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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT: PhD Researcher at the Institute of Development Studies – University of Sussex, UK
DATE OF BIRTH: May 19th
NATIONALITY: British
LANGUAGES: English (Fluent); Arabic (Fluent); French (Intermediate)
THEMATIC EXPERTISE: Gender Relations; Women's Empowerment; Humanitarian Assistance; Gender in Humanitarian Action; Politics and Power; Governance; Livelihood Interventions; Social Inequality and Inclusion
GEOGRAPHICAL EXPERTISE: Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia

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OVERVIEW

Maha joined IDS in September 2020 as a doctoral researcher working on women's empowerment. Her PhD looks at the perceptions of empowerment among women beneficiaries and implementing NGOs of craft-based Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) programmes as well as the mechanisms used to mediate such programmes. Her research focuses on the poorest areas of urban Egypt and employs a variety of mixed qualitative and participatory methods. Mariz Tadros and Deepta Chopra are the PhD supervisors.

In parallel to her PhD research at IDS, Maha was most recently a Senior Specialist in Policies and Strategies at Abu Dhabi Government's Department of Community Development. She has previously worked for UK charity Oxfam GB in Lebanon as part of the Syrian Humanitarian Crisis response – in the capacity of Partnership Officer and Gender trainer – and has also worked as a Regional Programme and Policy Officer at the United Nations World Food Programme Regional Bureau for the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe on programmes related to Resilience, Livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation.

Maha holds an MSc in International Development from the University of Birmingham and a BA in Marketing from the American University in Dubai. Her Master's thesis was published in 2012 and has been used at IDS Master's-level modules as an example of a Distinction Thesis using qualitative research methods.

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

2020 – 2025 (Expected)   **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) – Development Studies**
                                Institute of Development Studies – University of Sussex, UK

2011 - 2012   **Master of Science (MSc) – International Development**
                                University of Birmingham, UK *(Distinction thesis)*

2005 - 2009   **Bachelor's in Business Administration (BBA) - Marketing**
                                American University in Dubai, UAE

RECORD OF EMPLOYMENT

2023 – PRESENT   **Visiting Lecturer - Adjunct Faculty in International Development, Middlesex University Dubai, UAE**
Currently an adjunct lecturer for the module 'Sustainable Development and Human Rights' taught to Master's students as part of the MA International Relations and MA Global Governance and Sustainable Development programmes.

2020 – 2023   **Senior Specialist – Policies & Strategies, Abu Dhabi Government's Department of Community Development, UAE**

Was part of DCD's 'Families & Communities Division – Family & Women Section', which develops strategies and policies related to the protection and support of families including women, the elderly, children and youth in alignment with the Emirate's needs and in compliance with federal regulations. My role included:
- Co-managing the development of the Abu Dhabi Family Wellbeing Strategy (ADFWS), in collaboration with consulting firm Ernst & Young and DCD's operating entities.
- Managing the implementation of DCD's Seniors Wellbeing Strategy (a part of ADFWS) and supporting the development and implementation of the Family and Youth Wellbeing Strategies.
- Acting as Deputy in the absence of the Family & Women Section Head.
- Project managing the development of the Abu Dhabi Gender Balance Framework.
- Developing and managing the budget for initiatives under the ADFWS.
- Working closely with partners and stakeholders including DCD's operating entities to design, implement, monitor and evaluate the ADFWS initiatives.
- Developing a Policy for Children Deprived of Family Care.
- Project managing the development of the Assisted Living Services for Seniors project.
- Working with the Strategic Affairs Sector to update the ADFWS and develop KPIs and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of all initiatives
- Identifying trends and priorities for supporting families through research & analysis.
- Conducting Gender Equality Training for all AD Social Sector staff (over 200 employees).
- Ensure Gender Mainstreaming in all the Division's strategies and policies
- Supporting other initiatives related to Vulnerable Groups and People of Determination.

2018 – 2019   **MEA Communications & CSR Coordinator, Deutsche Bank, UAE**

Managed and lead all CSR activities for Deutsche Bank across the Middle East, Africa and Turkey under the bank's 'Middle East Foundation' (MEF) which entailed: (1) scouting and selecting non-profit organisations and other partners for the bank's support; (2) monitoring the progress of existing projects in the bank's portfolio; (3) managing the MEF annual budget and processing payments; (4) managing the bank's Corporate Volunteering Programme; and (5) writing internal news stories and press releases.

2016 – 2017   **Regional Programme & Policy Officer, UN World Food Programme, Egypt**
Was a part of WFP's 'Resilience, Livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation' unit based in the Regional Bureau for Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe to help provide technical support to the 18 Country Offices covered under this region. My role included:
- Supporting resource mobilization with a focus on funds related to DRR, Climate Change, and Food Security (e.g. multi-million-dollar proposals to the Green Climate Fund).
- Leading a Rapid Livelihoods Assessment in Iran to assess the feasibility of a livelihoods intervention for women refugees.
- As the Partnerships focal point, supporting new and existing partnerships with UN agencies, NGOs and government entities.
- Supporting WFP country offices' capacity augmentation and providing technical guidance to Countries' Strategic Programmes (CSP) on activities related to Resilience, Livelihoods, DRR and Climate Adaptation.
- Researching and analysing policy and operational issues to support the development of strategies and programmes.
- Organising and co-facilitating the 2016 WFP Regional Resilience and Social Protection Workshop.

• Member of WFP's 2016/2017 Emergency Response Roster (72 hr deployment)

2014 – 2016 **Partnership Officer – Gender, Oxfam GB, Lebanon**

Was part of Oxfam's Partnership Programme working to build the capacity of Civil Society Organizations to improve the quality of humanitarian aid delivery to people affected by the Syrian crisis. My role included:
• Developing needs-based partners' capacity building plans, and providing guidance / consistent coaching to partners on Project Cycle Management, proposal writing, reporting, strategic planning and development.
• Contract and grant management for partner portfolios; supporting partners' proposals and reports; and monitoring their activities ensuring compliance to Oxfam/donor requirements.
• Designing and delivering face-to-face and online training in Arabic & English on various Gender topics.
• Ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in all Partnership Programme activities.
• As the 'Acting Funding Officer', writing concept notes, reports and proposals for donors (i.e. ECHO, DFID)
• Regularly monitoring contextual changes/humanitarian needs and communicating them internally.

2013 – 2014 **Development Consultant, Indemaj, UAE**
Managed all projects at this local NGO, which included developing 'Learning Resource Centres' in remote UAE government schools to promote early learning development and inclusion; and created a partnership proposal for working with government entities.

2013 – 2013 **Intern at ICPD Beyond 2014 Secretariat, UNFPA, USA**
Reviewed and summarized feedback from Country Offices and partners regarding the engagement of CSOs in consultations related to the International Conference on Population and Development; Researched videos/testimonials on gender-related topics for ICPD regional events.

2012 – 2013 **Intern at PRME Secretariat, UN Global Compact, USA**
Supported the PRME team in communication with partners across 80 countries, regularly updating the CSR reporting database, supporting preparation for regional events and conducting research; Managed the development of an e-course on CSR for partners and created 2013 Outreach Campaign.

2009 – 2011 **Middle East Marketing & Communications Specialist, Lexmark, UAE**
Was solely in charge of all marketing operations for the Middle East (15 countries) where I developed and monitored annual Marketing & Communications Strategies & Plans; was in charge of procurement and storage room inventory; managed two budgets; handled all CSR; and organized all regional partner trainings and events.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND OUTPUTS

2023 Presented a paper at the Development Studies Association Conference 2023 (University of Reading, UK)

2016 Selected to present a paper at The 3rd ISA Forum of Sociology in Vienna, Austria

2012 Gaad, M., 'The Roles of Women in the Egyptian Revolution and Their Perceptions of the Effects of the Revolution on Their Future Roles: A Sociological Analysis'. University of Birmingham (United Kingdom)

CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

2022 Certified Data Analysis Professional – KPI Institute

2020	Child Welfare Services & Policy – NYU Abu Dhabi Executive Education, February 2020
2019	Basic Fire Safety, Prevention & Practical Use of Portable Fire Extinguisher (Dubai Civil Defence)
2017	Various UN-WFP trainings - United Nations WFP
2016	UN Basic and Advanced Security in the Field
2015	Group Facilitation Methods (ICA: UK)
2014	Sphere Humanitarian Assistance Handbook - Training of Trainers (Oxfam GB & ICOD)