

Mary-Justine Todd

Contact Information

maryjustinetodd.com
mjtodd@shamsaha.org
maryjustinetodd@gmail.com

Education

- **PhD, International Law. University of Leicester**, Leicester, UK. 2025. (Women's Rights and Socio-Legal Advocacy). Supervisors: Professor Kimberley Brayson; Dr. Joe Wills.
- **MPH, International Public Health. New York University**, NYC, USA. 2010. (Public Policy for Women and Families in Marginalized Communities).
- **MA, International Studies. University of Iowa**, Iowa City, USA. 2006. (Policy of Refugee Protection).
- **BA, International Studies (African Development), Theater (Performance/Speech).** (Minor: French). **University of Iowa. Iowa City, USA.** May 2004.
- *Certification*, International Victims' Advocate and Advocate Trainer. National Organization of Victim's Assistance. 2013; *Certification*, English as a Foreign Language. TEFL/Bridge. 2013; *Certification*, Rape Crisis Counselor. Columbia University Hospital. 2011.
- Burlington Community High School, Burlington, Iowa.

Professional Academic Experience (Teaching and Research)

Shamsaha – Founder/CEO. 2013 to Present. MENA.

- Comprehensive development of US-accredited training curriculum for social justice and gender violence prevention in the Middle East - trained 500+ certified international crisis advocates.

American University of Bahrain – Adjunct Instructor. 2022 to 2023. Bahrain.

- Wrote, developed, implemented English composition course. Received 4.5/5 on student evaluations

Education Consultant – 2018 to Present. Bahrain.

- Supported academic faculty at various universities in Bahrain to develop syllabi and course materials for 15+ courses, accreditation requirements, and online learning management systems.

New York Blood Center Social and Behavior Lab – Lab Manager. 2011 to 2012. New York City.

- Conducted research on community gender violence prevention in minority communities of NYC.
- Collaborated with multiple stakeholders, completed literature reviews, study design and research protocols, participant recruitment, led focus groups and interventions, and completed qualitative/quantitative data analysis. 25+ focus groups conducted, with two publications.

New York University – Graduate Research Assistant. 2009 to 2010. New York City.

- Developed study design, participant recruitment protocols; led focus group facilitation and data collection.
- Conducted qualitative research using the community mapping data analysis method to understand violence root causes and responses from a neighborhood perspective.

University of Iowa – African Studies Graduate Assistant. 2005 to 2007. Iowa City, Iowa.

- Conducted qualitative research regarding women refugee rights and conflict/crisis zones in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Assisted African Studies program director in ongoing monitoring of human rights abuses throughout the African continent, concluding with 3-month research project looking at gender-based violence (GBV) prevention in Tanzania’s refugee camps.

**Relevant
Industry
Experience**

Shamsaha – Founder/CEO. 2013 to Present. MENA.

- Founded and lead the first full-scale, 24/7, multilingual gender-based violence crisis response NGO in the Arab Middle East, reaching 120,000+ beneficiaries across ten countries and directly support regional diplomatic priorities on women’s rights and security.
- Represent the organization at high-level engagements with heads of state, royal courts, and international diplomatic delegations, including regular meetings with ministers, ambassadors, and Fortune 500 corporate executives to advance strategic partnerships and policy alignment.
- Manage a team of 150+ regional and international staff and an 11-member advisory board composed of diplomats, academics, and private sector leaders.

The Pollination Project – Grants Advisor. 2016 to 2020. Global.

- Reviewed and advised on international grant applications, ensuring alignment with global women’s rights strategies and ethics goals.
- Provided expert guidance to grantees on program development, capacity building, and funding opportunities.

Columbia University Presbyterian Hospital – Advisory Board President. 2011 to 2013. New York City.

- Designed and executed women’s rights-based interventions for survivors of gender-based violence, embedding respect for human rights within hospital protocols.
- Advised leadership on programmatic risks and opportunities, driving sustainable, long-term social impact.

Sauti Yetu Center for African Women – Program Manager. 2012 to 2013. New York City.

- Facilitated discussions across stakeholder groups to design and implement refugee family violence prevention programs, driving impactful solutions and ensuring successful community integration.
- Monitored program indicators and delivered quarterly and annual reports to funders, aligning with strategic organizational goals and state regulations.

International Rescue Committee – Program Coordinator/Women’s Health Trainer. 2010. Tanzania/Liberia

- Managed all human rights and social service initiatives in two refugee camps, implementing mechanisms to address identified risks and improve outcomes.
- Collaborated with UN agencies and government partners to align programming with human rights and international refugee law.
- Conducted capacity-building initiatives for health workers, addressing public health risks and promoting compliance with global health standards.

African Refuge – Program Coordinator. 2008 to 2009. New York City.

- Operated refugee center addressing issues such as women’s health, child protection, and other human rights concerns.
- Monitored and evaluated program activities. Researched and wrote grant proposals. Worked with program director on all media relations and news briefings.

Church World Service – Refugee Casework. 2007 to 2008. Ghana.

- Conducted refugee resettlement interviews, assessing for human rights vulnerabilities within communities experiencing systemic human rights violations and persecution.
- Maintained adherence to all international legal frameworks and protections for refugee resettlement requirements and national regulations.

Publications

- “An Islamic Framework for Animal Ethics: Widening the conversation to include Islamic ethical vegetarianism”. *Critical Research on Religion*. 2023. Mohamed Mukhtar, Mary-Justine Todd.
- “Attitudes of Intimate Partner Violence, as Influenced by the Introduction of the First and Only Women’s Crisis Advocacy Program in the MENA Region”. *Families and Social Change in the Gulf Region*, Routledge, November 2020. Mary-Justine; Jarvis, Zoe; Murad, Rona.
- “Modifiers of Neighbors’ Bystander Intervention in Intimate Partner Violence: A Concept Mapping Study” *Violence and Gender*. March 2016. Sara Wee; Mary-Justine Todd; Michael Oshiro; Emily Green; Victoria Frye.
- “Informal Social Control of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women: Results from a Concept Mapping Study of Urban Neighborhoods”. *Journal of Community Psychology*. August 2012. Victoria Frye; Margaret M. Paul; Mary-Justine Todd; Veronica Lewis; Malik Cupid; Jane Coleman; Christina Salmon, Patricia O’Campo.

Grants

(Total awarded
+1.5 million
USD)

- **L’Oreal Fund for Women.** Women’s Rights, Empowerment, and Protection. Middle East. 2024, 2022, 2020. (Total Grant Income: 900,000+ USD).
- **United States Department of State.** Women’s Empowerment and Professional Advancement. Middle East. 2022. (Total Grant Income: 100,000 USD).

- **The Greenbaum Foundation.** International Women's Rights and Protection. Middle East. 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017. (Total Grant Income: 250,000 USD).
- **The Pollination Project.** Social Impact. Bahrain. 2019, 2016, 2015, 2014. (Total Grant Income: 25,000 USD).
- **The Pollination Project.** Seed Grant for Humanitarian Response. Bahrain. 2013.
- **New York University.** International Human Rights and Development. Graduate Student Grant. NYC. 2009.
- **University of Iowa's Center for Human Rights.** Human Rights Fellowship. Tanzania. 2006.
- **Stanley Fellowship.** Human Rights Research. Tanzania. 2006.
- **FLAS.** Fellowship for Swahili Study. Tanzania. 2005.
- **Freeman Grant.** Asian Cultural Studies. Japan/Korea. 2003.

Awards and Honors

- **VISA She's Next.** Finalist for Women's Impact Award. Bahrain. 2024. (Top 10/100).
- **United Nations Population Fund.** Finalist for Innovation in Impact Award. Middle East. 2024. (Top 4/globally).
- **Ernst and Young.** Global Ripples Award, for social enterprises with high potential for humanitarian impact. Middle East. 2020. (Winner/50+).
- **Ingrid Vanderveldt's Empowering A Billion Women 2020** – Most Innovative App Award. Bahrain. 2019.
- **Stevie Awards** for Women in Non-Profit Business, Gold Medal Award. NYC. 2019.
- **Ernst and Young.** Global Winning Women Fellowship. International awards made to women entrepreneurs proven to be global leaders in their field. Bahrain. 2019.
- **Afkarech.** Woman of the Year Award. Bahrain. 2018.

Invited Talks

- **United Nations Population Fund.** NYC – UN Headquarters. Topic: Innovation in Human Rights. 2024. (100+ people.)
- **Women From World Over.** Estonia. Topic: Women in Crisis. February 2019. (100+ people.)
- **Women's Power Summit.** Bahrain. Topic: Make Change in Your Community. 2018. (200+people.)
- **Building Bridges International Film Festival. Bahrain.** Topic: Honor Killings, A World-Wide Phenomenon, 2016. (100+ people.)
- **United Nations Environment Program.** Bahrain. Topic: Promoting Women and Girls' Protection, 2016. (50+ people.)
- **United Nations Office for Drug and Crime.** Bahrain. Topic: Understanding Gender Based Violence in the Middle Eastern Justice System, April 2016. (50+ people.)

- **Staten Island University Hospital.** NYC. Conference Presentation: Family Violence Across the Lifespan, 2012.
- **New York University.** NYC. Conference Presentation: Refugee Youth, NYC, USA. 2011.
- **International Rescue Committee.** Tunisia. Topic: International Gender Based Violence Prevention, 2010. (50+ people.)
- **University of Iowa - Center for Human Rights.** Iowa. Conference Presentation: International Human Rights and Women Refugees, Iowa City, USA. 2006.

Service and Community

- **Critical Research on Religion.** Peer Reviewer. May 2025.
- **Violence Against Women.** Peer Reviewer. August 2022, September 2023.
- **Columbia University Presbyterian Hospital - DOVE.** Rape Crisis Counselor. NYC. 2011 - 2013.
- **LSA Family Health Services.** Mentor for “At Risk” Girls. NYC. 2011 - 2012.
- **Relief to Development Society.** GBV Prevention Volunteer. Tanzania. 2006 - 2006.
- **International Rescue Committee.** Refugee Technical Trainer. NYC. 2007 - 2007.

Media and Press Coverage (select)

- Harpers Bazaar – [International Day of Failure](#)
- UNFPA - [Beyond Close Doors; Beyond Close Borders](#)
- Entrepreneur Magazine Middle East – [We Need an Entrepreneurial Spirit to Tackle Women’s Issues in the Middle East](#)
- The Telegraph – [Volunteering in the Middle East](#)
- Frictions by L’Oreal – [A podcast: Resilience Comes with the Ability to Regain Hope](#)
- The Matrix Green Pill – [A podcast: The visionary behind Shamsaha](#)
- Wow Woman – [Extraordinary Women and Their Stories](#)
- The National (UAE) – [What is Shamsaha?](#)
- The Daily Tribune (Bahrain) – [Shamsaha App Empowers Women](#)
- StartUp Magazine – [Launch App with Sayg](#)
- The Daily Tribute – [Awareness on Violence Against Women](#)
- Etijah – [Ladies Who Lead](#)
- Bahrain Today – [Women’s Crisis Care International \(Shamsaha\)](#)
- Bahrain Confidential – [Break the Bias](#)
- Inspiring UAE Women – [Break the Silence](#)
- Women this Month – [Words of Wisdom](#)
- The Goodness Podcast – [GBV and the Media](#)
- Fact Magazine – [Local Heros](#)

Related Professional Skills

- Advanced and nuanced understanding of progressive human rights ideals and topics related to socio-legal studies from both a Western and Eastern perspective.
- Advanced knowledge of research in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including the use of advance research analysis software such as SPSS, MaxQDA, Delve, and Concept Mapping Systems.
- Advanced knowledge of syllabus and curriculum development adhering to all quality assurance and accreditation requirements.
- Proficiency in Sales-Force, FTP-Pro, File-Maker, Microsoft Office, QuickBooks for Non-Profits, and website design.
- Cultural sensitivity and awareness. Ability to work in international, unsupervised and/or unstable areas.

Teaching Areas (Interdisciplinary)

- Human Rights and the Rule of Law
- Law, Gender, and Social Order
- Politics and Society in the Middle East
- Migration, Refugees, and Political Economy
- Feminist Political Thought and Development
- Qualitative Methods for Politics, Philosophy, and Law
- Law, Health, and Human Rights
- Islam, Gender, and Civic Traditions in the MENA Region
- Global Governance, Institutions, and Civil Society
- Socio-Legal Theories of Justice

Languages

- English, native language
- French, intermediate level in reading, writing and speaking
- Swahili, intermediate level in reading, writing and speaking
- Arabic, beginning level in reading, writing and speaking

Professional Memberships

- **Middle Eastern Studies Association.** USA. Member. 2025
- **International Studies Association.** USA. Member. 2025
- **Law and Society Association.** USA. Member. 2025
- **Global Research Network.** UK/Global. Member and Asylum Advisor. 2023
- **National Organization for Victim's Assistance.** USA. Advisory board member. 2015 to present.
- **Pollination Project.** USA. International health and human rights grant reviewer. 2016 to 2020.
- **DOVE, Columbia University Presbyterian Hospital.** New York. Chair of advisory board (rape and violence crisis response program). April 2011 to March 2013.

References

- **Victoria Frye, Professor of Social Work, Columbia University, NYC.**
vaf5@columbia.edu

- **Kimberley Brayson, Professor of Critical Jurisprudence**, University of Leicester Law School, Leicester. UK. kimberley.brayson@leicester.ac.uk
- **Joe Wills, Lecturer of International Law**, University of Leicester Law School, Leicester. UK. jjw24@leicester.ac.uk
- **Sarah Shono, Assistant Professor of English, American University of Bahrain**, Bahrain. sarah.shono@aubh.edu.bh
- **Munira AlShaikh, Advisory Board President, Shamsaha**. Bahrain. muniraalshaikh@gmail.com