

# I OVERVIEW

BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB) is a non-profit, non-governmental and non-religious women's human rights organization that focuses on women's legal rights issues under customary, secular and religious laws in Nigeria. Established in 1996, BAOBAB evolved from a three-year research project on Women and Laws, coordinated by the international solidarity network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), which began in 1993. The Women and Laws action-research team in Nigeria was made up of women's rights activists, *ulema* (scholars of Islam), lawyers, social science researchers, historians, and Arabic linguists amongst them. They spent over three years researching Muslim jurisprudence, the history of Muslim laws in Nigeria, Sharia court judgments (especially at the higher levels) and daily practices in diverse Muslim communities across Nigeria as they affect women as family members, citizens and individuals. The research also focused on how secular and customary laws and practices interact with Muslim laws and practices.

The wealth of data generated from this research showed the need for intervention as the different manifestation of violations of women's human rights was evident in different spheres of the Nigerian society. It was clear that many women do not access their rights, especially in Muslim laws, because they do not know of them, or how to actualise them.

The **name** of the organisation is derived from the baobab tree (*Adonsonia Digitata*), a tenacious and long-lived tree found all over sub-Saharan Africa. This tree provides shelter, food to birds and humans and can withstand adverse conditions. BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights strives to emulate these sterling qualities by being a place of refuge for all women; providing strength, nourishment and dependence, as well as being able to stand the test of time.

BAOBAB is a feminist organization based on feminist principles of equality, empowerment and respect for the dignity of women as human beings. It has a horizontal **structure** whereby all work as a team for the realization of BAOBAB's objectives.

BAOBAB operates from a national office in Lagos with program, administrative and technical staff. There are also volunteers in fourteen (14) out of the thirty-six states (36) in Nigeria. These volunteers share the vision of BAOBAB and give their time, resources and skills to implement the programs and activities of the organization in those states. BAOBAB is the regional coordinator of the international solidarity network of Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML) in Africa and the Middle East, and the Nigerian partner of Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace (WLP)

The *Board of Directors* ensures that the activities of the organization are in line with its mandate. Members are activists from different parts of the world with expertise in a wide range of disciplines. They share the vision of BAOBAB, its values and are committed to its success. The *Executive Director* oversees the day-to-day management of the organization. There is a *Management Team* made up of Senior Programme Officers and the Coordinator of Administration and Finance. Decisions are taken in consultation with every member of staff.

**Our vision** is for women's human rights to become an integral part of everyday life. The **mission** of BAOBAB is to promote and protect women's human rights primarily by improving knowledge, exercise and development of rights under customary, religious and statutory laws in Nigeria.

The following are the **values and principles** of the organization

- We believe that women's rights are human rights
- We believe in gender equality and equity
- We believe in respect for diversity
- We believe that the personal is political
- We believe in organizational and individual growth and development
- We believe that one woman's problem anywhere is every woman's problem everywhere

The **objectives** of BAOBAB are to:

- Promote knowledge, development and exercise of women's rights
- Protect and defend the rights of women
- Raise awareness of women's human rights, abuse of these rights and other legal issues as they affect women, with a view to determining policies which can best promote all human rights
- Further the construction of truly universal and relevant human rights
- Support and strengthen women's and other human rights focused organizations and individual activists.

The following **strategies** are employed in order to achieve the objectives of the organization:

- Outreach activities (public awareness, paralegal training, etc.)
- Carrying out advocacy
- Publishing including, but not limited to, books, pamphlets and posters
- Ongoing comparative analysis of women's human rights activities in different societies (local, regional and international)
- Interdisciplinary teaching
- Popular education and training
- Conducting research on women's human rights
- Exchange and development of ideas
- Disseminating information regarding women's human rights
- Capacity building for other women's groups and NGOs through training, skills building etc.
- Networking in Nigeria, within Africa and worldwide
- Collaborating with like-minded organizations in mutually agreed campaigns and programmes
- Documenting legal issues as they affect women
- Participating in academic discussions and serving as a research centre for women's rights in law
- Furthering the appreciation and observance of women's rights through activities such as sponsoring training and education programmes

BAOBAB has an interrelated multi-disciplinary programme of **activities**, which include: research; documentation; capacity building; advocacy; litigation; counselling and mediation; information, education and communication (IEC); information sharing and networking, as well as specialised trainings, tribunals and workshops all geared towards bringing to fruition our vision of a Nigeria where women's human rights no longer have to be negotiated.

All of these activities also serve to support the work of the scores of unpaid **volunteers** in fourteen (14) states across Nigeria – Adamawa, Borno, Edo, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara. These state outreach teams'

activities include running legal consciousness workshops on different aspects of rights, training sessions, paralegal clinics, street theatre, mediation and counselling. They serve to interface local level work, with women and men in rural and urban areas in Nigeria, with the national and international levels and thus to make available and accessible the abilities to examine, actualise and develop rights to people at all levels and in all regions.

BAOBAB's work in defending the rights of women and children in customary, secular and Muslim laws especially under the Sharia Criminal Legislation acts passed in Nigeria since 2000, has earned the organisation an **international award** – the John Humphrey Freedom Award<sup>1</sup> in 2002. The award was conferred on BAOBAB for Women Human Rights and Dr. Ayesha Imam, the founding Executive Director on December 9, 2002 in recognition of our work in defending and developing women's human rights in Nigeria. It is an annual award conferred by Rights and Democracy (the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development) a Canada-based organisation ([www.ichrd.org](http://www.ichrd.org)) The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women also cited BAOBAB's work as an **example of best practices** in defending women against violence, in her 2003 report titled: 'International, regional and national developments in the area of violence against women 1994-2003'

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I for the Acceptance Speech by Ayesha Imam

## **II YEAR 2002**

BAOBAB has, since inception in 1996, been involved in various inter-related projects and activities planned strategically towards the realisation of the vision of the organisation. In 2002, the following programmes were carried out:

1. Women and Laws
2. Networking and Coordination
3. Solidarity Work
4. Capacity Building
5. Documentation and Information Sharing
6. Against Violence against Women

### **II.1 WOMEN AND LAWS PROGRAMME**

This programme remains the main fabric of BAOBAB 's interrelated activities. Apart from the fact that it is the foundation of the organization, the programme continues to be a reference point in the development of more programmes and projects in BAOBAB.

#### **II.1.1. Documentation**

This year, we continued the process of documenting the findings from the research on abuses of rights under customary, religious and statutory laws, especially under the new Sharia Acts enacted in twelve (12) northern states in Nigeria, through our writing weeks which we have always found extremely fruitful and useful.

During the year, the first edition of a quarterly publication “ **Under the BAOBAB Tree**” was published. The theme of this publication is ‘*Violence against Women*’ and it features articles such as *Violence against Women: What is Happening?* by Ayesha Imam, *Brief Reflections on CEDAW and CRC* by Chibogu Obinwa, *Gender Roles and Customs: A World of Inequalities* by Oyekemi Oyelakin and *Early Motherhood: In Sufferance and Silence* by Bunmi Diposalami. There is also a brief summary of the report of the first National Tribunal on Violence against Women, and the report of the Staff Retreat 2002, among others things. The report on “**Women’s Access to Justice and Personal Security in Nigeria: A Synthesis Report**” was also published. Presently, work is in progress on the draft of a legal literacy leaflet entitled “**Rights and Responsibilities of Women as Citizens**” and **Women’s Human Rights Violations: January 1966 to May 1999**. These will be published in 2003.

In the year under review, some of BAOBAB’s publications used for social advocacy were reprinted. Two thousand (2,000) copies of *Against Violence Against Women* (a legal literacy leaflet), five hundred (500) copies of BAOBAB Brochure and one thousand (1,000) copies of a poster on “*Same Parents, Different Worlds*” were reproduced.

As the Chair of the coalition, BAOBAB oversees the activities of the Secretariat.

#### **II.1.2. Outreach Programme**

The outreach programme is one of BAOBAB’s core areas of work. The activities carried out in general focus on the promotion and protection of the legal rights of women. This is enhanced and broadened by the multifaceted intervention programmes on women’s human rights that are carried out by teams of committed volunteers in fourteen (14) states of Nigeria who share BAOBAB’s vision and are working towards its actualisation. The yearly activities include the national planning meeting and community-based intervention activities on diverse women’s human rights issues depending on the felt needs of the respective states.

Outreach activities for 2002 were on some critical areas of women human rights issues, such as girl-child education, women's rights in sharia, violence against women, economic rights of women, political rights of women, child custody and guardianship. In addition, the teams carried out capacity building programmes such as paralegal and leadership training, as well as gender sensitization workshops.

In carrying out these activities, the teams utilized strategies such as popular theatre/drama, radio jingles, debates, interactive workshops, focus group discussions, among others. These programmes were planned to benefit different categories of women within the communities as well as their male counterparts (as it is believed that men also need to be sensitized), community leaders, the Police, Judges, religious scholars, teachers, students and parents.

#### *A. Monitoring Visits*

The national coordinating team from BAOBAB's office in Lagos visited twelve (12) out of the fourteen (14) outreach teams in 2002. The visits were aimed at updating the teams on the activities of BAOBAB, the plan of action for each year as well as to monitor and evaluate projects around emerging issues regarding violence against women, access to justice and the rule of law in those states. In addition, the plans of action of the teams and how to facilitate capacity building in different areas are also discussed. In most states where sharia is implemented, the question of women's rights under sharia law continues to be of great concern. Consequently, efforts have been made to disseminate information and build capacity around this.

Reports from Zamfara, Katsina, and Sokoto States show that violations of women's human rights have escalated. These teams still need more support than others and we continue to monitor and expand them while giving the support they need to survive and flourish. We were heartened when one of Zamfara team members contested for the position of Governor in the last concluded elections as this indicates that our work with the women in the state has not been in vain. We hope to increase our presence there and provide as much support as they need in light of the trend towards injustice to women in the state.

Some of the teams were assisted financially in the year under review based on their preparedness for an activity, scope of the activity, and retirement of previous financial support. State teams that benefited were as follows- Oyo, Ogun, Edo, Kano, Kaduna, Taraba, Zamfara and Lagos<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II for details of the activities of these teams

### *B. National Planning Meeting*

The national planning meeting for all the outreach teams was held in Abuja, in March 2002. The objectives of the meeting were:

- to build a networking structure amongst all the outreach teams
- to acquire training and skills that will further enhance the volunteers' facilitation of outreach intervention activities
- to plan a programme calendar for the year.

There was general debriefing from BAOBAB coordinating personnel and updates on programmes, projects, and general information on women's human rights since the last meeting. The teams also shared experiences about their work and learned new strategies from one another on how to overcome some of the challenges they are faced with in the course of their activities in their constituencies.

The scope of the outreach programme is expanding daily, given the incidence of violations of women's human rights in the country. This has resulted in a number of set backs in the area of effective coordination of outreach activities. Some of the challenges that the outreach volunteers are faced with are:

- (a) Effective communication: most members of the outreach volunteer team reside in areas where communication is yet to be effective and it slows down the pace of work because this hinders the flow of communication between the affected teams and National Coordination Office
- (b) Lack of commitment: voluntary work is not synonymous with the values of developing societies in Nigeria and other developing countries. It has been observed that a few members of the teams are not committed to the values and principles of BAOBAB. This however may not be unconnected to the fact that their regular jobs take up most of their time and since the outreach work is not remunerated, it is possible that they will only participate in it only whenever they like to
- (c) Inability of field programme officers from the National Coordination Office to conduct monitoring visits to all outreach teams biennially due to work schedule
- (d) Limited funding for outreach activities.

There was capacity building on how to develop a work plan for outreach activities, through the use of the SMART- G –that is - **S**mart, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime –bound and **G**ender Sensitive principle for adequate planning and effective implementation of their programmes. It was an opportunity to intimate the participants that potential funders are concerned about outreach activities incorporating monitoring mechanisms and impact indicators in their work plan.

One important benefit of the yearly national planning meeting initiative as a basis for networking for the teams as well as avenue to plan properly for the year cannot be overlooked. It has enhanced outreach team's focus and empowered each team to further strategize on their plan of action drawing experiences from colleagues in other teams.

The various outreach teams were encouraged to always send the reports of their activities, events, programmes, or articles on things happening around them, so that these could be featured in the BAOBAB Newsletter. Kaduna State team was featured in the first edition of the Newsletter and it is anticipated that other teams will be featured in subsequent editions.

It was a successful meeting, and well attended except for the unavoidable absence of Kaduna, and Katsina teams' representatives.

### *C. Capacity Building for outreach teams*

To enable outreach teams work effectively in carrying out outreach activities in their various constituencies, BAOBAB organizes periodic capacity building activities for the core team members. In addition, outreach teams organize training workshops within their communities for different categories of people, aimed at enhancing their capacity in areas that are of immense benefit to the beneficiaries.

#### *(i) Gender Awareness Workshops*

This is usually organized at the inception of a team or in welcoming new team members. This year, **Zamfara** Outreach team benefited from basic gender awareness training sessions. Similarly, the **Lagos** outreach team organized a sensitization workshop for teachers of Ikotun High School in Egbeda Local Government Area of the State. The training workshops were aimed at looking at the basic differences between sex and gender, factors in the society that determine gender relations and how to recognize and deconstruct gender stereotypes for the purpose of promoting and protecting the rights of women in the society. It is expected that the training would form a solid basis for intervention activities in the two states.

#### *(ii) Paralegal Training*

The paralegal training for BAOBAB's outreach states is designed for not more than twenty-five (25) participants of both sexes, but not male dominated, drawn from active human rights NGOs, community based organizations (CBOs), and/or, active individuals from different sectors of the society who have a keen interest in working as paralegals voluntarily and are committed to human rights generally and women's human rights specifically. The paralegal modules focus on information and training relevant to women's concerns, situations and needs as well as men's. It is expected that beneficiaries of the training will in addition to their work as paralegals, share their experiences with their community members.

**Lagos** and **Edo** outreach teams benefited from the paralegal training from September 11-13 2002, and September 22-24 2002, respectively. Participants included outreach team members and community based organizations identified by the teams as relevant beneficiaries. At the Lagos training were some members of staff of BAOBAB who had not received paralegal training before then. BAOBAB's paralegal training team from the National coordination Office facilitated both workshops. The issues discussed include; the basic aspects of the law, counseling, plus a systematic critique of gaps and lack of protections in law, as well as the role of paralegals and activists in developing laws. In addition there was a systematic and comparative focus on religious, customary and statutory laws. This is important since women are most affected by personal laws -marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody and so on. The workshop drew on experiences of the participants in handling individual cases of violations of women's human rights in their various communities. Both training workshops were successful as participants learned more about the inheritance customary practice of diverse groups<sup>3</sup>.

## **II.2 NETWORKING AND CO-ORDINATION**

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<sup>3</sup> The full report is available at BAOBAB's Documentation Unit

BAOBAB continued to coordinate the activities of the WLUMML network in Africa and the Middle East (AME) in the year under review.

### *II.2.1 Qu'ranic Interpretation Meeting*

A networking meeting tagged 'Empowerment through Networking' was organized for anglophone and francophone West Africa in Abuja, from 15<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> June 2002 by the International Coordination Office of WLUMML (WLUMML-ICO) in collaboration with BAOBAB, the Regional Coordination Office for Africa and the Middle East. Participants were scholars and activists from Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Nigeria, The Gambia and Sierra Leone. The meeting was a forum for exchange of knowledge, experiences and information sharing necessary for the effective empowerment of Muslim women in the sub-region. Religious texts were read and analysed from a feminist perspective. There were forty participants in attendance. Professor Amina Wadud and A.B. Norat served as resource persons.

### *II.2.2. WLUMML Programme Implementation Committee Meeting*

BAOBAB was represented at the Programme Implementation Committee meeting of the international solidarity network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws by Sindi Medar-Gould (Executive Director) and Mufuliat Fijabi (Senior Programme Officer). The meeting was held in London from July 2<sup>nd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> 2002.

## **II.3 SOLIDARITY WORK.**

BAOBAB networks with both national and international organizations. This involves receiving, circulating and responding to Alerts for Action and calls for joint campaigns. An Alert is a medium used for an urgent and public need to respond to specific threats or issues. Priority is given to cases that concern women's rights, especially as threatened by the political use of religious or ethnic sentiments.

### *II.3.1. Alerts for Action*

We continued to receive alerts in 2002. We added our voice to them and passed them on to people within our information network. For the year we received alerts from India, Afghanistan, USA, the United Kingdom, Mexico, The Republic of Congo and Thailand for solidarity campaigns from network members<sup>4</sup>.

### *II.3.2. Individual Cases of Solidarity*

#### *A. Sharia Legal Defense*

BAOBAB continued to offer support and efforts for reversal and redress to victims of the discriminatory implementation and violation of rights of the new Sharia acts during the year under review. This was aimed at ensuring that legal representation would be available to women who cannot afford to pay for cases, but wanting to appeal or institute actions in the law courts to enforce their rights. It also ensured that cases did not flounder for lack of money for court and allied costs (for example investigating the facts of the case(s), finding witnesses, monitoring court appearances supporting appellants). The strategy team made up of independent Muslim lawyers, rights activists and Muslim scholars continued to offer advice and information. The team also made resources and materials and case laws available to the legal teams, aimed at building a resource base in materials and skills to support, protect and promote women's human rights<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix III for details

<sup>5</sup> For details of these cases, see Appendix IV

### *B. Customary Law Cases*

The increase of violence against women in the domestic sphere shows no sign of abating and we have noted with alarm the trend in the South of Nigeria regarding these issues—spousal abuse, rape, incest, dispossession and child custody. Such cases have been brought to our attention and most of them have been settled by mediation and negotiation. Where this strategy has failed, we have resorted to the courts, though the process is long and cumbersome, fraught as it is with numerous adjournments and delays. For instance we have experienced several adjournments in an effort to frustrate us in a case of wife battering in which the victim lost one of her eyes. This notwithstanding, the individual cases team has brought closure to the case of the young woman sued by her husband for custody of their children on the grounds of her unfitness as a mother. Despite being attacked by the male relations of the woman, mostly verbally, BAOBAB continued to offer the woman moral support each time she appeared in court.

## **II.4. COLLABORATION**

The Nigeria Coalition on the International Criminal Court (NCICC) was also initiated in collaboration with the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the International Human Rights Law Group in 2002. As the Chair of the coalition, BAOBAB oversees the activities of the Secretariat.

Some of the **objectives** of the coalition include:

- To build an advocacy network of civil society organisations on issues relating to the ICC
- To provide a platform for sharing information and ideas on developments within the ICC at local and international levels
- To publicize and disseminate information on the ICC
- To document local violations within the jurisdiction of the Court and facilitate the prosecution of such
- To provide a platform for advocacy for domestication of the Rome Statute

During the year under review, **series of meetings** were held with key legislative and executive officers, INGOs, donor agencies, ECOWAS Secretariat and ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, foreign missions and members of the civil society to introduce the International Criminal Court and .

The coalition participated effectively in the process that led to the establishment of the Court. Sindi Medar-Gould (Chair, Ameen Ayodele (Secretary) Anne Ikpeme, Oby Nwankwo and Juliet Ume-Ezeoke attended the 10<sup>th</sup> prep com in New York in July 2002

## **II.5. CAPACITY BUILDING**

One of the strategies for achieving BAOBAB's objectives is capacity building for BAOBAB staff, Volunteer Outreach team members, other NGOs, women's groups and individuals. This we do through internships, seminars, staff retreat, and regular capacity building programmes for other NGOs.

### *II.5.1 Leadership Training*

One of BAOBAB's partners, the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, development and Peace (WLP) developed a leadership handbook *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women* in collaboration with the *Association Democratique des Femmes du Maroc*, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights and the Women's Affairs Technical Committee. With this handbook, BAOBAB has been organizing training workshops with diverse group of women in different sectors –such as NGO activists, domestic workers,

extension workers, women in the academia, etc. The objectives of this programme are to create a tool to enhance women's participation and leadership in various spheres of social interaction and decision-making, as well as to introduce the idea of horizontal leadership. Five (5) training workshops were organised in 2002.

### *II.5.2 Bridge Building Workshops*

BAOBAB has consistently worked to enable and encourage the widening of discussions, prevent the silencing and end the current climate of fearing to talk. It has raised publicly critiques of rights violations in the name of Muslim laws and Islam, and encouraged others to do so. Additionally, in the wake of the sharia expansion in some northern states in 2000, BAOBAB started a series of workshops whereby members of Muslim communities - members of the *ulema* and ordinary Muslims, rights activists, conservatives and progressives from different walks of life and parts of the country- came together for several days. During this period, they examine Quranic surahs and hadith, discuss both dominant and less well-known interpretations of these, and look at the actual constructions of Muslim laws in countries and communities around the world. They do this for each of thirty or so different issues of particular importance to women (such as choice of marriage partner, rights to inheritance, forms of divorce, witnessing, leadership, reproductive rights, bodily integrity and so on). These workshops thus examine the potential and actuality in Muslim laws and practices for establishing and promoting women's rights, as well as critiquing negative constructions and practices even when the latter are claimed to be Islamic. In so doing, they empower many of the participants with the knowledge and confidence to challenge the assertion that rights violations in the name of Islam and supporting Sharia, should be ignored, and to work instead towards progressive visions of Muslim laws.

The initial reaction of many Nigerians especially non-Muslims to the injustice perpetrated in the name of Islam was to condemn the religion. However, with the bridge building meetings, some Nigerians have come to understand that it is the implementation of Sharia in its present form that is harmful to the people, especially in those cases where there have been total disregard for women's human rights. Two meetings were organized in 2002. One Stage Two of the meeting which brought Muslims and non-Muslims together to analyse women's human rights situation in Nigeria and strategize for change was held in Lagos from February 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> 2002.

Participants, while evaluating the workshop, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to gain insight into each other's religious traditions, and to recognize that the commonality of abuse of rights cuts across perceived divides.

This programme will be extended to the West Africa sub-region in 2003.

### *II.5.3 Internship*

One of the members of Taraba State team, Halima Zubairu, benefited from BAOBAB's internship programme in the year under review. She spent three months at the Lagos office, during which she presented two seminars, gained skills in administrative practices, report writing, and attended capacity building workshops. She reported that she found her stay very productive and useful as she was exposed to the use of computers for the first time, in addition to the others skills she was able to acquire during the short period of time spent in BAOBAB. According to her it was an exciting and valuable experience.

Omo Akitan- a first year law student of Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, spent three months from May to July 2002. She was involved in proposal writing, legal defense and report writing.

As the work we do with defending the rights of women under the three systems of law in Nigeria become more internationally recognised, so do we receive more requests for placement at BAOBAB. While we are grateful for the recognition, unfortunately, we do not have the physical and financial wherewithal to cope with these demands, as we have to put outreach team members first on our priority list.

#### *II.5.4 Staff Seminar*

Every member of staff, regardless of status, makes a seminar presentation on issues relating to women's human rights. The purpose of the seminar has always been to build the capacity of the members of staff on women's human rights, in line with the mandate of BAOBAB. During the year under review, Ngozi Nwosu presented a seminar titled "The Gender Perspective to Issues of Reproductive Health and Rights." Mufuliat Fijabi, also made a presentation on the basic principles of feminism.

#### *II.5.5 Staff Retreat*

The staff retreat of 2002 took place in April in Accra, Ghana. It was facilitated by Ms. Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, Executive Director of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), assisted by Ms. Gloria Ojo, Coordinator of BAOBAB Plateau Outreach team.

The objectives of the 2002 retreat were:

- to clarify roles and responsibilities within the organisation
- to improve interpersonal relationships
- to develop strategies that will facilitate the realisation of the objectives of BAOBAB

The 2002 retreat prepared for us series of strategies in such areas as organizational structure, team building, commitment and modalities for planning to enhance efficiency. The retreat afforded staff members the opportunity of developing a calendar for programmes, meetings and fundraising for the remaining part of the year.

#### *II.5.6 Organisational Assessment Exercise*

The Department for International Development (DFID) sponsored a training on Change management. Two consultants from Capacity Building for Decentralised Development (CBDD), Ms. Tammie Edet – Abam and Ms. Biodun Ogunleye-Bangboye facilitated the training. The objectives of this exercise were:

- to help the organization learn more about itself
- to enhance the capacity of the organization to reflect on its internal processes
- to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization
- to build /enhance the internal capacity of the organization
- to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization
- to build/enhance the internal capacity of the organization to initiate and manage its own change process.

A change management team was constituted made up of the consultants, BAOBAB staff and a member of the BAOBAB Board of Directors. The committee in its report, recommended changes needed for formulation of policy and ideas that will enable BAOBAB to remain relevant in order to achieve its goals and objectives.

### *II.5.7. External Staff Training:*

- Ndidi Ekekwe (Programme Officer) and Linda (Assistant Documentalist) were at Gateway Hotel Ijebu-Ode for Transition Monitoring Group Capacity Building Workshop. It took place from Tuesday January 8<sup>th</sup>-Saturday January 12<sup>th</sup> 2002.
- Onaade Ojo (Documentalist) attended a training workshop organized by Development Information Network (DevNet) on funding-raising, code of conduct, report writing and financial report at Gateway Hotel Ota from March 10<sup>th</sup>-March 15 2002.
- Chibogu Obinwa (Senior Programme Officer) attended a six weeks training course on *Human Rights: Concepts and Issues* at United Nations University International Courses (UNU/IC) in Tokyo, Japan, from May 18<sup>th</sup> to June 28 2002.
- Onaade Ojo (Documentalist) participated in the training of trainers' workshop for observers of Voters Registration Exercise 2002. The training took place at Mainland Hotel, Oyingbo, Lagos from June 27<sup>th</sup>-June 28<sup>th</sup> 2002.
- Bose Ironsi (Programme Assistant) was at the African Women Leadership Institute (AWLI) from 13<sup>th</sup> October-3<sup>rd</sup> November 2002 at Akosombo Ghana. The theme of the training programme was "*Accessing and Sustaining Leadership*".

### *II.5.8 Service to other NGOs*

Onaade Ojo was a facilitator at the Step –Down Training for Observers of Voters Registration in Lagos-State. The Training took place on July 15<sup>th</sup> 2002 at Archbishop Vinning Memorial Cathedral, Oba Akinjobi, GRA, Ikeja.

## **II.6. PROJECT ON DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION**

The intervention stage of the project on 'Drug Abuse Reduction among Street Children and Commercial Sex Workers, commissioned by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in 2000 and implemented by BAOBAB with support from the government agency - the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) – was executed in 2002. Counselling Centres were identified and modestly furnished in Lagos, Kano and Port Harcourt. Each centre had a project coordinator assisted by a field officer.

It was not an easy task mobilizing the beneficiaries partly because of the long interval that elapsed between data gathering and the intervention and partly due to the mobility of the beneficiaries. In Port Harcourt, fifteen (15) street children reported regularly at the centre for counselling. It was virtually impossible to successfully mobilize the commercial sex workers in Port Harcourt. Only one of them visited the counselling centre. The reluctance of the commercial sex workers to visit the centre also adversely affected the mobilization of the street children since some of them (street children) also served as bodyguards to the commercial sex workers.

In Kano, owing to the fact that most of the street children and the commercial sex workers who participated in the project during the data collection phase could not be located, mobilization of the target groups in Kano was only modestly successful. Beneficiaries did not appear to be comfortable reporting at the Centre. Those that visited only stayed for short periods of time. Five (5) commercial sex workers and eleven (11) street children were mobilized.

During the intervention workshop, it was assumed that NGOs and the communities in the target locations could provide some assistance in the implementation of the intervention

programmes. However, this did not materialize. Nevertheless, some important achievements were recorded.

As a result of the intervention, many people in Ikotun community of Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State became fully aware of the problems and needs of street children and commercial sex workers. There are strong indications that the community will play a more active role in future programmes.

Some of the street children interviewed more than 9 months after the intervention claimed that they used much less cannabis, smoked less cigarette and drank less alcohol than before the intervention. They also indicated that they resorted to violence much less readily than before the intervention.

In fact, one of them who was interviewed by the consultant and a UNDCP representative showed evidence of basic computing skills, apparently from 3 months training in computer training centre. He also indicated that he had a better chance of securing a job than before.

Similarly, a commercial sex worker who was interviewed displayed high level of competence in basic computing skills. She indicated that she had given up commercial sex work, left the brothel and was now living with her relations in Lagos. She had attended a couple of interviews for jobs and was confident of securing a job.

The Manager of one of the private vocational training facilities (fashion design/tailoring) informed the evaluation team that some of the commercial sex workers commenced their training but stopped because of the negative impact of being recognised in the neighbourhood.

A draft report has been submitted to UNDCP

## **II.7. DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION SHARING**

### *II.7.1. Selected Dissemination of Information (SDI)*

#### *(A) Information Mailings*

Using specific selections of materials by BAOBAB on various journals, periodicals and newsletters, which we received daily from outside the country, we continued to share information with other NGOs and CBOs at the national level. Increasingly, we receive requests from international organizations for information on our work and issues relating to women's human rights in Nigeria specifically and in Africa in general. This facility that we offer is vital to our work as it keeps us in touch with relatively smaller non-centrally located organizations.

#### *(B) Library and Documentation Unit*

The library and documentation unit has continued to grow in strength and capacity. As the saying goes, 'a library is a growing organism'. As a result of this, we continued to increase the number of materials available in our resource room to meet the demands of our various library users. The library is open to different categories of people, including human rights activists, researchers, students, policy makers, lawyers and our outreach members.

Users are allowed to make photocopies of materials if they so desire at reduced rates.

### *(C) Information Packages*

Information packages containing BAOBAB publications, books and journals were given to members of staff that attended meetings, seminars and conferences at state, national and international levels. They were also distributed at programmes organized by BAOBAB such as the outreach programmes, advocacy, leadership and paralegal training workshops.

## **II.8. AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

This is a core programme area in BAOBAB and it addresses issues of violence against women through advocacy in collaboration with other like-minded organizations. BAOBAB is a member of the National Coalition on Violence Against Women (NACOVAV) and Legislative Advocacy coalition on Violence against Women (LACOVAV). BAOBAB also organises workshops and training and provides support to survivors of violence. Several cases of domestic violence were reported to the office by phone calls, visits and through e-mails during the year. Some of the cases reported had to do with gender discrimination in the work place, unlawful termination of appointment, denial of child-care and denial of access to children. Many of the cases were resolved through counselling and mediation.

### *II.8.1 16 Days Activism Against Gender Based Violence*

One of the major activities against violence against women in 2002 was the *16 Days Activism Against Gender Based Violence*, the theme of which was “Creating a Culture that Says NO to Violence against Women”. BAOBAB joined other organisations in the world to organise series of events during the period (November 25<sup>th</sup> - December 10<sup>th</sup> 2002).

The first event was a press briefing that was held in BAOBAB’s conference room on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2002 to give information to the press about the 16 days regarding the programme and to highlight the activities lined up for the period. There were gentlemen and ladies of the press from such media organizations as the Punch Newspapers, Comet, Guardian, ThisDay, New Nigeria, Vanguard and Daily Times.

The second activity was a drama presentation by BAOBAB team to some selected secondary school students around Lagos, among which were Ireti Secondary School, Nigeria Navy Secondary School, St.Gregory Boys Secondary School and Holy Child Girls Secondary School. About sixty (60) students were in attendance. The play put accent on various forms of gender-based violence perpetrated against women, which though more rampant in domestic arena, is also common in the public sphere. The play also highlighted how certain behaviours and attitudes are transferred from parents to the children. It also exposed some cultural practices and their effects on the lives of girls and women in the society.

At the end of the drama presentation, the participants had a better understanding of the problems and some of the schools that were interested in our work requested that invitations be extended to them to participate in BAOBAB’s activities. Holy Child secondary school in particular invited the Executive Director of BAOBAB to their school to give them a talk on the issue of gender violence.

Another drama presentation was made to grassroots women, representatives from NGOs, and the press. There was a discussion around issues of cultural right, rape and female genital mutilation (FGM) after the presentation.

The final event was a trek in which about 50 people, mainly from sister organisations and our friends participated. During the trek, IEC materials were distributed to raise awareness. Many other people who believe in the cause joined the trek.

The events were not only given adequate media coverage at the national level, two independent journalists from the Netherlands who were doing some work with Amnesty International also video- taped the trek for a documentary they were producing on women and activism in Nigeria.

The programme ended with participants reaffirming their commitment to work together to create a culture that says NO to violence against women.

## II.9. PERSONNEL

### II.9.1 BOARD MEMBERS

Kemi Williams - Chair  
Amina Ladan-Baki Mohammed  
Asma'u Joda  
Akin Amosu  
Ayesha Imam  
Bene Madunagu  
Rose Mensah-Kutin  
Salma Sobhan  
Sindi Medar-Gould – Executive Director

### II.9.2. Staff as at December 2002

Sindi Medar-Gould	Executive Director
Asabe Audu	Programme Officer
Bunmi Dipo-Salami <sup>6</sup>	Programme Officer
Bose Ironsi	Programme Assistant
Catherine Inyang	Communications Officer
Chibogu Obinwa	Senior Programme Officer
Ezinne Ekekwe	Programme Officer
Hurera Akilu-Atta	Programme Officer
Kemi Oyelakin	Executive Assistant
Lateef Akinbode	Administrative Assistant
Linda Izilein	Documentation Assistant
Mufuliat Fijabi	Senior Programme Officer
Ngozi Nwosu	Administrative Officer
Onaade Ojo	Documentation Officer
Sarah Dickson	Accounts Officer
Oby Izuako	Receptionist (NYSC)

### II.9.3. Outreach Team Co-coordinators

Asma'u Joda	Adamawa
Husseinat Aisegame	Edo
Victoria Adidu	Kaduna
Amina Ladan-Baki Mohammed	Kano
Sadiya Sanni-Daura	Katsina
Sani Lawal	Kogi
Sherifat Hussein-Abubakar	Kwara
Funke Adetunji	Lagos
Jade Mohammed	Osun
Toyin Abbass	Oyo
Gloria Ojo	Plateau
Fatima Abubakar	Taraba
Maryam Shahabi	Zamfara

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<sup>6</sup> On study leave

II.10. AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT 2002







### **III YEAR 2003**

During the 2002 strategic planning meeting, the OD Consultant recommended that the number of committees be reduced significantly because there were too many of them, which tended to slow down the pace of work. It was evident that with criss-crossing membership of the committees, individual members were not very effective because they were working on at least fifteen (15) projects at the same time. Thus, at the strategic planning meeting (1) for year 2003, the existing fifty-two (52) working committees were compressed into five (5) programme and one (1) administrative working groups to facilitate more effective programming. These are:

1. Research, Documentation and Capacity Building
2. Information, Education and Networking
3. Peace Building, Mediation and Counselling
4. Mobilization and Advocacy
5. Litigation and Interpretation of Laws
6. Administration and Finance

Each of the working groups approach issues that are related to BAOBAB's thematic areas such as violence against women, women and laws (religious, customary and secular), reproductive rights, leadership, democracy, governance, from the different programme perspectives.

Since this restructuring, there has been increased efficiency and effectiveness in BAOBAB. It has resulted in improvement in working relations and implementation strategies. Staff members are learning to manage overlaps as they get a better understanding of the present structure.

### **III. 1. RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

The objective of this programme is to conduct research, document findings and build capacity in different areas, based on the identified needs of women in particular, and the society in general.

#### **III.1.1. RESEARCH**

a) The research on *Drug Abuse Reduction among Street Children and Commercial Sex Workers* in Kano, Lagos and Port Harcourt, which began in year 2000, was concluded. The report of the project, which was designed with BAOBAB in mind because of our work on the human rights of women and girls, was submitted to the United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in March 2003. This project assessed the knowledge, awareness, the extent and patterns of drug abuse among street children and commercial sex workers in the cities of Lagos, Kano and Port Harcourt from a human rights perspective. Attention was paid to these two vulnerable groups because (a) street children constitute a large and growing proportion of the youth who in turn constitute a large and growing proportion of the community and; (b) it has been observed that there is a close relationship between drug use and unsafe sexual behaviours which may ultimately result in HIV/AIDS.

The assessment also identified the linkages between drug abuse and broader socio-economic and cultural factors affecting the lives of the project beneficiaries. In addition, the project identified elements of violence against women in the context of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as well as elements of the rights of the child from the viewpoint of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The findings of the study and the needs identified through the assessment determined the development of appropriate strategies for intervention to prevent drug use among the focus groups.

The report of this research will be published in the coming year.

b) Research visits were also undertaken to Bauchi, Zamfara, Sokoto and Katsina during the year under review. These visits concerned investigation of cases of abuse of women's human rights and sentence of women to death for adultery and infanticide. Sentences of amputation of under-aged boys were also investigated and legal actions taken on their behalf. A number of the cases have been successful and some others are still pending.

#### **III.1.2. DOCUMENTATION**

Two books, one legal literacy leaflet, Annual Report 2000 & 2001, revised BAOBAB brochure and the 2003 Calendar were produced. See below a brief summary of the books and the legal literacy leaflet produced in 2003:

##### **A. Books**

a) *Women's Human Rights Violations in Nigeria: - January 15, 1966 - May 29, 1999.*

This book builds on the many research projects carried out by BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights over the years. The focus is on women's human rights violations in Nigeria from January 15, 1966-May 29, 1999. The research was informed by the resolve of the Obasanjo-led civilian government, which came into office in May 1999 to ascertain the causes, nature and extent of all human rights violations in Nigeria. The report looks at abuses

of women's human rights - highlighting gender violations as well as discriminatory laws, policies and practices of the government, communities and individuals that have the effect of violating women's rights during the period under study.

b) *BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights and Sharia Implementation in Nigeria: The Journey so Far.*

This book is a potpourri of materials derived from our reports, public lectures, seminar papers and materials from fact-finding missions since 2000 as well as newspaper reports, court records and so on. It aims at clarifying and explaining the circumstances and background to some of the cases involving women in the new Sharia Penal Codes in the northern part of Nigeria since 2000. It is an **update** on the so-called "sharia implementation" so far and the role that BOABAB for Women's Human Rights has played in the emancipation of the survivors as well as the victims of a politicized passing and implementation of the new Sharia Acts in Nigeria, which have so far been limited to introducing criminal legislation.

*B. Legal Literacy Leaflet*

*Political Rights and Responsibilities of Women as Citizens.*

This leaflet looks at basic aspects of political rights and responsibilities of women. It also explains frequently used key terms in the political arena, and examines the legal provisions that back up the essence of political participation of women in the society. Lack of political awareness, amongst other factors, have militated against women's participation in politics. In view of this, the leaflet highlights the basic rights that accrue to women as regards political participation as well as examines the importance of women's political participation.

*C. Annual Reports*

There was a backlog of annual reports from year 2000. During the year under discussion, the reports for years 2000 and 2001 were produced.

*D. Quarterly*

Due to the heavy workload of BAOBAB and the fact that the office was not full capacity, only one edition of the Quarterly, "*Under the BAOBAB Tree*" was published in the year under discussion. The theme was on Human Rights generally and members of staff and other individuals contributed articles that are relevant to the Nigerian context focusing on issues of human/women's human rights. These include *Female Genital Mutilation: Defacing the Flower* by Rose Musa, *Obnoxious Widowhood Rites in Nigeria: Looking through Gender Lens* by Obiageli Izuako, *Bride Price: A Women's Human Rights Issue* by Chibogu Obinwa, *The Human Rights Movement in Nigeria: What are the issues?* by Bunmi Dipo-Salami and *Women's Rights and Law Reform* by Ezinne Ekekwe, among others. The theme for the next quarterly publication is Engendering Democracy and Good Governance.

*E. Reprints*

Existing Legal Literacy Leaflets and other publications, as well as BAOBAB stickers, which are used for outreach, mobilization and advocacy activities, were reprinted.

*F. Draft*

In the course of the series of bridge building meetings<sup>7</sup> since 2000, we have been working on a document on Women's Human Rights in Muslim Laws. This document has undergone series of reviews and it is in its final stage. This will be published in June 2004. This document compares different types of rights (progressive and conservative) enjoyed by

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<sup>7</sup> See section on Peace Building for more information

Muslim women and women living under Muslim laws in different Muslim communities around the world and the main sources from which the interpretations have been derived.

### *G. Book Display and Exhibition*

BAOBAB was a participant at the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of States and Government (CHOGM) in December 2003. We were involved in the preparatory meetings and subsequently took part in the 10 days events where BAOBAB exhibited publications, stickers, posters, books, pamphlets, and BAOBAB T-shirts at the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum (Peoples' market). It was an impressive outing for the organization. Onaade Ojo and Allyson Lee who represented BAOBAB were interviewed by some of the media houses that came to cover the event.

### *H. Acquisition of Books and Journals*

A few books and journals were purchased for the library and some others were donated to BAOBAB. Some others were also acquired at local and international meetings during the year. In all, a total of one hundred (100) books were acquired in 2003

### *I. AME Synthesis Writing Meeting*

The AME synthesis of data writing meeting was held in July, at the Hotel Aledjo, Cotonou. There were 10 participants at the meeting from Nigeria, The Gambia, Cameroon, The UK, USA, and Sudan. The objective of the meeting was to produce the final draft of the AME Analytical Book. However, this did not happen, as most of the writers were only able to come up with their outlines and the first draft at the end of the ten days meeting. This setback was due to the fact that the writers live so far apart and the communication systems in most countries are not as advanced as in other parts of the world. In addition to this, apart from the staff of BAOBAB and ICO, other writers have full-time jobs to which priority is given over the AME publication. It was decided that drafts be passed to the editor, Dr. Ayesha Imam. The final writing meeting is slated for June 2004.

### *III.1.3. CAPACITY BUILDING*

The focus of this programme is to enhance the capacity of women and men on issues that relate to the rights of women under the three systems of laws in Nigeria according to BAOBAB's mandate. The beneficiaries of our capacity building programme include the outreach teams, BAOBAB staff and different sections of the Nigerian public, particularly women. Some of the activities under this programme are training workshops in leadership, human rights, gender and paralegal issues; staff seminars; strategic planning meetings; staff training; service to other NGOs; internships and volunteership.

#### *A. Leadership Training*

BAOBAB in collaboration with the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP), the Association Democratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), and the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), developed a leadership handbook *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*. With this handbook, BAOBAB has been organizing training programmes with diverse group of women in different sectors –such as NGO activists, domestic workers, extension workers, women in the academia, etc. The objectives of this program are to create a tool to enhance women's participation and leadership in various spheres of social interaction and decision-making, and to introduce the idea of horizontal leadership.

**Six** leadership training workshops were organised for different categories of women and in some cases, men – undergraduates, professionals, women in the grassroots, activists, religious

scholars etc - in different parts of the country in the year under review. A total of **ninety** (90) participants benefited from the training.

The objectives of the training are to:

- (i) enable participants identify and develop communication skills, build consensus, create shared meaning and foster learning partnership at work, at home and in the community
- (ii) enhance women's participation at leadership levels in different spheres of social interaction and decision-making.

The evaluation of the programme by the participants indicates that for some of them, it is a life-changing experience. The very unique case study methodology of sharing experiences has been commended and recommended by the participants. Using the stories of women from different not so developed countries also helps to raise awareness to the fact that women's condition, situation and agency are the same everywhere, buttressing the need for global sisterhood.

Here are a few quotes from the participants:

"I have discovered myself. I will be able to defend my rights at any level and also empower some women in my society" –*Female undergraduate*

"I have in this workshop learnt what it takes to be a good leader in my own life and in the lives of other people" –*Female undergraduate*

"I strongly recommend BAOBAB's training and I wish it would continue for other groups of people" –*Professional woman*

"I will this day walk out of this hall determined to make the lives of people better" –*Professional woman*

"One of the things I like best is to be determined and resourceful. The sessions really added to my colours" – *Community-based activist*

"Am I a leader in my own life? This workshop has really made me to examine myself" –*Community based activist*

"The sessions and discussions have really fired my zeal and commitment to do more for my community, especially the women" – *Community –based activist*

"I thank BAOBAB and WLP for leading us to understand the real meaning of leadership" –*Professional Woman*

"You have empowered me more as a leader in my community. Now I know how to relate well with people" – *Woman in the grassroots*

"What I have gained here will change my life forever" - *Woman in the grassroots*

An evaluation meeting will be organised in May 2004. In addition, a Regional Roaming Leadership Institute for English-speaking Africa is being planned for December 2004 in Abuja, Nigeria.

### **B. Staff Seminars**

The staff seminar is aimed at building the capacity of the BAOBAB team and enabling them to make critical analysis of the condition and position of women in Nigeria. Every member of staff, without exception, presents a paper on any related topic on women's human rights. In 2003, the staff seminar presentations were re-organized to be more focused on issues that are pertinent to women's human rights.

During the year under review, **six** (6) in-house seminars were presented. They are as follows:

- (a) Harmful Traditional Practices: Consequences of Early Marriage (Linda Izilein)
- (b) Women Trafficking in Nigeria (Rose Musa)
- (c) Rape as Violence Against women (Obiageli Izuako)
- (d) Female Genital Mutilation – Defacing the Flower (Sarah Dickson)
- (e) The protection of sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women During Armed Conflict: A case study of Odi Crisis (Ngozi Nwosu)
- (f) Essentials of Proposal Writing (Aisha Lawal)

### *C. Strategic Planning Meetings*

Two planning meetings were held in 2003. The first strategic planning meeting took place the Hotel Aledjo, Cotonou, Republic of Benin, between January 26 and February 1 2003. It was an interactive forum where members of staff came together to share both as a team of professionals and as a group of friends to review the programmes and activities of year 2002 as well as to plan for 2003.

The retreat objectives were to:

- have a planned workable calendar for 2003
- enhance team working
- evaluate year 2002's goals and strategies
- address issues arising from the change management process.
- examine issues related to stress management
- restructure working teams/committees
- recommit to the goals and principles of BAOBAB
- build the capacity of staff in gender, feminism and organizational issues
- have fun

The meeting was facilitated by Mr Ben Arikpo, a Lagos-based OD Consultant and assisted by Sindi Medar-Gould, the Executive Director of BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights.

There was capacity building in the areas of *feminism, team building, and stress and time management*.

The second planning meeting was held from 14 to 21 December 2003 at the Premier hotel, Ibadan. It was a period of sober reflection on the work of the past year, aimed at evaluating the achievements and challenges of year 2003. Commendations were given for the former and there were suggestions on how to improve on the latter. It was also a time to plan the activities of the coming year ahead and a time of leisure and unwinding from the busy schedules of the just ended year with the hope that everybody would leave the retreat more refreshed and happier than they came. Above all, it was a time of rededication to the vision, mission and principles of BAOBAB.

The objectives of the strategic planning meeting were as follows:

- ✓ To evaluate BAOBAB's programs and activities in 2003
- ✓ To plan a workable calendar for 2004
- ✓ To build capacity of staff members
- ✓ To design new programs that would facilitate the realisation of BAOBAB vision and mission
- ✓ To have fun

For the first time since the programme was initiated in 2000, the December 2003 staff retreat was facilitated by staff members of BAOBAB – Sindi Medar-Gould, Bunmi Dipo-Salami,

Ngozi Nwosu, Chibogu Obinwa, Mufuliat Fijabi and Ezinne Ekekwe. There were capacity building sessions on *Introduction to Gender, How should we Communicate?* and *What is a Feminist organisation?*

The meeting was also an opportunity to review the new programme structure, which was introduced earlier in the year. Unlike the previous planning meeting, the December meeting did not have any element of turbulence as members of staff acknowledged and helped each other better and actually related as one entity. This, according to participants is a good development, which should be maintained for the growth of BAOBAB and individual staff members. The Executive Director noted that having the strategic planning meeting in December is an innovation and it is more feasible. For her, it is more strategic to review year 2003 and plan for 2004 as she will then go to the Board meeting ready for the new year.

#### *D. Staff Training*

In 2003, BAOBAB staff benefited from training programs in different areas aimed at strengthening their capacity to deal with the challenges of BAOBAB's work. These training opportunities were both within and outside Nigeria. In the year under review,

- Oby attended a *Certificate Course in Human Rights Information and Documentation Management* from 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> February 2003 at the Legal Research and Resource Development Centre (LRRDC) office in Yaba, Lagos.
- Oby attended a *Women's Electronic Network Training (WENT)*, hosted by APC – Africa – Women in Cape Town, South Africa from 29 March- 4 April 2003.
- Mufuliat, Chibogu and Ngozi attended a *TMG Training for Monitors for Nigeria's General Elections 2003*. Shelter Rights, Lagos, April 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Linda was at the British Council for *Basic Internet Training* organized by British Council on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at Ikoyi, Lagos.
  - Ezinne attended a three-week training programme on *Human Rights Training Methodology* hosted by the Canadian Human Rights Foundation, Montreal in June 2003
- Ade and Rose participated in *Proposal Writing Workshop* held at the Heinrich Boll Foundation Conference Room, Ikoyi, Lagos from 15<sup>th</sup> –17<sup>th</sup> July, 2003
- Ngozi was in Banjul, The Gambia from August 11<sup>th</sup> –20<sup>th</sup>, 2003 for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop of the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa on *Procedures of the African Regional Human Rights Systems*.
- Bunmi participated in *Capacity Building Workshop for Women's Organisations in West Africa*, organized by African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Accra, Ghana. September 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> 2003
- Ngozi took part in DAWN Training in Bangalore India from September 14-October 3, 2003.

#### *E. Service to other NGOs*

- Ade co-facilitated a certificate course in *Human Rights Information and Documentation Management* from 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> February 2003 held at LRRDC, Yaba.
- Chibogu co-facilitated a Peer-Education Training on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Women and Young Girls," under the auspices of the National Coalition on Violence Against Women (NACOVAV). The workshop was held on March 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> 2003 in Lagos

- Ade co-facilitated a Training of Trainers (T.O.T) for monitoring the 2003 general elections. This programmed was organised by the Transition Monitoring Group in Lagos, from March 15<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> 2003.

### *F. Internships /Volunteership*

This aims primarily at building and enhancing the capacity of outreach team volunteers in various communities in Nigeria. It also provides the opportunity for individuals within and outside Nigeria wishing to gain skills and/or share knowledge in the different areas of our work to do so. In addition, it promotes the exchange of skills between the interns and BAOBAB staff.

In 2003, we had **three** (3) volunteers – Catherine Currie (UK), Dera Meka – Obinwa (Nigeria) and Allyson Lee (Canada).

(a) **Catherine Currie** spent four (4) weeks between August and September 2003 in BAOBAB. A Management Consultant, Catherine’s project management skills were of great asset to BAOBAB during this period. Although she was here for a short period, it was a very productive time for the organisation. She developed a business plan for the talent competition. She also developed an Induction Package for interns and volunteers. Catherine was involved in outreach activities and she has more information on women’s human rights situation in Nigeria. This has informed her choice of a comparative research on domestic violence in Nigeria and the UK for her Masters’ thesis.

(b) **Dera Meka-Obinwa** is a teenager who was in- between classes and applied to volunteer for BAOBAB to understand women’s human rights issues in Nigeria as well as to get to know the work of BAOBAB better. She was with us for four months, during which she worked in all the working groups. A very fast learner, Dera was able to cope with the demands of her work in all the groups. In her report, she noted that she learnt about CEDAW, proposal writing, administration, photocopying, seminar presentation and so forth. BAOBAB also benefited from Dera’s computer skills as she shared word and power point applications with some members of staff. She considers the period well spent as she achieved so much. According to her, the knowledge gained in the area of women’s human rights issues awareness and how it affects everyday life has put her above her peers. She is also ready to face challenges of life as they arise. She left in September to continue her Senior Secondary School education.

(c) A VSO volunteer, **Allyson Lee** joined BAOBAB in October 2003. She is a public relations expert. She possesses skills in event management, issues and crisis management; strategy development and budget planning; writing and editing; print and video production. Allyson has been of immense benefit to the organisation since she came on board. She has been involved in practically all the working groups and has contributed in no little way to these groups. She has produced proposals and still is looking out for potential funders to support the work of BAOBAB. Allyson is presently working on the process of setting up an endowment fund for the organisation.

## **III.2. INFORMATION, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING**

### *III.2.1. INFORMATION SHARING*

This is an on-going core programme of BAOBAB. We currently have a mailing list of 350 NGOs that we send information to both by regular post and courier on local and international debates relating to women's human rights especially those of women living under Muslim laws. This service is also extended to a solidarity list of 40 women's NGOs in Africa, including WLUML-AME networkers. Sharing information enables individuals and groups to learn from others' experiences (successful and otherwise). It also enables groups to share and develop ideas and provide support to each other. We constantly receive commendation from organizations, groups, and individuals that benefit from this service. We also receive requests for placement on the mailing list.

### **III.2.2. COMMUNICATION**

#### Website Design

The BAOBAB website was developed in 2003. It came alive on the Internet in September 2003 ([www.baobabwomen.org](http://www.baobabwomen.org)) The Women Empowerment Group of the Global Information Internship Program (GIIP), an affiliate association of the University of California, Santa Cruz, designed the site.

### *III.2.3. EDUCATION*

#### Talent Competition

The Talent competition was revived in 2003 and it is hoped to be the start of a biennial commitment to promoting women's human rights issues in Nigeria. There are three (3) different areas to the competition - Art, Writing and Music from which an overall winner will be chosen. The age categories are: children (under 13) teenagers (13-19) and young adults (20-30). The winners will be announced at a National Prize giving ceremony covered by the print and electronic media. The Maggie Black Trust Fund provided the start off grant and we are still soliciting the support of other Corporations and Foundations to facilitate the success of the competition

### *III.2.4. SOLIDARITY WORK*

BAOBAB networks with both national and international individual groups and organizations by responding to Alerts for Action and calls for joint campaigns. An Alert is the medium used for an urgent and public need to respond to specific threats or issues. Priority is given to cases that concern women's rights, especially as they are threatened by the political use of religious or ethnic sentiments. In addition, BAOBAB deals (increasingly now) with individual cases of violations of women's human rights, mostly on domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse. In 2003 we circulated and responded to 12 alerts<sup>8</sup>

### *III.2.5. COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND NETWORKING*

Furthering its belief that there is strength in numbers, and that together everyone achieves more, BAOBAB collaborates with other organizations that believe in our mission to organize and raise awareness to women's human rights. These include campaigns around "March 8<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day" and "16 Days Activism Against Gender-Based Violence." These are usually marked with press briefing, media workshop, solidarity trek, popular

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix IV for details

theatre etc. BAOBAB also brings about a gender-sensitive analysis in the areas of engendering Democracy, anti-corruption, and good governance. BAOBAB is a key member of a number of networks aimed at promoting democracy and good governance as well as anti-corruption. These include –Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Transparency In Nigeria (TIN), Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN), amongst others.

### **III. 3. PEACE BUILDING, MEDIATION AND COUNSELING**

#### *III.3.1. PEACE BUILDING*

This programme generally addresses background and conceptual issues regarding women's rights in religious laws and how the interpretation of laws affects women adversely

##### *A. Bridge Building Meetings*

As a result of the perturbations concerning women's human rights, precipitated by the political islamization of some states in Nigeria, BAOBAB initiated a series of Bridge-Building meetings in 2000. These meetings bring together, people from diverse belief systems to interact, examine the contents of their belief systems vis-à-vis women's human rights, and come to a common understanding of these rights, as well as customary laws and practices. This is an on-going program aimed at preventing conflict between these groups and ensuring peaceful coexistence. Two (2) meetings were held in Abuja from February 23<sup>rd</sup> to March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2003. This brings the total number of bridge building meetings held so far to eight (8)- four for Muslim participants and four for non-Muslim participants.

This programme has been extended to the West Africa Sub- region as part of the activities organized by BAOBAB, as the Africa and Middle East coordination office of the international solidarity network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), to share information and ideas as well as document the experiences of women in other countries (both francophone and anglophone) whose lives are shaped and governed by Muslim laws. This is also aimed at demonstrating that there is not just one sharia as Muslim laws vary from one community to the other due to different customary laws and practices. Bridge Building West Africa 1 was held in Banjul in October 2003, in collaboration with GAMCOTRAP, a Gambian NGO, which is a member of the WLUML network. Participants at the meeting were members of the WLUML network from Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Niger, Nigeria, Guinea, and Senegal. The meeting for the non-Muslim group (Bridge Building West Africa 2) is scheduled for September 2004 in Ghana. The programme will also be conducted in other parts of Africa in the coming years.

#### *III.3.2. Mediation and Counselling*

This programme addresses issues of violence against women by mediating in individual cases and providing advisory services to survivors of human rights violations.

##### *A. Individual Cases of violence against women*

In the year 2003, twelve (12) cases of various forms of violation of women's human rights including but not limited to domestic violence were reported to the office by phone calls, visits and through email messages. Most of them were through referrals from organizations or individuals that know about BAOBAB's work. Other cases were related to discrimination in the work place, unlawful termination of appointment, denial of child maintenance and denial of access to children. Most of the cases have been handled and settled through mediation and counselling. Only one of them is at the point of litigation as at the time of this report<sup>9</sup>.

#### *III.3.3. New Tactics Project*

BAOBAB was represented by the Coordinator of Peace Building, Mediation and Counselling at the New Tactics in Human Rights workshop that took place in Cape town in South Africa

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix VI for a summary of these cases

in May 2003 organized by the Centre for Victims of Torture, the United States. BAOBAB did a thirty minutes presentation on the National Tribunal on Violence against women that was organised in collaboration with CIRDDOC on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2001 in Abuja. BAOBAB's Tactic of the Tribunal is one of the very few selected in Africa for presentation. The organizers are also in the process of producing the proceedings of the workshop. There will also be a follow up Symposium in 2004 in Turkey where BAOBAB will also make a repeat presentation, which has been selected as one of the very few to be re- presented at the international level.

#### *III.3.4. Media Relations*

BAOBAB involves the media in her activities to get them acquainted with the programmes of the organisation. In addition to several workshops that were organised during the year under review, a gender sensitisation workshop was organised for journalists to mark the International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

In November 2003 a workshop was organised for the Media and NGOs as part of activities to mark the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence. Some members of staff of BAOBAB also granted a number of press interviews to different media houses from both the print and electronic media. This include on NTA Network Service, LTV 8, News Agency of Nigeria, The Guardian, and so on.

### **III. 4. LITIGATION AND INTERPRETATION OF LAWS**

The activities carried out under this programme are: public interest litigation, sharia legal defense and simplifying international instruments for use by activists and individuals.

#### ***III. 4.1. SHARIA LEGAL DEFENSE***

BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights as the leading organisation dealing specifically with women living under Muslim laws in the country has been called upon not only to articulate the human rights of victims of the expansion of Sharia law to include criminal cases by some governors in the Northern part of Nigeria, but also to actually defend those rights in courts across the northern states. Due to the discriminatory implementation of the new Sharia Acts in twelve states in the northern part of Nigeria, women and girls have been deprived of due justice especially in the areas of sexual assault and/or rape. Most of these legal cases are related to women's sexuality and lack of knowledge among the women and the enforcers of the laws. In responding to these factors, BAOBAB initiated and led the way in offering support and efforts for reversal and redress to victims of these Acts. A legal strategy team has been put in place, which involves Muslim lawyers, rights activists, and Muslim scholars, to offer advice and information. The strategy team makes resources and materials as well as case laws available to the legal teams and strives to build a resource base in materials and skills to support, protect and promote women's human rights.

Increasingly, BAOBAB is becoming known for her defence of women who are railroaded through the unfair judicial system in states where the new Sharia Acts are implemented and where women's human rights are trampled upon. Consequently, we are asked for assistance with individual cases of rights abuse for such women either at the court of first instance or (more frequently) in appeals. So far, we have been involved in many cases of women and minors. As we become successful at defending such cases, we are receiving requests from families of men who have run afoul of the law in Sharia States. In such cases, we refer them to other human rights organizations as this is clearly outside our mandate. It is becoming the norm for even officers of the courts to draw cases to our attention when we visit our clients in various prisons in the northern part of the country.

Through the support of like-minded organisations and individuals who provide moral and/or financial assistance, we have been able to undertake the defence of the cases of some of these women and some minors who have been sentenced to amputation. Some of these cases are still pending. Not only do we litigate the cases in court, we also provide support, after care and welfare services to the survivors. BAOBAB engaged the services of a legal consultant who monitored the cases on behalf of the organization. We also undertake monitoring trips to see how the survivors are faring.

Currently there are about twenty (20) individuals being so supported.

#### ***III.4.2. PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION***

In furtherance of the objectives of BAOBAB, the organisation engages in public interest litigation. The idea behind this is to establish a social advocacy programme, which is aimed at bringing about changes in social attitude to domestic violence. Also it would be an opportunity to secure legal reform of laws affecting women's human rights. There are currently two cases before the court. One is a criminal proceeding while the other is a civil matter, involving the same parties. The two cases are currently pending before the Magistrate court in Ikeja Lagos and at the High court in Ota Ogun State in that order.

### *III.4.3. SIMPLIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS*

To establish social advocacy and to advance the rights of women through the application of the international instruments in existence, BAOBAB is in the process of simplifying international instruments. This also has the objectives of realising women's human rights through laws, and ultimately the reform of existing laws in Nigeria for the benefit of women. The first draft of the simplified versions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Rome Statute were produced by the end of 2003.

### **III. 5. MOBILIZATION AND ADVOCACY**

The activities of this programme revolve around sensitising communities on issues that affect women and prevent them from actualising their potentials in different spheres, as well as social and legislative advocacy. Thus, the activities under this programme include working with volunteers in fourteen (14) states, participating in discussions and/or meetings in such areas as violence against women, child rights, political participation and leadership, women's rights in religion, and so forth.

#### *III.5.1. MOBILISATION*

##### *A. Outreach*<sup>10</sup>

Presently, there are volunteer outreach teams in fourteen states. All members of these teams give their time and resources (human and material) voluntarily to further the principles and objectives of BAOBAB. They network within their communities and with other organizations in developing and carrying out programs, which would ultimately promote women's human rights, especially under Muslim laws. Some of the thematic areas of intervention work for the outreach activities include (but are not limited to) issues on divorce, inheritance, custody and guardianship, child marriage, female genital mutilation and harmful traditional practices. The activities take various forms, such as schools debate, popular theatre, role-plays, interactive workshops, radio drama and seminars, to name but a few. The national outreach coordinating team makes bi-annual visits to the state teams. The main aim of these visits is to meet with the outreach teams and update each other on outreach activities and to plan, monitor and evaluate, and to trouble-shoot where necessary. BAOBAB also organizes an annual national outreach-planning workshop. This is aimed at bringing together core outreach team members from each state to exchange information, share experiences and plan ahead for the year. The workshop also includes capacity building sessions for the outreach teams.

##### *a) National Planning Meeting 2003*

The third edition of the annual outreach national planning meeting for volunteer outreach teams of BAOBAB was held in Lagos, from March 21 to 25, 2003. The theme for this year's planning workshop was *Good Leadership for Self and for Others* and it revolved around the leadership training organized for the teams.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- (i) To build a networking structure amongst all the outreach teams
- (ii) To acquire training and skills that will further enhance the volunteers' facilitation of outreach intervention activities
- (iii) To plan a programme calendar for the year.

The leadership training was aimed at enhancing good leadership skills among the team members. Beneficiaries are also required to replicate this training in their various communities. The teams were able to share experiences about their work as well as learn new strategies from one another on how to tackle some of the challenges they are faced with in the course of their activities. In evaluating the gains and challenges of this national planning meeting- participants noted that they had learned a lot of issues on empowerment and leadership in the course of the discussions. They also observed that they saw leadership from a different perspective from the mainstream form of leadership they have been socialized to imbibe. The components of this leadership training had reflected the objectives around which

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix VII for a detailed report of outreach activities

it was designed. The participants further analyzed that they had been inspired and impressed by the concern shown by BAOBAB coordinating team. The plan of action gave each team a sense of direction and purpose as well as heightened the motivation to achieve more as well as make and/ or better impact on the lives of women in their various communities.

One strategy that was developed at the end of the national planning meeting is the latest coordination method of creating different liaison points and appointing members of staff as liaison officers for the volunteer outreach teams. The teams were grouped into zones namely North –west, North-east, South-west and North-central for efficiency and effectiveness. There remains an overall Coordinator for the project.

#### *b) States Visits*

The national outreach coordinating team visits outreach teams bi-annually. The aim of the visit is to meet with the outreach teams and update each other on outreach activities with a view to enhancing further interaction between the national coordinating team and the volunteer outreach teams. BAOBAB coordinating teams had visited the states and discussed challenges faced by the teams, progress of their activities and evaluation of their programs.

Members of staff from the National Coordination Office paid outreach visits to a number of outreach states including **Kaduna, Kano and Katsina** (during a leadership training workshop in Kano), **Taraba** (Sensitisation visit to the State Governor and ‘quick on the spot’ press briefing, Gender Awareness Training for the volunteers), **Adamawa** (paralegal training with Police and Court Personnel), **Lagos, Oyo** (Gender Awareness), **Kogi** (Mock Tribunal programme), **Plateau** (Bridge Building meeting – the Plateau Peace project), and **Edo** (Violence against women programme), **Kwara** (Legal Literacy workshop) and **Zamfara**.

In the year 2003, as anticipated by the outreach teams, impact indicators include reduction of practices in indicated areas, more cases of violence against women are reported, less cases of withdrawal of girls from schools and more enrolment of girl children in schools, as well as more demand for BAOBAB publications.

#### *B. Mobilization of funds Re: Girl Child Education*

While on vacation in Switzerland in 2002, the Coordinator of Mobilization and Advocacy seized the opportunity to mobilise a few friends to contribute to BAOBAB’s work. After sharing experiences about BAOBAB’s successes, challenges and strategies, the small group (mostly medical professionals) became interested in supporting girl child education in BAOBAB’s outreach communities. In 2003, the group called “Future for Girls” ([www.zukunftmaedchen.ch](http://www.zukunftmaedchen.ch)) sent in funds to supporting the education of two girls in Kaduna State – Hauwau Isyaku and Zainab Ibrahim. Both girls are ten (10) years old and they have been placed in a private primary school. “Future for Girls” hopes to support more girls in the years to come.

#### *III.5.2. ADVOCACY*

One of BAOBAB’s core activities in bringing women’s human rights to the fore is through advocacy either as an organization or in collaboration with like-minded organizations. The latter seems to have been more often the case as a reflection of BAOBAB’s belief that building coalitions for advocacy purposes gives room for interchange of and diverse expertise amongst member organizations and this in turn renders more strength to advocacy work. BAOBAB believes that effective advocacy will enhance review of laws and practices, which will address major concerns of women living under Muslim laws. Examples of coalitions for social and legislative advocacy are the CEDAW Coalition, and the National Coalition on the International Criminal Court (NCICC), which BAOBAB chairs, among others

### *A. International Women's Day*

To commemorate International Women's Day during the year under review, BAOBAB organised a media workshop to acknowledge the struggles of women from the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, with a slide show of "Great Ancestors." In an atmosphere of reflection tribute was paid to notable women's human rights activists in the global south, who struggled against various forms of discrimination in all spheres of life as individuals, family members and as members of their societies. Through various and sometimes life-threatening strategies women utilized poetry, politics and activism to further their quest for emancipation.

The struggles ranged from the quest for equality in education, to freedom from domestic violence and other forms of gender-based discrimination in the society. Some of the women are: Sayyida Al- Hurra who ruled Yemen for more than fifty years, Hafsa Bint Al- Hajj a great poet and teacher during her time, Bibi Ashraff who devised some adventurous strategies to be able to read and write and became a prominent professor in Lahore, Pakistan. Included also were Nigerian women like Queen Amina (Magajiya) of Zaria, Madam Tinubu of Lagos, Nana Asma'u and the women who organised the Aba Revolt.

### *B. 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence*

The theme of this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence was "*Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights: Maintaining the Momentum Ten Years After Vienna.*" BAOBAB organised a series of activities for the "16 Days..." programme, which include the following;

- Press Briefing
- Media Trek
- Creating awareness on Violence Against Women issues amongst students in Lagos State by showing a home video on various aspects of VAW and engaging the students in analysis/discussion.
- Media interviews including on NTA network, LTV panel discussion, Ray Power Live transmission, Guardian Newspaper, and diverse media coverage
- Obalende trek

The turnout for all the activities was impressive and the evaluation of the programme by participants shows that overall, the "16 Days..." programme was quite successful<sup>11</sup>

### *C. CEDAW Advocacy*

The coordinator of Mobilization and Advocacy, on behalf of BAOBAB, attended the CEDAW advocacy training and CEDAW Committee sessions in New York, in June/July 2003. This training enhanced her knowledge of the CEDAW Committee sessions and most importantly the necessary lobbying skills required in CEDAW advocacy especially as regards State Parties' reports. This will come in handy when Nigeria will be reporting to the CEDAW Committee in January 2004 as well as follow-up advocacy activities by BAOBAB hopefully in the first quarter of 2004. She disseminated this information by producing an extensive analytical report, which was circulated amongst other members of staff. In addition, also shared her experience of CEDAW Committee lobbying at an NGO forum organised by

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix VIII for a detailed report

Women Advocate Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC) and Women's Aid Collective (WACOL).

*D. Engendering Democracy and Good Governance*

From our experience of working with other groups over the past years, the need was identified to engender the discussions of such meetings/groups. In the year under review, BAOBAB participated in election monitoring coordinated by the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). A BAOBAB staff member facilitated an in-house pre-election observation strategic meeting for all observers re, incorporating a gender perspective in election observation. The Africa Democracy Forum Meeting was held in Accra, Ghana, in February 17-18, 2003. The meeting was an African regional preparatory meeting for the World Movement for Democracy Assembly. BAOBAB's contributions in the meeting reflected the need to engender issues of good democracy and governance. BAOBAB also participated at the pro-democracy activists meeting in Africa, held in Durban, April, to discuss pertinent issues of democracy and governance in Africa in view of the forth coming WMD Durban meeting early 2004. BAOBAB shared her work on email solidarity workshop as a way of building the capacity of activists on internet-based campaigns and specifically suggested gender training as one of the felt need thematic workshops to be organized for pro-democracy activists.

## **III.6. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE**

### *III.6.1. STAFF NEWS*

#### *A. New Staff*

Five (5) members of staff were employed in 2003 to strengthen the capacity of BAOBAB. Aisha Lawal came on board as the Personal Assistant to the Executive Director, Roselyn P. Musa joined as a Research Officer specifically for WLUML-AME activities for a period of one year. Obiageli Izuako who spent some months with us as a receptionist during her service year was appointed as the Information Officer, while Anuoluwapo Dada was employed as a receptionist. Joseph Agbessi was also employed as a Driver/office Assistant.

#### *B. Outgoing Staff*

During the year under review, Asabe Audu, a Programme Officer, left BAOBAB and moved into the corporate world. Another Programme Officer, Hurera Akilu – Atta resigned for personal reasons. We wish them the best in their endeavours.

#### *C. Staff Profile*

BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights is a multi-cultural environment. Members of staff represent all the geo-political zones of Nigeria and there are a few expatriates. They come from diverse backgrounds with varied professional experience.

##### *i) Ms. Sindi MEDAR-GOULD Executive Director*

Sindi possesses a Master of Arts degree in English and Philosophy. She taught Feminism in African Literature and Caribbean and Afro America literature at the Bayero University, Kano for ten (10) years. She served two terms on the National Executive Council of Women in Nigeria (WIN). Before working with BAOBAB, Sindi was the Executive director of WISSEA, Kano and the Coordinator of the Women and Law Program for Kano State. She came on board as a Senior Programme Officer in 1997. Ms. Medar-Gould is a life long activist and feminist with a record of 20 years standing in women's human rights work. She is an experienced trainer in gender, leadership, feminism, conflict resolution, gender budget analysis, human rights and ethics. Sindi is the Chairperson of the Nigeria Coalition on the International Criminal Court.

##### *ii) Ms. Aisha LAWAL Personal Assistant to the Executive Director*

A graduate of Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, Aisha holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. Before she came on board in 2003, she had worked at the Bureau of Establishment and Training, Staff Development Centre, Abeokuta where she worked as an English Language Instructor.

##### *iii) Ms. Allyson LEE Volunteer*

Ms. Allyson Lee joined BAOBAB in October 2003 for a one-year contract as Public Relations Coordinator. Holding a Bachelor's degree in Modern Languages and Literature, Ms. Lee later furthered her education in Public Relations. Her work experience covers a broad range of public relations activities including event planning, issues and crisis management, internal and external communications and media relations. Before coming to Nigeria, she managed Executive Public Relations for Ernst & Young Canada. Prior to that she was a Senior Consultant for an international public relations agency managing client accounts in both the public and private sectors.

iv) Ms. Anuoluwapo DADA *Front Desk Officer*

She holds an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Business Administration from the Federal Polytechnic, Offa. Before working with BAOBAB, Anuoluwapo worked with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Ejigbo.

v) Ms. Bose IRONSI *Programme Assistant*

A trained nurse midwife, Ms. Ironsi holds a B.Sc in Psychology. She has been working in the area of women's human rights since 1990 when she joined Community Life Project (CLP) as a field officer. She coordinated the research on drug abuse reduction amongst street children and commercial sex worker in Lagos. Bose possesses mobilization, advocacy and communication skills.

vi) Ms. Bunmi DIPO-SALAMI *Senior Programme Officer*

She joined BAOBAB as a Programme Officer in 2000 to coordinate the action research on drug abuse prevention among street children and commercial sex workers in the cities of Lagos, Kano and Port Harcourt. She is presently the Coordinator of Research, Documentation and Capacity Building. Ms. Dipo-Salami, a gender/women's human rights activist and researcher, holds a Master of Arts degree in Development studies, specializing in Women, Gender and Development, from the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. She has worked as a lecturer in French language and Literature at different tertiary institutions in Nigeria before moving into the field of development in 1998. Her areas of expertise are gender (analysis, mainstreaming, planning, budgeting etc), human rights, leadership, religion, project management, governance, globalization and women's citizenship rights and capabilities.

vii) Ms. Catherine INYANG *Communications Officer*

She joined BAOBAB in 1996 with little knowledge of women's human rights. Over the years, Catherine has grown to love and appreciate the work of BAOBAB and the impact it has on the lives of women, regardless of their religion, ethnic origin and status. She has a burning interest in information technology as a career and to achieve this, Catherine is presently undergoing a diploma programme in Computer Studies at the Lagos City Polytechnic.

viii) Ms. Chibogu OBINWA *Senior Programme Officer*

Ms. Obinwa possesses a Bachelor's degree in English Studies and a Post-Graduate diploma in Public Administration. She joined BAOBAB in September 1998 as a Programme Assistant primarily to assist in organizing the first BAOBAB/WLUML-AME Email Solidarity Campaign Workshop. In the course of her work with BAOBAB she has acquired further academic experience including a United Nations University Fellowship program in "Human Rights Concepts and Issues" and "International Cooperation and Development," as well as a post-graduate certificate in Women's Studies from IWSL, Lahore, Pakistan. Currently, she coordinates the Mobilization and Advocacy working group, which oversees the outreach community-based project, advocacy work around international human rights instruments such as CEDAW, as well as issues of engendering democracy and good governance. Chibogu is skilled and experienced in training, basic counselling, advocacy, human rights education, gender analysis, research and proposal writing among others.

ix) Ms. Ezinne EKEKWE *Programme Officer*

Ezinne is a lawyer. She attended Imo State University, Okigwe (now known as Abia State University, Uturu). She attended the Nigerian Law School, Lagos where she was called to the

Nigerian Bar. Ezinne had worked with the Law firms of ANGA & EMUWA and OBIOHA JUDE IDIGBE & CO where she developed her skills in litigation and corporate practice of law before she joined BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights in September 2001 as Programme Officer. She works in the Litigation and Interpretation of Laws work group, which handles legal defence, public interest litigation and paralegal training.

x) Mr. Joseph AGBESSI *Driver/office Assistant*

Joseph possesses a diploma in Computer operations and took a course in general History from Brevet Institute, Republic of Togo. He was a Steward/Driver with the Ford Foundation. He joined BAOBAB in 2003.

xi) Ms. Juliet MARTINS *Housekeeper*

Juliet joined BAOBAB in 2001. She had worked as Housekeeper at the Indian High Commission and Carlisle Court. She recently enrolled in a school programme to improve her skills.

xii) Mr. Lateef AKINBODE *Administrative Assistant*

He is a women's human rights activist of seven years standing. Lateef holds an Advanced Certificate in Computer Programme from the Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka and is responsible for the maintenance of electrical and communication equipment. He has a passion for community development programmes and he voluntarily participates in such. He is a member of the Police –Community Relations Committee and Transparency International, Lagos branch. Since coming on board, Lateef has benefited from capacity building programmes such as gender, email, and paralegal training.

xiii) Ms. Linda IZILEIN *Assistant Documentalist*

Linda graduated from the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma where she studied Library Science. She served at the Lagos State Library Board. She worked at Gani Chambers before joining BAOBAB as an Assistant Documentalist in 2001. She has represented BAOBAB at various meetings within and outside Nigeria.

xiv) Ms. Mufuliat FIJABI *Senior Programme Officer*

She joined BAOBAB in 1999 as a Programme Assistant. A graduate of English from the University of Ibadan, Ms. Fijabi has experiences in both the Print and Electronic Media. She has played a very significant role in advocating for the promotion and protection of women's human rights under the different systems of laws, particularly in Muslim laws. Mufuliat coordinates the Peace Building, Mediation and Counselling working group.

xv) Ms. Ngozi NWOSU *Administration and Finance Coordinator*

Ngozi joined BAOBAB in June 2000 as an Administrative Officer. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Linguistics from the University of Calabar and she is a graduate member of the Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria. Ms. Nwosu is a Macarthur Fellow and has conducted research titled 'Parent-Child Communication on Sexuality in three Catholic Churches in Lagos Nigeria', supported by the Macarthur Foundation. She is involved in reproductive health research and intervention activities in BAOBAB.

xvi) Ms. Obiageli IZUAKO *Information Officer*

Obiageli holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She joined BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights in 2002 during her service to the

nation under the NYSC scheme. She is involved in information dissemination, responding to alerts, collation of materials for the quarterly publication, updating the website, among other things. Obiageli has acquired a lot of experience since joining BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights in such areas as writing, information sharing, presenting papers, and communication technology generally.

xvii) Mr. Onaade OJO *Documentalist*

He came on board in 1998. As the Documentalist, Onaade is responsible for the overall management of the Resource Room, which he has made into a specialised documentation and information unit. His areas of specialisation are information storage, retrieval and dissemination in the areas of gender and women's human rights. To enhance his capacity, Onaade undertook a Masters programme in Sociology, with gender and development as his area of concentration between 1998 and 1999. He is presently pursuing a postgraduate professional programme in Library and Information Science (MLIS) at the University of Ibadan to enrich his performance and to enable him face the challenges of moving from librarianship to information resources management.

xviii) Ms. Roselyn MUSA *Research Officer*

She holds a Master of Arts degree in History and Diplomatic Studies from the Lagos State University, as well as in Law and Diplomacy from the University of Jos. She also has a certificate in Public Relations. In the course of her working career as an educationist and researcher, she has gained useful experience in administration, counselling, facilitation, communication, planning and analysis. She also possesses strong networking and negotiation skills.

xix) Ms. Sarah DICKSON *Accounts Officer*

Sarah possesses a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Accounting from the Lagos State Polytechnic, Isolo. She also has a diploma in Computer for Accounting. Sarah joined BAOBAB in 2001 and in the course of her work, she has acquired basic skills in gender, communication, facilitation and analysis.

### **III.6.2. BOARD MEMBERS**

- i) Prof. Bene Madunagu – Chair (Nigeria)
- ii) Ms. Amina Ladan-Baki Mohammed (Nigeria)
- iii) Ms. Asma'u Joda (Nigeria)
- iv) Mr. Akinola Amosu (Nigeria)
- v) Ms. Salma Sobhan (Bangladesh)
- vi) Dr. Ayesha Imam (Nigeria)
- vii) Dr. Rose Mensah-Kutin (Ghana)
- viii) Dr. Kayode Fayemi (Nigeria)
- ix) Ms. Kemi Williams (Nigeria)
- x) Ms. Sindi Medar-Gould – Executive Director (St. Lucia)

### **III.6.3.**

<p><i>IN MEMORY OF</i> <b>SALMA</b></p>
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In December 2003 we received the sad news of the passing away of Ms. SALMA SOBHAN, a much-loved member of our Board of Directors. Salma, a founding member of AIN O SHAKLISH KENDER (ASK), a non-governmental organisation in Bangladesh, died in her sleep having suffered a massive heart attack. She will be keenly missed but fondly remembered for her sharp wit, cogent points that would bring the most hotly debated issue to an agreed end and great wisdom. It is with a sense of deeply felt loss and great sorrow that we offer these lines in tribute to a great sister.

Salma dear you left us, but you did not go alone  
For part of us went with you  
That sad day that you went home  
With unending love and gratitude for knowing you  
We stood silently and cried  
If love alone could have saved you  
You never would have died  
The gates swung slowly open as you entered to your rest  
The garden must be truly beautiful  
For it only hosts the best

With regret and sisterhood, The Board and Staff of BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights.

### III.6.4. AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT 2003







## IV PARTNERS

### *a) Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace (WLP)*

The mission of the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace (WLP) is to advance communication and cooperation among and between the women of the world in order to protect human rights, facilitate sustainable development, and promote peace. In cooperation with an extensive network of women activists, scholars, opinion-makers, and grassroots women organizations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, WLP develops learning tools and training programs that enable women to negotiate at family, local, regional, national and international levels to bring about conditions that are more favourable to their personal and social development as free and equal human beings. Using information technologies, culturally sensitive approaches, and methodologies based on dialogue and choice, WLP produces multimedia educational materials to increase women's participation in local, regional and global decision-making. WLP aims not only to help booster the number of women involved in leadership roles, but more importantly, to encourage leadership styles that lead to gender equality, democracy, peace, human rights, and social justice. ([www.learningpartnership.org](http://www.learningpartnership.org))

BAOBAB is the Nigeria partner of WLP and the Leadership training workshops are organised in collaboration with WLP.

### *b) The International Solidarity Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)*

This is a network that links some 2,000 individuals in 40 countries in the Muslim world to exchange information and support one another's' struggles by undertaking exchange of information, facilitating mutual support through campaigns, alerts for action and collective work amongst women in the Muslim world. As well as networking through alerts for action and provision of information, WLUML undertakes specific collective projects that are identified as necessary by women of the network.

WLUML is a network of women whose lives are shaped, conditioned or governed by laws, both written and unwritten, drawn from interpretations of the Qu'ran tied up with local traditions. In general men and the state use this against women, and have done so under various political regimes. The network addresses itself to women living where Islam is the religion of the state, as well as to women who belong to Muslim communities ruled by minority religious laws, or whose personal status is governed by Shariah law. It also serves the interest of non-Muslim women, either nationals or foreigners living in Muslim countries and communities, where Muslim laws are applied to them and to their children.

WLUML visualizes a state where women will be free from oppressive laws, laws themselves would be gender encompassing, respect for women both legally and traditionally would exist and women (and men) would be free to access their rights and contribute to the development process. The network has its mission, the elimination of *isolation*, which is among the most used and powerful tools of oppressing women and the creation of links, which support women whose lives are shaped, governed and conditioned by laws- written and unwritten drawn from interpretations of the Qu'ran and tied up with local traditions and for the reason precludes them from enjoying and accessing their basic and fundamental human rights. ([www.wluml.org](http://www.wluml.org))

BAOBAB coordinates the activities of WLUML in Africa and the Middle East (WLUML-AME)

c). *Global Information Internship Program (GIIP)*

The Global Information Internship Program (GIIP) is an instructional program sponsored by the Center for Global, International, and Regional Studies (CGIRS) at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Since 1998, students, faculty, and staff concerned with unequal access to information technology---the “**digital divide**”---have trained and placed information-savvy interns with community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world. GIIP interns work closely with community, human rights, environmental, and other NGOs in order to upgrade their capacity to use computers and Internet-based communication. Guided by administrative and technical support from staff and faculty, GIIP is organized as a student-managed service-learning program that transfers the benefits of information technology to the world’s excluded majority.

In a world of widening inequality, GIIP’s **vision** is to democratize globalisation by empowering local and international groups to overcome their exclusion from the information revolution. Exclusion institutionalises new forms of social and economic inequality. To bridge the ever widening “digital divide,” GIIP mobilizes the energy of UCSC’s highly motivated students, trains them in the basics of information technology, and then places “info interns” with NGOs and community groups. The **mission** of GIIP is twofold: to upgrade the informational capacity of excluded communities while at the same time nurturing a new generation of info savvy, student leaders committed to advancing the public good. (<http://www2.ucsc.edu/giip>)

## **V**

### **SUPPORTERS**

We acknowledge the financial support of the underlisted organisations, governments and individuals in 2002 and 2003. They made it possible for BAOBAB to execute all the programmes and projects, which are geared towards realising the mission of the organisation during the period under review. We are very grateful for this.

#### ***Foundations***

- MacArthur Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Maggie Black Trust Fund

#### ***Governments***

- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)
- German Embassy

#### ***Organisations***

- African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)
- NOVIB (Oxfam – Netherlands)
- Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace (WLP)
- Rights and Democracy (R & D)
- International Solidarity Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)

#### ***Individuals***

- Mr. Ike Oguine
- Dr. Ayesha Imam

## APPENDIX I

### ACCEPTANCE SPEECH - JOHN HUMPHREY FREEDOM AWARD 2002

Ayesha Imam and BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights  
Montreal, December 9, 2002

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured on behalf of BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights and myself, to accept the conferment of the John Humphrey Freedom Award.

When BAOBAB was formed in 1996, it did not occur to us that one day the work we set out to do would be internationally recognized in this way. Here I want to pay tribute to Hajara Usman, our dear friend and colleague. Hajara Usman was the coordinator of the Nigerian women and laws action-research team that became the core volunteers of BAOBAB and was its co-founding director with me. Sadly, she died in 1999, but we remember and value her life, work, contributions and vision.

That **vision**, the BAOBAB vision, is to defend, promote and develop women's human rights in customary, secular and religious laws. This has meant research to find out what rights and/or constraints exist in laws, implementation and in social practice. It meant further disseminating that knowledge and means of actually accessing those rights. But further than that, it means examining whether laws and their implementation are adequately protecting rights and devising strategies to further develop laws, implementation and social practices where they do not.

Thus BAOBAB has undertaken research and produced reports on women's rights and laws in Nigeria, including on access to justice, for the Oputa Human Rights Violations Investigation Panel, and (with other non-governmental organizations) on Nigeria's record in fulfilling obligations under the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as a series of legal literacy leaflets. BAOBAB draws public attention to women's rights issues – for example, through co-organising with the Civil Resource and Documentation Centre Nigeria's first National Tribunal on Violence Against Women; organizing art competitions for young people on building women's human rights cultures; as well as co-ordinating and participating in both national and international campaigns and networks in gender justice, like the current national Domestic Violence Bill, the international solidarity network Women Living Under Muslim Laws (for which BAOBAB coordinates in Africa and the Middle East), and, the International Criminal Court Gender Caucus. BAOBAB runs training workshops for paralegals, in leadership skills for women, and in gender awareness in project management and research, amongst others. BAOBAB also supports women and girls to fight or redress rights violations in individual cases, ranging from domestic violence, to forced marriage, to rape and sexual abuse, to achieving custody and guardianship and maintenance rights for their children.

All of these activities also serve to support the work of the scores of unpaid volunteers in states across Nigeria. These state outreach teams' activities include running legal consciousness workshops on different aspects of rights, training sessions, paralegal clinics, street theatre, mediation and counseling. They serve to interface local level work, with women and men in rural and urban areas in Nigeria, with the national and international levels and thus to make available and accessible the abilities to examine, actualize and develop rights to people at all levels and in all regions.

## **Promoting Women's Rights in Muslim Laws**

BAOBAB works on women's rights in customary and secular laws, as well as religious laws, but the work for which it is best known - and for which Rights and Democracy have chosen to honour us - is that of defending women's rights in Muslim laws and practices.

The Women and Laws action-research team was around 70 people - women's rights activists, ulema (scholars of Islam), lawyers, social science researchers, historians, and Arabic linguists amongst them. They spent over three years researching Muslim jurisprudence, the history of Muslim laws in Nigeria, Sharia court judgments (especially at the higher levels) and daily practices in diverse Muslim communities across Nigeria, as they affect women as family members, citizens and individuals (as well as how secular and customary laws and practices interact with Muslim laws and practices). It was clear that many women cannot access their rights in Muslim laws because they do not know of them. Consequently in 1996 BAOBAB and its volunteer state outreach teams began making that knowledge available to women (and men) of through legal literacy leaflets and activities, training workshops, paralegal support and so on.

Until 1999, Muslim laws in contemporary Nigeria had been largely uncodified family and personal status laws (marriage, divorce, child custody and maintenance, inheritance). They were not enacted as written statutes. In 1999, beginning with Zamfara state, some states started passing a series of new Sharia Acts. In principle, this could have included many areas in economic and social development, such as provisions for the collection and distribution of zakat (the charity tithe, which is one of the five pillars of Islam), or the implementation of regulations prohibiting usury (such as charging interest on loans by moneylenders or banks). In practice, however, in none of the 12 "new Sharia" states has there been much beyond elaborating and executing punishments for offences like theft, zina (adultery or fornication, depending on marital status), and drinking alcohol.

The politics of the situations in which these new Acts were passed has had the unfortunate consequence of serious shortcomings in their drafting, content and implementation. Even more unfortunately, those politics have also produced claims that the new Sharia acts of 1999-2002 incorporate perfectly a universal God-given code, and that to raise any issues of possible defects (and therefore of the possibility of removing those defects) is unIslamic, anti-Sharia and tantamount to apostasy – in short a politics of intimidation and threat. However, the falsity of allegations like these are clear, when examining the nature of Muslim laws.

There are several 'schools' of Muslim legal thought (fiqh). The four main Sunni schools that exist today were formed through the personal allegiance of legal scholars or jurists to the founders from whom each school took its name - Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali. Each school was influenced by its own specific circumstances of origin. For instance, both Hanafis and Malikis are the representatives of the legal tradition of a particular geographical locality - the former in Kufa, present-day Iraq, and the latter in the Arabian city of Medina. The two later schools, following Abu Hanifa and Al-Shafi developed precisely out of a controversy in jurisprudence (i.e. human reasoning about law). Consequently each school has variations according to the cultural, political and socio-economic contexts in which they were developed and the philosophy of reasoning that was accepted.

Even the oldest schools of Muslim law did not exist until many decades after the revelation of the Qu'ran and the Prophet's death (pbuh). Hence the laws they outline (commonly collectively referred to as Sharia or as Islamic law) are clearly not direct divine revelations from Allah, but mediated through human judicial reasoning (ijtihad in Arabic). Amongst the

principles to be borne in mind in ijihad are istihsan (equity) and istihsal (the needs of the community). It was recognised in that 'golden period of Islam' that there were legitimate variations in Muslim laws, based on context - and therefore that Sharia must be subject to progressive development and therefore to change.

Reflecting the various and changing concerns of different societies, Muslim laws are diverse. For instance, orthodox Shia Sharia permits daughters who have no brothers to be residual heirs, while the Maliki school does not. Hanafi Sharia enables a woman to choose a husband without her father's permission, Shafi sharia does not. The schools also vary in their attitudes towards the management of fertility – some permitting family planning and/or abortion while others do not or require differing conditions.

On polygyny (i.e. the marriage of a man to more than one woman at a time) there is wide variation in Muslim legal discourses. The Qu'ran permits polygyny. It does not require it. And it specifies certain conditions that should be fulfilled if polygyny is to occur. Furthermore, it is also known that the surahs on polygyny were revealed after the battle of Uhud when many Muslim men were killed, so that many women and their children were suddenly without a man's contribution to their livelihood and in precarious economic straits. None of foregoing statements are contentious. Yet, Muslim thinking and laws on polygyny varies tremendously. Yusuf Ali and others have argued that the conditions are impossible to fulfil, and therefore that polygyny should be banned. Others have argued on the basis on surah 24:32, that monogamy is clearly preferred. Hence in Tunisia and South Yemen before re-unification, for instance, polygyny was banned or allowed only on very stringent conditions, which had to be validated by a court. At the other end of the spectrum, there is emphasis on the permission to marry polygynously. Hence in Nigeria, for instance, not only is there fierce insistence that polygyny is allowed by immutable law, but men often go further to say that they must marry polygynously in order to be like the Prophet (although the Prophet's first marriage was wholly monogamous and ended only with the sad death of his wife). These and other variations in Muslim law and reasoning have rather significant effects on women's rights and lives.

Muslim laws and consensus of legal scholars and the community (ijma) also change over time. As with polygyny, slavery is permitted in the Qu'ran but not required. Yet Muslim legal thinking has now developed such that Muslim states no longer permit slavery.

Muslim laws are therefore not unchangeable law, to be accepted unquestioningly by all Muslims. In fact, the scholars after whom the four currently accepted schools of sunni Sharia were named, had no intention of making their views final and binding on all Muslims. Imam Hanbali urged "do not imitate me, or Malik, or al-Shafi, or al-Thawri and derive directly from where they themselves derived". Imam Malik, the founder of the school of fiqh accepted in Nigeria, cautioned that "I am but a human being. I may be wrong and I may be right. So first examine what I say. If it complies with the Book and the Sunnah, then you may accept it. But if it does not comply with them, then you should reject it." So in the views of the very founders of the schools of Sharia, good Muslims were precisely those who questioned and examined and trusted their own reasoning and beliefs. Furthermore, the founders also found it acceptable that the reasoning of one legal tradition might be considered correct on one issue, but that of another more correct on a different issue.

The unthinking acceptance which dominates most Muslim societies derives from the myth of the 'closing of the doors of ijihad', whereby for the last thousand years and more, legal jurisprudence has ceased to develop in favour of following established models. But it should

be noted that this was a political event not a religious requirement. Abu Zahra wrote of the acceptance of ijma (a consensus about the schools of sharia at that time) in the tenth century that it was "but for the maintenance of national unity and to check individual deviations, that al-ijma was legalised as an authority after the sacred texts." Refusing further ijihad and legal development is not a religious or divinely sanctioned act. It is not required in the Qu'ran or by the Sunnah (the traditions of the Prophet, pbuh). Unfortunately, both existing argumentation and the possibility of developments in Muslim law, especially as regards women's rights, are being blocked in Nigeria, by the fiction that there is only one unchangeable, uncriticisable system of Muslim laws and that this is already in effect in the 'new Sharia' states in Nigeria.

The more immediate and pressing problem, however, is that the new Sharia Acts criminal legislation and their implementation are a travesty even of the conservative orthodox jurisprudence. Amongst other things, they lack some of the important safeguards in orthodox Muslim jurisprudence, such as the doctrine of shubha, that there should be no conviction where there is any element of doubt; or the requirement of repeated and voluntary confessions if there is not the eye-witness testimony of four witnesses of impeccable character to the willing act of sexual penetration; to the permissibility of the retraction of confessions right up to and including the moment of execution of punishment.

Furthermore, the implementation of the new Sharia Acts has clearly been discriminatory against women. By postulating that, by itself, pregnancy outside marriage is evidence of zina (a minority position in Sharia which is not held by the Hanafi, Hanbali and Shafi schools, nor a variant of the Maliki school), women have been held to a different standard of evidence than men. Pregnant women are required to provide evidence to prove their innocence, but men are not. If the prosecution does not provide independent evidence (such as four eye-witnesses), men can simply walk away, unlike such women. And yet, the Qu'ran specifies that whoever brings an allegation of zina without 4 witnesses will themselves be guilty of false witness and liable for punishment. In addition, zina, which is defined as a heterosexual act must necessarily include at least one man and one woman. But, more women than men have been both charged and convicted of zina. Women who ought not to even have been charged, have been convicted of zina and sentenced to death, by ignoring the well-established Maliki doctrine of the "sleeping embryo" (kwantace in Hausa), whereby a child born to a woman within a set period after the end of her marriage (in some areas up to seven years), is assumed to be the child of that marriage. Women have also been accused and convicted of zina as prostitutes, for instance, with neither confession nor the testimony of four witnesses to a willing act of sexual intercourse, nor even pregnancy, for evidence.

Another consequence of these factors is to deprive women and girls of any protection under Sharia from sexual assault or rape. A woman making such a charge would be required to produce male witnesses as evidence. Which men of impeccable character would stand by to witness such acts? How many rapists wait for an audience before sexually assaulting women and girls - or for that matter boys? Thus the victim of abuse is in double jeopardy, likely to find herself convicted of both zina, (having admitted that non-marital sex took place) and false testimony (in being unable to produce the requisite witnesses).

In addition, there are a host of practices, with no legal basis at all, which are being imposed on society in the name of 'sharianisation'. These include the widespread imposition of dress codes on women, attempts to force women to sit at the back of public vehicles, and a midnight curfew in Gusau. Many of these are enforced by extra legal groups of young men vigilantes - sometimes openly supported by the state government as in Zamfara, but

sometimes with attempts to control and stop them from taking the law into their own hands, as in Kano state.

In responding to these factors, BAOBAB has refused to be intimidated by accusations of being anti-Islam or by threats of violence and other harm. BAOBAB led the way in offering support and efforts for reversal and redress to victims of the discriminatory implementation and violation of rights of the new Sharia acts, beginning with Bariya Magazu. Currently there are around 20 individuals being so supported. To do so, BAOBAB put together a legal strategy team of independent Muslim lawyers, rights activists and Muslim scholars to offer advice and information. In addition, BAOBAB has researched and drew upon its international links to acquire information on similar cases in other geographical jurisdictions, as well as raising resources to cover the costs of the appeals and support activities (legal fees and court costs, transport, counselling, provision of 'safe' houses and so on). In addition, BAOBAB has been working in collaboration with a wide range of women's and human rights activist and organisations -the whole Nigerian human rights movement has been working in solidarity, in different ways, on this issue. So far, none of the sentences to death by stoning for adultery have been carried out. All of them have either been quashed on appeal, or are still in the process of appeal.

BAOBAB has also consistently worked to enable and encourage the widening of discussions, prevent the silencing and end the current climate of fearing to talk. It has raised publicly critiques of rights violations in the name of Muslim laws and Islam, and encouraged others to do so. Additionally, BAOBAB started a series of workshops whereby members of Muslim communities (members of the ulema and ordinary Muslims, rights activists, conservatives and progressives from different walks of life and parts of the country) came together for several days. During this time, they examine Quranic surahs and hadith, discuss both dominant and less well-known interpretations of these, and look at the actual constructions of Muslim laws in countries and communities around the world. They do this for each of thirty or so different issues of particular importance to women (e.g. choice of marriage partner, rights to inheritance, forms of divorce, witnessing, leadership, reproductive rights, bodily integrity). These workshops thus examine the potential and actuality in Muslim laws and practices for establishing and promoting women's rights, as well as critiquing negative constructions and practices even when the latter are claimed to be Islamic. In so doing, they empower many of the participants with the knowledge and confidence to challenge the assertion that rights violations in the name of Islam and supporting Sharia, should be ignored, and to work instead towards progressive visions of Muslim laws.

### **Acknowledgements**

To do the work it has done in protecting and promoting women's rights in Muslim laws in Nigeria, BAOBAB has had the support of many, many individuals and organizations. I would like to publicly acknowledge this, and to recognize the contributions of the following:

All BAOBAB volunteer outreach team members

All BAOBAB staff, whose commitment and work are par excellence, but in particular those responsible for the programmes I have described above - Hurera Akilu-Atta, Ndidi Ekekwe, Mufuliat Fijabi and the current executive director, Sindi Médar-Gould.

The Board of BAOBAB, who sit voluntarily through hours of meetings, wading through piles of documents, monitoring and advising

All those Muslim scholars (ulema), judges, lawyers, rights activists and others in Nigeria and outside who generously share their knowledge, expertise, resources and skills in research, policy development, political acumen and/or victim representation including Maryam Isa Wali, Bukhari Bello, Mallam Mustapha Hussein Ismail, (Muslim scholar), Hauwa Ibrahim (who, on consultancy to BAOBAB, acts as counsel to many of the victims), Idris Ibrahim (counsel for Bariya Ibrahim Magazu), Abdulkadir Imam Ibrahim (counsel for Safiya Hussein), Asifa Qureshi, Kole Shettima, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi as well as numerous others too many to name or who prefer discretion - but are all appreciated

All Nigerian women's and human rights activists and organizations - especially the members of the Coalition of NGOs for protection of women's rights in secular, religious and customary laws (over 60 NGOs from every region of Nigeria - including the 'Muslim North'); the National Human Rights Commission; Saudatu Mahdi and the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Agency (who have taken the lead on Amina Lawal's case - sharing the load, rather than each of us having to develop the lonely endurance of the marathon runner); and the Nigeria office of the International Human Rights Law Group. This award is also a recognition of the work done by the women's and human rights movement in Nigeria, who have collaborated and worked in different ways to protect women's rights.

International women's and human rights organizations and networks who showed solidarity and supported us in the ways we asked of them for each particular case - particularly the international solidarity network Women Living Under Muslim Laws, Shirkat Gah (Pakistan), the Muslim Women's Research and Action Forum (Sri Lanka), the International Association of Women Judges, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women and Sisters in Islam (Malaysia).

The Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs, various Ministries of Justice and the Office of the Solicitor General.

We appreciate too those who have given and continue to give BAOBAB general support so thanks to all of you - from those who gave big institutional grants, to those who gave personal donations and their support, and other resources (time, access to their books, friends and connections, advice and knowledge).

Most of all, to the women and men, like those in Safiya Hussein's village (who tried to hide Safiya because of their solidarity with her, and their recognition that judgments passed in the name of religious laws are not necessarily just simply because it is claimed they are God's law) and the numerous others who write, email or stop us in the street to let us know they appreciate our work and support it, and to thank us for speaking up.

For myself personally, I note that my first public statements on this issue (on the potential of women's liberation in Islam but the dismal reality in Muslim communities in Nigeria) was in March 1985, and it was followed within weeks by my first death threat. At first glance it might seem as though not much has changed. But now, there are so many more women and men speaking up and actively working for change. That is a glorious difference and I am proud to have contributed to it.

In more than two decades of struggling to actualize visions of women's rights, social justice and democratic development many people have touched my life, as friends, sisters, brothers, mentors, colleagues - supporting, advising, helping (and criticizing too). They know who they are, and they know, I hope, that I appreciate and value them.

But I would just like to mention

My mother, who showed me the importance of persistence and endurance - and who is still trying to instil in me the virtue of tact.

My late father, Dr. Abubakar Imam, who taught me to respect principles, rather than the powerful and privileged

My husband, Akwasi Aidoo, whose support came not only to me personally but as solidarity in our shared visions for a better future – and who has therefore put up cheerfully with incursions of our home, time, energy and resources Without his sympathy and practical help, things would have been a lot more difficult. Thank you.

Our youngest son, Anta (who thinks that the nursery in BAOBAB is his office), as well the 'big boys', Nana-Yaw and Apay.

Finally, to Rights and Democracy for choosing to honour us and our work, supporting us (especially working with the Women's Programme) and giving us a wider platform to share our work with others

Thank you.

## **APPENDIX II.**

### **REPORT OF STATE OUTREACH TEAMS' ACTIVITIES 2002**

Baobab's outreach programme includes biennial visits to each of the outreach state teams to monitor the progress, events, activities and at times participation in some of their programmes as facilitators. The activities of the outreach teams in 2002 are reported below:

#### **ADAMAWA STATE**

The activities of the team had to do with seeking redress for two teenage girls who were forced into marriage. One of the cases was taken to court in collaboration with the Women Affairs ministry. The case was won the case and the girl was allowed to marry the man of her choice. The second case had been going on before now and they had been successful in ensuring that the survivor went back to complete her secondary education. She plans to go into the university to study Law so that she would be able to assist girls who find themselves in places that they do not desire.

The team also organized a training workshop for men and women of the Nigeria Police. It was reported that the programme went well though the police refused to participate in the role-play, in their uniform due to professional ethics, but the court personnel did. At the end of the role-play some of the police personnel at the workshop recommended more workshops to for a positive change in the attitudes of Nigerians.

The team from the National Coordination Office charged members of the Adamawa team to promote the rights of women in their communities by initiating activities that bring women's issues from the margins and involving more people in the state as more work get done that way. They also implored them to focus more on gender training for the new members of the team, in addition to conducting follow-up programmes for the Police and court personnel. The team identified early girl marriage as one major issue in the State.

#### **ZAMFARA STATE:**

The inauguration of the Zamfara State Outreach team took place on the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> January 2002. The activities for this event were facilitated the team from the National Coordination Office of BAOBAB, which included Mufuliat Fijabi, Chibogu Obinwa and Bose Ironsi. The objectives of the programme were: i) to meet with the new team members; ii) to introduce BAOBAB's aims and objectives; iii) to know the structure and the objectives of the outreach activities. The new team members are Hafsat Ahmed, Maryam Sahabi Ahamad (Coordinator), Musa Hassan Gusau, Bello Sani Jabaka, Husseinat Mohammed Zumi and Bello Mohammed Jabaka.

Members of the team were encouraged to contribute meaningfully to achieve the aims and objectives of the meeting, so that they will be able to identify problems of women's issues in the state and how to address them.

The new team asked quite a number of questions based on fears, for instance that male members may be blackmailed, lack of follow up and resources to achieve their aims. Responding to the issues raised, the BAOBAB NCO team stressed that the most important thing was to get started and be committed to achieving the goals of BAOBAB as an organization. It was also pointed out that the team should be diplomatic in carrying out most of their programmes and activities that are geared towards the actualization of the rights of women under the sharia so as to avoid the 'wrath' of the government.

To enable the team have a focus in their outreach activities, a basic gender awareness training session was held and also a couple of sessions from the Leadership Training Manual, the sessions covered such topics like “ How do we have a shared vision?” and “Plan of Action”, to enhance the team’s better understanding of how to work as a team, and how to implement their plan of action.

On September 27<sup>th</sup> 2002, Mufuliat Fijabi and Bose Ironsi undertook another visit to Zamfara to facilitate a workshop on “ The Rights of Women in Islam vis a vis Violence Against Women”. There were also discussions on the consequences of street hawking in the society and issues pertaining to early marriage and its consequences. The workshop served as a forum to clarify certain prejudices about women’s human rights activism.

Hajia Hafsat of the Zamfara outreach team presented a paper on “Consequences of Street Hawking in our Society.” It was surprisingly revealing to find some of the participants stating that street hawking by the child is part of the culture and therefore cannot be eliminated. It was generally ascertained that girls hawked to enable them assist their mothers financially, who in turn would buy necessities for them in preparation for marriage. However, the facilitators further clarified the issue by explaining that parents had a responsibility to their children, part of which is to cater for them and ensure that they are brought up under circumstances free of abuse and child labour. The participants later unanimously agreed that child hawking does more harm than good.

The last discussion focused on early marriage and its consequences and overall participants were of the opinion that early marriage should not be encouraged.

During the meeting later with the team, it was observed that the members were still learning to work as a team. As a relatively new team, the members are still working towards strengthening the team and achieving a work plan.

### **EDO- STATE**

One of the major activities that took place at Edo-State outreach team in 2002 was the paralegal training workshop which was organised to enhance the capacity of the members from September 22 – 24. Chibogu, Ndidi, Bose and Catherine, from the National Coordination Office facilitated the training. The programme was also an opportunity to meet with the team to share experiences as regards their efforts and impact of their work in the State. During the meeting with the team, their proposal was discussed and it was generally agreed on that the team would continue with popular theatre presentation as well as their plan to meet with traditional rulers on the issue of harmful traditional practices against women. The use of radio jingles as a strategy for sensitization was also discussed.

### **OYO STATE:**

The market women at Gbagi Market in Ibadan were happy to be part of the workshop on “Girl-child Education and Attendant Reward” on October 17 2002. The Oyo State outreach team organized the event as part of their activities for the year. Present at the event were Mufuliat Fijabi and Linda Izilein from the National Coordination Office.

One of the resource persons during the workshop, Dr. Saka Adewunmi focused essentially on the need to give the girl child equal opportunities, as well as the need to discard age- long belief that the girl child will end up in the husband’s house, which is used as justification for not sending girls to school.

Mufuliat in addition spoke about the relevance of the topic to women and the need to make girl child education paramount. Participants asked a number of questions reflecting their enthusiasm and comprehension of the issues discussed. They were made to understand that education is the bedrock of development, and therefore should not entertain fear as regards of not securing job after acquiring it.

### **KWARA STATE**

The workshop titled “Violence Against Women,” organized by the Kwara State team formed part of their activities for the year 2002. The aim of the programme was identify various forms of violence in the selected areas, which are –(Group 1) Oyun and Offa, (Group 2) Irepodun and (Group 3) Ekiti. Ndidi Ekekwe and Ngozi Nwosu from the National Coordination Office and Alhaji Uthman, a member of the Kwara State team facilitated the workshop.

Many of the different forms of violence against women were identified, such as wife battering, rape, forced prostitution, marital rape, forced marriage and a host of others, which normally occurred at home, school, religious organizations and police stations as identified by the participants. The workshop discussion also centred on why most of these cases of violence are never reported and the reasons given include the fear of losing the husband, stigmatization, fear of religious sanctions, fear of losing financial support, strict adherence to cultural dictates, lack of support from the Police or Court personnel, among others.

The facilitators suggested ways of addressing the issues through the creation of awareness programme, media orientation, advocacy towards enactment of laws to protect women, sensitization and conscientization of traditional rulers. Ndidi Ekekwe summarized the issue of violence against women in her discussion on customary laws, sharia, statutory laws, constitutional laws and penal code. She explained that all laws are governed by the constitution and that the constitution states that all human beings are equal. She reaffirmed that some areas of the laws do not sufficiently protect women and she cited the example of crimes like marital rape, child sexual abuse, wife beating, sexual harassment, maltreatment of widows. Emotional and psychological abuses are not sanctioned by the constitution.

### **LAGOS STATE:**

Two major activities took place during the year 2002. There was a gender awareness workshop for teachers at Ikotun High School, which was facilitated by Chibogu Obinwa and Mufuliat Fijabi. It was an eye opener for the teachers on the issue of gender going by the series of questions that were asked about women’s human rights and gender awareness. They indicated their willingness to participate in BAOBAB’s programmes.

A paralegal training also took place in 2002. Members of the Lagos state outreach team were trained as paralegal to enhance their capacity so that they will be able to handle issues relating to violence against women in their communities. The training took place in BAOBAB Conference room and it was facilitated by Chibogu Obinwa, Mufuliat Fijabi and Ndidi Ekekwe.

On November 7 2002, the coordinating team led by Chibogu Obinwa from the National Coordination Office visited the Lagos outreach team as they have done with others outside the state. During the visit, former coordinator of the Lagos state outreach team Onaade Ojo, gave an update on various events and activities that have been carried out in the year such as the inauguration of a new executive committee led by Ms. Funke Adetunji, as well as the banking status of the team. The activities of the team were scheduled to hold in four (4) local

government areas within the state namely: Amuwo Odofin, Ikorodu, Eti-Osa and Ikotun. The visiting advise that we should try to be “focused of what we want to do, and that we should structure it in a way as to reach minimal number as well as post training impact and monitoring.”

Plateau state team postponed their first activity till early 2003 due to the mounting tension in the State caused by political and religious crises.

**APPENDIX III**  
**Alerts and International Campaigns 2002**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Alert Title</b>	<b>Action Taken by BAOBAB</b>
18 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2002	USA-Polygamy-related abuses in Utah, site of the 2002 Winter Olympics	Responded to and circulated
28 <sup>th</sup> March 2002	Urgent Appeal (a solidarity to protect democracy and human rights in Bangladesh)	Circulated
4 <sup>th</sup> April 2002	WLUML statement on the current situation in Palestine/Israel	Circulated
30 <sup>th</sup> May 2002	Palestine in daily life completely disrupted and destroyed by unrelenting closure and invasion	Circulated
28 <sup>th</sup> June 2002	Urgent Alert for Action-Sina Samir Afghanistan	Responded to and Circulated
22 <sup>nd</sup> Aug. 2002	Fears for lives of pro-democracy activist on Thai/Burma border	Circulated
25 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2002	Petition for Maira do Ceu, Portuguess nurse in jail	Responded to and circulated
27 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2002	Petition against war (signature)	Responded to and circulated
27 <sup>th</sup> Oct.2002	Background of People’s Forum Demonstration for Ceasefire (Violation in Aceh)	Circulated.

**APPENDIX IV  
INDIVIDUAL CASES 2002**

Name	Charge/Offence	State/Court of First Instance	Sentence	Appellate Court	Counsel	Status
Safiya Hussaini	Adultery	Upper Sharia Court Gwadabawa, Sokoto	Death by stoning	Sharia Court of Appeal, Sokoto	Abdulkadir Imam Ibrahim	Appeal successful. Discharged and acquitted on March 25 <sup>th</sup> 2002
Hafsatu Abubakar	Adultery	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Death by stoning	Nil	Abdulkadir Imam Ibrahim, BAOBAB's counsel, one consultant and one Islamic scholar	Matter decided at court of first instance. Accused person discharged and acquitted
Maryam Bodinga	Adultery	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Death by stoning	Nil	Al Mustapha & Co and BAOBAB's counsels	Accused person discharged and acquitted
Hauwa Garuba	Adultery	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Death by stoning	Sharia Court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al Mustapha & Co and BAOBAB's counsels	Matter adjourned sine dine due to ill health. She has since died.
Aisatu Musa	Fornication	Upper Sharia Court 11 Sokoto	Flogging 100 lashes	Sharia Court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al Mustapha & Co and BAOBAB's counsels	Matter adjourned sine dine by court
Amina Lawal	Adultery	Sharia Court, Bakori Katsina	Death by stoning	Upper Sharia Court, Funtua, Katsina	Musa Yawuri (WRAPA's counsel), Hauwa Ibrahim (BAOBAB's consultant, BAOBAB's counsel, one Islamic scholar	Adjourned

Fatima Usman and Ahmed Ibrahim	Adultery	Niger state	Fine of =N=5000 or imprisonment. They were re-sentenced to death by stoning without trial	Sharia court of Appeal, Minna	Jibril Kallamu, BAOBAB's counsel and one Islamic scholar	Adjourned
Bello Garba	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned
Umaru Buda	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned
Altine Hassan	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned
Bawa Magaji	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned
Lawal Garuba	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Discharged and acquitted in March 2002
Bashir Alkali	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Discharged and acquitted in March 2002
Sirajo Idris	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Matter to start de novo due to the death of one of the Khadis. Accused on bail
Mallam Aliyu	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned
Bashir Bello	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned

Mallam Garba	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned
Mohammed Suleiman	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned
Aminu Bello	Theft	Upper Sharia Court 11, Sokoto	Amputation	Sharia court of Appeal, Sokoto	Al. Mustapha & Co	Adjourned

**APPENDIX V  
ALERTS 2003**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Alert Title</i>	<i>Action Taken by BAOB</i>
30 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2003	Signing of Get Well Soon card for Wanjiru Kihoro who was involved in an accident	Responded to and Circu
6 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2003	Solidarity support for protest against the state persecution of refugees	Responded to
12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2003	Petition against the myth in South Africa that having sex with a virgin will cure AIDS	Responded to and circu
28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2003	Solidarity with the women of Gujarat on 12months of genocidal process	Responded to
6 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Solidarity with Iranian women on abolishing the inhumane punishment of stoning to death	Responded to
7 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Urgent demand for freedom of Frau Kuko from deportation	Circulated
19 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Signing on the letter to president George bush concerning the extension of Global Gag rule to HIV/AIDS funding	Signed
25 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Urgent need to sign a Citizen's Declaration reaffirming commitment to international cooperation and opposition to war.	Signed
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Urgent campaign for Asylum and deportation detention of Mr Said Seddik	Responded to.
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	Statement of support to foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong	Responded to
1 <sup>st</sup> April	Call for endorsement on NGO Joint Statement on	Responded to

2003	Iraq at UN CHR 2003	
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2003	Urgent Action Needed for Sexuality Studies and Sex-Positive Research under attack in Taiwan.	Responded to.

**APPENDIX VI**  
**Summary of Individual Cases for 2003**

<i>S/N</i>	<i>CASE</i>	<i>SUMMARY OF ACTION</i>	<i>Status</i>
1	Wife battery	Reconciliation Meetings held. Case charged to court	On going
2	Denial of access to ill husband	Mediation and Counselling	Concluded
3	Domestic violence from husband and mate	Counselling.	Concluded
4	Physical abuse by husband	She was counselled She requested a low profile for the case and did not want it reported to the police.	Concluded
5	Physical abuse by drug addicted husband	She was counselled and informed about the availability of Shelter	Concluded
6	Physical Abuse and threat to life	BAOBAB assisted her in reporting to the police. This was followed with counselling.	On going
7	Denial of Child's paternity	Discussion and advice	On going
8	Denial of access to see children. The children were taken away from her from Lagos to Kebbi.	Discussion and advice as well as her reporting to the Naval authority.	On going
9	Physical abuse within office premises	Advised to report first to the police and get back to BAOBAB	On going
10	Gender discrimination at place of work	Discussion still going especially on the possibility of litigation	On going

11	She was accused of assassinating her late husband	An Alert was sent out on her behalf to several groups and NGOs in the form of a protest letter to the Inspector General of Police.	On going
12	Employment Matters	We had a discussion with the husband who requested that we stay action on the case	On going

## **APPENDIX VII OUTREACH REPORTS**

### **A. Summary of State Teams' Activities for 2003**

To make administration/coordination of the outreach teams easier from by the National Coordination Office of BAOBAB, a new structure of Liaison Officers was introduced to support the National Coordinator in order to cope with the increasing and rather challenging expansion of the outreach scope. Liaison Officers are responsible for direct correspondence with the teams in their respective zones –South- West, North- East, North- West, and North- Central/Middle Belt.

#### **i) South West**

The South West zone comprises the following States –Lagos, Oyo and Osun.

**Lagos:** According to the felt needs identified by the base-line survey carried out in four Lagos local government areas, the outreach team has been conducting gender awareness discussions in secondary schools amongst students and also teachers. The main aim is to first of all, demystify the gender stereotypes in the society, which are usually imbibed at early stages in life through socialisation. Amongst the schools that benefited from this programme are –Navy School Ojo in Amuwo Odofin

local government and Government Model College, Igbogbo, in Ikorodu local government.

**Oyo** team held workshops on the issue of girl child education, having in attendance, market women and other community leaders.

**Osun** State team –In the year under review, the team was not able to do much as the coordinator was otherwise engaged academically and on a personal level.

#### ii) **North East**

The North East Zone comprises –Adamawa, Taraba and Borno States. The major felt needs identified in the communities in these States include – early/forced marriages for the girl child (especially in Adamawa), problem of child custody/guardianship (particularly in Taraba and Borno States). These issues formed the basis of the intervention activities of the States.

**Adamawa** team organised a moot court session on forced marriage in collaboration with the Moot Court Club, College of Legal Studies, Yola. It listened to some cases of violence Against Women. It was aimed at enlightening people about the evils of violence against women. A number of victims/survivors of violence testified in the court and related what their experiences were. These were mainly cases of forced marriages.

There was also a paralegal training relating to issues of violence against women, with the Police and Court Personnel in attendance. There was an initial challenge of mobilising the Police, which was later tackled due to the strategy employed by the State team’s coordinator to visit the Deputy Commissioner of Police. Highlights of the training included. The workshop was also to ensure that the police and court personnel deal with issues of domestic violence from a women’s human rights perspective.

In the course of the workshop participants discussed the skills a paralegal should possess and qualities of a good paralegal officer. These should include patience, open-mindedness, humility, tolerance, diplomacy, commitment, good listening ability, familiarity with local customs etc.

Importantly, the Police shared the experiences of some of the cases of domestic violence they handled and the challenge they faced regarding the spouses of the victim asking to withdraw the case and so forth. The resolution after discussions was that the Police should take responsibility to address cases of domestic violence appropriately and in gender-sensitive manner. Another controversy resolved was the issue of marital rape, while some agreed that a man should not force his wife to have sex with him, others countered this, but it was resolved as not acceptable.

Their regular paralegal and counselling activities also took place in the year.

**Taraba** team this year started with an introductory visit to the Deputy Governor of the State with the main aim of acquainting the State government of the work that BAOBAB has been doing in the State towards the issue of Child Maintenance. The Deputy Governor expressed assurance of his goodwill and support towards the organization (BAOBAB). The team, accompanied by BAOBAB Lagos Coordinating team personnel, presented BAOBAB's literature to the Deputy Governor. Later on, the team briefed the press about BAOBAB's work in the State as well as the concerns of women in the State.

The team also held a gender awareness programme with the new volunteers of the team. The main outcome of this programme was that participants became informed about certain gender stereotypes in the society and why they affect women's human rights. They resolved to reflect gender equality in their community work and personal lives.

**Borno** team needs restructuring, as the original members of the team could not cope with the demands of the volunteer work due to other circumstances. In this regard, outreach activities for the year were stalled until a new team (hopefully early 2004) is mobilised.

iii) **North West** –This zone comprises the following States –Kaduna, Kano and Zamfara States. Due to the introduction of the Sharia legal system covering criminal matters in some parts of the North, including

Kano and Zamfara, their intervention activities have expanded to cover the issue of women's rights under Sharia implementation.

**Kano** team has organised workshops/debates to address women's human rights within the Sharia and how best to develop and promote these rights. A leadership training was also organized for professional women (academics, administrators, lawyers)

**Zamfara** State has identified a trend of spousal abuse and extra judicial arrest/detention of young women. The team members did a lot of counseling and mediation in such cases and visited the prisons from time to time to identify such cases.

**Kaduna** team continued with its activities of workshops with parents of students on the issue of child marriage.

**Katsina** team held discussions on the "Rights of Women to Work", reflecting the problematic areas women faced in the State due to their lack of economic empowerment.

iv) **North Central:** This zone comprises Kogi, Plateau, Kwara and Edo<sup>12</sup> States.

**Kogi** State has been witnessing issues of violence against women in different local government areas characterised by extra judicial killings of women accused of 'witch craft'. This informed the three programmes organised by the team around violence against women. The programmes include –a two day workshop on violence against women, street/public campaign to create awareness on the scourge of violence against women, and a mock tribunal specifically to raise issues of extra judicial killings in Obeiba and Oboroke Ihima local government areas of the state.

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<sup>12</sup> Edo State, although geo-politically zoned in Nigeria as South- South, was zoned strategically with the North Central zone by BAOBAB for logistics and administrative purposes.

**Plateau** team which has experienced bouts of ethnic cum religious/political crises, detected the immediate need to organise a Bridge-Building workshop from a women's human rights perspective. Apart from the aim of finding common grounds of tolerance and understanding amongst the diverse women in the State, the programme was also aimed at suggesting ways to build peaceful communities where women's human rights could be pursued.

**Kwara** State continued with its legal literacy workshops on Violence Against Women (VAW). One of the workshops was held at Patigi local government. Participants were drawn from community based organisations, as well as community leaders. It was hoped that the gains of the discussion on various aspects of VAW and strategies to address them, would benefit other women in the community.

**Edo** State team's strategy of using popular theatre to highlight various aspects of violence against women especially female genital mutilation and widowhood rites was extended to other communities including Ekpoma local government area.

## **B. Evaluation of the Outreach Programme**

Overall, the gains of the outreach programme in the year 2003 are:

1. National Planning Meeting –This year's capacity building and experience sharing meeting was very strategic. The leadership training motivated the teams towards sharing the skills of good leadership in their various communities. Planning ahead for the year further enhanced outreach teams' focus and empowered each team to further strategise on their plan of action drawing experiences from colleagues in other teams.
2. The mock tribunal organised by the Kogi team was a great strategy and a reflection of the aims and objectives of BAOBAB's co-organised first national tribunal in 2001. It also reflects creativity and initiative of outreach teams.

3. Gaining the attention of the State government as happened in Taraba State was a step forward and commendable as it is hoped that the team will be able to conduct its activities without any threats or opposition from the government.
4. The introduction of the outreach Liaison Programme Officers from within BAOBAB coordinating office has been very useful. It has made the coordination and monitoring of the teams' activities easier, and much more decentralised, although more work needs to be done to strengthen this new structure.
5. Final approval of the proposal sent to NOVIB Netherlands to support outreach capacity building project was a major breakthrough! The funding will run for a one-year period (2004).

### **C Challenges**

No doubt that the need to expand the outreach teams and activities due to genuine and identified felt needs is a general challenge. There is a need to bear in mind that these teams are committed volunteers working under harsh economic and political environment, and as such this truncates the flow of activities. In view of this, we have experienced specific challenges such as:

- a. Communication –Although this has improved considerably since the previous year, yet there is a lot of room for improvement. Most of the outreach volunteer team members reside in areas where communication is yet to be effective and this slows down communication between the team and the coordinating office. The newly introduced Global Systems for Mobile Communications (GSM) network is yet to be fully effective in Nigeria, although it has helped considerably in bridging the communication gap between the teams and the coordinating office. On the other hand, even when/where it is available, the cost remains relatively high. Courier system of communication is not inexpensive and cannot be used as regularly as the need arises.
- b. Personal Commitments –In due respect to the efforts and time put in by outreach team members free of charge, there is still

room for improvement in terms of commitment –especially by the coordinators. This challenge of limited commitment exhibited by a few team members may not be unconnected to engagement to their daily professions and/or occupations, which in reality is likely to attract their immediate attention. In addition, voluntary work is not synonymous with the values of a developing society like Nigeria, for obvious reasons. However, we hope to address this at the next year’s (2004) national planning meeting.

- c. Limited Funds –More programmes/activities mean more funds, and at the moment, we have sparse funds devoted solely to outreach activities in the fourteen states.

**APPENDIX VIII**  
**Report on “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence”**  
**November 25<sup>th</sup> – December 10<sup>th</sup> 2003**

**Introduction**

The “16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence” is an international campaign originating from the first Women’s Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women’s Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25th, International Day Against Violence Against Women (VAW), and December 10th International Human Rights Day, for activities worldwide in a concerted effort to highlight the variety of heinous crimes of violence committed against women. In 1999 the United Nations officially recognized November 25th as the International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, while the 10<sup>th</sup> of December is marked as International Human Rights Day. These dates are commemorated together in order to symbolically link violence against women and Human Rights, and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights.

BAOBAB recognizes the need to use this period to ‘break the silence’ on various forms of VAW encountered in the society. The theme for 2003 was “Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights: Maintaining the Momentum Ten Years After Vienna.” This theme is symbolically marking the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993, which was a vital step in the struggle for women’s rights.

**Highlights of the ‘16 Days’ Programme**

*Press Briefing and Trek*

This year, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November, BAOBAB organized a press briefing with various members of the Media, electronic and print, in attendance. It was particularly important for BAOBAB that the Media attend the 16 Days campaign programme since we acknowledge the importance of the media as agents of socialization and public awareness. In addition, sister NGOs were invited from Lagos environs as well as BAOBAB’s Lagos outreach volunteer teams. After the press briefing which looked at the

concept of the campaign, and realities on ground regarding the cases of VAW especially in Nigeria, the Media and the NGOs present engaged BAOBAB representatives in useful discussion/question and answer session on key VAW issues.

The Media briefing preceded a trek with our friends in the media and other organizations within our network. It was another silence-breaking event, as this anti gender-based violence campaign was propelled through the streets of Victoria Island, Lagos (at peak business hours) with each campaigner carrying BAOBAB's leaflets, stickers and posters with anti gender-based violence messages. The responses from the crowd (especially the men!) were interesting, enthusiastic, and at some point overwhelming. There were outrageous rhetorical questions such as "What if the woman is stubborn?"(This is in reaction to the car-bumper sticker with the message 'Real Men Don't Abuse Women') Or "Why only men? What about women who beat their husbands?" On a positive note, we encountered a number of people both men and women who appreciated the messages, engaged in 'quick on the spot' dialogue, and even volunteered to join in the trek. One particular man was over heard saying, "Why should I maltreat a woman? We are both Partners...." The media, well known for their very busy schedules, surprisingly trekked all the way with the group and maintained good electronic coverage of the event. The greatest challenge encountered (which in the long analysis is a positive outcome) was the limited copies of BAOBAB's campaign materials in relation to the public demand for them.

*Awareness raising campaign with students: 'Catching them Young'!*

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2003, there was a home video viewing with a number of students (male and female) from selected schools (six schools) within Lagos. The main aim is to further ensure that the young ones imbibe a culture of non-violence and share the benefits of the discussion with their peers and family members The tool for the sensitization exercise was a home video titled 'Yesterday', which depicted a scenario of various obnoxious cultural practices faced by women in Nigeria, using a particular South- South community as a case study. Practices such as – Female

Genital Mutilation, Rape, harmful widowhood rites, and general discrimination against women were portrayed in the movie.

During the discussion session, the students engaged in the analysis of issues of violence against women as portrayed in the film, but most importantly linking them to real life situations. The students, accompanied by one or two teachers from each school, were not deterred from speaking out against the forms of violence against women they identified in the society. It was particularly important from the discussion that the students (both male and female) recognized the possibility of their future development impaired at the expense of the menace of violence against women. One of the students from Holy Child Secondary School commented on the harmful traditional practice of a widow being forced to 'cry' as a demonstration of mourning her late husband. She also talked about the morbid practice of forcing the widow to drink the water collected from bathing the corpse of the late husband. They affirmed the need for people to know and assert their human rights.

Chibogu Obinwa of BAOBAB reiterated the need for teachers to acknowledge their role as agents of socialization for the students and use the opportunity to sensitize them about these issues. It was also noted that the issue is not to do away with our culture completely, but to recognize the fact that the concept of culture dynamism is best expressed by doing away with obnoxious practices and developing the positive ones.

#### *Way Forward for the Students*

For their recommendations and plan of action in tackling the issue of VAW, the students came up with strategic suggestions. These include –the need for social clubs in schools which will amongst other strategies, sensitize the young ones about VAW. The students did not mince words in suggesting that laws protecting women and girls should be strengthened and offenders (especially on issues of rape!) punished accordingly. They promised to enlighten their peers and family members, which also happens to be one of the objectives of the workshop. BAOBAB facilitating team commended the students' efforts and commitment and promised to follow-up on their (the students) activities in keeping up with their plan of action.

*'Breaking the Silence' with Obalende Motor Park Personnel*

BAOBAB decided to take its campaign further this year to a rowdy commercial bus park area popularly known as 'Obalende Motor Park'. The initial feeling of uncertainty/caution and in fact almost fear of a possible erratic reaction expected from the motor park 'men' was turned to a reality of warm reception and enthusiasm from the crowd of people that benefited from BAOBAB's anti gender-based violence campaign materials. It was a very challenging but fulfilling experience as each BAOBAB team member on the campaign train, had a unique experience to share with others concerning her/his experience.

*Media Interviews*

One of the key areas of BAOBAB's '16 Days' campaign is strengthening its relationship with the media as key partners in promoting awareness against gender-based violence. This was further demonstrated in the series of Media interviews (both print and electronic) held with a number of BAOBAB personnel regarding this year's '16 Days' programme. One of such interviews was on a popular live national television programme titled 'Today's Woman', anchored by a seasoned journalist, Adesuwa Onyenukwe. BAOBAB's representatives on the programme were – Chibogu Obinwa and Mufuliat Fijabi. They discussed a variety of issues around violence against women, and the aim of 'breaking the silence' through public campaigns. Prompted by Adesuwa's questions, as well as phone in and/or SMS messages from the public, the duo of Mufuliat and Chibogu, emphasized that on no account should VAW be justified in the society. One of the key aspects of the programme was showing the viewers, recorded clips from the first National tribunal on VAW organized by BAOBAB in collaboration with Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC). This was to further lend credence to the seriousness of the cases of VAW in Nigeria.

Throughout the duration of the '16 Days' campaign – November 25<sup>th</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup> 2003 - two big banners with inscriptions depicting the

campaign message, were hung strategically on the walls of BAOBAB's office building.

*Gains and Challenges of the 2003 '16 Days' programme.*

Generally, BAOBAB's key aim to create awareness and 'break the silence' once again was an immediate success. The first pointer was the fact that the turn out for the trek for this year's campaign was much more than that of the previous year, albeit the short notice in change of dates. Demand for BAOBAB's anti gender-based violence literature was overwhelming, hence the limited supply. A particular sister NGO, recognizing the importance of the trek, made a special request to BOABAB to accommodate as many as nine participants for the campaign. We have frequently noticed our stickers in strategic areas as well as on the back shield or bumpers of a number of commercial vehicles in Lagos.

The Media: The participation of the media was very impressive. Major Media representatives covered the trek completely and the coverage was well televised repeatedly in the news bulletin and otherwise. Recalling a comment made by a Media representative during the press briefing (which was endorsed by a couple of others), the comment reflected the need for BAOBAB to frequently engage the Media in such campaigns and other programmes.

The students' enthusiastic remarks and commitment reflected in their plan of action and suggested strategies for dealing with VAW issues, marks a developing trend in beginning to deal with issues of VAW at early stages of socialization.

The major challenges however remain a resistant culture of patriarchy and androcentricism clearly reflected in some of the comments encountered during the campaign. In addition, the inability to cope with the huge demand for public awareness literature, due to limited funding, posed an immediate challenge, but on the other hand, it positively reflects a yearning for information and open debate, both of which are key to social change!