

Sydney Roeder – May 2016

### Reflections on Internship with EcoPeace

When my fellow classmates would discuss internships in the United States, many of the stories and positions gave me the idea that interns were simply glorified, unpaid secretaries. So one could imagine my surprise when I sat down with my advisor and started discussing being in charge of writing the templates for EcoPeace on Priority Projects (PPs). PPs are highlights of what is being accomplished by EcoPeace in the Jordan Valley. What started out as seven PPs to be written for the semester, turned into eight or more and a strategy to be written on a landfill project in Deir Alla. This challenged my professional writing skills in ways that I had not imagined could happen in such a setting. Of course, one of the greatest assets that many college interns have coming to the Middle East is their strong English writing competencies (well, hopefully) and I was no exception to that rule. However, the internship certainly did not consist of me staring at a computer screen in a cubicle for 5 months. EcoPeace owns an EcoPark in the north of Jordan and many meetings are held there between Palestinians and Israelis because of the convenience of location (right next to the Israeli border). This park is beautiful and is one of the only places that smelled like trees in Jordan (that I know of). When we first arrived, I could not believe that this was the area where most of EcoPeace's collaborative meetings occurred. In this park, I attended two branding meetings for the Jordan Valley as well as a camping retreat for both Israeli and Jordanian high school students. All of these experiences included what I had learned in the classroom and what I had worked on in relation to water sustainability over the past year. I grew both within EcoPeace and outside of it and formed some wonderful relationships that I know will follow me for the rest of my life. This internship far outweighed my expectations and I know that I received much better and more applicable experience than I would have in the United States. I definitely recommend it for anyone who is interested in similar subjects!