

A portrait of Gregory Biniowsky, a man with short dark hair, wearing a brown sweater over a white collared shirt. He is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is a blurred cityscape across a body of water.

Gregory Biniowsky LL.B.

By Joe Wiebe

Gregory Biniowsky (LL.B. '07) admits he has taken a roundabout route towards his goal to work in environmental law: a B.A. in Political Science from Carleton University, including exchange years spent at the Sorbonne and the University of Havana; one year spent pursuing a Masters in Political Science at York University; another year in Havana spent studying the Cuban/Latin American legal system; and, finally, an LL.B. from UBC.

"That's a bit of my life philosophy," Biniowsky says over an internet audio connection from Havana. "If someone is too uni-dimensional in terms of their focus, sometimes they don't get where they want to go."

Biniowsky is working on contract for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), coordinating a \$5 million sustainable development fund. He has lived in Cuba on and off for 15 years, and has worked on several different contracts for CIDA and the United Nations there. He has also taught courses on Canadian History and Politics at the University of Havana (earning the same \$20/month as Cuban professors), and even worked with David Suzuki as a coordinator, researcher and translator for a CBC *Nature of Things* documentary called "Cuba: The Accidental Revolution." Deep down in his lengthy resume there is even a reference to an acting role in a Cuban Television movie that aired in 2000.

Biniowsky believes it is important for lawyers interested in pursuing careers in international environmental law to experience the cultures where they intend to focus their efforts.

"Somebody who's thinking of doing international environmental law and hasn't taken the time between when they began undergraduate to finishing their law degree to go live in Latin America or Asia or Africa, I think is at a distinct disadvantage," he argues. "So much of international environmental law has to do with one's intercultural fluency."