Service Law (2022)

⁴⁸ Law No. 08/L 132 on Execution of Criminal Sanctions (2022)

⁴⁹ Juvenile Justice Code No. 06/L 006 (2018)

⁵⁰ Kosovo Probation Service Law No. 08/L 129 (2022)

⁵¹ Correctional Service of Kosovo, Annual Work Report 2024



	operate with clear mandates and regional structures. - Annual reporting improves transparency.	- Overreliance on donors for CPD. - Inter-agency cooperation informal, not protocol-driven.	cooperation and data systems. - Reduce donor-dependency via budgeted training programs.	Probation Service Law (2022) Criminal Procedure Code (2022/2023)
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7.4. ESG Analysis for Montenegro

a. Environmental (E)

Montenegro's criminal law and environmental policy frameworks provide a structured, though evolving, basis for ensuring that detention and correctional facilities maintain standards that uphold human dignity and child protection. The Criminal Code of Montenegro (Official Gazette Nos. 49/2018; 3/2020)⁵² and the Criminal Procedure Code (Official Gazette Nos. 57/2009; 47/2014) establish the legal obligation to uphold humane conditions in all forms of custody. Further, the Guidelines for Work with Children in Criminal Proceedings, jointly issued by the Supreme Court and the Supreme Prosecutor's Office in 2020⁵³, emphasize the necessity of ensuring safe, and developmentally appropriate environments for juveniles in detention. The Montenegro Law on Environmental Protection (Official Gazette Nos. 52/2016; 76/2021) establishes general principles and obligations for environmental protection such as sustainable development, pollution prevention, and efficient resource use which apply to all public institutions, including juvenile and correctional facilities. This law aligns with the EU environmental acquis, reinforcing domestic environmental obligations across sectors. Complementary to this, the Law on Sanitary Inspection⁵⁴ and specific Regulations on Minimum Conditions for Institutions for Children and Youth⁵⁵ stipulate basic standards regarding lighting, air quality, ventilation, water sanitation, and waste disposal. Montenegro's commitment to international child protection standards is reflected in its accession to relevant Council of Europe Conventions (2011, 2022)^{56,57}, which while not prescriptive in infrastructure terms—underscore the necessity of maintaining conditions conducive to children's health, dignity, and rehabilitation. In the domain of social policy, two national strategies anchor the environmental obligations of juvenile justice institutions. The Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence (2024–2028)⁵⁸ emphasizes environmental monitoring in custodial settings to ensure physical safety. Meanwhile, the Strategy for Exercising the Rights of the Child (2019–2023)⁵⁹, developed by the Government of Montenegro in collaboration with UNICEF, mentioned formal inspection mechanisms for living conditions within child and youth institutions. Juvenile offenders in Montenegro are primarily accommodated in the Spuž Institute for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions, in Podgorica, as well as some community-based environments linked to probationary programs, are also used. National oversight and EU accession assessments indicate that Montenegro's custodial infrastructure especially within the aging Spuž complex, is energy inefficient and suffers persistent overcrowding (20–30% above capacity). Since around 2020,

⁵² Criminal Code of Montenegro. (2018). Official Gazette, No. 49/2018; 3/2020.

⁵³ Supreme Court of Montenegro & Supreme Prosecutor's Office of Montenegro. (2020). Guidelines for work with children in criminal proceedings. Podgorica.

⁵⁴ https://www.sluzbenilist.me/propisi/4CA01B20-1CA0-4918-BAD0-901E06E17377?utm_source=chatgpt.com "Zakon o sanitarnoj inspekciji"

⁵⁵ <https://wapi.gov.me/download/802ccbb8-6f4c-47f0-af16-ac6b74e92816?version=1.0> "Katalog propisa 2018 - Registar i precisceni tekstovi propisa Crne Gore"

⁵⁶ Council of Europe. (2022). *Strategy for the rights of the child 2022–2027*.

⁵⁷ Council of Europe. (2011). *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (CETS No. 210).

⁵⁸ Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue. (2024). *Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence 2024–2028*.

⁵⁹ Government of Montenegro. (2019). *Strategy for exercising the rights of the child 2019–2023*. UNICEF.





incremental strides have been made in hygiene practices and health staffing, including the regular provision of hygiene kits to detainees. However, environmental sustainability remains largely unaddressed: adoption of waste, air quality, and climate strategies lags significantly, suggesting minimal renewable energy usage, limited green spaces, and a lack of structured eco-rehabilitation initiatives. Modernization is essential to align prison conditions with EU environmental and health-safety standards⁶⁰.

b. Social (S)

Montenegro demonstrates a strong legislative commitment to international child protection frameworks, aligning with the UNCRC, the ECHR, the Beijing Rules, and the Council of Europe guidelines on CFJ. The juvenile justice approach is explicitly oriented toward rehabilitation, education, diversion, and psychosocial support, rather than punitive measures. Notably, the introduction of the Barnahus model and the establishment of child-friendly courtrooms serve as institutional mechanisms to safeguard children from secondary victimization during judicial proceedings. Despite the progressive framework, several social gaps remain. A primary concern is the absence of specialized correctional institutions for juveniles. In some cases, young offenders are accommodated in adult-oriented facilities, posing serious challenges for social reintegration, developmental support, and equity in treatment. Furthermore, professionals in the juvenile justice system report high levels of stress and burnout, with minimal access to structured psychological or supervisory support systems. These challenges echo findings from DACUM analyses, which emphasized the importance of resilience and socio-emotional skills in this sector. In addition, family engagement and inter-institutional collaboration remain inconsistent, limiting the effectiveness of reintegration strategies and weakening the broader social support structure surrounding young offenders. The juvenile justice workforce in Montenegro is highly educated, with 58% of professionals holding postgraduate degrees, especially in psychology and law. While theoretical knowledge is strong, there is a deficit in applied, juvenile-specific competencies. DACUM findings reinforce this concern, highlighting the need for enhanced skills in communication, trauma-informed care, and interdisciplinary teamwork. Continuous professional development is another critical shortfall. Only about 34% of staff are engaged in ongoing training activities. Most initial and in-service education remains voluntary and donor-funded, rather than being integrated into a structured, institutionalized professional development framework. Initiatives such as Barnahus centers, mediation, and diversion programs aim to provide equitable access to justice for all children. However, implementation gaps remain especially affecting children from marginalized communities, dysfunctional family environments, and those exhibiting resistance to authority. This indicates a need for more inclusive outreach, monitoring, and tailored interventions to ensure that rights-based frameworks are equitably applied in practice.

c. Governance (G)

The 2011 Law on the Treatment of Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings serves as the foundational legal instrument for juvenile justice reform in Montenegro⁶¹, representing an alignment with broader EU integration standards. However, a critical governance gap persists due to the absence of key institutional infrastructure, most notably the lack of a specialized correctional home for juveniles⁶². This deficiency often results in the substitution of educational measures with imprisonment, a practice that diverges from international human rights standards and principles of CFJ. Hiring procedures and role clarity vary considerably across sectors. Positions within social work

⁶⁰ European Commission. (2023). Montenegro 2023 Report. SWD(2023) 694 final. Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

Available at: https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_694%20Montenegro%20report.pdf

⁶¹ Law on the Treatment of Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings, Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 001/18 (Zakon o postupanju prema maloljetnicima u krivičnom postupku, Službeni list Crne Gore, br. 001/18)

⁶² Vujović, T. (2007). Female juvenile delinquency in Montenegro and the USA. *Social Thought*, 14(2[54]), 85–116.



settings tend to be more clearly defined and better supported than court-based advisory roles, which remain fragmented and inconsistently regulated. The DACUM analysis similarly identified challenges in inter-institutional communication and governance coherence. The absence of standardized onboarding, probationary training programs, and robust performance evaluation mechanisms contributes to a weakened system of accountability and diminished role clarity. Training initiatives and broader systemic reforms are heavily reliant on non-governmental organizations and international donor support, revealing a limited domestic capacity for sustainable policy implementation. Although monitoring mechanisms for CFJ are beginning to emerge, they are not yet fully institutionalized, thus limiting their long-term effectiveness and integration into routine governance structures.

Table 16. Montenegro ESG Summary Table

Dimension	Key Factors	Risks / Gaps	Opportunities / Recommendations	Legal / Policy Basis
E – Environmental	Facility conditions, sanitation, waste/water management, energy efficiency, outdoor space for rehabilitation	Aging infrastructure; limited eco-programs but not formalized; partial compliance with EU standards	Energy-efficient upgrades; eco-rehabilitation; donor/EU-funded facility modernization	Law on Sanitary Inspection and specific Regulations on Minimum Conditions for Institutions for Children and Youth
S – Social	Juvenile rehabilitation, child-friendly procedures, inclusion of vulnerable groups	Regional disparities; limited psychosocial staff outside Podgorica	Expand community programs, mentorship, and inclusive education	Strategy for Prevention of Violence (2024–2028); Juvenile Criminal Law; UNICEF & CoE reports
G – Governance	Institutional capacity, transparency, inter-agency coordination, monitoring	Donor-dependency; limited digital data systems	Introduce electronic monitoring, case-tracking, and inter-ministerial protocols	Criminal Procedure Code (2009/2014); Strategy for Child Rights (2019–2023); CoE monitoring





8. Overview of the DACUM Workshops

The DACUM workshops conducted across Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Greece, and Romania demonstrated notable diversity in professional and academic representation, reflecting the multidimensional nature of juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy in Western Balkans and Southeast Europe⁶³.

Albania's workshop gathered over 20 participants in Tirana, achieving a balanced representation between academia, central government, municipal structures, and correctional institutions. Luarasi University's leadership, including the Rector and Vice-Rector and the participation of the Ministry of Justice's European Integration and Crime Prevention Departments embedded the workshop within Albania's EU-aligned juvenile justice reforms. Municipal representation, led by the Director of the Multidisciplinary Community Center, and the inclusion of private-sector-linked youth employment advocates (TEDA Tirana) underscored Albania's strong emphasis on holistic rehabilitation and community reintegration pathways for youth⁶⁴.

BiH hosted a highly specialized group of 13 participants, predominantly women, representing social work, psychology, law, and correctional services. Notably, the inclusion of senior and graduate psychology students alongside experienced practitioners (social workers, mediators, and correctional facility staff) created a rich intergenerational mix. This configuration ensured that perspectives ranged from direct field experience in managing minors in conflict with the law to academic insights into juvenile justice. The presence of the Dean of Law from the International University of Sarajevo and a correctional facility Head of Guards highlighted the workshop's institutional credibility and its capacity to bridge academic and operational practices⁶⁵.

Kosovo achieved the highest participant turnout with over 27 attendees, including senior justice officials, legal trainees, and professional staff from correctional and probation services. This large cohort enabled an academically rich and practice-oriented discussion, with the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Law at UBT College, the Director of the Correctional Service, and the Director of the Probation Service providing institutional leadership. The engagement of Master's students and legal trainees ensured that the session combined operational realities with academic reflection, reinforcing the workshop's dual capacity-building and networking objectives⁶⁶.

Montenegro gathered 17 participants from justice, probation, social protection, education, and civil society. The workshop benefitted from the structured involvement of key national institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice (Juvenile Department), Probation Service Podgorica, Spuž Correctional Facility, the Ombudsman's Children's Rights Office, and the University of Montenegro. This diverse mix fostered a multidimensional perspective, combining policymaking, frontline correctional work, and advocacy. Importantly, the inclusion of NGOs like Juventas and the Municipal Youth Office strengthened the voice of civil society and community-based approaches to juvenile rehabilitation⁶⁷.

Greece convened a smaller, more practice-oriented cohort of 14 participants, split between current correctional workers (5) and future professionals (9 learners). The workshop employed hands-on methods, including group work and the use of sticky notes for skill mapping, guided by the University of the Aegean research team. Although smaller in scale, the workshop's design emphasized practical skill identification and competency development, aligning with DACUM's experiential methodology⁶⁸.

⁶³ DACUM Workshop Country Reports.

⁶⁴ Annex DACUM Workshop Report of Albania.

⁶⁵ Annex DACUM Workshop Report of BiH.

⁶⁶ Annex DACUM Workshop Report of Kosovo.

⁶⁷ Annex DACUM Workshop Report of Montenegro.

⁶⁸ Annex DACUM Workshop Report of Greece.





Romania hosted 18 participants from a wide range of institutions across Timiș County, showcasing a strong regional ecosystem approach. This group integrated government representatives (Deputy Prefect and city hall officials), academia (West University of Timișoara), probation services, juvenile detention educators, NGOs, and cultural organizations. The cross-sectoral configuration allowed for a rich discussion connecting formal correctional pedagogy with community-based social and cultural reintegration strategies. Romania's group stood out for the breadth of civil society engagement, including child-focused NGOs and creative/cultural associations, which provided unique insights into psychosocial rehabilitation and youth empowerment⁶⁹.

8.1. Key Tasks and Responsibilities

Commonalities:

1. **Multi-Role Professionals:** Across all countries, staff serve as educators, mentors, counselors, and case managers.
2. **Emotional Intelligence & Ethical Competence:** Empathy, patience, and cultural sensitivity are consistently prioritized as core professional traits.
3. **Gaps in Structured Training:** Professionals often rely on on-the-job learning, highlighting a need for formal correctional pedagogy programs.
4. **Cross-Sector Collaboration Needs:** Effective juvenile rehabilitation requires coordination among justice, education, social work, and healthcare sectors.
5. **Psychosocial Support & Rehabilitation Focus:** Core tasks include counseling, assessment, therapy planning, and mentorship for reintegration.

Key Differences:

- Montenegro & Romania report systemic training and collaboration gaps, with strong reliance on experiential learning.
- Albania, BiH, and Kosovo emphasize direct engagement with minors, including legal/medical escort and emotional support.
- Greece highlights educational and emotional duality in Second Chance Schools, with a critical need for trauma-informed practice.

The synthesis confirms a regional need to professionalize correctional pedagogy, focusing on:

1. Standardized training in trauma-informed, culturally competent practices.
2. Structured mentorship programs to replace ad-hoc experiential learning.
3. Integration of digital and community-based approaches to engage high-risk youth.
4. Cross-sector communication protocols to reduce service fragmentation.

8.2. Essential Skills and Competencies

Commonalities:

1. Child- and youth-centered communication appears in all countries.
2. Emotional intelligence, empathy, and trauma-informed practice are widely emphasized.
3. Boundary management and ethical conduct are essential across contexts.

⁶⁹ Annex DACUM Workshop Report of Romania.





Regional Variations:

1. Western Balkans emphasize direct psychosocial engagement and mentoring.
2. Montenegro uniquely stresses digital skills and future-readiness.
3. Romania pivots toward employability and recidivism prevention via soft skills and vocational integration.
4. Greece highlights intercultural sensitivity and mental health awareness.

Training Gaps Identified:

1. Lack of structured, accredited pathways for correctional pedagogy.
2. Heavy reliance on on-the-job experiential learning.
3. Need for integrated, interdisciplinary, and practice-oriented curricula.

8.3. Knowledge Areas and Personal Capacities

Across the six countries, the workshops consistently emphasized that technical expertise must be complemented by strong emotional and ethical capacities.

Common knowledge areas include:

1. Child and Adolescent Development – understanding behavior, cognition, and emotional regulation.
2. Trauma-Informed and Mental Health Knowledge – awareness of psychological risks, crisis intervention, and referral pathways.
3. Juvenile Justice and Legal Frameworks – rights, diversion, and rehabilitative protocols.
4. Communication and Counseling Techniques – motivational interviewing, non-judgmental dialogue, and de-escalation.
5. Social and Educational Reintegration – family engagement, school return, and vocational pathways.

Shared personal capacities:

- Empathy, patience, and emotional intelligence,
- Crisis management and boundary awareness,
- Adaptability, flexibility, and interdisciplinary teamwork,
- Cultural sensitivity and ethical integrity.

Distinctive differences were noted:

- Montenegro and Kosovo highlight digital literacy and restorative tools for future-readiness.
- Romania emphasizes employability and life skills as part of correctional pedagogy.
- Greece focuses on self-awareness and non-stigmatization in multicultural settings.



8.4. Future Knowledge and Capacity Needs in Juvenile Justice and Correctional Pedagogy

The comparative analysis of future needs across the six participating countries reveals both areas of strong convergence and notable regional distinctions. A clear point of alignment is the growing recognition of digital literacy and cyber risk management as a core competency for professionals in juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy, highlighted prominently in Albania, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Romania. This reflects the rapidly evolving digital landscape, where youth are increasingly exposed to risks such as cyberbullying, online grooming, and digital exploitation. Similarly, mental health awareness and self-harm response emerged as a recurrent priority in Albania, BiH, and Kosovo, underscoring the urgent need for frontline staff to identify early warning signs, respond to crises effectively, and engage in timely referrals to specialized support services. In parallel, the workshops in Kosovo, Montenegro, and Romania emphasized the importance of trauma-informed and restorative approaches, reflecting a regional shift from punitive to rehabilitative practices. These approaches focus on addressing the underlying psychosocial needs of minors, fostering resilience, and creating pathways for meaningful reintegration into society.

Despite this convergence, regional variation reflects the unique challenges and priorities of each national context. Montenegro is primarily oriented toward systemic and institutional reform, seeking to strengthen intersectoral collaboration, formalize professional development pathways, and align national legislation with European standards. Romania, in contrast, positions itself at the intersection of pedagogy and employability, with an emphasis on gamified and experiential learning that directly connects correctional education to labor market reintegration and recidivism prevention. Greece, meanwhile, focuses on diversity management, psychosocial support, and educator well-being, recognizing that professionals in “Second Chance Schools” and similar environments must navigate multicultural classrooms, manage emotional strain, and maintain resilience in high-stress correctional settings.

8.5. Recommendations and Action Plans

Across the six countries, a clear consensus emerged that strengthening the professionalization of juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy requires a multifaceted and systematic approach. Core recommendations consistently focus on competency-based training, practical exposure, intersectoral collaboration, staff well-being, and policy reform.

1. Competency-Based and Structured Training Programs

All countries emphasized the urgent need for formalized, competency-driven curricula for professionals working with minors in correctional and justice settings. Albania, BiH, and Kosovo advocated for training modules covering effective communication with minors, behavioral management, trauma-informed care, and individualized rehabilitation planning. Romania and Greece extended this to include soft skills, digital literacy, intercultural communication, and risk assessment, while Montenegro proposed master’s-level and lifelong learning programs specifically designed to create a new generation of correctional pedagogy professionals. These programs are expected to be modular, practice-oriented, and aligned with European standards of ethical and rehabilitative practice.

2. Integration of Real-World Practice and Experiential Learning

Practical exposure was identified as a cornerstone of effective professional preparation. Workshops in Albania, BiH, and Kosovo highlighted the integration of internships and field-based learning in courts, youth shelters, probation offices, and correctional facilities. Montenegro and Romania suggested expanding experiential learning



through gamified, scenario-based methods, serious games, and real-life simulations to foster critical thinking, behavioral insight, and pedagogical adaptability. Greece emphasized mandatory pre-service practicums and continuous supervised practice to address the disconnect between theory and institutional realities.

3. Development of Field-Oriented Tools, Guidelines, and Checklists

Participants in Albania, BiH, and Kosovo proposed practical toolkits including observation templates, behavior tracking sheets, and interdisciplinary case management guides to support consistent and evidence-based interventions. Kosovo in particular underlined the importance of simplified, field-tested templates for behavioral observation and reporting, while Romania emphasized curriculum co-design and evaluation frameworks to ensure a systematic link between pedagogy, employability, and rehabilitation.

4. Strengthening Intersectoral and Cross-Institutional Collaboration

A recurring recommendation was the establishment of structured communication channels and joint planning mechanisms across justice, education, social services, mental health, and community sectors. Montenegro proposed standardized protocols and multi-agency coordination bodies, while Kosovo and Albania stressed that juvenile justice “cannot succeed in silos.” BiH, Romania, and Greece supported interdisciplinary teamwork as a means to ensure holistic service delivery, prevent gaps in care, and enhance reintegration outcomes.

5. Institutionalization of Continuous Professional Development

Sustained, in-service capacity building was recommended in all countries. Key elements include peer mentoring, reflective supervision, specialized workshops, and modular CPD frameworks. Romania and Greece advocated for national-level certification and micro-credentials, formalizing lifelong learning pathways and recognizing the complexity of correctional education roles. Montenegro proposed anchoring CPD within a national center for correctional pedagogy, which would also function as a research and resource hub.

6. Staff Mental Health, Supervision, and Burnout Prevention

The workshops collectively recognized that professionals face intense emotional and psychological demands. Albania, BiH, and Kosovo recommended institutional mechanisms for psychological support, including access to counseling, reflective supervision, peer support networks, and wellness programs. Greece highlighted the need for regular inter-vision sessions (peer reflection) and formal coaching to maintain professional resilience, while Montenegro integrated emotional literacy and reflective practice into its competency framework.

7. Legal and Policy Reform to Support Rehabilitation-Oriented Practices

Systemic and legislative alignment emerged as a priority in Western Balkan countries with recommendations to harmonize national laws with European standards and embed diversion, restorative justice, and rights-based approaches into legal frameworks. Romania and Greece complemented this by emphasizing policy recognition of correctional education as a professional domain linked to social reintegration and labor market opportunities.



8. Community and Family Engagement as a Pillar of Reintegration

Countries such as Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro stressed the importance of involving families and communities in rehabilitation planning. Participants highlighted raising public awareness, reducing stigma, and creating community-based support structures as critical to preventing recidivism and fostering sustainable reintegration. Romania and Greece further emphasized linking prison education to real-world qualifications and employability, ensuring that learning translates to tangible post-release opportunities.



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9. Conclusion

The CORE-ED synthesis demonstrates that juvenile justice systems in the Western Balkans are making steady progress towards rehabilitative, rights-focused models that align with UNCRC and Council of Europe standards. While legal and strategic frameworks are largely established, there remains a considerable gap between policy intentions and operational realities. Practitioners report confidence in legal knowledge but highlight persistent deficiencies in hands-on skills, such as trauma-sensitive practice, restorative approaches, and effective child engagement. Capacity development efforts are concentrated in larger cities, depend heavily on donor support, and lack integration into enduring national structures. Future progress will depend on embedding comprehensive training within official systems, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and ensuring equitable access to modern resources and digital innovations to create consistent, effective practices across the region.

9.1. Policy Recommendations

Capacity Building & Workforce Development

- Introduce mandatory, role-specific programs covering trauma-informed care, restorative approaches, crisis management, and specialized communication with minors.
- Apply competency-based methods for recruitment, appraisal, and promotion to raise professional standards across the sector.
- Create accredited CPD frameworks that allow staff to accumulate recognized qualifications through modular training.

Digital Innovation in Juvenile Justice

- Adopt VR simulations, online courses, and other digital platforms in training and rehabilitation contexts.
- Test and refine technology-supported restorative justice initiatives, assessing viability in varied operational environments.
- Guarantee equal access to technology and digital learning for staff and children in remote or under-funded facilities.

Inter-Agency Coordination & Multidisciplinary Practice

- Implement formal cooperation protocols linking judicial, correctional, social, and civil society actors.
- Set up multidisciplinary units in all juvenile justice facilities with well-defined responsibilities and shared accountability.
- Develop regional peer networks for exchanging experience, mentoring, and disseminating best practices.

Sustainability & Systemic Reform

- Secure dedicated budget lines for training and make participation a requirement for professional licensing.
- Provide training outside capital cities via mobile teams and satellite learning hubs.
- Ensure national strategies are harmonized with EU child rights policies to maximize policy and funding opportunities.



9.2. Key Messages

- Juvenile justice systems in Albania, BiH, Kosovo, and Montenegro broadly **reflect international child rights standards**, but practical implementation **remains uneven**, particularly in **applied skill areas**.
- Training provision is **fragmented**, overly reliant on **donor funding**, and often prioritizes **theory over practical**, role-specific competencies.
- Frontline staff such as correctional officers, probation personnel, and educators receive **the least** structured and targeted training, despite their **direct and frequent contact** with children.
- Collaboration between agencies is **inconsistent**, with pronounced **disparities in access** to training and services between urban centers and rural or under-resourced areas.
- Emerging tools and practices, including VR-based learning and interdisciplinary methods, have **significant potential** but are **not yet embedded** into national systems.
- Sustainable reform will require **institutionalizing training** within national frameworks, ensuring **on-going professional development**, and **reducing** reliance on temporary, externally funded projects.





10. DACUM Workshop Country Reports

10.1. DACUM Workshop Report of Albania

Description of the event

DACUM is organized on 29.05.2025, between 11.00-16.00, at the Luarasi University.

Agenda:

The workshop commenced at 11:00 with a formal opening by the Rector and Vice-Rector of Luarasi University, followed by welcoming remarks from key institutional stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the General Directorate of Prisons, the Municipality of Tirana, and TEDA Tirana. This session provided an institutional framing of the workshop's goals and the significance of developing corrective pedagogy for minors in contact with the justice system.

At 12:20, the moderator, introduced the DACUM methodology and its role within the CORE-ED Academy project, emphasizing its participatory nature and relevance to real-world practice. Participants were then guided through the structure of the five thematic sessions.

From 12:30 onward, participants engaged in five parallel sessions, each focusing on a key dimension of professional practice in the juvenile justice and rehabilitation system:

- **Session 1** explored the daily functions of correctional educators within closed institutions;
- **Session 2** focused on social reintegration strategies in community settings;
- **Session 3** gathered institutional perspectives from the correctional administration;
- **Session 4** addressed psychological support and interdisciplinary responses for minors;
- **Session 5** highlighted pathways for minor engagement in internships and community-based programs.

A short break was held at 13:00, followed by back-to-back sessions running through the afternoon. Each session allowed for focused, profession-specific discussion, resulting in concrete contributions to the DACUM competency charts.

At 15:30, the workshop concluded with a collective reflection session. Each group shared key takeaways and proposed competency areas to inform curriculum design and professional training models. The CORE-ED team will compile the outputs into frameworks for two new educational programs—one for undergraduate students and one for in-service professionals.

Participants were then invited to stay for informal networking and light refreshments, marking the end of a collaborative and forward-looking day.

Participants:

There were over 20 participants in total, representing academic institutions, government bodies, municipal services, and the correctional system. The workshop was hosted at Luarasi University and brought together key professionals working with justice-involved youth in Albania.

Organization:

The workshop was successfully organized through the joint efforts of multiple institutional partners, including Luarasi University and the University of the Mediterranean of Albania. The preparation and execution of the event demonstrated a strong commitment to inter-institutional collaboration and shared educational development. A key organizational challenge involved securing the necessary official confirmations and clearances for the participation of representatives from state institutions, including civil servants and correctional personnel. This required careful coordination, administrative communication, and sustained engagement with relevant authorities to ensure the inclusive and effective implementation of the workshop.



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Introduction

The DACUM (Develop A Curriculum) workshop held at Luarasi University was organized as part of the CORE-ED ACADEMY project, with the primary aim of identifying and structuring the core roles, tasks, skills, and competencies required by professionals working with minors in the juvenile justice and corrective education system. By bringing together institutional representatives, field practitioners, educators, and policy stakeholders, the workshop sought to develop a competency-based framework grounded in lived professional experience. This framework is intended to guide the development of new academic programs, enhance professional training pathways, and support informed policy-making within Albania and across regional partner institutions. The participatory and interdisciplinary nature of the DACUM process ensured that the resulting outputs reflect both practical realities and strategic needs in the field of juvenile rehabilitation, education, and reintegration.

Key Findings and Outcomes

1. Significant Discoveries

The DACUM workshop brought together professionals from diverse sectors—educators, correctional staff, social workers, psychologists, and legal experts—to define the competencies required to work effectively with justice-involved minors aged 14–18 in the Albanian context. A major shared realization was the lack of structured, comprehensive in-service training for professionals operating within juvenile justice institutions and community-based programs.

Participants observed that the majority of frontline staff have only received sporadic training, often limited to topics such as domestic violence or stress management. While these areas are important, this narrow focus leaves professionals insufficiently prepared to respond to the complex psychological, behavioral, and developmental challenges faced by minors in contact with the justice system.

The workshop emphasized the pressing need for targeted, hands-on training in several core areas:

- Communicating effectively with adolescents in vulnerable contexts
- Addressing high-risk behaviors such as self-harm and aggression
- Understanding adolescent development and psychology
- Providing trauma-informed mental health support

Professionals working in correctional or community settings are often expected to play multiple roles—as educators, counselors, mentors, assessors, legal escorts, and emotional anchors. However, without formal preparation across these domains, even seasoned staff face difficulties in delivering meaningful interventions. This competency gap limits the overall effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts and weakens opportunities for successful reintegration of minors.

2. Key Tasks and Responsibilities

Throughout the workshop, participants identified a range of interrelated duties that professionals in the juvenile justice system are expected to perform—often simultaneously. These tasks span education, rehabilitation, legal navigation, and emotional care. Key responsibilities include:

- **Communication and Counseling:**

Establishing trust-based relationships with minors through empathic listening and non-judgmental dialogue. Professionals are often required to provide emotional support, reassurance, and individualized guidance to help youth navigate challenging environments.



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- **Educational and Mentorship Support:**

Supporting minors in re-engaging with formal education or alternative learning pathways. Many professionals take on dual roles as mentors and educators, fostering personal growth, motivation, and reintegration into community-based education programs.

- **Assessment and Report Writing:**

Conducting behavioral assessments, structured interviews, and environmental evaluations. Participants emphasized the importance of clear, evidence-based written reports that inform legal decisions, educational planning, and therapeutic interventions.

- **Therapy and Rehabilitation Planning:**

Collaborating closely with psychologists, social workers, and case managers to develop tailored therapy and rehabilitation plans that are sensitive to the developmental and psychosocial needs of each minor.

- **Legal and Medical Escort Duties:**

Accompanying minors to judicial proceedings, health evaluations, or treatment sessions. In these situations, professionals play a critical advocacy role, ensuring emotional safety, clarity, and support throughout what can be stressful and disorienting processes.

These tasks require not only technical competence, but also a high degree of emotional intelligence, adaptability, and interdisciplinary coordination. The ability to respond to the unique needs of each minor—while balancing procedural, educational, and therapeutic demands—is central to the effectiveness of corrective pedagogy and reintegration efforts.

3. Essential Skills and Competencies

The DACUM workshop highlighted a core set of competencies that are essential for professionals working with minors in the juvenile justice and corrective education systems. These competencies reflect not only the complexity of the role but also the holistic approach required for effective intervention, guidance, and rehabilitation. Key competencies identified include:

- **Child-Centered Communication:** Applying developmentally appropriate language and active listening techniques to foster meaningful engagement and build trust with minors.
- **Understanding Adolescent Psychology:** Recognizing behavioral patterns, emotional regulation challenges, and stages of cognitive development unique to adolescents in vulnerable situations.
- **Trauma-Sensitive Interviewing Skills:** Conducting structured interviews that are respectful of each minor's background, trauma history, and psychological profile, while avoiding retraumatization.
- **Managing Problematic Behaviors:** Responding to high-risk behaviors—such as aggression, withdrawal, or self-harm—through evidence-based and restorative methods that emphasize safety, dignity, and growth.
- **Supportive Supervision and Mentoring:** Providing consistent guidance, motivation, and emotional support while maintaining professional boundaries and promoting autonomy and self-worth in minors.

These competencies form the foundation for high-quality, effective service delivery in the field of juvenile justice. Participants stressed the importance of ongoing training, peer exchange, and reflective practice to ensure continuous professional growth and alignment with evolving best practices.

4. Knowledge Areas and Domains

To operate effectively in the juvenile justice and rehabilitation field, professionals must be equipped with a broad and interdisciplinary knowledge base. The multifaceted nature of their roles—as educators, counselors, legal navigators, and rehabilitation facilitators—requires continuous learning across multiple domains. The workshop identified the following as essential areas of knowledge:



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- **Child and Adolescent Development:** Understanding emotional regulation, social interaction, brain development, and behavioral trends during adolescence is fundamental to tailoring appropriate interventions.
- **Counseling and Communication Theories:** Familiarity with trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, conflict de-escalation, and empathic communication techniques is crucial for building trust and guiding change.
- **Assessment Techniques:** Knowledge of basic psychological and behavioral assessment tools adapted for youth, including instruments for evaluating risk, needs, and emotional wellbeing.
- **Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Models:** Awareness of clinical and restorative approaches for managing crises, addressing self-harm or suicidal ideation, and applying strength-based and motivational models.
- **Educational and Social Integration:** Strategies for supporting school reintegration, strengthening family involvement, and facilitating youth access to vocational training and employment opportunities.
- **Juvenile Legal Frameworks:** A working understanding of child rights, legal representation and accompaniment standards, and the broader legal system's role in protecting and rehabilitating minors.

These knowledge domains underpin the competencies discussed in earlier sections and are vital for ensuring professional readiness, ethical service delivery, and long-term impact in the lives of justice-involved youth.

5. Critical Abilities and Personal Capacities

During the DACUM workshop held at Luarasi University in Albania, participants emphasized that beyond technical expertise, the effectiveness of professionals working with justice-involved minors depends heavily on their personal capacities and behavioral attributes. These qualities are often the most critical in emotionally demanding environments where trust-building, resilience, and ethical practice are key.

The following core abilities were identified as essential across all professional roles in the juvenile justice and corrective education system:

- **Empathy and Emotional Insight:** The capacity to engage minors with compassion, active listening, and emotional sensitivity was considered foundational. Building trust with vulnerable youth often begins with simple, human connection.
- **Patience and Motivational Capacity:** Professionals must remain engaged and supportive even in the face of resistance, relapse, or minimal immediate progress. Maintaining motivation is vital for sustaining long-term rehabilitation efforts.
- **Crisis Management and Trauma Response:** Participants shared that many situations require immediate emotional regulation and conflict de-escalation, particularly for minors with traumatic backgrounds. Recognizing trauma responses and intervening safely is essential.
- **Mental Health Awareness:** Recognizing early warning signs of emotional distress—including anxiety, depression, or dissociation—and making appropriate referrals to specialized care remains a critical skill, especially given the limited access to in-house psychological services in many institutions.
- **Boundary Awareness:** The importance of maintaining professional, legal, and emotional boundaries was repeatedly emphasized. These boundaries protect both the minor and the practitioner, ensuring ethical integrity and long-term sustainability in the role.
- **Collaboration and Flexibility:** Given the interdisciplinary nature of work in juvenile justice, professionals must be able to collaborate across agencies and adapt to varying institutional cultures, case demands, and shifting policy contexts.



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These behavioral capacities were described as prerequisites for successful professional conduct, particularly in roles that require a blend of education, emotional support, and legal navigation. Participants underlined the need for intentional training, reflective supervision, and peer support structures that promote and sustain these abilities over time.

Future Knowledge Needs

As Albania and the wider Western Balkan region continue to confront evolving challenges affecting justice-involved youth, the DACUM workshop held at Luarasi University identified several emerging knowledge areas that must be incorporated into both pre-service education and in-service training for professionals in the juvenile justice system.

To ensure that practitioners remain responsive and equipped to meet future demands, the following priority areas were highlighted:

- **Substance Use and Addiction:** With growing exposure to narcotics and other addictive behaviors among youth, professionals need early detection strategies, prevention tools, and referral mechanisms tailored to adolescents.
- **Suicide and Self-Harming Behaviors:** Participants emphasized the urgency of equipping staff with immediate-response skills for high-risk situations involving suicidal ideation or self-harm, along with clear pathways for psychological referral and support.
- **Cyberviolence and Online Exploitation:** The increasing prevalence of online threats—including cyberbullying, grooming, and digital exploitation—requires specialized training to understand, prevent, and respond to forms of violence occurring in digital spaces.
- **Digital Support Tools:** As technology becomes more embedded in daily life, professionals must learn how to utilize digital platforms and applications for educational reinforcement, virtual counseling, and secure communication with minors under supervision.

These knowledge domains reflect new realities faced by youth and demand forward-thinking approaches in curriculum design, workforce development, and institutional policy. Workshop participants called for these topics to be formally embedded into future programs developed under CORE-ED ACADEMY, ensuring that both new graduates and experienced professionals are fully prepared for the dynamic nature of the field.

Recommendations and Action Plans

Based on the findings and discussions held during the DACUM workshop at Luarasi University—organized in the framework of the CORE-ED ACADEMY project—participants proposed a set of practical, context-sensitive recommendations aimed at strengthening the juvenile justice and corrective education systems in Albania and across the Western Balkans.

Key recommendations include:

1. **Develop Competency-Based Training Programs:** Design and implement structured training modules focused on effective communication with minors, behavioral management, psychological assessment, and individualized rehabilitation planning.
2. **Integrate Real-World Practice into Education:** Embed internships and experiential learning opportunities in courts, juvenile shelters, correctional institutions, and community-based programs to connect theory with practice.



3. **Create Field-Oriented Tools and Checklists:** Equip professionals with practical instruments—such as structured observation templates, behavior tracking sheets, and case management guides—to support their day-to-day work with minors.
4. **Promote Intersectoral Collaboration:** Facilitate coordinated action between the justice, education, health, and social protection sectors, ensuring that interventions with minors are holistic, consistent, and sustainable.
5. **Ensure Continuous In-Service Training:** Institutionalize regular professional development to keep frontline staff updated on emerging challenges, new policies, trauma-informed practices, and international standards.
6. **Support Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Provide access to clinical supervision, peer support groups, and wellness programs to prevent burnout and maintain professional resilience in emotionally demanding roles.
7. **Advocate for Legal and Policy Reforms:** Review and adapt juvenile justice legislation to better reflect international child protection standards, with a focus on rehabilitation, diversion from detention, and rights-based approaches.

These recommendations aim to support the creation of a more effective, humane, and developmentally appropriate system for working with minors in contact with the law—anchored in professional excellence, institutional cooperation, and shared social responsibility.

Conclusion

The DACUM workshop held at Luarasi University reaffirmed that professionals working with justice-involved youth require a specialized and integrated skill set—combining technical knowledge, practical tools, ethical judgment, and strong personal capacities.

The workshop's outcomes emphasized the urgent need for systemic reform in training models, institutional support structures, and legislative frameworks to ensure that minors in contact with the justice system are met with care, protection, and meaningful pathways toward rehabilitation and reintegration.

Participants highlighted that the well-being of minors cannot be separated from the professional preparation and emotional resilience of those who work with them. Investing in those professionals means investing in a more just, humane, and effective system overall. By translating these findings into concrete curriculum design, workforce development strategies, and policy recommendations, the CORE-ED ACADEMY project will contribute to building a regional model of corrective pedagogy rooted in inclusion, empathy, and evidence-based practice.



10.2. DACUM Workshop Report of BiH

Description of the event

DACUM is organized on 24.05.2025, between 9.00-16.00, at the International University of Sarajevo.

Agenda:

The workshop commenced at 09:00 with a warm welcome, allowing participants to introduce themselves in a relaxed atmosphere over coffee. The introductory session included an overview of the workshop agenda and a brief presentation of the CORE-ED Academy project. Following this, participants completed the initial “Expectations” form. After a short coffee break, the first session began with small group discussions. Participants were grouped according to their professional fields to ensure focused and relevant exchanges. These group sessions led to in-depth analysis and productive dialogue, ultimately resulting in the completion of the DACUM Charts. A lunch break was held from 12:30 to 13:30, during which participants had the opportunity to continue informal conversations. The afternoon session, titled “Future,” resumed with refreshments, including coffee and tea. The workshop concluded with a closing ceremony. Following the official program, participants who wished to continue networking were invited to join the organizers for a shared dinner, marking a pleasant and collegial end to the day.

Participants:

There were 13 participants in total. One of the participants was the Chief Executive Officer of the Cantonal Center for Social Work (Kantonalni centar za socijalni rad), with 25 years of professional experience. Another participant was a social worker at the same institution, bringing 23 years of experience to the discussion. Two participants were senior psychology students with experience working at the NGO NARKO-NE, which focuses on youth addiction prevention. Two others were graduate students in clinical psychology, both of whom had practical experience working with minors in conflict with the law at a correctional facility in Canton Sarajevo. One participant was a professor of law and the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the International University of Sarajevo. She has an academic background and several publications in the field of juvenile justice. Another participant was a law student at the same university, with a particular interest in working with minors in conflict with the law. Additionally, one law assistant from the university also attended, expressing a strong interest in the juvenile justice field. There was also a social worker/mediator and a psychologist from the Center for Social Care (Službe za socijalnu skrb) in Kiseljak. Finally, one participant served as the Head of the Guards in a correctional facility in Tuzla, responsible for overseeing vulnerable groups within the institution.

Organization:

The workshop was successfully organized through the collaborative efforts of multiple contributors, including CEPS Kiseljak, faculty members from the International University of Sarajevo (IUS), and a dedicated team of volunteering students. The planning and execution reflected a strong spirit of interdisciplinary cooperation and civic engagement. One of the most challenging aspects of the organization process was securing the necessary official approvals from governmental institutions for the participation of civil servants, which required significant time and coordination.

Introduction

The DACUM (Develop A Curriculum) workshop was organized to identify and define the key roles, tasks, skills, knowledge, and abilities required by professionals in the juvenile justice sector. Bringing together professionals in the field and educators, the workshop aimed to establish a competency-based framework that can inform juvenile justice profiles, curriculum design, workforce development, and policy recommendations.



Key Findings and Outcomes

1. Significant Discoveries

The DACUM workshop gathered professionals from multiple disciplines—educators, social workers, psychologists, and legal experts—to better understand the evolving responsibilities of those working with justice-involved youth aged 14–18. One of the most important insights was the consensus that most frontline staff have received minimal in-service training beyond isolated sessions on violence (including domestic violence) and stress management. This narrow scope leaves professionals underprepared to address the complex developmental, psychological, and social needs of minors in the justice system.

Participants stressed the urgent need for comprehensive, hands-on training in critical areas such as:

- Effective communication with minors
- Approaches to problematic behavior (e.g., self-harm, aggression)
- Understanding child development and psychology
- Mental health and trauma-informed care

Professionals are often required to serve as educators, mentors, counselors, assessors, legal escorts, and emotional supporters. However, without structured training in these domains, even experienced staff struggle to meet the holistic needs of minors. This gap severely limits their capacity for meaningful intervention and rehabilitation.

2. Key Tasks and Responsibilities

Participants identified several interconnected duties that span multiple roles. These include:

- **Communication & Counseling:** Establishing trust, offering emotional support, and providing individual guidance rooted in empathic listening and non-judgmental communication.
- **Educational and Mentorship Support:** Helping minors re-enter school, and engage in community-based learning. Professionals often act as mentor-educators, guiding youths' development.
- **Assessment and Report Writing:** Conducting interviews and behavioral assessments, and producing written reports that inform legal decisions and therapy planning.
- **Therapy and Rehabilitation Planning:** Collaborating with psychologists and case workers to co-create developmentally appropriate therapy plans.
- **Legal and Medical Escort:** Accompanying minors to court hearings or health appointments, advocating for their well-being and emotional security during stressful procedures.

These tasks require a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach and the ability to adapt to the unique circumstances of each minor.

3. Essential Skills and Competencies

Core competencies identified during the workshop include:

- **Child-Centered Communication:** Using developmentally appropriate language and active listening techniques to engage minors effectively.
- **Understanding Child Psychology:** Recognizing behavioral patterns, emotional responses, and cognitive development specific to adolescents.
- **Interviewing Skills:** Conducting structured interviews that respect the minor's background, trauma history, and developmental stage.
- **Approaching Problematic Behaviors:** Responding constructively to behaviors such as aggression, withdrawal, or self-harming using evidence-based methods.
- **Supportive Supervision and Mentoring:** Guiding youth with empathy, motivation, and consistency while maintaining healthy boundaries.

These competencies form the foundation for effective service delivery and must be continuously developed through training and reflective practice.



4. Knowledge Areas and Domains

To function effectively, professionals must be trained in a broad knowledge base that supports their roles as social workers, educators, legal guides, and mental health supporters. Key domains include:

- **Child and Adolescent Development:** Including emotional regulation, peer relations, and brain development.
- **Counseling and Communication Theories:** Trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and conflict de-escalation techniques.
- **Assessment Techniques:** Basic psychological and behavioral tools tailored to youth; risk and needs evaluation.
- **Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Models:** Interventions for self-harming, suicidal ideation, crisis management, and motivational approach.
- **Educational and Social Integration:** School reintegration, family support systems, and youth employment pathways.
- **Juvenile Legal Frameworks:** Child rights, legal accompaniment protocols, and the justice system's role in protection and rehabilitation.

5. Critical Abilities and Personal Capacities

Beyond technical skills, workshop participants emphasized the importance of core behavioral attributes, including:

- **Empathy and Emotional Insight:** Building relationships through compassion and active listening.
- **Patience and Motivational Capacity:** Remaining committed through setbacks, resistance, or slow progress.
- **Crisis Management and Trauma Response:** De-escalating violent or emotional situations with sensitivity to trauma triggers.
- **Mental Health Awareness:** Recognizing signs of distress and referring appropriately.
- **Boundary Awareness:** Maintaining ethical, legal, and emotional boundaries to safeguard both youth and staff.
- **Collaboration and Flexibility:** Working across teams and adapting to the evolving needs of youth and institutions.

Future Knowledge Needs

To address emerging trends and vulnerabilities among youth, the following areas were identified as critical additions to current training:

- **Substance Use and Addiction:** Early detection and response strategies.
- **Suicide and Self-Harming Behaviors:** First-response approaches and referral pathways.
- **Cyberviolence Education:** Understanding and mitigating online threats, bullying, and exploitation.
- **Digital Support Tools:** Leveraging technology for education, counseling, and communication with youth.

These knowledge areas must be integrated into both pre-service curricula and in-service development programs to prepare professionals for current and future challenges.

Recommendations and Action Plans

To address the challenges outlined, the workshop made the following practical recommendations:

1. **Develop Practical Training Programs** that cover healthy communication, structured assessments, appropriate behavioral approaches, and support planning with minors.
2. **Integrate Real-World Practice** through internships in courts, youth shelters, and community programs.
3. **Create Field-Oriented Tools and Checklists** to guide daily responsibilities with minors.
4. **Promote Intersectoral Collaboration** between education, justice, health, and social services.
5. **Ensure Continuous In-Service Training** to keep staff updated on new methods and policies.
6. **Support Workers' Mental Health** through supervision, counseling, and wellness workshops.



7. **Advocate for Legislative Reforms** to align laws with youth protection and rehabilitation goals.

Conclusion

Professionals working with justice-involved youth must be equipped with a unique blend of skills, knowledge, and personal strengths. This DACUM workshop clarified the urgent need for systemic improvements in training, support, and policy to ensure that minors receive the care, guidance, and protection they deserve. By implementing these findings, the justice system can better support both its workers and the youth they serve.

Evaluation Summary

Following the workshop, a structured questionnaire was distributed to all participants to gather feedback and assess perceptions of the process and outcomes. Below is a summary of the results.

- 100% rated 5 in the workshop met their expectations
- 100% rated 5 in the workshop overall time provided for the workshop was appropriate
- 100% rated 5 in the workshop satisfied with the organization
- 100% rated 5 in the workshop was productive
- 92% rated 5 in the workshop the time provided for breaks was sufficient
- 92% rated 5 in the workshop the time provided for individual steps, breakout sessions and discussions were sufficient
- 100% rated 5 in the workshop the content was relevant to my field of work



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10.3. DACUM Workshop Report of Kosovo

Event Description and Agenda

The workshop took place on July 9, 2025, at UBT College, beginning at 11:30 AM. It opened with formal welcoming remarks by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Law, followed by contributions from institutional leaders:

- Director of the Kosovo Correctional Service
- Director of the Kosovo Probation Service

The opening session provided an institutional framework for the workshop's goals and emphasized the importance of inter-institutional collaboration in shaping a more rehabilitative and development-oriented juvenile justice system in Kosovo.

Following the opening, the moderator introduced the purpose of the workshop, linking it to the broader educational mission of integrating real-life practice with academic instruction in the field of criminal law.

Unlike the DACUM workshop in Albania which operated through five thematic sessions, this Kosovo-based workshop was designed as an integrated and interactive plenary discussion. Key areas explored included:

- The role and daily functions of correctional staff working with minors in closed institutions;
- Strategies for social reintegration through community programs;
- Psychological and interdisciplinary support frameworks for minors in conflict with the law; Opportunities for professional internships and student engagement in rehabilitation processes.

A short networking break was held around 13:00, after which the workshop resumed with intensive group dialogue until 16:00. The concluding session involved a collective reflection, where participants summarized key findings and proposed competency areas to be included in future academic curricula and training modules for juvenile justice professionals.

The event concluded with informal networking and refreshments, closing a productive and forward-looking academic-practitioner engagement.

Participants

Over 27 participants attended the workshop, representing a broad range of sectors:

- Vice Dean of the Faculty of Law-UBT College
- Director of the Kosovo Correctional Service
- Director of the Kosovo Probation Service
- Master's students in Criminal Law
- Legal trainees and practitioners in the juvenile justice field
- Professional staff from the Kosovo Probation Service

This diverse group enabled a vibrant exchange of perspectives, enhancing the academic-practical relevance of the workshop.

Organization

The workshop was organized through close cooperation between UBT College and institutional partners from the correctional and probation services. Effective planning and coordination allowed for seamless logistics and ensured participation from high-level officials.

Key challenges included aligning institutional schedules and ensuring official clearance for participation, which were successfully addressed through proactive engagement and administrative collaboration.



Introduction

The professional workshop organized at UBT College-Faculty of Law was designed as a strategic initiative to examine the practical and educational dimensions of working with juveniles involved in the justice system in Kosovo. With the growing importance of aligning academic preparation with real-world institutional practice, this workshop aimed to explore and articulate the core responsibilities, challenges, and competencies required of professionals operating within juvenile correctional and probation services.

By bringing together key institutional representatives, academic experts, field professionals, and graduate students, the event served as a collaborative platform to build a shared understanding of the evolving demands in juvenile justice. The workshop placed a particular emphasis on the integration of rehabilitative and educational approaches within justice institutions, while also addressing gaps in training, interdisciplinary coordination, and the transition of minors toward community reintegration.

The collective insights and experiences exchanged during the workshop are expected to inform the development of competency-based academic modules, improve field training practices, and contribute to shaping more responsive and humane policies in the field of juvenile justice in Kosovo. This process, though not embedded in a formal DACUM methodology, embraced the same participatory spirit and sought to ensure that the outcomes reflect both operational realities and long-term institutional goals.

Furthermore, the Kosovo context presents a unique institutional configuration where professionals are often required to operate across multiple roles-as mentors, assessors, reintegration facilitators, and legal companions. This multidimensional responsibility necessitates an advanced skill set that combines legal understanding with psychosocial sensitivity and pedagogical insight. The workshop helped highlight this complexity, paving the way for more structured approaches in preparing current and future professionals for such demanding yet impactful roles.

Key Findings and Outcomes

1. Significant Discoveries

The workshop held at UBT College on July 9, 2025, brought together a focused group of stakeholders dedicated to the field of juvenile justice in Kosovo. While the event did not include a large number of frontline officers, the presence of key institutional leaders Director of the Kosovo Correctional Service, and Director of the Probation Service-provided essential insights into the current state and strategic direction of juvenile justice services. Alongside them, the active participation of graduate students in criminal law and legal interns created a dynamic space for knowledge exchange between experienced professionals and future practitioners.

One of the primary insights that emerged from the workshop was the limited exposure of future legal professionals to the applied dimensions of juvenile rehabilitation. Many students reported that, although theoretical frameworks are addressed in their studies, opportunities for structured interaction with institutions such as probation and correctional services remain scarce.

Moreover, the directors highlighted the ongoing need for specialized training and capacity building within their respective institutions, particularly in areas concerning the psychological and developmental needs of minors in conflict with the law. Both directors emphasized that juvenile offenders require a different institutional approach-one that is rooted in communication, rehabilitation, and social reintegration, rather than punitive measures.

Another important observation was the lack of formal, interdisciplinary modules in higher education programs that reflect the multifaceted roles professionals must play in juvenile justice contexts. These include not only legal interpretation and enforcement, but also counseling, crisis management, and reintegration planning.

The participants collectively recognized the importance of:

- Promoting youth-friendly and non-punitive communication with minors in institutional settings.
- Developing preventive approaches that reduce recidivism and encourage educational continuity.
- Enhancing collaboration between academic institutions and justice agencies to offer students early, structured exposure to real-world cases involving minors.



Although the workshop was limited in scale, its targeted composition allowed for deep engagement on structural and educational challenges, as well as on the professional standards needed to improve the quality of juvenile justice services in Kosovo.

2. Core Roles and Responsibilities

During the course of the workshop, participants-particularly the two institutional directors and engaged master's students-reflected on the wide spectrum of responsibilities faced by professionals who interact with juveniles in the justice system. While the daily functions may vary depending on institutional setting, a consistent message emerged: professionals must operate across multiple domains, often switching between legal, social, and educational roles. Key responsibilities identified include:

- **Building Communication and Emotional Rapport**-Professionals must learn to communicate effectively with minors, using non-authoritative and respectful language that fosters trust. Establishing emotional safety is a critical first step in any rehabilitative or legal process involving youth.
- **Mentorship and Educational Guidance**-Participants highlighted the importance of encouraging minors to remain connected to educational goals. This includes not only formal schooling but also life skills training, vocational planning, and moral development-areas in which professionals often act as informal mentors.
- **Observation, Documentation, and Reporting**-Accurate documentation of a minor's progress, behavior, and psychosocial needs is essential. Interns and trainees learned about the need for clarity and objectivity in writing behavioral notes, preparing case files, and contributing to multidisciplinary evaluations.
- **Coordination with Interdisciplinary Teams**-Although not all institutions in Kosovo currently have fully integrated support teams, the directors emphasized that effective work with minors must involve collaboration with psychologists, educators, probation officers, and social workers. Rehabilitation planning, in this sense, is a team-based responsibility.
- **Accompanying and Supporting Minors in Institutional Processes**-Whether during legal hearings, health assessments, or reintegration activities, professionals are often required to physically and emotionally accompany minors, providing not only logistical assistance but also moral support and clarity.
- **Each of these tasks demands more than technical proficiency**-they require professionals to demonstrate patience, empathy, cultural awareness, and a strong ethical compass. The success of any intervention or reintegration effort depends on how well these roles are performed-not in isolation, but as part of a consistent, humane, and developmentally informed practice.

3. Essential Skills and Competencies

While discussing the multifaceted roles of professionals in juvenile justice, workshop participants- especially the institutional directors and engaged legal trainees-stressed the importance of a well- defined set of skills that go beyond legal knowledge. The group emphasized that the quality of interaction with juveniles is directly tied to the interpersonal, emotional, and reflective capacities of the individuals involved in their care and rehabilitation.

The following core competencies emerged as essential for anyone working with minors in the justice system:

- Youth-Centered Communication

The ability to adapt language, tone, and body language to suit the developmental stage and emotional condition of the minor. Effective communication is not simply about delivering instructions but about building connection, trust, and understanding in sensitive or high-stress situations.



- **Emotional Intelligence and Self-Regulation**

Professionals must be equipped to manage their own stress, remain calm in emotionally charged situations, and respond to minors with empathy and consistency. This is particularly important when working with youths who may exhibit aggression, withdrawal, or trauma-based behaviors.

- **Observational and Reflective Skills**

Noticing subtle behavioral cues, identifying distress signals, and interpreting non-verbal communication are key for early intervention. Students and interns expressed a need for more structured opportunities to learn these observational skills in real-life institutional settings.

- **Crisis Response and Conflict De-escalation**

Professionals must be trained to intervene calmly and effectively during moments of emotional or behavioral crisis. This includes knowing how to defuse tensions, protect all parties involved, and transition the situation into a safer, more constructive interaction.

- **Boundary Management and Professional Ethics**

Maintaining a professional, respectful, and ethically sound relationship with minors is critical. This includes knowing where to draw the line between supportive engagement and overinvolvement, especially when the minor seeks excessive emotional dependence.

- **Cultural and Social Sensitivity**

Understanding the backgrounds, community dynamics, and socioeconomic challenges faced by minors is essential for tailoring responses that are both fair and impactful. Many minors in contact with the justice system come from marginalized or vulnerable environments, and professionals must be mindful of this context.

In short, the competencies required in juvenile justice extend far beyond the legal domain. They represent a blend of psychological insight, practical tools, and a sustained commitment to values such as dignity, inclusion, and care. Participants agreed that these skills should be explicitly integrated into academic training and reinforced through supervised practical experiences.

4. Knowledge Areas and Domains

The workshop discussions revealed that professionals who interact with minors in conflict with the law must possess a diverse and interdisciplinary knowledge base. Legal expertise alone is insufficient. Instead, professionals need a strong understanding of adolescent development, behavioral health, and social systems to deliver effective and ethical interventions.

Key knowledge domains highlighted by participants include:

- **Adolescent Development and Behavior**

A solid grounding in how adolescents think, feel, and behave is fundamental. This includes knowledge about stages of cognitive development, emotional regulation patterns, risk-taking behavior, and the impact of trauma or instability on behavior.

- **Foundations of Juvenile Justice**

While participants recognized that students are typically introduced to basic juvenile justice laws, there was a strong consensus that greater emphasis is needed on the practical interpretation of legal norms-particularly regarding diversion measures, rehabilitation rights, and procedural safeguards specific to minors.

- **Trauma-Informed Practice**

Understanding how trauma affects brain development, emotional stability, and behavior is critical in working with youth populations. Trainees expressed a desire for more guidance on how to interact with minors who may have experienced neglect, abuse, or exposure to violence.

- **Basic Counseling and Motivational Approaches**

While not expected to act as therapists, juvenile justice professionals must be familiar with supportive communication methods, such as motivational interviewing, active listening, and behavioral reinforcement strategies that promote cooperation and positive change.



- **Risk and Needs Assessment**

Knowledge of how to identify high-risk behaviors and unmet needs through structured observation or assessment tools is vital in shaping individualized support plans. Although such tools are still underutilized in Kosovo, the directors agreed that future professionals should be trained in their use.

- **Educational and Social Reintegration Pathways**

Understanding how to support a minor's reintegration into school, vocational training, or employment is an essential part of any rehabilitation effort. Knowledge of available community services, reintegration programs, and transitional support is crucial.

- **Family and Community Dynamics**

Professionals must also understand the broader environment that influences a minor's development-including family structure, peer influence, and socioeconomic pressures. Effective interventions often require engaging not only the individual but also their support network.

By mastering these areas of knowledge, professionals can approach juvenile cases with greater confidence, competence, and compassion. The participants strongly recommended that university programs and institutional trainings in Kosovo incorporate these domains into their curricula and continuing education schemes.

5. Critical Abilities and Personal Capacities

In addition to technical competencies and interdisciplinary knowledge, workshop participants emphasized that working effectively with juveniles in contact with the justice system requires a distinct set of personal attributes and behavioral capacities. These qualities are often what determine whether a professional can truly connect with, support, and empower a young person navigating institutional processes.

Participants-particularly the directors and master's students-highlighted the following core personal abilities as indispensable:

- **Empathy and Human Connection**

The ability to see the world through the eyes of a vulnerable or troubled minor was repeatedly described as foundational. Professionals must build authentic relationships grounded in trust and compassion, especially when working with youth who may feel misunderstood, marginalized, or judged.

- **Patience and Emotional Resilience**

Supporting minors is rarely a linear process. Professionals must maintain a calm and encouraging presence even in the face of setbacks, resistance, or emotional volatility. Patience allows for steady guidance, while resilience ensures that staff can cope with the emotional toll of repeated exposure to trauma and institutional stress.

- **Crisis Sensitivity and De-escalation Capacity**

A recurring theme was the importance of being able to recognize early signs of crisis-whether psychological, emotional, or behavioral-and intervene quickly and appropriately. This includes knowing when to act, when to listen, and when to seek interdisciplinary support.

- **Ethical Discipline and Professional Boundaries**

Working with minors requires professionals to walk a fine line between approachability and professionalism. Knowing how to maintain ethical boundaries, safeguard confidentiality, and act in the minor's best interests-even under pressure-is critical for legal integrity and personal accountability.

- **Adaptability and Situational Awareness**

Given the dynamic nature of juvenile justice work, professionals must remain flexible. No two cases are the same, and no institutional context is fully predictable. Whether responding to institutional changes, judicial delays, or a shift in a minor's mental state, adaptability is key to sustained professional effectiveness.



- **Team Collaboration and Role Awareness**

Although professionals may work in different institutions or roles, their success often depends on coordinated, interdisciplinary teamwork. This requires humility, active listening, and a willingness to share responsibility and communicate transparently with other actors in the justice and rehabilitation system.

The participants underscored that these abilities cannot be learned through theory alone. Instead, they must be developed through supervised experience, reflective practice, and mentorship by senior professionals. Embedding these values and capacities into academic preparation will be essential for building a juvenile justice system in Kosovo that is both effective and compassionate.

6. Future Knowledge Needs

As Kosovo continues to develop its justice institutions and align them with European and international standards, the demands placed on professionals working with minors are expected to increase in both complexity and scope. The workshop participants highlighted several critical knowledge areas that are not yet fully integrated into academic or professional development programs but are becoming increasingly urgent.

These future-oriented knowledge domains include:

Digital Risks and Online Exploitation

With increasing access to digital technology, more minors are exposed to risks such as cyberbullying, grooming, online radicalization, and the spread of harmful content. Professionals working in juvenile justice must be equipped to identify, address, and prevent forms of digital victimization, which often go unnoticed in traditional assessments.

Mental Health and Self-Harming Behaviors

Institutional leaders acknowledged the growing number of cases involving minors with untreated mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and self-harm. Professionals need basic training in recognizing symptoms, responding appropriately, and coordinating care with specialized mental health providers.

Restorative Justice and Diversion Models

There was broad agreement that Kosovo's juvenile justice system should place greater emphasis on restorative practices that prioritize dialogue, accountability, and community-based resolutions over punitive measures. Knowledge of restorative justice theory, as well as practical implementation strategies, will be crucial in moving toward a more rehabilitative model.

Working with Marginalized or High-Risk Groups Professionals should be equipped to work with youth from Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, as well as minors with disabilities or those from low-income households. This requires a nuanced understanding of systemic inequality and how it intersects with justice outcomes.

Use of Technology in Monitoring and Rehabilitation

The potential use of mobile applications and digital platforms for case tracking, remote counseling, and educational engagement is still underutilized. Workshop participants encouraged the introduction of such tools, along with training on ethical, safe, and effective usage.

In conclusion, the participants emphasized that anticipating these emerging challenges and embedding relevant knowledge areas into both pre-service curricula and in-service training modules will be essential for ensuring a



future-ready juvenile justice workforce. Building professional capacity in these domains will not only improve individual outcomes for minors, but also enhance institutional credibility and compliance with international human rights standards.

7. Recommendations and Action Plans

Based on the insights shared during the July 9, 2025 workshop at UBT College, participants proposed a set of practical and strategic recommendations aimed at strengthening the professional preparation, institutional coordination, and policy direction of juvenile justice in Kosovo. These recommendations reflect both immediate needs and long-term reform opportunities.

1. Integrate Competency-Based Training into Legal Education

Universities should design and implement modules focused on communication with minors, trauma-informed practice, and behavioral management. These should be mandatory components within criminal law and criminology curricula at the graduate level.

2. Expand Structured Internships within Justice Institutions

Academic programs should formalize partnerships with the Kosovo Correctional and Probation Services to enable regular student placements. Internships must include mentoring, supervision, and feedback mechanisms to ensure educational value.

3. Promote Restorative and Rehabilitative Models in Practice

Justice institutions and training centers should shift their approach from punitive discipline to restorative engagement. Staff should receive dedicated training on how to apply restorative principles in daily work with minors.

4. Develop Practical Toolkits for Daily Case Management

Professionals need access to operational tools, including templates for behavioral observation, case planning, and interdisciplinary reporting. These toolkits should be simple, field-tested, and adapted to Kosovo's legal and institutional environment.

5. Institutionalize Continuous Professional Development

The Ministry of Justice, in partnership with educational institutions, should establish a national framework for ongoing in-service training in juvenile justice. Topics should evolve over time and include new challenges such as cyber risks, digital rehabilitation, and cultural inclusion.

6. Provide Staff with Psychological Support and Supervision

Professionals working with minors face high emotional burdens. Institutions must create mechanisms for psychological support, including regular reflective supervision, access to counseling, and peer support networks.

7. Strengthen Cross-Institutional Collaboration

Juvenile justice cannot succeed in silos. A multi-agency coordination body or working group- comprising representatives from corrections, probation, education, social services, and mental health-should be established to ensure alignment of services.

8. Advocate for Legislative and Policy Reform

National institutions, in collaboration with civil society and academia, should promote legal reforms that prioritize diversion, limit detention, and strengthen the procedural rights of minors in line with EU and UN standards.

These recommendations are not exhaustive but represent a foundation for action. Participants agreed that the future of juvenile justice in Kosovo depends on a coordinated investment in people, knowledge, and institutional integrity. By acting on these proposals, Kosovo can take concrete steps toward building a more just, inclusive, and rehabilitative environment for all youth in contact with the law.

8. Conclusion

The workshop held at UBT College on July 9, 2025, served as a vital step toward enhancing the professional readiness of individuals working-or preparing to work-with juveniles in contact with the justice system in Kosovo. Through the participation of institutional leaders, graduate students, and legal interns, the event created a



focused and open space for dialogue, reflection, and planning. One of the central takeaways of the workshop was the recognition that juvenile justice requires more than legal compliance; it demands a human-centered, rehabilitative, and developmentally appropriate approach that reflects the needs and potential of each minor. As highlighted by the Kosovo Correctional and Probation Services, the roles played by professionals in this field are increasingly interdisciplinary-requiring emotional intelligence, practical skills, ethical awareness, and a strong commitment to long-term reintegration.

Participants agreed that a strategic shift is needed—one that moves from fragmented, ad hoc training to structured educational pathways that bridge academic theory with institutional realities. The insights shared during this workshop point to a clear need for innovation in both curriculum design and institutional practice.

Importantly, the workshop reaffirmed that preparing to work with justice-involved youth is not simply a matter of technical instruction, but also one of values: empathy, patience, respect, and responsibility. Investing in those who serve minors is, ultimately, an investment in Kosovo's broader goals of social justice, inclusion, and resilience.

As this report is disseminated among academic and institutional stakeholders, it is hoped that the momentum generated by the workshop will carry forward into concrete actions, lasting partnerships, and meaningful reform.



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10.4. DACUM Workshop Report of Montenegro

Organization

Taking place on 20 June 2025 at the Rectorate Building of UoM, the workshop followed a full-day structure:

09:40 – 10:30 | Introductory Interviews and Initial Evaluation

- Overview of the agenda and brief explanation of the objectives
- Short overview of the CORE-ED ACADEMY project
- Introduction of participants
- Completion of an expectations form

10:30 – 12:30 | First Session – Characteristics of the Current Job Role

- **Phase 1:** Brainstorming and collaborative exploration
- **Phase 2:** Drafting a preliminary DACUM diagram
- **Phase 3:** Reorganization, refinement, and validation

12:30 – 13:00 | Break

13:00 – 15:00 | Second Session – Characteristics of the Future Job Role

- **Phase 4:** Using the same phases for the future role

15:00 – 15:30 | Final Remarks

A total of 17 participants (including project team members) from diverse sectors contributed, including justice, education, rehabilitation, youth engagement, and civil society. This variety ensured a comprehensive and multi-dimensional view on occupational challenges and future training needs in Montenegro.

Participating Institutions:

- Ministry of Justice, Department for Juveniles
- Basic Court Podgorica
- Institute for Social and Child Protection
- Probation Service Podgorica
- Spuž Correctional Facility
- Ombudsman's Office (Children's Rights Sector)
- University of Montenegro
- NGO Juventas
- Municipal Youth Office
- Centre for Social Work

Introduction

- I. The CORE-ED Academy initiative seeks to foster a resilient, inclusive, and evidence-driven correctional pedagogy ecosystem. Its mission is to bridge the gap between higher education and the professional development needs of stakeholders within the juvenile justice system by addressing local priorities and systemic educational challenges.

In collaboration with professionals from correctional education, justice, and social services, the Montenegro initiative identified key challenges:



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- Low Integration of Education and Practice

A significant disconnect exists between academic training programs and the everyday realities of fieldwork in correctional and juvenile justice settings. Professionals frequently rely on experiential or ad hoc learning rather than structured educational pathways.

- Scarcity of Specialized Training

There is a lack of tailored educational programs designed for practitioners working with justice-involved youth, especially in areas like trauma-informed care, digital safety, and behavioral rehabilitation.

- Limited Interest in Further Training

Many professionals demonstrate low motivation to pursue additional professional development once they obtain their working licenses, pointing to gaps in continuing education incentives and structure.

- Fragmented Inter-Agency Collaboration

Participants reported poor coordination and inconsistent communication among key institutions (justice, education, social services), leading to duplicated efforts and gaps in service delivery for vulnerable youth.

- Lack of Adaptive and Digital Pedagogies

Teaching strategies often fail to accommodate high-risk youth populations, especially in a rapidly evolving digital environment. Participants emphasized the need for digital literacy and AI-based tools to support education and behavioral monitoring.

- Insufficient Cultural and Diversity Competency

Professionals often lack adequate preparation to address the cultural, ethnic, and social diversity of the youth population they serve. This limits their ability to provide inclusive, responsive support.

- Inadequate Emotional and Reflective Capacity

Emotional regulation, resilience, and reflective supervision were identified as crucial but underdeveloped areas among staff. These skills are essential to reduce burnout and improve the quality of interventions with justice-involved youth.

- Underutilization of Community and Family Contexts

Interventions often overlook the broader social and familial environments of youth, reducing the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

II. DACUM Process and Stakeholder Engagement

To address these gaps, a structured DACUM process was adopted. The workshop gathered experts from diverse institutions including correctional facilities, civil society organizations, and academia. Participants contributed through interactive sessions aimed at capturing real-world professional insights and aligning them with EU-level pedagogical standards. Stakeholders validated proposed role profiles and helped shape the direction of curriculum design, ensuring future educational content will be rooted in institutional and regional realities.

III. Curriculum Framework and Competency Areas

The workshop laid the groundwork for Montenegro's correctional pedagogy ecosystem by co-creating two key occupational profiles:

- Correctional Pedagogy Educator
- Youth Justice Education Facilitator

These profiles emphasize:

- Holistic and Individualized Approach to Youth Support

Profiles prioritize individual case planning, taking into account psychological, social, educational, and family backgrounds. There is a focus on individual and group treatment, including occupational therapy, counseling, and educational reinforcement.



- 2. Multisectoral and Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Effective cooperation with legal, educational, health, and social welfare institutions is a foundational element. Emphasis is placed on cross-institutional correspondence, supervision, and joint planning, particularly when implementing court decisions and treatment strategies.

- Evidence-Based and Rights-Oriented Practice

The roles integrate data collection, evaluation, and reporting, including preparation of expert opinions and court reports, reflecting the importance of transparency and accountability.

- Educational Inclusion and Reintegration

Support for school enrollment, learning assistance, and coordination with educational institutions is central. Emphasis on the use of pedagogical strategies to prevent school dropout and foster re-socialization and reintegration into the community.

- Professional Development and Reflexivity

Profiles call for ongoing training, academic advancement, and participation in accredited programs. Participants also highlighted the importance of self-reflection, awareness of personal biases, and ethical conduct in professional decision-making.

- Future-Readiness and Innovation

The development of cyber violence prevention skills, digital literacy, and familiarity with restorative justice tools and approaches is emphasized to meet contemporary challenges.

- Trauma-Informed and Emotionally Competent Practice

Understanding the impact of trauma on behavior and learning is essential, as is cultivating emotional literacy in educators and facilitators. Empathy, patience, and non-judgmental support are highlighted as crucial behavioral competencies.

The competency framework prioritizes digital, civic, and emotional intelligence skills, integrated into experiential formats. These are being used to inform two educational offers:

1. Master's-Level Module in Correctional Pedagogy

A formal academic program designed to develop specialized competencies for working in juvenile justice and correctional education. This module will be part of a second-cycle (Master's) curriculum aimed at:

- Enhancing theoretical knowledge and applied skills in correctional pedagogy
- Supporting reflective, evidence-based, and rights-oriented practice
- Preparing professionals for interdisciplinary roles in institutional and community settings

2. Lifelong learning programs (LLL)

A short-cycle, practice-oriented training program tailored for in-service professionals from justice, education, and social work sectors. This course will focus on:

- Practical application of trauma-informed, digital, and emotional intelligence competencies
- Facilitating inter-agency collaboration and reintegration work
- Providing flexible learning formats for professionals in the field

IV. Implementation Plan

The plan follows a three-phase timeline:

Year 1: DACUM validation, institutional roundtables, curriculum design drafts

Year 2: Pilot implementation, occupational role finalization, evaluation loops

Year 3: Integration into HEI offerings, regional dissemination, EU policy alignment

V. Mapping Current and Future Competency Needs



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Key findings and Outcomes

In collaboration with professionals from correctional education, justice, and social services, the Montenegro initiative identified key challenges:

- Low integration between educational programs and fieldwork realities
- Scarcity of specialized training tailored to correctional settings
- Low level of interest in training after obtaining the required work licenses.
- Fragmentation across inter-agency cooperation
- A lack of adaptive and digital teaching strategies suitable for high-risk youth populations

Session 1: Mapping Present Roles

Participants analyzed their day-to-day realities, including:

- Formal and informal mentoring
- Legal advocacy and documentation
- Educational planning in correctional contexts

Competencies identified:

- Communication, emotional resilience, ethical decision-making
- Navigating institutional boundaries and crises

Gaps revealed:

- Lack of formal pedagogical preparation
- Reliance on experiential or ad hoc learning

Session 2: Future Role Visioning

This session explored future scenarios:

- Anticipated duties in digital, hybrid, and trauma-aware programming
- Emphasis on inter-agency work and restorative models
- Individualized, Trauma-Informed Interventions
- Allowing broader community and family involvement
- Establishment of multi-agency response teams with shared protocols

Proposed competencies:

- Use of AI/digital tools for education and monitoring
- Emotional literacy and reflective supervision

Pedagogical adaptability for justice-involved incorporation of youth's social and community context into interventions

- Cultural and Diversity Competency

To work effectively with justice-involved youth, professionals must be equipped with a dynamic set of competencies that reflect the complexity of both the individuals they serve and the environments they operate within. Central to this skill set is the pedagogical adaptability needed to engage young people who have often experienced disrupted education, trauma, or systemic exclusion. This requires the ability to tailor teaching and support strategies to their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural profiles—often in challenging institutional settings. Equally important is the development of emotional literacy and reflective supervision, allowing practitioners to regulate



their own emotional responses, understand the emotional world of the youth they work with, and reflect critically on their practice to avoid burnout and unconscious bias.

Incorporating the youth's social and community context into interventions is another vital dimension. Recognizing the impact of family dynamics, neighbourhood influences, peer networks, and socio-economic background enables more holistic and sustainable support strategies. Professionals must also demonstrate cultural and diversity competency, ensuring their approaches are inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the ethnic, cultural, gender, and identity realities of each young person. Finally, in a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the use of AI and digital tools—for education, engagement, and behavioural monitoring—offers powerful new opportunities. When used ethically and thoughtfully, these technologies can enhance learning, build accountability, and provide real-time feedback to both youth and practitioners.

VI. Outcomes from Group Work Sessions

From Session 1:

- Rich typology of current correctional tasks
- High importance of emotional/behavioral skill sets
- Documentation of formal training deficits
- Emergence of informal learning as central

The findings of the Montenegro workshop underscore the need for a paradigm shift in how we understand and support those working in juvenile justice. As the field evolves, so too must our investment in practitioner development, including emotional competence, cross-sector coordination, and meaningful, practice-based education.

To build a system capable of truly rehabilitating young offenders, we must equip professionals not just with credentials, but with the deep human skills and adaptive knowledge required to guide vulnerable youth toward positive life paths.

From Session 2:

- Need for professional agility and adaptive knowledge
- Rise of cross-sector collaboration expectations
- Future-oriented demand for resilience-based education

Future Recommendations

Building on the insights, evaluations, and collaborative analyses conducted during the DACUM workshop, a series of forward-looking recommendations were formulated to guide the continued development of correctional pedagogy in Montenegro. These recommendations reflect both the immediate needs identified by practitioners and the long-term vision for a more integrated, inclusive, and professionalized juvenile justice education system. Emphasizing systemic reform, interdisciplinary cooperation, and the creation of robust educational pathways, the proposed actions aim to ensure that professionals are equipped with the competencies, resources, and institutional support necessary to respond effectively to the evolving challenges of working with justice-involved youth.

1. Strengthen Intersectoral Collaboration

Participants emphasized the urgent need to improve coordination and communication among institutions involved in juvenile justice—such as social services, education, health, and the judiciary. Developing standardized protocols, promoting joint planning, and encouraging collaborative interventions were highlighted as critical steps toward a more unified and effective approach.



2. Reform Legal and Policy Frameworks

A consistent theme among participants was the necessity to revise the Law on Juvenile Justice and related policies. Recommendations include aligning national legal frameworks with European standards, strengthening mechanisms for implementation, and ensuring laws reflect the rehabilitative and educational goals of correctional pedagogy.

3. Develop Specialized Educational Programs

The workshop strongly supported the creation of two educational offers—a Master’s-level module in correctional pedagogy and a LLL programs for professionals. These programs should incorporate digital, civic, and emotional intelligence competencies using experiential learning methods, and be designed to meet the specific needs of practitioners across sectors.

4. Promote Evidence-Based and Reflective Practice

Participants recommended embedding tools and strategies for data collection, evaluation, and monitoring into everyday professional activities. Encouraging evidence-based planning, case documentation, and outcome measurement is essential for ensuring quality, accountability, and continuous improvement.

5. Expand Capacity Building and Professional Development

Continuous learning opportunities are essential for practitioners working in challenging environments. Recommendations include regular in-service training, peer mentoring programs, and tailored workshops addressing emerging themes such as trauma-informed care, cyber safety, and diversity awareness.

6. Increase Community and Family Engagement

To improve reintegration outcomes and promote resilience among youth, the role of families and communities must be strengthened. Recommendations include involving families in educational and rehabilitation planning, raising public awareness, and partnering with civil society organizations to reduce stigma and build supportive environments.

7. Establish Institutional Support Structures

Finally, the workshop called for the creation of a dedicated national center for correctional pedagogy and juvenile justice. This hub would serve as a platform for training, research, resource sharing, and cross-sector collaboration, anchoring reform efforts within a sustainable institutional framework.

Conclusion

The DACUM workshop at the University of Montenegro represented a pivotal milestone within the CORE-ED Academy project, aiming to enhance the professionalization of correctional pedagogy in Montenegro. Designed as a dynamic and participatory forum, the workshop brought together stakeholders from the justice system, education, social services, civil society, and academia. This multisectoral collaboration created a fertile ground for jointly identifying the knowledge, skills, and behavioral competencies necessary for supporting justice-involved youth through inclusive and evidence-based educational interventions.

Throughout the workshop, participants engaged in collaborative sessions structured around two core objectives: mapping current roles and envisioning future competencies. The initial session focused on analyzing the realities of participants' professional environments, highlighting a series of systemic and operational challenges such as the low integration of education with fieldwork, insufficient specialized training, and limited pedagogical resources adapted to high-risk and trauma-affected youth. The second session took a forward-looking approach, exploring the evolving expectations placed on professionals in the justice and correctional sectors—particularly in relation to digital learning, restorative practices, trauma-informed care, and inter-agency collaboration.

A key outcome of the workshop was the co-creation of two essential occupational profiles—Correctional Pedagogy Educator and Youth Justice Education Facilitator. These profiles reflect a shift toward holistic, resilience-based education and prioritize competencies such as emotional literacy, cultural and diversity awareness, adaptive pedagogy, and the ethical use of digital tools for learning and behavioral monitoring. These competencies will serve as the foundation for the development of new educational programs, including a master's-level module and a LLL program tailored to professionals in the juvenile justice system.



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In addition to technical outcomes, the workshop fostered a strong sense of professional solidarity and learning among participants. Evaluation feedback revealed overwhelmingly positive impressions: participants found the sessions highly relevant, well-structured, and impactful. The group work was particularly valued for enabling peer exchange and real-life scenario reflection. Suggestions for future improvements focused on deepening the use of case-based methods and allowing more time for open discussion and cross-sector dialogue.

In conclusion, the DACUM workshop stands as a successful model of collaborative curriculum design, rooted in local context and aligned with European educational standards. It reinforces the importance of inclusive, multi-disciplinary approaches in tackling complex social challenges and demonstrates the value of investing in the people who work at the intersection of education and justice. By equipping professionals with the competencies needed to guide vulnerable youth, Montenegro takes a meaningful step toward building a more humane, responsive, and effective correctional education system.



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10.5. DACUM Workshop Report of Greece

DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

The DACUM Workshop in Greece took place on 04.06.2025, between 16.00-18.00, at the University of the Aegean. The workshop's format was blended, including both face-2-face and online participants.

Agenda

The Agenda of the DACUM workshop was structured as follows:

- 16.00 Launch / Welcome
- 16.05 Introduction to CORE-ED Academy project
- 16.15 Presentation of National Mapping
- 17.00 Working in Groups
- 17.30 Discussion
- 17.45 Conclusions/ Feedback
- 18.00 DACUM Workshop Closure – Coffee & Networking

The introductory session included an overview of the workshop agenda and a brief presentation of the CORE-ED Academy project. During the working groups and discussions participants were guided by the researchers and the field experts and focused on: (a) the definition of current duties and tasks at professions in Correctional Systems, (b) the correlation between the duties/ tasks and the necessary skills and competencies. Finally, they put hierarchically the skills and competencies that have emerged during the discussions, reaching the most critical one they would prefer to get trained in.

Participants

A total number of 14 attended the workshop, 5 currently working (workers) in Correctional Systems and 9 future professionals (learners). Two researchers of the UAegean team implemented the presentations and facilitated the workshop.

4 attended online while 10 were present at the DACUM workshop location.

Participants worked in groups, keeping notes in their notebooks and using sticky notes for highlighting skills and competencies.

Organization

The workshop was organized by the project team of the University of the Aegean. At first practical issues were prepared, such as:

- Location/ Room
- Digital equipment for online connection (hybrid form)
- Project workshop materials (notepad with project front page, banner, sticky notes etc.)
- Coffee break

Then, the project team continued with the dissemination of the event through email contacts, social media posts and personal contacts (calls). A registration form was initiated, to have an overall idea of the total number of participants.

Finally, a list of participants was printed, so that the face-to-face attendees could sign, and the online attendees could be noted as “online”. Relevant screenshots and photos were planned to be included in the documentation.



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KEY FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES

The Greek DACUM Workshop offered a structured space for reflective dialogue, comparison, and analysis between professionals currently working in correctional education settings and pre-service professionals exploring career paths in the field. The participants engaged in group-based activities to articulate their understanding of job roles, map responsibilities and competencies, and co-create recommendations for a more responsive and supportive training framework.

1. Current Roles and Challenges in Correctional Education

Professionals currently working in “Second Chance Schools” (S.D.E.) within Greek correctional institutions described their duties as extending far beyond instructional tasks. They often assume multiple roles simultaneously—as teachers, emotional supporters, informal counselors, mediators, and case managers. Key tasks identified include:

- Curriculum delivery adapted to the fluctuating emotional and cognitive readiness of learners.
- Conflict prevention and resolution in a highly sensitive institutional environment.
- Support for mental health and trauma-related needs in the absence of specialized staff.
- Informal mentorship and life-skills coaching.

The need for multidisciplinary competence was emphasized, especially in areas such as trauma-informed teaching, intercultural communication, and crisis response. Professionals also expressed the need for regular psychological supervision and institutional support to manage emotional exhaustion and prevent burnout.

2. Future Professionals’ Perceptions and Gaps

In contrast, many future professionals—education students or early-career teachers—demonstrated a limited understanding of the complexity of correctional environments. Their assumptions about teaching in prisons largely reflected mainstream public school dynamics. They expressed:

- Uncertainty about the structure and demands of correctional education.
- Limited awareness of ethical boundaries, confidentiality protocols, and safety concerns.
- A generalized belief that empathy and standard social skills would be sufficient.

While most showed high motivation and social engagement, they identified a clear need for targeted orientation, hands-on preparation, and exposure to real-world correctional learning environments before entering service.

3. Competency Discrepancies: Current vs. Future Roles

As far as the tasks and duties of current professions are concerned, the following table represents the general input provided by the participants.

Current job	Trainer at SDE in a correctional system	Psychologist
Duties	Teaching, Administrative duties	Psychological Support and Interventions
Tasks	Teaching, Psychological support	Personal or Group Sessions, Psychoeducation



Knowledge	Knowledge of Rules and Policies	Correctional Psychology, Trauma, Addiction
Skills/ competencies	Social Skills	Clinical Work
Behavior	Conflict Management, Programs and Activities Management	Non-Discrimination, Non-Stigmatization
Specific knowledge/skills developed	Specification of my topic to the needs of the learners within the correctional systems	-
Existing training	Private trainings offered by Lifelong Learning Centers	University Classes

Table: Current job duties-tasks-skills description (general overview of participants)

As far as the tasks and duties of future professions are concerned, the following table represents the general input provided by the participants.

Future job	Trainer at SDE in a correctional system	Social Worker
Duties	Teaching, Administrative duties	Prisoners' support
Tasks	Teaching	Not known
Knowledge	Knowledge of teaching field	Social worker knowledge (general)
Skills/ competencies	Collaboration, Social Skills	Social and digital skills
Behavior	Positive attitude towards inclusion and return to society	Empathy
Specific knowledge/skills developed	No specific knowledge/ skills	No specific knowledge/ skills
Existing training	No specific training/ general training programs for teachers	No specific training

Table: Future job duties-tasks-skills description (general overview of participants)

The workshop confirmed that training gaps persist not only at the level of pedagogical technique but also in professional identity, ethical boundaries, and institutional orientation.

4. Priority Skills and Training Needs Identified

Participants collectively ranked the most critical competencies that should be prioritized in pre-service and in-service training. These include:

- **Counseling and Communication Skills:** Active listening, reflection of emotions, motivational support, non-verbal decoding.





- **Intercultural Sensitivity and Diversity Management:** Addressing multicultural challenges, promoting inclusion, and responding to language and identity differences.
- **Mental Health Awareness:** Basic understanding of common psychological conditions in prison settings; referral procedures.
- **Conflict and Anger Management:** Responding to emotional escalations or threats in a de-escalating and constructive manner.
- **Boundary-Setting and Ethical Competence:** Confidentiality, role clarity, and institutional protocols for safeguarding.
- **Self-Awareness and Bias Mitigation:** Identifying internalized stereotypes, stigmas, or emotional triggers in working with incarcerated youth and adults.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The DACUM Workshop held in Greece highlighted both the complexity and transformative potential of correctional education when delivered by well-prepared, emotionally attuned, and ethically grounded professionals. By facilitating structured reflection across different career stages, the workshop uncovered significant gaps between the perceived and actual demands of working in correctional educational settings.

Key themes emerging from the workshop include:

- The multiplicity of roles required in correctional education: educator, social supporter, mental health ally, administrative intermediary.
- A widespread lack of systematic training before entering correctional institutions, especially for teachers and staff in Second Chance Schools.
- A disconnect between theoretical preparation and the lived realities of teaching in confined, high-vulnerability settings.
- A strong desire for collaborative, interdisciplinary support and more visibility for correctional education within mainstream teacher training frameworks.

Conclusions

1. **Institutionalized Professional Preparation Is Urgently Needed** All professionals entering correctional systems—teachers, psychologists, administrators, or social workers—should receive formal training before starting their roles. Such training should be mandatory and competency-based, including simulations, case study discussions, and ethical reflection.
2. **A National Correctional Education Training School Could Fill the Gap** A central institution or program could offer certification, modules, and continuing education tailored to correctional settings, building capacity consistently across Greece.
3. **Correctional Education Must Be Valued and Connected to Society** Education in prisons should be linked to real-life opportunities—vocational qualifications, university access, and social reintegration programs—to make learning meaningful and motivational for emerging adults.
4. **Teachers Require On-Going Psychological Supervision and Peer Support** Preventing burnout and managing emotional strain must be recognized as a systemic need. Supervision, coaching, and inter-vision (peer feedback) should be offered regularly.
5. **Competency Frameworks Must Go Beyond “Soft Skills”** The future of correctional pedagogy lies not just in empathy, but in integrated competencies: trauma-informed teaching, legal knowledge, risk management, digital learning in prisons, and re-entry pedagogy.



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6. **Evaluation and Certification Should Be Systematized** National-level recognition of competencies through micro-credentials or certification would strengthen both professionalism and accountability in the sector.

These conclusions will directly feed into the upcoming phases of WP3 and WP4 of the CORE-ED project, supporting the co-design of new educational programs, short-cycle CPD courses, and the creation of a transnational Correctional Pedagogy Framework for juvenile and emerging adult learners.

Evaluation Summary

Following the workshop, a structured questionnaire was distributed to all participants to gather feedback and assess perceptions of the process and outcomes. Below is a summary of the results.

- 100% rated 5 in the workshop met their expectations
- 94% rated 5 in the workshop overall time provided for the workshop was appropriate
- 100% rated 5 in the workshop satisfied with the organization
- 100% rated 5 in the workshop was productive
- 94% rated 5 in the workshop the time provided for breaks was sufficient
- 91% rated 5 in the workshop the time provided for individual steps, breakout sessions and discussions were sufficient
- 100% rated 5 in the workshop the content was relevant to my field of work



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10.6. DACUM Workshop Report of Romania

The DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop, organized by the West University of Timișoara (UVT) under the CORE-ED Academy initiative, was held to collaboratively identify the core competencies and role characteristics necessary for building a modern, needs-based correctional pedagogy framework. The full-day session followed a structured agenda: it began with a welcome and orientation (09:30–10:30), which included participant introductions, presentation of the CORE-ED project, and a sharing of expectations. The first session (10:30–12:30) focused on mapping current job roles using DACUM methodology—through brainstorming, task identification, and validation. After a short break, the second session (13:00–15:00) was dedicated to defining future job profiles and emerging competency needs. The workshop concluded at 15:30 with a summary of key findings and next steps for curriculum co-production.

A total of 18 participants attended the workshop, representing a wide range of institutions across the juvenile justice, education, and social support sectors in Romania. The institutional breakdown is as follows: Timiș Prefecture – 1 representative (Deputy Prefect); Timiș Directorate of Social Assistance – 1 representative (Director); Timișoara City Hall – Directorate for Education and Health – 1 representative (Department Head); West University of Timișoara (UVT) – 4 participants (1 professor and 3 doctoral students from the Department of Educational Sciences and the Doctoral School of Philosophy, Sociology, and Political Science); Timiș Probation Service – 1 social worker; Buziaș Juvenile Detention Center – 3 educators; Center for Christian Education and Contemporary Culture Areopagus – 1 representative; Mothers' Academy of Timișoara – 1 representative; NGO Child Project UK-Ro – 1 representative; ReCentre Clinic – 1 representative; and LAPSUS Association – 1 representative (a cultural NGO supporting young artists and cultural professionals). This multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral group provided rich insights and practical knowledge, ensuring the curriculum development process is firmly grounded in both institutional realities and regional needs.

CORE-ED Academy is a regional effort to address critical gaps at the intersection of higher education and the juvenile justice system across Romania. Through close collaboration with PACT members—particularly higher education institutions—CORE-ED Academy responds to challenges such as the low competency levels of graduates in adaptive, transdisciplinary approaches; insufficient integration between academic curricula and the needs of correctional systems; and the absence of modern, employment-oriented offers in correctional pedagogy.

The agenda of the DACUM workshop was carefully structured to reflect these regional priorities and to contribute directly to the co-creation of a Joint Correctional Pedagogy Ecosystem, the update of occupational profiles grounded in pedagogy-first principles, and the design of innovative training programs aligned with labour market and EU educational standards.

The event began with a welcome session (09:30–09:40) followed by introductory interviews and a first evaluation session (09:40–10:30). During this segment, participants were introduced to the scope and goals of CORE-ED Academy, including its commitment to bridging educational and correctional policy gaps and fostering resilience in educational systems. Participants shared their professional backgrounds, discussed the relevance of correctional pedagogy in their fields, and expressed expectations for the day's work.

The first working session (10:30–12:30) focused on identifying and analysing the current job role characteristics of professionals working in or alongside the juvenile justice system. Through three collaborative DACUM stages—brainstorming, preliminary chart compilation, and refinement—participants contributed to a shared map of existing tasks, responsibilities, and required competencies in correctional pedagogy.

After a short break (12:30–13:00), the second session (13:00–15:00) focused on defining future job role characteristics. Using the same participatory method, stakeholders anticipated emerging needs in the sector and envisioned how HEIs and civil society can help prepare professionals for evolving roles in juvenile education and reintegration.

The day concluded with a final session (15:00–15:30), where participants reflected on the workshop's findings and discussed next steps in curriculum co-production. These insights will inform the creation of two new educational programs (one at the master's level and one CPD/short-cycle format) and the broader strategic goals of CORE-ED Academy—namely, strengthening research collaboration between universities, correctional services, and NGOs, and aligning regional juvenile justice education with European frameworks.



Introduction

The CORE-ED Academy initiative aims to develop a resilient, inclusive, and evidence-based Correctional Pedagogy Ecosystem across Romania. Its central objective is to align higher education and professional development pathways with the rapidly evolving needs of the juvenile justice system, while responding to pressing regional challenges.

I. Needs-Based Rationale

Through extensive consultations with higher education institutions and correctional stakeholders across Romania, several critical gaps have emerged. These include limited trans-disciplinary competencies among education and justice professionals, poor alignment between academic curricula and the realities of correctional work, and a general lack of awareness and motivation among students to pursue careers in correctional pedagogy. Additionally, there is a clear need for more integration of experiential, digital, and resilience-based learning methods to support both learners and educators operating within complex institutional settings.

II. DACUM Process and Stakeholder Engagement

To address these challenges, the DACUM process was employed as a participatory tool for developing relevant, context-driven curriculum content. The process engaged a diverse group of stakeholders, including prison educators, university faculty, psychologists, probation officers, and correctional professionals, in structured sessions. These engagements validated the curriculum directions proposed and ensured their alignment with EU competency frameworks and correctional education standards.

III. Curriculum Framework and Competency Areas

One of the core objectives was the creation of a participatory Correctional Pedagogy Ecosystem, supported by co-designed frameworks that involve higher education institutions, correctional services, and civil society. This ecosystem will foster stakeholder engagement, participatory curriculum design, and a foundation of educational ethics in closed institutional environments.

A second major focus is the development of a Correctional Pedagogy Competency Strategy. This strategy will serve both initial education and professional upskilling by incorporating key competences at EU level—such as digital, civic, and entrepreneurial skills—alongside pedagogical planning tailored to vulnerable learner populations. The methodology emphasizes transformative and experiential learning approaches.

Another critical component of the project is the validation of updated and emerging occupational profiles relevant to juvenile justice. Two central profiles are being developed: the Correctional Pedagogy Educator and the Youth Justice Education Facilitator. These profiles reflect the evolving demands of the sector and emphasize competencies such as biographical learning facilitation, trauma-aware teaching practices, and support for learner autonomy.

To strengthen professional pathways, the project is also designing two joint educational programs. The first is a master's module titled *"Fundamentals of Correctional Pedagogy,"* aimed at students in relevant fields such as education, psychology, and law. The second is a continuing professional development (CPD) course titled *"Applied Methods in Juvenile Justice Education,"* targeting practitioners already active in the field. Both programs will foster multidisciplinary teamwork, promote innovative practices like gamification, and support critical self-reflection among learners. In parallel, the initiative will build the capacity of HEIs in the region through training-of-trainers schemes and the development of research integration modules. These efforts will enhance institutional readiness to engage in curriculum co-creation, supervise applied research in correctional contexts, and build sustainable partnerships with justice institutions.

Finally, the project will promote ecosystem-wide collaboration by developing digital hubs and joint learning events that connect education providers, correctional authorities, NGOs, and the labour market. These efforts aim to improve cross-sector communication, support project-based learning, and facilitate long-term impact through coordinated stakeholder engagement.

IV. Implementation Plan

The implementation plan unfolds across three phases. In the first year, the focus will be on DACUM validation, organization of stakeholder roundtables, and drafting of the curriculum components. In the second year, the project will pilot the delivery of the HE and CPD courses and organize public hearings to finalise occupational profiles. By the third year, the project aims to integrate these outputs into the formal offerings of HEIs, disseminate findings at the regional level, and contribute to policy alignment with EU education and justice frameworks.



Mapping Current and Future Competency Needs in Correctional Pedagogy

As part of the DACUM workshop organized under the CORE-ED Academy initiative at the West University of Timișoara (UVT), two facilitated group sessions were conducted to analyse the current professional landscape and anticipate future developments in the field of correctional pedagogy and juvenile justice. These sessions were essential in gathering structured, stakeholder-driven input to inform the development of relevant curricula and updated occupational profiles.

Session 1: Mapping the Present – Exploring Current Job Roles

The first group session focused on identifying and analysing the participants' current professional realities. Participants were divided into mixed working groups representing education, social services, juvenile justice, and civil society. The session began with a facilitator-led overview of the activity's purpose and categories of analysis, including duties, tasks, competencies, behaviours, knowledge, and training.

Each group worked collaboratively to fill in a shared matrix designed to capture key elements of their current roles. Through reflective discussion, they listed their core responsibilities and daily activities, discussed the competencies required to perform effectively, and described the behaviours commonly observed or expected in their work. Additionally, they distinguished between general and specific knowledge used in practice and identified the types of training (formal and informal) they had received.

At the end of the session, each group presented their findings to the plenary, highlighting recurring patterns such as the predominance of informal learning, the lack of standard pedagogical training for professionals in correctional settings, and the need for more trauma-informed approaches. The session successfully revealed the diversity and fragmentation of current practices and training routes across institutions, providing a solid foundation for identifying strategic areas of curricular reform.

Session 2: Envisioning the Future – Anticipating Evolving Job Roles in Correctional Pedagogy

The second group session invited participants to shift their focus from the present to the future, using a structured visioning exercise to anticipate changes in their fields over the next five to ten years. Building on the outcomes of the first session, participants explored how their duties, tasks, and responsibilities may evolve in response to regional reforms, technological shifts, and European policy developments in juvenile justice and education.

Each group completed a future-focused version of the earlier matrix, this time projecting what new duties and tasks may emerge, what skills and competencies will be required, and how professional behaviour, attitudes, and values may shift. They also identified anticipated knowledge needs and proposed the kinds of training and educational offerings that would best prepare future professionals in the field.

During the plenary sharing phase, participants emphasized the growing need for cross-sectoral collaboration, the use of digital tools in learning and rehabilitation, and the integration of pedagogical and psychological approaches in juvenile justice work. They also pointed to the necessity of embedding reflective practice and emotional resilience in training programs, considering the psychological demands of working in closed or correctional environments.

This session generated valuable forward-looking insights that will inform the design of the CORE-ED Academy's joint educational programs and the formulation of a Correctional Pedagogy Competency Strategy. The envisioned roles and required competencies gathered during this session will be cross-validated through upcoming stakeholder hearings and further consultations.

Outcomes from Group Work Sessions

The two group sessions conducted during the DACUM workshop successfully generated valuable qualitative data and insights that directly contribute to the development of a Correctional Pedagogy Ecosystem and inform curriculum co-design under the CORE-ED Academy framework. The following key outcomes were identified:



Outcomes from Session 1: Mapping Current Job Roles

1. Detailed Mapping of Current Professional Realities

Participants identified a wide range of duties and tasks currently performed by professionals working in or with juvenile justice systems, including formal education delivery, informal mentoring, crisis intervention, and administrative responsibilities.

2. Identification of Core Competencies and Behavioural Patterns

The exercise revealed essential cross-cutting competencies, such as communication, empathy, conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and the ability to work in high-stress environments. Participants noted that while technical skills vary across roles, behavioural competencies are central to effective practice in correctional education.

3. Documentation of Knowledge and Training Gaps

Participants distinguished between general knowledge (e.g., developmental psychology, legal frameworks) and specific knowledge (e.g., institutional procedures, trauma-informed practice). There was consensus on the lack of targeted pedagogical training available to professionals entering correctional environments, with many relying on experiential learning or ad-hoc training opportunities.

4. Emergence of Informal Learning as a Primary Learning Pathway

Many professionals reported acquiring key skills and coping strategies on the job, due to limited availability of structured training. This underlined the need to formalize and professionalize correctional pedagogy education pathways.

Sample of the DACUM's outcome from 4 psychologists' responses to current duties, tasks, competencies, and specific knowledge and existing training

Current duties	Current tasks	Current skills/competencies	Current behaviour	General knowledge	Specific knowledge	Existing training
Psychological assessment of inmates	Conduct clinical interviews Administer psychological tests and questionnaires Observe inmate behavior Record findings in reports	Psychological evaluation techniques Interviewing skills Test administration and interpretation Clinical observation and analysis	Attention to detail Ethical and confidential approach Patience and active listening	Principles of psychology Basics of mental health assessment Ethical standards in psychological evaluation	Use of standardized psychological tests Assessment of risk factors (e.g., suicide, aggression)	University degree in Psychology Certification in psychological assessment Continuing education in forensic and clinical evaluation tools
Coordinating and assigning inmates to suitable job	Match inmates to suitable job	Organizational and planning skills	Fair and impartial attitude	Basic labor and prison regulations	Penitentiary work assignment procedures	Introductory training for prison staff



signing inmates to work activities	roles based on profile and eligibility Maintain rosters and schedules Coordinate with work supervisors Resolve conflicts or issues related to work assignments	Decision-making under constraints Communication and interpersonal skills Ability to assess work capacity and motivation	Structured and detail-oriented Respectful communication with inmates	Inmate rights and duties	Risk assessment related to inmate work placement Internal protocols for labor coordination	
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Current Psychologist's Job Roles in Pedagogy Programme

The psychologist's work in correctional settings—assessing inmates' mental health, behavior, and learning readiness—is directly relevant to a correctional pedagogy program. Their assessments help identify emotional or cognitive barriers to learning, allowing educators to adapt instruction to individual needs. A well-designed pedagogy program should therefore include basic psychological principles, trauma-informed approaches, and collaborative practices between educators and psychologists. This ensures that learning in corrections is not only educational but also rehabilitative, addressing both behavioral change and personal development. Integrating psychology strengthens the educator's capacity to engage vulnerable learners and contributes to a holistic, human-centered approach to correctional education.

Current Educator's Job Roles in Pedagogy Programme

The prison educator plays a central role in implementing correctional pedagogy, acting as both an instructor and a facilitator of personal development. Beyond delivering content, educators in prisons must adapt their methods to diverse learning needs, manage complex group dynamics, and foster motivation in often disengaged learners. A correctional pedagogy program should prepare educators with skills in differentiated instruction, emotional intelligence, and classroom management in secure settings. It should also emphasize rehabilitation-oriented teaching, where education contributes to desistance, reintegration, and self-efficacy. As frontline practitioners, prison educators are key to making learning meaningful and transformative within the correctional environment.

Current Social Worker's Roles in Pedagogy Programme

The social assistant in a correctional setting supports inmates' rehabilitation by addressing social, familial, and reintegration challenges. Their role is essential in identifying barriers to learning, coordinating support services, and preparing individuals for life after release. A correctional pedagogy program

should include content on social assessment, case management, and cross-sector collaboration, equipping future professionals to work alongside educators and psychologists. By integrating social assistance into the educational process, the programme reinforces a holistic approach to rehabilitation, where learning is connected to social reintegration and long-term personal stability.

Current Employer / Work Assignment Coordinator's Roles in Pedagogy Programme The employer or prison-based work coordinator plays a key role in linking education to employability by assigning inmates to work activities that support skill development and social responsibility. Their insights into labour demands and individual capabilities help align learning pathways with real-world opportunities. A correctional pedagogy program should therefore promote understanding of vocational education, soft skill development, and the role of structured work in rehabilitation. Including employers in the educational ecosystem ensures that learning is practical, purposeful, and contributes to reducing recidivism through improved job readiness.

Outcomes from Session 2: Envisioning Future Job Roles

1. Projection of Emerging Job Duties and Specializations

Participants foresaw the expansion of job roles to include digital learning facilitation, reintegration planning, restorative justice practices, and personalized educational interventions tailored to the needs of incarcerated youth.

2. Definition of Future Competency Needs

Key emerging competencies included interdisciplinary collaboration, digital literacy, use of innovative pedagogical methods (e.g., gamification), ethical decision-making, trauma-sensitive education, and the ability to guide self-reflection and biographical learning.

3. Recognition of Shifting Professional Behaviours and Values

Participants anticipated a growing need for emotionally resilient, flexible professionals who can balance structure with empathy, act as role models, and co-create learning journeys with young people in custodial settings.

4. Identification of Future Knowledge Domains

New knowledge areas were highlighted, such as European correctional education policy, digital tools for distance learning in prisons, evaluation methodologies for pedagogical impact, and applied research in desistance and rehabilitation.

5. Recommendations for Future Training and Educational Programs

Participants proposed the development of structured educational programs that are modular, practice-based, and adaptable to different roles within the correctional eco-system. Emphasis was placed on joint training schemes between HEIs and correctional institutions, mentorship models, and the need for recognition frameworks (e.g., micro-credentials) for continuing professional development.

Cross-Session Impact

The outcomes of both sessions form the foundation for updating occupational profiles, developing a Correctional Pedagogy Competency Strategy, and designing two joint educational programs—one at the master's level and one short CPD course. The sessions also strengthened stakeholder ownership of the curriculum co-design process and reinforced the relevance of the CORE-ED Academy initiative within the regional policy and labour market context.

Sample of the DACUM's outcome from 4 psychologists' responses to future duties, tasks, competencies, and specific knowledge

Future duties	Future tasks	Future skills/ competencies	Future behaviour	General knowledge	Specific knowledge
Implement trauma-informed addiction therapy	- Deliver addiction therapy that acknowledges trauma as a root cause - Adapt therapeutic approaches to individual trauma histories	- Proficiency in trauma-informed care principles - Ability to integrate substance use treatment with trauma therapy	- Empathetic and non-judgmental - Trauma-sensitive communication - Flexible and client-centered approach - Ethical and culturally responsive in treatment delivery	- Fundamentals of trauma and post-traumatic stress	- Models of trauma-informed care - Evidence-based therapies for co-occurring trauma and addiction
Conduct risk assessments for substance-related behavioral issues	- Identify high-risk inmates for targeted interventions - Document findings and contribute to case management decisions	- Proficiency in using validated risk assessment tools	- Objective and evidence-based - Clear communicator under complex or sensitive conditions	- Basics of criminology and behavioral risk - Impact of substance use on mental health and behavior	- Risk assessment models for substance-related disorders - Co-occurring disorders and behavioral indicators - Institutional protocols for managing at-risk individuals

Connecting Future Competencies to Correctional Pedagogy: Focus on Recidivism Prevention, Employability, and Soft Skills

A future-oriented correctional pedagogy program must be designed to address two critical outcomes of incarceration: preventing recidivism and supporting successful reintegration through employment and life skills. The evolving duties of correctional staff—such as assessing behavioural risk, guiding personal development, and preparing inmates for post-release life—demand an educational model that is both holistic and personalized.

Professionals working in this space (educators, psychologists, social workers, and work coordinators) must be trained to recognize and respond to the factors that influence reoffending, including low self-

efficacy, lack of social support, poor decision-making, and unemployment. Future tasks such as conducting risk assessments, delivering trauma-informed addiction therapy, and aligning education with job readiness require an integrated skillset that combines behavioural insight, pedagogical flexibility, and vocational orientation.

A multidimensional correctional pedagogy program should therefore focus on:

- **Teaching soft skills** such as communication, problem-solving, self-regulation, and teamwork—essential for both workplace success and personal stability.
- **Using experiential methods**, including serious games, simulations, and real-life scenarios, to develop critical thinking and decision-making abilities.
- **Designing individual learning pathways** based on psychological assessments and reintegration goals, co-developed with professionals across disciplines.
- **Linking education with labour market opportunities** by involving employers in curriculum planning and by embedding transferable competencies into learning.

By aligning educational content with behavioural development and employability, the program directly supports recidivism prevention and builds a bridge between custody and community reintegration. Ultimately, it shifts correctional education from a remedial approach to a transformative framework that empowers individuals to rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose.

Data Analysis and Future Recommendations:

A differentiated TNA emerged from the DACUM data analysis based on age groups. This ensures that correctional educators at all career stages are empowered to implement the multidimensional pedagogy in prison effectively. Beginners need foundational knowledge, emotional preparedness, and adaptive teaching tools. Senior staff require advanced content, leadership capacity, and skills to drive systemic change. Both levels benefit from reflective practice and interdisciplinary collaboration as central pillars of their development.

A one-size-fits-all training approach is insufficient. This Training Needs Analysis identifies the distinct learning and development requirements of two key educator profiles: Beginners (younger correctional workers) and Senior prison educators.

1. Beginners / Younger Correctional Workers Profile:

Typically early in their careers, these educators may have formal teaching qualifications but limited exposure to correctional environments, vulnerable learners, and interdisciplinary teamwork.

Training Needs:

- **Introduction to Correctional Education**

Understanding the purpose, philosophy, and goals of education in a prison setting.

- **Foundations of Trauma-Informed Practice**

Basic concepts of trauma, its effects on learning, and how to create psychologically safe classrooms.

- **Behavioural Management Skills**

Entry-level techniques for de-escalation, communication with high-risk learners, and managing classroom dynamics.

- **Substance Use Awareness**

Introductory understanding of how addiction impacts cognition, motivation, and behaviour.

- **Soft Skills Facilitation**

Training on how to teach communication, emotional regulation, and decision-making through participatory methods.

- **Use of Serious Games and Active Methods**

Introduction to gamified learning and interactive strategies to increase engagement.

- **Reflective Practice and Self-Care**

Building emotional resilience, boundary setting, and stress management to prevent burnout.

Preferred Methods:

Workshops, simulations, mentoring from experienced staff, structured onboarding, and scenario-based learning.

2. Senior Correctional Educators Profile:

Experienced professionals with deep institutional knowledge and familiarity with inmate populations. Often involved in mentoring or curriculum planning.

Training Needs:

- **Advanced Trauma-Informed Pedagogy**

Deepening understanding of complex trauma and developing customized learning pathways for high-risk inmates.

- **Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders**

Advanced insight into how mental health and addiction intersect with learning and behaviour.

- **Leadership in Multidimensional Pedagogy**

Training to lead interdisciplinary teams, integrate education with psychological and social support, and mentor junior staff.

- **Curriculum Co-Design and Evaluation**

Skills in co-developing and evaluating flexible, modular educational content aligned with rehabilitation goals.

- **Advanced Classroom Innovation**

Use of serious games not only as learning tools but also for assessing social-emotional development and behavioural change.

- **Policy and Ethical Leadership**

Familiarity with national and European correctional education frameworks and the ethical implications of educational work in custodial settings.

Preferred Methods:

Peer learning communities, advanced CPD modules, action research, policy workshops, and leadership coaching.

Workshop Conclusion

The DACUM and training workshop concluded with a shared sense of purpose and momentum toward redefining correctional education as a transformative and rehabilitative process. Through collaborative analysis and structured reflection, participants identified both current and future competencies required across roles in the correctional ecosystem—including educators, psychologists, social workers, and employers. Discussions highlighted the urgent need for a multidimensional pedagogy in prison, one that integrates trauma-informed approaches, supports behavioural and emotional development, and prepares inmates for reintegration through education, soft skills, and employability training.

Participants emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and flexible, context-sensitive curricula that respond to the realities of prison work. The differentiated needs of beginner and senior staff were acknowledged, reinforcing the call for tailored professional development pathways. The insights gathered will directly inform the design of correctional pedagogy programs, training modules, and occupational profiles under the CORE-ED Academy initiative. As a next step, this collective input will be synthesized into curriculum frameworks and competency strategies to support systemic change in correctional education across the region.