

BAOBAB WOMEN NEWS

Community Research | News and Updates | Journey to Wellness

Community Research Training with CIRC

Women from Baobab are training with CIRC, (Coalition in Researching Communities), an emerging Community Interest Company, which is working in collaboration with the University of Birmingham. CIRC will: 'Create Pathways for Community Engagement and Empowerment' and 'Establish a Community Research Profession and Support Sector'.

23 women from Baobab are training in two groups as Community Researchers (CR's), aligning their research capacity with that of other CR-active organisations.

The first cohort of 13 researchers chose to research migrant maternity. They have completed the first module, where they learnt about research design, interviewing skills, and ethics. They are now doing the second module on interview skills.



Trainers, developing their own skills on a Train the Trainer course, are mentoring women in the group. They are also conducting interviews on migrant maternity to allow more data to be collected and analysed.

The second cohort of ten researchers have just started the first module after the success of the first group. Both groups of women will join for the third module.

@baobabwomen

www.baobabwomen.co.uk



Journey to Wellness

The 'Journey to Wellness Pilot' was funded by the SEREDA team at Birmingham University. In the initiative, six asylum-seeking Women were invited to explore Creative and Healing Arts as a means to building resilience and developing strategies for thriving despite their negative past experiences and ongoing challenges affecting their health and well-being. Full blog by Viv Manjaro [here](#).

An interactive Toolkit has been created, the promotional Webpage is coming soon to showcase the variety of wellbeing activities which includes:

Singing together

Women sang songs from our native homes and taught others these songs.

Writing it down

Journaling sessions. There were no rules of any kind, just thoughts and feelings put on paper.

Affirmations

"Every morning starts a new page in Your Story"

Sheva Martin

Author: Sarah Taal

Edited by Amandas Ong



Policy and Advocacy Casework Report 2024

UK Public Policy affecting Women Seeking Protection and Migrant Women with No Recourse to Public Funds

We have produced a report summarising the main issues women face, drawing from what we have learnt from two years of working on asylum and NRPF advocacy, with the Baobab Influencing Team and Women with Hope. The report can be accessed here:

[Executive Summary](#)

[Full Report](#)

Key Issues

- The processing of asylum claims
- Accommodation and support
- Legal advisers, interpreters and the presentation of claims
- Challenges encountered by women who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF), have suffered from domestic violence or are living undocumented
- Healthcare, mental wellbeing and education

First Recommendation our Influencing Team is Working On

- Distributing leaflets with clear instructions and links to resources and support for all asylum seekers arriving at ports of entry across the UK, similar to the well-publicised Homes for Ukraine scheme

Espoir and other influencers are meeting to discuss what information they would want in a leaflet. Once this is finalised, we will talk to organisations and the Home Office, and to distribute it to women at port entry points.

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Policy and Advocacy Project

Our Policy and Advocacy work continues to be funded by Barrow Cadbury. Sarah Taal continues to work with the project, in partnership with Espoir Njei, who is our influencing lead. Espoir, also known as Hope, is a prominent community leader within the migrant justice movement in the West Midlands and beyond. As part of her Baobab roles, she fosters networks with partner organisations. She uses her voice for the marginalised, speaking up to pressure authorities into enacting change on policies that affect migrants. With her lived experience of having No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), Espoir is able to advocate for women in the same situation with empathy and knowledge.



Influencer Blogs from Baobab

[Influencing at Sisters not Strangers Liverpool Conference Feb 2024](#)

[In Solidarity With Other Advocates at Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership \(REAP\) Conference July 2024](#)

[Contribution to Article About How the UK's Asylum Process Endangers Survivors of Sexual Violence](#)

Author: Sarah Taal

Edited by Amandas Ong



Rise Rise Developmental Achievements Clearer Strategy

We finalised our strategic plan, including training and discussion with the Director Board and with staff, and planned regular reviews to keep it as a living document.

We now have an expanded director board of 8; bringing in more lived experience, experience of running community organisations, a deep knowledge of Baobab and links to different communities.

We have regular management meetings for those who are both directors and employees to deal with day to day matters, and make decision making clearer and more accountable.

Effective Leadership

The Rosa-funded workers have worked with women within the organisation to identify and take up leadership opportunities: including taking up a Director role, taking a lead in a relevant network meetings, and reviewing and developing projects in line with the strategic plan.

Stronger Voice within the Women's Sector

Although the main focus of this Rosa grant has been internal development, we have been able to do more networking as a result of the increased staff capacity and support. We have a working partnership with Women's Aid and local partners as part of the NRPF Women's Support Network, assisting women who experience Domestic Abuse and have NRPF.

Funding & Impact

We managed to get in a lot more funding through bids written by the Rosa-funded worker. We have also been able to create and improve tools and processes making funding easier to attract, apply for and manage in future.

We worked with our existing database hosting company to improve the reporting tools but unfortunately they then notified us they would no longer be able to host it so we are working to install those improvements on a new host system. We have improved many of our operational systems with the support of this grant; for example, regular review of budgets using a template developed by our finance worker, more effective decision making through management meetings, or templates and schedules for staff support and supervisions.

Beth Ash & Sheva Martin

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Author: Sarah Taal

Edited by Amandas Ong

News

European Council on Refugees in Exile, 19th July 2024 News

UK: New UK Prime Minister Scraps Controversial Rwanda Scheme — More Migrant Deaths in Channel — New Government Sets Out Plans for 'UK Border Security Command' — Polling Indicates Support for 'Safe and Legal Routes' for Asylum Applicants — Condemnation of Conditions in Europe's Largest Detention Centre — Renewed Concerns About Asylum Accommodation and Protest on the Bibby Stockholm Barge.



SEREDA & Rainbow Migration Report

Forced migration and sexual and gender-based violence in queer communities: UK findings from the SEREDA project.

June 2024 By Pip McKnight, Jenny Phillimore and Dawn River with support from Rainbow Migration.



Community Advocacy

Advocacy continues to be the core of our work.

One of the changes recently made is the way in which we facilitate our weekly Drop-In service. This has meant supporting women as they arrive in a safe and pleasant environment with positive distraction activities prior to meeting with a designated advocate on a 1 to 1 basis.

- Amandas specialises in educational information and assistance.
- Bridget delivers financial resilience 1 to 1, and group work with newly settled women.
- Espoir advocates on various issues, learning about issues which feeds into her influencing.
- Mireille works with women who have experienced domestic abuse and have NRPF.
- Mohinder mentors and improves advocate and coordination practice.
- Nisha provides support and administrative help to the whole team, and is learning more about NRPF and Domestic Abuse casework

Healthy Anecdotes

'It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver'. So let's us build wellness rather than treat as 'who has health has hope and who has hope has everything'.

Mireille Kameni

Health and wellbeing are treasure that only an ill person can know the importance of being healthy. Health come before anything in this life. It is our precious wealth. If you are healthy, you can have the courage and the strength to face anything. If you are healthy, you will be able to prosper and help others. If you are healthy, you feel happy.

Let take care of ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually. Let stay healthy for our own sake.

Talhatou Diallo

- Sarah coordinates the advocacy work and focuses on NRPF and asylum casework for undocumented women.



- Sheva does wellbeing support and activities for women waiting in the space, and supports advocates 1-1 and in groups to reflect and improve practice.



- Advocates are supported by community interpreters speaking Farsi, Amharic, Arabic, Tigrinya, Albanian, Urdu and Hindi, as well as A to Z interpreting service professionals.

If we cannot help, we will refer the women attending to another agency.

We are regularly making referrals to partners at Fatima House, Hope Projects, CRISIS Homelessness Charity, or the Adavu Project for example.

We are very happy to have moved into the front of the Jericho Building, having a front door, big windows, and a confidential office space.