

RISE FIGHT BE REBORN – BE THE WOMAN YOU ARE NOW!

Courtesy
of GROW

Pressed by my family, I was only 15 years old when I got married. I had no awareness or knowledge of what that means, and little did I know that this moment would alter my life forever. During my ten years of marriage, I was beaten constantly by both my husband and my mother-in-law. I was not allowed to continue my school education and could not even leave the house unaccompanied.

At age 25 years, I secretly started attending counseling sessions organized by UNRWA. I could no longer endure the harsh years of physical and emotional violence nor the way the rest of my family remained silent about it. I finally ran away from the house and applied for divorce through the help of a local organization. For more than a year, I was denied seeing my four children (the oldest was nine years old, the youngest was four), even though I had been granted custody.

The agony of losing my children compelled me to take stock of my life. I promised myself that I would never be broken again. I decided to rise, fight, and be reborn – to be the woman I am now. So, one day, I just took my children from my husband's house while he was away. After that, I received death threats from his family.

Without any financial support, I lived at my parents' house and started working various small jobs, which enabled me to renovate the old family house where my father allowed me to live with my children. Six years later, when my father became sick, and while I was away, my mother and brother returned the kids to my husband and kicked me out of the house. Consequently, my husband was given custody of my children.

Again trying to put the scattered pieces of my life back together, I negotiated at times with my family to let me stay with my children and at other times with my husband who refused to let me see my children – whom I was able to meet secretly in public places only. I left my family, managed a few months later to settle in an apartment, and got back my children who were old enough to choose to live with me.



Since then, I have been fighting for a better future for us. Not an easy task for a divorced, 33-year-old woman who lives alone. I had to stand strong in the face of social criticism and exclusion. Through a grant from GROW, I am now developing my small business, producing candles on olive wood holders. Gradually becoming financially independent has enabled me to stand on my feet and raise my children by myself. I

am stronger than ever, but this is just the beginning. There is still a long way to go.

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