



OXFAM CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010 – 2013

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Name of Candidate: Alia Dharssi

Position Sought: Youth Director

PART 1: Candidate Statement

How does serving on the Oxfam Canada Board fit with your values and commitment to ending global poverty and injustice?

My involvement with Oxfam during my undergraduate years has shown me that the fight to end global poverty and injustice can begin at home with the attitudes of those around me. Becoming involved with campaigns like No Sweat, Make Trade Fair and Make Poverty History also made me aware of the global impact of my lifestyle choices and how creative solutions, like fair trade, can generate empowering change.

With these experiences in mind, I believe that solutions to global poverty and injustice must incorporate efforts to change the attitudes of Canadians towards these issues. Solutions must also empower the individuals they seek to help in the long-term. During my career, I hope to impact the public's perspective on issues related to international development and human rights as a journalist. My involvement with Oxfam since 2006 has played an important role in shaping this goal and enriching my university years. As Youth Director, I hope to shape the perspectives of other youth and provide them with similar enriching experiences that will increase their commitment to ending global poverty and injustice.

How do you believe Oxfam Canada could increase its impact in ending poverty and injustice?

My experience with Oxfam primarily relates to raising awareness of Oxfam's goals with the aim of increasing public support of Oxfam campaigns. As I helped organize events for the Oxfam Club at the University of British Columbia, some events mostly attracted people who were already supportive of Oxfam's cause. While these events served as useful fundraisers and opportunities for the attendees to deepen their knowledge of the issues, they could have had more impact if they also attracted individuals who were not yet supportive of Oxfam's goals. With this in mind, Oxfam Canada could increase its impact on ending poverty and injustice with events and resources that attract a broader audience not yet committed to Oxfam's goals.

As a Youth Director, one of the issues I hope to concern myself with is how to spark interest in human rights and international development issues among youth, especially high school and undergraduate students not yet interested in these issues. To do so, I will support workshops, hunger banquets, and other successful tools that Oxfam already uses, as well as find ways in which social media and online tools can be used to increase youth awareness and support of Oxfam's goals.

PART 2: Board Competencies

The competencies required by the Oxfam Canada Board include combinations and variations of the following:

- Experience on Non-Profit Boards
- Financial Management
- Fundraising
- Governance/Accountability
- Women's Rights and Gender Equality
- Strategic Planning
- International Development

Note that candidates for Youth Director are not expected to have the same depth or breadth of experience and that this will not jeopardize their candidacy.

Please note your areas of strength related to these competencies:

My experience with fundraising, event management and project planning will enable me to contribute to Oxfam. For example, I gained experience fundraising and seeking sponsorship when I organized a Peanut Butter and Jam-a-thon to make more than 2,000 sandwiches for local shelters. Furthermore, I have developed relevant organizational skills that I can apply as youth director. For example, as a Report Director for the Failing, Failed and Fragile States Conference I led a team of students in the production of report of foreign policy recommendations to the Canadian government, which was cited in a Canadian Parliamentary Committee Report on Democratization.

Please note any relevant professional designations or qualifications:

B.A. in History Honours and Economics

PART 3: Board, Work, Leadership and Life Experience

Board Experience

Name of Organization/Agency/Enterprise	From (date)	To (date)	Position on Board

Work and Leadership Experience

Name of Company/Agency/Organization and Position	From (date)	To (date)	Accomplishments
Research and Program Assistant, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Vancouver, BC	August 2009	April 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated and managed social media strategy to promote awareness of genocide • Conducted research and prepared teaching materials for

			exhibit on 1936 Olympics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted with training of tour guides and led school tours
Volunteer and Student Leader, University of British Columbia (UBC) Oxfam Club, Vancouver, BC	January 2006	March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach Coordinator for Hungry4Change Banquet 2009 that raised \$3,000 for Oxfam Vice President Internal in 2006-2007
Academic Research, Terry Project on Global Issues, UBC, Vancouver, BC	May 2007	August 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produced multimedia content for a popular blog aimed at increasing student engagement with global issues Researched climate change and GMOs to create materials for an academic course Assisted with organization of a high-profile speaker series on global issues
Report Director, Failing, Failed, and Fragile States Conference, UBC, Vancouver, BC	October 2006	March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed publishing process of a report of foreign policy recommendations to the Canadian government
Co-Chair, PB-and-J-a-thon, Ismaili Students Association, Vancouver, BC	September 2006	October 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated event that made 2000+ sandwiches for local shelters with 100 volunteers

Life Experience

Life Experience:

Alia Dharssi

B.A. Honours

<http://aliadharssi.wordpress.com>

INVOLVEMENT WITH OXFAM

- 2008 - 2009
Dec - Feb **Outreach Coordinator**, Hungry4Change Banquet, Oxfam UBC, Vancouver, BC
- Managed marketing and media outreach for banquet that raised \$3,000 for Oxfam
- 2008
Feb - May **Volunteer**, Intermón Oxfam, Salamanca, Spain
- Assisted with Day of Solidarity that attracted more than 3,000 members of the public
 - Campaigned for political commitments related to poverty eradication and climate change
- 2007
May **Committee Member**, We Can Campaign Event, Oxfam, Vancouver, BC
- Assisted with organization of public event featuring a Sri Lankan women's rights activist
- 2006 - 2007
Aug - April **Vice President Internal**, Oxfam UBC, Vancouver, BC
- Raised funds for Oxfam and increased awareness of Oxfam campaigns on campus
 - Worked with other executives to plan meetings and invite speakers to club
 - Organized events like fashion show on responsible consumption and HIV/AIDS workshop

OTHER LEADERSHIP AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- 2006 - 2007
Oct - Mar **Report Director**, Failing, Failed, and Fragile States Conference, UBC, Vancouver, BC
- Trained chairs to facilitate formulation of policy recommendations at conference that brought students and experts together to discuss Canadian foreign policy
 - Managed production of a report of policy recommendations that was distributed to government officials with the sponsorship of the Canadian government and UBC
- 2006
Sept - Oct **Co-Chair**, PB-and-J-a-thon, Ismaili Students Association, UBC, Vancouver, BC
- Coordinated event that made 2000+ sandwiches for local shelters with 100 volunteers in partnership with the Jewish Students Association
 - Successfully attained media coverage of event's message of inter-faith cooperation
 - Received Outstanding Partner Award from the Jewish Foundation for Campus Life
- 2006
July - Dec **Volunteer**, Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, Vancouver, BC
- Provided crisis support to battered women during weekly 6-hour shifts
- 2006 **Director of NATO Simulation**, Richmond Model United Nations, Richmond, BC
- Wrote background guide and directed NATO simulation for high school students
- 2004-2005 **Head Delegate**, Crofton House School Model United Nations Team, Vancouver, BC
- Trained younger students to present ideas when speaking at Model UN conferences
 - Organized debates on current events and prepared delegations for conferences

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2009 - 2010
Aug - present **Research and Programs Assistant**, Holocaust Education Centre, Vancouver, BC
- Initiated and managed social media strategy to promote awareness of genocide
 - Conducted research and prepared teaching materials for exhibit on 1936 Olympics
 - Assisted with training of tour guides and led school tours
- 2009
Aug - Oct **Oral History Interviewer**, Mission Community Archives, Mission, BC
- Collected oral histories of prominent women in municipality for archival records
- 2009 **Social Media Intern**, NowPublic.com (participatory news network), Vancouver, BC

- June - Sept
 - Wrote news stories and sourced multimedia content for featured news coverage
 - Used social media for newsgathering by finding citizen accounts of current events
 - Curated news stories produced by citizen reporters and recruited citizen journalists

- 2008 - 2009
Nov - Mar
 - **Project Assistant**, New Public Consortia Project, UBC, Vancouver, BC
 - Prepared case study on metropolitan governance in Canada's poorest neighbourhood to consider how lessons learned could be applied to assist urban poor in Brazil

- 2008
July - Sept
 - **Research Intern**, Amnesty International Canada, Vancouver, BC
 - Researched human rights issues and Canadian mining companies in the Philippines
 - Submitted 40-page report containing summary of issues for campaign development

- 2007
May - Aug
 - **Academic Researcher**, Terry Project on global issues, UBC, Vancouver, BC
 - Produced multimedia content for a popular blog on global issues
 - Researched climate change and GMOs to create materials for an academic course
 - Assisted with organization of a high-profile speaker series on global issues

EDUCATION

- 2005 - 2009
 - **University of British Columbia**, Vancouver, BC, Canada
 - B.A. in Economics and Honours History; GPA: A-; 2008-2009 Dean's List
 - Kathleen and Hugh Keenlyside Prize in History, Millennium In-Course Excellence Award, Education Abroad Scholarship, Arts One Essay Prize, President's Entrance Scholarship, AP Scholars Book Award, BC Government Scholarship
 - History Honours Thesis: Studied communication strategies used by the BC environmental movement to galvanize public support from 1988-1993 (grade: A)

- 2007 - 2008
 - **University of Salamanca**, Salamanca, Spain – Study Abroad Program (2 semesters)
 - Took a full course-load in Spanish and studied economics, history and literature

- 2006
 - **Fudan University**, Shanghai, China – Program on Modern China (2 weeks)
 - Selected to represent university and study contemporary Chinese history, economics and politics with selected students from around the Pacific Rim

HOBBIES AND LANGUAGES

Writing: Writer for *The Vancouver Observer* (2009 to present), *The Ubysey* (2006 to 2009), The Terry Project Blog (2008 to present), & Go Global UBC Blog (2007 to 2008)

Spanish: Advanced speaking, reading and writing.

French: Intermediate reading