

This month
Johanna Ramirez Bernal
interviewed Natalya Prozorova,
geoscientist at Xodus Group



NATALYA, LET'S START FROM THE BEGINNING, WHERE DID YOU GROW UP AND HOW DID YOU ENDED UP IN THE OIL INDUSTRY?

I was born in a small city called Neftekamsk about 1,000 km to the east of Moscow. It was founded in 1963 after the discovery of the Arlan oil field. I grew up in the city surrounded by oil rigs everywhere but, to be honest, I never thought about becoming a petroleum geologist when I was a child. It was my older sister Elena who became the first petroleum geologist in our family and she convinced me to go for a career in the oil business. Her passion and enthusiasm for everything she was learning and experiencing in the geology program at Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU) were so contagious that I decided to try it myself.

MSU is one of the most prestigious higher education institutions in Russia and it's very difficult to pass the entry exams for a person with average education from rural city. It took one year of exam preparation for my sister and two years for me. I graduated from the University with a diploma with honors, spent four years of my Bachelor degree focusing on geochemistry, structural and petroleum geology, and a two-year Masters degree focusing on seismic interpretation. My experience in the oil industry started with Fugro Jason where I did a summer internship during the first year of my Masters. The turning point in my career came at a Russian service company named Largeo where I worked during my second summer internship and continued as an employee. I worked on Russian and international projects such as West Siberia and Equatorial Guinea. That gave me Western African experience, which gave me the opportunity to find a job abroad.

Subsequently, after some time working in Moscow I realized that I was ready to explore the world and go for something new. I applied for a job at Xodus Group, a global independent engineering consultancy that had just opened the office right in the center of The Hague and was hiring people for new projects. After the interview I got a feeling that it was the company I would love to work for with loads of opportunities and a good team of professionals. The same night, I received their job offer. It was the best present I could have wished for, for my 25th birthday, which happened to be in a few days time!

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ROLE AT XODUS GROUP?

I'm a Geoscientist, a combination of Geologist and Geophysicist, working on seismic interpretation and geomodeling. So far during my three years at Xodus, I have worked in different geological settings in Nigeria, Oman and currently the North Sea. The golden policy of the company is integration; people from different disciplines communicate to produce a high quality work. I was trained not only in seismic interpretation but also in all the steps to build a static geological model, to

communicate with reservoir engineers and petrophysicists, participate in data rooms, and so on. I was recently promoted to a higher grade which will give me the opportunity to become a project manager for one of the smaller projects at our office. I cannot wait to start this new role!

Apart of professional side I have found a second family in Xodus. Moving to another country with no family and no friends around was quite tough but I was lucky to join a company where Dutch people and people from other countries with different backgrounds and religion became my friends.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF TEN YEARS FROM NOW?

Since I was a child I have aimed to be good and successful in my profession. I would like to become a worldwide expert and open my own company in the future. I enjoy being involved in business development, an area where communication skills are the key to success. I always enjoy dealing with people and making new contacts.

For now, I feel very happy to have the opportunity to be a part of both groups, technical and non-technical, and will try my best to develop in both worlds.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE THINKING ON MOVING AND WORKING ABROAD?

The oil and gas industry offers great opportunities to gain worldwide experience, to extend your knowledge, to encounter other cultures, and to meet new people and friends. I would say go for it, set clear goals for yourself, dare to dream and work hard while you are young, enthusiastic and full of energy.

Nothing is impossible, as my father would say; it just depends on how much you want it. For myself, my next goal is to learn Dutch and speak it fluently. ■





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Thanks to a comprehensive suite of technical competencies, we can add value to every phase of a study or project – from front-end analysis and risk-based decision-making through to technology development, project delivery and operational support.

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