

## **BACKGROUND**

BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights came into existence as a result of research carried out by the Women and Laws action-research team. This team of about 70 people included women's rights activists, ulama (scholars of Islam), lawyers, social scientists, researchers, historians, and Arabic linguists.

The research took place in 12 states of the federation. They spent 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. The focus was on how 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 could not access their rights in Muslim laws because they simply did not know them.

The result was the need for Women and Laws Project (Nigeria) to document and analyze the disparate laws and customary practices that govern the lives of women in Muslim communities in Nigeria, women's knowledge of existing laws and their access to legal redress.

The research also aimed to assist grassroots and activist women by providing a better understanding of the multiple forces that define the parameters of their lives, thereby equipping them with strategies for their empowerment.

### **Challenges currently facing women:**

The completion of the research highlighted the insurmountable challenges that needed to be addressed. Violations of women's rights occur in communities all across Nigeria and include: domestic violence; wife battery; widowhood rites; inheritance; custody/guardianship; adoption; decision making in the home; religious participation; legal rights; citizenship and reproductive rights.

BAOBAB for  
Women's Human Rights

**Name:**

The baobab (*Adonsonia Digitata*) is a striking tree found throughout Africa from Senegal to South Africa. It is very tenacious and long-lived, despite drought and other adverse environmental conditions. The baobab is an extremely useful tree. It gives shade and fuel. Its leaves and fruits are eaten and made into drinks. The bark is made into rope and strings for musical instruments. It is also medicinal. The tree is often hollow and serves as shelter for small animals. Amongst many peoples the baobab connotes spiritual strength, an easy-going person, and fortitude or strength in distressing times.

Like the tree, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights strives to provide resources and protection. BAOBAB aims to be resolute and affirmative despite difficulties, to spread its work widely and resolve women's grievances.

**Our Vision**

That Women's Human Rights become an integral part of everyday life.

**Mission**

To promote and protect women's human rights, principally via improving knowledge, exercise and development of rights under religious laws, customary and statutory laws.

**Type of Organisation**

BAOBAB is a not for profit, non-religious, non-governmental Women's Human Rights organization.

**Values and Principles**

- 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

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 individuals activists

**Strategies**

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

Outreach activities (community/ mobilizing, public awareness, paralegal, leadership, human rights and gender trainings.

Social and legislative 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

Researching 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 discourses and serving as a research center for women's rights in law

Furthering the appreciation and observance of women's rights through activities such as sponsoring trainings, education programmes and talent competitions.

## Objectives

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 individuals activists

## Strategies

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## BAOBAB Works With

Women

Legal and paralegal professionals

Policy makers

Women's and human rights NGOs

Young people

Members of the general public

Our Programmes include:

### **Legal Literacy Outreach**

This programme deals with issues relating to women in the family, as well as citizens and as individuals in Nigeria.

### Capacity Building

Internships

Training workshops and courses in (for example):

- Gender sensitization and awareness
- Project management
- Leadership
- Gender research
- NGO development, management and financial accounting
- Paralegal training

Training workshops are undertaken in English and in other Nigerian languages.

### **Research and Publications**

Research on women and laws in Nigeria.

Publishing analytical works as well as practical handbooks and leaflets.

## Networking and Coordination

Coordinating Office for Africa and Middle East office for the International Solidarity Network of Women  
Living under Muslim Laws  
Disseminating information on women and human rights  
Coordinating campaigns and programmes in collaboration with like-minded organizations

## Consultancies

BAOBAB provides consultancy services in all the above areas of specialization, whether research, review, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, reproductive rights and comprehensive sexuality education.

## Counseling

We also provide advisory services to survivors of human rights violations.

## Information Services

BAOBAB has a Documentation Unit. This stores materials on women's human rights, gender, violence against women, adolescent health, reproductive rights and sexuality education, religious, customary and statutory laws, and other related topics. It is open to researchers, students, human rights activists and members of the general public.

**BAOBAB** provides a regular information mailing by post, e-mail or fax to 350 women's and human rights NGOs in Nigeria. The mailings circulate information within Nigeria and internationally on women's human rights issues, resources, opportunities and meetings.

## Affiliations

BAOBAB believes that there is strength in unity. Being affiliated with like-minded organizations provides

added resources and information to help us achieve our vision of making women's rights a part of everyday life. BAOBAB is a founding member of various national and international networks and coalitions. NGO CEDAW Coalition, founder  
Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN), member  
Coalition of Women's NGOs on the Protection of Women's Rights under Religious, Statutory and Customary Laws, founder  
Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)  
HUMAN rights Information Network (HURINET)  
Development Information Network (DEVNET)  
Transparency In Nigeria (TIN)

**Regional Organizations:**

Africa Democracy Forum  
African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMINET)  
Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)

**International Organizations:**

The International Solidarity Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), member of implementation committee  
Gender Justice Initiative, member  
Coalition on the International Criminal Court (CICC), member  
Women's Learning Partnership Collaboration (WLP), partner and host of Roaming Institute, Africa  
Economic Social and Cultural Rights Network (ESCR), member  
World Movement for Democracy, member  
Women's Human Rights Defenders, member

National Organizations:

State; Oyo State; Plateau State; Taraba State and Zamfara State.

Work Groups

Research, Documentation and Capacity Building  
Information, Communication and Networking  
Peace Building, Litigation and Interpretation of Laws  
Advocacy and Community Mobilization  
Administration and Finance

Board Members:

Bene Madunagu, Chair  
Akin Amosu  
Kayode Fayemi  
Ayesha Imam  
Asmau Joda  
Amina Ladan-Baki Mohammed  
Rose Mensah-Kutin  
Olukemi Williams  
Sindi Medar-Gould, Executive Director

National Coalition of Women on Violence Against Women (NACOVAV), founding member

Nigeria Coalition on the International Criminal Court (NCICC), founding member and chair

NGO CEDAW Coalition, founder

Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN), member

Coalition of Women's NGOs on the Protection of Women's Rights under Religious, Statutory and Customary Laws, founder

Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)

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**Regional Organizations:**

Africa Democracy Forum

African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMINET)

Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)

### International Organizations:

Board Member International Solidarity Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), member of implementation committee  
Bene Maduagwu, Chair  
Akin Adesina, Gender Justice Initiative, member  
Kayode Fayomi, Commission on the International Criminal Court (CICC), member  
Ayesha Womani, Women's Learning Partnership Collaboration (WLP), partner and host of Roaming Institute, Africa  
Asmau Edo, Economic Social and Cultural Rights Network (ESCR), member  
Amina Wadud, Wadud-Mak-Mohamud, Democracy, member  
Rose Mwanabiku, Human Rights Defenders, member  
Olukemi Williams  
Sindi Medar-Gould, Executive Director

### Board of BAOBAB

Administrative management headed by Executive Director, in offices with full time staff including Programme Officers and varied administrative staff.

Volunteer Outreach teams of 5-10 members each in 14 states including: Adamawa State; Borno State; Edo State; Kaduna State; Kano State; Katsina State; Kogi State; Kwara State; Lagos State; Osun State; Oyo State; Plateau State; Taraba State; Zamfara State.

### Work Groups

Research, Documentation and Capacity Building  
Information, Communication and Networking  
Peace Building, Litigation and Interpretation of Laws  
Advocacy and Community Mobilization  
Administration and Finance

For Women's Human Rights

### **BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights**

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