THE SITUATION

The number of women with substance use issues enrolling in treatment programmes remains very low despite the soaring prevalence of women affected. In addition, those who succeed in entering treatment programmes typically have a shorter stay than men and, after treatment completion, are more frequently exposed to relapse.

In addition to experiencing physical and mental health problems, these women often experience physical and sexual violence or have a history of violence and abuse. They also face negative or inadequate social support systems, inadequate income, unemployment, unstable housing, and involvement with the criminal justice system. On top of this, women entering treatment often find themselves in a male-centred environment, designed for and populated by men that does not address their specific needs.

Violence & Addiction

A link between violence and addictive behaviour is more frequently found in women than men. In recent decades, various studies have shown how closely alcohol and other drug abuse and gender violence are related. These issues have an increasing impact on the mental, physical and emotional health of the women concerned.

The relationships between these factors are even part of a vicious circle: on the one hand, women’s substance use is likely to increase their risk of being victims of violence from their intimate partners, and on the other hand, substance use is a strategy to deal with violence. In addition, rates of physical and sexual violence suffered by women undergoing drug treatment are very high, ranging from 40 to 70 per cent.

The link between gender violence and addiction can be observed both within and outside the couple, for example:

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1 Kilpatrick et al., 1997; World Health Organization, 2013
2 INCB report 2016. Chapter I: Women and Drugs; pp. 5

‘Human Empowerment’ Campaign, Phase 3 - Briefing
The use of psychotropic substances (mainly alcohol and medication) is a way of numbing or dissociating themselves to cope with the violence suffered within the couple. The use of substances is therefore a consequence of this violence;

- The presence of alcohol addiction in the couple leads to a higher level of intimate violence (alcohol affects cognitive functions and reduces the ability to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence; it can exacerbate conflict-generating family difficulties);

- The use of illicit psychotropic substances (heroin, cocaine, etc.) often requires that women become involved in violent environments (physical and psychological violence, sexual blackmail);

- The use of psychotropic drugs alters the state of consciousness, increasing risk-taking and reducing control over a given situation, which promotes sexual violence;

- Women with addictive behaviours appear to be more vulnerable, which can lead to physical, psychological or sexual threats and violence against them;

- The guilt felt by mothers who use substances can be worsened by the rebukes of their abusive partners (the "bad mother" argument is often used by perpetrators of violence);

- Women with addictive behaviour who experience violence from their partners are often more isolated, reducing their ability to seek or receive treatment for their addiction problem.

**CAMPAIGN’S DESCRIPTION**

**Why the ‘Human Empowerment’ Campaign?**

Dianova believes that there is an urgent need to create more awareness among the general public, the media, decision makers and health professionals of the specific problems women face when confronted with substance use disorders, including stigma, gender-related differences, violence, and obstacles to treatment and social reintegration. This is the reason why the campaign will endeavour to emphasize how addiction and gender are closely interconnected, through the lens of a single concept, Human Empowerment.

**General Objective**

The campaign’s general objective is to raise awareness of the need for change in people with substance use or other addiction disorders, to promote the use of effective treatment programmes, and to urge governments, the private sector, foundations and other stakeholders to support some of the Dianova network’s specific programmes and projects with financial aid and other contributions.

**The Campaign’s Three Phases**

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3 World Health Organization: [Intimate partner violence and alcohol](https://www.who.int/health-topics/intimate-partner-violence-and-alcohol#tab=tab_1) accessed Nov. 2019
The campaign is being implemented using a three-phase approach. After the first two phases, entitled “Recovering one’s capacity to choose and embracing life” and “Achieving empowerment through education and life skills”, the third phase will coincide with the collaborative campaign launched by UN Women: 16 Days of Activism to against Gender-Based Violence, an annual international campaign that will begin on 25 November with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and will end on 10 December with Human Rights Day.

**Phase 3: Empowerment**

Only when women and girls have full access to their rights – from equal access to education, health care, decent work, financial independence, sexual and reproductive rights, and freedom from violence, to representation in political and economic decision-making processes – will true equality exist. And only then will all women and girls have the self-determination they are entitled to.

Empowering women and girls across all programmes and advocacy efforts will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. With stepped-up action on gender equality, every part of the world can make progress towards sustainable development by 2030, leaving no one behind...

**Target Audiences**

The Human Empowerment campaign aims to achieve specific, measurable objectives that will be defined depending on each target audience. Each member organization will select one or more targets: decision makers, foundations, companies, beneficiaries and their families, and the academia – based on the changes expected in each audience, and according to the social and political context.

**Definition of Audiences**

- **Decision makers** – institutions, governments, ministries in key positions with decision-making power to carry out changes.
- **Private foundations** – related to the theme of the campaign and those who have experience with the funding of related causes.
- **Companies** – having gender equality plans at the workplace, involved and sensitized with the theme and working on the SDGs.
- **People with SUD and their families** – people with SUD or other addictive disorder who need help and their family members who need support to accompany the former in their change process.
- **Educational community** – primary and secondary schools, universities, teachers and students. Schools having developed addiction prevention programmes.

**What change should be achieved in the target audience?**
• *Decision makers* – they should invest funds and resources in specific activities and adapt laws; establish or consolidate new alliances with Dianova International and its members; invest resources for specific programmes for women.

• *Private foundations* – they should provide additional resources for studies and research and in specific programs or projects targeting the issue of gender and addiction.

• *Companies* – they should develop specific awareness programmes for their employees; invest financial resources in specific activities, including gender specific personal development and labour integration programmes.

• *People with SUD and their families* – they should be more aware of the consequences of their addiction disorders and willing to enrol in treatment programmes.

• *Family members* – they should provide people with SUD with adequate support and help address stigma-related difficulties that they may face, especially women.

• *Educational community* – they should integrate gender specific, addiction prevention programmes in the curriculum and participate in research programmes on this issue.

Once the target is selected, each member organization will develop its communication strategy and adapt the campaign’s messages to the selected target audience.

**Creative Concept**

We have created a video which, through the story of an adolescent girl, aims to raise awareness and highlight the specific problems girls and women with substance use disorders must face, as well as the importance of empowerment as an essential tool to bring violence and addiction stigma to an end. We want to convey the importance of empowering women and girls as a key for them to acquire the means to make decisions that will determine their own future.

**Implementation**

The campaign will run from November 25 to December 10, 2019. It will be available to ordinary and associate members of the Dianova International network in the following countries:

Chile, Uruguay, Nicaragua, United States, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, Kenya, Pakistan, India, Norway, Togo, DRC, Romania, Turkey, Bangladesh.

Languages: Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, Italian, Swedish, Slovenian, Norwegian.

**Materials & Resources**

*Editorial content:*

- Video 90s. - Empower Women - Empower society. Subtitled in 7 languages
- Social media kit. Developed by DI.
- Press release. Developed by DI.
- 5 articles for the web. Developed by DI.
- Reports, data, good practices. Developed by DI.

These materials will be available on the Dianova International website.

**Digital content:**

Hashtag: #HumanEmpowerment

**Images:**

- Provision of images. (headers for social networks – posts for social networks)
- Adaptation to different mediums

**Evaluation - global indicators**

Dianova International will provide a template for data collection.

**Online Communication. KPIs (key performance indicators)**

- Activity: number of publications, tweets, post.
- Vitality: reach, number of people impacted, number of web visits.
- Influence: number of interactions, likes, shared, comments, and retweets.