

# ILA ASPLUND

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## CONTACT

"Ila" pronounced "eye lah"  
she/her/hers  
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## PORTFOLIO

[writing.halfsky.org](http://writing.halfsky.org)

### Re: Senior Copywriter role at REI

Dear REI hiring team,

The Senior Copywriter role at REI presents a perfect opportunity to apply my talents, years of work and life experience, and passion for REI's mission to awaken a lifelong love of the outdoors for everyone, everywhere.

My calling is to find people's stories of change and personal discovery, placing these stories precisely where they will attract the highest outcome. I have more than ten years of experience elevating brands across the U.S. and across the planet — helping raise millions of dollars and followers on behalf of values-driven organizations along the way.

At Mercy Corps, I write, edit, and produce digital campaigns that deepen relationships with our audience. As a member of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force, I'm driven to increase transparency and authenticity in both our external language and internal approach to storytelling. My creative work has resulted in record-breaking engagement and revenue numbers.

I am aligned with REI's inclusive, multicultural, and anti-racist values. As the founder of Half Sky Journeys, I created one-of-a-kind travel experiences to connect diverse women leaders, activists, and philanthropists across oceans and across belief systems. I wrote and designed itineraries, marketing materials, and story assets to convey trip highlights and outcomes.

I helped establish World Pulse, a global women's media brand, producing a print magazine which evolved into a digital platform. I wrote content that inspired individual and corporate investment in our work, and citizen journalists to join our community. My work was key to forging an online network of 30,000 of grassroots activists and gaining major media recognition.

As a perpetual traveler, whether in a new country or unknown mountain range, I am familiar with feeling lost. I treasure the empathy that being "out of place" has kindled in me. When it comes to writing, I believe that empathy — for our audience and for those whose stories we tell — is the essential starting point.

I know you'll have your pick of talented writers with outdoor industry backgrounds to choose from for this role. Maybe my portfolio gives the impression that the work at REI would be too different from work I've done in the past. But being outside my comfort zone? That IS my comfort zone.

It's clear that REI walks its talk when it comes to creating spaces where anyone and everyone can feel welcome — and I'm 100% on board with this bold vision. I'd love the chance to collaborate with your creative team and make our work together something greater than the sum of its parts. I'm ready to hit the ground running and join you on this adventure. Shall we begin?

To the path ahead,



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## EDUCATION

University of Washington, Seattle, WA:  
Bachelor of Arts: English (Creative  
Writing), Cum Laude with Honors

Seattle University, WA: Teaching English  
to Speakers of Other Languages,  
Teaching Certificate

## TECHNICAL TRAINING, PLATFORMS & SKILLS

Project Management expertise with MS  
Project, Wrike, Basecamp, Asana

HTML for web; CMS tools: Wordpress,  
Drupal, Weebly, Wix, Squarespace,

Adobe Creative Suite Fundamentals,  
Pacific Northwest College of Art

The Poynter Institute  
online courses: Ethics of Journalism,

Design Thinking Workshops, San  
Francisco & New York City

Beginning Improv, Curious Comedy  
Theater, Portland, OR

## WORK HISTORY

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### Marketing Manager

Mercy Corps, 2020 to present

- Copywriting and editing: deliver value, drive engagement, and achieve revenue goals via first-in-class storytelling for web and email
- Research assets, uncover original sources, and interview participants and team members, to identify stories that demonstrate the impact of Mercy Corps' domestic and international programs
- Write and edit CEO and other executives' public communications
- Create a byline index of diverse, expert voices from our global team to ensure that story content is told from multiple perspectives.
- Analyze campaign outcomes to create data-informed decisions to improve future content performance
- Collaborate with social media manager to offer cohesive, relevant messaging and multi-media experiences across the user journey
- Work within and contribute to guidelines for language and imagery that embrace values of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Member of internal DEI working group, working to improve both internal and external practices and communications

### Freelance Digital Communications

Half Sky Writing, 2018-ongoing

- Copywriter and project manager for [Relevant Studios](#), a branding, logo, and design agency
- Copywriting, materials design, event planning and facilitation for [Future Leader Now](#) - providing change management, design thinking, and team culture-building workshops across the globe (Silicon Valley, NYC, London) for professionals from major companies including: Virgin Media, Kellogg's, Whole Foods, Apple, LinkedIn

### Director of Marketing & Communications

WorldOregon (formerly World Affairs Council), 2016-2018

- Led content creation, copywriting, and design for all digital and print communications: e-newsletters, fundraising appeals, event promotion
- Utilized data and analytic tools to measure effectiveness of digital outreach strategies, continuously adapted campaigns to achieve goals
- Wrote pitches to media, press releases, prepared interviews, and wrote scripts for radio spots promoting speaker events with thought leaders, including journalist Lulu Garcia-Navarro, author Masha Gessen, travel guru Rick Steves, and racial justice activist Shaun King
- Wrote, scripted, produced promotional video
- Crafted and managed an editorial calendar to focus messaging across all communication channels (web, social, email, direct mail)

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## LANGUAGES, GLOBAL EXPERIENCE, & VOLUNTEERING

Languages: Native English speaker, basic conversational Bahasa Indonesia, beginning French (speaking/listening)

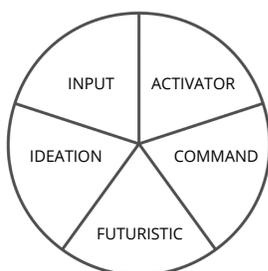
Work and extended travel in countries such as Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania

Rapporteur and blogger for Vital Voices (New Delhi, India)

Conference Speaker, Media for Activism, Global Leadership Conference (Indonesia)

Volunteer, International Refugee Hospital Literacy Program (Seattle, WA)

## GALLUP'S "STRENGTHSFINDER" STRENGTHS



## WORK HISTORY

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### Founder & CEO

Half Sky Journeys, 2010-2015

- Increase impact of cause-centered businesses through creating in-person and digital engagements worldwide
- Design premium international events to unite social impact leaders with a lens on women's rights, past trips include Cambodia, [Kenya](#), and [Rwanda](#)

### Director of Communications

World Pulse Media, 2006-2010

- Wrote marketing campaigns for donor audiences, plus external and internal community audiences
- Transformed data and research into written narratives to grow support
- Served as ghostwriter and editor of CEO's internal and external communications to supporters, board, and subscribers
- Interviewed participants virtually and in person to collect and share stories
- Led advertising creation for a quarterly print magazine,
- Built outreach strategy which tripled membership to our social network

### Design Team Project Manager

Opolis Design Agency, 2005-2006

- Managed execution of print and 3-D design projects for **major sports and outdoor industry clients like Nike, Adidas, and Gerber**
- Facilitated internal communications for designers, vendors, and clients

### Marketing Director

One With Heart Wellness Center, 2001-2005

- Created internal team sales strategy resulting in most profitable year to date, funding a self-defense scholarship for low-income families
- Wrote copy for website, press releases, e-news, media (TV/web/radio)

### Marketer & Trainer of Trainers

Teach and Travel, 1999 - 2001

- Sold premium cost workshops by leading outreach and marketing events
- Wrote curriculum, taught, and certified students
- Consulted new teachers in preparation for employment overseas

### Team Leader, Customer Service

Amazon.com, 1998-2000

- Helped develop written content for LINUX-based "blurbarry" system, to train representatives to respond in "customer-centric" style, empowering team to reflect the brand with every email interaction