

## Background

UNAIDS recognizes Stigma and discrimination as an important barrier to achieve the three Zeros, having a direct impact in the quality of life of People living with HIV (PLWHIV) - the fourth zero.

In Portugal, the social impact of HIV and Viral Hepatitis, fueled by stigma and discrimination, is still very significant, as showed in the Stigma Index Portugal study, conducted in 2013.

However, until 2010 there was no response in Portugal to defend PLWHIV rights and prevent stigma and discrimination, although there is a law (n.º 46/2006) warranting NGO the mandate to intervene on behalf of/or supporting requesting party

## Goals

Pioneered In 2010, Ser+ and GAT, created the Anti-Discrimination Center (CAD) to ensure, promote and secure PLWHIV fundamental rights.

This project is a **distinct initiative in Portugal**. Its main goals are:

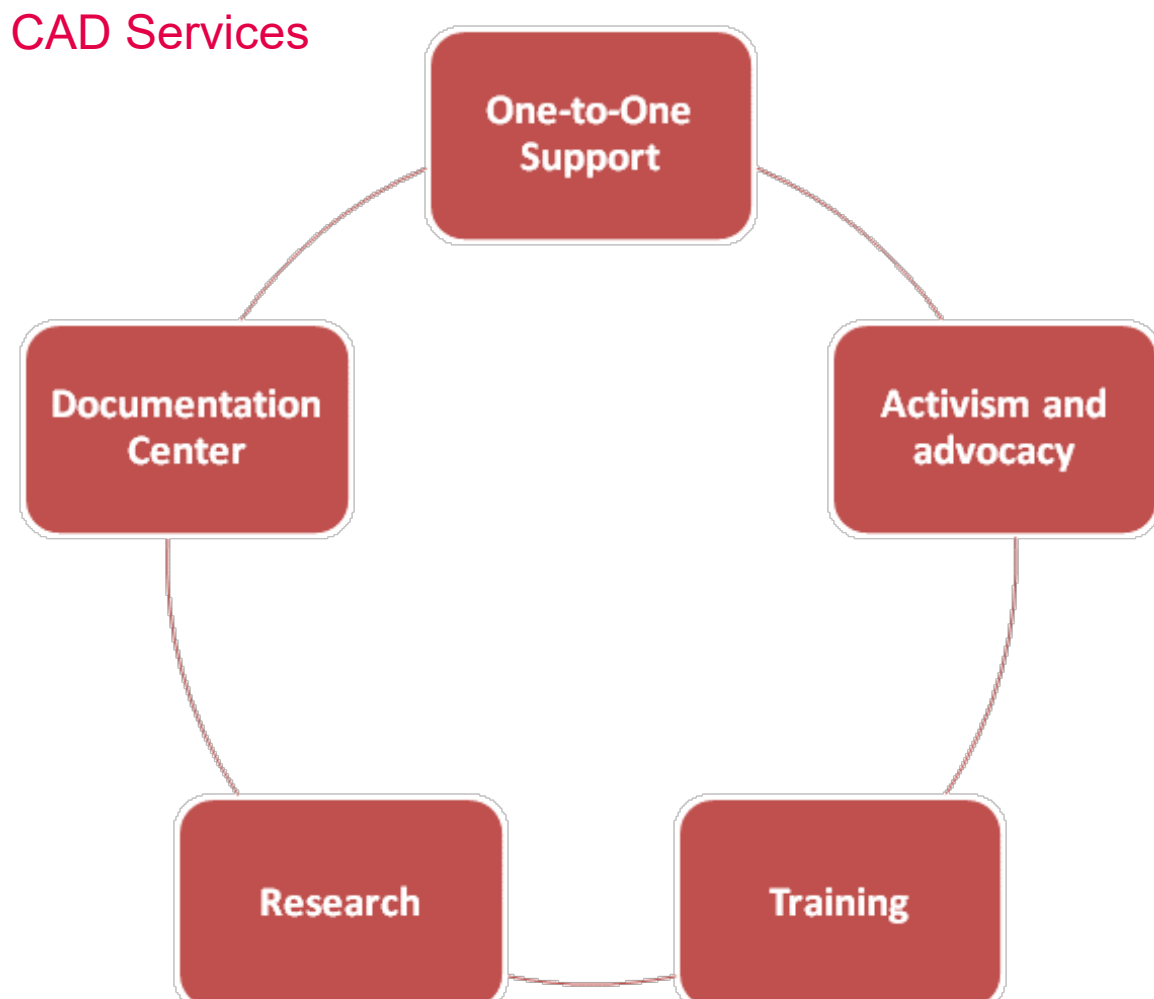
- Provide counselling and legal support to PLWHIV / hepatitis and vulnerable populations, subject to discrimination;
- Promote legal and social solutions and tools, to defend the rights of PLWHIV/ hepatitis and vulnerable populations;
- Empower PLWHIV/ hepatitis, as well as community members in key sectors, to reduce stigma and prevent discrimination;
- Gather relevant national and international publications in the areas of discrimination, Human Rights, HIV and viral hepatitis;
- Contribute to the production of knowledge about discrimination, Human Rights, HIV and viral hepatitis.

## Activities and Methodologies

CAD has 5 main services, ensured by a multidisciplinary team of professionals and peers:

- **One-to one support** : Information, counseling and legal support to PLWHIV /hepatitis facing real-life situations of discrimination and/or rights violation.
- **Activism and Advocacy**: Identify structural barriers and promote legislative, regulatory or administrative changes, necessary for better protection of the rights of PLWHIV/ hepatitis and to avoid discriminatory practices.
- **Training**: Aimed at professionals, activists and PLWHIV/ hepatitis, intends to wipe out stigma, demystify wrong beliefs and promote PLWHIV full social integration.
- **Research**: Production of knowledge about stigma and discrimination, Human Rights, HIV and viral hepatitis.
- **Documentation Center**: Gather relevant national and international publications in the areas of discrimination, Human Rights, HIV and viral hepatitis;

Figure 1. CAD Services



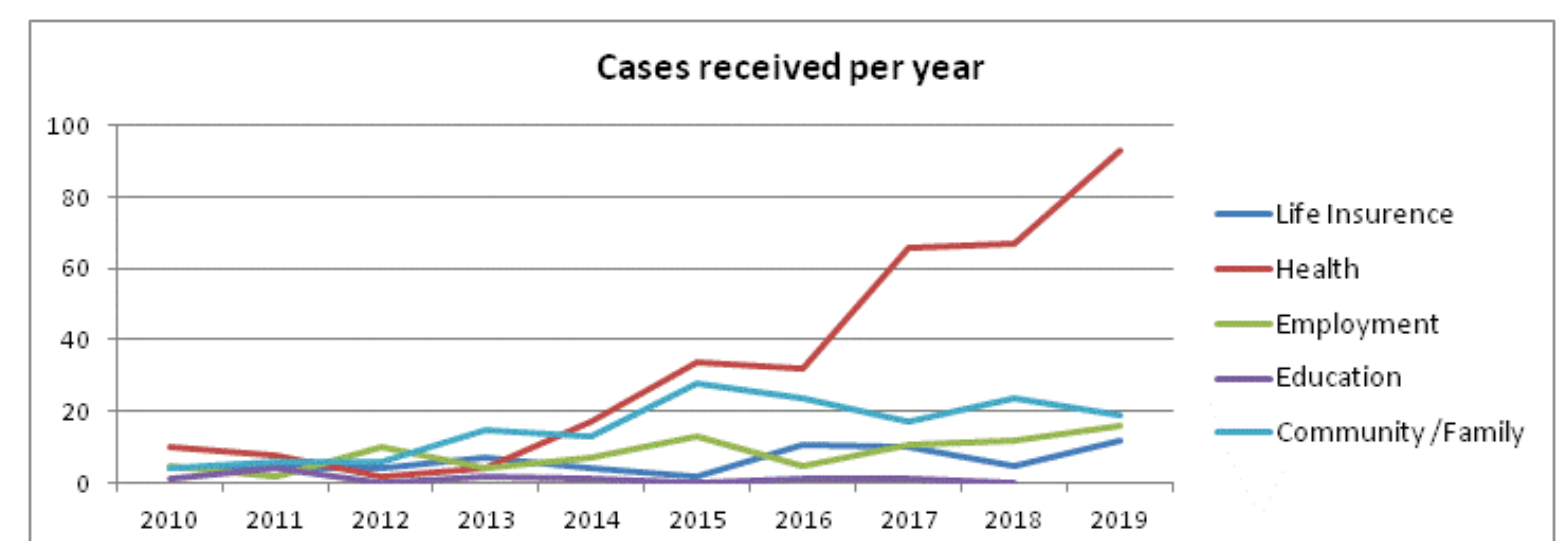
## Results

### • One-to one support

Since 2010, CAD received 647 cases, (140 in 2019) equally divided between information requests and complaints. The number of cases increases every year, and they are mainly health related (51%).

We receive cases from all over the country, and are able to achieve a successful outcome in the majority of them (41% vs 23% unsuccessful; 19% withdrawal; 10% without fundament)

Figure 2. Cases received per year and typology



### • Activism and Advocacy

CAD identified barriers and have been working to remove them and promote structural changes, namely:

- Change discrimination law, to include social and family discrimination
- Change the regulations to access public swimming pools
- Improve inmates access to HIV and HCV treatment
- Change access regulations of PLWHIV/ Hepatitis to security forces
- Facilitate access to life insurance

### • Training

Since 2010 CAD developed 162 training sessions all over the country (11 in 2019), attended by 3.898 trainees (384 in 2019), In all training sessions we noticed a significant improvement in knowledge, attitudes and behavior intention in trainees, evaluated through a pre/post questionnaire.

Table 1. N.º of people that attended CAD training sessions

Trainees	2010 - 2019	2019
PLWHIV/ hepatitis and NGO	583	76
Companies and vocational training centres	1249	308
Social support facilities and services	1241	-
Teachers and other educational agents	421	-
Young people	116	-
Health professionals	288	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.898</b>	<b>384</b>

### • Research and Documentation Center

- In 2013 CAD developed **Stigma Index study** in Portugal, to know and quantify stigma and discrimination felt by PLWHIV., interviewing 1060 participants. The study will be replicated in 2020 to evaluate changes;
- Between 2016 and 2019 CAD developed the research/action project **Respect**, to evaluate and improve knowledge, practices and testing regarding HIV in primary care centers;
- Documentation Center has 23.200 documents, 90% accessed online

## Conclusions

Although stigma and discrimination are central aspects in HIV reduction, changing attitudes and behaviors is a slow and hard path.

We strongly believe that this changes are only possible with continuity responses that integrate multiple activities (awareness, training, accurate information, advice, legal actions and research), such as CAD.

However, this project has no guaranteed funding and any state contribution, so companies support is crucial to its continuity.