

## LUGO Alumni: Soem Zeijlmans

I first started getting involved with Leiden University Green Office (LUGO) in the second year of my bachelor, as a volunteer. Like many people who are interested in sustainability, I joined events, clean-ups, and tried to live a sustainable lifestyle. Yet, for me the attempts seemed futile: it felt like draining a bathtub with a dropper, while the tap was fully open. I realised that if I truly wanted to make a positive impact on our environment, I had to tackle the root causes of unsustainability.

Many of our current ecological threats, like global heating and the collapse of biodiversity, are the results of systems and companies set up by people with university degrees. Therefore, one of these root causes is higher education. As a Green Office coordinator, I worked to integrate sustainability throughout university programmes. For example, we organised a conference for members of co-participation bodies to discuss how they can work on sustainability.

I've since graduated and therefore I also left the Green Office, to which I look back with satisfaction. Yet I continue to be motivated to tackle sustainability problems at the root. I founded my own company ([Goodrise](#)) to give sustainability advice and train organisations such as Green Offices to become more impactful in lobbying for sustainability.

I know that sometimes the news of increasing emissions, wildfires and droughts can be frightening. Yet, I truly believe that if we put our shoulders to the wheel and tackle the root causes, we can solve these challenges together!