

# BAOBAB WOMEN NEWS

Community Research | News and Updates | Journey to Wellness

## Community Research Training with CIRC

Women from Baobab are training with CIRC, 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'.

In two groups, 23 women from Baobab are training 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 module 1 learning about research design, interviewing skills, ethics and are now doing module 2, interviewing.

Trainers, developing their own skills on a Train the Trainer course, are mentoring



women in the group. They are also conducting interviews on maternity to allow more data to be collected and analysed.

The second cohort of 10 researchers started module 1. The two cohorts will join for module 3.

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[www.baobabwomen.co.uk](http://www.baobabwomen.co.uk)



## Journey to Wellness

'Journey to Wellness Pilot' was funded by the SEREDA team at Birmingham University. In the initiative, 6 Asylum Seeker Women were recruited to explore Creative and Healing Arts as a means to building resilience and developing strategies for thriving despite negative past experiences and ongoing challenges affecting their Health and Well Being. Full blog by Viv Manjaro [here](#).

## Singing together

In our Well Being Group we sang songs from our native homes and taught the other these songs. As the Women grew in confidence they felt able to compose their own group melody for a group poem that they wrote collectively about 'Being Grateful'.

## Write it Down

Journaling sessions. There were no rules of any kind simply thoughts and feelings onto paper. We explored the impact of Affirmations and decided that 'Words have Power'; so we should always be mindful what words we use. One affirmation speaks 'Seek to Heal not to Hurt'

Interactive, Toolkit and Webpage coming soon.

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 summerising the main issues women face, from our 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

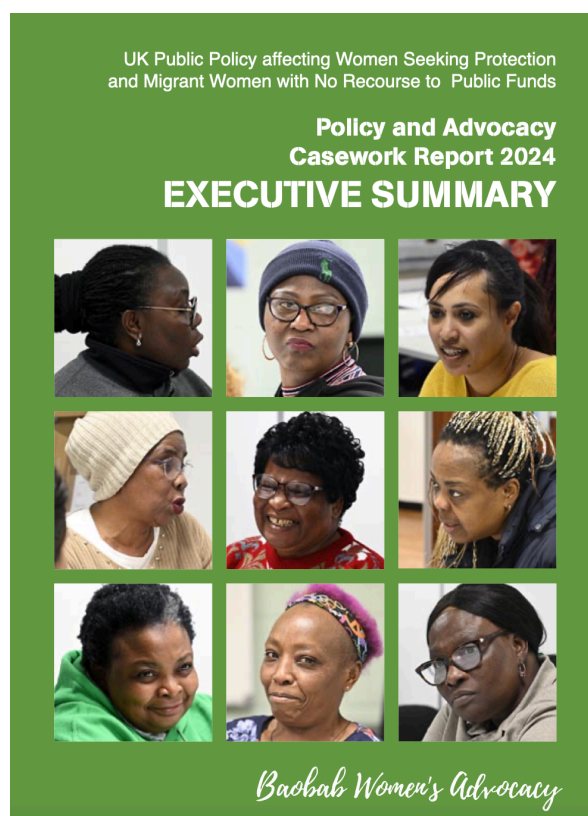
Espoir and other influencers are meeting discuss what information they would want in a leaflet. Once this is finalised we will talk to organisations to get it out to women at port entry points.

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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 Events

[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](#)

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 some more networking as a result of the increased staff capacity and support. Our working partnership with Womens' 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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## News

### [Bibby Stockholm barge to close as asylum accommodation, says Home Office](#)

[Ben Quinn](#), [Diane Taylor](#) and [Kiran Stacey](#) from the Guardian, 23.7.24, reports on the vessel moored in Dorset, which is home to 400 people, to be shut down in January when contract ends.

A Downing Street spokesperson said they could not specify where those on the barge would go in January, and would not rule out sending them to hotels.



### [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

@baobabwomen

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SMALLWOODTRUST  
Enabling women to be financially resilient

CHOOSE  
LOVE

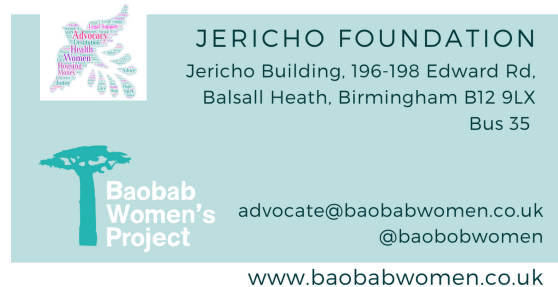


## Community Advocacy

**With refugee and migrant women**  
**Help with legal, housing, money or health Issues**  
**Info on access to college or social groups**  
**Links to specialist services**

Get help by calling or texting our advice line,  
 every week, 07847 271 022

Or drop in at Jericho Foundation, Term Time  
 only, Wednesdays 10am-1pm



- 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 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.



