

EcoPeace Middle East Internship Reflection  
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I came to intern at EcoPeace Middle East through a professional development opportunity provided by my employer in Washington DC. Before beginning my internship in the Amman office, I spent a year working as the Environmental Coordinator for Patagonia DC. Much of this role involved community building, and I was inspired by EcoPeace's model for establishing cross-community cooperation and fostering a network of grassroots activists. For the past two months I have been supporting EcoPeace's mission as a project intern for the Good Water Neighbors program.

From my first day in the office to my last week here I have felt welcomed and supported by the whole team. And I have seen firsthand how dedicated EcoPeace is to making their internship program an opportunity for young Jordanian and international interns to develop professionally. I have greatly appreciated the fact that EcoPeace strives to maximize the skills of their interns, and this experience working to support grassroots activism and campaigns has provided me with many new ideas for programming and discussion to bring back to my work in DC.

One of the major components of my internship was providing research support for EcoPeace's faith-based advocacy campaign. Conducting this research on interfaith environmentalism provided me an opportunity to generate substantive content to support EcoPeace's mission while learning about a new lens through which to view environmental work. Also a result of this internship, I have been able to think critically about how best I can continue to support the environmental movement internationally and locally, and during my time here applied for a master's degree in strategic communication with a focus on social impact and advocacy.

In addition to my work in the Amman office, EcoPeace provided me the opportunity to travel on multiple occasions to the Sharhabil Ben Hassneh Ecopark in the Jordan River Valley in order to experience Good Water Neighbor cross-border events. Seeing the community-based programs on the ground illustrated to me the full impact of EcoPeace's bottom-up advocacy. EcoPeace works with students and teachers in cross-border communities and I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in a seminar on young women's empowerment as well as a regional teachers' conference. Through these events I was able to see the ways in which EcoPeace engages educators and learners in order to promote environmental cooperation.

After spending two months with EcoPeace, I have been given a holistic view into their unique model of environmental peacebuilding. Although EcoPeace is working on across international borders, I have found great relevancy to my work at home and hope to bring back trans-boundary strategies to address environmental issues arising from social borders. EcoPeace's intersectional approach to environmentalism and emphasis on equitable distribution of natural resources has inspired me to look more closely at the issues of environmental justice in my own community. It is my hope to continue working to combat these issues and I am grateful for the experience working in environmental advocacy provided to me by EcoPeace Middle East.