

Simon's Story

My name is Simon and I am currently studying a degree in Industrial Ecology, a joint master degree of Leiden University and TU Delft on sustainability. Within this program I am focussing on the food system. Where many people often think about energy and mobility in terms of sustainability, food actually has at least as much potential to have an impact on sustainability! In fact, the existence of humanity is at stake if we don't transition towards a sustainable food system. That's why, next to my studies, I decided to take action. In January (2020) I co-founded a company called Gros together with Minne, a good friend of mine, and my sister, Hester. The strength of our company lies in the multidisciplinary of our knowledge, namely organizational science, food innovation and industrial ecology. To solve the complex problem of sustainable food systems I find it necessary to look at this matter from various backgrounds.



Picture from left to right: Minne, Hester, Simon

Gros is a young and creative business that aims to accelerate the sustainable food transition. We try to achieve this by creating and stimulating sustainable business cases in the food sector. The projects we do are very diverse, ranging from solving food waste to creating transparency in supply chains. We are now for example doing a project for the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Safety, where we are developing a tool that will help consumers to waste less food. Next to that together with the French initiative 'C'est qui, le patron?!' we will start setting up a food cooperative in August that will ensure sustainable and fair food production and complete transparency to consumers. We have found these projects very exciting, however we are still optimizing our strategy of the best way of creating impact by what we do best: connecting people, knowledge and creativity.

It is very rewarding and challenging to run a company next to your studies. I find it to be like being in between two worlds: the academic research oriented and the practical business world. Tapping knowledge and insights from the one and experience and real life examples from the other. Both worlds can really complement each other! Academia can sometimes be too abstract, whereas business may lack research insights. I don't want to say everyone should start a company, but doing projects next to your study programme can be really valuable, both for you as a student as well as for the world that needs your talents! Most importantly: do the things that suit you, that you have a passion for and/or that you're good at.

If you want to know more about our projects or want to chat about anything you can always contact me on simon@gros-food.nl or check out our website www.gros-food.nl.