



**Gender and Drug Policy:
Exploring Global Innovative Approaches to Drug Policy and Incarceration**

A new series of policy briefs explore innovative approaches that incorporate a gender perspective and the principles of public health and human rights into drug policy.

May 25, 2017 – Across the Americas, drug policies have failed to make a significant dent in the drug trade, while corruption and organized crime continue to thrive. At the same time, these harmful drug policies disproportionately fall on the most vulnerable, including poor women who often enter the drug trade because of desperation, lack of opportunity, and coercion. Incarceration heightens the situation of vulnerability that these women face and takes a toll on their families and communities.

Today, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), Dejusticia, and the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States are releasing a series of policy briefs, [Global Innovative Approaches](#), highlighting various programs and legal reforms from Latin America and around the world that promote more effective and humane drug policies.

Each [Innovative Approach](#) includes background information and a description of the program or reform, in addition to a section detailing outcomes and results. The examples in the series include alternatives to incarceration for low-level, non-violent drug offenders, policy reforms, and health and social programs. Many of the briefs analyze programs specifically tailored toward women in conditions of vulnerability.

While the details of each approach vary, their goal is to reduce incarceration rates, protect human rights, address public health concerns related to drug use, and assist individuals in transitioning back into their communities after their release.

The highlighted programs are promising, but they should not come at the expense of broader drug policy reform. Yet, in the absence of more comprehensive reforms, these innovative programs can assist communities caught up in vicious cycles of poverty, social exclusion, drug use, involvement in the drug trade, and incarceration.

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