

"A Gateway Within All Women's Reach"

Press release

Barcelona, 26 June 2023 - Addiction does not discriminate by gender, however, gender does condition access to services. Let's be clear: accessing addiction treatment services is certainly no walk in the park. Only one in five people with drug dependence have access to treatment services. At the same time, if you're a woman, it gets even more complicated. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, only 20% of people accessing treatment services are women!

On "World Drug Day", June 26, Dianova launches its campaign **"A Gateway Within All Women's Reach" (#RemovingGenderBarriers)** to draw attention to the need for more inclusive and accessible services for all. To achieve this, it is critical to approach these challenges from a gender perspective and take action to remove the barriers that prevent women from accessing addiction services. It is time to put an end to the under-representation of women in the services concerned.

The campaign aims to encourage decision-makers and healthcare professionals to take action, but also to raise public awareness and put an end to the stigmatization of women who use drugs.

Barriers to addiction services for women are multi-faceted. They may be structural, social and cultural, including those linked to gender as a social construct. In addition, women who use drugs are two to five times more likely to experience violence than those who do not. Yet most services are still designed based on men's needs, profiles, and expectations. In addition, they seldom address gender-based violence, which is key when working with women who use drugs.

Health and addiction professionals can also be prejudiced against women and LGBT+ people. In addition, women fear of losing custody of their children, and other legal sanctions, which makes them reluctant to seek treatment. And lastly, one should also mention the weight of a persistent social stigma attached to women who use drugs.

It should also be noted that people from the LGBT+ community face additional obstacles resulting from their characteristics and specific circumstances that can make access and adherence to addiction services even more complicated.

For many years, Dianova has been a proud advocate of the need to mainstream a gender equality perspective in all drug policies and addiction services. With the campaign "A Gateway Within All Women's Reach", our objective is to hammer our message once more: it is essential that everyone has access to inclusive and accessible addiction services.

About Dianova

Dianova is a network of organizations working in the social and health fields on four continents for the benefit of people in vulnerable situations.

Addiction prevention and treatment are the main areas of activity of Dianova International, but it also engages in advocacy, defending the rights of people in vulnerable situations in international bodies and forums on drug policy, health and human rights.

Main affiliations

Dianova International is a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations ([ECOSOC](#)); it is registered as a civil society organization with the Organization of American States ([OAS](#)); and maintains consultative relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)). Dianova is also a member of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs in the EU ([CSFD](#)), the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs ([VNGOC](#)) and the World Federation of Therapeutic Communities ([WFTC](#)), among other entities.

For more information, please contact:

Montse Rafel

montse.rafel@dianova.org

www.dianova.org

Tel. 34 93 636 57 30