



COPOLAD

# Policy Paper on stigma and drug with a gender approach in Latin America and The Caribbean

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ANTROPÓLOGO SOCIAL - CONSULTOR



**COPOLAD III**

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Programa de Cooperación  
entre América Latina, el Caribe  
y la Unión Europea  
en Políticas sobre Drogas

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COPOLAD III es un consorcio formado por:



Socios colaboradores:



Observatorio Europeo de las  
Drogas y las Toxicomanías



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- What is Stigma?
- Cycle, Scope and Ecology of Stigma.
- Stigma towards People Who Use Drugs (PUD).
- Stigma towards Women and Diversity Drug Users.
- Guidance Reference Documents and Policy Paper.
- Good Practices for the Destigmatization of PUDs.
- Proposal for country accompaniment.

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# ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD STIGMA

- From the **Latin word** stigma: 'mark made on the skin with a hot iron', 'infamous note',
- In ancient Rome, the term **stigmata** (stigmatization) was used as the name of a practice in which a **mark** was impressed on a person's skin to identify his or her condition of slavery, criminality or dissidence.
- In **Christianity** it also symbolizes a phenomenon that reflects the appearance of a stigma or stigmata, usually on the hands or feet, which refers to the crucifixion of Jesus.
- In the **Webster's Dictionary** it is defined as:
  - a. a set of negative and unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something
  - b. a mark of shame or discredit





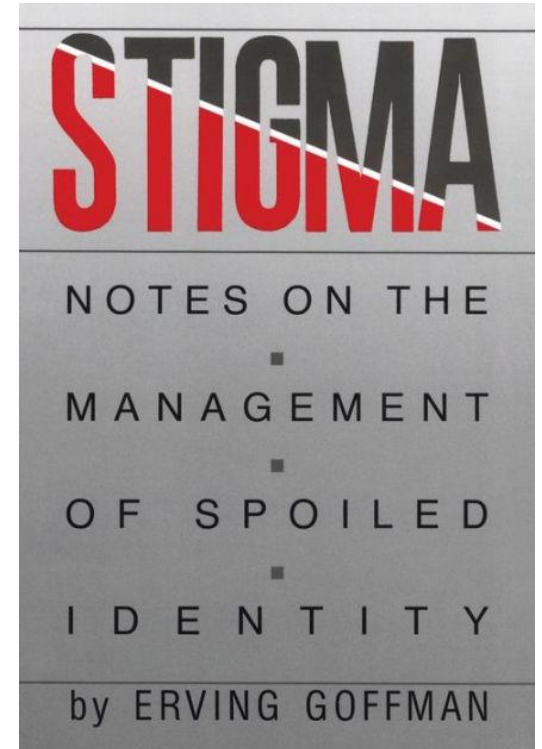
## Erving Goffman (1969) Stigma. Notes on the management of spoiled identity

### FORMATION OF STIGMA

- **Relational concept.** Depends on the person and the context.
- Is a process of devaluation that **significantly discredits** an individual.
- It leads to a kind of a **spoiled identity**
- The person is seen in terms of **an attribute considered undesirable**
- The attribute constitutes a **difference or deviation** that generates a **stereotype or label**.

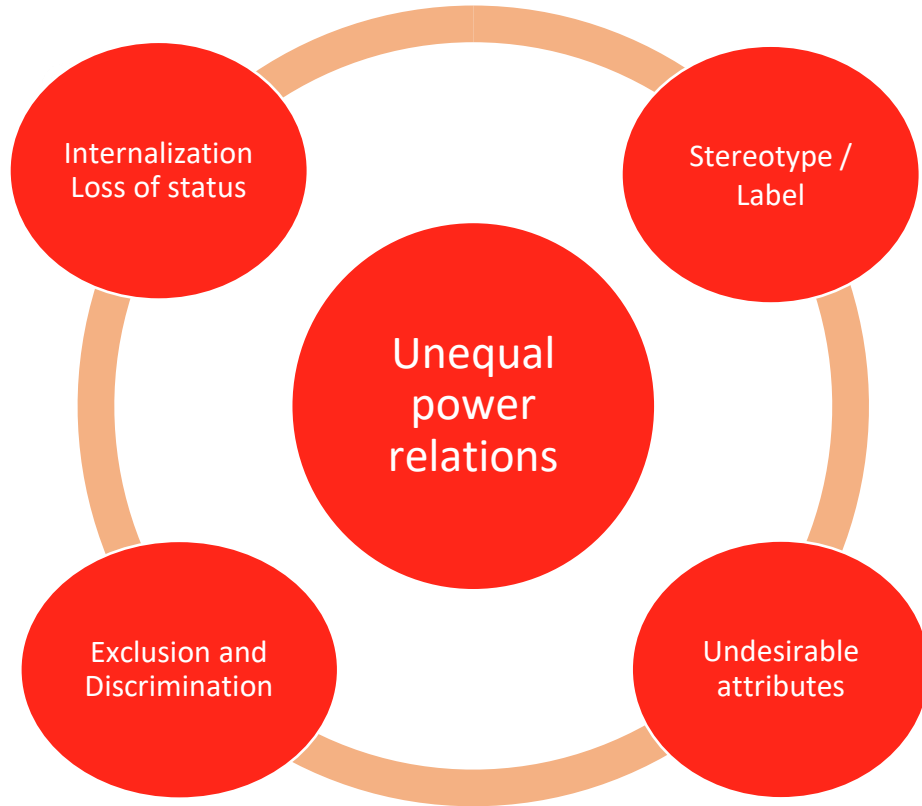
### SOURCES OF STIGMA

- Physical deformity or an undesirable difference
- Tribal (race, ethnicity, nation, religion)
- Experience of mental illness (or imposition of a diagnosis)





# STIGMA CYCLE



## 1. Distinguish and label differences between people

- Differences are socially identified
- On simplification of attributes, they can change

## 2. Associating tags with certain attributes considered undesirable

- Differences (labels) linked to stereotypes
- Complexity Reduction – Cognitive Efficiency

## 3. Separation between the "us" and the "others"

- Distinctive and separated categories between people
- Culturally justified hierarchies based on power relations

## 4. Loss of social status

- Justifying or rationalizing exclusion and discrimination
- Discrimination can be social, institutional, cultural
- Diminishes the ability to access social, economic and political power



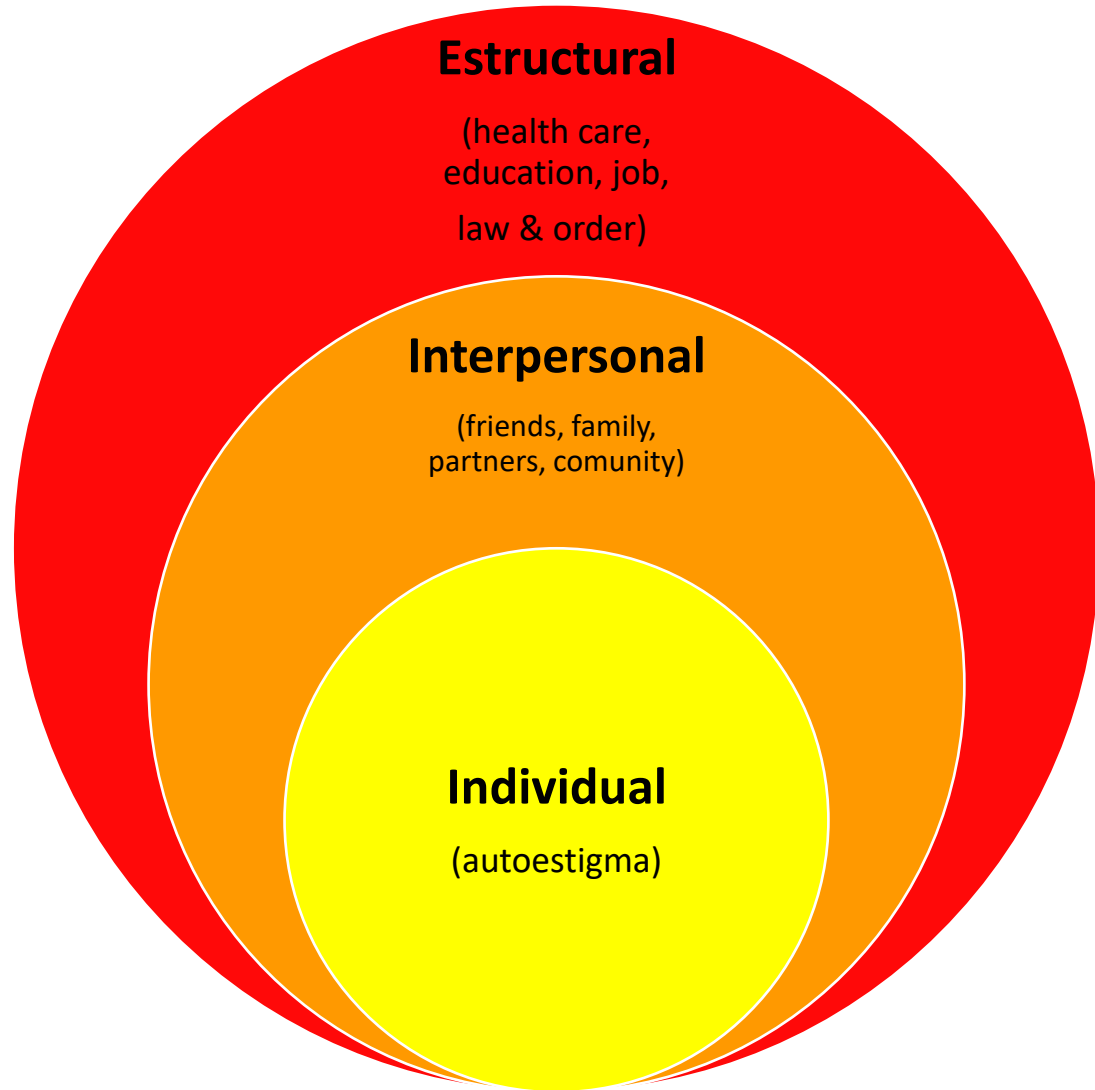
# ÁMBITOS DE ESTIGMATIZACIÓN

- 🌀 **Social or Public stigma:** Attitudes and beliefs that society in general has in relation to individuals or their families.
- 🌀 **Institutional stigma** Refers to negative attitudes and beliefs that are part of an organization's policies or culture. It is usually reflected in the use of a discourse based on labels.
- 🌀 **Self-stigma:** When the same person believes the false ideas that society has about him/her and his/her behavior.
- 🌀 **Stigma by association:** Is directed towards people who do not carry the label, but it relates with those that do.





# Ecological approach to Stigma





# Labels or Stereotypes towards People Who Use Drugs



## Social

- Junkie
- Criminal
- Reefer – Crack head
- Bum - Outcast

## Institutional

- Drug addict
- Manipulator
- Dangerous
- Criminal

## Autostigma

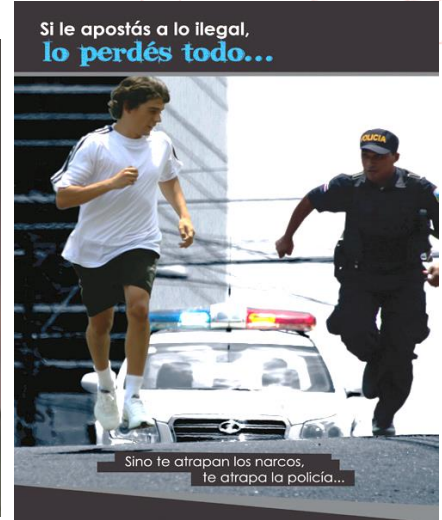
- Unwilling
- Irresponsible
- Useless
- Incapable





# STIGMA IN THE MEDIA - LATIN AMERICA

**Evita relaciones con personas que consumen drogas.**  
**Apóyate en tu familia**





## **Health Services**

Denial of health care and medication  
Absence of Harm Reduction services  
Abuse in rehabilitation centers

## **Law Enforcement**

Police abuse, extortion, violence  
Arbitrary detention and imprisonment  
Violence and torture in detention facilities

### **Impacts of Structural Stigma on People Who Use Drugs**

## **Women**

Exclusion of social and psychological services  
Denial of custody of their children  
Sexual and gender violence

## **Job / Education**

Toxicological tests (doping)  
Suspension / Expulsion  
Unjustified job loss



## Stigma towards Women who Use Drugs



### **Chang J. (2021). Women who use drugs: Resistance and rebellion.**

“Due to expectations around gender norms and identities, women who use drugs end up facing a “double stigma”, not only from society at large, but also within the drug-using community. This double discrimination manifests itself in how women who use drugs face stigma, are more hidden and isolated, and have fewer economic and social resources, as well as support networks.”



### **INPUD (2014) Drug User Peace Initiative**

“Women who use drugs face considerable barriers to accessing health care and service delivery, which creates barriers to preventing sexually and blood-borne infections. Women who use drugs are more likely to experience violence, both perpetrated by the State and in their homes and family contexts.



### **“Dávila, M. (2020) Guide to protect the sexual and reproductive rights of women who use drugs**

“Another type of violence faced by women sex workers who use drugs has to do with abuses of power by police officers. In several accounts, the interviewees pointed out that, frequently, the police harass them, violate them, stigmatize them and expel them from their usual workplaces.”



### **Brennan, A. (2021) Female queer identities and the war on drugs**

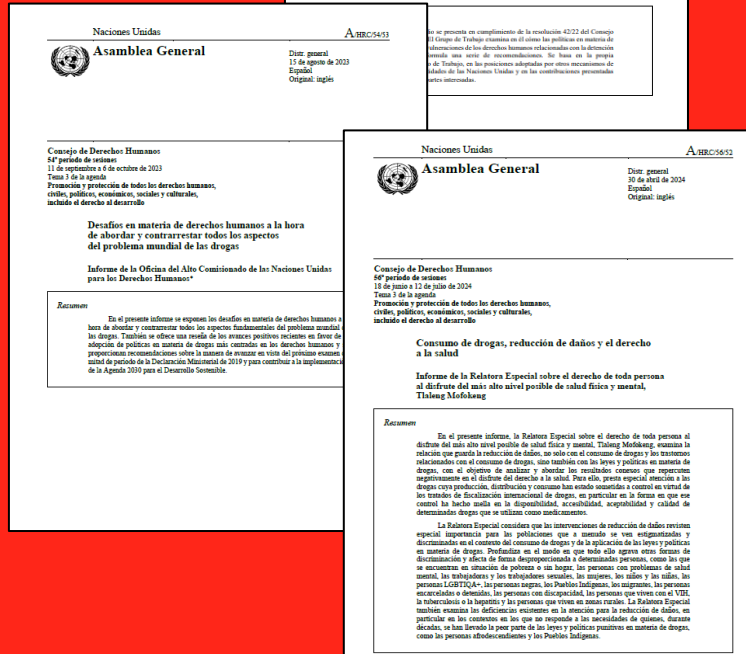
“There are numerous other factors leading to women being prevented from accessing these services. The issues facing womxn who use drugs are at their most severe when compounded with marginalised queer identities. The intersection of issues and stigmas that we face limit our access to services.”

# UNITED NATIONS REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

## General Assembly

## Human Rights Office

## Commission on Narcotic Drugs







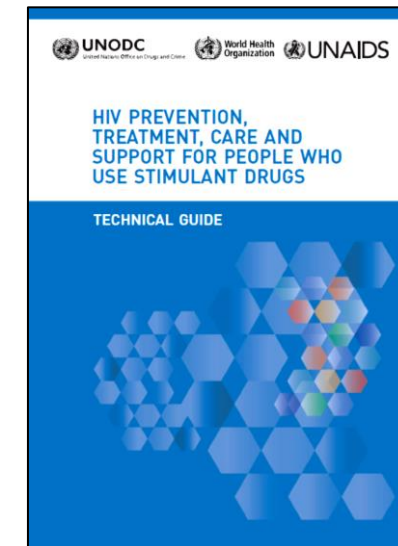
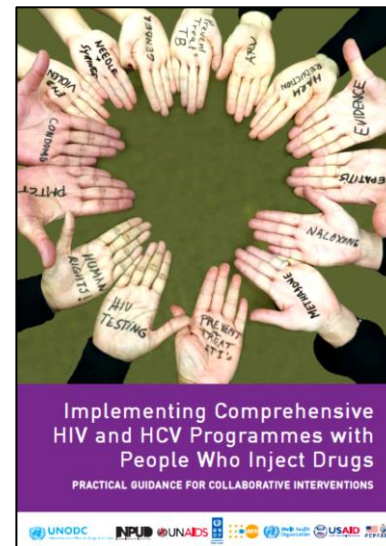
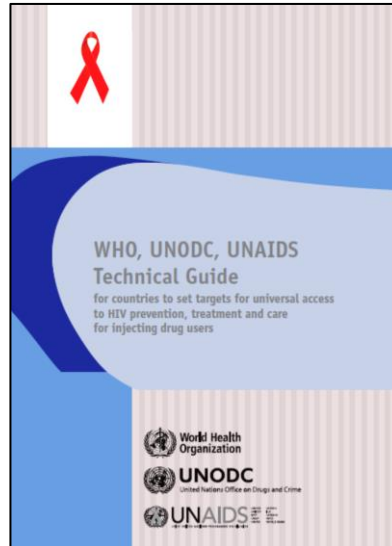
## Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda



“It points to the need for drug policies, prevention campaigns and the design of services and programs to be gender-sensitive. This implies recognizing that there are important differences between men and women, as well as other gender identities, in terms of drug use and addiction. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but the necessary foundation for achieving a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.” (RIOD 2019)

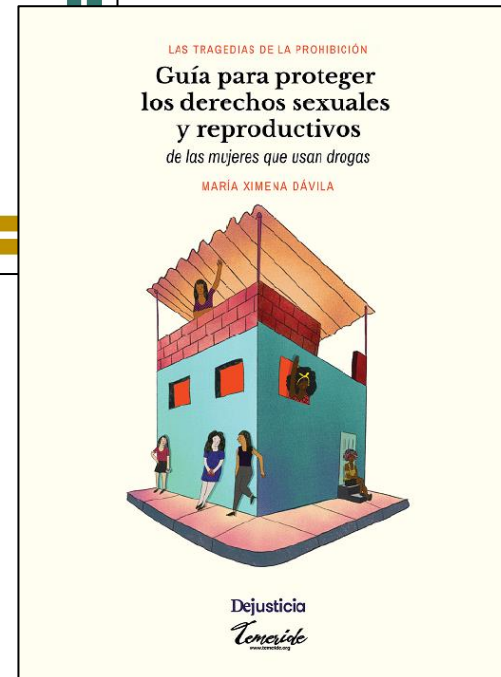
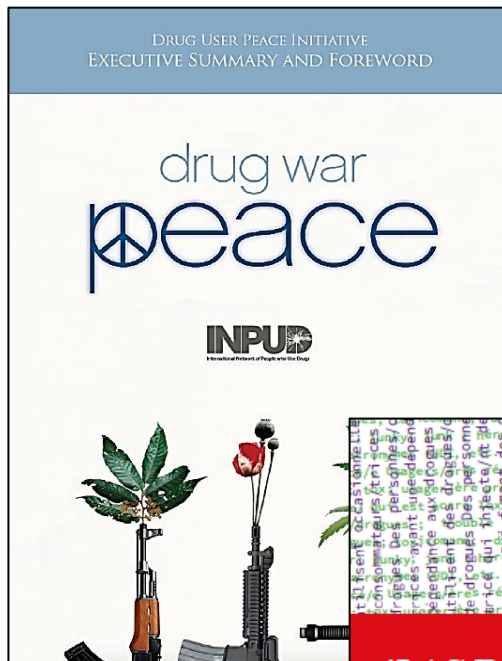


- UNAIDS
- UNODC
- WHO
- UNDP





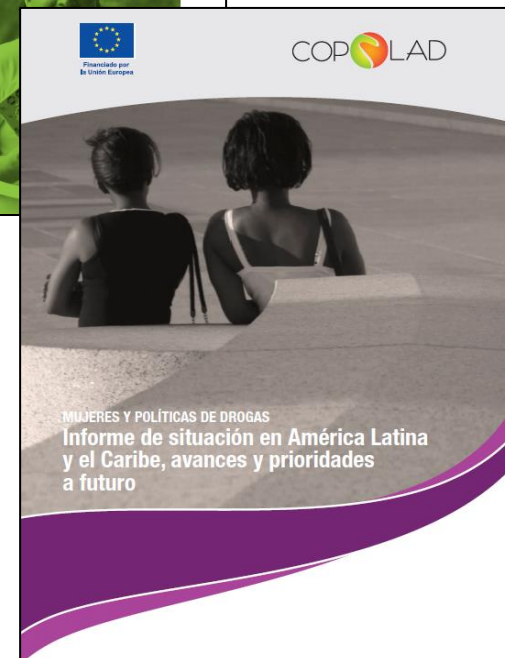
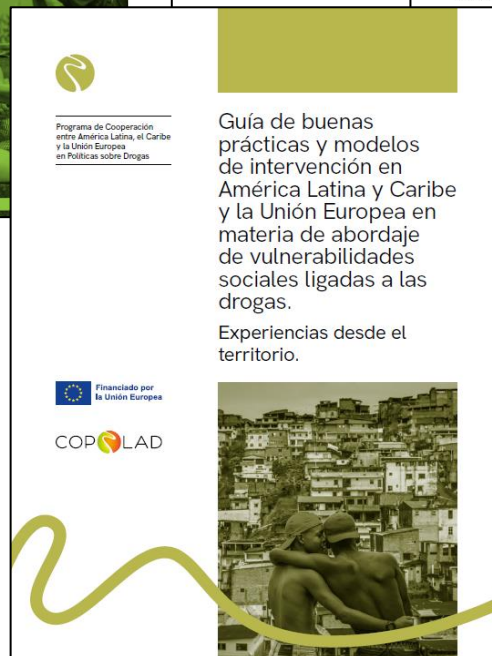
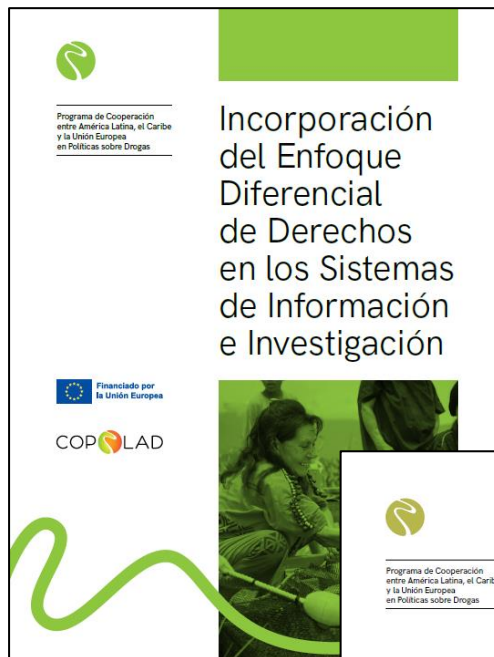
# NGO Documents







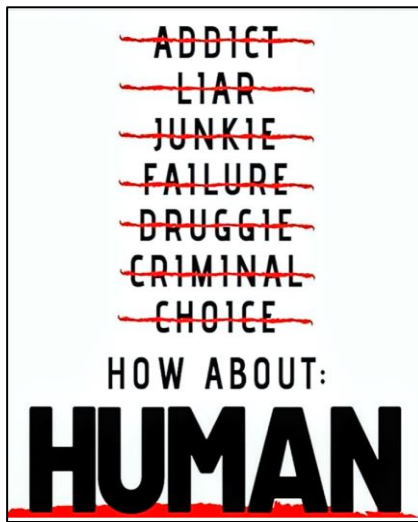
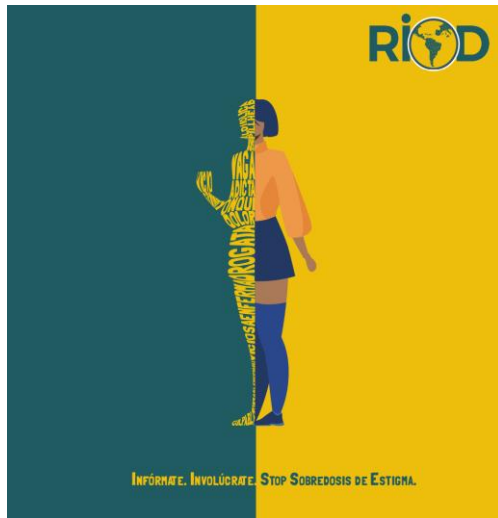
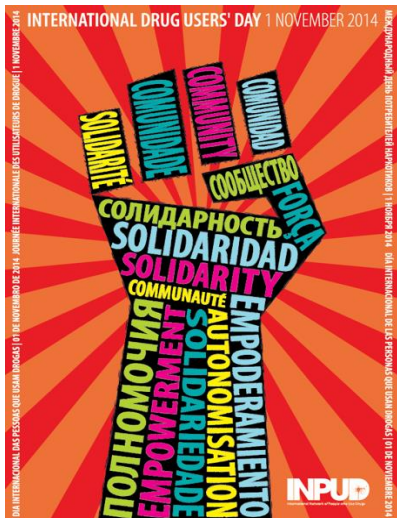
## COPOLAD III Documents and Guides







# DE-STIGMATIZATION CAMPAIGNS



# DE-STIGMATIZATION CAMPAIGNS

Support.  
Don't  
punish.

Above.  
No  
castigue.



Acompañe.  
No  
castigue.

Acolha.  
Não  
puna.



## Policy Paper

## Next Steps

### **Phase 1: Initial Preparation and Coordination**

- 1.1 Preparatory meetings
- 1.2 Initial assessment

### **Phase 2: Development of the policy paper**

- 2.1 Preparation of the policy paper on stigma and drug use and gender
- 2.2 Review and validation of the policy paper

### **Phase 3: Implementation of Pilots and Monitoring**

- 3.1 Implementation of pilot proposals
- 3.2. Sensitization of key actors in the countries
- 3.3. Evaluation of the pilot

### **Phase 4: Final Evaluation**

- 4.1 Final evaluation
- 4.2. Final corrected policy paper



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# THANK YOU

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