

Growing up in Switzerland is a privilege I cannot take for granted. I would even argue that there is a moral obligation to use it to make the world a better place. One of these opportunities is the access to an outstanding education, which is a chance to prepare in order to drive meaningful action. For me, this means learning so I can work on mitigating climate change, which I consider the most powerful lever to reduce suffering. Not only can limit further warming reduce global heartship, but the societal transformations needed to achieve this can also contribute to the solutions of other global challenges.

Almost three years ago I thus decided to study environmental sciences. What I particularly enjoy about the program is how concepts of one lecture appear in another. This makes it possible to connect these wide range of topics into a system. It gave me a deeper appreciation and curiosity for these complex interactions that I had never considered before. Looking back, I was also a bit naive. The word “environment” in the title of the program made me believe that this would be where I would get the tools to solve climate change. There have been times when I questioned my choice. Would a different program have helped me more? I am finally realising that this approach is too broad. The variety of changes needed requires an equal variety of backgrounds to tackle them. Moving forward, a more sensible question would be: What role do I want to play in this transition and what skills do I need to succeed there?

My answer to this question was shaped by a realisation I had in the last year: For individual behavior change to make a difference on a big problem, it needs to happen everywhere and the actions have to be substantial. Even when we disregard the limited capacity to reduce a personal carbon footprint in a fixed system, persuading individuals does not scale onto a global level. For years I was frustrated because I couldn't see another way. At some point though, I came across a second lever: reducing the needed change. A lot more people will be on board if we find ways of driving down the cost of emission free alternatives while making them functionally equal or better. A prominent example of this are renewable energy sources: They still face some resistance but becoming the cheapest source of electricity has accelerated their adoption massively. To achieve similar feats in many other fields, where the technology is not as mature, will take a lot of work. Being a part of this transition of rethinking the way we do everything excites me and I think I am in a unique position to get involved.

My studies helped me to get a better understanding of everything from bacteria to atmospheric dynamics. It taught me a great deal about observing complex real world systems. During my exchange semester in Toronto I took courses with a stronger emphasis on energy systems and climate change (see recommendation letter by Hanna Morris). This gave me a first chance of applying my systems thinking on solutions. I also pursued statistics, coding, and physics wherever I had the possibility, not only out of curiosity but also to facilitate understanding and application of technology (see recommendation letter by Marcus Christl). At the same time, I developed an interest in startups and business by listening to podcasts like “Acquired” which opened a new point of view of how ideas are implemented and scaled.

My aspiration is neither to solely describe climate change nor to be the engineer developing a new technology. I want to be the person that bridges these fields. The person that looks at the problem systematically, can communicate this to engineers, and knows how to scale it as a

business to increase adoption. I think this is the role where I can make a difference. Ultimately I see myself leading projects that bring sustainable technologies to the market and making them the default choice globally. I aspire to work in fast-moving, mission driven teams, whether in an innovative company or by founding my own startup.

In order to become this driver of change I seek to be, there is a lot I want and need to learn. The master in “Sustainable Management and Technology” seems to be the perfect next step towards this vision. The thematic match stands out because it would allow me to acquire these new skills of management and technology in the context of sustainability where I want to apply them. The work during the transformative project and the master thesis take this to the next level. I got a taste of this type of learning during my first year when we had a course called “environmental problem solving”. We worked in small groups on a real world case study of making the canton of Uri climate positive. By joining the support group of the lecturers and local stakeholders as the student representative, I got to be part of discussions about both the teaching side as well as how to connect the student’s ideas to real world action (see recommendation letter by Christian Pohl, the originator of this course). I am excited to solve problems alongside lectures with exams and I am looking forward to collaborating with my fellow students to learn together and from each other. The nature of the small cohorts of motivated people is yet another reason why the master appeals to me. I want to be around others who want to learn, make a difference, and who are not afraid to aim high because they know they will do whatever is in their power to make it happen.

Completing this master program, I wish to integrate new perspectives and disciplines into my mental model of climate solutions and gather valuable skills to be a proactive actor towards a net-zero world.