



Results 2009-2010

## **P'RA TI<sup>1</sup> – Oporto Women's Centre**

### **Monitoring Service and Accompaniment of Women Victims of Violence**

**UMAR**

#### **Introduction**

This report presents the results of the Oporto Women's Centre – P'RA TI, concerning the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> February of 2009 to the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010, and the achievements due to the grant of the Body Shop Foundation. For this period, UMAR established three main objectives for the Oporto Women's Centre: i) to create a space that assures a specialized support, follow up and the specialist referrals of women victims of violence in order in order to protect their autonomy; 2) to accomplish this with the cooperation of a multidisciplinary team (professionals from the areas of law, psychology and social work); 3) to establish a net work of partnership with others services and organizations to achieve a more effective long term support to women to assure an autonomous and non-violent personal, familiar and professional life project.

These objectives were achieved and this report will describe what was done in conformity. Nevertheless, the aim of the Oporto Women's Centre is to contribute to eradicate gender violence and this will continue to mobilize the energy and efforts of the team of Oporto Women's Centre P'RA TI.

From the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007, the Centre had no funding support, working with volunteer staff and negotiating with Portuguese government funding for a professional and integrated support and accompaniment of women victims of domestic and gender violence.

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<sup>1</sup> PRATI – Project for Autonomy, Work and Social Integration (Projecto Autonomia, Trabalho e Inserção).

The protocol for government funding (designed Agreement on Cooperation between Social Security and UMAR) was signed in February 1, 2009. The staff selection was completed to the 1st April 2009, and from this date to the end of June, the team staff have received training in the CIG<sup>2</sup> and UMAR and began the promotion and divulgation of the Centre. The formal reopening of the P'RA TI- Oporto Women's Centre took place on June 26th, 2009.

In this report, it is presented the main achievements in 2009 and the results of the first semester of 2010.

### **Setting the Oporto Women's Centre – P'RA TI, reorganizing the team**

The priorities of the work in 2009 were setting the Centre, because UMAR has moved from Formosa Street and it was necessary to make the PRATI – Oporto Women's Centre in good conditions to work with women victims of gender and domestic violence.

Several structural arrangements and works took place, with the contribution of the grant of Body Shop Foundation, which made possible the acquisition of furniture and office material to give good conditions to the work in the Centre. Please, see attachment 5, with the photos in power point and Attachment 4 with the detailed financial execution concerning the grant of Body Shop Foundation.

Then, we proceed in the selection of the staff, followed by training sessions to be well prepared to work with the victims. Some new members of the team felt they were young and with a few experience in attending and supporting women victims and, nevertheless, annual training and supervising is part of UMAR's philosophy in working in gender and domestic violence.

Then, parallel to the intervention in supporting and accompanying the women, attention was put on remaking partnerships to build a social and institutional network in supporting women's victims of domestic and gender violence.

Most of the partnership protocols were set according that the partner institution or organization will inform women and eventual victims about Oporto Women's Centre and UMAR will be available to participate in lectures, awareness campaigns or other actions in favour to the rights of women led by the institution / organization. In 2009, several

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<sup>2</sup> CIG – Portuguese Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality

partnership protocols were established between UMAR and other institutions or organizations, such as: Municipal Councils of Baião, Marco de Canavezes, Gondomar, Vale de Cambra; Legião da Boa Vontade (Good-Will Legion, an organization for homeless people); ASI – International Association for Social Solidarity; Espaço T<sup>3</sup>.

A special partnership protocol was established with CPCJ- Portuguese Committee for the Protection of Children and Youngsters (Comissões de Protecção de Crianças e Jovens): besides the agreement of informing women about the Centre from the part of the CPCJ, and the availability to participate in seminars or lectures about women's rights, CPCJ and UMAR set a procedure protocol to act in an articulated way with the women victims (UMAR) and their children and adolescents at risk (CPCJ). Also, CPCJ asked UMAR to train the staff members of CPCJ on gender and domestic violence issues.

Partnership protocols with health institutions from Oporto were also established, specifically for reducing costs for the victims who need to be attended.

Also with the Civil Government of Oporto it is set a protocol to receive some funding and to have permission to organize awareness activities in public space.

To assure a scientific training of psychologists (the volunteer psychologists working in centre) it was set a protocol with ISMAI<sup>4</sup>.

During 2009, in parallel with the work to create the space and to form the multidisciplinary team, new 53 women victims of violence made use of P'RA TI, with 62 sons and daughters dependents, totalizing 115 persons, conducted nearly 300 personal meetings and 200 telephone calls.

From these 53, 8 women were attended in a crisis / risk emergency situation. 22 users received legal support and other 58 continue to receive legal consulting. 20 users received psychological support, 52 psychological sessions were held. 24 users received social support, with 94 social consultations. Finally, 4 users asked for vocational guidance and with them the team did 11 vocational consultations.

Furthermore, the team participated in several actions related with training and awareness activities, requested by other institutions and associations and also organized by other teams of UMAR, such as: Catholic University of Oporto, to lecture in the Master degree of Community Health; Red Cross of VN Gaia; training workshop and

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<sup>3</sup> Space T is an association to support people with disabilities and drug abusers, among other social problems.

<sup>4</sup> ISMAI is an Institute for University Studies in Maia with a degree in Psychology.

a lecturing for Aliança Artesanal de Vila Verde<sup>5</sup>, in Vila Verde and in Terras do Bouro; participation in the Seminar “Preventing Gender Violence at Schools”, organized by UMAR, collaboration in OMA – The Murder of Women by Intimate Partners Observatory; collaboration in the Research Project Love, Fear and Power, run by Professor Maria José Magalhães in the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education and funded by Portuguese Science Foundation.

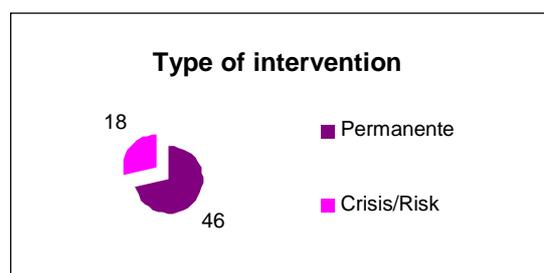
The divulgation of the P’RA TI Oporto Women’s Centre was a constant preoccupation of the team, and the staff participated in 2 television programs, 2 radio programs, and be noticed in 10 newspaper articles. Besides that, many meetings were held to give leaflets and accurate information about the Centre in many institutions and occasions (see Attachment 2 for a more detailed description).

The space created, the staff team set, the following section will describe the results more specifically about the women supported and accompanied by the Oporto Women’s Centre.

## Results of the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester of 2010

### Women

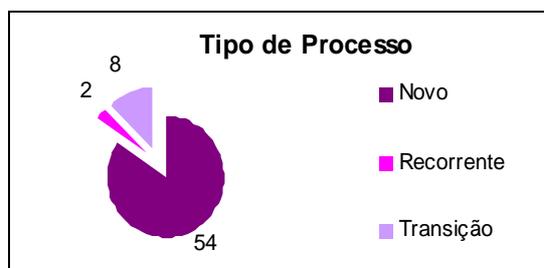
In this period, sixty four (64) women victims of violence have been supported and accompanied, with eighty-one (81) daughters/dependants, a total of 145 persons.



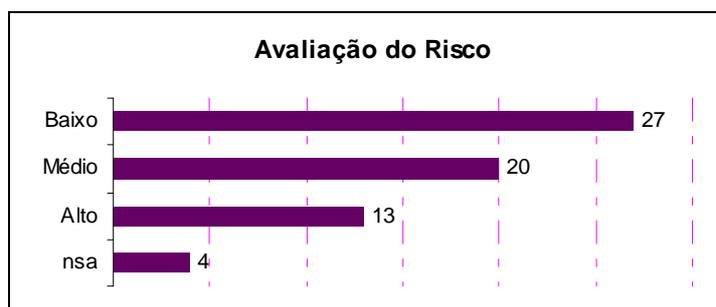
Eighteen (18) women arrived at P’RA TI in crisis/Risk, which means that it took immediate and urgent measures to ensure their protection, as well as of their daughters/sons, minimizing the social situation of defencelessness and risk of life or security physical integrity and psychological of them and their children.

<sup>5</sup> This is a cooperative of craft women in Vila Verde, in the North of the country.

Concerning the type of process, as it can be seen below, from the sixty four (64) users in monitoring in 2010, fifty-four (54) used the Oporto Women's Centre - P'RA TI for the first time, two (2) appealed again with a new request for help, associated to the context of domestic violence., without new situations of violence and eight (8) transited to 2010, i.e., the intervention procedures continued to the current year.

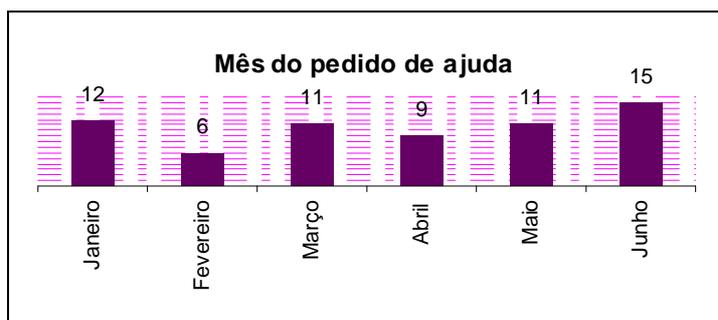


In respect to the Risk Evaluation, the staff evaluated the risk situation of the women in following degrees: twenty-seven (27) users were evaluated with low risk and thirty-three clients (33) users were considered at risk middle/high.

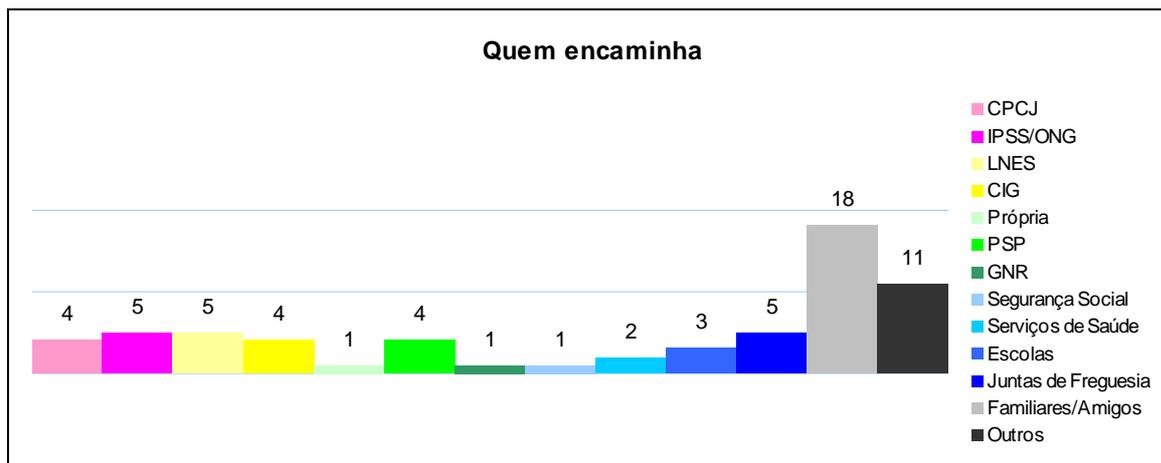


Among these 33, 13 were in a high risk and because of that measures to assure their protection and security as well as that of their children had to be taken.

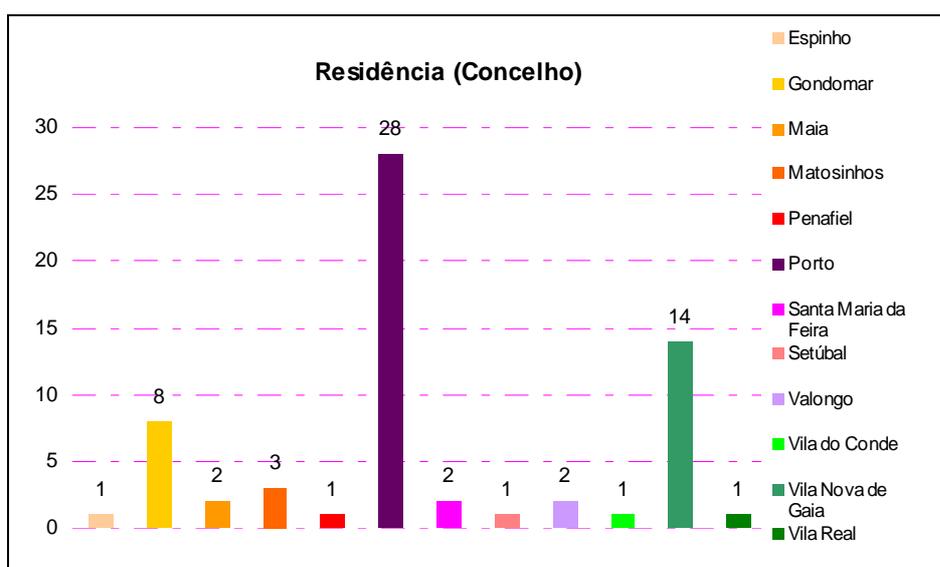
Concerning the month when new women come to the Oporto Women's Centre P'RA TI, we can see, below, that the months with more women appealing to the Centre are January and June.



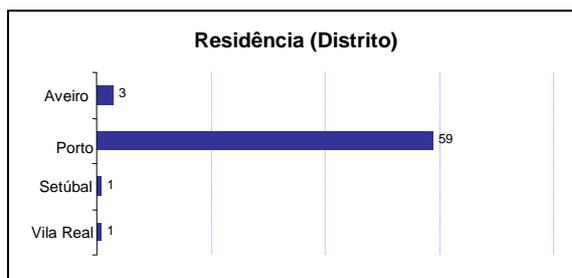
By average, the Oporto Women's Centre received ten (10) new cases per month.



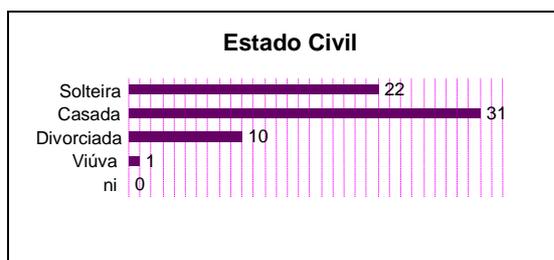
Victims arrive at P'RA TI through family or friends (18), followed to "others" that includes television, radio, newspapers, posters, flyers (11) and then through police, Parish, IPSS/NGOS and LNES (with 5 users respectively), the IGC and CPCJ (with 4 users respectively) and finally for health services and Social Security.



The users reside mostly in Porto District, in the Municipalities of Porto Gaia, Vila Nova and Gondomar.



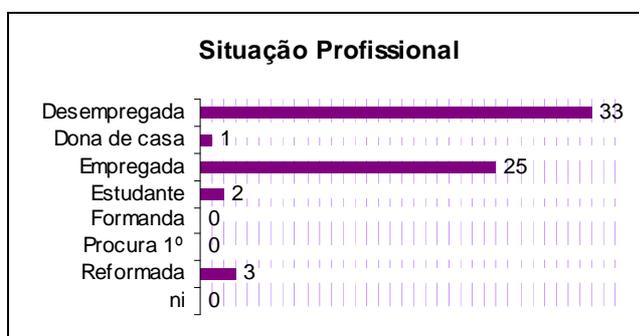
Plus the District of Porto, we receive users of Aveiro, Setúbal and Vila Real.



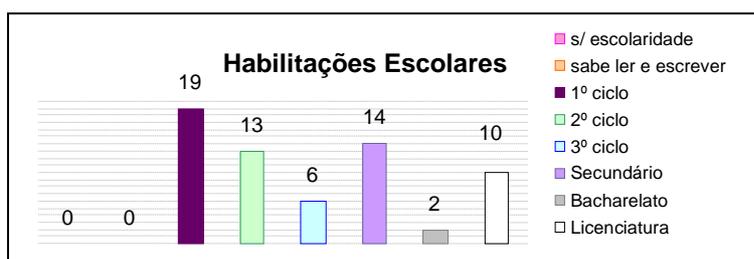
Thirty-one (31) users are married, ten (10) are divorced, twenty-two (22) are single and 1 (1) is widow.

The average age is 42 years.

Are mainly Portuguese nationality (52), followed by the Brazilian (11) and one (1) Belarusian.



Regarding to the employment situation, thirty-three clients (33) users are unemployed, twenty-five (25) have employment, two (2) are students, one (1) is housewife and three (3) are retired.



In terms of education degrees we have nineteen (19) users with the 1st cycle, thirteen (13) with the 2nd cycle, (6) six with the 3rd cycle, (14) fourteen with secondary, two Bachelors (2) and (10) ten licensed.

### Children and youngsters

Regarding children and young people who are part of the household (81), the average age is 9, 5 (years) and attend educational facilities or childcare.

Eighteen (18) of these children and young people are victims of Psychological abuse and nine of these (9) are also victims of Physical abuse. Sixty (60) children and young are daughters/sons of aggressor and of the victim and in many cases they assisted aggressions which makes them indirect victims.

### Aggressors

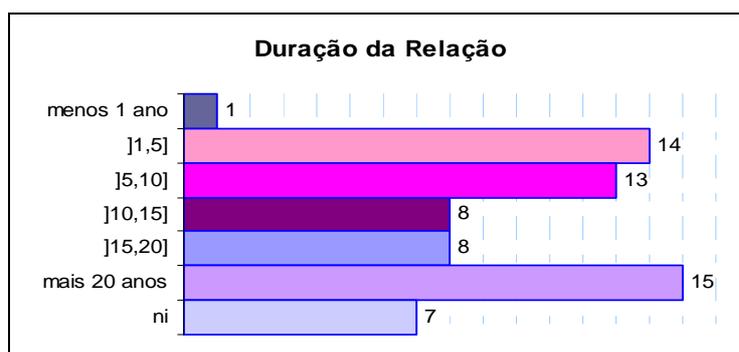
The average age of aggressors is 45 years. Nationality is mostly Portuguese (51), a perpetrator of Iraqi nationality (1), a perpetrator of Brazilian nationality (1), a perpetrator of Georgian nationality (1), an aggressor Angolan nationals (1).

Regarding the employment situation, thirty (30) aggressors are employed, unemployed fifteen (15), three (3) are students and nine (9) are retired. Forty-two (42) aggressors have no criminal records.

### Abusive relationship

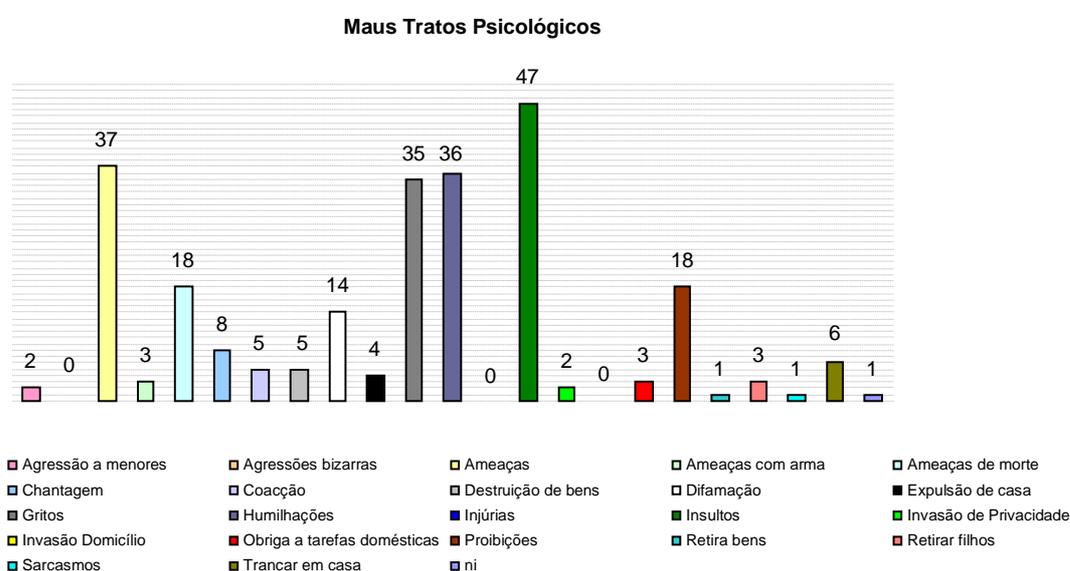
The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is overwhelmingly a relationship of intimacy, the aggressor's husband, ex-husband, partner or ex-companion of these women, one of the victims is victim of parents and brother, one of the users is an old lady son's victim, two victims are victims of their parents, that in one case is also the aggressor's mother.

Three (3) users are no victims of domestic violence, one is a victim of co-workers (bullying in the context of labour) and other classmates College (bullying in school context), one of the users is not a victim of violence.

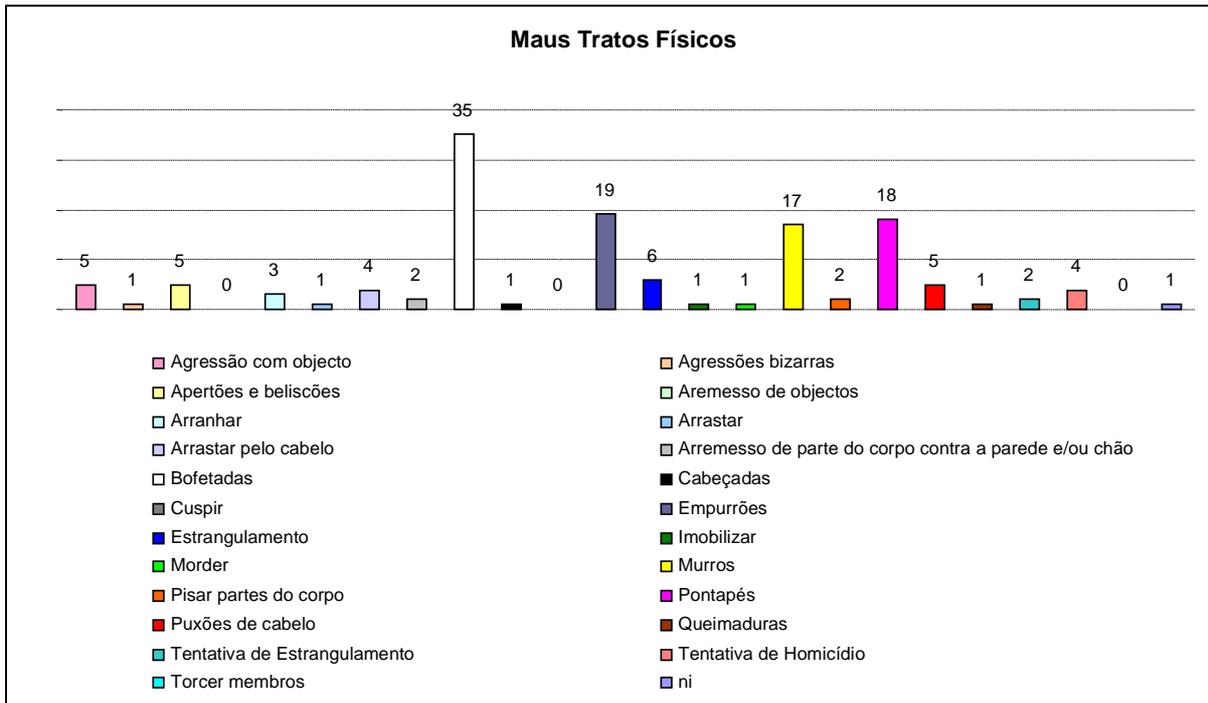


The duration of the relationship is in most cases exceeding ten (10) years.

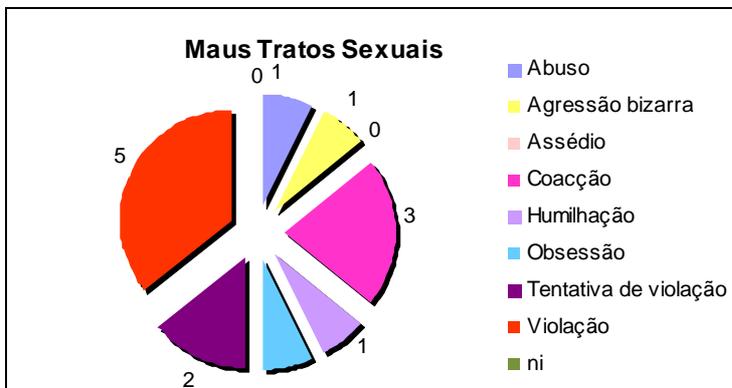
All our users are or were victims of psychological violence, fifty (50) users refer to be/have been victims of physical aggression, twenty (20) are victims of economical violence, nine (9) suffered sexual assaults and eight (8) stalking.



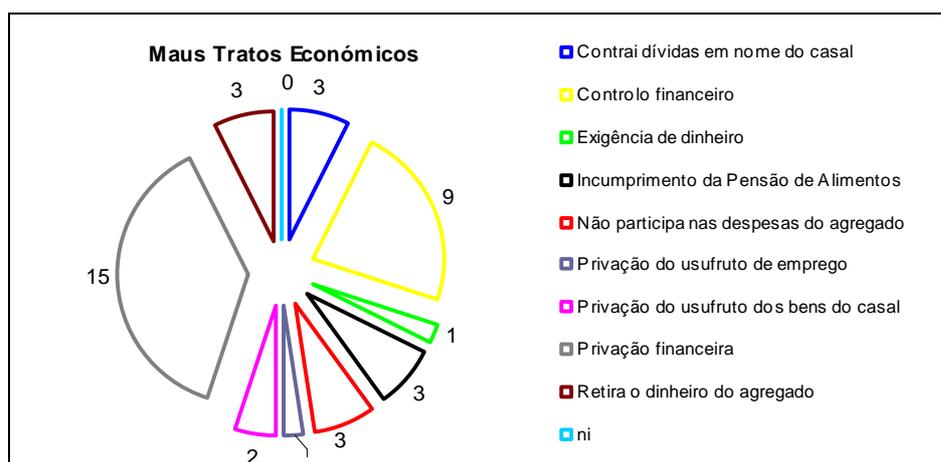
Insults (47), threats (37), humiliation (36), verbal aggressions (35) and the destruction of goods (35) are the psychological abuse more frequent. Eighteen (18) users have received death threats and three (3) users were threatened with a gun.



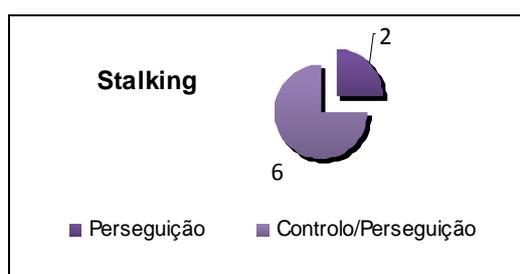
The physically abuse more frequent are the slaps (35), jerks (19), punts (18), punched (17). Four (4) users were victims of attempted murder and eight (8) attempted strangulation.



Five (5) users were raped, two (2) suffered attempted rape, three were coerced, beyond one (1) humiliation, one (1) obsession, one (1) abuse and a bizarre aggression (1).



Economic violence is fundamentally effective by financial deprivation for fifteen (15) users, nine (9) suffer financial control, in three (3) cases the perpetrator does not participate in household expenditure, three (3) household withdraws money, three (3) contracted debts on behalf of both spouses (3) no comply with alimony, two (2) deprive users enjoyment of spouses' property, one (1) requires money to the user and one (1) deprives the user of the usufruct of employment.



Eight (8) users are victims of stalking.

The violence that women suffer have very serious physical and psychological consequences, at physical level, bruises and abrasions (often still visible), fractures, cuts, burns, trauma and psychological consequences are devastating, fear and anxiety, tension, depression, low self-esteem, isolation, are the most frequent.

### Main procedures

When the users arrive for the first time at P´RA TI, it is done the first general consultation, we realise the situation context, evaluate the risk, the social situation and which support are expected. Many victims require legal aid, followed the psychological support, housing, employment, host at home shelter and support for the output of home.

In this first meeting after evaluated the situation, the user is forwarded to the different valences of P´RA TI, legal, social support, counselling, occupational guidance; the

specific calls are scheduled as soon as possible and taking into account the urgency of each situation. When necessary and if is possible, given the shortage of staff, is done specific support immediately.

<b>Demarches last semester in P'RA TI-Oporto Women's Centre of UMAR</b>	
Social Reports	19
Telephone contacts	505
General Care and monitoring	417
Psychological Consultations	123
Social Consultations	29
Vocational guidance	13
Legal Service	67
Requests for legal protection	30
Contacts made with other entities:	189
PSP	22
GNR	3
PJ	3
SEF	3
Other entities Support Emigration	3
Social security	1
LNES	19
EMAT	3
CPCJ	55
Courts	11
Refuge	11
Health	1
Schools	4
Mercies	7
IPSS	18
NGO's/Associations	8
Family	8

In General Consultations and accompaniment we include the movements with the users for collecting belongings, complaint, query in the IML, going to the courts, health services, collect or lead the users to emergency shelters, accompany the transport or take them to places, when they are integrated into a Shelter or going home of relatives or friends.

Some of the general consultations are conducted outside de Centre, given the impossibility users' dislocation to P' RA TI.

### **Women's Participation in P'RA TI**

During 2010, there took place some performances which were prepared with some users of the Oporto Women's Centre and some volunteers. They participate in activities of promoting the P'RA TI, sharing their own reflections and ideas (photos of some of the performances can be seen in the bog of the P'RA TI).

For the external evaluation of the Oporto Women's Centre, there is a research team of the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education who have conducted non-directive in-depth interviews to the staff and to six women supported by the Centre. The data analysis is done by the external evaluation team and will be completed in the end of the current year.

Also, women respond to the questionnaire about their in/satisfaction about the services but it is still in course, and data will be analysed and presented in the end of the current year, in the annual report.

Nevertheless, we can already show some quotations of oral testimonies by some women:

“I, *Maria*<sup>6</sup>, since the first day I arrived here, I was very well received; besides that, Dr. X treats me very well, I come here very much depressed and I go out with more joy and hope, she is very thoughtful”

One woman who had to go to a shelter stressed that:

“I thought that being in a shelter was almost like being in a prison, and it is true we can take our friends to the shelter, there are many rules to follow, but the first

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<sup>6</sup> We changed the name for preserving the confidentiality.

night I slept in the shelter was the first night I and my three daughters could sleep in peace for more than eight years!" (Fátima)

Another woman write her feedback to the Centre:

"I have to say that I'm very glad with UMAR, because it helps me either psychologically or with things I need. I have a good social worker, a very gentle one, who is with me in everything I need. I'm very well with UMAR. Thank you for everything". (Celeste)

### New partnerships for the social network

In 2010, the team pursued the work to set partnerships with institutions and organizations to improve the quality of the social answers to the women victims. In this respect, it were established protocols with the Parish Councils of: Cedofeita, Ramalde, Paranhos, Nevogilde, Rio Tinto. As well as, with the Municipal Councils of: Maia, Paredes. Other partnership protocols were also established with Governmental entities as IDT – The Portuguese Institution for Drug Addicted, and INEM – the Medical Emergency Institute, with public institutions as University of Porto, with the Psychological Service, as well as non-governmental organizations as ATLAS, an association that supports immigrants and foreigners.

The protocol with CPCJ were extended to other services.

Like in 2009, P'RA TI participated in several lectures and seminars and gave training to people when requested by other institutions or associations (see a more detailed description in Attachment 3 Grid of Implementation 2010).

During the first semester of 2010, it also increased the requests from schools to go and lecture about gender and domestic violence.

P'RA TI was also able to create a group of volunteers who are working in a regularly basis, according to their free time, and this helps to achieve the goal of empowering the women.

### **Final remarks**

It can be said the achievements exceeded the expectations. The objectives established for this period were achieved and for that the grant of Body Shop Foundation was crucial.

Nevertheless, the next targets to be met are to empower women and to improve their participation as subjects of their own destiny. We have to go beyond the help we can give but also creating conditions for women get strong enough to pursue and achieve their own dreams.

To achieve the main target of the P'RA TI – Oporto Women's Centre of UMAR - that is the autonomy and liberation of women's prior victims of violence - we need to continue to develop the strategies of the different modalities of inclusivity and creativity that can allow women to express themselves (ourselves) and be aware of the traps of sexism and patriarchal society to not fall down again in violent relationships.