



First Annual Report

Nov 2015 – March 2017



I constantly feel inspired and alive to work with women supporting and helping one another in a system that discriminates based on nationality and status.

If we work together, and with other groups we will see real change, [in time!].

Sarah Taal

Coordinator: Sarah Taal

Advocates and Interpreters: Ana Milusheva, Beth Ash, Bridget Obi,
Iram Mushtaq, Muna Mohammed, Sadie Young.

Campaigner and Supporters: Malka Al-Haddad, Joan Proctor, Salman
Mirza.

Steering Group: Agnes Tanoh, Bridget Obi, Talhatou Diallo.

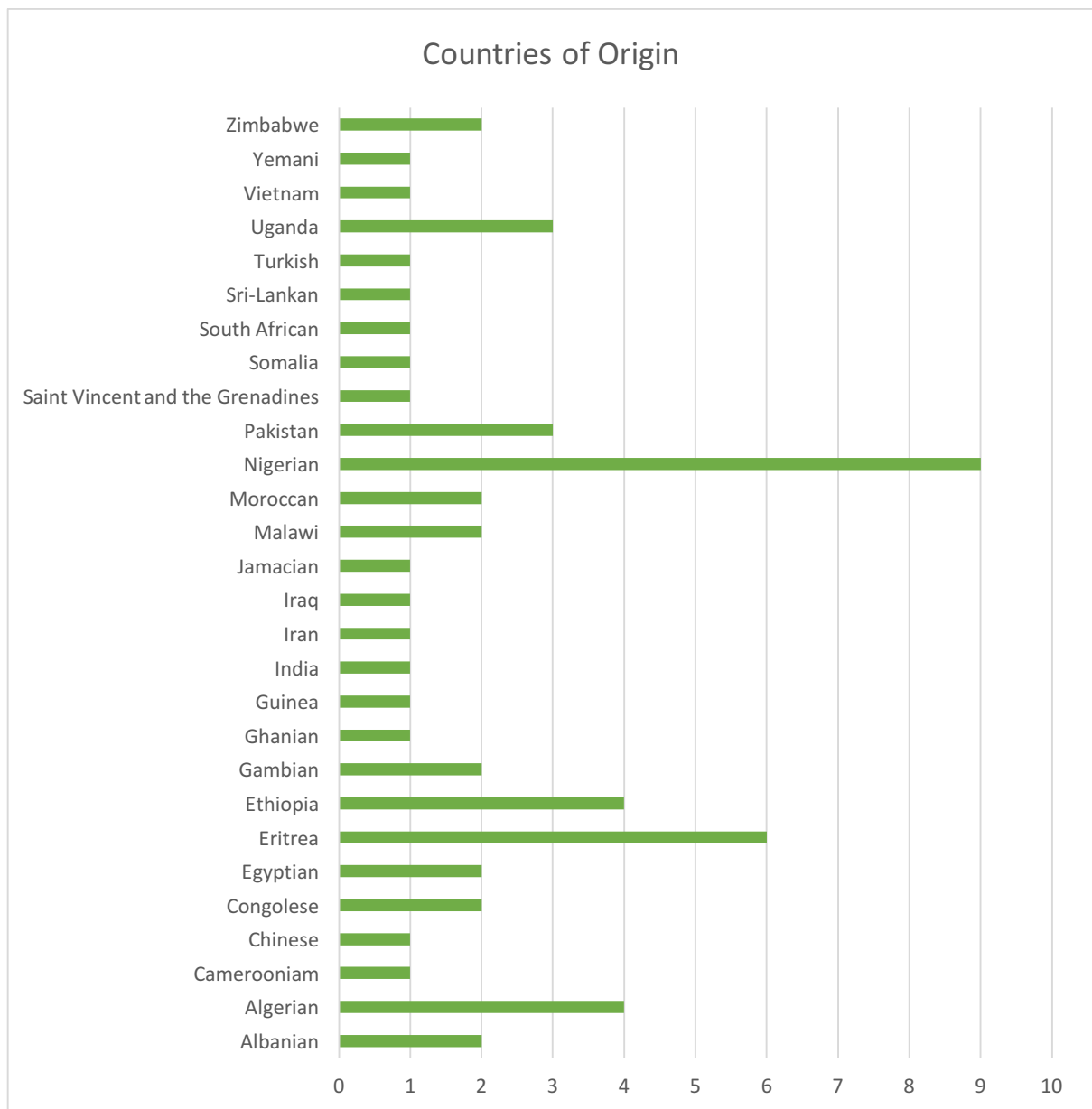
Trustees: Almamy Taal, Beth Ash, Iram Mushtaq, Nina Perrowski,
Sarah Taal

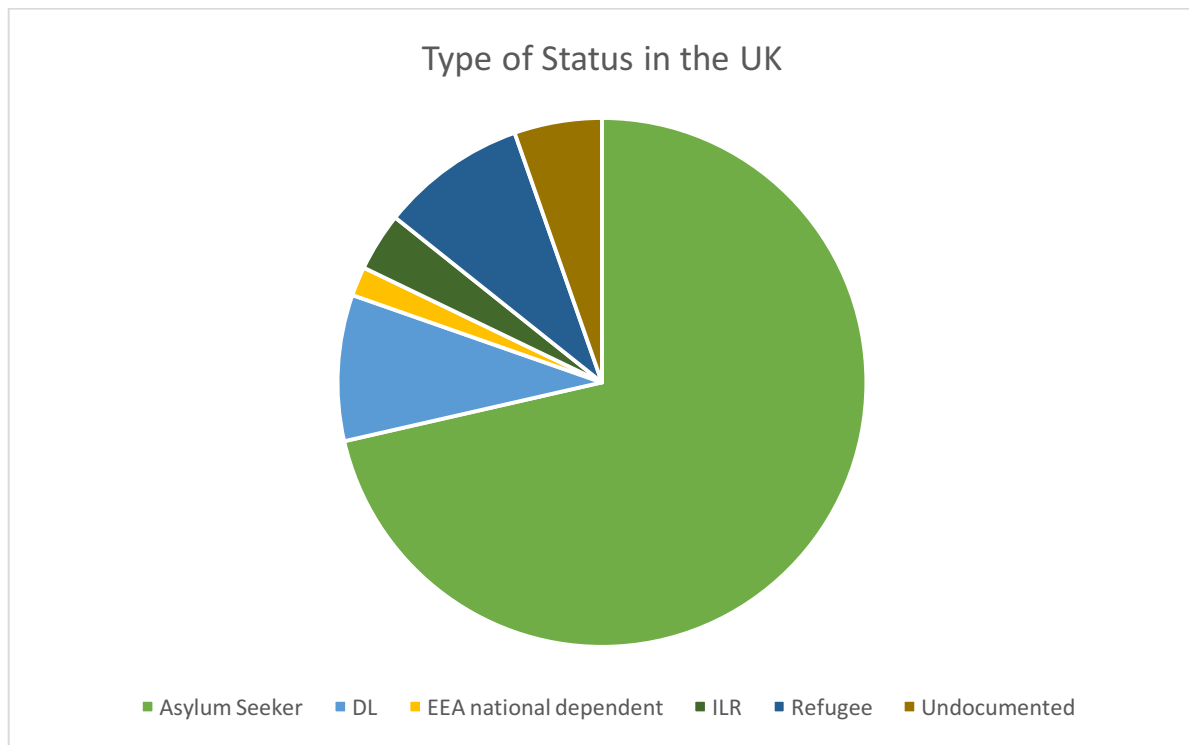
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Baobab Women's Project is an Unincorporated Community Group, for Refugee and Migrant Women Seeking Protection in the UK, advocating from the West Midlands

Baobab Women have done a lot to celebrate since its inception.

We started in November 2015, and up to March 17 we helped over 67 women, with more than 350 appointment spaces, some 1-1 confidential sessions, some shared advocate training spaces, and some admin based, phoning or emailing, following up previous work. We estimate around 855 volunteer hours were completed (volunteers usually do far more then they record), from 10 advocates.





Charities we refer to and work with included: Zakat Foundation, Freedom From Torture, Women's Aid, Hope Projects, Carriers of Hope, Smethwick Food Bank, Advocacy Matters.

Volunteering or Job seeking support includes: signposting to Doula project, BVSC, Job Centre, Restore's Equipping refugee for work, helping to write CV's and completing Indeed online applications.

Health or pregnancy worked with to: GP's, Midwives, Mental Health teams, Doula, Narthex.

Destitution assistance: Hope Projects, Destitution Fund, Zakat Foundation, Section 4, and section 95 asylum support.

Housing: Private landlords, Council Housing, Hope Housing, BIRCH, Coventry Peace House, Section 4 and Section 95 Asylum Support.

Contacting Home Office: ARC cards, Asylum support, reporting requirements.

Welfare Court: Child benefit issue.

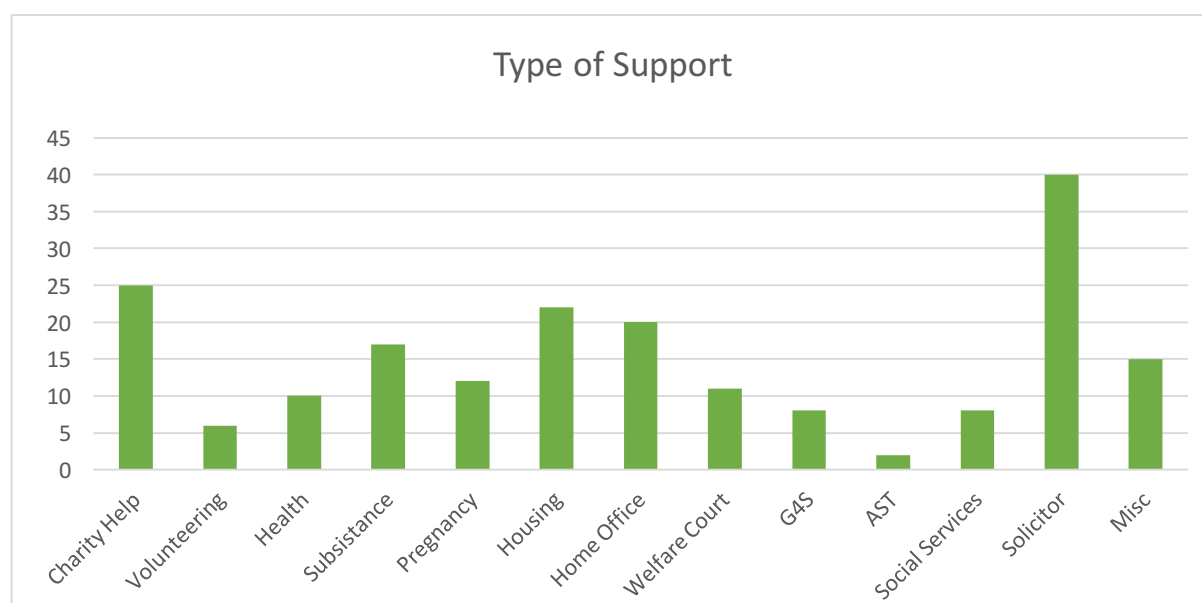
G4S: housing reporting and following up maintenance issues, house resident dispute mediation. Bullying advice. Delivery of pregnancy vouchers.

AST: Asylum support court and ASAP referrals.

Social Services: Children's section 17 assessments, support gained, some community care referrals made before support granted.

Solicitors: working with 13 different reps' including TRP, Hope Legal Project, ASIRT, Salman Mirza, Bhatia Best, Coventry Law Centre, Birmingham Community Law Centre, Fountain Solicitor, Lifeline Options, Wilson LLP.

Misc.: Opening bank accounts after refugee status, support letters for trafficking of abuse and violence cases, registry office assistance after birth of baby.



We have put women involved in the project in touch with health and NRPf research at Bham university and a Democracy Now reporter writing on the 28 day transition period, to try to lobby on important issues. We regularly tweet and share knowledge on our website as much as our capacity allows.

Case Studies

Martha, was staying from place to place. She had absconded from her Asylum Support when she was scared about being removed to Italy. She feared being forced into prostitution again, she had had her finger prints taken there, which left her vulnerable to the Dublin convention rule. Finding herself pregnant, sofa surfing was no longer an option. We helped her access Hope Housing and the Destitution Fund. She was referred to a local solicitor, and Freedom from Torture for her past experiences. When she had her baby, she was helped by the Doula project during the birth, and Narthex with baby items before hand. The Children's Society, and Bhatia Best stepped in when social services did not provide support after she had given birth. She is now settled in Spark-brook, and is awaiting her chance to have her asylum case heard in the UK.

Charlotte had been refused support, and needed legal advice. She had no money, and no ideas from the local networks she had tried. We put her in touch with Salman's legal drop in, he helped her fill the appeal form, which she sent herself. She was granted 6 month's discretionary leave. She has since had to extend this, and is waiting for a response.

We helped three women in London, one had worked with us locally, she was helped to understand form filling to challenge the NRPF given on her 30 month's leave, it was checked by Salman, she got the NRPF lifted, short term benefits help and is now working at ASDA while struggling to pay for childcare. One woman needed legal help and support, we signposted to Crossroads Women's Centre, and a local no borders activist. The other woman, with a young daughter was struggling with Social Services, we gave her piece of mind to keep fighting and not give in, speaking with an advocate who had been through the system gave her the courage to keep fighting for a warm bed, and food. She had the right not to be on the street with her kid. She got support and later got leave to remain.

We did Zakat foundation applications with women granted refugee status to get them new items for their houses. We helped people navigate the benefits system, access job search help from the different places offering the support locally.

We plugged destitute people into the NACCOM network in Newcastle upon Tyne, and locally to many places including BIRCH, the Red Cross and the CMWH project.

Accounts

We distributed £3464 in Hope Destitution Fund, and Hope Special Fund payments to women. Thanks to Hope for giving us this opportunity to work together.

We had a small unrestricted grant for bus travel and administration, which allowed us to pay ink costs for printing flyers, give out some travel expenses to steering group members, and pay postage for recorded delivery items to be sent to the Home Office.

Baobab Women's Project Year from 1 Feb 16 to 31 Mar 17

Receipts and Payments account

	Unrestricted Funds £	Hope Projects HDF / SF	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Receipts				
Funds received	120	3,464	3,464	3,464
Fundraising activities	✓ -	-	-	-
Bank interest	✓ -	-	-	-
Total Receipts	120	3,464	3,464	3,464
Payments				
HDF / Special Fund Payments		3,464	3,464	3,464
Volunteer travel	80		-	-
Volunteer lunches	-		-	-
Admin / publicity	20		-	-
Internet / phone/ computer costs				
Networking event costs				
Room drop in hire	-		-	-
Sessional worker	-		-	-
Paid Worker costs	-		-	-
Insurance	-		-	-
Total Payments	100	3,464	3,464	3,464
Net of receipts/(payments)	20 -	0 -	0 -	0
Funds brought forward from previous period	-	-	-	-
Funds carried forward to next period	20 -	0 -	0	20

Next Year's Aims

We have struggled with training and advocacy for members that are not affluent enough to subsidize. We need funds to allow women in the system to help each other, we believe their strength and knowledge, linked to others, is the key to success.

We want to attend more trainings and develop our network, working with local and national organisations, researchers and campaign groups.

Thanks to our group members, volunteers and supporters

We should thank those who have made this year possible:

Sadie, Iram, Bridget, Ana for increasingly organised advocacy and support, Agnes, Malka and Talha for the online questions and 1-1 support in other places, Almamy for help as and when needed, Muna for all the interpreting hours and time, even when you were giving birth yourself! Marcela for her Albanian interpreting, other friends of women, mothers, daughters, sisters.

Salman, Brushstrokes and the Asian Resource Centre for an advice space at the weekly drop in and Coventry Peace House for a base.

Joan for her unwavering support and realism and Geoff for the encouragement, inspiration and help whenever we need it.

Also thanks to Banksy for the quality art, and reminder, there is always hope.

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