

# Statements Board candidates 2022 for website

## Aurelia Talvela

### Pronouns

She/her

### **1. Why do you want to run for a position with COCo's board of directors? What interests you about our organization and the kind of work we do?**

I am deeply committed to working towards and advancing social justice in both my personal and professional life. With a background in communications and studying power relations, and practical experience working in the philanthropic/social sector with dozens of non-profit organizations and socially minded businesses (especially B Corps), I believe COCo's mission and values align with mine, and together we can benefit from it and go further.

### **2. COCo is committed to fostering anti-oppressive and social justice values and practices, both within the organization, and throughout the community sector. How do you see yourself supporting this part of COCo's mission during your time as a board member? On which experiences (lived, work, or otherwise), skills, and knowledge will you draw, and what kinds of training and/or learning opportunities would you seek out in service to COCo's social justice mission?**

Ever since finishing my Master's degree specializing in power and race relations in Québec and Canada, I have sought out ways to apply my knowledge in practice and continue to deepen it, whether it be participating in different trainings and advancing anti-racist policies and work at my job or being inspired and learning from community organizations. As an immigrant here, I have been especially concerned in understanding the effects of settler colonialism in Canada, and I am constantly seeking learning opportunities to understand what reconciliation should look like.

For the last few years, I have worked at a full-service agency dedicated to charities, foundations and socially minded businesses. As in many smaller organizations, I have been lucky to touch on almost every aspect of the work that we do, whether that's governance, strategy, communications, branding or fundraising, working with the smallest charities to big foundations and B Corps. This has been a fantastic learning opportunity that I think will be able to draw from. Working in the social sector and surrounding myself with change-makers was and continues to be very important to me, which is how I see my implication with COCo.

**3. COCo offers regular training sessions for groups we support on non-profit board members' roles and responsibilities. We created a framework which summarizes these roles and responsibilities: a) Championing the organization's mission and vision b) Ensuring adherence to laws c) Maintaining and monitoring the organization's policy landscape d) Engaging in relevant organizational evaluation and development activities (e.g. change processes, organizational capacity building) e) Maintaining and developing the board's ability to fulfill its duties Choose one of these roles/responsibilities and elaborate on how your personal interests, past experiences, and/or skills would contribute to fulfilling this role/responsibility.**

I am interested in dedicating myself to maintaining and monitoring the policy landscape of the organization. In my work, increasingly I see that organizations and individuals within them struggle going from the conceptual and theoretical to the practical and tangible. In the work we do in the social sector, we all have guiding visions, missions and values but it is the "how" that is the most tricky to articulate and get to. A policy serves as guidelines to get to action, while making sure we hold on to an overarching strategy and mission. I want to focus on how we can get to action more effectively in order to benefit the communities we serve. With the skills and experience I have in communications, strategy and governance I believe I can apply this knowledge to COCo's benefit but also continue to learn and expand that knowledge.

**4. With social inequality and a public health crisis permeating our communities, it has become clear that a culture of care and solidarity is integral to the well-being of individuals of an organization and the health of the community they serve. During challenging times, what are ways you practice self-care? What are ways in which you practice interpersonal and/or community care? How do you see yourself enacting this within your role as board member?**

It's hard not to fall into existential despair with everything that is going on, especially as we can feel so powerless as individuals. In those times, I remind myself that I'm doing my best and as much as I have control over. What I also have control over is what I do with my knowledge and time, and making sure that it contributes towards a common good. I once heard somewhere that in order to find purpose, get involved with something that won't be accomplished in your lifetime and get involved in something you can't do alone. This just made sense to me and is why I wanted to work in the social sector and why I want to connect with more like-minded people to enact some of the change we want to see happen.

**5. Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself and your intent to run for the board of directors?**

Nothing else :)

# Shawna Moore

## Pronouns

(she/her)

### **1. Why do you want to run for a position with COCo's board of directors? What interests you about our organization and the kind of work we do?**

I have been working in the non-profit sector for over five years now, and during my journey, I have always been passionately drawn to the process of building collaborative and non-hierarchical structures. On many occasions, I have used COCo's resources to support me in my roles. I moved from Toronto to Montreal during the pandemic, and I am eager to support COCo and be part of the amazing work you do. I worked at a grassroots organization in Toronto that quickly grew from a grassroots organization to securing over half a million dollars. This experience was both enriching and painful, and taught me a lot about the balance of having structure and being flexible. I currently work at an Indigenous national charity that funds grassroots Indigenous youth collectives and non-profits. We work to provide funding and support, as well as to make our programs as accessible as possible. My role requires a balance of having clear processes and adaptability to challenges. I like that COCo has very honest and reflective conversations about the challenges around creating non-hierarchical structures, and I wish to provide support to those conversations.

### **2. COCo is committed to fostering anti-oppressive and social justice values and practices, both within the organization, and throughout the community sector. How do you see yourself supporting this part of COCo's mission during your time as a board member? On which experiences (lived, work, or otherwise), skills, and knowledge will you draw, and what kinds of training and/or learning opportunities would you seek out in service to COCo's social justice mission?**

I strongly believe that the best way I can do this is to keep committing myself to my own unlearning and healing journey, and to be in community with people who foster the same ideas. One of my favourite quotes is from Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams, who states, "Without inner change there can be no outer change. Without collective change, no change matters."

### **3. COCo offers regular training sessions for groups we support on non-profit board members' roles and responsibilities. We created a framework which summarizes these roles and responsibilities: a) Championing the organization's mission and vision b) Ensuring adherence to laws c) Maintaining and monitoring the organization's policy landscape d) Engaging in relevant organizational evaluation and development activities (e.g. change processes, organizational capacity building) e) Maintaining and developing the board's ability to fulfill its duties Choose one of these roles/responsibilities and elaborate**

**on how your personal interests, past experiences, and/or skills would contribute to fulfilling this role/responsibility.**

I choose the roles and responsibilities within section d. I have experience creating an organization-wide survey to gather staff input on organizational capacities and limitations. Once the results were gathered, I developed a report that was presented to the board. I also created a plan to address the significant gaps faced by the organization. In my current role, I work within a team to develop capacity-building workshops for the grassroots and non-profits we provide funding. I recently organized an online gathering for 90 grantees that covered topics such as building facilitation skills, managing differences, Indigenous leadership, connecting to the land and having grantee groups share about their projects and learnings with others.

**4. With social inequality and a public health crisis permeating our communities, it has become clear that a culture of care and solidarity is integral to the well-being of individuals of an organization and the health of the community they serve. During challenging times, what are ways you practice self-care? What are ways in which you practice interpersonal and/or community care? How do you see yourself enacting this within your role as board member?**

Self-care is an important part of my life because, like so many others, I have experienced burn-out and health problems caused by how our society functions. There are many ways in which I practice self-care. For instance, by moving my body and taking time to do activities that bring me joy, such as cooking, painting and being with friends! I appreciate finding spaces that give you opportunities to learn, unlearn, and grow deeply. I was part of the Embodied Social Justice program (certificate) with the Embody Lab in 2021, which was an incredible opportunity to show up for myself and others. If I were part of COCo's board, I would be there for the journey to learn, grow, listen, support the other board members and staff, and to embrace the moments of joy and celebration!

**5. Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself and your intent to run for the board of directors?**

Unfortunately, I wanted to let others know that I do not speak French and have challenges with pronunciation. I have also only been living in Montreal for a year and a half and only have a brief understanding of the local non-profit sector.

# Sofia Laroussi

## Pronoms

elle

### **1. Pourquoi voulez-vous présenter votre candidature au Conseil d'administration du COCo ? Que trouvez-vous intéressant à propos de notre organisme et du travail que nous faisons ?**

Tout au long de mon parcours, j'ai pu démontrer un vif intérêt pour les enjeux liés à la justice sociale. Passant de la communication politique à la gestion de projet à impact social, je m'intéresse particulièrement aux questions d'éducation à l'engagement et à la participation citoyenne. Forte de plusieurs années d'expérience en tant que, responsable du financement et du développement pour la promotion de la diversité culturelle dans les arts, j'ai pu développer de très bonnes connaissances sur les réalités et les défis liés à la représentativité des communautés racisées dans l'écosystème culturel canadien. Aujourd'hui, conseillère en partenariat communautaire au sein de la Fondation du Grand Montréal, je collabore étroitement avec le secteur communautaire dans son ensemble. Force est de constater la fragilité de notre tissu social en tant de crises et le rôle indispensable que remplit le COCo dans l'écosystème communautaire montréalais. Par ailleurs, je contribue activement à la réflexion et la mise en place d'une philanthropie plus juste et inclusive à travers mon engagement dans le comité Justice, équité, diversité et inclusion à la Fondation du Grand Montréal, que ce soit au niveau de structure organisationnelle, la gouvernance, les investissements ou le déploiement des subventions. Ainsi j'aimerais m'impliquer en exploitant mes compétences et mes expériences efficacement dans votre CA et contribuer au développement d'une société solidaire, juste et responsable.

### **2. Le COCo s'engage à promouvoir l'anti-oppression et la justice sociale au sein de notre organisme et dans l'ensemble du secteur communautaire. Comment comptez-vous soutenir cet aspect de la mission du COCo pendant votre mandat au sein de notre Conseil d'administration ? Sur quelles expériences (vécues, professionnelles ou autres), compétences et connaissances comptez-vous vous appuyer, et quels types de formation et/ou d'apprentissage poursuivrez-vous pour servir cet aspect de la mission du COCo ?**

Dans le cadre de mon implication en éducation à l'engagement, j'ai coordonné plusieurs projets, notamment, un parcours de formation et un espace de réflexion en participation citoyenne où la justice sociale et environnementale en était le cœur. Dans ce contexte, j'ai moi-même effectué des formations spécifiques en Éducation à la Citoyenneté mondiale et en égalité des genres dans les programmes. De plus, mon expérience pour la promotion de la diversité culturelle dans les arts m'a permis de mieux comprendre les enjeux spécifiques que vivent les communautés noires au Québec et, plus largement, au Canada, mission même de l'organisation pan canadienne qui m'employait. Enfin, mon engagement actuel me permet de mieux comprendre les dynamiques de pouvoirs existants entre les bailleurs de fonds et les organismes communautaires. Mon rôle

me permet de contribuer activement à l'inclusion des organismes qui œuvrent par et pour les communautés marginalisées dans la philanthropie; mais aussi de mettre en place des formations et des processus pour intégrer de nouvelles pratiques organisationnelles et d'assurer plus d'équité dans le secteur. Ainsi, je poursuis, entre autres, une formation « Accélérateur JEDI » qui sur 10 mois offre un accompagnement par les pairs en philanthropie pour faire progresser la stratégie de JEDI au sein des organisations. Cette formation m'expose à des outils concrets et me force au développement de compétences en gestion du changement.

**3. Le COCo offre des sessions de formation sur les rôles et responsabilités des membres du Conseil d'administration des organismes à but non lucratif. Nous avons créé un cadre qui résume ces rôles et responsabilités : a) Défendre la mission et la vision de l'organisme b) Garantir le respect des règlements administratifs c) Maintenir et observer le contexte politique de l'organisme d) S'engager dans des activités d'évaluation et de développement organisationnel pertinentes (par exemple : processus de changement, renforcement des capacités organisationnelles) e) Maintenir et développer la capacité du Conseil d'administration à remplir ses fonctions Choisissez l'un de ces rôles/responsabilités et expliquez comment vos intérêts personnels, vos expériences et/ou vos compétences vous permettraient d'effectuer ce rôle/cette responsabilité.**

La mission et la vision du Coco sont ce qui suscite mon intérêt à intégrer le CA. Je serai ravie de mettre à profit mes compétences, mes connaissances et mon réseau à la pérennisation de sa mission. Titulaire d'une maîtrise en "Gestion de projets à impact social" mon parcours m'a permis de développer de solides compétences en gestion et évaluation de projets. À travers mon expérience de coordonnatrice de programme, j'ai démontré de mes capacités organisationnelles et de mon leadership. J'ai mobilisé les ressources techniques et financières et coordonné et développé plusieurs partenariats. J'ai participé, également, à la conception d'outils pédagogiques et apprivoisé plusieurs approches de co-création et d'animation. Des compétences, qui je pense, pourront être utiles dans le cadre mon mandat. Par ailleurs, mon rôle de responsable de financement m'a permis de consolider mes aptitudes en recherche de financements public et privé et de développer des partenariats stratégiques avec les différents acteurs du milieu social et culturel. J'ai pu aussi contribuer à plusieurs réflexion et planification stratégique et participer pleinement à la définition d'orientations stratégiques dans plusieurs organismes. Enfin, mon engagement envers la justice sociale me pousse à vouloir m'investir davantage, de continuer à déconstruire mes propres biais tout en développant mes connaissances sur les pratiques anti-oppressives.

**4. L'inégalité sociale et la crise de santé publique qui frappent nos communautés nous rappellent qu'une culture de soin et de solidarité fait partie intégrante du bien-être des individus d'un organisme et de la communauté qu'ils desservent. Comment prenez-vous soin de vous en ces temps difficiles ? Quelles sont vos démarches en matière de soin**

**interpersonnel et/ou communautaire ? Comment comptez-vous mettre ces démarches en œuvre dans votre rôle de membre du Conseil d'administration du COCo ?**

Ce n'est pas une question facile. En ce qui me concerne, j'essaye de me prioriser tous les jours un petit peu soit pas une séance de sport, une gourmandise, une pause, un moment d'échange. Trouver le temps pour soi a toujours été important pour le bien être individuel, il est devenu indispensable durant la pandémie, et pourtant il reste un luxe. Cet équilibre me permet de trouver de la place mentale pour être présente pour mes proches et pour la communauté qui m'entoure. Mes implications à titre de bénévoles au sein de différents organismes m'ont toujours permis de garder des liens étroits avec le secteur communautaire, un lien important pour moi. Par ailleurs dans le cadre de mon emploi actuel, j'ai pu m'impliquer dans la mise en œuvre des plans d'action covid 19 au sein de plusieurs quartiers montréalais en étroite collaboration avec les tables de quartiers me permettant ainsi d'être à l'avant-scène des enjeux que vivent les organismes communautaires et leurs bénéficiaires. L'exacerbation des inégalités à laquelle nous faisons face depuis la pandémie souligne la vulnérabilité de notre tissu social et me conforte plus que jamais à continuer mon engagement personnel.

**5. Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez qu'on sache à propos de vous et de votre candidature au Conseil d'administration ?**

Sinon, je suis très sympa aussi .

# Tatiana Romanova

## Pronouns

she/her

### **1. Why do you want to run for a position with COCo's board of directors? What interests you about our organization and the kind of work we do?**

As part of my role as a Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Consultant, I have been working on the development of diverse recruitment strategies for companies while partnering with diverse non-profit organizations around Quebec and Canada to provide work opportunities to marginalized communities by connecting them with employer partners. I would like to join COCo's board of directors in order to contribute my diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility consulting experience in order to connect more non-profit and grassroots organizations to opportunities that are easily accessible to companies I work with, but are more limited in the non-profit sector. This is the gap I'm hoping to bridge by working side by side with a diverse team of individuals. As a society, we heavily rely on non-profits and grassroots to move the needle on racial justice and equity, but fail to provide them with the necessary resources to do so. I am hoping that by joining COCo, I would be able to contribute my experience and network to stand to this challenge.

### **2. COCo is committed to fostering anti-oppressive and social justice values and practices, both within the organization, and throughout the community sector. How do you see yourself supporting this part of COCo's mission during your time as a board member? On which experiences (lived, work, or otherwise), skills, and knowledge will you draw, and what kinds of training and/or learning opportunities would you seek out in service to COCo's social justice mission?**

Over the past seven years, I have been actively involved in issues of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). My volunteer involvement with organizations such as the Centre des Services aux Néo-Canadiens de Sherbrooke, World University Service of Canada's Student Refugee Program, and my work as the coordinator of the International Student Sponsorship Program at the University of Sherbrooke exposed me to challenges of immigrant integration and retention in Quebec. My numerous exchanges with newcomers and established immigrants, as well as my lived experience as immigrant, were the source of my interest in undertaking an exploratory case study on this topic as part of my thesis. I then worked in large multinational companies and Quebec SMEs, which allowed me to compare different types of corporate cultures and EDI approaches. As part of my role as a Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant, I have been working on the development of strategies, as well as the creation and facilitation of workshops and certificate programs in EDI. I am regularly partnering with diverse non-profit organizations around Quebec and Canada to provide work opportunities to marginalized communities by

connecting them with employer partners. I am also a member and co-founder of the Immigrant/Refugee Employee Resource Group, as well as a member of Indigenous and Mental health/accessibility employee resource groups which allows me to learn from others, although I continuously take courses on these topics

**3. COCo offers regular training sessions for groups we support on non-profit board members' roles and responsibilities. We created a framework which summarizes these roles and responsibilities: a) Championing the organization's mission and vision b) Ensuring adherence to laws c) Maintaining and monitoring the organization's policy landscape d) Engaging in relevant organizational evaluation and development activities (e.g. change processes, organizational capacity building) e) Maintaining and developing the board's ability to fulfill its duties Choose one of these roles/responsibilities and elaborate on how your personal interests, past experiences, and/or skills would contribute to fulfilling this role/responsibility.**

Engaging in relevant organizational evaluation and development activities.

I have worn many hats throughout her professional career and I'm often recognized for my multi-disciplinary approach. I have worked extensively in learning and development, project management and diversity & inclusion h with teams across Canada. I have lived, studied and/or worked in 5 countries, fluently speak 3 languages and, above all, I am a life-long learner. I hold a Master's degree in Communications specializing in research of immigrant integration in Quebec, and I also obtained a Specialized Master's degree in HR Management to further explore D&I from an organizational strategy viewpoint. I believe that this combination of lived and learned experience will enable me to create development activities (training, consulting services expansion, process analysis) that are unique to COCo's needs, as I believe in an adaptable personalized approach and not one-size-fits-all solutions.

**4. With social inequality and a public health crisis permeating our communities, it has become clear that a culture of care and solidarity is integral to the well-being of individuals of an organization and the health of the community they serve. During challenging times, what are ways do you practice self-care? What are ways in which you practice interpersonal and/or community care? How do you see yourself enacting this within your role as board member?**

Human connection has been my most important form of self-care that fills my bucket with abundance. During the pandemic, I have been an online career mentor for youth in Kenya and Tanzania through VSO, as well as for the organization I currently work in. I am passionate about mentoring and coaching because, by asking in-depth questions, you get the person to see that everything they need to accomplish their dreams is already within them. I would love to contribute this passion to COCo's board of directors by promoting an empowered community.

But as much as I want to contribute to fostering a community, I would like to be a part of a community of people who are striving to make our society a better, more welcoming place.

**5. Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself and your intent to run for the board of directors?**

Thank you so much for considering my application. I am also adding my LinkedIn profile. My personal mission is to create more opportunities (participation in society, work) for a diversity of communities in Québec and Canada. If there are any projects I can collaborate with or events I can promote within my network, please don't hesitate to reach out.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tatiana-romanova-diversity-consultant/>