



# Pictures

Shaping Futures  
Emerging Adults Transitioning from Prisons



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## Synthesis Report



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## Executive summary

The PICTURES project aims to address the critical need for professionalising practitioners who support emerging adults (ages 18-25) in correctional settings across Europe. This initiative brings together a diverse partnership of organisations from ten countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, and Serbia. By leveraging the expertise and experiences from these varied contexts, the project seeks to develop a comprehensive and standardised approach to correctional pedagogy.

The primary objectives of the PICTURES project are:

- Foster new, innovative, and multidisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning in correctional settings, with a focus on pedagogy for emerging adult corrections.
- Develop teaching methods from the perspective of correctional pedagogy, currently unavailable in the European context.
- Set up ESCO-based assessment techniques for practitioners to self-assess and present competencies.
- Create digital learning environments for practitioners to develop new skills in correctional pedagogy.
- Establish Correctional Pedagogy HUBS as incubators within education and training institutions across Europe.
- Support the quality and relevance of correctional pedagogy competencies developed and certified through the PICTURES system.
- Facilitate knowledge flow and co-creation between higher education, vocational education and training, research, public sector, and business sector.
- Build effective and inclusive higher education and vocational education and training systems that contribute to innovation.

Our research has identified several key areas for improvement in the training and development of correctional staff working with young offenders. These



findings highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of correctional pedagogy, emphasising the need for a holistic approach to professional development. The following points summarise our key findings and recommendations for future training paths:

- **Soft Skills Development:** Enhance communication, empathy, and conflict resolution skills crucial for building rapport with young offenders.
- **Specialised Knowledge:** Incorporate in-depth modules on adolescent psychology and criminology tailored to correctional settings.
- **Technology Integration:** Carefully implement emerging technologies to engage youth while addressing security concerns.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice:** Develop skills to recognise and respond to trauma-related behaviours and support mental health.
- **Inter-departmental Collaboration:** Improve communication and cooperation between different teams within the correctional system.
- **Continuous Professional Development:** Establish ongoing learning opportunities, including regular training sessions and mentorship programmes.
- **Legal Knowledge:** Provide comprehensive training on relevant legal frameworks and their practical application in correctional settings.
- **Crisis Management:** Incorporate practical scenarios to develop skills in handling emergencies and high-stress situations.
- **Cultural Competence:** Include modules on cultural diversity and strategies for addressing varied needs of inmates from different backgrounds.

These findings underscore the importance of a multifaceted approach to training correctional staff. By addressing these key areas, the PICTURES project aims to significantly enhance the quality of support provided to young offenders, ultimately contributing to better rehabilitation outcomes and reduced recidivism rates across Europe.

The diverse partnership spanning ten countries ensures that the project benefits from a wide range of perspectives and experiences, allowing for the development of training paths that are both comprehensive and adaptable



to different national contexts. This collaborative approach is essential for creating a truly European standard in correctional pedagogy for emerging adults, aligning with the project's objectives of fostering innovation, developing new teaching methods, and building effective and inclusive education strategies.



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## Introduction

This synthesis report is the culmination of extensive research conducted across the partner countries. It incorporates findings from diverse methodological approaches, including stakeholder mapping, in-depth interviews with practitioners and students, questionnaires, analysis of inspiring practices, and a comprehensive review of current policies and research in correctional pedagogy.

The report is structured to provide a holistic view of the current state of correctional systems and pedagogical practices across the participating countries. It begins with an overview of the methodology employed, followed by a detailed analysis of the correctional systems in each partner country. This analysis highlights the institutional structures, challenges faced, and ongoing efforts in rehabilitation and education within these systems.

Subsequently, the report presents a transversal analysis of correctional pedagogy across the ten countries, identifying common themes, challenges, and promising practices. This section is enriched by insights gathered from stakeholder mapping, interviews, and questionnaires, providing a ground-level perspective on the needs and experiences of practitioners and students in the field.

The report also examines inspiring practices from various correctional institutions, offering valuable insights into successful interventions and innovative approaches. These practices serve as potential models for improving correctional education across Europe.

Furthermore, the synthesis includes an analysis of the current policy landscape and research findings in European correctional pedagogy. This section identifies gaps in current practices and areas for future development, providing a foundation for evidence-based recommendations.

The final sections of the report focus on the implications of these findings for correctional pedagogy, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education (HE). It outlines key findings relevant to correctional pedagogy

training paths and presents detailed recommendations for enhancing training and professional development, improving educational and rehabilitation programs, and implementing systemic improvements in correctional settings.

This comprehensive synthesis report aims to provide a robust foundation for the development of innovative, effective, and standardized approaches to correctional pedagogy across Europe. By addressing the unique challenges of working with emerging adults in correctional settings, the PICTURES project seeks to contribute significantly to the professionalization of practitioners and the overall improvement of rehabilitation outcomes for young offenders.

## **1. Overview of Current State of Correctional Systems in the Partner Countries**

This analysis provides a comprehensive examination of the correctional systems across ten European countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, and Serbia. These countries, while geographically proximate, display varying degrees of development in their correctional systems, reflecting their distinct historical, political, and economic contexts. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the similarities, differences, and challenges faced by these nations in managing their correctional facilities and rehabilitating offenders.

### **1.1. Institutional Structure and Governance**

The institutional frameworks governing correctional systems across these 10 countries share some commonalities but also exhibit notable differences:

Romania, Portugal, Bulgaria, Italy, Serbia, North Macedonia, Croatia, and Montenegro all have centralised correctional systems under their respective Ministries of Justice. This centralization allows for a unified approach to correctional policies and practices at the national level. For instance:

- Romania's system is managed by the National Administration of Penitentiaries under the Ministry of Justice.
- Portugal operates under the Directorate-General of Reintegration and Prison Services (DGRSP), also within the Ministry of Justice.
- Bulgaria's correctional system is overseen by the General Directorate "Execution of Penalties" (GDEP), again under the Ministry of Justice.
- Italy presents a slightly more complex structure, with two separate departments under the Ministry of Justice: The Department of Penitentiary Administration and the Department for Juvenile Justice and Community. This division allows for specialised focus on adult and juvenile offenders, potentially enabling more tailored approaches to each group.
- Greece stands out as an exception in this group, having recently transferred responsibility for its correctional system from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Citizen Protection in 2019. This shift might indicate a change in perspective on the role of correctional facilities in the broader context of public safety and security.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina present the most unique case among these countries. Due to its complex constitutional structure, it operates a multi-level system with parallel correctional structures at both the state and entity levels. This arrangement reflects the country's political complexities and presents distinct challenges in terms of coordination and standardisation of practices across different jurisdictions.

## **1. 2. Prison Population and Overcrowding**

One of the most pressing issues facing many of these correctional systems is overcrowding, though the severity of this problem varies significantly among the countries:

- Romania faces significant challenges with overcrowding, holding about 23,000 prisoners in facilities that are often operating beyond their intended capacity. This situation can lead to substandard living conditions, increased tensions among inmates, and difficulties in implementing effective rehabilitation programs.

- Portugal, by contrast, seems to have a more manageable situation with 12,117 inmates reported as of July 2024. Notably, overcrowding is not mentioned as a major issue in the Portuguese system, suggesting better alignment between facility capacity and inmate population.
- Bulgaria presents an interesting case of decreasing prison population. In 2021, the country reported 6,192 inmates, marking a significant 37% decrease from 2011. This trend could be the result of successful alternative sentencing measures, changes in crime rates, or shifts in judicial practices.
- Italy, while not providing overall prison population figures, reports a concerning increase in juvenile detention numbers. The juvenile inmate population rose from 381 in 2022 to 555 in June 2024, a substantial increase that may strain specialised juvenile facilities.
- Serbia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro all face significant overcrowding issues, like Romania. This problem is particularly acute in Serbia and Montenegro, where outdated facilities compound the challenges posed by excess populations.
- Greece and Croatia, while not explicitly mentioned as facing severe overcrowding, still grapple with capacity issues in their correctional facilities.

The varying degrees of overcrowding across these countries highlight the need for diverse approaches to address this issue, from expanding facility capacity to implementing alternative sentencing measures and enhancing rehabilitation efforts to reduce recidivism.

### **2. 3. Rehabilitation and Education Programs**

All ten countries recognize the importance of rehabilitation and education in their correctional systems, though the extent and effectiveness of these programs vary:

- Romania and Portugal stand out for their strong emphasis on vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) opportunities for inmates. Romania's innovative programs like "Art Behind Bars" and

"Code of Freedom" aim to develop inmates' skills and creativity, potentially improving their prospects upon release.

- Bulgaria and North Macedonia have made efforts to adopt international standards for resocialization, but both countries face challenges in implementing comprehensive social, educational, and training activities due to resource constraints.
- Italy has historically been known for its strong focus on rehabilitation, particularly for juvenile offenders. However, recent legislative changes, such as the "Caivano Decree" (Law 159/2023), suggest a shift towards more punitive measures, potentially impacting the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts.
- Serbia and Croatia both place a strong emphasis on education, vocational training, and psychological counselling within their correctional systems. These countries seem to be aligning their practices with European standards on offender rehabilitation.
- Greece focuses on mitigating the adverse consequences of imprisonment and facilitating reintegration. Programs like NPID EPANODOS demonstrate the country's commitment to supporting offenders' transition back into society.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro both recognize the importance of education and professional development for resocialization but face challenges in fully implementing these programs due to resource limitations and, in Montenegro's case, a lack of well-developed post-penal treatment and exit strategies.
- Portugal's use of electronic surveillance as part of its rehabilitation and reintegration strategy represents an innovative approach that could serve as a model for other countries seeking to reduce reliance on traditional incarceration.

### **3. 4. Juvenile Justice and Young Adult Offenders**

The treatment of juvenile and young adult offenders varies across these countries, reflecting different philosophies and resource allocations:

All ten countries have specific provisions for juvenile offenders, recognizing the unique needs and potential for rehabilitation in this group. However, the approaches and resources dedicated to juvenile justice differ:

- Romania and Portugal have separate facilities for juveniles and young offenders, with Portugal extending special provisions to offenders up to 21 years old.
- Italy allows juveniles to remain in juvenile facilities until the age of 25 under certain conditions, potentially providing a longer period for rehabilitation before transitioning to adult facilities.
- Serbia and Greece operate dedicated juvenile detention centres with a focus on education and psychological support.
- Croatia has specific legislation (the Juvenile Courts Act) that emphasises rehabilitation over punishment for young offenders.
- Bulgaria maintains separate correctional facilities for juveniles.
- North Macedonia gives special attention to juvenile offenders but faces challenges in consistently separating them from adult offenders.
- Montenegro lacks specialised facilities for juveniles, leading to issues with proper separation from adult inmates.

The variation in approaches to juvenile justice across these countries highlights the ongoing debate about the most effective ways to handle young offenders. While all recognize the importance of specialised treatment, the practical implementation of these ideals varies widely.

#### **4. 5. Challenges and Opportunities**

Despite their differences, these ten countries face several common challenges in their correctional systems:

- Overcrowding remains a significant issue for many, particularly Romania, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. This problem not only affects living conditions but also hampers the effective implementation of rehabilitation programs.

- Insufficient funding and resource constraints are universal challenges, impacting everything from facility maintenance to the provision of educational and vocational programs.
- Staff shortages and the need for better training are consistently mentioned across countries. The complex nature of modern correctional work requires well-trained, professional staff, and many of these countries struggle to meet this need.
- High recidivism rates are a concern in several countries, particularly noted in Montenegro and North Macedonia. This indicates potential shortcomings in rehabilitation and reintegration programs.
- Adapting to multicultural inmate populations is an emerging challenge, particularly noted in Italy but likely relevant to other countries as well.
- Infrastructure issues, including outdated facilities, are significant problems in several countries, notably Montenegro.
- Weak inter-institutional cooperation, especially noted in Montenegro, can hinder the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.
- Despite these challenges, there are also opportunities for improvement:
- Expansion of alternative sanctions could help reduce overcrowding and possibly lower recidivism rates. Portugal's electronic surveillance system is an example of innovative approaches in this area.
- Increased investment in staff training and professional development could enhance the quality of inmate care and the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs.
- Strengthening post-release support programs could help reduce recidivism rates by easing the transition back into society.
- Modernization of facilities and technologies in correctional institutions could improve living conditions and enable more effective program delivery.



- Improving coordination between justice, social services, and education sectors could lead to more comprehensive and effective rehabilitation strategies.

## Key findings

### Needs and Challenges:

- **Overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure:** Many facilities, particularly in Romania, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro, are operating beyond capacity, leading to substandard living conditions and hindering rehabilitation efforts.
- **Insufficient funding and resource constraints:** Limited financial resources affect all aspects of correctional systems, from facility maintenance to programme provision.
- **Staffing issues:** There are widespread shortages of qualified staff and inadequate training programmes, impacting security and rehabilitation efforts.
- **High recidivism rates:** Notably in Montenegro and North Macedonia, suggesting shortcomings in rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.
- **Adapting to diverse inmate populations:** Particularly in Italy and Portugal, correctional systems face challenges in managing multicultural populations and potential language barriers.
- **Outdated facilities:** Many prisons, especially in Montenegro, are ill-equipped to meet modern incarceration and rehabilitation standards.
- **Weak inter-institutional cooperation:** Poor coordination between justice, social services, and education sectors hampers rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.
- **Insufficient post-release support:** There is a pressing need for more comprehensive programmes to assist former inmates with housing, employment, and social reintegration.

## Resources and Opportunities:

- **Alternative sanctions:** Expanding programmes like Portugal's electronic surveillance system could help reduce overcrowding and potentially lower recidivism rates.
- **Facility modernisation:** Investing in renovations and integrating modern technologies could improve living conditions, enhance security, and increase staff efficiency.
- **Enhanced rehabilitation and education programmes:** There is potential to expand and improve educational and vocational training opportunities, drawing inspiration from innovative approaches like Romania's "Art Behind Bars" and "Code of Freedom" programmes.
- **Improved sector coordination:** Enhancing collaboration between justice, social services, and education sectors could lead to more comprehensive rehabilitation strategies and smoother community reintegration.
- **Centralised management structures:** Most countries operate under centralised systems within their Ministries of Justice, allowing for unified correctional policies and practices.
- **Specialised juvenile facilities:** Many countries have separate facilities or provisions for young offenders, though not universally implemented.
- **Varied educational and vocational programmes:** While the extent and quality differ across countries, there is a foundation of training opportunities to build upon.
- **Innovative rehabilitation approaches:** Some countries have implemented creative programmes that could serve as models for others seeking to improve their rehabilitation efforts.
- These findings highlight the complex landscape of correctional systems across the ten countries, showcasing both shared challenges and diverse approaches to addressing them. The focus on rehabilitation and education is evident, though implementation effectiveness varies widely due to resource constraints and other factors.

## Conclusion

The correctional systems of Romania, Portugal, Bulgaria, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Greece, North Macedonia, Croatia, and Montenegro reflect a diverse range of approaches to incarceration and rehabilitation. While all face common challenges such as overcrowding, resource constraints, and high recidivism rates, they also demonstrate various innovative practices and reform efforts.

The focus on rehabilitation and education is a common thread across all ten countries, although the effectiveness of implementation varies widely. Recent legislative changes, particularly in Italy, suggest potential shifts in philosophy from rehabilitation towards more punitive approaches, at least for certain offender groups.

Moving forward, these countries have opportunities to learn from each other's successes and challenges. Continued reform efforts, increased resource allocation, and improved inter-institutional cooperation will be key to addressing the persistent issues in these correctional systems. Moreover, aligning practices with EU standards while adapting to local contexts will be crucial for the ongoing development and improvement of these correctional systems.

As these countries continue to evolve their approaches to corrections, maintaining a balance between security, punishment, and rehabilitation will be essential. The experiences of these diverse European nations offer valuable insights into the complexities of modern correctional systems and the ongoing quest for effective, humane, and rehabilitative approaches to criminal justice.

## 2. Correctional Pedagogy: A Meta-analysis

This analysis examines the state of correctional pedagogy across ten European countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, and Serbia. The focus is

on the current provision of correctional education, challenges faced, and the overall approach to rehabilitating offenders through educational means. Despite varying levels of development and different cultural contexts, these countries share common challenges and opportunities in implementing effective correctional pedagogy systems.

## **2.1. Current State of Correctional Pedagogy**

Across the examined countries, there is a notable disparity in the development and implementation of correctional pedagogy programs. While some nations have made significant strides in integrating educational initiatives into their penal systems, others lag, struggling with limited resources and outdated approaches.

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the focus on correctional pedagogy is minimal. Learning subjects related to the treatment of juvenile and young adult inmates are rare, primarily confined to law universities where the criminal legal status of these offenders is studied. The absence of correctional pedagogy studies at pedagogical and philosophical faculties highlights a significant gap in the educational system's approach to rehabilitating offenders.
- Bulgaria presents a more structured approach, offering master's programs such as "Pedagogy of Deviant Behaviour" and "Social and Criminal Psychology". These programs aim to equip professionals with the necessary skills to work with offenders, focusing on prevention, correction, and social rehabilitation. However, the integration of these academic offerings into practical applications within the correctional system remains a challenge.
- Croatia and Serbia have implemented vocational training programs for inmates, offering courses in carpentry, welding, culinary arts, and other practical skills. These initiatives aim to improve employability and foster a sense of purpose among inmates. Both countries also provide opportunities for distance learning, allowing eligible inmates to pursue higher education. However, these programs face challenges in terms of resource allocation and widespread implementation.

- In Greece, the education of prisoners is mandated by law, with provisions for primary and secondary education units within penitentiaries. The system aims to provide education at all levels, including vocational training. However, the practical implementation of these provisions faces significant hurdles due to resource constraints and infrastructural limitations.
- Italy's approach to correctional pedagogy appears to be fragmented. While there are some initiatives in place, the lack of a comprehensive, nationwide strategy for correctional education is evident. The education system does not offer specific courses or classes on correctional pedagogy, leaving a significant gap in the preparation of professionals working in this field.
- Montenegro's correctional system emphasises the need for education and professional training of prisoners, recognizing its importance in rehabilitation and reintegration. However, the implementation of these programs is hampered by limited resources and infrastructural challenges.
- North Macedonia faces similar challenges, with a lack of specialised programs in correctional pedagogy. The education system does not adequately prepare professionals for working in correctional settings, highlighting a need for more focused educational initiatives in this area.
- Portugal has made notable progress in developing a correctional pedagogy system, particularly for youth offenders. The country's approach emphasises education and social reintegration over punitive measures, guided by the Educational Tutelary Law of 2001. This system focuses on both formal education for school qualifications and professional certification, as well as non-formal education for holistic development.
- Romania's correctional education system offers various vocational training programs aimed at equipping prisoners with practical skills. However, the country faces challenges in providing comprehensive higher education opportunities for inmates and in integrating educational programs with broader reintegration efforts.

- Serbia's correctional pedagogy system shares similarities with Croatia's, offering vocational training and some higher education opportunities. The country has also implemented policies focused on rehabilitation and reintegration, particularly for youth offenders.

## 2.2. Challenges and Gaps

Across all ten countries, several common challenges and gaps in correctional pedagogy are evident:

- **Limited Specialised Education:** Most countries lack comprehensive, specialised education and training programs in correctional pedagogy. This gap extends to both the preparation of professionals working in correctional settings and the educational opportunities available to inmates.
- **Resource Constraints:** Inadequate funding is a universal challenge, affecting the quality and breadth of educational programs offered in correctional facilities. This includes shortages in educational materials, technology, and qualified instructors.
- **Infrastructural Limitations:** Many correctional facilities lack the necessary infrastructure to support diverse educational activities. Overcrowding exacerbates this issue, making it difficult to allocate space and resources for educational purposes.
- **Staff Training:** There is a widespread lack of specialised training for correctional staff in pedagogical methods suited to the unique needs of the prison population. This gap affects the quality and effectiveness of educational initiatives within correctional facilities.
- **Integration with Higher Education:** While some countries offer limited higher education opportunities for inmates, these are often not well-integrated with the broader correctional pedagogy framework.
- **Policy Gaps:** Many countries lack comprehensive policy frameworks specifically supporting correctional pedagogy. This absence of clear guidelines and support at the national level hinders the development and implementation of effective educational programs in correctional settings.

- **Diverse Needs of Inmates:** Addressing the varied educational backgrounds, learning abilities, and personal circumstances of inmates presents a significant challenge across all countries.
- **Balancing Security and Education:** Many countries struggle to balance the security requirements of correctional facilities with the need for open and effective learning environments.

## Opportunities and Promising Practices

Despite these challenges, several promising practices and opportunities for improvement emerge from this analysis:

- **Vocational Training:** The focus on practical, vocational skills in countries like Croatia, Serbia, and Romania shows promise in improving inmates' employability and facilitating their reintegration into society.
- **Collaboration with External Partners:** Partnerships with NGOs, educational institutions, and community organisations, as seen in Serbia, Croatia, and Portugal, offer opportunities to enhance and diversify correctional education offerings.
- **Holistic Approach:** Portugal's emphasis on both formal and non-formal education, addressing not just academic qualifications but also personal development, presents a model that other countries could adapt.
- **Policy Development:** The development of comprehensive policies supporting correctional pedagogy, as seen in Portugal and to some extent in Serbia, provides a framework for systemic improvements.
- **Technology Integration:** While currently limited, there is potential for greater use of technology in correctional education, including e-learning platforms adapted for secure environments.
- **Staff Development:** Initiatives to provide specialised training for correctional staff, as planned in Bulgaria, could significantly improve the quality of educational programs.

## Key findings

### Challenges and Needs:

- **Specialised education and training programmes in correctional pedagogy:** Most countries lack comprehensive, specialised education in correctional pedagogy. This gap affects both the preparation of professionals working in correctional settings and the educational opportunities available to inmates, hindering effective rehabilitation efforts.
- **Limited resources and funding for educational programmes:** Inadequate funding is a universal challenge, affecting the quality and breadth of educational programmes offered in correctional facilities. This includes shortages in educational materials, technology, and qualified instructors, which severely limit the scope and effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts.
- **Comprehensive policy frameworks supporting correctional education:** Many countries lack clear guidelines and support at the national level for correctional pedagogy. This absence of comprehensive policies hinders the development and implementation of effective educational programmes in correctional settings.
- **Improved infrastructure to support diverse educational activities:** Many correctional facilities lack the necessary infrastructure for diverse educational activities. Overcrowding exacerbates this issue, making it difficult to allocate space and resources for educational purposes, thus limiting the range and quality of programmes available.
- **Lack of specialised training for correctional staff:** There is a widespread lack of specialised training for correctional staff in pedagogical methods suited to the unique needs of the prison population. This gap affects the quality and effectiveness of educational initiatives within correctional facilities, potentially undermining rehabilitation efforts.
- **Balancing security requirements with effective learning environments:** Many countries struggle to create open and effective learning environments whilst maintaining the necessary security



measures. This challenge often results in restrictive educational settings that may not be conducive to optimal learning and rehabilitation.

- **Addressing diverse educational needs of inmates:** The varied educational backgrounds, learning abilities, and personal circumstances of inmates present a significant challenge across all countries. Developing flexible and individualised educational approaches to meet these diverse needs requires substantial resources and expertise.

### Opportunities and Resources:

- **Expansion of vocational training programmes:** Countries like Croatia, Serbia, and Romania have implemented vocational training programmes offering courses in practical skills. These initiatives aim to improve employability and foster a sense of purpose among inmates, presenting a model that could be expanded and adapted in other countries.
- **Increased collaboration with external partners:** Partnerships with NGOs, educational institutions, and community organisations, as seen in Serbia, Croatia, and Portugal, offer opportunities to enhance and diversify correctional education offerings. These collaborations can bring in additional expertise, resources, and innovative approaches to correctional pedagogy.
- **Integration of technology in correctional education:** While currently limited, there is potential for greater use of technology in correctional education. This could include e-learning platforms adapted for secure environments, potentially broadening access to educational resources and programmes for inmates.
- **Development of holistic approaches:** Portugal's emphasis on both formal and non-formal education, addressing not just academic qualifications but also personal development, presents a model that other countries could adapt. This approach recognises the importance of comprehensive personal growth in addition to academic achievement.
- **Varying levels of vocational training programmes:** While the extent and quality differ, most countries offer some form of vocational training. These existing programmes, even if limited, provide a foundation upon

which more comprehensive correctional education systems could be built.

- **Limited higher education opportunities for inmates:** Some countries offer higher education opportunities for eligible inmates, often through distance learning. While currently limited, these programmes demonstrate the potential for expanding access to higher education within correctional settings.
- **Specialised postgraduate programmes in related fields:** Countries like Bulgaria offer master's programmes such as "Pedagogy of Deviant Behaviour" and "Social and Criminal Psychology". These programmes, while not directly focused on correctional pedagogy, provide relevant knowledge that could be applied to improve correctional education systems.
- **Partnerships with external organisations:** Some countries have established partnerships with external organisations to support their correctional education efforts. These partnerships provide additional resources and expertise, offering a model for expanding and enhancing correctional pedagogy programmes across the region.

## Conclusion

The state of correctional pedagogy across these ten European countries reveals a landscape of both challenges and opportunities. While there are pockets of innovation and progress, particularly in countries like Portugal and Bulgaria, the overall picture is one of underdevelopment and resource constraints.

To move forward, these countries need to prioritise the development of comprehensive correctional pedagogy systems. This involves not only increasing resources allocated to educational programs in correctional settings but also developing specialised training for staff, creating policies that support rehabilitation through education, and fostering partnerships with external educational institutions and organisations.

The potential benefits of effective correctional pedagogy are significant, including reduced recidivism rates, improved social reintegration of offenders, and ultimately, safer communities. By learning from each other's successes and challenges, these countries have the opportunity to transform their correctional systems into environments that truly support rehabilitation and positive change.

### 3. Methodology

The PICTURES Project encompasses the development of innovative and flexible approaches to teaching and learning in the context of prisons, particularly focusing on correctional pedagogy for emerging adults. The methodology employed was a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative elements. These methodological techniques were crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the correctional education ecosystem across the ten partner countries.

The qualitative aspect of the methodology involved interpretive methods that focused on understanding the realities and specific needs of the practitioners involved in the correctional education environment. This approach is essential to investigate ideas and behaviours, discovering the meanings of their practices and actions, and understanding interactions from the perspectives of the stakeholders involved. By employing qualitative methods, we can explore the deeper, contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of new pedagogical approaches. This is particularly relevant to understand the needs and experiences of the professionals and students who work or will work with emerging adults in correctional settings, who are the primary focus of the project.

Examples of qualitative techniques included conducting in-depth interviews with justice-involved stakeholders, students and employees who interacted with emerging adults in correctional settings. These interviews gathered detailed insights into their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions to improve educational practices. Another technique involved implementing a

DACUM workshop, which involved discussions with practitioners, educators, students, psychologists and other prison staff to explore their collective views and ideas about current educational practices and potential innovations in correctional education. Additionally, reviewing and analysing existing research and policy documents related to learning ecosystems for emerging adults in corrections helped identify existing gaps, inspiring practices, and areas needing improvement.

The research also involved a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify and categorise key stakeholders in the correctional system, including ministries, penal institutions, judicial institutions, social work centres, mental health institutions, higher education institutions, and NGOs. This provided a foundational understanding of the system's structure and the distribution of educational initiatives.

Field visits to correctional facilities were conducted, allowing for direct observation and interaction with both practitioners and inmates. These visits provided valuable insights into the practical implementation of correctional pedagogy and the challenges faced in different settings. For security reasons, the use of cameras and audio equipment was not allowed during some prison visits.

The quantitative aspect focused on analysing observable facts and phenomena through objective data collection and statistical analysis. This approach allowed for measuring and evaluating behavioural and socio-affective variables, which are critical for assessing the effectiveness of the new pedagogical instruments developed by the project. Quantitative methods enable the project to test hypotheses, verify theories, and generate generalisable findings that can be useful for building an updated curriculum for correctional education. This is important to ensure that the new approaches are not only innovative but also empirically validated and capable of improving educational outcomes for learners in correctional settings.

Examples of quantitative techniques included applying structured questionnaires to a sample of correctional professionals and students to collect quantifiable data on their educational needs, experiences, and outcomes. The responses were then statistically analysed to identify trends and correlations. Another technique applied was statistical analysis to the data collected from the qualitative instruments, such as the interviews and research literature. This included analysing descriptive and inferential statistics, helping to validate the effectiveness of the pedagogical approaches. Conducting a thorough needs assessment to determine the skills and knowledge required by employers and practitioners in the correctional system was also part of the quantitative methodology.

The research methodology also included an analysis of inspiring practices from various correctional institutions, evaluating their implementation, objectives, methodologies, results, and potential for replication. This analysis aimed to identify best practices that could be adapted to improve correctional education across the partner countries.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were paramount. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their involvement was voluntary and their responses confidential. The research adhered to ethical guidelines to protect the privacy and rights of participants, particularly when dealing with sensitive information related to correctional practices and inmate experiences.

This comprehensive methodology allowed for an in-depth examination of correctional pedagogy across different countries, capturing variations in pedagogical offerings and reflecting local socio-economic characteristics. By synthesising data from different sources and methods, the project aims to develop evidence-based recommendations for improving correctional education and training across the partner countries, with a particular focus on emerging adults.

## 4. Research Results

This section presents the results of key findings from mapping, interviews, questionnaires, inspiring practices, and conducted research. In-depth interviews with diverse stakeholders, including correctional officers, educators, psychologists, social workers, policymakers, and students, were semi-structured to explore personal experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Paper analysis reviewed existing research, policy documents, laws, and international best practices in correctional education. Stakeholder mapping identified key actors in the correctional system, examining their roles, influences, and interconnections. Analysis of inspiring practices evaluated successful rehabilitation programmes and educational initiatives, focusing on implementation processes, objectives, methodologies, and potential for replication.

### 4.1. Description of the Stakeholders Mapping

The correctional education ecosystem is influenced by various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, nonprofit organisations, and private enterprises. Each of these stakeholders plays a crucial role in developing and implementing effective educational strategies tailored to the unique needs of practitioners who lack formal pedagogical training in the prison context.

The goal is to enhance the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of pedagogical tools and resources in vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) while establishing a robust communication and collaboration system among stakeholders. This ensures that the upskilling process remains relevant and responsive to the needs of employers and practitioners.

Understanding the roles, interests, and contributions of these stakeholders is essential for fostering a collaborative environment that promotes a holistic learning and teaching experience for correctional staff and future professionals. This section details the mapping of key stakeholders involved

in the correctional education systems across ten countries within the PICTURES project consortium.

## Government Agencies

Government agencies play a crucial role in supporting correctional education by creating policies, providing resources, and overseeing the implementation of educational programmes within correctional facilities. These agencies manage the administration and regulatory framework of the correctional system, ensure safety and rehabilitation programmes, supervise correctional facilities, and collaborate on security and operational matters. In Portugal, the Ministry of Health also collaborates with the Ministry of Justice and Education to support correctional education. Here are the agencies involved:

Ministry of Justice (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Serbia)

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Monitors the development of the correctional system. The Ministry of Justice collaborates with professional associations and higher education institutions to improve training for those working with juveniles and young adults.
- **Bulgaria:** Manages the administration and regulatory framework of the correctional system, employing psychologists, social workers, and educators to provide resocialisation and integration processes for inmates.
- **Croatia:** Ensures the safety of inmates and staff and oversees rehabilitation programmes. The Ministry also collaborates with educational institutions and civil society organisations to enhance correctional education.
- **Greece:** Supervises correctional facilities and ensures educational provisions. The Ministry works with adult educators and school directors within detention facilities.

- **Italy:** Responsible for education and training within the Sicilian Region, collaborating with universities and social cooperatives to implement educational programmes.
- **Montenegro:** Organises and implements educational programmes for minors, employing a multidisciplinary team of psychologists, social workers, and educators to support prisoner rehabilitation.
- **North Macedonia:** Includes the Sanctions Enforcement Authority, which oversees educational reformatories, penitentiaries, and prisons. The Ministry supports training programmes for staff through the Training and Education Center.
- **Portugal:** Oversees the Directorate-General of Reintegration and Prison Services (DGRSP) and the Justice Protocol Centre (CPJ). The Ministry collaborates with the Ministry of Education and Health to ensure comprehensive support for correctional education.
- **Romania:** Collaborates with the Ministry of Internal Affairs for security and operational matters and the Ministry of Education to develop curricula and educational policies for inmates.
- **Serbia:** Ensures that correctional policies align with national standards, focusing on the safety and rehabilitation of inmates.

### Ministry of Education (Croatia, Greece, Portugal, Romania)

- **Croatia:** Oversees educational initiatives within correctional facilities, working closely with the Ministry of Justice to implement effective programmes.
- **Greece:** Ensures the provision of educational programmes within correctional facilities, involving educators with extensive experience in the field.
- **Portugal:** Works with the Ministry of Justice and Health to ensure educational provisions in correctional facilities, focusing on tailored educational approaches to meet the needs of inmates.



- **Romania:** Ensures the quality of educational programmes within correctional facilities, developing policies and curricula that cater to the unique needs of inmates.

### Ministry of Health (Portugal)

- **Portugal:** Works alongside the Ministry of Justice and Education to support correctional education, ensuring that the health and well-being of inmates are considered in educational programmes. The collaboration aims to address both the physical and mental health needs of inmates, enhancing their overall rehabilitation process.

### Research Institutes

Research institutes contribute valuable support in developing innovative educational methodologies and evaluating correctional education programmes. They manage services for emerging adults in conflict with the law, conduct relevant research, develop new pedagogical methods, and engage in social sciences research. They provide essential research support and innovative approaches to correctional education. Key institutions include:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The University of Sarajevo is involved in educational research, providing insights and strategies to enhance correctional education.
- **Bulgaria:** The Institute for Social Initiatives and Practices manages services for children in conflict with the law and conducts relevant research.
- **Croatia:** The University of Zagreb conducts research on correctional education, developing new pedagogical methods.
- **Italy:** The University of Palermo and the University of Padua engage in research in social sciences and correctional education, providing valuable insights and innovative approaches.
- **Montenegro:** The University of Montenegro supports correctional education with innovative research methodologies. Their activities have

a significant impact on UKS employees, leading to increased competence of professionals and improved treatment of inmates. The University is also involved in understanding the current situation and needs of the penal system, aiming to improve rehabilitation through education.

- **North Macedonia:** The University of Skopje conducts research and develops educational methodologies tailored to correctional education. The Educational Reformatory in Volkovija, Tetovo, houses young offenders and employs various practitioners involved in educational methods for emerging adults. The Training and Education Center within the Sanctions Enforcement Authority is responsible for developing and conducting training programmes for prison staff.
- **Portugal:** Institutions like Instituto Piaget, the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, the University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, the Open University, and Coimbra University provide essential research support. These institutes contribute to the development of innovative educational methodologies and offer expertise in evaluating and improving correctional education programmes.
- **Romania:** The West University of Timișoara develops curricula and offers educational opportunities for inmates, focusing on effective pedagogical methods. Universities and officer academies provide specialised training for correctional officers and law enforcement personnel, ensuring comprehensive educational programmes for inmates.
- **Serbia:** The University of Belgrade contributes to research and the development of correctional education methodologies, ensuring that programmes are grounded in current academic research and practical applications.

## Legal Aid Services

Legal aid services advocate for the professional needs and rights of prison staff, ensuring that training and development programmes align with legal standards. These services are vital in navigating the legal aspects of correctional education and maintaining legal and professional standards within correctional facilities. Organisations involved include:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Department for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions of the Ministry of Justice oversees the execution of criminal sanctions and ensures legal standards are upheld in prisons, penitentiaries, and reformatories.
- **Bulgaria:** The Local Commission for Fighting Anti-social Acts of Minors and Juveniles provides assistance in the correction and re-education of minors, which may include ensuring their legal rights are respected.
- **Croatia:** NGOs work closely with correctional facilities to support inmate rehabilitation and reintegration, which may include advocating for their rights.
- **Greece:** Competent judicial officers control the heightened security measures in Prison Establishments, ensuring they comply with human rights standards according to national, EU, and international law.
- **Italy:** The Social Cooperative "Granello di Senape" provides social support to inmates in Padua's adult prison, which may include assistance with legal matters.
- **North Macedonia:** The Ombudsman ensures that the rights of emerging adults in the penitentiary system are respected, providing independent monitoring and evaluation.
- **Portugal:** The Trade Union of Prison Officers (SNCGP) and the Trade Union of Directorate-General of Reintegration and Prison Services Practitioners (SINDGRSP) advocate for the professional needs and rights of prison staff.
- **Romania:** NGOs contribute perspectives on the system's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement, which may include legal aid services.
- **Montenegro:** Institutions responsible for monitoring prisoners at the end of their prison sentences provide continued support, which may include legal assistance.
- **Serbia:** While not explicitly mentioned as legal aid, Correctional Officers and Staff ensure the safety and order within facilities, which includes upholding legal standards.

## Educational Institutions

Educational institutions collaborate with correctional facilities to provide tailored pedagogical programmes that address the specific education and training needs of practitioners working with emerging adult learners. These institutions develop curricula, offer educational opportunities, and ensure the relevance and effectiveness of educational programmes. Key institutions include:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** University of Sarajevo develops educational programmes for inmates and equips students with practical experience in the correctional system, fostering collaboration with various institutional actors.
- **Bulgaria:** University of Sofia collaborates with correctional facilities to enhance educational methodologies and provide relevant training.
- **Croatia:** Educational Institution for Correctional Training offers specialised training for correctional officers and educational staff.
- **Greece:** Ministry of Education ensures the provision of educational programmes within correctional facilities, focusing on the specific needs of young inmates.
- **Italy:** University of Verona provides training and develops educational methodologies tailored to the correctional context.
- **North Macedonia:** Educational Reformatory in Volkovija, Tetovo, employs practitioners such as correctional officers, educators, psychologists, social workers, and pedagogues to implement educational programmes.
- **Portugal:** Schools including Agrupamento de Escolas D. Dinis, Agrupamento de Escolas M. G. Poente, and Agrupamento de Escolas Domingos Sequeira work closely with correctional facilities to deliver tailored educational programmes.
- **Romania:** Police Academy “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” offers specialised training for correctional officers and law enforcement personnel, focusing on effective pedagogical methods.

- **Montenegro:** University of Montenegro collaborates with correctional facilities to offer multidisciplinary educational programmes that respond to the specific learning needs of prison staff, improving the penal ecosystem.
- **Serbia:** Educators and vocational schools collaborate with correctional facilities to offer e-learning programmes and vocational courses. This network supports the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates, aiming to reduce recidivism rates.

## Community-Based Organisations

Community-based organisations offer support services to inmates, complementing educational initiatives and addressing broader well-being. These organisations provide moral support, counselling, and various support services that foster an environment conducive to learning and rehabilitation. Key organisations include:

- **Bulgaria:** The Institute for Social Initiatives and Practices manages the Children and Youth Zone in Sliven, providing services for children in conflict with the law. The Crime Prevention Fund – IGA is engaged in lowering crime rates and increasing social engagement.
- **Italy:** Social Cooperative "Granello di Senape" provides volunteers offering social support to inmates in Padua's adult prison, addressing their broader well-being.
- **Portugal:** Organisations such as the Diocese Leiria-Fátima and Testemunhas de Jeová provide moral and spiritual support to inmates, complementing educational initiatives.

## Nonprofit Organisations and NGOs

Nonprofit organisations and NGOs provide a wide range of support services, contributing to the holistic development of inmates. These organisations engage in crime prevention, social engagement, advocacy, and providing educational, psychological, and social support to inmates. Key organisations include:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** NGOs such as "Otaharin" Bijeljina, Psychological Society of the Republika Srpska, and Association of Social Workers of the Republika Srpska provide support during incarceration and after release. They offer professional skills and knowledge to those in need, including legal, entrepreneurial, and craft expertise.
- **Bulgaria:** The Institute for Social Initiatives and Practices manages the Children and Youth Zone in Sliven, in collaboration with the Municipality of Sliven and UNICEF, providing a complex of services for children in conflict with the law. The Crime Prevention Fund – IGA is an independent professional organization engaged in lowering crime rates and increasing social engagement.
- **Croatia:** NGOs work closely with correctional facilities to support inmate rehabilitation and reintegration, although specific organizations are not named in the provided data.
- **Italy:** Social Cooperative "Granello di Senape" provides volunteers offering social support to inmates in Padua's adult prison. Cooperativa "Rigenenerazioni" offers services aimed at work re-integration of minor offenders within the Palermo juvenile prison, as well as job profiling activities for adult inmates in the prisons of Palermo and Siracusa.
- **Montenegro:** NGOs play an important role in reforming support mechanisms for children in conflict with the law. Their engagement contributes to the development and implementation of programs that support the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. The data mentions that all organizations with approval for implementing projects related to training and improving personnel capacities and knowledge are involved.
- **North Macedonia:** The Helsinki Committee regularly produces reports on conditions in the penitentiary system and plays an important role in ensuring that the rights of emerging adults are respected and promoted. NGO Sina Svetulka – Skopje, in partnership with the Faculty of Law at the University of Bitola and the Sanctions Enforcement Authority, implements digital skills training for female inmates in the Penitentiary "Idrizovo" in Skopje.

- **Portugal:** Organizations such as Instituto Champalimaud, Chapatô, Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima (APAV), Espaço T, Associação Portuguesa de Educação nas Prisões (APEnP), Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa, Cáritas Diocesana, Associação Portuguesa de Apoio ao Recluso, Aproximar, Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social, and Sociedade Artística Musical dos Pousos provide educational, psychological, and social support to inmates.
- **Romania:** Various NGOs offer support services during incarceration and post-release. While specific NGOs are not named, the data indicates that they contribute valuable perspectives on the system's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement, covering aspects from policy and administration to practical implementation and prisoners' experiences.
- **Serbia:** NGOs work closely with correctional facilities to support inmate rehabilitation and reintegration, although specific organisations are not named in the provided data.

## Private Companies and Social Enterprises

Private companies and social enterprises contribute to the development of new pedagogical approaches and provide opportunities for research and cooperation. They bring innovation and resources to correctional education, enhancing learning experiences and supporting inmate rehabilitation. Key companies include:

- **Italy:** Cooperativa "Rigenenerazioni" offers services aimed at work reintegration of minor offenders within the Palermo juvenile prison, as well as job profiling activities for adult inmates in the prisons of Palermo and Siracusa. Cotti In Fragranza – "Rigenerazioni" Cooperative (WISE in juvenile Palermo prison) provides services in the penal system. Social Cooperative "Granello di Senape" provides volunteers offering social support to inmates in Padua's adult prison.
- **Portugal:** Innovative Prison Systems develops new educational strategies and collaborates with correctional facilities to enhance learning experiences.

- **Bulgaria:** The Crime Prevention Fund – IGA is an independent professional organisation engaged in lowering crime rates and increasing social engagement.

## Conclusion

The collaboration among these diverse stakeholders is essential for the success of the PICTURES project. Each stakeholder group brings unique perspectives and resources, creating a comprehensive support system that addresses the multifaceted needs of practitioners in correctional settings. Government agencies provide the necessary legal and administrative framework, educational institutions develop and deliver relevant curricula, nonprofits offer critical support services, research institutes ensure evidence-based practices, legal aid services advocate for professional standards, and private companies introduce innovative approaches.

By working together, these stakeholders can create a cohesive and effective correctional education ecosystem that not only addresses the immediate educational needs of young offenders but also supports their long-term rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The coordinated efforts of these stakeholders are crucial for the development and implementation of successful correctional pedagogy and rehabilitation initiatives across the partner countries, ensuring the PICTURES project achieves its goal of enhancing vocational and higher education within correctional settings.

## 4.2. Main Points From the Interviews

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

The analysis of interviews with five professionals working in Bosnia and Herzegovina's correctional institutions, including the Ministry of Justice, provides critical insights into the current state of correctional education and areas for improvement. The respondents, holding various positions and bringing a wealth of experience from their diverse backgrounds, shed light on the skills and competencies required, the challenges faced, and the



potential for integrating new technologies and improving professional development within the correctional system.

The respondents, comprising two employees from the Ministry of Justice, two from the Penal-Correctional Facility in East Sarajevo, and one from the Penal-Correctional Facility in Bijeljina, possess significant experience in correctional education and administration. They emphasize the necessity of educational and corrective influence on inmates, highlighting skills such as effective communication, motivation, flexibility, empathy, and an altruistic disposition as crucial for working with younger adults in the correctional system. Additionally, knowledge of penology, penological andragogy, psychology, and therapeutic methods is essential for establishing effective relationships and managing rehabilitation processes.

The professionals underscore the importance of continuous professional development and training, facilitated by the Ministry of Justice's annual training programmes. These programmes cover topics like penology, psychology, psychopathology, and other relevant fields, ensuring that practitioners are well-equipped to handle the complexities of inmate rehabilitation. However, they also note the challenges in implementing resocialisation plans due to the influence of informal prisoner groups and the need for tailored approaches to individual inmates.

The use of new technologies, such as digital learning platforms, is seen as a vital tool for enhancing correctional education. These technologies provide access to the latest developments in corrective pedagogy, legislative updates, and research, helping practitioners stay informed and apply best practices in their work. Collaboration with universities and international organisations is also highlighted as a key factor in supporting professional growth and improving correctional education.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

### **1. Skills and Competencies:**

- Effective communication, empathy, and flexibility are essential for practitioners.
- Comprehensive knowledge of penology, psychology, and therapeutic methods is crucial.
- Continuous professional development through annual training programmes is necessary.

## **2. Challenges:**

- Implementing resocialisation plans is challenging due to the influence of informal prisoner groups.
- Tailored approaches to individual inmates are needed to address diverse needs and personalities.
- Maintaining discipline while fostering rehabilitation requires a delicate balance.

## **3. Integration of New Technologies:**

- Digital learning platforms can enhance educational opportunities and provide access to current research and best practices.
- New technologies facilitate better tracking of inmate progress and personalised educational plans.

## **4. Collaboration and Support:**

- Collaboration with universities and international organisations can enhance professional development.
- Regular professional seminars and workshops with experts from related fields are recommended.

- Establishing a common competency framework for the correctional sector would support a multidisciplinary approach and post-penal resocialisation.

## Bulgaria

The interviews conducted at the Education Centre for Initial Preparation, Retraining and Upskilling of Personnel to the Directorate General “Execution of Penalties” in Pleven and the Correctional Facility for juvenile boys in Vratza provided comprehensive insights into the state of correctional education in Bulgaria. Six interviews in Pleven and additional discussions with four practitioners in Vratza highlighted key aspects of correctional pedagogy, practitioner skills, and challenges faced in the field.

The practitioners interviewed emphasised the necessity of effective communication skills to build strong connections with adolescents. Understanding individual needs, recognising aggressive behaviour, and being able to react swiftly to critical situations were highlighted as crucial competencies. Emotional awareness, empathy, and resilience to stress were also deemed essential. Additionally, knowledge of legislative procedures, psychological testing methodologies, and security techniques were emphasised as vital for the effective functioning of correctional education.

Challenges identified include the lack of institutional support post-incarceration, insufficient IT equipment, and the need for better integration of prison IT systems with national court networks. Practitioners face difficulties in educating largely illiterate populations and indoctrinating responsible behaviour. The absence of social support networks for adolescents upon release often results in recidivism.

To enhance correctional education, the interviewees recommended developing digitalised courses, increasing vocational education and training opportunities, and providing more practical examples in teaching. Training in IT skills and foreign languages, particularly English, was also suggested. The need for training in conflict resolution, psychological assessment methods,

and methods for de-escalation of conflicts was emphasised. Improved material resources and distance learning opportunities for practitioners were also recommended.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

- **Develop Digitalised Courses:**
  - Implement new digitalised courses to engage younger generations who learn better with technology.
- **Increase Vocational and Practical Training:**
  - Provide more vocational education and training opportunities, emphasising practical skills and visualisation of knowledge.
- **Enhance IT and Language Skills:**
  - Offer training in IT skills and foreign languages, particularly English, to keep pace with global standards.
- **Improve Training in Conflict Resolution:**
  - Conduct specialised training in conflict resolution techniques and psychological assessment methods.
- **Provide Better Resources:**
  - Ensure better material resources within prisons, including IT equipment and access to online networks.
- **Foster Continuous Learning:**
  - Encourage continuous professional development through distance learning courses and sharing of best practices.
- **Focus on Soft Skills:**

- Emphasise training in soft skills such as communication, resilience, and working with vulnerable groups.
- **Enhance Inter-Institutional Collaboration:**
  - Improve collaboration between correctional facilities, educational institutions, and social support networks to ensure continuity of care and reduce recidivism.

## Croatia

Interviews with correctional practitioners in Croatia highlighted several key areas for enhancing correctional education programmes. Respondents emphasised the need for increased funding, with 30% identifying it as essential for providing adequate resources and infrastructure. This increase in funding is seen as a critical step toward ensuring that educational programmes can be delivered effectively and reach a wider range of inmates.

Updating curricula was another significant recommendation, with 25% of respondents advocating for changes to align educational content with current market needs. By tailoring programmes to the skills and knowledge required in today's job market, correctional education can better prepare inmates for successful reintegration into society. Integrating educational programmes with reentry support services, also supported by 25% of respondents, was highlighted as crucial for providing a holistic approach to rehabilitation. This integration ensures that education is not an isolated activity but part of a broader strategy to support inmates in their transition back into the community.

Enhancing training for educators was identified by 20% of respondents as a vital component for improving the quality of correctional education. Better-trained educators can offer more effective support, tailored to the unique challenges and needs of the inmate population. Respondents noted that continuous professional development and specialised training programmes

for educators are necessary to maintain high standards of teaching and to adapt to evolving educational practices.

The integration of new technologies into correctional education was seen as beneficial by 70% of respondents. Technologies such as e-learning platforms can offer flexible and interactive learning opportunities, helping to overcome some of the logistical challenges associated with delivering education in correctional facilities. E-learning can provide inmates with access to a wider range of educational materials and allow for self-paced learning, which can be particularly valuable in a correctional setting where traditional classroom environments may not always be feasible.

### **Key Findings and Recommendations:**

- **Increased Funding:**
  - Secure additional funding to provide adequate resources and infrastructure for correctional education programmes.
- **Updating Curricula:**
  - Align educational programmes with current market needs to ensure relevance and improve inmates' job prospects upon release.
  - Tailor curricula to include skills and knowledge that are in demand in the job market.
- **Integration with Reentry Support Services:**
  - Develop a holistic approach by integrating educational programmes with reentry support services to facilitate successful reintegration into society.
  - Ensure education is part of a broader strategy to support inmates' transitions back into the community.

- **Enhancing Training for Educators:**

- Provide continuous professional development and specialised training for educators working in correctional facilities.
- Improve the quality of education by equipping educators with the skills and knowledge to address the unique challenges of teaching in a correctional environment.

- **Integration of New Technologies:**

- Implement e-learning platforms and other digital tools to offer flexible and interactive learning opportunities.
- Use technology to overcome logistical challenges and provide inmates with access to a wider range of educational materials.
- Promote self-paced learning to accommodate the diverse learning needs and schedules of inmates.

## **Greece**

The interviews conducted with six practitioners in Greece, between May and June 2024, provided a detailed analysis of the current state of correctional education in the country. The sample consisted of four women and two men, including three teachers in Special Youth Detention Facilities, one of whom was a headmaster, and three professionals with extensive experience in correctional education. These discussions highlighted the challenges, skills required, and potential improvements for enhancing educational practices within Greek correctional institutions.

Practitioners emphasised the multifaceted role of teachers in correctional facilities, extending beyond traditional teaching duties to include roles akin to those of parents, friends, nurses, psychologists, and peacemakers. This expanded role is crucial due to the harsh realities of incarceration and the need for a supportive and inspiring environment within prisons. The

importance of cooperation among all professionals involved in correctional education was underscored, highlighting the necessity for mutual respect and understanding of the school's role in mitigating tensions and fostering a sense of community among inmates.

Key challenges identified by the respondents include establishing trust with juvenile and young adult inmates, managing behavioural issues, and ensuring prisoners' right to dignity and education. The lack of specialised training for professionals, insufficient resources, and the constant turnover of teachers due to institutional policies were also significant concerns. Additionally, cultural and educational differences among inmates, along with their resistance to the educational system due to previous negative experiences, further complicate the educational process.

The integration of new technologies in correctional education was seen as essential for providing inmates with a connection to the outside world and enhancing learning opportunities. Digital learning environments and distance learning platforms were highlighted as valuable tools for overcoming logistical challenges and providing continuous education despite the constraints of incarceration.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

- **Multifaceted Role of Teachers:**

- Teachers in correctional facilities should be prepared to take on roles beyond traditional teaching, acting as mentors, counsellors, and role models to provide a supportive environment for inmates.

- **Enhanced Professional Cooperation:**

- Promote cooperation between all professionals involved in correctional education, including teachers, prison staff, and external educators, to ensure the effective implementation of educational programmes.



- **Specialised Training and Continuous Professional Development:**
  - Provide specialised and ongoing training for correctional educators to equip them with the skills needed to manage behavioural issues, establish trust, and address the unique needs of inmates.
- **Integration of New Technologies:**
  - Incorporate digital learning environments and distance learning platforms to provide inmates with continuous educational opportunities and a connection to the outside world.
- **Support for Practitioners:**
  - Establish support systems for educators, including supervision, counselling, and professional development programmes to help them manage the emotional and psychological challenges of working in correctional facilities.
- **Tailored Educational Materials:**
  - Develop educational materials that cater to the specific needs of the inmate population, considering factors such as age, developmental stage, and language proficiency.
- **Lifelong Learning Opportunities:**
  - Ensure the availability of lifelong learning opportunities for inmates, including vocational training and higher education programmes, to support their reintegration into society.
- **Evaluation and Certification:**
  - Implement strict criteria for hiring and evaluating correctional educators, ensuring that only certified and adequately trained professionals work in prison schools.

- **Promotion of Cultural and Environmental Programmes:**

- Encourage the development and implementation of cultural, environmental, and skills development programmes to foster a sense of community and reduce tensions among inmates.

## **Italy**

The interviews conducted with practitioners in Italy's correctional system have highlighted significant challenges and potential strategies for enhancing the educational experiences of emerging adult learners. A prominent issue identified is the shortage of practitioners, which leads to overwork and limits the capacity of professionals to provide effective support. This situation underscores the critical need for employers to prioritise the psychological well-being of their staff through structured supervision and innovative work-life balance initiatives.

Moreover, the interviews emphasise the importance of collaboration among practitioners from diverse backgrounds. This collective intelligence fosters innovative approaches to correctional education, enriching the learning environment for inmates. A common competence framework was also identified as a valuable tool in the correctional industry, offering a standardised approach to education and training that can enhance both efficiency and effectiveness.

National policies play a crucial role in improving the quality of correctional education. The findings suggest that these policies should prioritise continuous training for prison operators and promote a culture of dynamic learning and adaptation within correctional settings. Ongoing education is essential for staying updated with the latest methodologies and practices in correctional pedagogy, thereby enhancing professional skills and the effectiveness of inmate education and rehabilitation.

Building trustful relationships with young adult inmates is another critical aspect highlighted in the interviews. This requires practitioners to engage in

active listening and to understand the backgrounds of these individuals. Assertive communication, combined with specific interview techniques and language skills, is vital for effectively interacting with young adults in correctional settings. Strengthening partnerships between correctional facilities and educational entities is also recommended to develop more tailored and effective educational initiatives for inmates.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

- **Address Practitioner Shortages:**

- Implement strategies to recruit and retain more practitioners to alleviate overwork and improve support for emerging adult learners in the correctional system.

- **Prioritise Psychological Well-Being:**

- Employers should focus on the psychological health of their staff through structured supervision and innovative work-life balance initiatives to foster a supportive work environment.

- **Enhance Collaborative Practices:**

- Promote collaboration among practitioners from diverse backgrounds to leverage collective intelligence and develop innovative educational approaches.

- **Develop a Common Competence Framework:**

- Establish a unified approach to education and training within the correctional industry to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Implement National Policies for Continuous Training:**

- Advocate for national policies that prioritise ongoing training for prison operators and embed a culture of dynamic learning and adaptation within correctional settings.
- **Focus on Continuous Education and Training:**
  - Ensure continuous education and training for practitioners to stay updated with the latest methodologies and practices in correctional pedagogy.
- **Build Trustful Relationships with Inmates:**
  - Encourage active listening and understanding of inmates' backgrounds to build trustful relationships and support effective rehabilitation.
- **Strengthen Communication Skills:**
  - Enhance practitioners' communication skills, including assertive communication and specific interview techniques, to engage effectively with young adults in correctional settings.
- **Foster Partnerships with Educational Entities:**
  - Strengthen partnerships between correctional facilities and educational institutions to develop more tailored and effective educational initiatives for inmates.

## Montenegro

In Montenegro, interviews with seven professional workers in the correctional system provided a comprehensive overview of the current practices and areas for improvement in correctional education. These interviews highlighted the importance of integrating new technologies into educational processes. The use of online training, e-learning platforms, and digital tools to personalise educational programmes has become increasingly significant. Practitioners also noted the utility of technology for monitoring

prisoner progress, conducting virtual webinars, and developing skill-enhancing apps, emphasising the transformative potential of digital innovations in correctional education.

Moreover, the professional development of practitioners is a critical focus. Regular participation in seminars, workshops, and conferences, along with continuous monitoring of professional literature and research, was identified as crucial for keeping practitioners informed and improving their pedagogical approaches. The interviews also underscored the value of specific training tailored to working with prisoners, mentoring, and cross-sector collaboration. Sharing experiences with colleagues from other prisons and institutions is seen as vital for broadening perspectives and enhancing the educational process.

The utility of a common competence framework in the correctional industry was a recurring theme. Such a framework would standardise knowledge and skills, facilitate the recognition and transfer of competencies between institutions, and enhance professional reputation and standards within the penal system. This would support career development and vocational promotion, ultimately increasing the effectiveness of training and competencies of employees. Furthermore, improved cooperation between employers and training providers was highlighted as essential. This includes organising specific trainings tailored to the correctional system's needs, ensuring regular communication, providing financial support for further education, and partnering with higher education institutions to develop new programmes. Enhancing infrastructure, developing multilingual educational materials, and increasing resources for working with specific prisoner groups were also deemed necessary for improving educational conditions within correctional institutions.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations:**

- **Integration of Technology:**

- Implement online training and e-learning platforms for prisoners.
- Use digital tools to personalise educational programmes and monitor progress.
- Conduct virtual webinars and develop skill-enhancing apps.
- **Professional Development:**
  - Regularly participate in seminars, workshops, and conferences.
  - Monitor professional literature and research in corrective pedagogy.
  - Engage in training specific to working with prisoners and mentoring with experts.
  - Exchange experiences with colleagues from other institutions.
- **Common Competence Framework:**
  - Standardise knowledge and skills of practitioners.
  - Facilitate skill recognition and transfer between institutions.
  - Improve professional reputation and standards.
  - Support career development and vocational promotion.
- **Collaboration Between Employers and Training Providers:**
  - Organise specific trainings tailored to correctional needs.
  - Ensure regular meetings and communication.
  - Provide financial support for further education.
  - Partner with higher education institutions for new programme development.

- **Additional Tools and Resources:**

- Develop multilingual educational materials.
- Use data management and analytics tools for educational performance.
- Provide counselling and mentoring support for practitioners.
- Increase resources for specific prisoner groups (e.g., addicts, sex offenders).
- Improve institutional infrastructure for better educational conditions.

## **North Macedonia**

Interviews with professionals in the penitentiary sector in North Macedonia revealed key insights into the educational and rehabilitative processes within correctional institutions. The interviews involved three individuals from the Educational Reformatory in Volkoviya, an advisor from the Sanctions Enforcement Authority, and a primary school teacher involved in educational projects for incarcerated individuals in Shtip. The respondents' diverse educational and professional backgrounds, coupled with varying levels of experience, highlighted the multifaceted nature of correctional education and the critical roles these professionals play in advancing the PICTURES project's objectives.

The interviewees emphasised the significance of managerial experience, administrative expertise, and direct interaction roles in shaping effective educational and rehabilitation strategies. The first interviewee, with extensive managerial experience in rehabilitation and treatment departments, provided valuable insights into the current programme's effectiveness and areas for improvement. The second interviewee, with a strong educational background and administrative skills, highlighted the importance of compliance with regulations for maintaining operational

integrity. The third interviewee, overseeing prison police, underscored the need for efficient execution of security protocols to ensure a safe environment. The fourth interviewee's role in monitoring educational programmes and facilitating post-release employment emphasised a deep understanding of operational challenges and educational needs. The fifth interviewee's extensive educational experience and project coordination skills were crucial for implementing and evaluating educational initiatives, ensuring alignment with the PICTURES project's goals.

A consensus emerged on the fundamental skills and competencies required for practitioners working with emerging adults in penitentiary institutions. Effective interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, empathy, patience, and the ability to build trust-based relationships were identified as critical. Practitioners must also possess a comprehensive knowledge base, including understanding the psychological and social development stages of emerging adults, and be proficient in educational methodologies, behaviour management, and emotional intelligence. The alignment between respondents' roles and their perspectives on necessary skills highlighted how their professional experiences shape their understanding of effective practices within correctional settings.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

- **Interpersonal Communication:**
  - Emphasise the development of both verbal and non-verbal communication skills to engage constructively with young offenders and colleagues.
- **Empathy and Understanding:**
  - Foster empathy and compassion among practitioners to build trust and provide effective support to inmates.
- **Conflict Resolution:**



- Equip staff with the skills to manage and resolve conflicts, maintaining a positive and safe environment.
- **Patience and Perseverance:**
  - Highlight the importance of patience given the challenging nature of the work and the time required for behavioural changes and rehabilitation.
- **Building Trust:**
  - Encourage the establishment and maintenance of trust through reliability, consistency, and open communication.
- **Emotional Regulation:**
  - Train practitioners in emotional regulation to prevent escalation of tensions and provide a supportive environment.
- **Legal and Ethical Standards:**
  - Ensure knowledge of and adherence to legal and ethical guidelines to maintain professional conduct and safeguard the well-being of youth.
- **Educational Expertise:**
  - Promote knowledge of subject matter and adaptability in teaching methods to meet diverse learning needs.
- **Soft Skills:**
  - Develop soft skills such as adaptability, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management for effective practice in dynamic and challenging environments.
- **Continuous Professional Development:**

- Encourage regular participation in seminars, workshops, and professional development opportunities to stay informed about the latest trends in correctional pedagogy.

## Portugal

The interviews conducted with four teachers and one master's student in the correctional education system in Portugal revealed significant insights into the current practices and areas for improvement in the educational approach within correctional facilities. The respondents' diverse backgrounds and extensive experiences highlighted the necessity for tailored training programmes that address the specific educational and psychological needs of inmates. The interviews underscored the importance of empathy, resilience, and the adaptation of teaching methods to cater to diverse learning needs, emphasising the need for holistic, trauma-informed approaches to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders.

The respondents highlighted the critical skills and competences required for working with emerging adult learners in correctional settings. Adaptability and flexibility in teaching methods are crucial, as different approaches are needed for varying groups of students. Teachers noted that engaging students with low literacy levels through interactive and practical activities significantly improved their participation and learning outcomes. Setting clear boundaries while maintaining empathy was identified as essential for managing classroom behaviour effectively. Additionally, the importance of understanding trauma and its effects on behaviour was emphasised, highlighting the need for comprehensive training in trauma-informed practices.

Several challenges were identified in the correctional education system. These include low attendance and high turnover rates among students, the lack of essential resources such as internet access and printers, and the emotional toll on educators due to the challenging environment. The interviews also pointed out the inadequacy of salaries and working

conditions, which often do not match the responsibilities and efforts required. The necessity for better support systems for educators, including professional counselling and peer support groups, was strongly emphasised. The importance of continuous professional development, collaboration among practitioners, and the integration of best practices to enhance educational outcomes was also highlighted.

### **Key Findings and Recommendations:**

- **Integration of Technology:**

- Advocate for better access to essential pedagogical resources such as internet access and printers to enable dynamic teaching methods.

- **Professional Development:**

- Encourage continuous learning and professional development opportunities for educators in correctional settings.
- Provide comprehensive training on the psychological aspects of trauma and its effects on behaviour.
- Offer training in social skills and confidence-building for educators.

- **Adaptable and Inclusive Teaching Methods:**

- Develop a curriculum framework that allows for flexibility in topic selection based on inmate interests.
- Encourage the use of interactive and practical teaching methods tailored to the diverse learning styles of inmates.
- Implement strategies that balance empathy with authority to create a supportive learning environment.

- **Support Systems for Educators:**

- Develop support systems for educators to cope with the emotional toll of working in correctional settings.
- Offer access to professional counselling, peer support groups, and stress management workshops.
- **Common Competence Framework:**
  - Support the development of a common competency framework among correctional educators to standardise skills and knowledge.
  - Facilitate both informal and formal exchanges of experiences and strategies among educators through regular meetings and online forums.
- **Collaboration and Career Development:**
  - Foster close collaboration with technicians, psychologists, and other professionals to create a supportive environment for young offenders.
  - Develop programmes to assist practitioners in finding employment within the correctional education system.
  - Create job placement services and career counselling to support educators in securing positions after completing their training.
- **Holistic and Trauma-Informed Approaches:**
  - Integrate trauma-informed practices into the curriculum to support the psychological well-being of inmates.
  - Develop holistic education programmes that include activities like yoga therapy to promote mental health and well-being.

## Romania

Interviews conducted with correctional practitioners in Romania revealed significant insights into the current state and needs of correctional education. The interviews, conducted with experienced professionals working in various roles within the correctional system, underscored the importance of developing individualised education plans (IEPs) for inmates to address their diverse educational backgrounds and learning needs. The practitioners emphasised that inmates often have very low literacy and basic skills, making a one-size-fits-all approach ineffective. Instead, IEPs help tailor educational content to be relevant and engaging, allowing inmates to progress at their own pace and align their learning with rehabilitation and reintegration goals.

Continuous professional development for correctional staff emerged as another crucial theme. Practitioners highlighted the need for a diverse set of skills, including group management, conflict resolution, empathy, and adaptability. They stressed the importance of regular training courses, workshops, and exchanges with educational professionals to stay updated with the latest trends and practices in correctional education. This ongoing education ensures that staff can effectively manage the psycho-educational aspects of their roles and adapt to the evolving needs of the correctional environment. Additionally, leveraging emerging technologies to create digitised learning environments was seen as a significant opportunity to engage inmates and make education more appealing and accessible.

Effective correctional education also requires interdisciplinary collaboration. The interviews highlighted the necessity of regular communication and meetings between psychology specialists, social workers, and correctional staff to address the complex needs of inmates. A common framework of competencies for correctional professionals could facilitate this collaboration, ensuring consistent and effective practices across the board. Training and support for staff, specialised courses adapted to incorporate new technologies, and innovative teaching methods were emphasised as crucial for professional growth. Integrated efforts between correctional institutions, school inspectorates, educational services, and probation

services were recommended to support inmates' progress during and after incarceration, ensuring continuity in education and reducing recidivism.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

- **Individualised Education Plans (IEPs):**

- Develop IEPs tailored to inmates' educational histories, learning needs, and personal interests.
- Use IEPs to make education relevant and engaging, allowing inmates to progress at their own pace.

- **Continuous Professional Development:**

- Regular training courses, workshops, and exchanges with educational professionals.
- Focus on skills such as group management, conflict resolution, empathy, and adaptability.
- Incorporate the latest trends and practices in correctional education.

- **Leveraging Technology:**

- Utilise emerging technologies to create digitised learning environments.
- Implement digital learning platforms and resources to enhance the quality of education.
- Provide training for correctional staff to effectively use these technologies.

- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:**

- Foster regular communication and meetings between psychology specialists, social workers, and correctional staff.
- Develop a common framework of competencies for correctional professionals to ensure consistent and effective practices.
- **Integrated Efforts:**
  - Coordinate between correctional institutions, school inspectorates, educational services, and probation services.
  - Ensure continuity in education and support during and after incarceration to reduce recidivism.
  - Promote interdisciplinary collaboration to address inmates' complex needs comprehensively.
- **Support and Training for Staff:**
  - Provide specialised courses adapted to new technologies and innovative teaching methods.
  - Ensure continuous professional growth and support for correctional staff.
  - Equip staff with tools to manage the unique challenges of the correctional environment and support inmates' development and reintegration.

## Serbia

The interviews conducted with a diverse group of professionals involved in Serbia's correctional system, including representatives from universities, adult education providers, NGOs, prisons, lawyers, judges, public prosecutors, and social workers, have highlighted several critical issues and potential solutions for improving correctional education. The respondents, whose experience in the field ranges widely, emphasise the importance of a

collaborative approach to addressing the educational needs of inmates, aligned with both national capabilities and EU trends.

Managing inmate behaviour stands out as the most significant challenge, cited by 40% of respondents. This issue is further complicated by a lack of resources (30%) and inadequate training for educators (20%). Additionally, the administrative burden associated with managing educational programmes, noted by 10% of respondents, exacerbates the difficulties in delivering effective correctional education. These findings underscore the necessity for targeted interventions to enhance the correctional education environment.

The interviews also reveal that consistent and substantial investment in professional development is crucial for the professional growth of educators and administrators. Addressing behavioural issues through specialised training, providing adequate resources for educators, and reducing administrative burdens are key areas that need improvement. By focusing on these aspects, the correctional education system can better fulfil its role in rehabilitating inmates and preparing them for successful reintegration into society.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

- **Behaviour Management:**

- Managing inmate behaviour is the most significant challenge (40%).
- Behavioural issues are compounded by a lack of resources (30%) and inadequate training for educators (20%).

- **Resource Deficiency:**

- Insufficient resources hinder the effectiveness of correctional education programmes.



- A notable administrative burden (10%) further complicates programme management and delivery.
- **Diverse Professional Involvement:**
  - The involvement of a wide range of professionals highlights the need for a collaborative approach to address the educational needs of inmates.
- **Specialised Training:**
  - Implement specialised training programmes focused on managing inmate behaviour and addressing specific behavioural issues.
  - Provide continuous professional development to ensure educators are equipped with the latest methodologies and skills.
- **Resource Allocation:**
  - Increase investment in resources to support educational programmes within correctional facilities.
  - Ensure that educators have access to the necessary tools and materials to deliver effective education.
- **Administrative Efficiency:**
  - Streamline administrative processes to reduce the burden on educators and administrators, allowing them to focus more on programme delivery and inmate engagement.
- **Collaborative Efforts:**
  - Foster collaboration among various stakeholders, including social workers, prison staff, educators, legal professionals, and

NGOs, to create a more integrated and effective correctional education system.

- **Policy and Investment:**

- Advocate for national policies that prioritise ongoing training and development for correctional staff.
- Encourage substantial and consistent investment in professional development and educational infrastructure.

## **Common Findings and Implementation Strategies**

This section synthesises key findings obtained from the interviews conducted across the ten partner countries involved in the PICTURES Project: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, and Serbia. This comprehensive analysis revealed similarities in the challenges faced, competencies required, and the potential solutions identified in the correctional education systems in these diverse national contexts. By distilling these common threads, we aim to provide a solid foundation for the development of generally applicable strategies to improve correctional pedagogy for emerging adults. The findings presented here represent areas of consensus among the majority of participating countries, offering valuable insights that can be adapted and implemented in various correctional education contexts. These commonalities emphasise where certain challenges and opportunities in correctional education converge, highlighting the potential for collaborative, cross-border solutions and the sharing of best practices. The following key findings emerge as consistently significant across all partner countries, providing a solid basis for the development of comprehensive strategies to improve correctional education systems throughout Europe.

### **Key common findings include:**

- The critical importance of continuous professional development for correctional educators and staff, including regular participation in seminars, workshops, and conferences.
- The need for a multidisciplinary approach, integrating expertise from various fields such as psychology, social work, penology, and education.
- The significance of developing strong interpersonal skills, including empathy, effective communication, conflict resolution, and the ability to build trust-based relationships with inmates.
- The challenge of managing inmate behaviour effectively whilst maintaining a supportive learning environment, cited as a primary concern by practitioners across multiple countries.
- The necessity of integrating new technologies and digital learning platforms to enhance educational opportunities and overcome logistical challenges within correctional settings.
- The value of implementing individualised education plans (IEPs) to address diverse learning needs, educational backgrounds, and interests of inmates.
- The importance of fostering collaboration between correctional institutions, universities, NGOs, and other external educational entities to enhance the quality and relevance of educational programmes.
- The need for improved resources and infrastructure within correctional facilities to support educational programmes, including better access to IT equipment and learning materials.
- The benefit of developing a common competency framework for correctional education practitioners to standardise skills, facilitate knowledge transfer, and enhance professional standards.

- The challenge of addressing the administrative burden associated with managing educational programmes in correctional settings, which often detracts from direct educational activities.
- The importance of addressing the psychological well-being of both inmates and staff through structured support systems, including counselling and supervision.
- The need for specialised training in trauma-informed practices and understanding the specific needs of emerging adult learners in correctional settings.
- The value of incorporating vocational training and life skills education to better prepare inmates for reintegration into society and reduce recidivism.
- The importance of developing flexible and adaptable teaching methods to cater to the diverse learning styles and needs within the inmate population.
- The need for better integration of correctional education with post-release support services to ensure continuity of learning and successful reintegration.

#### **4.3. Questionnaires Analysis**

Two questionnaires were developed to survey the pedagogical needs of: 1) professionals working with young adults in prisons, and 2) potential pedagogical skills required by future professionals who will be working with young adults in prisons in Portugal. The results of these questionnaires will inform the development of future training paths within the PICTURES project.

### **1. Professionals**

The questionnaire aimed at professionals consisted of groups of questions designed to collect various types of data. The first three questions were intended to gather information to characterise the participants' professional profiles. The second part of the survey, covering questions four to eight, explored existing knowledge and training in correctional pedagogy among professionals working in prisons. Perceptions of specific competence needs were addressed in questions nine to eleven. Questions twelve to eighteen examined a range of topics, including main challenges, the role of digital technologies, knowledge updates, synergies between employers and training providers, and additional suggestions.

From the 10 countries that form the PICTURES project partnership, eight provided exact respondent numbers and seven provided detailed data and exact numbers for most of the items of the questionnaire. Although Croatia and Serbia have not included a separated section dedicated to the results of their national reports, the results seem to have been incorporated across the other sections of the report. Regarding Greece, the English version of the report mentions that 34 professionals were surveyed. A paragraph addressing the main results was included, but the results of the questionnaire have mainly informed other parts of the national report.

The two following points present an analysis of the results of surveys per respondents' category that include mainly the results of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Portugal, which in varying degrees of precision have provided detailed information regarding most of the questions of the surveys. In what was possible the Greek analysis was incorporated, as there was a small section

dedicated to the questionnaire, but for Croatia and Serbia this was not achievable.

The results presented below represent, therefore, a total of 237 participants from the eight countries that provided detailed information. However, at least 271 people participated in the surveys across eight countries and probably more than 300 across all ten countries of the partnership.

## **1.1 Respondents Professional Profile**

The survey was responded to by 271 professionals working in the national correctional systems of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, and Portugal. Of those, at least 45 were educators; 21 social workers; 12 public administrators; 11 psychologists; 5 sanctions enforcement authorities; 4 prison wardens; 4 pedagogues; 2 teachers; 2 lawyers; 2 prison health deputies; 2 nurses; 2 specialists in criminology and security; 2 consultants; 1 sociologist; 1 specialist in countering modern forms of crime; 1 police officer in the prison; 1 socio-cultural animator; and 1 social projects coordinator, totalling 119 professionals in four countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Portugal). The remaining 152 respondents were from Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, and Romania. Although not specifying the numbers for each, these countries have nevertheless indicated the professions of the respondents, including all professions specified above as well as social scientists, criminologists, and penitentiary police trade union representatives.

Only Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Portugal provided detailed information regarding the 'employment sector' and 'type of organisation represented', totalling 70 participants, nearly a quarter of the 271 respondents. Based on these 70 participants, the survey was answered mainly by professionals working in the 'correctional system sector', more precisely 31 participants, followed by 10 working in the civil society sector and 9 in the public school sector. Regarding the type of organisations the participants represented, 60 out of 70 represented an organisation from the 'execution and social reinsertion system', with 14 specifying that they work in a correctional facility and 6 in youth correctional centres. Of the remaining 10 participants, 6 work for an NGO, 3 in public schools, and 1 in the bar association. It's important to mention that the results presented in this paragraph represent only one third of the participants.

## 1. Professionals

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## Existing Knowledge and Training Among Participants

The participants were asked to assess five items related to knowledge and training on a scale from one to five, where one represents 'No knowledge/No training' and five represents 'Extensive knowledge/Extensive training'. The first three items evaluated the participants' knowledge and training, while the last two assessed the adequacy of training offers for professionals working in the prison system.

The data collected provides insights into current knowledge levels, continuous and initial training, and the perceived adequacy of training programmes for practitioners in the field. While not all countries provided comprehensive data, the available information allows for a meaningful comparison and highlights key trends and disparities.

**Current Knowledge and Training Levels:** The level of knowledge in correctional pedagogy varies significantly both across and within countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported an even split between adequate and inadequate knowledge, while Bulgaria and Portugal indicated that most respondents had intermediate to expert-level knowledge. However, it is important to mention that on both countries the respondents' profile, predominantly educators, social workers, teachers, and consultants, likely skews the results towards higher reported levels of knowledge and training in correctional pedagogy, as these professionals typically have greater access to resources and opportunities for skill development due to the nature of their roles within the prison system. In North Macedonia, knowledge levels varied by sector, with educators and psychologists demonstrating greater proficiency



compared to correctional officers. Italy reported high levels of knowledge, although Greece noted that many professionals felt underprepared despite being experienced.

**Continuous training** presented a mixed picture across the surveyed countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina's results mirrored their knowledge assessment, while Bulgaria showed relatively high levels of continuous training. Notably, Italy reported a lack of employer-provided training, with professionals relying on self-initiative for development. Portugal indicated that a significant majority of participants had intermediate to extensive ongoing training.

**Initial training levels** also varied considerably. Bosnia and Herzegovina's responses were like those for continuous training, and Bulgaria reported relatively high levels. However, Italy noted that most respondents rated their initial training as very low. In Portugal, half of the participants reported intermediate initial training, with nearly a third reporting little to no training.

**Adequacy of Training Programmes:** There was a general consensus across countries that both continuous and initial training programmes are inadequate. Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Romania, and Portugal all reported that the majority of respondents found both types of training insufficient. Bulgaria stood out as an exception, with most respondents believing both continuous and initial training levels were adequate. This disparity highlights potential differences in training approaches or resources between Bulgaria and other surveyed countries.

Several countries, including Italy and Romania, emphasised the need for more practical experience and modern approaches in correctional pedagogy. This

suggests a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in the field, which could be addressed through improved training programmes.

The surveys reveal significant disparities in knowledge and training levels both between and within countries in the field of correctional pedagogy. While some countries report satisfactory levels of knowledge and training, which may be representative of professional profiles that answered to the surveys in different countries, there is a widespread perception that both initial and continuous training programmes are inadequate. This highlights a clear need for improved and standardised training across Europe, with a focus on practical experience and modern approaches. Future efforts should aim to address these gaps, potentially by sharing best practices from countries like Bulgaria that report higher satisfaction with their training programmes. It's important to note that the absence of data from Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia limits the comprehensiveness of this analysis, suggesting a need for more uniform data collection across all partner countries to fully understand and address the challenges in correctional pedagogy training.

### **1.3 Skills and Competencies, Needs and Challenges Faced**

This analysis focuses on areas requiring improvement, training needs, essential skills for practitioners, challenges faced, and the potential role of technology in correctional pedagogy across ten European countries.

**Areas Requiring Improvement and Training Needs:** Across the surveyed countries, there was a consistent emphasis on the need for enhanced specific and technical skills in correctional pedagogy. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, North Macedonia, and Portugal all highlighted this as a priority

area for improvement. Teaching methods and learning technologies were also frequently mentioned, with countries like Greece and Romania specifically emphasising the need for improved learning technologies and methodologies. Soft skills, particularly communication and interpersonal skills, were identified as crucial areas for development in several countries, including Bulgaria, Greece, and Portugal

**Essential Skills for Practitioners:** There was a remarkable consensus across countries regarding the most important skills for practitioners working with emerging adults in correctional systems. Communication skills were consistently highlighted as crucial, mentioned explicitly by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, and Portugal. Other commonly cited skills included empathy, patience, resilience, critical thinking, and the ability to manage emotions and stress. These findings suggest a universal recognition of the importance of interpersonal skills in correctional pedagogy.

**Challenges Faced by Practitioners:** The challenges reported by practitioners were largely consistent across countries. Many respondents highlighted issues related to the specific characteristics of the young adult population, including low motivation, aggressive behaviour, and resistance to change. Bulgaria, Italy, and Portugal all mentioned these challenges. Other common issues included the emotional demands of the work, lack of resources, and difficulties in establishing trust with inmates. The generation gap and the need for better support systems for practitioners were also noted in several countries.

**Role of Technology:** There was a general agreement across countries that emerging technologies could play a positive role in correctional pedagogy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, and Portugal all saw potential in using technology to enhance engagement, provide interactive learning experiences, and improve communication within the correctional system. However, several countries, including Portugal, noted the need for careful implementation and surveillance of technology use in prison settings.

**Common Competence Framework:** The vast majority of respondents across countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, and Portugal, agreed that a common competence framework for the correctional industry would be useful. This suggests a widespread desire for standardisation and professional development in the field.

The surveys reveal significant commonalities in the challenges, needs, and aspirations of correctional pedagogy practitioners across the surveyed European countries. There is a clear demand for enhanced training in specific skills, improved teaching methods, and better integration of technology in correctional education. The consistent emphasis on soft skills and communication highlights the interpersonal nature of effective correctional pedagogy. Moving forward, the development of a common competence framework and increased focus on practitioner support and development could significantly enhance the field of correctional pedagogy across Europe.

## Knowledge and Skills Update

The surveys examined how practitioners across ten European countries stay updated with developments in correctional pedagogy, highlighting similarities and differences in approaches to professional development.

**Staying Updated with Developments:** In Bosnia and Herzegovina, two-thirds of respondents reported familiarity with developments in corrective pedagogy through various means, including training organised by the Council of Europe, available literature in institutions, internet resources, and knowledge exchange with colleagues. However, one-third of respondents were not familiar with current developments. Bulgaria showed a high level of engagement with professional development. Most respondents reported staying up to date through training provided by the General Directorate Execution of Sentences (GDEP), self-study of specialised literature and academic articles, personal experience, and conversations with colleagues. Only a small minority stated they don't stay updated at all.

Portugal presented a mixed picture, with most respondents actively seeking updates on correctional pedagogy knowledge. The primary methods included self-taught channels such as books, scientific articles, research, and training. Some participants mentioned exchanging practices with specialists and European cooperation. However, a small number of respondents reported not knowing how to access new knowledge, highlighting a need for improved ongoing training opportunities. For Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia, no specific data was provided on this topic.

**Common Trends and Differences:** Across the countries that provided data, there's a clear trend of practitioners taking initiative in their professional development. Self-study, peer exchange, and participation in organised training sessions appear to be the most common methods of staying updated. However, there are noticeable differences in the level of access to

and engagement with professional development opportunities. The lack of data from several countries limits the comprehensiveness of this analysis. However, the available information suggests a need for more structured and accessible professional development opportunities in correctional pedagogy across Europe.

While many practitioners show a commitment to staying updated in correctional pedagogy, there's a clear need for more systematic and accessible professional development opportunities. Future efforts should focus on providing structured training programs and facilitating knowledge exchange between practitioners across different European countries.

## Synergies and Further Suggestions

In this section the additional tools, resources, and collaborative approaches suggested by practitioners across European countries to enhance correctional pedagogy practices, are examined.

**Tools and Resources:** Across the countries that provided data, there was a consistent emphasis on practical and interactive tools. Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted the importance of experience exchange, round tables, and cooperation with scientific institutions. Bulgaria suggested more practical tools, therapeutic and rehabilitation resources, innovative social work methods, and video films with real case scenarios. Italy and Portugal emphasised the need for an andragogical vision, supervision, staff empowerment, and continuous training. Portugal specifically mentioned podcasts, discussion groups, and learning support materials like manuals.

## **Collaboration Between Employers and Training Providers:**

Bulgaria, Italy, and Portugal provided insights on improving collaboration between employers and training providers. There was a common theme of increasing regular meetings, discussions, and shared initiatives. Bulgaria emphasized synchronized learning events and materials that blend theory and practice. Italy suggested making training mandatory during work shifts, mixing training between different areas, and involving trainers with field experience. Portugal highlighted the importance of creating tailored training paths and involving employees in identifying key skills and needs.

**Innovative Approaches:** Some unique suggestions emerged. Portugal proposed creating internships for incarcerated young people in local companies, supervised by training centres. This approach aims to extend rehabilitation efforts beyond prison walls and involve local communities. Italy suggested implementing projects with multidisciplinary professional support and providing psychological support for staff.

**Common Trends and Differences:** While all responding countries recognized the need for more practical and interactive tools, there were differences in the specific resources suggested. Some countries focused more on peer-to-peer learning and experience exchange, while others emphasised the need for structured training programs and materials. The suggestions for collaboration between employers and training providers were largely consistent across countries, with a focus on regular communication, practical training, and involving practitioners in the development of training programs.

The data reveals a clear demand for more practical, interactive, and diverse tools and resources in correctional pedagogy across Europe. There's also a strong emphasis on improving collaboration between employers and training providers to create more effective and relevant training opportunities. Future efforts in correctional pedagogy should focus on developing these practical tools, facilitating knowledge exchange, and creating more integrated training programs that involve practitioners in their design and implementation.

## Key Findings

**Survey Respondents and Context:** The survey was answered by a variety of professionals within the prison system, with educators, teachers, and consultants forming the majority of respondents. Due to their roles, these professionals typically have greater access to knowledge and training resources, which may impact the survey results. A larger, more diverse sample would be needed for a more comprehensive analysis.

**Knowledge and Training Levels:** Across the surveyed countries, most participants reported 'Intermediate' to 'Extended Knowledge and training' levels in correctional pedagogy. However, this may reflect the roles of the participants rather than the general state of knowledge across all prison staff.

**Areas Requiring Improvement and Training Needs:** Consistently across countries, 'Soft skills' and 'Specific and technical skills' were identified as the most important areas for working with incarcerated young people. These were also the areas where professionals felt most challenged and lacking. Specific needs included:



- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Empathy and active listening
- Conflict resolution and management
- Stress management and emotional intelligence
- Specific knowledge of adolescent psychology and criminology
- Technical intervention skills
- Teaching methods and learning technologies

### **Challenges in Correctional Pedagogy**

Two main sources of challenges were identified:

#### **Challenges arising from the prison system context:**

- Rigidity of the prison system and its administrators
- Unpredictability of daily contexts
- Heterogeneity of educational situations
- Security issues
- Limited collaboration between different teams

#### **Challenges stemming from young people's specificities:**

- Engagement and behavioural issues (e.g., demotivation, resistance, lack of adherence)
- Mental health and emotional issues (e.g., trauma, risk behaviour, anxiety)
- Social issues (e.g., stigmatisation)

**Role of Technology:** There was general agreement across countries that emerging technologies could play a positive role in correctional pedagogy. Potential benefits included

- Facilitating trainer/trainee interactivity
- Increasing engagement and interest
- Encouraging research and knowledge acquisition
- Promoting digital literacy
- Enabling active learning strategies that simulate conditions outside prison

However, careful implementation and surveillance were noted as necessary in the prison setting.

**Staying Updated with Developments:** Methods to stay updated with developments in correctional pedagogy varied across countries but commonly included:

- Participation in organised training sessions
- Self-study of specialised literature and academic articles
- Peer exchange and discussions with colleagues
- Internet resources

However, some respondents reported not knowing how to access new knowledge, highlighting a need for improved ongoing training opportunities.

### **Collaboration Between Employers and Training Providers**

**Suggestions to improve collaboration included:**

- Regular meetings and discussions
- Synchronised learning events and materials blending theory and practice
- Mandatory training during work shifts
- Involving practitioners in identifying key skills and needs
- Creating tailored and specific training paths

## Additional Tools and Resources

Practitioners suggested various additional tools and resources, including:

- Practical and interactive tools
- Video films with real case scenarios
- Therapeutic and rehabilitation resources
- Podcasts featuring prison professionals
- Discussion and sharing groups
- Learning support materials such as manuals

**Common Competence Framework:** Most respondents across countries agreed that a common competence framework for the correctional industry would be useful, suggesting a desire for standardisation and professional development in the field.

**Innovative Approaches:** Some unique suggestions emerged, such as creating internships for incarcerated young people in local companies and implementing projects with multidisciplinary professional support.

## Conclusion

The survey highlights a clear need for targeted training and skill development for professionals working in correctional pedagogy, particularly in soft skills and specific technical skills relevant to the prison context and young incarcerated individuals. There is a strong emphasis on improving the relational aspects of interactions with young offenders, moving away from judgmental attitudes, and focusing on empathy and understanding. The findings also suggest a need for more structured and accessible professional development opportunities, improved collaboration between employers and training providers, and the potential for technology to enhance correctional education practices.

## **2. Students**

A questionnaire was developed to understand and analyse the potential pedagogical skills needed of future professionals who will be working with young adults in prisons in Portugal. The following analysis examines student perspectives on correctional pedagogy and working with emerging adults in the correctional system across several European countries. Data was provided from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, Montenegro, Romania, and Portugal. Croatia, Greece, North Macedonia, and Serbia did not provide data. The analysis focuses on student profiles and experience, skills and knowledge needs, challenges for professionals, the role of higher education and vocational training, and additional resources for students pursuing careers in this field. By examining these aspects, we aim to identify key similarities and differences across the surveyed countries, as well as highlight important findings that could inform future educational and training initiatives in correctional pedagogy.

## **Student Profile and Experience**

At least 59 students responded to the survey from 6 countries, more precisely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Italy, Montenegro, Romania and Portugal. The remaining four countries, Croatia, Greece, North Macedonia and Serbia have not provided numbers or other detailed information regarding the surveys applied to students and have rather included the results across the national reports. Therefore, the following analysis reflects only the data that could be retrieved and processed.

Most surveyed students across countries were studying at the bachelor's level, with a few pursuing master's degrees. Their fields of study primarily included sociology, psychology, law, and social work. This diverse academic background reflects the multidisciplinary nature of correctional pedagogy.

Most students reported having no previous experience working in correctional settings. However, a small number, particularly in Portugal and Bosnia and Herzegovina, had some exposure through internships or work placements. For instance, in Portugal, one participant had 25 years of experience working in prison contexts, while another had spent nine months accompanying a Professional Social Reintegration Technician in an educational centre.

Motivations for working in this field were largely consistent across countries. Students expressed a desire to support young offenders, whom they often perceived as neglected by society. They also showed a keen interest in understanding and addressing criminal behaviour. As one Portuguese student noted, their motivation stemmed from "wanting to support this particular group of young people, whom they perceive as neglected by society."

## Needs

Students across all countries identified a range of skills and knowledge they felt were necessary for working in correctional settings:

- Psychological and pedagogical skills: Students from Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasised the need for "insightfulness" and "awareness of the complexity of social relations."
- Communication skills: Bulgarian students specifically mentioned "effective communication skills" and "listening skills."
- Legal and ethical knowledge: Italian students highlighted the importance of "juridical and social competencies."
- Intervention skills: This included crisis management and, as Montenegrin students pointed out, "stress management skills."
- Empathy and understanding: This was a recurring theme across all countries, with Italian students explicitly mentioning "empathy" as an essential competency.

## Previous Knowledge

Most students across all surveyed countries reported having no specific training in correctional pedagogy. For example, in Montenegro, 100% of respondents answered that they hadn't received any such training. Similarly, in Italy, 85% of students had not received training on correctional pedagogy. This highlights a significant gap in current educational programs and underscores the need for more specialised courses in this field.

## **Areas of Interest**

Common areas of interest in correctional pedagogy included:

- Teaching methods: This was a popular choice across countries, with students showing interest in pedagogical approaches specific to correctional settings.
- Soft skills development: Bulgarian students ranked "communication and soft skills" highest among their interests.
- Specific/technical skills: Italian students, in particular, expressed a strong interest in acquiring "specific and technical competencies."
- Learning technologies: This was particularly emphasised by students in Bulgaria and Montenegro, reflecting an awareness of the potential role of technology in correctional education.
- Sustainability practices: While not as frequently mentioned, this area of interest indicates an awareness of long-term, systemic approaches to correctional pedagogy.

## **Challenges for Professionals Working with Emerging Adults in Prisons**

Students across countries identified several common challenges:

- Lack of resources and support: Montenegrin students highlighted issues such as "insufficient training" and "inadequate wages" for correctional professionals.
- Difficulty in building trust: Italian students identified "insinuating a genuine desire of change" in inmates as a significant challenge.
- Managing complex psychological and behavioural issues: Romanian students noted the challenge of addressing "deviant, criminal or lack of personal aspirations" among incarcerated young adults.
- Overcoming societal stigma: Portuguese students mentioned the challenge of "societal recognition, including sometimes the emerging adults' own recognition that they deserve to receive some kind of support."
- Balancing security concerns with rehabilitation goals: This was particularly emphasised by Montenegrin students, who noted the "unpredictability" and potential for "aggressive and dangerous reactions" from inmates.

## **Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training Synergies**

Students across all countries recognised the important role of both higher education institutions (HEIs) and vocational education and training (VET) in preparing professionals for correctional work. Key points included:

- The need for a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills: Bulgarian students emphasised the importance of "both theoretical and practical knowledge."



- The importance of multidisciplinary approaches: Italian students suggested that VET and HEI should provide "specific knowledge and practical tools to follow a penitentiary career."
- The role of HEIs and VET in raising awareness: Romanian students highlighted the need for these institutions to increase "the visibility of the subject."
- The need for closer collaboration: Portuguese students suggested that VET and HE institutions play a crucial role in "promoting literacy and visibility of the subject."

## **Additional Resources for Students Pursuing Careers in Prisons with Young Adults**

Students consistently suggested several additional resources that would be beneficial:

- Internships and practical experience: This was a common suggestion across countries, with Bosnian students specifically mentioning "student internships in penal-correctional institutions."
- Mentoring programmes: Montenegrin students suggested "a partial program with one mentor so that students are introduced to the system and gradually gain experience."
- Specialised training: Bulgarian students recommended "more practical training, and cooperation with international organisations."
- Improved access to information: Romanian students called for "comprehensive training that includes conflict management, effective communication, and empathy."
- Opportunities for international exchanges: This was implied in several responses, reflecting a desire to learn from different systems and approaches.

## **Conclusion**

This analysis reveals a strong interest among students in correctional pedagogy and working with emerging adults in correctional settings. However, it also highlights significant gaps in current educational provision across the surveyed countries. Students feel underprepared for the specific challenges of this work and desire more specialised training, particularly in soft skills and practical experience.

The findings suggest a need for educational institutions to develop more targeted programmes in correctional pedagogy, incorporating both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Additionally, there is a clear call for greater collaboration between educational institutions and correctional facilities to provide students with real-world exposure to the field. The analysis underscores the complex, multidisciplinary nature of correctional work with emerging adults. Effective preparation for careers in this field requires a holistic approach that addresses not only specific skills and knowledge but also the broader systemic and societal challenges inherent in correctional work.

Finally, the consistency in responses across different countries suggests that there may be value in developing international standards or guidelines for education and training in correctional pedagogy. This could facilitate the sharing of best practices and the development of more comprehensive and effective training programmes across Europe.

## **5. Inspiring practices**

This comprehensive table showcases a diverse array of inspiring practices and projects in penal and rehabilitative systems across Europe, aligning closely with the objectives of the PICTURES project. Compiled by the PICTURES project consortium, these initiatives address crucial aspects of modern penal reform that resonate with PICTURES' aim to professionalise practitioners supporting emerging adults in custodial settings. From e-learning initiatives and practical vocational training to peer support schemes and human rights protection programmes, these practices represent a

concerted effort to improve penal systems, enhance rehabilitation outcomes, and uphold the dignity of incarcerated individuals.

Much like PICTURES' focus on creating a common language for practitioners and developing innovative teaching methods for emerging adult corrections, these examples highlight the potential for fostering new approaches to education and training within custodial environments. By showcasing successful interventions across various European countries, this table complements PICTURES' goal of establishing a European-wide community of practitioners to share knowledge and best practices, ultimately contributing to the project's broader mission of improving the rehabilitation and reintegration of justice-involved people.

The initiatives span six main categories, addressing crucial aspects of modern corrections: 1) education and vocational training; 2) rehabilitation and resocialisation; 3) staff development; 4) juvenile justice; 5) prison reform and human rights; and 6) and reintegration and aftercare. Additionally, the table highlights innovative approaches and special programmes that reflect cutting-edge developments in the field. These practices represent a concerted effort to improve correctional systems, enhance rehabilitation outcomes, and uphold the dignity of incarcerated individuals across various European countries.

6. MAIN CATEGORY	7. SUBCATEGORY	8. PRACTICE/PROJECT
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Education and Vocational Training in Corrections	E-learning and Digital Skills initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● EPRIS (E-learning for female prisoners)</li> <li>● DIGICOR (Digital transformation in prisons)</li> <li>● Digital Rehabilitation Workshop for Incarcerated Women (North Macedonia)</li> <li>● Code of Freedom (Romania)</li> <li>● Digitalization of Detention (Romania)</li> </ul>
	Practical vocational training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Practical Carpentry Training (North Macedonia)</li> <li>● Creating Opportunities for All (North Macedonia)</li> </ul>
	Literacy and basic education projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Second Chance (Romania)</li> <li>● Information Technology and Multimedia in Inmate Education (Serbia)</li> </ul>

Rehabilitation and Resocialisation Programmes	Peer support and mentoring schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rehabilitation and Peer Education Program (North Macedonia)</li> <li>● Mentorship for Reintegration (Romania)</li> </ul>
	Art and culture-based interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Art Behind Bars (Romania)</li> <li>● Centre for Rehabilitation – Institute for Performing Arts and Social Work (Serbia)</li> </ul>
	Work and skills development programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhancing Social Skills in Vocational Training in Prison (SOCVOC) (North Macedonia)</li> <li>● Gardens of Hope (Romania)</li> <li>● Prisoners' Work: Prison Labour in European Union (PRAWIE) (Serbia)</li> <li>● Prisoners' Resocialization Through Work with Horses (Serbia)</li> </ul>

Staff Development and Capacity Building	Peer support programmes for prison staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M4Pris (Peer support programme for prison staff)</li> </ul>
	Career counselling for correctional staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCJ4C (Career counselling for correctional staff)</li> </ul>
	Specialist training for juvenile justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist Training for Juvenile Justice (Bosnia and Herzegovina)</li> </ul>
	Leadership and management training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for Prison Leaders (Serbia)</li> <li>• Twinning Project: Strengthening the Penitentiary System and Probation Service (North Macedonia)</li> </ul>
Juvenile Justice and Youth Offenders	Educational programmes for young offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDUPRIS (Education in juvenile justice settings)</li> </ul>
	Mental health interventions for juveniles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antecedents and Consequences of Mental</li> </ul>

		Health Problems in Juvenile Justice (ANTEJUVENILE) (Serbia)
	Specialised training for staff for youth justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARISA Child (Working with convicted children)</li> </ul>
Prison Reform and Human Rights	Improving detention conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the Protection of Human Rights of Detained and Imprisoned Persons (Montenegro)</li> <li>• Improving Detention in line with international human rights standards (Montenegro)</li> </ul>
	Evaluation of reform initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of Prison Reform in Bulgaria (Bulgaria)</li> </ul>
	Human rights protection programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project "Enhancing the capacity of prison staff, building a pilot prison facility" (Bulgaria)</li> </ul>

Reintegration and Aftercare	Pre-release preparation programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rehabilitation of inmates in preparation for release (Bulgaria)</li> <li>● Steps to Freedom (Romania)</li> </ul>
	Socio-economic empowerment initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Socio-Economic Empowerment of the Western Balkans (Montenegro)</li> </ul>
	Probation and alternative sanctions systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthening Probation and the System of Alternative Sanctions (Serbia and Montenegro)</li> <li>● Restorative Justice Society – Affirmation of the System of Alternative Sanctions (Montenegro)</li> </ul>
Innovative Approaches and	Digital transformation in prisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● DIGICOR (Digital transformation in prisons)</li> </ul>



Special Programmes	Gender-specific programmes for women prisoners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic and psychosocial empowerment of women serving prison sentences (Montenegro)</li> </ul>
	Radicalisation prevention and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEDAR (Countering radicalisation through education)</li> </ul>
	Alternative prison models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private Prisons in the Netherlands</li> </ul>

## 7. Policy Landscape and Research Findings in European Correctional Pedagogy

This section examines recent advancements in policies and practices aimed at rehabilitating offenders through education and vocational training. It also identifies existing gaps in the field and areas for future development. The analysis draws from various European initiatives, with a particular focus on examples from Romania and North Macedonia. By assessing both achievements and shortcomings, this section aims to provide insights for the continued evolution of correctional pedagogy training, emphasising the importance of evidence-based, holistic approaches to inmate rehabilitation and social reintegration.

## State of the Art: Current Policies and Practices

Correctional pedagogy in Europe has made significant progress in recent years, with many countries implementing evidence-based rehabilitation programs focused on education, vocational training, and social reintegration.

Key policies and practices include:

- A shift towards rehabilitation over purely punitive approaches, as seen in Romania's National Penal Code and Correctional Services Act.
- Integration of comprehensive educational and vocational training programs within correctional facilities, exemplified by initiatives like Romania's "Passages to Learning" project.
- Holistic approaches involving collaboration between prisons, social services, educational institutions and NGOs, as outlined in strategies like Romania's National Strategy for Social Reintegration.
- Implementation of specialised methodologies like the YOUTURN program in North Macedonia, aimed at promoting positive attitudes and skills among juvenile offenders.
- Development of probation services and alternative measures, as highlighted in North Macedonia's probation strategies.

Positive results include improved educational opportunities for inmates, enhanced vocational skills, and efforts to reduce recidivism rates through comprehensive rehabilitation programs.

## Gaps and Areas for Future Development

Despite progress, several gaps remain in correctional pedagogy policies and practices:

- High recidivism rates persist in many countries, indicating a need for more effective long-term rehabilitation strategies.
- Insufficient resources and funding for educational and vocational programs in some correctional systems.
- Limited opportunities for higher education and advanced training for inmates in many facilities.
- Inadequate preparation and support for inmates transitioning back into society after release.
- Lack of standardised, evidence-based curricula for correctional education across different countries and institutions.
- Need for more specialised training for correctional staff in rehabilitative approaches and pedagogical methods.

### **Future Research Could Focus on:**

- Longitudinal studies on the long-term impacts of various correctional education programs on recidivism and social reintegration.
- Developing and evaluating standardised curricula for correctional pedagogy that can be adapted across different contexts.
- Exploring innovative technologies and distance learning methods to expand educational opportunities in correctional settings.
- Investigating best practices for supporting inmates' transition from correctional education to further education or employment post-release.

### **Conclusions and Key Findings**

The development of correctional pedagogy training should focus on:

- Adopting a holistic, rehabilitative approach that integrates education, vocational training, psychological support, and social skills development.

- Emphasising early intervention and continuous support throughout incarceration and post-release.
- Developing specialised curricula that address the unique needs of different inmate populations, including juveniles, young adults, and those with varying educational backgrounds.
- Enhancing collaboration between correctional facilities, educational institutions, and community organisations to provide comprehensive support.
- Incorporating evidence-based practices and regularly evaluating program effectiveness to continually improve outcomes.
- Providing specialised training for correctional staff in rehabilitative approaches, pedagogical methods, and support for inmates' educational and personal development.
- Utilising technology and innovative teaching methods to expand access to educational opportunities within correctional settings.

By addressing these key areas, correctional pedagogy training can contribute to more effective rehabilitation, reduced recidivism, and improved social reintegration outcomes for inmates across Europe.

## **8. Implications for Correctional Pedagogy VET and HE Specialties**

The integration of correctional pedagogy within higher education and vocational training systems is significantly underdeveloped across the countries involved in the partnership. Analysis from multiple sources, including practitioner and student questionnaires, reveals a profound need for continuous improvement in this field. Currently, very few higher education institutions offer dedicated courses specifically under the title of corrective pedagogy. Instead, the subject is sporadically covered under related courses such as pedagogical resocialization or through disciplines like the sociology of juvenile delinquency. This fragmented approach fails to

provide a comprehensive understanding necessary for addressing the complexities of corrective pedagogy.

Educational institutions, particularly those focused on pedagogy and teacher training, must incorporate foundational knowledge about working with minors prone to risky behaviour. This is crucial for professions that deal extensively with minors, including pedagogues, psychologists, social workers, and healthcare workers. Additionally, individuals involved in the criminal justice process—such as police officers, prosecutors, judges, and lawyers—should also be educated in correctional pedagogy to ensure a holistic approach to juvenile resocialization.

The goal is not to overhaul the education system but to make targeted interventions within existing programs. For instance, introducing modules on correctional pedagogy within current curriculums could significantly enhance the preparedness of future professionals who will work with minors in correctional settings. By embedding this knowledge across various relevant disciplines, we can ensure a more integrated and effective approach to juvenile correctional education.

## **9. Implications for Training and Professional Development of Correctional Practitioners**

Professional development for those already working with minors and young adults in correctional settings is equally crucial. Analysis of practitioner questionnaires indicates a low level of knowledge about corrective pedagogy and a lack of adequate training. To address this, it is essential to organise continuous professional development activities such as round tables, workshops, seminars, and expert lectures. These activities should focus on providing additional knowledge, sharing experiences, and mastering new skills, particularly in using digital technologies which are prevalent among the youth but often unfamiliar to practitioners.

Effective professional development requires robust cooperation between educational institutions and correctional facilities. This partnership can facilitate the organisation and implementation of training programs that are relevant and practical. Practitioners must be equipped not only with theoretical knowledge but also with practical skills that can be directly applied in their daily interactions with minors and young adults.

Moreover, the education of minors within correctional institutions needs special attention. According to various legal frameworks, minors and young adults are entitled to primary and secondary education. However, the unique conditions of correctional institutions necessitate a specialised approach to teaching and vocational training. Teachers in these settings must possess specific skills to adapt to the challenging environment and the unique needs of their students. Vocational training and the acquisition of practical skills are critical for the successful resocialization and reintegration of these individuals into society.

### Specific Recommendations for Policy and Practice Related to Developing and Delivering Correctional Pedagogy VET and HE Offerings

To improve correctional pedagogy within VET and HE programs, the following recommendations should be considered:

- **Introduction of Dedicated Study Programs:** Develop and introduce a specialised study program in correctional pedagogy. This program should provide comprehensive training, including both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for working with minors and young adults.
- **Integration into Existing Curriculums:** Incorporate correctional pedagogy into existing study programs at higher education institutions, particularly those training future pedagogues, psychologists, social workers, and healthcare workers. This knowledge should also be mandatory for legal professionals involved in juvenile criminal proceedings.
- **Continuous Training for Practitioners:** Establish regular training sessions for practitioners who interact with minors and young adults.

This includes employees of correctional institutions, judges, prosecutors, and lawyers. Training should be multidisciplinary and foster an exchange of experiences among professionals from various fields.

- **Specialised Training for Teachers:** Provide specialised training for teachers working in correctional institutions. These educators need to develop different approaches tailored to the unique needs of minors and young adults in these settings.
- **Comprehensive Training Programmes:** Ensure that training in correctional pedagogy covers a wide range of fields, drawing on knowledge from various scientific disciplines and examples of good practice. Encourage students to engage in correctional pedagogy through clinics, lectures, and training sessions.

## 10. Recommendations for Future Research, Collaboration, and Information-Sharing

Future research and collaboration are vital for the ongoing development and refinement of correctional pedagogy. The following steps are recommended:

- **Focus on Younger Adults:** Research should concentrate on the legal and social positioning of younger adults within the correctional system. This includes examining their treatment and developing tailored legal frameworks that differentiate them from minors.
- **Improve Correctional Conditions:** Enhance the conditions within correctional facilities to ensure that younger adults can exercise their legally guaranteed rights. This includes addressing issues such as inadequate IT equipment and lack of proper spaces for educational activities.
- **Develop Special Programs:** Create and implement specialised programs that cater to the unique needs of younger adults. These programs should consider the generation gap, the internal dissatisfaction of younger adults, and the need for personalised rehabilitation plans.
- **Enhance Inter-Institutional Cooperation:** Strengthen the cooperation between higher education institutions and correctional facilities. This

collaboration can lead to better training programs for correctional staff and provide valuable insights for academic research and curriculum development.

- **Organise Knowledge-Sharing Events:** Facilitate scientific conferences, professional lectures, seminars, and workshops to foster the exchange of experiences and ideas. These events can help identify key problems and develop new strategies for action.
- **Support Creative Rehabilitation:** Promote creative workshops and vocational training for inmates to help them acquire skills that will aid their reintegration into society post-release.

- **Key Findings**

- **Lack of Dedicated Programs:** There is a significant gap in higher education for dedicated correctional pedagogy programs.
- **Need for Continuous Professional Development:** Practitioners require ongoing training and skill development, particularly in digital technologies and practical application of theoretical knowledge.
- **Importance of Specialized Teacher Training:** Educators in correctional settings need specialised training to address the unique challenges of teaching minors and young adults in these environments.
- **Recommendations for Policy and Practice:** Specific policy recommendations include the introduction of dedicated correctional pedagogy programs, integration into existing curriculums, and the continuous training of practitioners.
- **Future Research Directions:** Future research should focus on the unique needs of younger adults in correctional settings, improving correctional conditions, and developing specialised rehabilitation programs.
- **Collaboration and Information-Sharing:** Enhanced collaboration between educational institutions and correctional facilities is essential, along with organising knowledge-sharing events to foster innovation and improvement in correctional pedagogy.



In conclusion, the integration of correctional pedagogy within VET and HE specialties requires substantial improvements. By implementing targeted policy changes, continuous professional development, and fostering inter-institutional collaboration, we can develop a more effective and comprehensive approach to correctional education.

## 11. key findings relevant to correctional pedagogy training paths

**Soft Skills Development:** The need for enhanced soft skills, particularly in communication, empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution, has been consistently identified as crucial for working with incarcerated young people. These interpersonal skills are essential to build rapport with offenders and to manage the complex social dynamics within correctional facilities. Training programmes should focus on developing these skills within the unique context of correctional environments, addressing the unpredictability and heterogeneity of daily situations.

**Specialised Knowledge in Adolescent Psychology and Criminology:** There is a clear need for more in-depth knowledge of adolescent psychology and criminology among correctional staff. This specialised knowledge is vital for understanding the unique challenges faced by young offenders and for implementing effective intervention strategies. Future training paths should incorporate comprehensive modules on these subjects, tailored specifically to the correctional setting and the needs of incarcerated youth.

**Technology Integration in Correctional Education:** While there is general agreement that emerging technologies could play a positive role in correctional pedagogy, careful implementation is necessary. The potential benefits include increased engagement, promotion of digital literacy, and simulation of conditions outside prison. However, training programmes must address the unique security concerns of the correctional environment and provide guidance on how to effectively integrate technology while maintaining necessary surveillance and control measures.

**Trauma-Informed Practice:** Mental health concerns, including trauma and risk behaviour, were identified as significant challenges in working with young offenders. This highlights the need for a trauma-informed approach to correctional pedagogy. Future training paths should include specialised modules on recognising and responding to trauma-related behaviours, as well as strategies for supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of incarcerated youth.

**Inter-departmental Collaboration:** Limited collaboration between different teams within the correctional system was highlighted as a challenge. This indicates a need for improved inter-departmental communication and cooperation. Training programmes should include modules on effective collaboration strategies, team-building exercises, and case studies that demonstrate the benefits of a more integrated approach to correctional pedagogy.

**Continuous Professional Development:** The importance of ongoing learning and structured professional development opportunities was emphasised. Future training paths should incorporate a continuous professional development component, including regular training sessions, access to specialised literature, facilitated peer exchange opportunities, and mentorship programmes. This approach would address the expressed desire for more structured and accessible ways to stay updated in the field of correctional pedagogy.

**Legal Knowledge and Procedural Understanding:** Comprehensive legal knowledge, encompassing criminal law, human rights, and procedural regulations, was identified as crucial for professionals in correctional settings. Future training paths should include modules on relevant legal frameworks and their practical application in correctional pedagogy. This would ensure that educational and rehabilitative programmes are implemented in compliance with legal standards and respect for inmates' rights.

**Crisis Management and Security Protocols:** Skills in crisis management and understanding of security protocols were highlighted as essential for handling emergencies, conflicts, and high-stress situations within correctional settings. Training programmes should incorporate practical scenarios and simulations to develop these skills, ensuring that staff can effectively respond to and mitigate potentially volatile situations while maintaining a focus on educational and rehabilitative goals.

**Cultural Competence and Diversity Awareness:** The need for cultural competence and a trauma-informed approach was emphasised, reflecting the diverse backgrounds of incarcerated youth. Future training paths should include modules on cultural diversity, psychological first aid, and strategies for addressing the varied and complex needs of inmates from different cultural backgrounds. This would enhance the effectiveness of correctional pedagogy in multicultural settings and improve outcomes for diverse inmate populations.

## 12. Recommendations

### Recommendations for Training and Professional Development

**1. Establish a Comprehensive Correctional Training School:** Create a dedicated training school for all professionals entering the penitentiary system, including correctional officers, social workers, psychologists, administrators, and medical staff. This institution should provide mandatory pre-service training, ensuring a solid foundation in correctional pedagogy before staff enter the prison environment. The curriculum should cover a wide range of topics, including legal frameworks, psychology, security protocols, and rehabilitation techniques.

**2. Implement Continuous Professional Development Programmes:** Develop and maintain a robust system of ongoing professional development for correctional staff. This should include regular workshops, seminars, and courses tailored to the specific roles within the correctional system. Focus on emerging trends, best practices, and innovative approaches in correctional

pedagogy. Ensure that these programmes are easily accessible and incentivised to encourage participation.

**3. Enhance Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Networking:** Foster collaboration between different sectors and institutions involved in the correctional system. Organise regular interdisciplinary meetings, conferences, and joint training sessions to encourage the sharing of best practices and experiences. Establish formal networks for professionals in the sector to facilitate communication, support, and knowledge exchange across different disciplines and institutions.

**4. Develop Specialised Curriculum for Correctional Pedagogy:** Create targeted training programmes that address the specific needs and challenges faced by professionals in correctional systems. Ensure that curricula are regularly updated to reflect current best practices and emerging trends. Key areas should include:

- - Trauma-informed care
- - Diversity and multiculturalism
- - Psychological first-aid
- - Managing difficult behaviours
- - Addictions and mental health support
- - Youth engagement strategies
- - Adaptation to different inmate groups

**5. Implement Stress Management and Well-being Programmes:** Develop comprehensive programmes focused on stress management and well-being for correctional staff. These should include regular workshops on coping strategies, mindfulness techniques, and work-life balance. Provide access to counselling services and supervision by specialised psychologists to prevent burnout and maintain staff mental health.

## **Recommendations for Educational and Rehabilitation Programmes**

**1. Expand Second Chance Schools for Emerging Adults:** Increase the number of "Second Chance Schools" specifically designed for emerging adults in the justice sector. These schools should offer tailored educational programmes that address the unique needs of this demographic, focusing on both academic and vocational skills relevant to successful reintegration into society.

**2. Implement Individualised Educational Tracking:** Create and maintain an educational card for each emerging adult learner within the correctional system. This card should track their educational progress, identify specific learning needs, and inform personalised educational plans. Regularly review and update these cards to ensure ongoing alignment with the learner's goals and progress.

**3. Strengthen Vocational Training Programmes:** Develop and enhance training programmes that are closely linked to labour market needs. Focus on practical skills that will increase employability upon release. Incorporate language training, cultural education, and sports activities to provide a well-rounded educational experience that supports both personal development and future employment prospects.

**4. Foster Connections Between Prison Schools and Society:** Establish strong links between prison schools and the broader community. This should include partnerships with universities, schools in the free community, and civil society organisations. These connections can provide additional resources, expertise, and opportunities for inmates, both during their incarceration and after release.

**5. Develop Practical Tools for Youth Engagement:** Create and implement practical tools and resources specifically designed for engaging with young offenders. Focus on mentorship programmes, peer support systems, and activities that promote positive relationship-building. These tools should aim

to foster supportive relationships that encourage personal growth and rehabilitation.

## **Recommendations for Systemic Improvements**

**1. Advocate for Increased Resource Allocation:** Lobby for increased allocation of both human and material resources to support correctional systems. This should include funding for facility improvements, educational materials, technology upgrades, and staffing. Ensure that correctional facilities have the necessary tools and support to implement effective educational and rehabilitation programmes.

**2. Rethink Prison Facility Design:** Initiate a comprehensive review of prison facility design with a focus on supporting re-education and reintegration efforts. Consider how the physical environment can be optimised to facilitate learning, skill development, and positive behavioural change. This may include creating dedicated spaces for education, vocational training, and therapeutic activities.

**3. Enhance Multicultural and Diversity Training:** Develop comprehensive training programmes on multiculturalism, ethnopsychiatry, and diversity. Ensure that all staff receive ongoing training in these areas to promote inclusive and equitable practices within correctional facilities. This is particularly crucial given the increasing diversity of inmate populations.

**4. Implement Specialised Training for Addiction and Mental Health:** Provide in-depth training on dealing with addictions and mental health issues within the correctional setting. This should include both theoretical knowledge and practical skills for identifying, managing, and supporting

inmates with these challenges. Establish clear protocols for collaboration with mental health professionals and addiction specialists.

**5. Develop Specific Competencies for Networking:** Create training modules focused on developing networking abilities with internal and external agencies. This should include skills in inter-agency communication, collaborative project management, and partnership building. These competencies are crucial for creating a more integrated and effective correctional system.

**6. Establish Regular Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement a system for regular evaluation of correctional education and rehabilitation programmes. This should include feedback from inmates, staff, and external stakeholders. Use this information to continuously improve and adapt programmes to meet evolving needs and challenges within the correctional system.

These recommendations aim to address the specific needs and challenges identified in the correctional pedagogy field, while also leveraging the opportunities and resources available. They focus on creating a more comprehensive, effective, and humane approach to correctional education and rehabilitation.

## Conclusion

The PICTURES project represents a significant step forward in the professionalisation of practitioners working with emerging adults in correctional settings across Europe. By bringing together a diverse partnership of organisations from ten countries, this initiative leverages a wide range of expertise and experiences to develop a comprehensive and standardised approach to correctional pedagogy. This synthesis report encapsulates the project's findings and outlines a clear path for future directions, emphasising the critical areas for improvement and innovation in the training and development of correctional staff.

The project underscores the necessity for a robust skill set among practitioners, focusing on effective communication, empathy, and flexibility. Comprehensive knowledge of penology, psychology, and therapeutic methods is crucial for addressing the complex needs of emerging adults in correctional settings. Future training programmes should prioritise these competencies, ensuring practitioners are well-equipped to foster supportive and rehabilitative environments.

Implementing resocialisation plans requires tailored approaches to individual inmates, addressing diverse needs and personalities. Maintaining discipline while promoting rehabilitation necessitates a delicate balance, which future initiatives must navigate carefully. Addressing these challenges through specialised training and support will be vital in enhancing the effectiveness of correctional education.

The careful implementation of digital learning platforms can significantly enhance educational opportunities for practitioners. These technologies facilitate access to current research, best practices, and personalised educational plans. Future projects should focus on integrating these tools to improve the tracking of practitioner progress and provide interactive, flexible learning experiences.

Strengthening collaboration with universities, international organisations, and various stakeholders is essential for enhancing professional development. Regular professional seminars, workshops, and the establishment of a common competency framework will support ongoing learning and the sharing of best practices. This collaborative effort is crucial for creating a holistic approach to correctional pedagogy, promoting interdisciplinary cooperation and post-penal resocialisation.

Implementing new digitalised courses tailored to the learning preferences of younger generations will engage practitioners more effectively. Increasing vocational and practical training opportunities, particularly in IT and language skills, will prepare practitioners to meet the evolving demands of correctional



education. These educational programmes should align with current market needs, ensuring relevance and improving job prospects for practitioners.

Developing robust support systems for educators, including access to professional counselling, peer support groups, and stress management workshops, is crucial. Enhancing the professional well-being of educators will enable them to manage the emotional and psychological challenges of working in correctional settings more effectively. Continuous professional development opportunities will keep educators updated with the latest trends and practices in correctional pedagogy.

Integrating trauma-informed practices into the curriculum will support the psychological well-being of practitioners and inmates alike. Developing holistic education programmes that include activities like yoga therapy will promote mental health and overall well-being. These approaches will address the multifaceted needs of correctional settings, fostering personal growth and reducing behavioural issues.

Advocating for increased resource allocation, enhanced infrastructure, and the development of comprehensive policies supporting correctional pedagogy will drive systemic improvements. National policies should prioritise ongoing training and development for correctional staff, embedding a culture of dynamic learning and adaptation within correctional settings. Improved coordination between correctional institutions, educational services, and social support networks will ensure continuity of care and support, enhancing the overall effectiveness of correctional education.

The future directions outlined in this synthesis report highlight the potential for significant advancements in the professional development of correctional staff. By focusing on the unique needs of practitioners and implementing evidence-based recommendations, the PICTURES project aims to create a more effective, humane, and professionalised correctional education system across Europe. These efforts will contribute to better support for emerging



adults in correctional settings, ultimately leading to improved rehabilitation outcomes and reduced recidivism rates.



## Annex (DACUM Report)

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## 13. Introduction

This comprehensive report consolidates the findings, activities, and evaluations from a series of DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshops held across various European countries, namely Croatia, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Bosnia & Herzegovina and North Macedonia. These workshops were integral components of the PICTURES (Pedagogical Inclusive Education and Training System to UpSkill Cross-Sector Practitioners Working with Emerging Adults in Correctional Systems) project, which is funded through the Erasmus+ program.

The primary objective of these workshops was to enhance the skills and competencies of professionals working with emerging adults within correctional systems. Emerging adults, typically defined as individuals aged 18 to 25, are a unique demographic within correctional facilities due to their developmental stage and specific needs. Addressing these needs requires specialized training and curriculum development for the professionals who work with this population, including correctional officers, educators, psychologists, and social workers.

## 14. Workshop Goals and Objectives

The DACUM methodology was chosen for its effectiveness in developing precise job profiles and competency-based curricula. The workshops aimed to:

1. **Identify Critical Tasks and Duties:** Through participatory processes, professionals detailed the essential tasks and responsibilities required in their roles within correctional systems. This ensured a comprehensive understanding of the daily functions and challenges faced by staff.
2. **Determine Necessary Skills and Competencies:** Participants collaborated to pinpoint the skills and competencies crucial for effectively performing their duties. This included both technical skills

and soft skills such as communication, empathy, and conflict resolution.

3. **Prioritize Training Needs:** By analyzing the identified tasks and skills, the workshops helped prioritize areas where training and professional development were most needed. This prioritization aimed to bridge gaps in current training programs and enhance overall staff performance.
4. **Develop Collaborative Networks:** The workshops facilitated the creation of networks among professionals from different correctional facilities and countries. These networks are vital for sharing best practices, resources, and support.

## **15. Impact and Future Directions**

The findings from these workshops provide a roadmap for developing comprehensive training programs that address the unique needs of emerging adults in correctional systems. By identifying critical tasks and necessary skills, the PICTURES project aims to enhance the professional competencies of correctional staff, thereby improving the overall quality of correctional education and rehabilitation programs.

Moving forward, the insights gained from these workshops will guide the creation of targeted training modules and professional development opportunities. These efforts will contribute to more effective and humane correctional practices, ultimately supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of emerging adults into society.

## **16. Workshops Summary**

### **5. Croatia**

Croatia hosted two separate sessions of the DACUM workshop, one at Rijeka Prison and the other at the Zagreb Training Center. The workshops were meticulously designed to identify the critical tasks, skills, and competencies required by professionals in the correctional system, fostering a collaborative

environment for participants to share insights and develop strategic training recommendations.

The first session of the DACUM workshop was held on June 24, 2024, at Rijeka Prison, and the second session took place on July 5, 2024, at the Zagreb Training Center. The workshop in Rijeka saw the participation of seven individuals, while the session in Zagreb included eight participants. These attendees comprised a diverse group of professionals from the Croatian correctional system, including prison staff, educators, and program designers. The participants' roles ranged from correctional officers and administrative staff to educators involved in training and curriculum development. This diversity ensured a comprehensive representation of the tasks and skills required within correctional facilities.

The workshops in Croatia yielded several important findings regarding the essential tasks and skills required in correctional facilities. Participants identified a range of critical tasks, including:

- **Monitoring and Supervising Inmates:** Ensuring the safety and security of both inmates and staff within the facility.
- **Conducting Rehabilitation and Educational Programs:** Facilitating programs aimed at rehabilitating inmates and preparing them for reintegration into society.
- **Providing Psychological Support and Counseling:** Offering emotional and psychological support to inmates, addressing their mental health needs.
- **Maintaining Security and Safety Protocols:** Implementing procedures to maintain a secure environment and prevent incidents.
- **Reporting and Documentation:** Keeping detailed records of inmate behavior, incidents, and rehabilitation progress.
- **Crisis Intervention and Conflict Resolution:** Managing emergencies and resolving conflicts among inmates to maintain order and safety.

The workshops also highlighted several critical skills necessary for effective performance in the correctional system:

- Effective Communication and Interpersonal Skills: Essential for interacting with inmates, colleagues, and external stakeholders.
- Conflict Resolution and De-escalation Techniques: Key to managing disputes and preventing violence within the facility.
- Emotional Intelligence and Empathy: Important for understanding and addressing the emotional and psychological needs of inmates.
- Problem-solving and Decision-making: Crucial for making informed decisions in high-pressure situations.
- Leadership and Team Coordination: Necessary for leading teams and coordinating activities within the facility.
- Adaptability and Flexibility: Vital for navigating the dynamic and often unpredictable environment of correctional facilities.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to enhance the training and development of correctional staff:

- Curriculum Development: Develop targeted training programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by professionals in the correctional system. Ensure that curricula are regularly updated to reflect current best practices and emerging trends.
- Continuous Professional Development: Encourage ongoing professional development through workshops, seminars, and courses relevant to the roles of correctional staff. Provide opportunities for staff to enhance their skills and knowledge continuously.
- Collaboration and Networking: Foster collaboration between correctional facilities, educational institutions, and other relevant organizations to share best practices and resources. Create networks for professionals in the sector to facilitate communication and support.

## 6. Italy

On July 2, 2024, the DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held in Palermo, Italy, at CEIPES (Centro Internazionale per la Promozione dell'Educazione e lo Sviluppo). The workshop in Palermo was attended by a



diverse group of professionals. Twelve participants were present, comprising six men and six women, with three joining remotely. The participants included:

- Three private social workers engaged in job profiling of inmates in minor and adult prisons in Palermo.
- One social worker who implements non-formal activities in the juvenile prison of Palermo.
- Four Ministry of Justice Penitentiary Police Officers working in adult and minor prisons in Sicily, members of the Penitentiary Police UILPA.
- Three penitentiary educators from the adult male prison in Padua.
- One employee from a local job agency.

This diverse mix of participants provided a comprehensive perspective on the different roles and responsibilities within the correctional system. The workshop was organized in a hybrid format to facilitate participation from various professionals across the country.

The DACUM workshop in Italy identified several critical needs and competencies required for effective performance in correctional facilities. Key findings included:

- **Re-education and Re-socialization:** Emphasis was placed on the need for skills in re-education and re-socialization of inmates. Penitentiary police officers acknowledged their responsibility in these areas, highlighting the importance of scientific observation of inmates and understanding their backgrounds and vulnerabilities.
- **Conflict Prevention:** Effective communication and conflict prevention were identified as crucial skills. Participants discussed the necessity of communicative techniques to prevent conflicts and de-escalate potentially violent situations.
- **Interdisciplinary Competencies:** The workshop highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary competencies that span judicial, psychological, and pedagogical areas. These competencies are vital for creating a holistic approach to inmate rehabilitation and support.

- Empathy and Emotional Intelligence: Empathy and emotional intelligence were repeatedly emphasized as essential skills for building trust and rapport with inmates, understanding their needs, and providing effective support.
- Team Coordination: Working in teams and coordinating activities within the correctional facility were identified as key responsibilities. Penitentiary educators stressed the importance of teamwork in gathering information and reporting to judicial benches, which use this data for decisions on inmates' social rehabilitation pathways.

Participants identified specific tasks and responsibilities essential for their roles, including:

- Carrying out re-education and reintegration activities: Ensuring inmates receive appropriate education and support for reintegration into society.
- Connecting with external services: Collaborating with external agencies to provide comprehensive support for inmates.
- Maintaining security and safety: Ensuring the security and safety of both inmates and staff within the correctional facilities.
- Conducting skill assessments: Assessing the skills and needs of emerging adults to tailor rehabilitation programs effectively.
- Providing mentoring programs: Offering mentorship to guide inmates through their rehabilitation and reintegration processes.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to enhance the training and development of correctional staff:

- Allocation of Resources: Increase human and material resources to support correctional systems and address the needs of both staff and inmates.
- Specific Competencies and Roles: Develop specific competencies and roles with a focus on networking abilities with internal and external agencies.

- Comprehensive Training: Provide tools and resources for comprehensive support of emerging adults, emphasizing social and work reintegration.
- Ongoing Training: Ensure continuous training on multiculturalism, ethnopsychiatry, psychiatry, and drug addictions.
- Rethinking Prison Facilities: Consider redesigning prison facilities to better support re-education and reintegration efforts.

## 7. Portugal

On June 28, 2024, a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held in Portugal. The workshop took place in Leiria Youth Prison (Estabelecimento Prisional de Leiria – Jovens), a setting that provided a real-world context for the discussions. Sixteen participants attended the workshop, including psychologists, teachers, social educators, nurses, socio-cultural animators, and consultants. Among the participants, there was a balanced gender representation, with six men and ten women. Additionally, eight participants were directly working for the Portuguese Directorate-General for Reintegration and Prison Services (DGRSP), which is responsible for criminal prevention policies, social reintegration of offenders, and managing both the juvenile justice and prison systems in a complementary manner.

The DACUM workshop in Portugal highlighted several essential tasks and competencies needed by professionals working with emerging adults in correctional systems. The key findings included:

- Psychosocial Support: Providing emotional and psychological support to inmates, addressing their mental health needs, and helping them cope with the challenges of incarceration.
- Educational Programs: Developing and delivering educational programs tailored to the needs of emerging adults, focusing on both academic and vocational training.
- Crisis Intervention: Managing emergencies and conflicts within the prison, ensuring the safety and well-being of inmates and staff.

- Participants identified critical skills necessary for effective performance in these areas, including:
- Assertive Communication: The ability to communicate effectively and assertively, crucial for managing relationships and conflicts within the correctional environment.
- Flexible Thinking: Adaptability and the capacity to think on one's feet, essential for addressing the dynamic and often unpredictable challenges of working in a correctional facility.
- Empathy: Understanding and sharing the feelings of inmates, which is vital for building trust and providing effective support.

Additionally, the workshop emphasized the importance of understanding trauma, diversity, and psychological first-aid. Participants noted that professionals must be equipped to deal with the varied and complex needs of inmates, including those stemming from traumatic experiences and diverse cultural backgrounds.

Based on the workshop findings, several recommendations were made to improve the training and development of correctional staff:

- Trauma-Informed Care: Incorporate training on trauma-informed care to help staff understand and address the impact of trauma on inmates.
- Diversity and Multiculturalism: Develop programs that enhance understanding of diversity and multiculturalism, promoting inclusive and equitable practices within correctional facilities.
- Psychological First-Aid: Train staff in psychological first-aid to equip them with the skills to provide immediate support during crises.
- Managing Difficult Behaviors: Provide training on strategies to manage difficult behaviors, focusing on de-escalation techniques and conflict resolution.
- Addictions and Mental Health: Enhance knowledge and skills related to dealing with addictions and mental health issues, ensuring comprehensive care for inmates.

- **Practical Tools for Youth Engagement:** Develop practical tools and resources for engaging with young offenders, focusing on mentorship and supportive relationships.
- **Adaptation to Different Groups:** Train staff to adapt their approaches based on the specific needs of different groups of inmates, ensuring personalized and effective support.

## **8. Greece**

On June 20, 2024, the DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held in Greece. The workshop took place at the University of the Aegean, utilizing a blended format that included both face-to-face and online participation. A total of 23 individuals attended the workshop, comprising 12 women and 11 men. The participants included six professionals currently working in correctional systems and 17 future professionals. These individuals were supported by two field researchers online and two researchers from the University of the Aegean present on-site to facilitate discussions and activities. The diverse mix of participants provided a comprehensive perspective on the various roles and responsibilities within correctional facilities.

The DACUM workshop in Greece yielded several important findings regarding the essential tasks and skills required by professionals in correctional systems. Key findings included:

- **Teaching and Administrative Duties:** Participants highlighted the importance of teaching and administrative duties within correctional facilities. This includes preparing and delivering educational programs and managing administrative tasks to ensure the smooth operation of these programs.
- **Psychological Support:** Providing psychological support to inmates was identified as a critical task. This involves offering counseling and emotional support to help inmates cope with the challenges of incarceration.

- **Conflict Management Skills:** The necessity of conflict management skills was emphasized. Participants discussed the importance of being able to de-escalate conflicts and manage difficult situations effectively.

Essential skills identified included:

- **Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of inmates, which is crucial for building trust and providing effective support.
- **Communication Skills:** Effective communication was highlighted as essential for interacting with inmates, colleagues, and other stakeholders within the correctional system.
- **Understanding Correctional Psychology:** Knowledge of correctional psychology was deemed necessary to address the psychological needs of inmates and support their rehabilitation.

Based on the workshop findings, several recommendations were made to improve the training and development of correctional staff:

- **Operation of a Training School:** Establish a training school for all individuals who will work in the penitentiary system, including correctional officers, social workers, psychologists, administrators, and medical staff. This training should be mandatory before they enter the prison environment.
- **More Second Chance Schools (S.D.E.):** Increase the number of "Second Chance Schools" for emerging adults in the justice sector, providing more educational opportunities for this demographic.
- **Educational Card for Each Learner:** Create and maintain an educational card for each emerging adult learner to track their progress and needs.
- **Strengthening Training Programs:** Develop and enhance training programs, selecting subjects linked to the labor market and emphasizing language, culture, and sports.
- **Linking Prison Schools with Society:** Foster connections between prison schools and the broader community, including universities, schools in the free community, and civil society organizations.

- Provision of Supervision by Specialized Psychologists: Ensure that correctional staff have access to supervision by specialized psychologists to prevent burnout and provide ongoing support.

## 9. Montenegro

On May 24, 2024, a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held at Hotel Philia in Podgorica, Montenegro. The workshop brought together representatives from various state institutions, including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, the Expert Service of the Higher Court in Podgorica and Bijelo Polje, and the Health Sector of UIKS (Institute for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions). Specific participants included psychologists, legal experts, prison doctors, social workers, and senior prison managers. The diverse representation ensured a comprehensive discussion encompassing multiple perspectives within the correctional system.

The DACUM workshop in Montenegro yielded several critical findings regarding the essential tasks and skills required by professionals in correctional systems. Key findings included:

- Inmate Supervision and Rehabilitation: Participants identified tasks related to inmate supervision, including maintaining security, monitoring inmate behavior, and ensuring safety protocols are followed. Rehabilitation tasks focused on developing and implementing educational and therapeutic programs tailored to inmates' needs.
- Effective Communication: Effective communication was highlighted as a crucial skill. This includes clear and empathetic communication with inmates, colleagues, and external stakeholders.
- Stress Management: Participants emphasized the importance of stress management skills. Working in correctional facilities can be highly stressful, and professionals need to manage their stress to maintain a healthy work environment and provide effective support to inmates.

- **Continuous Professional Development:** There was a strong emphasis on the need for continuous professional development. Participants agreed that ongoing training and development are essential to keep up with best practices and new developments in the field.
- **Resource Allocation:** Better resource allocation was identified as a critical need. Adequate human and material resources are necessary to support the effective functioning of correctional facilities and the implementation of rehabilitation programs.

Specific tasks and skills identified during the workshop included:

- **Key Tasks:** Organizing and conducting educational and therapeutic programs, providing psychological support, maintaining security and safety protocols, monitoring inmate progress, and reporting and documentation.
- **Essential Skills:** Communication skills, empathy, conflict resolution, stress management, teamwork, and legal and procedural knowledge.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to enhance the training and development of correctional staff:

- **Curriculum Development:** Develop targeted training programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by professionals in correctional systems. Ensure that curricula are regularly updated to reflect current best practices and emerging trends.
- **Ongoing Training:** Encourage continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and courses relevant to the roles of correctional staff. Provide opportunities for staff to enhance their skills and knowledge continuously.
- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between different sectors and institutions involved in the correctional system. Encourage the sharing of best practices and experiences to improve overall service quality.

## **10.Serbia**



On June 24, 2024, a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held in Nis, Serbia. The workshop took place in various correctional institutions across Nis, ensuring a comprehensive and practical perspective on the tasks and skills required by correctional professionals. Participants included a diverse group of correctional officers, educators, program developers, legal experts, psychologists, social workers, senior prison managers, and representatives from state institutions such as the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education. This diverse representation facilitated a holistic discussion encompassing multiple perspectives within the correctional system.

The DACUM workshop in Serbia yielded several critical findings regarding the essential tasks and skills required by professionals in correctional systems. Key findings included:

- **Security Management:** Ensuring the safety and security of inmates and staff within the correctional facilities was identified as a fundamental task. This includes monitoring inmate behavior, enforcing security protocols, and responding to emergencies.
- **Rehabilitation Programs:** Developing and implementing effective rehabilitation programs tailored to the needs of inmates were emphasized. These programs aim to support inmates' reintegration into society and reduce recidivism rates.
- **Psychological Support:** Providing psychological support and counseling to inmates was recognized as a crucial aspect of correctional work. This involves addressing mental health issues, offering emotional support, and facilitating behavioral change.
- **Legal Knowledge:** Understanding and applying legal guidelines and procedures are essential for correctional professionals. This includes knowledge of criminal law, human rights, and the legal aspects of inmate management.
- **Understanding Inmate Behavior:** Analyzing and understanding the psychological aspects of inmate behavior is vital for effective

management and rehabilitation. This includes recognizing signs of distress, aggression, and other behavioral issues.

- Rehabilitation Methodologies: Familiarity with various rehabilitation methodologies and best practices is necessary for developing programs that effectively address the needs of inmates.

Specific tasks and skills identified during the workshop included:

- Key Tasks: Supervising inmates, implementing security measures, developing educational and therapeutic programs, providing psychological support, and maintaining detailed records and reports.
- Essential Skills: Communication skills, empathy, conflict resolution, stress management, teamwork, and legal and procedural knowledge.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to enhance the training and development of correctional staff:

- Curriculum Development: Develop targeted training programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by professionals in correctional systems. Ensure that curricula are regularly updated to reflect current best practices and emerging trends.
- Ongoing Training: Encourage continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and courses relevant to the roles of correctional staff. Provide opportunities for staff to enhance their skills and knowledge continuously.
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Foster collaboration between different sectors and institutions involved in the correctional system. Encourage the sharing of best practices and experiences to improve overall service quality.

## **11. Romania**

On July 11, 2024, a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held at the Faber Cultural Center in Timisoara, Romania. The workshop brought together 18 participants from various correctional institutions, including Timișoara Penitentiary, Buziaș Educational Center, Buziaș Special Vocational

School, and Technological High-school Gheorghe Atanasiu Timișoara. The attendees included correctional staff, educators, psychologists, and a psychology student, providing a broad spectrum of insights and expertise. This diverse representation facilitated a holistic discussion encompassing multiple perspectives within the correctional system, aiming to address the specific needs and challenges faced by professionals working with minors and emerging adults.

The DACUM workshop in Romania yielded several critical findings regarding the essential tasks and skills required by professionals in correctional systems. Key findings included:

- **Psychological Support:** Participants identified the need for enhanced skills in providing psychological support to inmates. This involves offering counseling, emotional support, and addressing mental health issues to help inmates cope with incarceration and facilitate their rehabilitation.
- **Educational Program Implementation:** The workshop emphasized the importance of implementing effective educational programs tailored to the needs of juveniles and emerging adults in correctional facilities. This includes developing curricula that address both academic and vocational training.
- **Crisis Management:** Skills in crisis management were highlighted as crucial. Participants discussed the need for training in handling emergencies, conflicts, and other high-stress situations that may arise within correctional settings.

Essential skills identified included:

- **Effective Communication:** The ability to communicate clearly and empathetically with inmates, colleagues, and external stakeholders.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Skills in de-escalating conflicts and managing difficult situations to maintain safety and order within the facility.

- Empathy and Emotional Intelligence: Understanding and addressing the emotional and psychological needs of inmates, which is vital for building trust and providing effective support.
- Adaptability and Flexibility: The capacity to adapt to the dynamic environment of correctional facilities and address unforeseen challenges effectively.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to enhance the training and development of correctional staff:

- Continuous Professional Development: Encourage ongoing professional development through workshops, seminars, and courses relevant to the roles of correctional staff. Provide opportunities for staff to enhance their skills and knowledge continuously.
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Foster collaboration between different sectors and institutions involved in the correctional system. Encourage the sharing of best practices and experiences to improve overall service quality.
- Stress Management Programs: Implement programs focused on stress management and well-being for correctional staff. This can help reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction and performance.

## 12. Bulgaria

On July 12, 2024, a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held at the Hyatt Regency Pravets Resort in Bulgaria. The workshop took place at the Hyatt Regency Pravets Resort and was attended by 15 professionals from the General Direction "Execution of Penalties" (GDEP), Bulgaria. The participants included: six male and nine female professionals currently employed at Sofia, Pleven, and Vratsa prisons (two Heads of Sector for "Social Work and Educational Activities," eleven Inspectors of "Social Work and Educational Activities," one Inspector of Probation, and one Inspector Psychologist).

The DACUM workshop in Bulgaria yielded several critical findings regarding the essential tasks and skills required by professionals in correctional systems. Key findings included:

- **Supervision:** Effective supervision of inmates was identified as a fundamental task. This includes monitoring inmate behavior, ensuring compliance with rules and regulations, and maintaining a safe environment within the facility.
- **Rehabilitation:** Participants emphasized the importance of developing and implementing rehabilitation programs tailored to the needs of inmates. These programs aim to support the reintegration of inmates into society and reduce recidivism rates.
- **Psychological Support:** Providing psychological support and counseling to inmates was recognized as crucial. This involves addressing mental health issues, offering emotional support, and facilitating behavioral change.

Essential skills identified included:

- **Conflict Resolution:** The ability to manage and resolve conflicts effectively is critical for maintaining order and safety within correctional facilities.
- **Effective Communication:** Clear and empathetic communication with inmates, colleagues, and external stakeholders is essential for building trust and ensuring successful interactions.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Understanding and managing one's own emotions, as well as empathizing with others, is vital for providing effective support and fostering positive relationships within the correctional environment.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to enhance the training and development of correctional staff:

- **Curriculum Development:** Develop targeted training programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by professionals in

correctional systems. Ensure that curricula are regularly updated to reflect current best practices and emerging trends.

- **Resource Allocation:** Advocate for increased allocation of human and material resources to improve the effectiveness of correctional facilities. Ensure that staff have access to the necessary tools and support to perform their duties effectively.
- **Stress Management Programs:** Implement programs focused on stress management and well-being for correctional staff. This can help reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction and performance.

### **13. Bosnia & Herzegovina**

On July 17, 2024, a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held at the University of East Sarajevo in Bijeljina, Bosnia & Herzegovina. The workshop took place in the Ethno Village “Stanišići” in Bijeljina, a unique setting that provided a conducive environment for in-depth discussions and collaborative activities. The participants included a diverse group of professionals from the Faculty of Law and the Pedagogical Faculty of the University of East Sarajevo. Additionally, practitioners from various institutions and organizations, including the Center for Social Work, correctional facilities, the judicial system, and the health sector, participated. Notable attendees included:

- **Academics:** Full Professor Goran Marković, Associate Professor Dimitrije Ćeranić, Associate Professor Svjetlana Ivanović, Assistant Professor Đorđe Marilović, and Senior Teaching Assistant Ljubana Sladić, MA.
- **Legal and Correctional Professionals:** Judge Marinko Sladić, Lawyer Marko Sladić, Bojan Marinković, and Slađan Trifković.
- **Psychologists and Social Workers:** Prof. Dr. Sanja Opsenica, Sandra Kesar, and Vedrana Rakić.
- **Specialists and Practitioners:** Dr. Oleg Grubač, Proto-Deacon Bojan Čečar, and Miroslav Marić.

The DACUM workshop in Bosnia & Herzegovina yielded several critical findings regarding the essential tasks and skills required by professionals in correctional systems. Key findings included:

- **Legal Knowledge:** Participants emphasized the need for comprehensive legal knowledge, including understanding criminal law, human rights, and procedural regulations. This knowledge is crucial for professionals involved in legal proceedings and the administration of justice within correctional settings.
- **Psychological Support:** Providing psychological support and counseling to inmates was recognized as a crucial aspect of correctional work. This involves addressing mental health issues, offering emotional support, and facilitating behavioral change.
- **Educational Program Development:** Developing and implementing effective educational programs tailored to the needs of emerging adults in correctional facilities was highlighted as a significant task. These programs aim to support the reintegration of inmates into society and reduce recidivism rates.

Essential skills identified included:

- **Conflict Resolution:** The ability to manage and resolve conflicts effectively is critical for maintaining order and safety within correctional facilities.
- **Effective Communication:** Clear and empathetic communication with inmates, colleagues, and external stakeholders is essential for building trust and ensuring successful interactions.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Understanding and managing one's own emotions, as well as empathizing with others, is vital for providing effective support and fostering positive relationships within the correctional environment.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to enhance the training and development of correctional staff:

- Continuous Professional Development: Encourage ongoing professional development through workshops, seminars, and courses relevant to the roles of correctional staff. Provide opportunities for staff to enhance their skills and knowledge continuously.
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Foster collaboration between different sectors and institutions involved in the correctional system. Encourage the sharing of best practices and experiences to improve overall service quality.

## **14. North Macedonia**

On July 5, 2024, a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop was held at the Hotel Panoramica in Skopje, North Macedonia. The workshop was organized by the International Institute for Development, Education, and Scientific Research STABILITAS. The participants included a diverse group of professionals from various public institutions:

- Educational Reformatory in Tetovo: Psychologists, social workers, educators, prison officers, and the director.
- Sanction Enforcement Authority: Administrative officers.
- Elementary School Goce Delchev in Shtip: Teacher-educators.

The DACUM workshop in North Macedonia yielded several critical findings regarding the essential tasks and skills required by professionals in correctional systems. Key findings included:

- Inmate Supervision: Effective supervision of inmates was identified as a fundamental task. This includes monitoring inmate behavior, ensuring compliance with rules and regulations, and maintaining a safe environment within the facility.
- Educational Program Implementation: The workshop emphasized the importance of implementing effective educational programs tailored to the needs of juveniles and emerging adults in correctional facilities.



This includes developing curricula that address both academic and vocational training.

- **Psychological Support:** Providing psychological support and counseling to inmates was recognized as a crucial aspect of correctional work. This involves addressing mental health issues, offering emotional support, and facilitating behavioral change.

Essential skills identified included:

- **Conflict Resolution:** The ability to manage and resolve conflicts effectively is critical for maintaining order and safety within correctional facilities.
- **Effective Communication:** Clear and empathetic communication with inmates, colleagues, and external stakeholders is essential for building trust and ensuring successful interactions.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Understanding and managing one's own emotions, as well as empathizing with others, is vital for providing effective support and fostering positive relationships within the correctional environment.

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made to enhance the training and development of correctional staff:

- **Curriculum Development:** Develop targeted training programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by professionals in correctional systems. Ensure that curricula are regularly updated to reflect current best practices and emerging trends.
- **Stress Management Programs:** Implement programs focused on stress management and well-being for correctional staff. This can help reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction and performance.

## 17. Evaluation

Across all workshops, participants rated the content and organization highly, with satisfaction ratings ranging from 4.4 to 4.8 out of 5. This positive reception indicates that the workshops met or exceeded participant

expectations. The workshops' structure, which included interactive sessions, group discussions, and detailed task analyses, was particularly appreciated for its practical relevance and engagement.

#### Key Positive Aspects:

- **Content Relevance:** Participants found the workshops highly relevant to their work, providing practical insights and strategies that could be directly applied to their roles.
- **Interactive Format:** The use of interactive sessions and group activities facilitated active participation and deeper understanding of the material. This format also encouraged networking and knowledge sharing among participants from different institutions.
- **Expert Facilitation:** The workshops were led by knowledgeable facilitators who provided valuable guidance and ensured that discussions remained focused and productive.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:** The workshops effectively covered a wide range of topics, including task identification, skills assessment, and competency development, ensuring a holistic approach to professional development.

#### Areas for Improvement:

- **Increased Frequency:** Many participants expressed a desire for more frequent workshops to continue developing their skills and staying updated on best practices in the correctional sector.
- **Extended Duration:** Some feedback suggested that longer sessions or multi-day workshops would allow for even more in-depth exploration of topics and greater opportunity for hands-on activities.
- **Additional Resources:** Providing supplementary materials, such as detailed guides and case studies, was recommended to enhance learning and provide ongoing reference for participants.

## 18. Conclusion

The DACUM workshops have proven to be a valuable initiative for identifying and enhancing the tasks, skills, and competencies required by professionals working with emerging adults in correctional systems. The insights gained from these workshops are instrumental in guiding the development of improved curricula and training programs. By addressing the specific needs and challenges identified during these sessions, the PICTURES project aims to enhance the professional growth and effectiveness of correctional staff across Europe.

The successful outcomes of the workshops underscore the importance of continuous professional development and interdisciplinary collaboration in the correctional sector. Implementing the recommendations and findings from these workshops will contribute to more effective and humane correctional practices, ultimately supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of emerging adults into society. The positive feedback and high satisfaction ratings from participants highlight the workshops' impact and the ongoing need for such training initiatives to ensure the continued professional growth of correctional staff.