

Committee: **The Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee**

Organization/Sector represented:

Name: **Shobhita Sharma**

Address:

**2104-363 Colborne Street  
London, Ontario  
N6B 3N3**

Occupation: **Strategic communications professional**

Work experience: My work as a communicator has been very rewarding. From representing international consumer brands as a public relations professional to working as a journalist, I have had the privilege of interacting with and learning from the best in the business. I have also had the opportunity to work as a communications and social media specialist in the realm of economic development. My interest in politics and communications was bridged through my position as the Mayor's press secretary in London. Currently, I work as a strategic marketing communications specialist at a Fortune 500 company.

Education: I describe myself as a life-long learner and a diligent student. I hold a master's degree in journalism from Western University. In the third trimester of the one-year program, I specialized in television reporting and editing and completed a six-week internship at Global News in Toronto. I also hold a bachelor's degree from Western University. I completed an honours specialization in Media, Information and Technoculture and a minor in General Cinema along with a writing certificate. I graduated with distinction in the program.

Skills: I am a seasoned professional with excellent written and oral communication skills. I have the ability to absorb information and examine it with a critical lens. It would be an honour to put these skills to use to further the commitments of this group. An early adopter of social media, I can also share my knowledge of new/rich media with the team.

Additionally, I am skilled at project management. I am also proficient in Hindi (I can speak, read and write in Hindi) and Punjabi.

Interest reason: I am interested in serving our community by being a member of the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee because I want to make a difference in the city we all call home. I grew up in New Delhi, India and moved to London with my family in 2004. London has given me the opportunity to develop into a confident, community-minded person in a relatively safe space. I understand this is not the story experienced across the board. Far too many people feel disconnected with the city they live in. They don't feel like their opinions matter or that their voices are heard. This has to change. Far too many times people, especially those who identify as minorities, give up on being involved even before trying because they don't see leaders and change-makers who they can identify with. The face of our city is changing. Our demographics are changing. It is critical that we as a community recognize this shift and work together to make sure everyone in our city feels safe at home, and has an equitable chance at living a fulfilled life. The work undertaken by the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee (previously LDRRAC) around championing diversity, taking a hard stance against racism and most recently carding has been inspirational. I would be honoured to serve on this committee alongside some fantastic Londoners. I believe work done at the municipal level make the most impact on the community. I would like the opportunity to contribute in making London more inclusive and more open.

Contributions: From making new friends in a city where my family didn't know anybody to the challenges of finding employment without "Canadian experience," I have first-person experience of what it is like to be an 18-year old newcomer to the country. I embraced our new home and am a very proud Londoner. It would be my honour to share my experience and what I have learned with the hope of being able to help new Londoners. One of the reasons my family chose to move to Canada was so that my sister and I could grow up into independent, fearless women. I have thrived here and have become an engaged, active and informed citizen. There is room for our community to grow together and evolve into a more inclusive home for all. Historically, visible minorities have not been engaged in municipal politics for several reasons. If our city wants to bring about change, everyone must come to the table. For everyone to come to the table, they first need to feel welcomed, feel respected and feel confident that their voice and opinions matter. I would like to

**contribute to that process. From an operational point, I'd be very glad to share my communications and social media skills to further the work of this committee.**

**Past contributions: I have been an active member of the community since I moved to Canada in 2004. As a Londoner, I feel a strong sense of responsibility towards working together to make our community more accepting, more equitable and more welcoming for everyone. In the past, I have had the opportunity to try to make a difference in the lives of our neighbours and friends as a volunteer on several committees. In 2014, I volunteered on the London Sports Celebrity Dinner and Auction committee. The event raises funds and awareness for the Thames Valley Children's Centre that serves kids from all across southwestern Ontario. I helped redesign the website for the event by making it more user friendly and enabling the site to house a ticketing section to enable easy purchase. I also brought the event to life on social media by creating and curating its own Twitter account and sprucing up its Facebook page for added exposure for the event. Additionally, my job in politics provided me with a unique vantage point into our community and its needs. It was humbling to identify areas where we could do better and serve Londoners who work hard everyday to raise their families and support community causes. I am currently on the board of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of London and Area's Bowl for Kids' Sake event. I have served on the professional development committee of the London chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators. On the committee, I developed programming for communications professionals in London. I am also an active member of the Hindu community in London with my active participation at the Hindu Cultural Centre. My volunteer commitments have given me the opportunity to serve a number of different causes and I have always brought the diversity and inclusion lens to the table. Serving on the Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Advisory Committee would give me the opportunity to grow with like-minded Londoners who have come together for one common goal of making our community even better.**

**Interpersonal: Communication is key to achieving harmony and success in any situation. Communication always involves an exchange of ideas and beliefs. It is always a two-way road. As a journalist, I have been trained to gather different opinions and views and critically examine different aspects of the same story. I believe ego and judgement need to be kept aside especially when a group is working together for the benefit of the community. I have had the privilege of working alongside Londoners from all walks of life through volunteering opportunities and professionally as a reporter, a social media champion, political aide and now as a corporate communicator. I have learned that everyone brings something different to the table in terms of skills, abilities and knowledge. The most successful groups are ones where everyone feels safe to contribute in a non-threatening environment and where everyone feels heard. I strongly believe we can learn something from everyone. Disagreements are a natural and healthy part of the communications process. I believe in peaceful conflict resolution by acknowledging everyone in a group has an opinion worthy of sharing and everyone deserves to be treated with respect.**

**Interview interest: Yes**