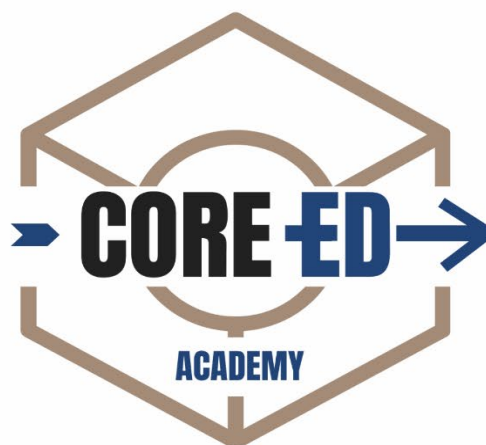




D3.5 – A Correctional Pedagogy Competencies Strategy with "pedagogy-first" practices to support the juvenile justice sector growth and resilience

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Executive summary

Deliverable 3.5 presents the CORE-ED ACADEMY Correctional Pedagogy Competencies Strategy, designed to support the growth and resilience of the juvenile justice sector in the Western Balkans beneficiary countries through a “pedagogy-first” approach. The Strategy is the WP3 capstone output that translates the project’s competence work and country-level inputs into an implementable package addressed to competent authorities, higher education institutions, and system actors. It provides a coherent pathway for professionalising correctional pedagogy by aligning higher education investments, continuing professional development, governance routines, and evidence-based improvement mechanisms.

The Strategy is built on two complementary components. The first component is a harmonised set of national policy recommendations for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo. These recommendations are designed to be implementation-anchored rather than generic: each one identifies practical measures that can be adopted through clear institutional levers, with higher education positioned as the central engine of professionalisation. Across the four countries, the recommendations converge around a common reform architecture that includes competency-aligned higher education curricula (including mandatory core content where applicable), institutionalised continuing professional development and micro-credentials with certification and tracking, university-enabled research-to-practice evidence loops, formal

interagency collaboration and multidisciplinary case governance routines, digital and data-enabled pedagogy standards with safeguards, and the integration of safeguarding, inclusion, accountability and ESG-aligned governance into competence development and service delivery. While each country emphasises different constraints—ranging from regulatory and infrastructure needs to coordination and CPD participation—the Strategy demonstrates that the reform logic is structurally shared and can therefore be advanced through a common backbone with national adaptation.

The second component is a toolbox of inspiring practices drawn from European and international experience, compiled to make the Strategy operational rather than purely programmatic. These practices demonstrate concrete models of university–justice cooperation, pedagogy-first learning design, structured continuing education and practitioner upskilling, partnership governance toolkits, curriculum co-creation methods, and distance/blended learning approaches suitable for custodial and detention environments. In D3.5, the inspiring practices are not presented as a general catalogue; they are mapped to the Strategy’s implementation levers so that stakeholders can immediately see how tested models can support adoption of the recommendations in Western Balkans settings, including prison schools, juvenile facilities, probation-linked education, and HE-provider partnerships.

To support adoption, the Strategy includes an implementation roadmap and a minimum monitoring framework. The roadmap proposes a prioritised sequence structured into three tiers. Tier 1 (0–12 months) focuses on establishing the competence-and-learning architecture through competence standards, curricula integration, and certified CPD/micro-credential pathways. Tier 2 (6–18 months) consolidates interagency governance routines and evidence loops that keep competence development active and continuously updated. Tier 3 (12–24 months) scales reforms through digital standards, safeguarding-by-design, inclusion, and enabling infrastructure investments where relevant. The monitoring framework proposes a minimum set of indicators that countries can apply to demonstrate measurable progress, including uptake of competence-aligned curricula, CPD participation and certification rates, compliance with multidisciplinary routines, production and use of evidence outputs, and adoption of digital and safeguarding standards.

Overall, D3.5 delivers a practical Strategy for moving from fragmented training and role-dependent practice toward a resilient competence ecosystem for juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy. By combining national policy recommendations with a transfer-oriented inspiring practices toolbox and a structured roadmap, the deliverable supports authorities and institutions in implementing competence-based professionalisation through higher education reforms, continuous learning, evidence-informed practice, and accountable governance. Purpose, scope and position of D3.2 in WP3

Deliverable 3.5, “A Correctional Pedagogy Competencies Strategy with ‘pedagogy-first’ practices to support the juvenile justice sector growth and resilience,” is the strategic output of Work Package 3 and the mechanism through which WP3’s analytical and competency-building work is

converted into an operational, investable, and transferable roadmap for the Western Balkans beneficiary countries. Its purpose is to provide competent authorities, higher education institutions, and system actors in juvenile justice with a structured Strategy that (i) establishes a coherent direction for competency-based professionalisation in correctional pedagogy, (ii) articulates implementation-anchored policy recommendations, and (iii) offers a curated set of inspiring practices that demonstrate how “pedagogy-first” interventions can be embedded into correctional systems through higher-education-enabled solutions.

The core function of D3.5 is therefore translational: it bridges the “what is needed” (competency and profile definitions) with the “how to implement” (policy levers, institutional routines, and replicable models). In WP3 terms, the Strategy builds on the identification and validation of sectoral occupational profiles (captured through the WP3 profiling and validation process) and on the competency architecture developed under WP3, and it channels these results into concrete actions that can be adopted by ministries, prison/juvenile justice administrations, probation services, higher education providers, and relevant training bodies. In this way, D3.5 ensures that the outputs of WP3 do not remain descriptive deliverables, but become an applied strategy capable of supporting system change, workforce development, and resilience across national contexts.

The scope of D3.5 is explicitly multi-level and comparative. At the national level, it consolidates a set of policy recommendations addressed to competent authorities and system actors in each of the four Western Balkans beneficiary countries. These recommendations are deliberately framed to avoid generic policy language and to remain implementation-anchored, meaning that each recommendation is designed to be actionable, attributable to identifiable system actors, and linked to higher education as a primary lever for professionalisation. In practice, this means that recommendations are structured around higher education investments and governance choices that can be implemented through curricula reform aligned with competencies, continuing professional development pathways and micro-credentials, research centres and evidence loops connecting practice to learning, interagency collaboration and decision-making routines, digital and data-enabled pedagogy, safeguards and inclusion mechanisms, and ESG alignment and accountability. This framing reflects WP3’s overall ambition to modernise correctional pedagogy through competence-based, evidence-informed, and ethically grounded professional practice.

At the comparative and regional level, D3.5 functions as a shared strategic reference for the consortium and stakeholder ecosystem by identifying cross-country patterns, shared bottlenecks, and common implementation pathways that can be pursued in parallel across the Western Balkans. The Strategy therefore supports convergence of practice and standards without imposing a one-size-fits-all model, by providing a structured menu of policy and institutional options that can be adapted to national legal frameworks, institutional capacities, and existing training ecosystems. The Strategy is designed to be used not only for immediate project implementation and curriculum design, but also as a longer-term reference for interagency coordination and sustainable workforce development beyond the project lifecycle.

A defining feature of D3.5, and a key element of its position in WP3, is the integration of “pedagogy-first” inspiring practices. Beyond policy recommendations, the deliverable includes a minimum set of inspiring practices that exemplify implementable pedagogical interventions, organisational routines, and higher-education-enabled solutions that can be replicated across partner countries. These practices operationalise the Strategy by showing how higher education institutions can act as research and development poles for the correctional/juvenile justice sector, supporting practice improvement through structured partnerships, evidence-informed teaching and training, and practical models such as prison–university collaborations, structured professional development systems, and education programmes with demonstrable rehabilitative value. The purpose of this component is not descriptive benchmarking, but enabling transfer: providing partner countries with concrete models and implementation logic that can be adapted to prison schools, juvenile facilities, probation-linked education, and wider community reintegration settings.

Within WP3’s internal logic, D3.5 is positioned after the profiling, validation, and competency-definition work and before the subsequent project actions that require a strategic framework for implementation. It is the WP3 output that consolidates the deliverables of analysis and co-design into a clear direction for action, setting out both what must be done and how it can be done through higher education, continuous learning, governance routines, and evidence-based practice. For that reason, D3.5 is designed as a public-facing report (aligned with WP3 deliverable metadata in the project proposal), readable by policy audiences while remaining technically grounded in WP3 evidence and outputs, and structured to support immediate uptake and long-term sustainability of correctional pedagogy competence development in the Western Balkans.

2. Methodology

2.1 Overall approach and methodological logic

D3.5 was developed as an applied strategy document rather than a descriptive inventory. The methodological logic was to move from validated needs and competency gaps, to implementation-ready policy recommendations, and then to practical operationalisation through inspiring “pedagogy-first” practices that can be adapted to Western Balkans contexts. In other words, the Strategy is intentionally structured as a translation mechanism: it transforms country-level inputs into a coherent set of measures that can be acted upon through higher education reforms, continuing professional development systems, governance routines, and evidence loops, while also providing concrete models that demonstrate how these measures function in real settings.

2.2 Sources of evidence and inputs used for D3.5

The deliverable is based on two primary source streams collected through the consortium. The first stream consists of national sets of policy recommendations from each Western Balkans beneficiary country. These recommendations were drafted by the respective country leads and

partners, then shared with the coordinator for consolidation. The country inputs include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Albania, each reflecting national context, system needs, and actionable proposals, while aligning to the project's "pedagogy-first" framing and higher-education-enabled professionalisation.

The second stream is the inspiring practices pack compiled to support transfer and operationalisation. This pack contains practice descriptions that are already structured in a way that supports strategic use, typically including a short problem statement or rationale, objectives, implementation process, results, and transferability considerations. These descriptions allow the Strategy to go beyond "what should be done" and to show "how it can be done" through concrete institutional models and routines.

2.3 Consolidation and harmonisation procedure

To ensure that D3.5 functions as a single coherent Strategy, the country recommendations were consolidated through an editorial harmonisation procedure.

First, all country recommendations were collected and reviewed for completeness and minimum coverage, ensuring that each country contributes a core set of actionable recommendations addressed to competent authorities and system actors.

Second, recommendations were standardised into a shared presentation format to ensure comparability across countries. This harmonisation is necessary because national submissions vary in drafting style and level of detail: some countries provide recommendations already written in an implementation template (policy levers, rationale, implementation actions, HE investment link, indicator), while others provide broader strategic text or recommendations framed as thematic sections. The harmonisation step converts these differences into a consistent "Strategy-ready" structure while preserving each country's substance and contextual specificity.

Third, the consolidated set was screened for duplication, internal consistency, and implementability. Where two recommendations overlapped in objective but differed in mechanism, the consolidation retained both when they represent distinct policy instruments; where they were functionally identical, they were merged without losing key national details.

2.4 Analytical framework for structuring recommendations

After consolidation, recommendations were organised using a common analytical framework focused on implementation levers, explicitly anchored to higher education investment and pedagogy-first professionalisation. Each recommendation was assessed and tagged according to the lever(s) it activates. Across the country documents, the dominant levers repeatedly appear in an internally consistent manner: competency-aligned higher education curricula, CPD and micro-credentials, research and evidence loops, interagency governance and coordinated case work, digital and data-enabled pedagogy with safeguards, inclusion, and ESG accountability. This lever-based organisation is not cosmetic; it is used to ensure that the Strategy can be implemented through identifiable institutions and instruments rather than remaining aspirational.

A second analytical pass focused on measurability and accountability. Many national recommendations already include proposed indicators or measurable outcomes, such as completion rates of core modules, CPD uptake, adoption of protocols, quality of documentation, and case governance routines. These were extracted and then consolidated into a common monitoring logic that supports later sections of D3.5 on implementation and evaluation.

2.5 Selection and integration of inspiring practices

The inspiring practices were treated as an operationalisation instrument and not as a general literature review. The methodology for integrating practices into D3.5 followed three steps.

First, practices were screened for relevance to correctional pedagogy and juvenile justice professionalisation, with preference given to models that demonstrate a direct role for higher education institutions, structured training pathways, certified learning, or evidence-informed practice improvement.

Second, practices were examined for transferability, focusing on what makes a practice replicable across different legal and institutional contexts. The practice descriptions already provide transferability elements, typically specifying enabling conditions such as collaboration with academic institutions, modular design, mentoring structures, digital tools, and partnership arrangements.

Third, practices were mapped to the same implementation levers used for the policy recommendations. This mapping ensures that the “practice toolbox” directly supports the recommendations, allowing the Strategy to show, for each lever, concrete examples of how institutions can implement it in real settings.

2.6 Drafting, internal review, and quality assurance

The drafting process follows a structured write–review–revise cycle. The coordinator prepared the integrated draft by combining harmonised national recommendations with the inspiring practices toolbox and by adding cross-country synthesis, implementation logic, and monitoring elements. National partners’ inputs remain identifiable at the country level, while the overall Strategy is written as a single deliverable with consistent terminology, style, and structure.

Internal review is then conducted by checking (i) coherence with the project framing and deliverable scope, (ii) completeness of country coverage, (iii) implementability and clarity of recommendations, and (iv) consistency between recommendations and the inspiring practices presented as operational supports. Where needed, recommendations are refined for precision, feasibility, and alignment with the higher-education-enabled “pedagogy-first” approach that the Strategy is designed to promote.

3. Strategic context and rationale

3.1 Why a Correctional Pedagogy Competencies Strategy is needed now

Across the Western Balkans beneficiary countries, juvenile justice and correctional practice are being asked to deliver outcomes that are inherently educational and rehabilitative, while the systems that should enable those outcomes remain uneven in professional preparation, coordination, and continuous learning. The country inputs converge on a shared diagnosis: practice depends heavily on individual capacity and local arrangements rather than a stable competence ecosystem that produces, refreshes, and verifies professional capability over time. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the recommendations explicitly link service quality and rehabilitation outcomes to the absence of a mandatory competence-based foundation in higher education and to weak interagency decision routines that undermine consistent casework. Montenegro's recommendations similarly locate the bottleneck in a fragmented professionalisation architecture, including limited structured CPD participation, insufficient institutionalised standards for pedagogical practice, and gaps in coordination mechanisms that should ensure continuity of rehabilitation and education work across actors. Kosovo's recommendations frame the same structural issue through the need for a unified competence framework, better-aligned university curricula, and a professional development ecosystem that is recognised, measurable, and embedded into institutional routines rather than delivered as ad hoc training. Albania's strategic text highlights systemic constraints that directly affect implementation quality, including institutional capacity and infrastructure constraints, the need for more robust inter-institutional cooperation, and the necessity to professionalise staff capabilities through structured development and clearer operational standards.

This shared context is the rationale for D3.5. The Strategy is needed because professional capability in correctional pedagogy cannot be improved sustainably through isolated training events. What is required is a competence-based system that begins in higher education, continues through certified professional development, is reinforced through interagency governance routines, and is continually improved through evidence loops and measured accountability. Without that ecosystem, reforms remain vulnerable to staff turnover, uneven implementation, and inconsistent service quality across institutions and regions.

3.2 The “pedagogy-first” rationale: from control-centred practice to capability-centred practice

The Strategy adopts a “pedagogy-first” lens because juvenile justice growth and resilience depend on how effectively the system can teach, coach, rehabilitate, and reintegrate, not only how it can control. “Pedagogy-first” in this deliverable is not a rhetorical preference; it is a professionalisation principle. It means that educational practice, developmental approaches, and rehabilitative methodologies must be treated as core competencies for the workforce, supported by formal learning outcomes, practice standards, and continuous competence verification. The country inputs repeatedly frame professional improvement in exactly these terms: competency-aligned curricula, structured CPD and micro-credentials, mentoring and supervision routines,

multi-disciplinary practice, and the integration of digital and evidence-informed methods into everyday professional work.

The “pedagogy-first” approach is also the reason why higher education is placed at the centre of implementation. Several national inputs propose that universities do not only deliver initial education, but also function as system enablers: hosting evidence units, delivering micro-credentials, operating practice-research feedback loops, and building structured partnerships with justice institutions to ensure practice continuously improves. Bosnia and Herzegovina explicitly proposes a university-hosted evidence and research function linked to practice improvement and measurable indicators, and it links professional development to protected time and institutional incentives. Montenegro and Kosovo similarly emphasise the need to formalise continuing learning through recognised pathways and to ensure that competence development is institutionalised rather than dependent on individual motivation or donor cycles.

3.3 How D3.5 fits within WP3 and what it operationalises

Within WP3, D3.5 is positioned as the strategic bridge between profiling/competency definition and implementation. WP3 produces the technical and evidence base for professionalisation by clarifying the occupational reality of correctional/juvenile justice roles and translating those realities into a competence architecture. D3.5 then consolidates that evidence into a Strategy that can be acted upon by competent authorities and system actors. This is why the deliverable is designed around implementation levers rather than thematic discussion. The policy recommendations are framed to be “implementation-anchored” to higher education investments and to professionalisation instruments that have a realistic pathway to adoption: curricula reform aligned with competencies, CPD and micro-credentials, research centres and evidence loops, interagency governance routines, digital and data-enabled pedagogy, safeguards and inclusion measures, and ESG alignment/accountability mechanisms. These levers appear consistently across the national inputs and form the backbone of the Strategy’s internal structure.

Crucially, D3.5 does not stop at recommendations. Its position in WP3 is also to provide an operational toolbox, so that partners and stakeholders can implement reforms with reference to tested models rather than starting from zero. This is the role of the inspiring practices component. The inspiring practices pack compiles implementable examples of higher-education-enabled solutions and structured pedagogical interventions, presented with elements that support transferability and adaptation. In D3.5, these practices are not presented as a standalone catalogue; they are intended to support the recommendations by demonstrating what works in practice, under what conditions, and how similar routines and partnerships can be built in Western Balkans settings.

3.4 Strategic intent of D3.5: implementability, measurability, and transfer

The guiding intent of D3.5 is to make correctional pedagogy professionalisation implementable, measurable, and transferable. Implementability is ensured by framing recommendations as institutional actions with identifiable system owners and clear higher-education links, rather than broad aspirations. Measurability is supported by the presence—already visible in several national

inputs—of proposed indicators and accountability mechanisms, such as completion rates for core modules, CPD uptake, compliance with interagency case routines, and adoption of digital standards and safeguarding measures. Transfer is enabled through the inspiring practices toolbox, which provides concrete operational models that can be adapted to national contexts, including prison schools, juvenile facilities, probation-linked education, and university–system partnerships.

On this basis, the Strategy sets a shared direction for the Western Balkans while preserving national specificity. It creates a coherent pathway from competence definition to systemic adoption, using higher education as the central engine of professionalisation and resilience in juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy.

4. Strategic objectives and guiding principles

4.1 Strategic objectives of D3.5

D3.5 pursues a set of objectives that convert the “pedagogy-first” rationale into an implementable regional strategy for the Western Balkans beneficiary countries. The objectives are intentionally framed at system level, because the main constraint identified across country inputs is not the absence of isolated training opportunities, but the absence of a stable competence ecosystem that produces, refreshes, and verifies professional capability through higher education, continuing professional development, interagency routines, and evidence-based improvement cycles.

The first objective is to establish competence-based professionalisation as a common standard for correctional pedagogy and juvenile justice practice, ensuring that key roles and functions are anchored to clearly defined competencies and learning outcomes. This includes the translation of competency requirements into higher education curricula and into structured professional development pathways that are recognised, assessed, and documented rather than delivered informally.

The second objective is to position higher education institutions as enabling actors for system development, not only as degree providers. The Strategy aims to strengthen the role of universities in designing and delivering competency-aligned curricula, providing micro-credentials and CPD pathways, supporting practice through research and evidence loops, and institutionalising partnerships with juvenile justice actors. This objective is explicitly aligned with the country recommendations that call for competency-aligned curricula, university-led evidence units, structured training ecosystems, and formalised collaboration models.

The third objective is to embed “pedagogy-first” practice into organisational routines and interagency governance. The Strategy aims to ensure that educational and rehabilitative methodologies are integrated into everyday casework through structured decision routines, multi-disciplinary practice, and shared accountability mechanisms. This objective reflects

recurring country-level emphasis on coordinated case management, interagency collaboration, and standardised protocols that make practice consistent and resilient to staff turnover.

The fourth objective is to mainstream digital and data-enabled pedagogy in a safeguarded way. The Strategy supports the adoption of digital tools, learning platforms, and data-informed practice as part of competency development and service delivery, while ensuring safeguards, inclusion, and ethical compliance. This is reflected in national recommendations that call for digital standards, online learning pathways, and improved evidence and monitoring mechanisms.

The fifth objective is to strengthen accountability, inclusion, and ESG alignment in correctional pedagogy professionalisation. The Strategy aims to ensure that competence development and practice reforms incorporate safeguarding, non-discrimination, and measurable accountability, including indicators that allow competent authorities and institutions to monitor implementation and outcomes. Several country recommendations already incorporate measurable targets and accountability mechanisms, which the Strategy consolidates into a coherent monitoring logic.

The sixth objective is to support transfer and scaling through inspiring practices. D3.5 explicitly operationalises reform by linking recommendations to a toolbox of inspiring practices that demonstrate implementable “pedagogy-first” interventions and higher-education-enabled partnership models that can be replicated and adapted across countries.

4.2 Guiding principles

To ensure that D3.5 remains usable by policy and implementation audiences, the Strategy is guided by a set of principles that inform how recommendations are formulated and how inspiring practices are selected and presented.

The first principle is implementability. Recommendations must be designed as actionable measures, attributable to identifiable system actors, feasible within institutional constraints, and structured around clear policy instruments rather than general aspirations. This principle reflects the explicit consortium decision to avoid generic recommendations and to ensure visible anchoring to higher education investments and professionalisation levers.

The second principle is competency alignment. All proposed measures are expected to strengthen the link between required professional competencies and the mechanisms through which competencies are developed, assessed, and refreshed—particularly through curricula reform, CPD pathways, micro-credentials, supervision and mentoring routines, and practice standards.

The third principle is higher-education enablement. D3.5 assumes that sustainable professionalisation requires universities to function as competence “system nodes”: producing competence-aligned learning, hosting research and evidence functions, delivering accredited CPD, and partnering with system actors to close the gap between theory and practice.

The fourth principle is system coherence through governance. Competence development and pedagogy-first practice cannot be sustained without interagency coordination, shared protocols,

and organisational routines that integrate educational and rehabilitative work into case management and institutional decision-making. The Strategy therefore treats governance as a necessary enabling condition, not as a separate reform line.

The fifth principle is evidence orientation. Where possible, recommendations are tied to measurable indicators and supported by evidence loops. This principle is reinforced through the inspiring practices toolbox, which prioritises models with clear implementation processes, observable outputs, and demonstrable lessons for adaptation.

The sixth principle is safeguarding and inclusion. Reforms in juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy must embed safeguards for vulnerable groups, ensure equitable access to learning and support, and protect rights and dignity in both institutional and community-based settings. This principle is particularly relevant when adopting digital tools and data-enabled practices.

The seventh principle is ESG alignment and accountability. The Strategy recognises that modern system development is increasingly assessed through transparency, accountability, and responsible governance, and therefore promotes measures that improve monitoring, reporting, institutional responsibility, and ethical compliance in competence development and service delivery.

4.3 How these objectives and principles structure the remainder of the Strategy

On the basis of the objectives and guiding principles above, the remainder of D3.5 is structured around two complementary components.

The first component is the consolidated set of national policy recommendations for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo, organised and presented in a consistent format and linked to shared implementation levers.

The second component is the inspiring practices toolbox, mapped to the same levers, providing concrete models that illustrate how “pedagogy-first” and higher-education-enabled solutions can be implemented, adapted, and scaled across Western Balkans contexts.

5. Consolidated policy recommendations

5.1 Purpose and structure of the recommendations section

This section presents the consolidated policy recommendations that constitute the core intervention component of D3.5. The recommendations are addressed to competent authorities and system actors and are designed to be implementation-anchored, meaning that each recommendation is framed as an actionable measure linked to higher education investments and “pedagogy-first” professionalisation levers. The four Western Balkans beneficiary country inputs are used as the authoritative source base for this consolidation: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Albania.

To ensure comparability and usability for policy audiences, the recommendations are organised using a shared lever framework. This lever framework does not replace national context; it provides a common structure so that authorities and institutions can quickly identify which instruments to activate (curricula reform, CPD/micro-credentials, evidence loops, governance routines, digital pedagogy, safeguards/inclusion, ESG accountability) and how these instruments interact.

5.2 Common lever framework used across all countries

The national recommendations converge around a common architecture of reform. For D3.5, this architecture is presented as a set of implementation levers that recur across all four country inputs, even where the language and formatting differ. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the recommendations explicitly propose mandatory competency-aligned higher education modules, micro-credentials supported by institutional incentives, university-hosted evidence functions, interagency case governance routines, and measurable indicators. Montenegro's recommendations similarly emphasise institutionalising CPD, strengthening interagency coordination, building university-enabled research-to-practice loops, and embedding digital/adaptive pedagogy as a standard competency area. Kosovo provides a structured set that includes a national competence framework, higher education curriculum reform, a micro-credential-based CPD ecosystem, evidence-based policy infrastructure, probation strengthening and alternative measures, and a multidisciplinary coordination model. Albania's strategic input identifies systemic constraints and then proposes administrative and legal measures, institutional collaboration and capacity strengthening, and staff professionalisation actions that can be translated into the same lever-based structure.

On this basis, D3.5 organises recommendations under seven levers.

Lever 1: Higher education curricula reform aligned with competencies. This lever covers changes to university curricula (and, where relevant, specialised modules) so that graduates enter the field with competence-based preparation that reflects juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy realities.

Lever 2: Continuing professional development and micro-credentials. This lever covers structured CPD pathways, certification, protected learning time, incentives, and modular micro-credentials that support continuous upskilling and competency verification for in-service staff.

Lever 3: Research centres and evidence loops. This lever covers the institutionalisation of practice–research feedback cycles, including university-hosted evidence units, applied research, monitoring systems, and mechanisms that use evidence to update curricula, CPD, and practice standards.

Lever 4: Interagency collaboration and governance routines. This lever covers cross-institutional coordination mechanisms, multidisciplinary case routines, shared protocols, and governance agreements that stabilise pedagogy-first practice across actors.

Lever 5: Digital and data-enabled pedagogy. This lever covers digital learning infrastructure, blended pedagogy models, digital tools for training and practice, and data-informed approaches, combined with governance and safeguards.

Lever 6: Safeguards and inclusion. This lever covers safeguarding, rights-based practice, inclusion of vulnerable groups, and equity-oriented design of services and learning pathways.

Lever 7: ESG alignment and accountability. This lever covers accountability mechanisms, measurable indicators, transparency, reporting routines, and governance measures that make implementation trackable and responsible.

5.3 Standard recommendation template used for consolidation

For consolidation into a single Strategy document, each country recommendation is presented in a standard format to ensure clarity and comparability.

Each recommendation is expressed through: a short action title; a brief statement of the measure; the primary responsible actors; the higher-education link (curricula, CPD/micro-credentials, research/evidence, partnership function); the implementation mechanism (what must be created, adopted, mandated, funded, or institutionalised); and an indicative monitoring element or expected result where the country inputs provide measurable indicators. The Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro inputs already provide recommendation structures with clear implementation anchors and indicators, which informs the shared template used in this deliverable. Kosovo's recommendations provide comparable implementation depth and include outcomes-oriented elements that can be translated into the same template. Albania's text requires extraction and reformulation so that its strategic measures appear as discrete recommendations that match the shared template while preserving national context.

5.4 Consolidated national recommendations

This subsection presents the consolidated recommendations by country, ensuring that each country contributes a minimum set of recommendations and that each recommendation is visibly anchored to one or more implementation levers. The country order reflects the Western Balkans beneficiary coverage: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo.

In the draft that follows, each country section will be written in the same structure: a short national context paragraph (only what is necessary to understand the recommendations), followed by the recommendations themselves, with each recommendation tagged by the lever(s) it activates. The aim is to make the Strategy readable for policy audiences while remaining technically consistent with the consortium's competence-based and pedagogy-first approach.

5.4.1 Albania – policy recommendations

AL-1. Update and strengthen the secondary regulatory framework and staffing structures for juvenile justice institutions and community-based measures

Policy recommendation: Amend and update the relevant secondary legislation and internal regulatory acts to clarify staffing profiles, organisational structures, minimum competence requirements per function, and operating procedures for juvenile detention/re-education settings and community-based execution of measures. The aim is to align the system's formal rules with operational reality and to make competence-based professionalisation enforceable rather than optional.

Implementation anchors: A targeted review of existing secondary acts; drafting of amendment packages specifying minimum staffing/competence requirements per role; formal adoption by the competent authority; issuance of updated organisational charts and SOPs for facilities and community services.

HE investment link: Embed competence-based recruitment and learning obligations into the regulatory framework; enable university-delivered modules and accredited learning pathways as recognised means of meeting competence requirements (initial education and CPD).

Accountability indicator: Updated secondary acts adopted and implemented; revised organisational charts approved; proportion of juvenile facilities and community structures operating under the updated staffing/competence requirements.

AL-2. Establish a mandatory, periodic, competence-based CPD system for all juvenile justice staff, aligned with accredited providers and recognised certification

Policy recommendation: Introduce mandatory periodic training for all staff working with juveniles across functions, structured around defined competencies and delivered through a recurring CPD cycle with documented certification. The objective is to replace ad hoc training with an institutionalised competence refresh system.

Implementation anchors: Adoption of a CPD policy setting minimum annual CPD hours by role; development of a CPD catalogue aligned with juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy; establishment of certification rules and attendance tracking; linking CPD completion to appraisal and professional progression.

HE investment link: Formal cooperation with universities and other accredited providers to deliver modular CPD that can be recognised as micro-credentials; use higher education capacity to update content and assess learning outcomes (the Albania input references the structured continuing-training model as a benchmark for periodicity and systematisation).

Accountability indicator: CPD participation rate by institution/role; percentage of staff meeting annual CPD requirements; number of certified modules delivered annually; quality assurance records for CPD delivery and outcomes.

AL-3. Create structured mobility, exchange, and external certification pathways to accelerate professional capability and transfer of good practice

Policy recommendation: Establish structured mobility and exchange pathways (study visits, short courses, placements, accredited external training) combined with recognition of learning outcomes, to accelerate specialist capability development and good-practice transfer into Albania's juvenile justice practice.

Implementation anchors: Cooperation agreements enabling mobility; selection criteria linked to competence gaps; defined learning objectives; requirement for a "practice transfer product" upon return (internal briefing, training session, practice note); integration of certification into CPD tracking.

HE investment link: Use universities to structure and certify mobility learning outcomes, support recognition/micro-credentialing, and ensure transfer into curricula and CPD content through academic–practice feedback loops.

Accountability indicator: Number of mobilities completed; number of external certificates obtained; number of internal transfer outputs produced; evidence of integration into CPD or practice guidance.

AL-4. Incentivise professional development, applied research, and knowledge production by staff, embedding it into institutional routines

Policy recommendation: Create an institutional mechanism that supports and incentivises staff participation in professional events and promotes applied research, publications, and practice-based knowledge production as a routine part of professionalisation in juvenile justice.

Implementation anchors: Adoption of rules for professional-development support (eligibility, annual planning, internal reporting obligations); introduction of time allowances and/or incentives where feasible; requirement that supported activities produce internal learning outputs (seminars, briefs, updated guidance).

HE investment link: Formalise collaboration with universities for joint research, co-authored outputs, guest lectures, and incorporation of field evidence into teaching and CPD; position universities as the vehicle for research-to-practice cycles.

Accountability indicator: Number of supported PD/research activities; number of staff outputs produced (briefs/publications); number of internal dissemination sessions delivered; traceable changes in CPD content or practice guidance informed by staff research.

AL-5. Build institutional learning infrastructure through a specialised library and a progressively developed digital knowledge repository

Policy recommendation: Establish a dedicated resource base for juvenile justice professional learning by creating a specialised library and progressively expanding it into a controlled-access

digital repository of manuals, guidelines, commentaries, internal regulations, and practice resources.

Implementation anchors: Creation of a budget line and acquisition plan; definition of minimum content requirements; annual updating obligations; repository governance rules (access, updating responsibility, linkage to CPD themes).

HE investment link: University support for curation and updating, training staff in evidence use, and linking repository materials to curricula and CPD modules; enabling joint knowledge products (practice notes, annotated guidance).

Accountability indicator: Budget line executed; library/repository established and updated annually; staff utilisation/access metrics where feasible; documented integration of repository resources into CPD delivery.

AL-6. Institutionalise cooperation between juvenile justice institutions and universities to anchor pedagogy-first professionalisation

Policy recommendation: Formalise long-term cooperation between juvenile justice institutions (custodial and community-based) and universities to support competence development, structured CPD delivery, applied research, and sustained practice improvement through joint planning and outputs.

Implementation anchors: MoUs and annual action plans defining products (joint CPD modules, research briefs, practice guidance, structured placements where permissible); governance and safeguarding rules for cooperation; institutional routines that ensure outputs are adopted (integration into training plans and operational guidance).

HE investment link: Direct HE-centred mechanism: universities deliver competence-aligned learning and act as evidence and innovation nodes for the system; cooperation outputs feed into curricula reform, micro-credentials, and research-to-practice loops.

Accountability indicator: Number of active MoUs/action plans; number of joint outputs delivered; number of adopted practice improvements linked to cooperation; measurable CPD uptake supported through university partnership.

AL-7. Expand and modernise juvenile-specific infrastructure and community-based support capacity to enable rehabilitation and standards compliance

Policy recommendation: Increase and modernise infrastructure capacity for juveniles across custodial and community-based settings, including reconstruction of existing facilities and, where needed, expansion or new capacity that meets contemporary standards and enables education, counselling, and rehabilitative programming.

Implementation anchors: Needs assessment and capacity plan; capital investment programming; standards-based design; inclusion of programme spaces required for pedagogy-first interventions; phased implementation with clear milestones.

HE investment link: Couple infrastructure investments with competence investments: university partnerships provide programme design support, staff upskilling, and evaluation so that new/modernised spaces translate into improved pedagogical and rehabilitative delivery.

Accountability indicator: Capacity increased and modernisation completed; availability of programme spaces (education/counselling); utilisation and programme-delivery indicators; compliance verification against standards where applicable.

5.4.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina – policy recommendations

National context note for interpretation of recommendations

The Bosnia and Herzegovina input frames correctional pedagogy professionalisation as a system-wide capability challenge driven by inconsistent initial preparation, limited structured CPD, fragmented interagency work, and insufficient institutionalisation of evidence and digital standards. The national recommendations are already written as implementation-anchored measures linked to higher education investment and accountability indicators; they are presented below in the unified D3.5 “table-ready” format with minimal editorial harmonisation.

BiH-1. Introduce a mandatory “Correctional Pedagogy Core” in relevant higher education programmes

Policy recommendation: Establish a mandatory, competency-aligned Correctional Pedagogy Core within relevant university programmes to ensure that graduates entering the sector possess baseline competencies in rehabilitation-oriented practice, communication, safeguarding, and educational work with justice-involved populations.

Implementation anchors: Define the core module(s) and learning outcomes; agree national/sector endorsement; integrate into curricula through formal university approval procedures; align assessment and graduation requirements with competency outcomes.

HE investment link: Direct investment into curricula reform and delivery capacity (qualified teaching staff, practicum links, updated materials) to institutionalise competence-based preparation at entry level.

Accountability indicator: Percentage of relevant programmes adopting the core; number/proportion of graduates completing the core; evidence of competency assessment results and course evaluation feedback.

BiH-2. Establish a structured CPD and micro-credential pathway with protected learning time and incentives

Policy recommendation: Create a structured, certified CPD pathway (including micro-credentials) for in-service correctional and juvenile justice staff, supported by protected learning time and institutional incentives to ensure participation and competence renewal.

Implementation anchors: CPD framework with minimum annual requirements; modular micro-credential catalogue; formal recognition rules; protected learning time policy; incentives linked to progression and performance.

HE investment link: Universities act as accredited providers for CPD/micro-credentials, ensuring competence-based design, quality assurance, and regular updating based on evidence and practice needs.

Accountability indicator: CPD uptake rate; number of micro-credentials issued; completion rates; documented competence gains and application in practice (e.g., supervision records, practice change logs).

BiH-3. Create a university-hosted “Evidence and Improvement Unit” to run research-to-practice loops

Policy recommendation: Establish a university-hosted unit or structured function that collects practice evidence, evaluates interventions, and produces applied guidance to continuously update curricula, CPD, and operational practice standards in the juvenile justice/correctional pedagogy domain.

Implementation anchors: Designate a lead HEI; define unit mandate, governance and data-sharing protocols; adopt annual evidence and learning agenda; produce periodic briefs and update cycles for curricula/CPD.

HE investment link: Strengthens HEI role as a research and development pole by embedding evidence capacity into university structures and connecting it to learning provision and policy uptake.

Accountability indicator: Evidence products produced (briefs, evaluations); number of CPD/curriculum updates informed by the unit; documented adoption of guidance by system actors.

BiH-4. Institutionalise interagency collaboration and multidisciplinary case governance as standard operating practice

Policy recommendation: Formalise interagency collaboration and multidisciplinary case governance routines so that educational, psychosocial, legal, and correctional actors coordinate consistently around rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes, supported by agreed protocols and shared accountability.

Implementation anchors: Interagency agreements; standard case conference protocols; role definitions and decision rules; documentation standards; training for routine implementation; escalation and quality review mechanisms.

HE investment link: Universities support development of protocols, deliver joint interagency training modules, and evaluate routine performance through evidence loops.

Accountability indicator: Frequency and compliance of case conferences; quality of case documentation; multi-agency participation rates; outcome tracking indicators relevant to rehabilitation and reintegration.

BiH-5. Adopt digital and data-enabled pedagogy standards for correctional education and rehabilitation work

Policy recommendation: Establish minimum digital and data-enabled pedagogy standards for correctional education and rehabilitation-related training and practice, ensuring that digital tools and data are used to enhance learning and service delivery while maintaining safeguards.

Implementation anchors: Define standards (platforms, content quality, assessor guidance, data governance); integrate digital pedagogy into curricula and CPD; provide enabling infrastructure and staff training; adopt safeguards and compliance procedures.

HE investment link: HEIs lead development of digital learning content, staff training, and evaluation; integrate digital pedagogy competencies into programmes and micro-credentials.

Accountability indicator: Adoption of standards; number of staff trained; usage metrics for platforms/tools; compliance records for data safeguards; quality audits of digital learning.

BiH-6. Embed safeguarding, inclusion, and ESG accountability into competence development and service delivery

Policy recommendation: Integrate safeguarding and inclusion requirements into all competence development pathways and institutional routines, and strengthen ESG-style accountability through measurable indicators and transparent reporting for juvenile justice education and rehabilitation interventions.

Implementation anchors: Safeguarding protocols and inclusion standards; staff competence requirements and refresher training; reporting routines; QA checks; inclusion indicators integrated into monitoring.

HE investment link: HEIs provide competence-based safeguarding and inclusion training, develop QA instruments, and support monitoring frameworks aligned with responsible governance.

Accountability indicator: Staff completion of safeguarding/inclusion learning; incidents reporting and response compliance; inclusion metrics and equity indicators; publication of monitoring summaries.

5.4.3 Montenegro – policy recommendations

National context note for interpretation of recommendations

The Montenegro input frames correctional pedagogy professionalisation as constrained by limited specialised capacity, insufficiently institutionalised CPD participation, the need for stronger interagency routines, and the requirement to integrate digital and evidence-based practice into competency development. The national recommendations are already written in an implementation-oriented format and are presented below in the unified D3.5 “table-ready” structure with minimal editorial harmonisation.

MNE-1. Establish a national correctional pedagogy competence framework and embed it into institutional HR and training requirements

Policy recommendation: Adopt a national competence framework for correctional pedagogy roles in the juvenile justice/correctional context and integrate it into recruitment, job profiles, performance appraisal, and training obligations, ensuring that competence standards are consistently applied across institutions.

Implementation anchors: Formal approval of competence framework; update of job descriptions and HR criteria; integration into appraisal and promotion rules; mandatory competence-based training plan per institution; competence verification routines (assessment/certification). HE investment link: Universities support competence framework design and validation, translate it into curricula and micro-credentials, and provide competence assessment capacity.

Accountability indicator: Competence framework adopted; percentage of institutions using updated job profiles and appraisal criteria; proportion of staff with documented competence certification against the framework.

MNE-2. Institutionalise mandatory CPD participation with recognised certification and clear annual minimum requirements

Policy recommendation: Make CPD participation mandatory for staff working with juveniles, setting annual minimum learning requirements, recognised certification, and institutional incentives to ensure participation and sustained competence renewal.

Implementation anchors: CPD policy with annual minimum hours by role; certified modular CPD catalogue; tracking system for completion; protected learning time provisions; linkage to progression and performance.

HE investment link: HEIs deliver accredited CPD and micro-credentials, update content based on evidence, and support quality assurance of CPD outcomes.

Accountability indicator: CPD completion rates by institution/role; number of certificates/micro-credentials awarded annually; evidence of competence gains through assessment results and supervisor verification.

MNE-3. Strengthen interagency collaboration through formal coordination mechanisms and multidisciplinary casework routines

Policy recommendation: Establish formal interagency coordination mechanisms for juvenile justice and correctional practice, standardising multidisciplinary casework routines so that educational, psychosocial, legal, and institutional actors operate under shared protocols and accountable decision-making.

Implementation anchors: Interagency agreements/coordination body; standard case conference procedures; role definitions and escalation rules; documentation standards; training for consistent implementation; periodic quality reviews.

HE investment link: Universities support protocol design, provide joint interagency training modules, and evaluate the effectiveness of casework routines through research-to-practice loops.

Accountability indicator: Case conference frequency and compliance; multidisciplinary participation rate; quality of documentation; tracked outcomes related to rehabilitation and reintegration.

MNE-4. Embed digital and adaptive pedagogy competencies into both initial education and CPD, supported by minimum digital standards

Policy recommendation: Make digital and adaptive pedagogy a formal competency requirement for correctional pedagogy staff, supported by minimum digital standards for learning provision and practice tools, ensuring safe and effective use of digital methods in training and rehabilitation work.

Implementation anchors: Definition and adoption of minimum digital standards (platforms, content quality, assessment guidance, data governance); integration into curricula and CPD modules; staff training; infrastructure and support arrangements; safeguarding and compliance procedures.

HE investment link: HEIs design digital learning modules and micro-credentials, provide digital pedagogy training, and evaluate adoption and quality of digital delivery across institutions.

Accountability indicator: Adoption of digital standards; number of staff trained; usage metrics for platforms/tools; QA results for digital learning; compliance records for safeguarding/data protection.

MNE-5. Establish a university-enabled evidence loop (research-to-practice cycle) to continuously update competencies, CPD, and practice guidance

Policy recommendation: Create a structured research-to-practice cycle that connects juvenile justice institutions with universities to collect practice evidence, evaluate interventions, and feed results into curricula reform, CPD updates, and operational guidance.

Implementation anchors: Partnership agreements and annual research/practice agenda; data-sharing and ethics protocols; periodic evidence briefs; defined update cycles for training content and guidance; dissemination routines within institutions.

HE investment link: Universities act as research and development nodes, providing evaluation capacity, producing applied outputs, and maintaining competence-aligned learning pathways based on evidence.

Accountability indicator: Number of evidence products produced annually; number of CPD/curriculum updates informed by evidence; documented adoption of updated guidance; monitoring of selected outcomes where feasible.

MNE-6. Strengthen safeguarding, inclusion, and accountability in competence development and service delivery

Policy recommendation: Integrate safeguarding and inclusion requirements into competence standards and training pathways, and strengthen accountability through measurable indicators and reporting routines that allow authorities to monitor implementation quality and equity of services.

Implementation anchors: Safeguarding protocols; mandatory safeguarding/inclusion training cycles; QA checks and reporting; inclusion metrics integrated into monitoring; institutional responsibility assignment for compliance.

HE investment link: HEIs deliver safeguarding/inclusion training and support QA instruments and monitoring design; inclusion considerations embedded into curricula and micro-credentials.

Accountability indicator: Completion rates of safeguarding/inclusion modules; compliance records; inclusion metrics and equity indicators reported; evidence of corrective actions when gaps are identified.

5.4.4 Kosovo – policy recommendations

National context note for interpretation of recommendations

The Kosovo input presents a structured policy package aimed at building a unified competence ecosystem for juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy, with strong emphasis on a national competence framework, higher education curriculum reform, institutionalised CPD through micro-credentials, evidence-based policy infrastructure, strengthened probation/alternative measures, and multidisciplinary coordination. The recommendations below are harmonised into the unified D3.5 “table-ready” template, while keeping Kosovo’s original intent and implementation orientation.

KOS-1. Establish a national competence framework for juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy professionals, linked to certification and recruitment standards

Policy recommendation: Develop and formally adopt a national competence framework that defines the core competencies required for juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy professionals, and link it to recruitment standards, certification requirements, and performance appraisal to ensure consistent professionalisation across the system.

Implementation anchors: Competence framework drafting and stakeholder validation; formal endorsement/adoption; update of job profiles and recruitment criteria; introduction of competence-based certification mechanisms; integration into HR appraisal processes.

HE investment link: Universities support competence framework development, translate competencies into learning outcomes, embed them into degree curricula, and provide competence assessment and certification capacity (including micro-credential pathways).

Accountability indicator: Competence framework adopted; percentage of institutions applying updated job standards; proportion of staff certified against competence requirements; documented appraisal integration.

KOS-2. Reform higher education curricula to integrate correctional pedagogy competencies and ensure practice-relevant preparation

Policy recommendation: Update relevant university curricula to include correctional pedagogy and juvenile justice competencies as mandatory content, ensuring that graduates entering the sector have baseline professional capability in rehabilitation-oriented practice, safeguarding, and pedagogical interventions.

Implementation anchors: Curriculum review against competence framework; formal programme revisions through university governance; integration of mandatory modules and practicum elements; alignment of assessment with competency outcomes; periodic curriculum review cycle.

HE investment link: Direct curricula reform investment (teaching capacity, materials, practicum partnerships) and integration of competence-aligned learning outcomes into degree structures.

Accountability indicator: Number/proportion of programmes updated; completion rates for core modules; student evaluation results; evidence of competency-based assessment outcomes.

KOS-3. Institutionalise CPD through certified micro-credentials and digital learning pathways, with minimum annual learning requirements

Policy recommendation: Establish an institutionalised CPD system built around certified micro-credentials and, where appropriate, digital/blended learning delivery, setting minimum annual learning requirements for staff working with juveniles and ensuring recognition, tracking, and incentives for completion.

Implementation anchors: CPD policy with annual minimum requirements; modular micro-credential catalogue; certification rules and tracking system; protected learning time/incentives; integration into promotion and performance rules.

HE investment link: Universities and accredited providers design and deliver micro-credentials aligned to competencies, provide assessment capacity, and update modules based on evidence from practice and emerging needs.

Accountability indicator: CPD uptake and completion rates; number of micro-credentials issued; staff competence assessment outcomes; evidence of application in practice (supervisory confirmation, practice change logs).

KOS-4. Create an evidence-based policy and practice infrastructure (centre/platform) to run research-to-practice loops and support system improvement

Policy recommendation: Establish a national mechanism (centre, platform, or structured function) that supports evidence-based policy and practice improvement in juvenile justice and correctional pedagogy through data collection, evaluation, applied research outputs, and dissemination of guidance.

Implementation anchors: Designation of host/governance model; adoption of mandate and data-sharing/ethics protocols; annual evidence agenda; production of periodic evaluation briefs and practice guidance; update cycles for curricula and CPD modules based on evidence.

HE investment link: Universities act as core partners or hosts for the evidence mechanism, providing research capacity, methodological support, and links to learning provision (curricula and CPD updates).

Accountability indicator: Number of evidence products produced; number of policy/practice updates informed by evidence outputs; uptake of guidance by institutions; monitoring indicators published periodically.

KOS-5. Strengthen probation services and expand alternative measures through competency-based practice and interagency coordination

Policy recommendation: Strengthen probation and community-based measures for juveniles by enhancing competence-based practice and coordination between justice actors, with the goal of increasing effective use of alternatives to detention and improving reintegration outcomes.

Implementation anchors: Review and update probation practice protocols; structured interagency cooperation arrangements; targeted competence-based training for probation and partner actors; monitoring routines for alternative measures implementation and outcomes.

HE investment link: Universities support development of training modules and evidence-informed protocols, contribute to evaluation of alternative measures, and embed relevant content into curricula and CPD micro-credentials.

Accountability indicator: Increased utilisation rate of alternative measures; probation staff training completion rates; compliance with interagency routines; outcome indicators relevant to reintegration and reduced reoffending where measurable.

KOS-6. Institutionalise a multidisciplinary, integrated service model for juveniles, supported by governance routines and safeguarding standards

Policy recommendation: Implement an integrated multidisciplinary approach for juvenile cases, ensuring that education, psychosocial support, legal services, and rehabilitation interventions are coordinated through standard routines, with safeguarding and inclusion embedded as non-negotiable requirements.

Implementation anchors: Standard multidisciplinary casework procedures; role clarity and coordination protocols; training on integrated practice; documentation standards; safeguarding/inclusion compliance rules; periodic quality review.

HE investment link: Universities support joint training modules, development of practice standards, and evaluation of coordination routines; safeguarding and multidisciplinary practice embedded into curricula and CPD.

Accountability indicator: Compliance with multidisciplinary routines (case conferences, documentation quality); safeguarding training completion; inclusion metrics where feasible; evidence of coordinated service delivery across agencies.

5.5 Cross-country synthesis and prioritisation

This subsection consolidates the four Western Balkans beneficiary country recommendation sets into a shared strategic backbone. The objective is not to replace national context, but to identify the recurring structural reforms that appear across Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo and to translate them into a prioritised, implementable sequence. This synthesis is grounded in the national inputs, which converge strongly around competence-based professionalisation, higher-education-enabled learning pathways, interagency governance routines, and evidence-based improvement cycles.

Across the four country inputs, seven common reform lines emerge as the most consistent and mutually reinforcing elements of a “pedagogy-first” professionalisation strategy.

The first common line is competence standardisation. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo explicitly call for competence frameworks or competence-aligned standards that can be institutionalised through HR and training systems, while Albania’s recommendations aim at updating regulatory and organisational structures that enable competence-based staffing and practice standards.

The second common line is higher education curricula reform aligned with competencies. Bosnia and Herzegovina proposes a mandatory correctional pedagogy core embedded into university programmes; Kosovo proposes curriculum reform to integrate correctional pedagogy

competencies; Montenegro links competence frameworks to educational and training provision; Albania highlights the need for university cooperation and capacity strengthening to support professionalisation.

The third common line is institutionalised CPD delivered through certified pathways, increasingly framed through micro-credentials. Bosnia and Herzegovina proposes structured CPD with protected learning time and micro-credentials; Montenegro and Kosovo similarly push for mandatory CPD with recognition and tracking; Albania calls for periodic mandatory training and recognises structured continuing training as a model for institutionalisation, adding mobility and certification pathways.

The fourth common line is evidence loops and research-to-practice functions, typically hosted or enabled by universities. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo explicitly propose evidence units/centres/platforms; Montenegro proposes a research-to-practice cycle through HE partnerships; Albania emphasises professional knowledge production and university cooperation that can operationally form the same evidence loop.

The fifth common line is governance and interagency collaboration formalisation. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro propose institutionalised interagency routines and multidisciplinary case governance; Kosovo proposes an integrated multidisciplinary model and strengthened probation/alternatives requiring coordination; Albania's reform line includes regulatory, organisational and cooperation measures that support clearer coordination between actors and institutions.

The sixth common line is digital and data-enabled pedagogy, combined with safeguards. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro explicitly propose digital pedagogy standards and training; Kosovo includes digital CPD pathways; Albania's learning infrastructure and cooperation measures can be extended into digital repositories and structured digital learning delivery.

The seventh common line is safeguarding, inclusion and accountability (including ESG-style governance logic). Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro explicitly include safeguarding/inclusion and accountability; Kosovo integrates safeguarding and multidisciplinary routines; Albania addresses standards, institutional strengthening, and capacity development that should incorporate safeguarding and accountability into practice.

The cross-country inputs suggest a clear sequencing logic: reforms must begin by establishing competence and learning architecture (standards, curricula, CPD), then institutionalise governance and evidence loops that keep the architecture alive, and finally scale through digitalisation and infrastructure improvements.

Priority Tier 1: Establish the competence-and-learning architecture (0–12 months). This tier includes adoption of competence standards/frameworks where missing, introduction or updating of competence-aligned HE curricula components, and launching structured CPD with certification

and tracking. This tier is a prerequisite because without a stable competence pipeline (entry + in-service), any governance or digital investment lacks human capability to execute it reliably.

Priority Tier 2: Institutionalise interagency routines and evidence loops (6–18 months). This tier focuses on formal coordination mechanisms, multidisciplinary case governance, and the establishment of evidence functions that continuously update curricula, CPD, and practice guidance. The reason for sequencing this after Tier 1 is that governance routines depend on a shared competence language, and evidence loops are only useful when they have a learning system into which evidence can be fed.

Priority Tier 3: Scale through digital standards, safeguarding-by-design, and enabling infrastructure (12–24 months). This tier includes minimum digital pedagogy standards, digital learning pathways, safeguarded data practices, and, where relevant, infrastructure investments that enable pedagogy-first programming (learning spaces, counselling facilities, resources). Albania’s infrastructure line sits strongly in this tier, but the same principle applies across countries: physical and digital “enablers” only produce value when competence pathways and governance routines already exist to use them effectively.

A consistent monitoring logic across countries increases accountability and makes the Strategy operational. Based on the indicator-oriented style already present in several country inputs, D3.5 can apply a minimum common KPI set that each country can adapt.

Competence pipeline indicators should include: proportion of relevant HE programmes with integrated correctional pedagogy competency content; number/proportion of graduates completing mandatory core modules; CPD participation and completion rates by role; number of micro-credentials/certificates issued annually.

Governance indicators should include: compliance with multidisciplinary case routines (frequency of case conferences, documentation quality); participation rate of agencies; adoption of standard protocols; probation/alternatives utilisation measures where relevant.

Evidence-loop indicators should include: number of evidence products produced (briefs, evaluations, guidance); number of curriculum/CPD updates informed by evidence outputs; documented adoption of guidance in institutional routines.

Digital and safeguarding indicators should include: adoption of minimum digital pedagogy standards; number of staff trained in digital pedagogy; compliance records for safeguarding and data governance; inclusion metrics where feasible.

The synthesis confirms that the four countries are not proposing fundamentally different strategies, but variations of the same reform architecture adapted to national constraints. D3.5 therefore uses the cross-country backbone to present a coherent regional strategy while maintaining national specificity through the country recommendation blocks. This design supports both policy uptake (because the Strategy reads as a unified framework) and

implementability (because national actors can directly use their country's recommendations without losing comparability and shared direction).

6. Inspiring practices toolbox

6.1 Purpose of the inspiring practices component

The inspiring practices component is included in D3.5 to make the Strategy operational. The policy recommendations in Section 5 define what competent authorities, higher education institutions, and system actors should implement in order to professionalise correctional pedagogy through a “pedagogy-first” approach. The inspiring practices complement those recommendations by demonstrating how similar interventions have been implemented in practice in other contexts, particularly through higher-education-enabled solutions and structured institutional partnerships. They are therefore not presented as a general catalogue of “good ideas”, but as an implementation toolbox that illustrates concrete mechanisms, enabling conditions, and transferable routines that Western Balkans beneficiaries can adapt in realistic institutional settings (prison schools, juvenile facilities, probation-linked education, and HE-provider partnerships).

6.2 Selection logic and how practices were treated in the Strategy

The set of inspiring practices used for D3.5 was treated as a transfer-oriented evidence base. Practices were selected and retained because they directly support at least one of the Strategy's implementation levers and because they illustrate a method by which higher education can strengthen correctional pedagogy professionalisation. In practical terms, this means that the practice set privileges models with one or more of the following characteristics: structured learning pathways in custodial settings; university–prison or university–justice partnerships with defined roles; competence development mechanisms that can be modularised and certified; practitioner upskilling schemes or continuing education formats; toolkits and guidance instruments that standardise partnership governance and delivery; evidence-based justification and monitoring logic; inclusion and safeguarding approaches that keep educational work ethical, rights-respecting and effective.

Each practice was then interpreted through a “transfer lens” rather than as a unique national story. The Strategy uses the practice set to clarify three questions that policy audiences typically need answered: what the practice actually does (core mechanism); what institutional arrangement makes it work (governance and enabling conditions); what can be realistically replicated or adapted in Western Balkans beneficiary systems (transferability logic). The source document already provides structured descriptions (objectives, implementation process, outcomes, and transferability notes), which allows the Strategy to build a credible toolbox rather than a descriptive list.

6.3 Overview of the practice portfolio and mapping to D3.5 implementation levers

The inspiring practices pack contains 20 practices that can be mapped to the Strategy’s lever framework. Many practices support more than one lever, but each has an identifiable “primary” contribution. The table below indicates how the toolbox connects to the Strategy levers, ensuring that implementation pathways are visible and that national recommendations can be supported by practical models.

Practice	Primary lever(s) supported in D3.5
Practice 1: The Leonhard Prison Entrepreneurship Programme (Germany)	HE-enabled curricula; employability pedagogy; partnerships
Practice 2: Learning Together (UK)	Pedagogy-first methodology; inclusion; university–prison partnership routines
Practice 3: University courses at La Santé Prison (France)	Direct HE provision in prison; governance of delivery
Practice 4: Inside-Out Prison Exchange Programme (USA)	Pedagogy-first learning design; community-building; inclusion
Practice 5: PROMOTE – Integrated professional development for prison practitioners	CPD and structured upskilling; competency-oriented training architecture
Practice 6: Prison Education Taskforce & Mountjoy Prison – Maynooth University (Ireland)	Partnership governance; inclusion pathways; institutional change tools
Practice 7: RiUscire – Rete Universitaria... (Italy)	Networked HE–prison cooperation; governance routines
Practice 8: SkillHUBS – counselling and training model	CPD and training delivery model; guidance for institutionalisation
Practice 9: Learning Together in Detention (Belgium)	Pedagogy-first practice; HE–detention teaching routine
Practice 10: PARTNER – Bridging Health Literacy in Prisons	Targeted competence modules; inclusion and wellbeing focus
Practice 11: Higher Education in prisons – direct university programmes (Italy)	HE curricula delivery inside prison; system-level scaling

Practice 12: University Distance Education in Prisons	Digital and distance-enabled pedagogy; safeguarded access
Practice 13: Oxford & Cambridge – Learning Together & philosophy in prisons (UK)	Pedagogy-first methodology; inclusion; HE-led delivery
Practice 14: UNESCO UIL – Global Collection of Best Practices	Reference base; standards and evidence orientation
Practice 15: Prison Education: Theory and Practice – Continuing Education Course (Greece)	CPD model for educators; competence refresh
Practice 16: Prison–University Partnerships Toolkit	Governance and implementation guidance; quality routines
Practice 17: Co-creating curricula for Prison–University Partnerships	Curriculum co-design methodology; partnership routines
Practice 18: Continuing Education for Reintegration Technicians and Prison Guards (Portugal)	CPD institutionalisation; role-specific competence renewal
Practice 19: Prisoners’ Education Trust (distance learning strategy)	Access and inclusion through distance learning; organisational delivery model
Practice 20: Prison Education Reduces Reoffending – Ministry of Justice analysis (UK)	Evidence rationale; monitoring and accountability framing

This mapping is used in D3.5 to ensure that inspiring practices are not separate from the recommendations: they function as “implementation references” that illustrate how each lever can be activated through real institutional design.

6.4 How the practices support implementation in Western Balkans beneficiary contexts

The practice portfolio supports the Strategy in four implementation-relevant ways that align directly with the cross-country backbone established in Section 5.5: it provides workable partnership models, tested pedagogy-first learning formats, institutionalised CPD designs, and evidence/standardisation instruments.

First, the toolbox demonstrates feasible university–justice partnership models that can be formalised through MoUs and annual action plans, which is a recurring need across the WB country recommendations. Practices such as Learning Together (Practices 2, 13), the Maynooth–Mountjoy partnership (Practice 6), and the Italian networked university cooperation approaches (Practices 7, 11) show different institutional architectures for sustained collaboration: single-

institution partnerships, multi-university networks, and system-level programmes embedded inside prison settings. These models directly support the Strategy's emphasis on higher education institutions acting as competence-system nodes rather than only degree providers, and they provide practical reference points for Albania's and other countries' recommendations on institutionalising cooperation and knowledge production routines.

Second, the toolbox illustrates pedagogy-first practice formats that are transferable as teaching methodology and learning design, even when institutional conditions differ. Inside-Out (Practice 4) and Learning Together variants (Practices 2, 9, 13) are valuable not only as programmes but as pedagogical models: dialogic learning, shared classroom dynamics, structured reflection, and the intentional integration of inclusion and empathy into the learning process. In D3.5, these practices support the Strategy's claim that resilience and rehabilitation depend on professional capability to teach and support developmental change, and they complement WB recommendations that call for competence-aligned curricula and structured CPD for staff working with juveniles.

Third, the toolbox provides concrete templates for CPD and role-specific upskilling that can be institutionalised through micro-credential logic and competence verification routines. PROMOTE (Practice 5), the Portuguese continuing education model for reintegration technicians and prison guards (Practice 18), and the Greece continuing education course for educators (Practice 15) show that continuing learning can be made systematic through modular training design, role-targeted pathways, and institutional recognition. These practices directly support the WB recommendations that prioritise CPD, certification, and competency renewal as early implementation steps (Tier 1), and they provide reference models for designing content architecture, delivery frequency, and assessment logic.

Fourth, the toolbox includes instruments that strengthen governance, standardisation, and evidence-based justification, which are essential to keep reforms durable. The Prison–University Partnerships Toolkit (Practice 16) and the co-creation of curricula approach (Practice 17) are especially valuable because they provide implementation scaffolding: how to structure partnerships, define roles, design curricula collaboratively, and institutionalise routines that survive staff turnover. UNESCO's global collection (Practice 14) provides a reference base that can support benchmarking and knowledge sourcing, while the UK analysis on reoffending reduction (Practice 20) strengthens the policy narrative by linking prison education to measurable outcomes and accountability logic. These practices support the Strategy's emphasis on evidence loops, monitoring indicators, and governance routines as Tier 2 reforms that stabilise the competence ecosystem.

Finally, the toolbox contains models relevant to digital and distance-enabled pedagogy, which is increasingly necessary for continuity of learning, scaling of CPD, and inclusion. University Distance Education in Prisons (Practice 12) and the Prisoners' Education Trust model (Practice 19) illustrate delivery mechanisms that can be adapted to WB contexts when in-person provision is constrained, while also highlighting the need for governance safeguards, controlled access, and quality assurance. This supports the Strategy's lever on digital and data-enabled pedagogy and

complements national recommendations that propose digital standards, blended learning pathways, and structured repositories of learning resources.

7. Implementation roadmap and monitoring framework

7.1 Purpose of the roadmap and monitoring component

This section translates the Strategy into an operational implementation sequence with measurable progress markers. The roadmap is designed to support competent authorities, system actors, and higher education institutions in planning and coordinating reforms while maintaining national flexibility. It is grounded in the cross-country backbone identified in Section 5.5 and in the implementation-anchored nature of the national recommendations, many of which already include accountability indicators or measurable outcomes.

The monitoring framework complements the roadmap by proposing a minimum common set of indicators that allow countries and institutions to demonstrate progress in a comparable way, while allowing each beneficiary to expand the indicator set according to national data availability and institutional maturity. The intent is not to create a heavy reporting burden, but to ensure that the “pedagogy-first” professionalisation effort remains accountable, evidence-informed, and resilient over time.

7.2 Implementation sequencing logic

The roadmap is built around a sequencing principle derived from the country inputs: reforms that build the competence-and-learning pipeline must come first, because they enable governance routines and digital scaling to function effectively. On this basis, the roadmap is structured into three tiers (phases) that overlap in time but have a clear priority order.

Tier 1 (0–12 months): Establish the competence-and-learning architecture. This includes competence frameworks/standards, competence-aligned higher education curricula elements, and institutionalised CPD systems with certification and tracking. This tier is emphasised across BiH, MNE, and KOS inputs and is also consistent with Albania’s focus on mandatory periodic training and structured cooperation with universities.

Tier 2 (6–18 months): Institutionalise interagency routines and evidence loops. This includes multidisciplinary case governance, formal coordination mechanisms, and university-enabled research-to-practice functions (evidence units/centres/platforms) that continuously update curricula, CPD, and practice guidance.

Tier 3 (12–24 months): Scale through digital standards, safeguarding-by-design, and enabling infrastructure. This tier includes digital and data-enabled pedagogy standards, safeguarded digital learning delivery, inclusion and safeguarding integration, and—where relevant—facility and programme-space investments that enable delivery of pedagogy-first interventions (particularly emphasised in Albania).

7.3 Roadmap: key actions, responsible actors, and expected outputs

Tier 1 actions (0–12 months): competence-and-learning architecture

Action 1. Adopt or formalise competence standards for key roles (where needed) and integrate them into HR systems.

Responsible actors: competent ministries; penitentiary/juvenile justice administrations; probation/community service authorities; HR departments; relevant agencies.

Expected outputs: competence standards formally endorsed; job profiles updated; competence requirements integrated into recruitment and appraisal; competence verification approach defined.

Rationale: supports the competence standardisation line present in MNE and KOS, and enables competence-based staffing and regulation strengthening in AL.

Action 2. Integrate competence-aligned correctional pedagogy content into higher education curricula.

Responsible actors: universities; accreditation bodies/programme governance; competent authorities as endorsers; sector stakeholders.

Expected outputs: updated curricula or mandatory core modules adopted; practicum/partnership arrangements defined; assessment aligned with learning outcomes.

Rationale: directly reflects BiH's mandatory core and Kosovo's curricula reform, and operationalises the HE cooperation approach in Albania and competence translation in Montenegro.

Action 3. Launch institutionalised CPD and micro-credential pathways with certification and tracking.

Responsible actors: competent authorities; training units; universities/accredited providers; facility leadership; HR departments.

Expected outputs: CPD framework adopted (annual minimums); modular CPD/micro-credential catalogue; certification rules and tracking mechanism; protected learning time/incentives where feasible.

Rationale: central Tier 1 mechanism across BiH, MNE, KOS; mirrored in AL as periodic mandatory training, external certification and mobility.

Tier 2 actions (6–18 months): governance routines and evidence loops

Action 4. Formalise interagency collaboration and multidisciplinary case governance routines.

Responsible actors: competent ministries; juvenile justice administrations; probation; social services; education actors; facility leadership; coordination bodies.

Expected outputs: interagency agreements; standard case conference routines; documentation standards; training for implementation; periodic quality reviews.

Rationale: emphasised directly in BiH and MNE; Kosovo's integrated multidisciplinary model and probation strengthening depend on it; Albania's regulatory and cooperation measures are enabling conditions for coherent coordination.

Action 5. Establish university-enabled evidence functions (units/centres/platforms) and research-to-practice update cycles.

Responsible actors: universities (host or core partners); competent authorities; institutional stakeholders; data protection and ethics oversight bodies where required.

Expected outputs: defined governance and mandate; data-sharing protocols; periodic evidence briefs/evaluations; formal update cycles for curricula, CPD, and practice guidance. Rationale: explicit in BiH and KOS; proposed as evidence loop in MNE; operationally supported in AL through incentives for research/knowledge production and HE cooperation.

Tier 3 actions (12–24 months): scaling, digitalisation, safeguarding, infrastructure

Action 6. Adopt minimum digital and data-enabled pedagogy standards with safeguarded implementation.

Responsible actors: competent authorities; ICT units; universities/accredited providers; facility leadership; safeguarding and data protection functions.

Expected outputs: digital standards adopted; staff trained; blended/digital CPD delivery operational; repository and content governance rules in place; compliance mechanisms established.

Rationale: directly requested in BiH and MNE; supported through digital CPD logic in KOS; aligned with AL's learning infrastructure and cooperation measures (repository and knowledge access).

Action 7. Embed safeguarding, inclusion, and accountability in competence development and daily practice routines.

Responsible actors: competent authorities; safeguarding units; HR and training units; facility leadership; universities as training and QA partners.

Expected outputs: safeguarding protocols integrated into learning pathways and practice standards; inclusion requirements embedded; reporting routines established; corrective-action procedures defined.

Rationale: explicit in BiH and MNE; integrated into Kosovo's multidisciplinary model; should be embedded into Albania's regulatory, infrastructure and capacity strengthening measures.

Action 8. Where relevant, plan and deliver enabling infrastructure improvements that support pedagogy-first interventions.

Responsible actors: governments/competent ministries; capital investment authorities; juvenile justice administrations; facility leadership.

Expected outputs: programme spaces for education/counselling; modernised facilities meeting standards; increased capacity where needed; integrated programme delivery conditions. Rationale: emphasised in Albania; relevant to scaling pedagogy-first work when physical constraints limit delivery quality.

7.4 Minimum monitoring framework

The Strategy proposes a minimum set of indicators that all beneficiary countries can use to demonstrate progress. Each country can expand the set depending on data availability. The indicators are grouped to match the Strategy’s core levers and the sequencing logic above.

Competence and learning pipeline KPIs: proportion of relevant HE programmes integrating correctional pedagogy competencies; number/proportion of graduates completing mandatory correctional pedagogy learning; CPD participation and completion rates by role; number of micro-credentials/certificates issued annually. These indicators are consistent with the indicator orientation already present in BiH and implied through CPD and curricula reforms in MNE and KOS.

Governance and coordination KPIs: compliance with multidisciplinary routines (frequency of case conferences, documentation quality); participation rate of agencies; adoption rate of standard protocols; utilisation of alternative measures/probation indicators where measurable (Kosovo).

Evidence-loop KPIs: number of evidence products produced (briefs, evaluations, guidance notes); number of CPD/curriculum updates informed by evidence outputs; documented adoption of updated practice guidance.

Digital and safeguarding KPIs: adoption of digital pedagogy standards; number of staff trained in digital pedagogy; usage metrics for learning platforms where feasible; safeguarding/inclusion training completion rates; compliance records and corrective actions.

7.5 Using inspiring practices to accelerate implementation

To accelerate implementation, authorities and institutions are encouraged to use the inspiring practices toolbox as a “design reference” when operationalising Tier 1–3 actions. For example, partnership toolkits and co-created curriculum approaches support governance design and curricula reform; structured continuing education courses and practitioner upskilling programmes support CPD architecture; distance education and blended delivery practices support digital scaling; evidence-based analyses and UNESCO collections support monitoring rationales and benchmarking.

8. Conclusions and next steps

D3.5 delivers a consolidated Correctional Pedagogy Competencies Strategy designed to support the growth and resilience of the juvenile justice sector in the Western Balkans beneficiary countries through a “pedagogy-first” approach. The Strategy converts WP3 outputs and partner inputs into an implementable roadmap by providing two complementary instruments: a harmonised set of national policy recommendations for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo, and a toolbox of inspiring practices that demonstrates how higher-education-enabled solutions and structured institutional routines can be implemented and adapted in practice.

The Strategy’s practical value is that it does not treat professionalisation as a one-off training intervention. Instead, it sets out a competence ecosystem approach, in which higher education curricula reform, institutionalised CPD and micro-credentials, interagency governance routines, and evidence loops jointly create sustainable professional capability. This ecosystem framing reflects the convergent logic of the four country inputs and provides a shared backbone that can be used for policy uptake and implementation planning, while preserving national specificity through country blocks and targeted measures.

Following submission, the first immediate step is internal consortium endorsement and operational dissemination of the Strategy to relevant national stakeholders. This includes competent ministries, penitentiary and juvenile justice administrations, probation/community-based measure authorities, relevant higher education institutions, and key civil society actors engaged in juvenile rehabilitation and reintegration. Dissemination should not be limited to publication; it should include targeted briefings and structured discussions focused on which Tier 1 actions can be launched quickly within existing institutional mandates.

Second, partners should translate the Strategy into a practical action planning exercise at national level. This means selecting the Tier 1 measures that can be initiated within 0–12 months (competence standards, curricula integration steps, CPD framework launch) and identifying the institutional owners, decision procedures, and resource requirements for each. The monitoring framework proposed in Section 7 should be used from the start so that early implementation creates evidence of progress rather than only activity logs.

Third, the inspiring practices toolbox should be used as a design reference for implementation. Rather than treating practices as standalone examples, national teams should map one or more practices to each priority action, extracting the institutional arrangement and operational mechanism that can be adapted locally (for example, partnership governance toolkits for university–system cooperation, structured continuing education models for CPD design, and distance/blended learning models for digital scaling under safeguards).

D3.5 is intended to guide subsequent project implementation by providing a stable strategic reference for curriculum development and professional learning pathways. The competence-and-learning architecture described in the Strategy is designed to be translated into competency-

aligned modules, micro-credential structures, and partnership routines that can be sustained beyond project timelines. In this sense, D3.5 should be treated as an operational reference for future WP activities that focus on education and training development, pilot implementation, and capacity-building.

Sustainability depends on institutionalisation, not documentation. For that reason, the Strategy's long-term impact requires the formal embedding of competence standards into HR rules, the maintenance of accredited CPD pathways through universities and other providers, and the establishment of evidence loops that update learning content and practice guidance. The monitoring framework is specifically included to support this sustainability logic by enabling authorities and institutions to demonstrate progress and to justify continued investment and policy support.

The Western Balkans beneficiary countries share a common professionalisation challenge in juvenile justice: achieving consistent, rehabilitative, and educationally grounded practice in systems where workforce development and institutional routines have historically been fragmented. D3.5 addresses this challenge by articulating an implementable, higher-education-enabled, and evidence-oriented Strategy that positions correctional pedagogy competencies as a foundation for resilience and growth. It offers both the policy direction and the practical tools necessary for adoption, adaptation, and measurable implementation across national contexts.

ANNEX 1 – Albania

LUARASI UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF LAW

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL LAW

Strategic Document on Minors in Albania

CORE-ED ACADEMY Project

Introduction

The penitentiary system in Albania has continuously been in focus by state structures for at least the last two decades. This has aimed not only at respecting or guaranteeing the fundamental rights and freedoms of convicted citizens, in light of international instruments ratified by our country, as well as domestic legislation, but also at approximating such a system with the penitentiary systems of European Union member states and with the *acquis* of this international organization, of which Albania seeks to become a member and part of this family.

When we speak about the penitentiary system, we must consider three components: specifically, the legal corpus regulating the functioning of this system within the jurisdictional or geographical scope of the country; the infrastructural conditions of the institutions responsible for executing criminal decisions that constitute the penitentiary system; and the sufficiency or adequacy of the logistical and human resources of all institutions within this system.

The second component, the infrastructural one, relates to the conditions and facilities of institutions executing criminal decisions, concerning whether these institutions provide standards or whether they are modern and fully respect the rights of persons sentenced to imprisonment, thus being in harmony or compliance with European Union standards in this field. The first component, the legal corpus, and the third component, human resources, are organically linked. This is because human resources, which constitute a very important element in guaranteeing the standards of the entire penitentiary system (also known as the prison system in Albania), are clearly regulated through legislation and sub-legal acts in this field, issued by state bodies that are part of or extensions of justice system bodies.

Referring to the types of penitentiary institutions in Albania, institutions for the execution of criminal decisions, or prisons, are categorized according to legal and sub-legal acts as high-security prisons, ordinary-security prisons, low-security prisons, open prisons, and pre-trial detention institutions. Although such categorization exists according to legal provisions, in practice there are no low-security prisons or open prisons at present. This is due to the lack of specific infrastructure required according to the standards applicable to such institutions.

Comparatively, unlike other penitentiary systems—especially European ones—the Albanian penitentiary system recognizes only a state-run system with state structures. In contrast, many other countries have resolved this issue by granting concessions to licensed private entities for the management of certain penitentiary structures, particularly low-security or open institutions. Based on these experiences, such legal solutions appear to have produced positive effects in optimizing penitentiary system functioning and standards.

Additionally, beyond classification by security level, the Albanian penitentiary system also categorizes institutions based on subjects. Thus, institutions are divided into those for adult male convicts, those for women and girls, and those for minors. This categorization exists not only legally but also practically.

Examples include the women’s prison in Pojskë, Pogradec; the institution for the execution of criminal decisions for minors in Kavajë; adult prisons in Tirana (302 and 313), Shënkoll Lezhë, Drenovë Korçë, Reç Shkodër, Fier, Peqin, Rrogozhinë, Fushë Krujë, etc. The Albanian state has also established another institution that is not strictly a prison but a re-education institution, known as the Re-education School in Vaqarr, Tirana.

At the Vaqarr school, minors under the age of criminal responsibility are placed—specifically those under 14 years of age who have committed crimes, and those under 16 years who have committed criminal contraventions. It may also accommodate minors who are criminally responsible but have been found guilty and later exempted from punishment due to favorable legal elements. Such minors may be placed in a re-education school.

Given that the project focused on minors in conflict with the law, during its implementation several technical findings were made, particularly regarding human resources. These findings are analyzed in the second part of this strategic document.

Findings

During project implementation concerning minors in conflict with the law, it was found that the legal corpus in this field is largely complete but may require amendments in some cases through additions, modifications, or updates. It is regulated through the Constitution of Albania, the European Convention for the Protection of Children (ratified), and specific provisions in the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code.

Furthermore, matters concerning minors in conflict with the law, minor victims, and minor witnesses are governed by a specific law: the Juvenile Criminal Justice Code, adopted in 2017 and effective since 1 January 2018, marking a novelty in Albanian legal practice.

Another finding concerns the limited number of institutions for minors in conflict with the law—currently only two: Vaqarr (re-education school) and Kavajë (juvenile prison). There is a clear need to increase accommodation capacity and infrastructure in this sector.

Similarly, other centers responsible for alternative sanctions, such as semi-liberty or supervision measures, are limited despite growing needs.

Human resources in existing juvenile institutions are insufficient. Shortages exist across legal, psycho-social, educational, medical, technical, and security sectors. Increasing infrastructure without increasing staffing capacity would be ineffective.

There is also a need for institutional coordinators who serve as bridges between penitentiary institutions and schools, the Free Legal Aid Directorate, the Probation Service, universities (especially Faculties of Law), and other education or rehabilitation centers.

Another finding relates to the support that should be shown to minors serving sentences. Many demonstrate creative talents (painting, ceramics, crafts, etc.). State structures should promote and support these talents through evaluation and promotion systems.

Professional level improvement is needed across sectors. Staff must better understand their rights and duties to reduce administrative or judicial disputes arising from poor documentation or procedural mistakes.

There is also a lack of proper organizational studies concerning staffing structures and required personnel numbers. This requires serious policy intervention.

Probation Service staff, who supervise suspended sentences and alternative sanctions, also face shortages and require systematic professional training.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- I. Intervention in the sub-legal framework regulating human resources in juvenile institutions, re-education schools, and alternative sanction centers. Amendments should be made to regulations, decisions, orders, and instructions rather than primary laws.
- II. Increase professional capacities of existing staff across all sectors (legal, psycho-social, educational, security, health).
- III. Plan and conduct systematic periodic training programs similar to those of the School of Magistrates. Cooperation agreements could allow legal staff and probation officers to participate in continuing seminars. Legal amendments may be required to expand eligibility for such training.
- IV. Make systematic training mandatory. Additionally, organize exchange programs abroad and certify professional qualifications.

- V. Allow staff participation in conferences, workshops, research, and publications, supported through financial and administrative incentives.
- VI. Provide logistical support, including establishing well-equipped institutional libraries funded through dedicated budget lines.
- VII. Strengthen cooperation between penitentiary institutions and universities, particularly Faculties of Law, through joint projects and research initiatives.
- VIII. Increase infrastructure capacity and modernize facilities to meet European standards.
- IX. Increase state awareness and financial support for minors' creative activities. Institutions should allocate budgets to purchase and promote minors' creative works. Policies should provide benefits such as sentence reductions, reward leaves, or other incentives through amendments to internal regulations.

Conclusions

Based on the research findings, numerous recommendations were made concerning human resources in institutions where minors serve sentences, especially in juvenile prisons.

These institutions require legal, administrative, and managerial interventions. Improvements are necessary to guarantee the rights of minors and staff alike. Standardization in infrastructure, legal framework, and human and logistical resources is essential to align with EU standards.

Monitoring institutions consistently emphasize the importance of improving these measurable indicators as prerequisites for Albania's EU accession. The time is appropriate to take concrete action in this direction.

ANNEX 2 – Bosnia and Herzegovina

Deliverable 3.5-style set of policy recommendations (5 for Bosnia and Herzegovina + 5 for Montenegro)

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BiH) — 5

Policy Recommendations

1) Establish a national “Correctional Pedagogy & Juvenile Justice Core Curriculum” as a mandatory HE track (competency-based + practice-oriented)

Policy levers: HE curricula reform aligned with competencies; ESG alignment & accountability
Why this is needed (country evidence): Practitioners report that formal academic education does not sufficiently prepare them for juvenile justice work; competencies are built largely via experience and non-formal learning, indicating a systematic education–practice gap.

Implementation presenters (what competent authorities should do):

Mandate an accredited core module/minor (undergraduate + master-level options) covering: child development, trauma-informed practice, youth communication, behavioral risk/needs assessment, crisis de-escalation, rights-based case planning.

Require scenario-based assessment (simulated interviews, case formulation, reporting) and supervised field placement as a graduation condition.

HE investment link: Fund practice labs (mock interview rooms, case simulation tools) and university–institution placement agreements.

Accountability indicator: % of relevant graduates completing the core module + competency assessment pass rates.

2) Launch a micro-credential system for in-service staff with “paid learning time” and recertification incentives

Policy levers: CPD and micro-credentials; safeguards & inclusion

Why this is needed: Continuous training is reported as largely absent and informal, dependent on individual initiative rather than a structured system; training content is also not updated

regularly to match evolving needs.

Implementation presenters:

Introduce micro-credentials (e.g., 3–5 ECTS each) tied to promotion/role eligibility.

Require at least one credential per year for staff in direct contact with minors.

Include special needs/inclusion, given its priority in reported training themes.

HE investment link: Public funding to universities for short-cycle accredited programs + digital delivery capacity.

Accountability indicator: credential completion rate + observed improvements in incident management, reporting quality, and child-centered communication.

3) Build an “Interagency Case Governance Protocol” with joint training and shared decision tools (education–justice–health–social care)

Policy levers: Interagency collaboration and governance; safeguards & inclusion

Why this is needed: Training needs explicitly highlight strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, and the system context shows coordination complexity and uneven practices.

Implementation presenters:

Create a formal multi-agency case conference model with shared roles and escalation pathways.

Establish a standard shared case plan template (education reintegration + psychosocial needs + risk management).

Include joint modules on communication with minors, family engagement, and referral pathways.

HE investment link: Universities co-design the protocol and deliver interprofessional training using simulation.

Accountability indicator: proportion of cases with documented case conferences + reduced duplication and delays.

4) Create a “Juvenile Justice Pedagogy Evidence Unit” inside a lead HEI to run continuous feedback loops (training → practice → outcomes)

Policy levers: Research centers and evidence loops; ESG alignment & accountability

Why this is needed: The regional synthesis identifies the need for standardized training, mentoring structures, and cross-sector protocols to reduce fragmentation.

Implementation presenters:

Establish a university-hosted unit that tracks: staff competency gains, child outcomes (reintegration, engagement), and service blockages.

Use findings to revise curricula and micro-credentials annually (closing the “not updated” problem).

HE investment link: Dedicated funding line for applied research staff, field data collection agreements, and outcome dashboards.

Accountability indicator: annual curriculum revision cycle + published monitoring briefs to ministries/relevant bodies.

5) Introduce a “Digital & Data-Enabled Pedagogy Minimum Standard” for juvenile justice services (privacy-respecting, child-safe)

Policy levers: Digital and data-enabled pedagogy; safeguards & inclusion; ESG accountability

Why this is needed: BiH protects privacy but lacks robust monitoring systems at the regional level, highlighting the need for structured data capacity.

Implementation presenters:

Develop a standard set of digital practice tools: e-learning modules, structured reporting templates, risk/needs checklists, and child-friendly engagement resources.

Embed safeguards: consent rules, access control, and child-sensitive documentation standards.

HE investment link: Fund HEIs to produce validated digital learning content and certify staff achievement.

Accountability indicator: compliance audit of digital standards + evidence of improved documentation quality and training consistency.

ANNEX 3 – Montenegro

MONTENEGRO — 5 Policy

Recommendations

1) Close the “specialized institution gap” by creating an HE-supported correctional pedagogy pathway + service model for educational measures

Policy levers: Interagency governance; safeguards & inclusion; HE curricula reform

Why this is needed (country evidence): Montenegro cannot execute key institutional educational measures because a specialized institution does not exist—creating a major systemic gap and limiting judicial options.

Implementation anchors:

Develop a national plan for either: (a) establishing a specialized facility OR (b) a structured network of accredited alternatives (therapeutic + educational) with defined standards.

Require university-led workforce preparation for staff operating these measures (pedagogy-first model).

HE investment link: fund a national training pipeline (Master’s module + supervised placements) connected to service expansion.

Accountability indicator: number of operational options for educational measures + proportion of cases diverted from imprisonment to appropriate rehabilitative measures.

2) Institutionalize micro-credentials and make CPD participation measurable and mandatory for frontline roles

Policy levers: CPD and micro-credentials; ESG accountability

Why this is needed: Participation in training is very low: only 36.7% received initial training and 33.7% engage in continuous training; university-level exposure to juvenile justice is limited (21.4%).

Implementation anchors:

Introduce role-based annual CPD requirements (e.g., probation, prison educators, court support staff).

Tie CPD to licensing renewal, performance appraisal, and promotion.

HE investment link: contract universities to deliver certified short-cycle programs; subsidize participation for public sector employees.

Accountability indicator: annual CPD completion rate + improved competence scores in child-centered communication and risk management.

3) Create a national “Interagency Coordination Compact” targeting fragmentation + family engagement failures

Policy levers: Interagency collaboration and governance; safeguards & inclusion

Why this is needed: Montenegro reports inadequate inter-institutional coordination and difficulties engaging youth and families.

Implementation anchors:

Standard operating procedure for coordinated case handling (courts–probation–education–social care–health).

Minimum standards for family engagement and reintegration planning (school/vocational continuity).

Joint training cycles delivered with HE partners (interprofessional simulation).

HE investment link: fund joint training and shared toolkits through university–ministry agreements.

Accountability indicator: case coordination compliance rate + reintegration metrics (school return, stable placement plans).

4) Prioritize “digital & adaptive pedagogy” as a national competency requirement (future-ready correctional education)

Policy levers: Digital and data-enabled pedagogy; HE curricula reform

Why this is needed: DACUM findings highlight a lack of adaptive/digital teaching strategies suitable for high-risk youth and low integration between education and field realities.

Implementation anchors:

Define a minimum digital pedagogy standard: hybrid learning design, cyber-violence prevention, AI/digital tools for monitoring and education.

Develop a national repository of evidence-based learning activities (dropout prevention, behavioral engagement).

HE investment link: fund an HE-led digital pedagogy lab (content production + teacher training + evaluation).

Accountability indicator: adoption of digital pedagogy toolkit + measured improvements in youth engagement and continuity of learning.

5) Establish a “Research-to-Practice Loop” through a university-based center that updates training annually and tests what works

Policy levers: Research centers and evidence loops; ESG alignment & accountability

Why this is needed: Regional synthesis confirms systemic reliance on experiential learning and the need for formal professionalization, mentorship, and cross-sector communication protocols.

Implementation anchors:

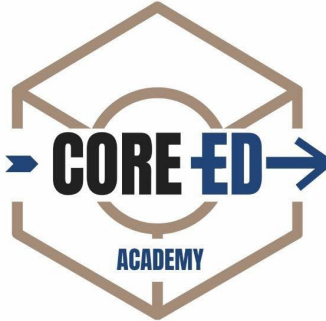
Create a unit that monitors training impact (skills transfer), practice quality, and reintegration outcomes.

Formalize mentorship and reflective supervision as part of professional standards (DACUM emphasizes reflexivity and ethical decision-making).

HE investment link: permanent budget line for applied research + monitoring staff + partnerships with ministries/NGOs.

Accountability indicator: annual evidence briefs + curriculum and CPD revisions based on outcome data.

ANNEX 4 – Kosovo



CILËSI. LEADERSHIP. SUKSESI



ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟΥ



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PROJECT NUMBER 101179359



STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS (D3.5)

Strategic Recommendations from Representatives of Penitentiary Institutions, specifically from the Field of Juvenile Justice in the Republic of Kosovo

I. STRENGTHENING PROFESSIONAL CAPACITIES AND THE COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

Recommendation 1

Development of a National Competence Framework for Staff Working with Minors

It is recommended to develop a National Framework of Professional Competences for:

Correctional pedagogues

Institutional educators

Psycho-pedagogues

Probation officers

Multidisciplinary staff in institutions for minors

This framework should be based on the “pedagogy-first” principle, placing the educational and rehabilitative dimension at the center of institutional intervention.

Key elements of the framework:

Restorative pedagogy

Trauma-informed education (trauma-informed approach)

Children’s rights and child-friendly justice

Socio-emotional and intercultural competences

Case management and multidisciplinary work

Inclusion and gender equality

Expected outcomes:

Standardization of professional competences

Improvement in the quality of pedagogical interventions

Increased rehabilitative effectiveness

Measurable indicators:

Number of approved professional profiles

Integration of competences into university curricula

Percentage of certified staff

II. REFORM OF UNIVERSITY CURRICULA

Recommendation 2

Integration of Correctional Pedagogy into University Programs

Reform of curricula is recommended in the fields of:

Pedagogy

Psychology

Law

Social Work

Public Security

In cooperation with universities and partner institutions.

The reform should include:

Development of modules on restorative pedagogy

Integration of restorative justice into study programs

Drafting of manuals/guidelines for practical implementation

Development of training modules for correctional staff

This approach guarantees the linkage between university education and institutional practice.

III. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) SYSTEM

Recommendation 3

Creation of a Mandatory National CPD System for Institutions for Minors

It is recommended to establish a structured and mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system for:

Pedagogical staff

Correctional staff

Probation officers

Institutional leaders

This system should:

Be linked to career advancement

Be based on flexible micro-credentials

Use digital platforms for hybrid training

Monitor the impact of training on rehabilitative outcomes

Priority micro-credentials:

Digital and data-based pedagogy

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) in rehabilitation

Management of problematic behavior

Trauma-informed care

Burnout prevention and professional well-being

IV. NATIONAL MECHANISM FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES

Recommendation 4

Establishment of a National Center for Correctional Pedagogy and Juvenile Justice

It is recommended to establish a national mechanism (center or platform):

For the development of evidence-based policies

For exchange of experiences

For research development

For building databases on rehabilitative outcomes

This center should function in partnership between:

The Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Education

The Probation Service

The Correctional Service

Universities

Community partners

V. STRENGTHENING THE PROBATION SERVICE AND ALTERNATIVE MEASURES

Recommendation 5

Advancement of Capacities of the Juvenile Probation Service

It is recommended to develop pedagogical competences for probation officers in line with the educational and restorative approach.

Special focus should be placed on:

Alternative measures and sanctions

Social reintegration

Cooperation with families and communities

Monitoring recidivism

Indicators:

Increased use of alternative measures

Reduction of recidivism

Increased successful completion of measures

VI. INTEGRATED MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Recommendation 6

Implementation of an Integrated Inter-Institutional Model

Correctional institutions should apply an integrated approach that combines:

Security

Rehabilitation

Education

Psychosocial support

This requires:

Completion of staffing according to the organogram

Continuous training

Coordination between divisions

Structured multidisciplinary work

CONCLUSION

The above recommendations aim to:

Professionalize the juvenile justice sector

Improve the quality of pedagogical interventions

Strengthen alternative measures and the restorative approach

Build a sustainable, evidence-based system