

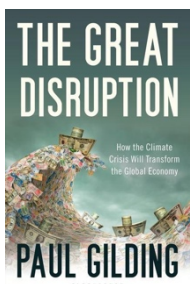
Lara's Story

My name is Lara and I am a second year bachelor student. I am passionate about mental health and creating a healthy society, which was the reason for moving from Germany to Leiden for my studies. Another one of my passions is sustainability, which is why I joined the LUGO committee in September 2019, where together we try to raise awareness. As a team, we want to make people think about the crisis we are experiencing and help others to become multipliers themselves. Having a network of people that is aware of climate change and their impact on our environment is a great help in changing your habits. It is a source of inspiration, strength and also helps you to learn more about sustainability.



The current economic system and the consumerism it promotes are a big underlying factor of why it is so easy to make unsustainable choices. Oftentimes it is more convenient: Why take the train for 20 hours when you can fly to Italy for the summer? However, I believe that we can help each other to change our daily habits for the better. In one of my psychology courses I learned about nudging, which is a strategy that helps people in changing their behavior. One simple element that can help us act in accordance to our moral values is a reminder that we have a choice. This realization releases us out of our automatic schemes and facilitates the overwriting of our habits. Understanding how our brains work is vital in changing our behavior. It therefore seems clear that psychology should play an important role when it comes to dealing with the climate crisis.

I believe that consumerism has led us into a climate crisis which will have drastic consequences for us all. In order to save the planet and ourselves we need big changes in our system and our thinking. I want to help raise awareness, about the big and the little things that we can - and should - change in order to live sustainably and within the limits of our planet. These changes will not only save humanity from unimaginable suffering, it will also help us to prioritize happiness, connectedness, and health over consumerism.



To close off, I would like to share a very interesting read, *The Great Disruption* (2011) by the environmentalist Paul Gilding. He points out the role economic growth plays in the climate crisis. According to him, it is time to stop just worrying about climate change, as it is too late to escape the consequences. Instead, we need to act now, to keep climate change at bay. His solution: The transition into a steady-state economy that does not rely on growth. For those who would like to learn more about the interplay of climate change and economic growth his book is definitely the right place to start!