

# TAINA VARGAS-EDMOND

## EDUCATION

- John C. Whitehead School at Seton Hall University; South Orange, NJ** **May 2012**
- Master of Arts Degree, Diplomacy and International Relations,
  - Functional Specialization: International Economic Development; Regional Specialization: Sub-Saharan Africa
- California State University, Northridge (CSUN); Northridge, CA** **May 2010**
- Bachelor of Arts Degree, Political Science; Minor: African Studies,
  - Dean's List, 2006-2010; University Scholar, 2009; Associated Students Scholar, 2008; Horatio Alger National Scholar, 2006
- Arcadia University, Study Abroad; Arusha, Tanzania** **Summer 2009**
- Studied Human Right and Capacity Building; collaborated with local NGOs and the East African Community trade group

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Initiate Justice** **September 2016 - Present**  
*Founder & Executive Director*
- Developed an inside-outside organizing strategy by which people directly impacted by incarceration are leaders in organizing efforts to end mass incarceration; fundraise, supervise organizers, and lead legislative and ballot initiative campaigns.
- Essie Justice Group** **September 2016 – March 2017**  
*Fellow / Statewide Advocacy Coordinator*
- Organize women with incarcerated loved ones in various campaigns aimed at ending mass incarceration's harm to women
- Ella Baker Center for Human Rights; Oakland, CA** **August 2015-December 2016**  
*State Campaigner*
- Coordinate the development and implementation of Justice Teams for Truth and Reinvestment in eight California counties
  - Assist in the advocacy in support of statewide legislation aimed at criminal justice reform
- California State Assembly; Monterey, CA** **May 2014-August 2015**  
*Field Representative*
- Represent Assemblymember Mark Stone at District events and meetings; provide legislative assistance in the District
  - Provide casework assistance to constituents; manage calls and letters; meet with constituents regarding state issues
- Dorothy's Place Homeless Shelter; Salinas, CA** **November 2013-May 2014**  
*Volunteer Coordinator*
- Recruited, trained, and supervised volunteers at the women's emergency shelter, Women Alive, at Dorothy's Place
- Teach for America; Oakland, CA** **June 2012-June 2013**  
*Special Education Teacher*
- Taught social justice-oriented academic curriculum to sixteen students with learning disabilities at Bret Harte Middle School
- Femmes Africa Solidarité; New York, NY** **January-May 2012**  
*Intern*
- Advocated for the inclusion of women in peace and security processes in Africa at the United Nations Headquarters
- NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security; New York, NY** **September-December 2011**  
*Policy Intern*
- Advocated for women's integration in the peace and security process through conducting research and policy analysis
- California State Assembly; Pacoima, CA** **Summer 2010; Summer 2011**  
*Policy Intern*
- Coordinated public events and engaged constituents in local political issues for the office of Assemblymember Felipe Fuentes
- CSUN Model United Nations Course for Academic Credit; Northridge, CA** **August 2009-May 2010**  
*Head Delegate / Professor's Assistant*
- Provided instruction on diplomacy and research methods to prepare students for competition in National and International Model UN Conferences; edited student Position Papers; prepared grant requests to support travel expenses