

## Support programme for survivors of armed violence in Rio de Janeiro



## :: Context ::

- Brazil has one of the highest rates of armed violence in the world: 22/100 thousand inhabitants; in Rio these figures double (2002).
- In Rio, armed violence is mainly connected with drug trafficking & conflicts between dealers and the police. One of the most visible expressions of violence are massacres and summary executions.
- Most of the victims & aggressors are young males, poor, with low education levels & residents in suburban areas. Women as a risk group are neglected.



## :: Why survivors? ::

The impacts of violence go way beyond the statistics of the death and injured (direct victims): the network of relatives and friends of the victims (survivors).

The relatives - mainly mothers, sisters and wives – suffer serious physical, psychological, social and economic injuries, which, many times, contribute to their social isolation.

They are the ones who have to deal with violence and its effects on a daily basis, most of the times without the necessary support – **invisible victims.**



## :: The project ::

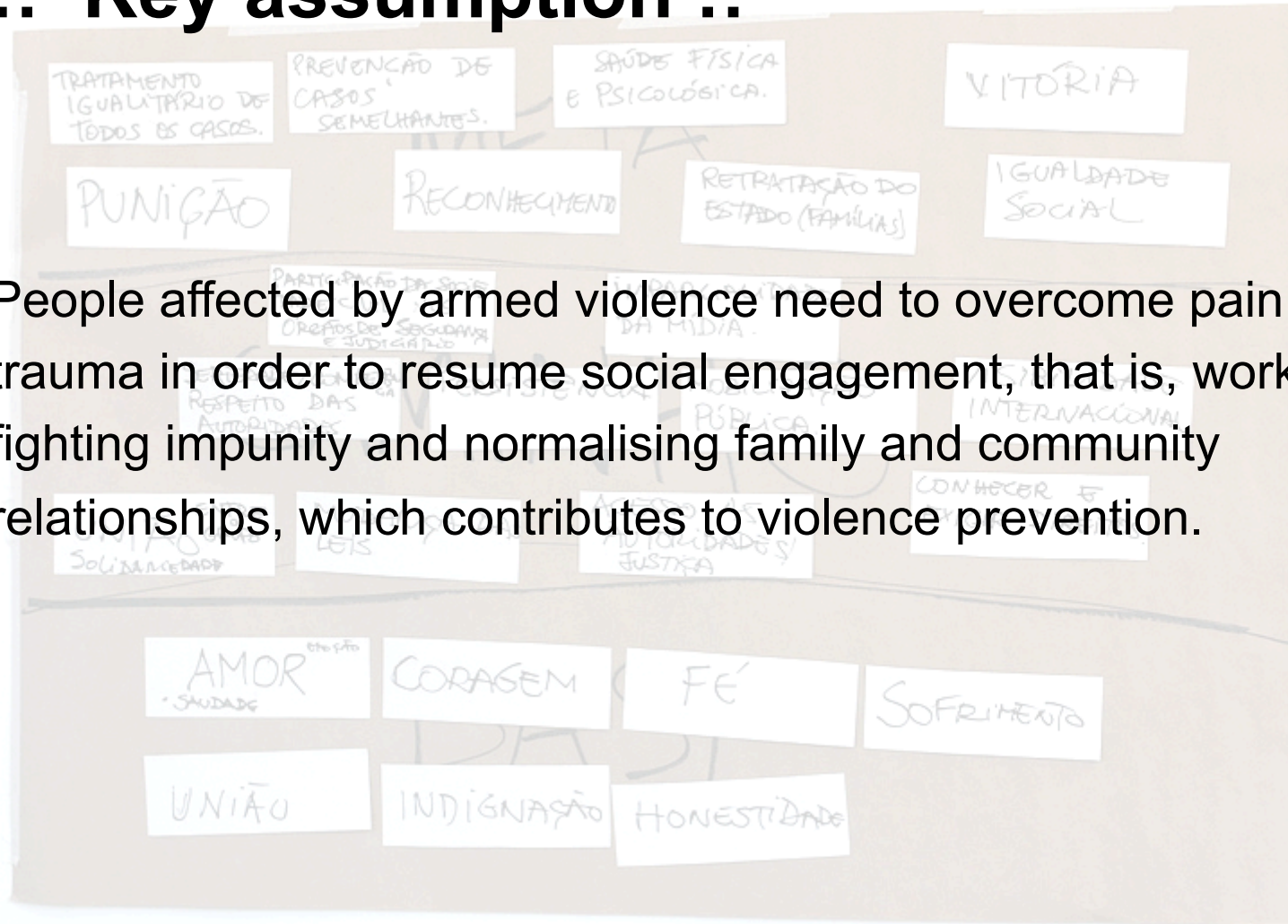
A partnership between the Centro de Estudos Sociais, University of Coimbra, Portugal, and the Centro de Estudos de Segurança e Cidadania, Cândido Mendes University, Rio de Janeiro, supported by the Ford Foundation, aiming at implementing a support programme for indirect victims in Rio de Janeiro:

- A psychosocial support programme;
- A legal empowerment course;
- A network of psychological and legal assistance.



## :: Key assumption ::

People affected by armed violence need to overcome pain and trauma in order to resume social engagement, that is, working, fighting impunity and normalising family and community relationships, which contributes to violence prevention.





## :: Psychosocial support group ::

Aim: to set up a self-help community, enabling the expression of needs and the definition of collective strategies of violence questioning.

- Open-based group of about 30 relatives, who gather periodically in the presence of facilitators;
- 1st meeting: November 2005, facilitated by Carlos Martín Beristain.



## :: Characteristics of the self-help group ::

- Agenda: work in progress
- Sessions: active and participatory
- Sharing experiences: Fabíola Lalinde (Colombia/Estrategia Ciriri)
- Recent activities:
  - “Luto como Mãe” - Documentary with and about the group (with the support of the NGO Cinema Nosso);
  - “Auto de resistência”- Book of memories of struggle;
  - Participation in the Popular Legal Educators’ course.





## :: Popular Legal Educators ::

Aim: to introduce basic concepts about Human rights, state functioning and judicial system.

- PLP concept: created by the Brazilian NGO Themis (90s);
- PLP'Rio: 1st course exclusively dedicated to the victims' relatives;
- Process: participatory (e.g. CV, trainers and schedule);
- Participants: 30 (mainly mothers);
- 1st course completed, 25 graduates.







## :: Network of social services ::

Aim: to establish a network of social services, public and free of charge.

- Network of individual psychological support;
- Legal assistance (NGO Justiça Gobal).