

“No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.”

These words by Sir David Attenborough succinctly summarize why awareness and empathy is important in sustainable practices.

Coming from India, I had incredible opportunities to experience the country’s rich biodiversity and wanted to share those experiences with the whole world. I would also spend hours watching documentaries about nature, trying to comprehend how our tiny blue planet was capable of sustaining so much life and within it, so many mysteries and miracles.

My fascination with these documentaries became a gateway into the larger issue of climate change, as a younger me would soon discover that our tiny blue planet and all that it contained is on the brink of devastation. I remember watching a documentary about Kiribati, a group of islands in the Pacific



Ocean, a part of which was submerged under water due to rising sea levels. Through it, I gained a nuanced understanding of how climate change is affecting real people today. I started wondering why the people around me seemed unconcerned by this, and especially how climate change affects the world disproportionately. But just because we do not experience it ourselves, does not mean it is not important. The impending consequences of climate change affects certain areas more severely than others and I truly believe that awareness can be instrumental in bringing about change in the behaviour of people. Documentaries and films are an excellent way of doing just that. As a student of Media Studies with a specialisation in Film and Photographic Studies at Leiden, my aim is to understand the intersectionality between sustainability and media, and apply it to the real world.

In a hyper-digitized era, visual media has gained importance in spreading a strong message. Be it the devastating imagery of sea animals choking on plastic, or the horrific visuals of forests burning down, the power of images has the potential to bring about a certain realization among people. That realization is the first step towards concrete change.

Although it might seem unlikely for Film Studies to have a concrete connection with environmentalism, I would love to explore the different ways in which I can apply that knowledge to sustainability or integrate it with the message of a more sustainable world. In fact, I strongly believe that climate activism can benefit from visual medium like film and photography as a means of disseminating information that is accessible and comprehensible by anyone, regardless of their level of education. Additionally, Being a part of LUGO and working with a dedicated group of people has been immensely rewarding as it constantly encourages me to think of ways in which sustainability can be integrated into not only our systems of education.

My hope for the future is to make work that invokes a sense of passion and agency in people regarding the issue of sustainability.

Finally, here are some of my favourite documentaries that have been essential in my journey towards understanding the issue of climate change: *A Plastic Ocean (2016)*; *Before the Flood (2016)*; *Chasing Coral (2017)*; *The Promise of Biomimicry (2020)*; *Our Planet (2020)*; *The Third Industrial Revolution: A Radical New Sharing Economy (2018)*; *Minimalism: A Documentary About the Important Things (2015)*; *Chasing Ice (2012)*, *Years of Living Dangerously (2014-2016)*; *Ten Billion (2015)*; and *The 11th Hour (2007)*.