



There is a lot of work to do if we want to go towards a sustainable society. Luckily there are many different opportunities to do so. For me, this started at Leiden University Green Office (LUGO). I have always been interested and passionate about the environment and LUGO helped me finding a way to put this passion into practice. I have been part of LUGO for a long time. I started as a member, then became the Education and Research coordinator, then the Manager and after that I have been a mentor for the new board. The reason I started working for LUGO was because I believed that Leiden University not only *should* incorporate sustainability more, but also *could*. It was really

inspiring to me to work with students and staff with different backgrounds towards the same goals namely increasing awareness about sustainability and supporting Leiden University in decreasing their CO<sub>2</sub> footprint.

How we worked towards these goals was up to us. This gave us a lot of space to explore and grow. During these years we organized various projects such as the funky phone challenge (LUGO won the challenge by collecting 251 phones), selling reusable LUGO bottles at the cafeterias of Leiden University to stimulate drinking tap water and reducing PET bottles (we sold over 6000 bottles in a year and as it was such a big success Leiden University took over of this project). To give the latter project an extra boost we worked together with Marijn Tinga, the plastic soup surfer. To stimulate it even further, we worked together with the municipality of Leiden. We also spoke at the opening of the EL CID and hereby reached many students. On a more serious note, we were also in close contact with the executive board of Leiden University and involved in the Leiden University Environmental Policy Plan. LUGO also has an international touch and thus went on a weekend trip meeting other EU LUGO'ers to learn from each other. Lastly, because of the projects that we did I was lucky enough to go to Costa Rica to give a workshop on a three day conference about education, the Earth Charter and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As can be read I spent a lot of time at LUGO, but it was a lot of time well spent. As I was part of the beginning of LUGO it was first important to create a strong foundation within LUGO and the university. During my time at LUGO I realized

that if I wanted to work in the sustainability field, I really want to know the facts behind the green ideas. Therefore, I followed the master Industrial Ecology. During this master I had the chance to increase my knowledge about sustainability. This master takes a systemic approach to sustainability problems. An interdisciplinary approach, integrating an engineering, environmental and social science perspective is essential for sustainable development. Last week I graduated, and I am now working for Statistics Netherlands (CBS) as an environmental and economic researcher / data scientist. At CBS I work on projects such as the Monitor of Well-being, Natuurlijk Kapitaalrekeningen and Material Monitor. These projects match perfectly with the themes I explored and learned during LUGO and my master. Additionally, knowledge based on facts is the foundation for improvement. This is really something I learned during my time at LUGO and my studies and which I see now in my current job.

My time at LUGO has been very valuable for my personal and professional growth. My advice would be to stay curious. Read a lot, try out a lot of things and wonder about what could improve and how and according to whom. We not only *should* start today, but also *could* start today. Once again, there is a lot of work to do and it is up to you to find the right fit for you.