

BAOBAB WOMEN NEWS

Community Research | Influencing News | New Website

Community Research Qualifications with CIRC

Women from Baobab have completed their community research training with CIRC, working in collaboration with the University of Birmingham. We look forward to the graduation event where certificates will be given out, and we will hear more about what's next for researchers.

21 women from Baobab are now a mix of Level 1, 2 and 3 diploma qualified with AIM accreditation as Community Researchers. This aligns their research capacity with that of other organisations active in community research: Brushstrokes and Women's Wellness.

Their research findings are currently set out in assessment papers, but we are working to put together a final project report.



Some of the researchers are already working within University projects such as the Regional Refugee Integration Strategy (RRIS). Researchers from the University of Birmingham and the University of Keele are working in partnership with West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (WMSMP), Brushstrokes and other community organisations, Local Authorities and practitioner researchers across the region to co-create a RRIS.



Influencing Events

Migrant Voice Workshop

Espoir Njei, our Influencing Lead, raised awareness of the severity of all kinds of violence faced by women in the asylum system and those who have NRPF. There was firm agreement with attendees that this will be followed up with another written piece to be disseminated.

She built solidarity with other activists in Migrant Voice and agreed to work towards collaborative writing to be published in the organisation's newspaper, which will be submitted to policymakers to urge for quicker and more efficient action.

Asylum Hotel Meeting

Hygiene condition and overcrowding was discussed. We are thinking about how to better support asylum seekers in the hotels, and to push the Home Office into treating them like human beings that they are.

Policy and Advocacy Casework Report 2024

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

We continue to promote our report summarising 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 developing 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.

@baobabwomen

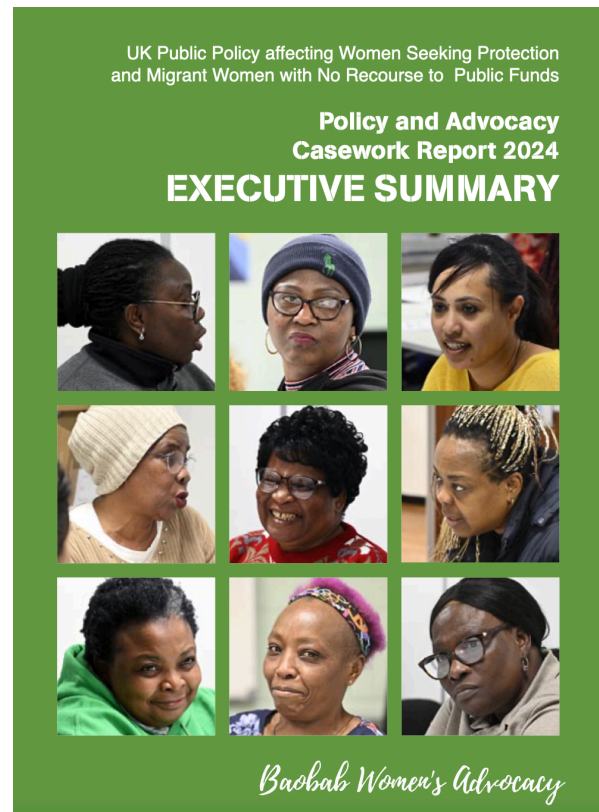
www.baobabwomen.co.uk

Authors: Espoir Njei, Sarah Taal

Edited by Amandas Ong

Policy and Advocacy Project

Sarah Taal continues to work with the project, focusing on complex advocacy with asylum seeking women with NRPF. This is in partnership with Espoir Njei, who is our Influencing Lead, who takes case studies from advocacy out to stakeholders and communities to make change.



Abolition and Decolonisation Organising Day



Issues discussed include the effect of colonialism on migrants.

We discussed strategies of working

together, forming networks to end the racist structures that harm our communities.



Influencing Update

Espoir: Over the last 6 months, as the Influencing Lead at Baobab, I worked closely with women who have often faced unjust or unfair treatment by the system. Liaising with other organisations to join voices to say no to such ill and discriminative practices. We constantly raise issues to policy makers to highlight the need for system change.

Our influencer team, made up of women with lived experience of the system (Asylum seekers and Refugees) met and shared their experiences.

This is a safe place where members feel like they belong. They let us know what they are going through as well as propose what could be done to better help their mental wellbeing. These points are then taken to network meetings for discussions as well as creating awareness of the true story (hostile environment) on the ground.

Some of the women with lived experience had this to say:



"The Home Office don't give five days notice to leave the house, they just surprise on the day that we should leave while my children were in school. The Home Office doesn't treat us like human beings"

"We eat the same food at the hotel everyday and the food is not nice, I ate, and I went to the hospital, when I complained nothing was done"

"Dispersal doesn't take the children's school in consideration, when mothers complain nothing is done, children eat less because mother must travel by bus to accompany their children to and from school"

"There's small money to feed and buy uniform, giving the increase in the prices of everything all the time".

"Women get poor maternity care just because of the immigration status."

"Some of accommodations are not adequate there is, mould, old carpets and exposed cables".

Influencing creates awareness, but the process of changing policies is too slow.

However, there is also positive feedback.

"Phones are allowed at the detention"

"Aspen cards are accepted on West Midland buses"

"Many funders are assisting organisations to support these vulnerable service users".



New Website

We have revamped and updated our website - check it out here: www.baobabwomen.co.uk



WELLBEING & THERAPY



DESTITUTION PARTNERSHIPS



COMMUNITY & GROUPS

We have produced a well-being toolkit and are developing a team of women who will take elements of this to others experiencing the system as well as professionals .

Psychotherapy, Counselling, Reiki and Life Coaching sessions are offered by qualified therapists on a limited basis to women we assist. Advocates get self-care funds to relieve vicarious trauma.



COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

Community advocates and interpreters provide advise and information to undocumented migrants, asylum seekers as well as newly settled refugees and migrants.

They connect women to organisations that can assist if we cannot. Our main areas of casework are legal, health housing and money support.



POLICY & NETWORKING

Our policy influencing uses recent examples of situations women face from our casework, to document and suggest recommendations for change. This informs and improves practice of policy makers.

Our influencing team, led by and involving experts through experience work with partners to shine a light on policies in practice.



COMMUNITY RESEARCH

We have a Community Research partnership with CIRC (Community Interest Research Centre), Birmingham University, IRIS, Brushstrokes, PLSF, Women's Wellbeing, AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and Maokwo.

Researchers gain new skills, and play a crucial role in project teams across all aspects of integration.

Organisational Progress

We are working with decisions made at our regular management meetings, focusing our development on creating and embedding good practice.

This is so we can more proactively evaluate our ongoing work. We are also undertaking organisational administration such as our yearly policy review and planning ongoing budgets and funding.

Your Support Matters: Fund Our Judicial Review

We are seeking to raise £6000 to support the claims of two women who are challenging the Home Office decision to treat them as citizens of Ethiopian rather than of Eritrea.

From that, we immediately need £340 to pay the first court fees.

Next Influencer Meeting



INFLUENCING Plan, Meet and Take Action With Women

Design a leaflet for people claiming asylum, to be given out at port of entry

12th Feb 2025, 11 -2pm

We will be gathering and sharing information and to work with partners to distribute leaflets with clear instructions and links to people seeking protection as they arrive at point of entry to the UK

Jericho Building
Edward Road
B12 9LX

Snacks & £10 expenses for all

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