

## Sonia Zilberman

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### SKILLS AND ASSETS

Strong ability to link local impacts with international policies and agendas; ability to build networks and partnerships, especially local-international connections; coalition building and campaigns; knowledge of the operations and policies of international financial institutions (IFIs); engagement with multilateral institutions on issues of human rights and extractive industries, fundraising.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### Crude Accountability

*Director, South Caspian Energy and Environment*

January 2016-Present

- Monitoring of extractive industries projects financed by the International Financial Institutions in the South Caspian;
- Working with local civil society and communities impacted by hydrocarbon development in the South Caspian to advocate for greater accountability, transparency and participation in decision making in the extractive industries;
- Working with private sector oil and gas companies operating in Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan to strengthen transparency, accountability;
- Research and analysis of fossil fuel financing in the Caspian, including both public and private financial institutions;
- Developing advocacy tools on the linkages between human rights, environment and energy investments targeting multilateral development banks, intergovernmental institutions and western governments working in the South Caspian.

*Prove They Are Alive! Campaign Coordinator*

January 2014-December 2016

- Work in a coalition of seven diverse international human rights organizations to hold the government of Turkmenistan accountable for gross violations of human rights through research, multilateral advocacy, and direct work with families of victims of gross human rights violations;
- Coordinated research, compiled and edited reports on enforced disappearances, torture and penitentiary conditions in Turkmenistan;
- Direct advocacy with US State Department and multilateral organizations such as the OSCE and the UN to highlight individual cases of human rights violations and broad sweeping repression in Turkmenistan which includes bilateral meetings, organization of events and panels;
- Production of various communications materials such as press releases, policy statements, open letters, articles, reports and background documents;
- Direct engagement with relatives of victims of enforced disappearances to gather information for publication, amplify their voices at the international level through facilitation of high level meetings and show solidarity through campaign activities.
- Serve on the Board of Advisors for a small grants project on Turkmenistan

**Translation Consultant**

July 2012-December 2013

- Provided Russian to English translation services to corporate and non-profit clients.

**CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation**

*Consultant, Eurasia Programme*

October 2010- January 2011

- Coordinated the organization, outcomes and advocacy components of the Parallel OSCE Civil Society Conference.

- Coordinated the work of the International Organizational Committee of the Parallel OSCE Civil Society Conference made up of 22 international and regional organizations.
- Coordinated the Eurasia Network advocacy actions and engagement.
- Fundraised two separate grants for the Parallel OSCE Civil Society Conference.
- Co-organized the Regional Workshop for Central Asian Human Rights Defenders with OHCHR, and other multilateral organizations and NGOs.

*Manager, Eurasia Programme*

February 2009—September 2011

- Established and coordinated the Eurasia International Digital Exchange and Advocacy Network project: a regional network of over 40 NGOs across Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan which aims to identify regional threats to civil society and respond through advocacy strategies targeted at raising awareness and leveraging action from the international community.
- In partnership with regional civil society, coordinated campaigns of the Network in the thematic areas of: a) freedom of internet use; b) regional standards for freedom of association; c) influencing donor policies; d) transparency, and; c) defending human rights defenders.
- Coordinated activities of Network campaigning, including: analyses, press releases, open letters to presidents and intergovernmental officials, information dissemination through new media tools, support of campaigns and initiatives.
- Was responsible for managing and reporting upon on a EURO 500,000 project budget, and temporarily the entire Programme budget as delegated Acting Manager responsibilities.
- Promoted local civil society engagement and advocacy on Eurasia related issues at the United Nations through advocacy with the Secretary General's Office, the Human Rights Council and OHCHR through Side Events, oral interventions, statement, UPR submissions, and briefings on regional and country related issues.
- Oversaw the work of 2 regional project partners and managed 3 regional consultants.
- Successfully fundraised over USD 40,000 for year-long grant for UN engagement for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan civil society.

**The Bank Information Center** (NGO, [www.bicusa.org](http://www.bicusa.org)), Washington, DC

*Consultant, Europe and Central Asia Program*

May—December 2008

- Developing and implementing a strategy to promote benefit sharing for indigenous peoples affected by the IFI-financed extractive industries projects in Russia.
- Fund-raising for projects involving monitoring of IFI financed extractive industry activities, which affect forest dependent indigenous peoples in Russia.

*Associate, Europe and Central Asia Program*

March 2007-April 2008

- Forged partnership with Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), to monitor World-Bank-Group financed extractive-industries projects that impact indigenous communities in the Russian Federation. This included field-trip assessments of project sites, capacity building workshops with local communities, and development of benefit-sharing agreements with project companies.
- Successfully raised funds to develop the 'Indigenous Peoples, Extractive Industries and International Financial Institutions: Benefit Sharing in Russia' project.
- Worked with Central-Asian and Eastern-European partners to promote revenue and contract transparency, accountability and benefit sharing within extractive industry projects. This included advocacy campaigns toward the international financial institutions, organization of Washington-based Conference on Extractive Industries in the Former Soviet Union, and monitoring of implementation of World-Bank Policies and Safeguards.
- Expanded The Bank Information Center's work to engage with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and conducted a presentation at a UNPFII entitled "International Financial Institutions in Russia: Indigenous Peoples Policies, Standards and Compliance".

## **The Nature Conservancy**

*Consultant, Marine Conservation and Community Outreach --US Virgin Islands*

July—December 2006

- Conducted a historical analysis of community engagement in the creation of the St. Croix East End Marine Park (EEMP), US Virgin Islands. Perceptions of local fishing communities, local and international conservation organizations, the tourism sector and government officials were documented to draw lessons for the future design and implementation of a territorial marine park system. Scope of work focused on participatory approaches to MPA design, identification of institutional partnerships and capacity of government bodies. Products include a published paper and poster displayed at the 59<sup>th</sup> Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Conference.
- Co-authored Environmental Briefing Book for territorial Senators.
- Created media and outreach materials to promote marine conservation in the US Virgin Islands.

*Consultant, Marine Protected Areas and Poverty Reduction Study ---Indonesia*

January—May 2006

- Consultancy at TNC's Indo-Pacific Resource Center provided research towards Master's Thesis Project
- Research and literature review included: a) international frameworks and standards of Marine Protected Areas; b) socio-economic benefits of marine conservation; c) socio-economic significance of coral reef ecosystems and conservation strategies.
- Conducted socio-economic survey and participatory data collection in villages within Berau Marine Protected Area, Indonesia, concerning the locally perceived linkages between marine natural resource management, poverty, health and education. Findings and recommendations regarding local level participation were presented to TNC project and Headquarters offices.

**IUCN- The World Conservation Union, US Multilateral Office, Washington, DC**

*Research Fellow, Global Policy*

September 2003—May 2006

- Worked on the Environmental and Social Policy Review processes of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This included: drafting IUCN's written recommendations to the Banks throughout the consultative processes; participation in civil society consultations; conducting comparative analyses of the Environmental Safeguards and Policies of the World Bank Group, IDB and the Asian Development Bank.
- Represented IUCN at Global Environmental Facility meetings, including Council; and reported on the changes in the GEF institutional framework to IUCN Secretariat.
- Provided research and analyses on the topics of: a) Official Development Assistance (ODA) trends, projections into 2015, and flows to the environmental sector; b) North-South cooperation, and partnership building among international and local civil society; c) linkages between poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

## **SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

- "Horse Breeding and Human Rights in Turkmenistan", EurasiaNet.org. 22 September, 2015. [Link](#)
- "The Ovadan Depe Prison: Medieval Torture in Modern Turkmenistan", Prove They Are Alive! Campaign. September 2014. [Link](#)
- "Prove They Are Alive!: The Disappeared in Turkmenistan", Prove They Are Alive! Campaign. September 2014. [Link](#)
- "Uzbekistan's Threatened Cultural Legacy". *The Guardian*. 15 April 2010. [Link](#)
- "If Gas Could Talk". *The Guardian*. 14 December 2009. [Link](#)
- "The Novatek Gas Project financed by the International Finance Corporation: Overview of Responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples". *Indigenous peoples and industrial corporations: from conflict - to partnership; from charity - to development programs*. Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North / Russian Indigenous Training Center (CSIPN / RITC), (2008).

- “International Financial Institutions in Russia: Indigenous Peoples Policies, Standards and Compliance”. *UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues International Workshop on Perspectives of Relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Industrial Companies*. Salekhard, Russian Federation, (2007).
- “Understanding and Acceptance of Conservation: Analyzing Perceptions of Local Communities in the Berau Marine Protected Area, Indonesia”. *The George Washington University, Elliott School of International Affairs*, (2006).

## EDUCATION

### MA, International Development Studies

May 2006

Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University, Washington, DC

- Concentration: Natural Resources and the Environmental Policy
- Thesis Project: *Understanding and Acceptance of Conservation: Analyzing Perceptions of Local Communities in the Berau Marine Protected Area, Indonesia*.

**BA, International Affairs, Magna cum Laude, George Washington University Honors Program** May 2004 The George Washington University, Washington, DC

- Concentrations: *International Environmental Resources; Eastern Europe*
- Enosinian Scholarship Thesis: *Environmental Impacts of Chinese Western Development: Engaging the Indigenous Communities in Conservation Initiatives*.

### BA, Russian Language and Literature

May 2004

The George Washington University, Washington, DC

### Certificate, UN Human Rights System

November 2010

Human Rights Education Associates Distance Learning Program

### School for International Training

- *Amazonian Ecology and Natural Resource Management Program, Amazon, Brazil* June 2003
- *International Studies, Organizations, Social Justice Program, Geneva, Switzerland* Dec 2002

### Minor, Fine Arts and Art History

May 2004

The George Washington University, Washington, DC

## LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Fluency in English, Russian (Native), Spanish; intermediate standing in French.