

Kojo Minta Memorial Fund Research and Travel Award 2014

Report from Gabrielle Dyson

West Bank fieldwork for the MSc in Nature, Society and Environmental Policy.

This summer I went to the West Bank to do fieldwork for my MSc in Nature, Society and Environmental Policy. The Kojo Minta Memorial Fund helped me pay for flights and an interpreter during interviews with Palestinian farmers for my project, which focused on agricultural policy and institutions. Specifically, I investigated agrochemical regulations, looking at how fragmented governance networks in the West Bank affect farmers' crop production method. This was placed in the context of the wider social and environmental implications of using chemicals in food systems. My aim was to reveal how the problem of agrochemical regulation and distribution presents itself in the West Bank, as a product of complex political, economic, and environmental factors.

Once in the West Bank, I interviewed several farmers (mostly conventional producers, both large and smallholders) throughout different areas, to find out about their techniques of fertiliser and pesticide use (and reasons why they may or may not use them). The main part of my fieldwork, though, involved interviewing representatives from institutions involved in agricultural policy and governance: Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environmental Affairs officials of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, an official of the Israeli Civil Administration in the West Bank, large international organisations like the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN, and also smaller NGOs. The data I gathered on these different actors' approaches to agrochemical governance highlighted the messy tangle of problems arising from the extended occupation and conflict in the West Bank, which affect farmers and policy makers' efforts to forge a sustainable and safe future for local people.



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