



My story: Noor, finding relief from an abusive relationship

We met with Noor during the summer of 2022. She was accompanied by her referent, ABAAD's social worker who follows her case.

"We were a family of seven brothers and four sisters. When I was growing up in Syria, I had a hard time focusing on my studies, and dropped school at 12. At that time, I started being physically abused by my brother, but my family didn't do anything about it.

I met a boy and fell in love with him. When my mother found out about him, she told me she would kill me if I do anything 'stupid'; she put a knife on my neck to threaten me. I tried to run away with him, but was returned to my family by the police.

From that day, my brother and my mother started hitting me almost every day. It became a nightmare.

When I turned 15, my mom sold me to my current husband. My mom did not believe in love. She wanted men to pay for us. I was trapped to go to my husband's family house, and there, they read parts of the Coran, asking us to engage to be married in the future. I was asked if I could clean and cook, so I could be responsible for the house.

I was so shocked that I tried to escape but my mom came after me. I returned to the room where everybody was and my father began to hit me in front of everybody. I had no option. After three days we celebrated our engagement. During the engagement party I started crying when the sheikh asked me if I really wanted to get married. Everyone was involved in this but me.

I was still in love with my boyfriend at the time. The frustration and desperation were so overwhelming that I tried to kill myself with pills. I was taken to the hospital. When my boyfriend came to see me, my mother started shouting at him and told him I was a whore. I didn't know what to do."

Noor stops telling the story and we ask her if she needs a break. She answers that the situation is really hard for her and that her memories still hurt a lot. She continues:

"One day I was home alone and my fiancé came to see me. He knew there was nobody home and tried to rape me. I threatened him by saying that if he did so, I was going to kill myself. He did things to me even so. We got married few days later, and my family decided on everything; my dress, my ring, everything. I had no voice whatsoever".

"My husband started hitting me every day. It was hell. I tried to call my boyfriend to tell him that my husband was beating me but it went worse. He took me out of the house and hit me in front of everyone. After that, he took me to my parent's house and continued on hitting me. At that moment, I asked for the divorce. I didn't know that I was already pregnant.

I also found out my husband was cheating on me. When I was 6 months pregnant, I delivered a premature baby in the bathroom. The baby stayed at the hospital in intensive care, and died after some time. When they buried her, I felt that my soul was being buried with her..."

Noor stops again to breathe.

"My life with my husband got worse and I was subject to violent treatment. In the next years, I gave birth to 4 children in very difficult conditions.

In 2013, we escaped the war in Syria and moved to Beirut. This is when I found ABAAD through some people I met in the neighbourhood. I enrolled in the Psychological Support group.

During the sessions with the psychotherapist, I decided to start a new project for myself.

I took a hairdressing and makeup training course, and performed great. I had my first client, and now they became over 60!

I can say that before I enrolled in the PSS, I had nothing. I just had suicidal thoughts. Nowadays I'm thinking about my business, I feel alive. Now, I believe in me."