

Report by Zuky Serper on the event

Activists and Academics Forum has been hosted by the Centre for World Environmental History (CWEH) at the University of Sussex since the first meeting in May 2013.

lives, based on case studies from

capitalising on documentation of hardships - for the communities to tell their stories and highlight their needs are focus for the community activist group, working to remedy this community's livelihood.

In the afternoon session, the speakers were telling the stories of five successful local

The area has copper deposits, sought after by mining companies. In total, 42% of world copper is purchased by China. Since 1995 successful work started in kicking out two mining multinationals: Mitsubishi (1995-97) and a medium Canadian company (2004). There are 41 communities living there, organised to defend their drinking water, in the face of possible expansion of a copper mining lease.

There is state repression and circumstantial collusion between state and mining interests. The Junin community disarmed paramilitaries sent by a Canadian mining company, successfully stopped prospective mining, and lives under strong police intimidation, as state interests are now moving in.

Javier Ramirez, the secretary of Junin community was arrested five months ago (April 2014?) and held without trial ever since.

Carlos Zorrilla's house was raided in the mid-1990's, with the intention to arrest and imprison him. The belief is that mining interests had hand in this affair, which forced Zorrilla into hiding. Further harassment was stopped after Amnesty International intervened. Nine month ago Zorrilla was defamed publicly by Ecaudor's president Rafael Correa, whose progressive public image has not prevented him from joining the harassment of ecological activists.

The Decoin campaign [<http://www.decoin.org>] developed alternative programmes for economic sustainability based on Eco tourism and organic farming, refusing government funding for conservation, while linking with international conservation organisations. A manual 'Protect your Communities' was put online.

Canadian campaigns and lawyers successfully brought the de-listing of mining companies in Canada for their human rights violations.

Carlos Larrea, Professor at the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecaudor, participated in the forum via internet link, and presented the case of the Yasuni Park in Amazonian Ecaudor, where crude oil was kept underground for five years between 2008-2013, following a unique process and legislation of protecting biodiverse unique area. President Correa announced the initiative to the United Nations in 2007.

Ecuador's decision to keep oil indefinitely underground was based on the international community contributing at least half of the revenue that the state would earn by extracting the oil. The fund, administered by the UNDP, would be invested exclusively in renewable energy in Ecuador, preserving undisturbed rainforests and original ecosystems, and promoting sustainable social development in the Amazon.

The Yasuni-ITT, an area of 928.000 hectares, is the most biodiverse hot spot in the Southern Hemisphere with an estimated of 850.000 barrels of heavy unexploited oil reserves underground. In 2013 President Correa cancelled the agreement and decided to start oil extraction in the Yasuni Park. There are 14 indigenous nationalities in Ecaudor, that since 1972 have been severely affected by oil extraction: indigenous cultures in the Amazon have been seriously disturbed and oil pollution brought diseases to indigenous peoples. Social movements, grassroots organizations and indigenous

peo

Keep Oil in the Soil

Coal in the Hole

Gas under the Grass

Already in the 1980's, there were calls to stop American-style development programmes. Oil Watch advocated keeping oil in the ground far earlier than the Ecaudorian Yasuni Par

A list of books and authors mentioned during the talk:

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www.ejatlaser.org - to compile, analyze and distribute knowledge about conflicts that are the results of environmental justice.

Joan referred to the creativity of activists organisations, which good r