

## Anti-Discrimination Center (CAD): Counseling and legal support to people living with HIV/Hepatitis victims of discrimination; Activism, Training and Research

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### Background

UNAIDS recognizes Stigma and discrimination as an important barrier to achieve the three Zeros, having a direct impact in quality of life of People living with HIV (PLHIV). However, until 2010 there was no response in Portugal to defend PLHIV rights, although there is a law (n.º 46/2006) warranting NGO the mandate to intervene on behalf of requesting party.

### Project Description

In 2010, Ser+ and GAT, created Anti-Discrimination Center (CAD – [www.cad.vih.pt](http://www.cad.vih.pt)) to ensure and promote PLWHIV rights. This project is a distinct initiative in Portugal, with 5 main services, ensured by a multidisciplinary team of professionals and peers:

- **Counseling and legal support** to PLHIV/hepatitis facing discrimination and/or rights violation;
- **Activism and Advocacy**, to promote legislative and regulatory changes, for a better protection of PLHIV/hepatitis rights;
- **Awareness Campaigns and Training**, aimed at professionals, activists and PLHIV/ hepatitis, intends to wipe out stigma, demystify wrong believes and promote PLHIV full social integration;
- **Research studies** about stigma and discrimination of PLHIV/hepatitis to create new knowledge;
- **Documentation Center** with relevant national and international publications about discrimination, Human Rights, HIV/ hepatitis.

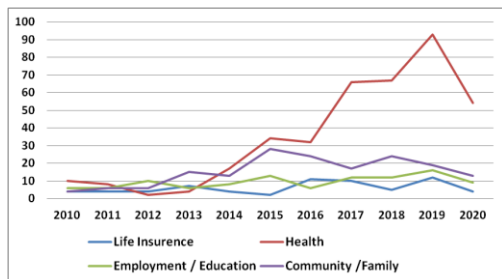


Figure 2. Cases received per year and typology

- CAD developed **165 training sessions**, attended by **3.963 trainees**. There was a significant improvement in knowledge and attitudes, evaluated through a pre/post questionnaire;
- In 2013 CAD developed **Stigma Index study** in Portugal (is being replicated in 2021) to know and quantify stigma and discrimination felt by PLHIV, interviewing 1060 participants;
- Between 2016-2019 CAD developed the research/action **project Respect**, to evaluate and improve knowledge, practices and testing regarding HIV in Primary Care Centers;

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Although stigma and discrimination are central aspects in HIV reduction, changing attitudes and behaviors is only possible with continuity and integrated responses including training, counseling, legal actions, advocacy and research.

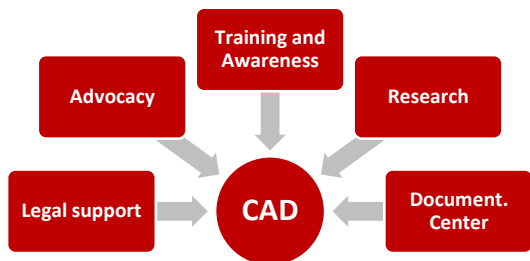


Figure 1. Anti-Discrimination Center (CAD) Services

### Results

- Since 2010, CAD received **727 cases** (80 in 2020, 56% complaints) from all over the country, mainly health related (53%) We achieved a successful outcome in the majority of them (58%);
- CAD promoted **structural changes**, namely in:
  - ✓ Public swimming pools regulations
  - ✓ Inmates access to HIV/HCV treatment
  - ✓ Access regulations to security forces
- In Documentation Center we gather **25.270 documents** (93% online), visited by **1M people**

Trainees	
PLWHIV/ hepatitis and NGO	522
Companies and vocational centres	1.289
Social support facilities and services	1.327
Teachers and other educational agents	421
Young people	116
Health professionals	288
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3963</b>

Figure 3. Nº of people trained by CAD