

**OXFAM CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010 – 2013****CANDIDATE PROFILE****Name of Candidate: Milena Gioia****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?**

After my experience with a grassroots women's organization in rural India, I was inspired to pursue my current Master's degree with a specific focus on the role of grassroots women in social change. I witnessed first hand the vibrancy and innovation of poor grassroots women organizing to promote their rights.

I appreciate Oxfam Canada's (OC) vision that ending poverty begins with promoting women's rights. It is a principle that I fundamentally agree with, and one that the international donor community should adopt. Moreover, OC's approach of partnership with organizations, reinforcing civil society to hold governments accountable, and valuing grassroots people and initiatives is one that could definitely transform Canada's approach to development into work for social justice.

OC's work in Canada, through mobilizing Canadians, especially youth, to be aware of the current state of the world and act for social justice is fundamental to a sustainable approach to development. Ending global poverty is not simply a question of more funding, but also one of mobilizing affluent citizens to realize their position of privilege and act to redress global inequalities.

Serving on the OC Board as Youth Director will allow me to continue to pursue my commitment to social justice and women's rights, in part through supporting the engagement of other youth members in Canada. Also, serving on the Board will compliment my work in the Ottawa RebELLEs, a new young feminist network dedicated to social justice.

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

Oxfam Canada does great work abroad through the capacity building of civil society to hold governments accountable to their population. This is also done domestically through public outreach, advocacy and lobbying with the Canadian government. However, it seems that more work could be done to mobilize the Canadian government to seriously put women's rights on its agenda.

Through my work at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) with the Gender Equality Team, I witnessed first hand the stern resistance of the current government to women's rights and gender equality issues. During my eight months there, I was pleased to see an Oxfam Canada presence through the 2nd phase of *Engendering Change* being approved; through two brownbag lunch presentations on results achieved; through the presentation of the 'Civil Society Response to the Evaluation of the Implementation of CIDA's 1999 Policy on Gender Equality'; and through the request for a consultation with higher management.

These efforts need to be sustained and reinforced since the Canadian government is a large funder for OC and for other CSOs working for women's rights and social justice. Moreover, OC needs to continue to be a good role model for the organizations it supports abroad by influencing the Canadian Government to taking women's rights more seriously.

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:

I have multi-faceted experience working for women's rights and gender equality (GE) as well as for international development: as a Gender Research Assistant for Oxfam Canada; as a junior GE Specialist with CIDA's Gender Equality Team; through working with a grassroots women's organization in rural India; through my studies in gender and development; and through my teaching experience in gender-based analysis.

Through my work with the Ottawa RebELLEs and Association for India's Development, I have been involved in planning and volunteering for many events (including fundraising), as well as networking and collaborating with like-minded organizations

Please note any relevant professional designations or qualifications:

I am currently pursuing a Master's in Globalization and International Development with a specialization in Women's Studies at the University of Ottawa. I am a graduate student representative for the *School of International Development and Global Studies* and have a seat in monthly Assemblies. I also hold a bachelor's degree in International Development and Women's Studies from McGill University.

PART 3: Board, Work, Leadership and Life Experience

Board Experience

Name of Organization/Agency/Enterprise	From (date)	To (date)	Position on Board
School of International Development and Global Studies, University of Ottawa	Sept. 2009	present	Graduate student representative (bilingual)

Work and Leadership Experience

Name of Company/Agency/Organization and Position	From (date)	To (date)	Accomplishments (please SEE bilingual CVs attached for more details)
<i>Ottawa RebELLEs</i> – Co-founder	Sept. 2009	present	Mobilize young feminists; fundraising; raise awareness on feminist issues; network w/ likeminded organizations
<i>CIDA</i> – Junior Gender Equality Specialist	May 2009	Dec. 2009	Compiled report on the state of Gender Equality Specific Programming at CIDA; developed bilingual GE Bulletin
<i>Oxfam Canada</i> – Gender Research Assistant	Jan. 2009	April 2009	Developed paper on <i>Feminist Transformative Leadership</i> and conducted presentation for Oxfam Canada staff
<i>Mata Balak Utkarsha Pratishthan</i> (India) – Intern	June 2007	Aug. 2007	Prepared report for the org so they could better address children's needs (esp. girls') in their programming
<i>English Montréal School Board</i> – Tutor, Adult Education	2003	2008	Responsible for school's tutoring program; organized a final report on the program to ensure its further funding

Life Experience

Life Experience:
<p>Five years ago, I was diagnosed with bipolar (dis)order. While it was a very traumatic experience, and has made certain things in my life more challenging, it has also made me stronger. My bipolar circumstance has allowed me to not only learn about my limits, but also about my potential and resilience.</p> <p>Living through a psychiatric diagnosis exposed me to the prominent societal stigmas around mental illness and the deplorable manner in which psychiatric patients are treated. Living through this marginalized position has reinforced my commitment to social justice</p>

MILENA GIOIA

LANGUAGES

English, French, Italian (Fluent); Spanish (Basic)

EDUCATION

**Master of Arts: Globalization and International Development
w. Specialization in Women's Studies (Co-op Program)** 2008-present

University of Ottawa (Ottawa, Ontario)

- Recipient of *Revivre* scholarship
- Graduation: Winter 2011

Bachelor of Arts: International Development Studies, Women's Studies 2004-2008

McGill University (Montréal, Québec)

- Recipient of *Revivre* scholarships for 2 consecutive years
- Graduated with Distinction

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Gender & Development Coursework 2007

Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM)(Montréal, Québec)

Development and Human Rights Summer School 2007

Development and Human Rights Institute (Pune, India)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Junior Gender Equality (GE) Specialist 2009

Canadian International Development Agency (Hull, Québec)

- Analyzed and evaluated all the operational gender equality specific projects in bilateral programming to better inform the GE team of the results achieved and the quantitative/qualitative trends
- Developed and edited the first Gender Equality Geographic Bulletin (bilingual), enabling networking and sharing of lessons learned for field and headquarters staff across geographic regions
- Prepared gender equality research and analytical pieces as needed
- Organized meetings, took minutes, and managed information for the Gender Equality (GE) Team
- Completed the *Results-Based Management (RBM)* 2-day training

Gender Research Assistant 2009

Oxfam Canada (Ottawa, Ontario)

- Developed a comprehensive literature review on perspectives and approaches to promote women's leadership for the realization of women's rights
- Conducted a presentation and facilitated a discussion for Oxfam Canada staff on women's leadership relevant to their current and upcoming programming

International Intern 2007

Mata Balak Utkarsha Pratishthan (Sangola, Maharashtra, India)

- Adapted and administered a survey of 100 high school children from Sangola town
- Prepared a report for the grassroots women's organization so they could better address children's needs in their programming, particularly for girls
- Continue to collaborate with partner to plan my thesis fieldwork

Teaching Assistant: *Women and Education* 2009

University of Ottawa (Ontario)

- Initiated a workshop addressing 100 students' weaknesses in gender-based analysis and essay structure and proposed concrete solutions

Academic Tutor

2003-2008

English Montréal School Board (Montréal, Québec)

- Responsible for the school's tutoring program (part of Québec's Student Success Plan); catered to a multi-cultural clientele
- Developed the ability to communicate with newly arrived immigrants having limited knowledge of English or French
- Compiled a final report on the school's tutoring program to ensure its further funding

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Co-founder, Active Member

2009 – present

Ottawa RebELLEs (Ontario)

- Network and organize to bring young Ottawa feminists together and raise awareness on local, provincial, national, and global feminist issues
- Organized fundraising activity for the *16 days to end gender based violence* campaign, with proceeds going to the Ottawa Coalition To End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
- Involved in the planning of two 2010 International Women's Day Events in Ottawa, including, *I'm Still Not a Feminist, but...*

Graduate Student Representative in General Assemblies

2009-present

School of International Development and Global Studies

University of Ottawa (Ontario)

- Ensure that graduate students have a voice in the reform of their university program

Co-President

2007 - 2008

Active Volunteer, Treasurer

2006 - 2007

Association for India's Development (AID), Montréal Chapter

- Pioneered AID Mtl's mandate, including planning fundraising events for Mata Balak Utkarsha Prathishthan, a grassroots women's organization
- Raised awareness and collaborated with like-minded organizations such as Rotaract McGill

Patient companion

2008-2009

Louis H. Lafontaine Psychiatric Hospital (Montréal, Québec)

- Visit patients weekly to break their isolation; raise awareness on mental health issues

ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

International Travel

- *North America/Europe*: United States, Mexico, United Kingdom, Italy, Croatia, Greece
- *Asia*: India; *Latin America/the Carribean*: Belize, Honduras, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, St. Martin, Venezuela

Fitness/ Personal Growth

- Routinely practice *Ashtanga* and *Yanumojá* Yoga; Played competitive soccer for 8 years