

Our alliance works cross-sectoral: in the fields of education, nutrition and healthcare. A young woman who survived domestic violence asked us to read a short testimony written by her. Because of safety issues, she needs to stay anonymous.

Open letter – a testimony

I am a survivor of domestic violence in different forms: psychological, economic and sexual. On top of this, I and my children were threatened that we were going to be killed if we did not obey enough.

Some years ago, I decided that I was strong enough to leave my husband. I had no bruises to show, no broken legs. I had no written threats. I had no proofs. Authorities in my country told me to wait until I would have at least some visible proof, because otherwise they could not help us. What meant: wait till he would have killed me or my kids.

I did not wait. We left. We survived.

I found people who believed me and who supported me on my healing journey. My anthroposophic doctor was so important to me. I needed this kind of integrative medicine that takes into account all dimensions, including the spiritual. I explored the healing environment of anthroposophic medicine and therapies in my own rhythm. Eurythmy therapy, a special form of meditative movement therapy, helped me so much to find back my inner strength and calmness. I got to know art therapy.

And step by step, I dealt with my wounds, I accepted them and I move on further. Healing and inner growth are possible. Thanks to the patient and caring support of my psychotherapist, I could give back colour to my life.

When I first read the texts of the EESC opinion and of the Istanbul Convention, I cried. This is what I would have needed so much when I left. Imagine I could have gone to court and the judges would have been aware of the definitions of domestic violence, of the issues of custody and visitation rights. Imagine I could have experienced that our safety was the highest priority for all authorities.

Thank you for all your work to support survivors of domestic violence.



TO DO:

- *Join forces*
- *Break the silence on domestic violence in ALL its forms*
- *Make the new EESC opinion on violence against women known in all our networks*
- *Urge our home countries to sign AND ratify the Istanbul Convention*

