LUMES 20 Years, 1997–2017

INTERNATIONAL MASTER PROGRAMME IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE
Foreword

The world is facing a plethora of sustainability challenges including growing inequality, coupled with urbanisation, deforestation, water conflicts, food security conflicts and global climate change. LUCSUS has a vision to combine critical scholarship with solution-based approaches. At the core of our work is the belief that sustainability is a complex field and is best understood and explained through interdisciplinary research in close collaboration with society. While there are many uncertain challenges governing our World on questions of justice, democracy, power and inequality there are also many important and positive developments around these very same matters addressing diversity and inclusion. Building trust within and between sectors in society is core and Lund University plays an important role in that endeavor by generating robust and original knowledge, communicating that knowledge, and in building new relationships through these processes.

The LUMES programme is at the heart of the LUCSUS mission. We are proud that LUMES lies at the forefront of sustainability education for developing future leaders in the most current sustainability thinking to be able to reflect critically, engage and influence processes of transformations. LUMES also links LUCSUS to communities of practice across the globe through its extensive alumni network. While LUCSUS is at a crossroad currently, it is also an exciting time. LUCSUS will continue to build its international collaboration, develop the Right Livelihood College and contribute to building sustainability research and education at Lund University together with the Sustainability Forum, through faculties, research groups, and with the broader community of local, regional and national actors in Sweden. We look forward to the next 20 years of LUCSUS and the LUMES programme with great anticipation!

Emily Boyd
Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies
LUCSUS Director, Lund 2017

**PROGRAMME OUTLINE:**

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The LUMES Story

THE BEGINNINGS AND EARLY YEARS OF LUMES

The idea for LUMES was born in the summer of 1992, as a direct effect of the UNCED conference held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June that year. At the closing ceremony of the first International Environmental Summer School at Lund University, it was suggested to vice chancellor of Lund University, Boel Flodgren, to start an international master’s programme based on the legacy of Rio and the commitment to the implementation of Agenda 21.

After the idea had been incubated and anchored in different environmental fora within the university for around two years, the actual planning of the LUMES programme started in 1994. The design and overall planning was undertaken by a senior multi-disciplinary planning group representing different departments in various faculties at the university. Everyone in the group was a pioneer in environment/sustainability within their respective academic subjects. The group had a very broad and democratic approach with meetings at several faculties to involve different researchers.

Administratively, LUMES was placed directly under the responsibility of an academically headed by a board chaired by the vice chancellor and with professors from different faculties as board members. In 1997, LUMES opened its door to its first batch of students who came from Ghana, Canada, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Iceland, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lithuania, Nepal, Philippines, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UK, Uganda and Vietnam. In its early years, the programme was able to fund many scholarships which enabled the students to go on study tours to or take part in international conferences related to sustainability. One year, we attended a conference at the EU headquarters in Brussels, and two years we went to conferences in Stockholm. This practice, in combination with the then free tuition for all nationalities, meant that LUMES was a truly global programme. Typically a student group would consist of around 40 students, coming from well over 20 countries from all continents.

In 1998, LUMES moved into a large building in the centre of Lund, just opposite Kulturen. The building had a number of working rooms, an assembly room, seminar rooms, and even a party venue! The staff consisted of three people, with only one of them working full time, so the offices did not take up a lot of space. The LUMES teachers would only come in for their classes – and for some of the numerous parties in the party room. There were, however, larger but fewer working rooms for the students to use and as the centre, which changed name to LUCSUS in 2005, grew, more and more of the working rooms were converted to offices. This meant that the students’ initial habit of hanging around LUMES more or less around the clock changed.

The novelty with LUMES in the early years was that different multi-disciplinary teachers’ teams, ideally made up by four people from four different faculties, were responsible for the detailed planning and execution of the interdisciplinary modules that constituted the LUMES programme. A majority of the members of the teachers’ teams were senior researchers at Lund University, and many teams were headed by professors in the early years.

Over time it became clear that the programme ought to be extended to two years. The planning went on for quite some time, and both faculty members and students were involved in the planning with two LUMES-graduates hired to support the process.

From the 2005 student intake, LUMES became a two-year programme with the most innovative module being called “Making Change Happen”. The module was designed to be both academic and action oriented. Over the years some of the student groups carried out amazing projects while both learning a lot, and having real fun!

When looking back at LUMES from the very start and until I left as Director of Studies in January 2011, I am amazed that every year we could conclude that the new “student batch” was even better than the previous one. In spite of diminishing financial and physical resources, and with fewer senior teachers, the students performed better and better and were more and more motivated and dedicated! In other words, the single most important asset at LUMES is the fantastic group of young scholars from all around the world who joins the programme every year.

Inggerd Ehn
Former Director of Studies
LUMES in Numbers – Statistics 2017

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT OF LUMES GRADUATES

LUMES IS RISING IN POPULARITY

CURRENT NATIONALITIES OF ALUMNI

WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

I manage a $21 million USD fund, backing entrepreneurs building a better world. Whether it’s promoting an equitable job system or providing low-income communities access to clean energy, we have a particular niche in “building tech right” in Silicon Valley, California. My background in engineering coupled with my systemic thinking from LUMES has equipped me with the skills to tackle the challenge of building a community of innovation that removes bias from access to funding.

WHAT HAS LUMES MEANT TO YOU – PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY?

LUMES has opened hundreds (if not thousands) of doors in the real world, and also in my own mind. I’m a more reflective, responsible, and insightful individual because of my time in LUMES and most importantly, with my classmates. In times of hardship, it has meant knowing that there is a group of some of the most amazing individuals I know, who don’t consider any other option than making the world more sustainable, equitable, and just. I have the privilege of feeling like I’m a part of a collective hive mentality of individuals who just have something magical and inspirational — an intrinsic motivation to take up the mantle of making the world better.

YOUR ADVICE TO CURRENT AND POTENTIAL STUDENTS?

Three things:
1. Spend as much time as possible with each other! Every day! Breakfasts, lunches, Sunday dinners, barbecues, hikes, whenever and wherever; find an excuse to be with each other.
2. Read articles (especially Kim Nicholas’s, researcher at LUCSUS). Digest them, talk about them at dinner, and be able to quote them – it’ll come in handy years later! It’s much harder to find the time to go back to them once you’ve completed your degree.
3. Find out what teachers and researchers in LUCSUS are working on. Stop by their office, see if you can help them with a project, and connect to other faculties in Lund and beyond. When you’re a M.S., and genuinely curious, everyone is willing to work with you. Once you graduate, they think you’re trying to get something out of them. Take the time to build your network and community, because no one else will do it for you.

DO YOU SEE SUSTAINABILITY THE SAME WAY TODAY AS YOU DID WHEN YOU GRADUATED?

I do, and with more potential. The main thing which is forever scratched onto my brain is the complexity, which has led me to not take anything at face value. In the same vein, I believe that every little bit can make an impact through reach of social capital. It starts with communities — whether of practice, power, or just lovely people.
Voices from the LUMES Alumni

THEO HARISS, BATCH 10

INTERVIEW

WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?
I work as an external monitor for the LIFE Programme, the EU’s main funding instrument for the environment. I monitor the progress of a variety of projects that relate to the environment.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE LUMES MEMORY?
My favourite LUMES memory is me meeting with people, getting to know people. Studies are important – but people are the most important thing in the world. This is because the students and teachers I met were from all over the planet. You get to experience people from everywhere – share their experiences. You get a crash course on the planet’s condition! You learn directly about sustainability challenges from places where they come from.

YOUR ADVICE TO CURRENT AND POTENTIAL STUDENTS?
A couple of things – while studying I didn’t understand the value of LUMES. I did not understand what I had gained. Only afterwards I understood its importance, that I had a great basis for understanding sustainability. Regarding jobs, I would advise students to do what their heart tells them. Don’t fall for the trap of feeling you have to follow what the market demands just to get a job you don’t like – this only leads to depression. I would add not working for an oil company either, but instead for an endeavor that makes the world a better place. This gives meaning to life.

WHAT DO YOU SEE SUSTAINABILITY TODAY COMPARED TO WHEN YOU GRADUATED?
I have realised that change is much slower than I would like. Core changes in the collective consciousness take generations. My whole concept of change is different. I work for something with which I most probably will not see happening in my lifetime. It takes entire generations. But even under this condition, you have to retain optimism!

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST PRESSING SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE?
I think the way we perceive and relate to our self and the world around us needs to change. People today do not care what happens to future generations or the planet. Most of us are isolated in our individualities and serve only our narrow self-interest – and the economic system we live in wants it this way and is founded on exactly this premise. No amount of technological solutions or renewed socio-economic or political system can deliver a sustainable society if this separation among us still prevails. Thus, the greatest sustainability challenge is to overcome this fragmentation, to expand ourselves so that when we say “I” we mean everything around us, to realise that there is only one human being on this planet, in 7.5 billion bodies, and express that unity. Then the people on the other side of the globe and those living 500 years into the future – they are us.

DARIO M. LAM, BATCH 15, PHD STUDENT AT LEUPHANA UNIVERSITY LÜNEBURG, GERMANY

In my LUMES thesis, I conducted an environmental hot spot analysis along the supply chain of German coffee to identify the most urgent environmental problems of German coffee consumption and production. To collect data I conducted several interviews with stakeholders from the German coffee industry. After finishing LUMES, I worked for three years as a Corporate Responsibility Consultant on sustainable supply chain management and stakeholder management, mostly in the pharmaceutical, chemical and food industry. Now I am a PhD student in the research project ‘Leverage Points for Sustainability Transformations’. My research focuses on two questions: (1) How to increase the impact of local sustainability initiatives through scaling processes in transformations? and (2) How can indigenous and local understandings of change and transformation complement our scientific paradigm of sustainability transformation?

HARRIET BAKER, BATCH 13, AUSTRALIA

My thesis was on how the work of volunteers can build community resilience following a natural disasters. My home city was hit by a flood when I was at home thinking of a thesis topic (January 2011, I graduated in June 2011). As a nurse I had originally thought about writing on sustainability issues in the Australian health care system which was evolving at the time and I had no contacts in this field.

Instead when the flood happened, I decided to volunteer with the clean-up efforts and met a lot of like-minded people who had travelled from all over the place to give their time. I was overwhelmed by their community spirit but also witnessed the negative impacts of too many people trying to help. In two days I had devised a survey questionnaire and made contacts of people who I chose to interview later on. Their responses and my experience led me to think about volunteerism, social capital and the theories of natural and community resilience.

Since I graduated I have done nothing with my thesis! I am a nurse and have been working as a nurse since. I am still very interested in Health care sustainability and I work part time with an NGO here in Australia (Climate and Health Alliance). I hope to enter this field in the future but want to start by making small changes in the workplace and going from there. I believe that to make change you have to have an understanding of what you are dealing with, especially when it comes to the health care sector.

You need to understand what changes are possible without compromising patient care. In the meantime, I have been on two missions with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) (one of my other life goals), to South Sudan and Iraq. Unfortunately, the environment and sustainability do not get first priority in humanitarian work and it would be nice to try to create some change in this field too.

CAROLINE JASCHEK, BATCH 17, GERMANY

The title of my thesis was ‘You spy with your little eye – Multimedia insights into a global movement from a grassroots perspective’. There are two sides to my thesis. First, on the content level, I examined characteristics of the climate movement, particularly the relationship and interdependencies between the global movement 350.org and the local grassroots groups of their Fossil Free campaign. On a second level, I wanted to make available all the information to the reader / viewer on which I based my examination.

Therefore, I recorded all interviews on video and published them, so everybody who is interested in it, can retrace all verbal and nonverbal information as well as some impressions of space that laid the groundwork for my thesis.

Experiences of LUMES Field Work

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LUMES Batches
1997–2017
FEMFIGHTERS

“The focus of our knowledge to action project was on the interlinkages between gender and sustainability, since we felt a lack thereof in our programme. We therefore wanted to integrate gender and intersectionality throughout our education, both institutionally, structurally and individually, since equality is a crucial part of sustainability.

We hosted workshops and panel discussions for staff and students at LUCSUS to create an agonistic space to open up for discussions and raise awareness. We also analysed the literature list of the different modules in LUMES to encourage more diverse readings for the students. The project is still active and open for other people who are interested to join and work with gender as a sustainability issue.”

CULTIVATING CONSUMERS
– ADDRESSING NEGATIVE CULTURAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENTOMOPHAGY

“Our project dealt with the barrier of disgust to eating insects and tried to change attitudes towards entomophagy. We organised a range of workshops for students and staff at LUCSUS. Over six-legged tapenade and sautéed cricket, workshop participants learned about the overwhelming environmental impact of the current pace of animal meat consumption and discussed the current social and practical obstacles to entomophagy in Western countries. At the second workshop, participants learned how to cultivate edible insects at home.”

THE BUZZING BEEHIVE

We launched “The Buzzing Beehive” in Lund’s cultural centre. Motivated by the decline in people’s commitment to nature, we designed and conducted three workshops for children using real live honeybees.

“The Buzzing Beehive” bridged the gap between people and nature, aiming at children’s knowledge and experience of nature. We raised awareness about the importance of bees to ecosystem stability as well as the human food system. By establishing the beehive together, we spiked the kids’ curiosity and promoted their interest in and awareness of nature with hands-on interaction. The photo shows the Buzzing Beehive team in one of the bathtubs donated by the municipality for planting pollinator habitats.”
Voices from the LUMES Alumni

Christoph Aberle, batch 17
On his favourite LUMES memory:
I set up a beehive during my LUMES time. It was part of my “Knowledge to Action” project. We would bring school children to engage with honeybees – it was awesome. Sometimes it’s the small things that can be so fascinating. It is not the environmental aspect that is key if you want to reach someone, it is the fun, interesting aspect.

Rebecca Laycock, batch 15
On how she sees sustainability:
I think the biggest sustainability challenge is being able to effectively communicate, dialogue and make decisions. In a world where we are beginning to reach consensus about the need to avoid major human-caused environmental changes, I think our challenge is how to see past our differences in values, beliefs, and ways of working in order to cooperate to achieve common goals.

Julia Hoffman, batch 14
On LUMES:
LUMES has changed my view on society, especially economic and political processes on national and international level. It has broadened my horizon on the structures and power imbalances at the cause of socio-economic-environmental problems.

Stefán Einarsson, batch 6
On how he sees sustainability today:
We have moved forward – sustainability is more on the agenda, but not always a strong notion of sustainable practices. The next step is to put words into action to achieve a more transformative system change. There are ongoing transformative megatrends in our societies, environment, and technological developments which can move us in a more sustainable direction, but only if supported with the right goals, incentives and metrics at all levels.

Anna Arakelyan, batch 4
On how she sees sustainability:
Now I see it as a more sophisticated, complicated, and challenging issue. When I was a LUMES student, back then climate change was too often seen as an issue of groundless and scientifically unjustified speculations, with sustainability being blamed for being a concept too blurry and abstract to take it seriously into account.

Alejandro Egüez, batch 14,
On LUMES:
LUMES is an evolving memory since what I realise after graduation is how special LUMES people are. We all share to some extent a common value for sustainability, something that is not often found in other realms of society.

Pia Buschmann, batch 15, On LUMES:
Professionally, LUMES meant to me to walk down a particularly unknown path. On the one hand, the themes, issues and approaches covered in LUMES are ahead of their time, especially, if one is working beyond academia. On the other hand, it means to enter the job world with a pretty critical perspective on things accompanied by a bold vision of how they should be. The task that then keeps oneself busy is to fill the gap between the two and to make one’s ideas more concrete. Personally, it meant to me to ask questions about why we do act in unsustainable fashions despite we know better. It also meant to reflect on my own actions and to get encouraged by others doing things differently.

ON HER FAVOURITE LUMES MEMORY:
My favourite memory is the orientation week right at the beginning of LUMES. Staying in cabins surrounded by nature, cooking for each other, working in teams, playing, and talking at the bonfire brought us students, but also students and teachers, closer together. It laid the basis for the next two amazing years.

Kai Kuhnenn, batch 6
On how he sees sustainability today:
I developed a much more left-wing perspective, and I see the environmental crisis as one of many interconnected crises (democracy, social, economic, cultural) that can only be solved together. The term “sustainability” has been hollowed out (at least in Germany) and I use it much less frequent.

Helen Lara Steiniger, batch 15
On LUMES:
LUMES has taught me that there is a different perspective to everything we experience in live. The programme has helped me work with different mindsets – to try and take a new perspective and search for the broad common ground I can agree on with the people I meet.
WHAT SUMS UP LUMES ACCORDING TO YOU?
I am doing my best to make LUMES a pleasant learning experience for everyone involved. I answer questions about the programme, I put prospective students in contact with current students, I (together with the Director of Studies) plan the running of the programme, I look venues and remind teachers when it is time to post the schedule, course evaluation etc. I am involved with the admission of new students, I manage the LUMES webpage and all administrative systems related to education. In short, I am trying to make sure that we are delivering what we have said we will.

WHAT SUMS UP LUMES ACCORDING TO YOU?
Good people, high ambitions and lots of hard work.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE PROGRAMME HAS CHANGED, IF AT ALL?
As it is a programme in a new research field it changes rather much and follows the research frontier. For example it has changed from environmental studies to sustainability science.

IS THERE A SPECIAL LUMES SPIRIT?
If so, I think it is the strong activism that students have, both when they start LUMES and also what is encouraged in the programme, which is most obvious in the Knowledge to Action course.

WHAT QUESTIONS FROM STUDENTS DO YOU GET MOST OFTEN?
“Ring the bell to change this (problem) to make a better world? I want to change myself and the world right now!”

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THINKING OF APPLYING TO LUMES?
Make sure you understand the programme structure. The environmental and climate challenges we study are identified by natural science, but we study social sciences (the most) as we believe social sciences can identify the solutions (and sometimes the lack of action) we need. Browse the LUMES homepage and read syllabuses for the different courses.

WHAT QUESTIONS FROM STUDENTS DO YOU GET MOST OFTEN?
We are always trying to develop the programme, to keep up with the latest within the field Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science. But as we are within a structure (the university) this is sometimes a challenge, you cannot change things from one day to another, it can take years to go from an idea of a new course to welcoming the students to the course.

IS THERE A SPECIAL LUMES SPIRIT?
I would say so yes. I think students starts as students but leave as family. I feel that we have a close relationship with each other and that this relationship is kept even after they have left Lund. Now I am generalising but I would also like to say that LUMES students are less competitive than other students, they do not hesitate to help each other out, they have got the thing with that we need each other and we need to work together to make the world a better place. I also like that the students are not afraid of challenging us, they do not have an answer to what to do about it but it scares me that some do not have an answer to what to do about it but it scares me that some seem to think that they are entitled to an idea of a new course to welcoming the students to the course.

WHAT QUESTIONS FROM STUDENTS DO YOU GET MOST OFTEN?
“I need a letter of registration, where can I get it from?” and “We want to organise a party/guest lecture/yoga session/event, can we be at LUCSUS?”

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THINKING OF APPLYING TO LUMES?
Inequalities and the lack of willingness of people who have it all to stand back and redistribute resources. I do not know from where this comes (and I do not have an answer to what to do about it) but it scares me that some seem to think that they are entitled to an unsustainable and unjust lifestyle and do not reflect on that their actions have an impact on others.
Ann Åkerman, physical geographer at LUCSUS

Ann Åkerman has taught at LUMES for 15 years. Every year she brings new students on a three day field trip to Bronak, at Lake Immeln in Skåne, for an introduction to the LUMES programme and to environmental sciences.

The trip is often an unforgettable memory for the LUMES students. – It’s a fantastic start to the programme. They get to know each other and the LUMES’ teachers through participating in hands on activities and social events, in a setting that is relaxed and very different to the class room.

– The LUMES students are so curious and engaged, and a great crowd to teach – every year. It is not just students who learn new things during the programme, we, the teachers, also get new insights when we meet students from so many different countries and with such varying backgrounds.

Ann Åkerman is a physical geographer. Her research and work, for consultancy agencies and municipalities, have focused on soil and water conservation both in Sweden and in Zambia, where she lived for many years.

Lennart Olsson, Professor of physical geography at LUCSUS

Lennart Olsson is a professor of physical geography and the former director of LUCSUS. His current research fields include human-nature interactions in the context of land degradation, climate change and food security in Africa and globally. His current research focuses on the politics of climate change in the context of poverty and food security.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED WITH LUMES?
I taught the very first LUMES batch in 1997. When LUMES subsequently became part of LUCSUS (then we were called MICLU – Miljövetenskapligt Centrum vid LU) I became more involved, not least as an examiner of theses.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE LUMES MEMORY?
The first alumni conference!

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PROGRAMME?
In the beginning of LUMES we tried to create a microcosm in Lund by having a mix of students from all continents. It was a kind of intellectual hootenanny. Gradually there has been a shift to strengthening the theoretical and scientific profile of the programme. Now I think LUMES is at the forefront of sustainability programmes in the world in terms of the scientific/theoretical profile, and I hope we have been able to keep some of the hootenanny qualities – being informal and fun!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO POTENTIAL STUDENTS?
Academically, be open to all the new impressions you get without giving up your own strengths. Socially, make the best of the richness of opportunities in Lund.

HOW WOULD YOU REFLECT BACK ON YOUR TIME AT LUMES?
Having been in academia since 1980, LUMES is certainly the best programme and experience I have been part of.

Alumni on LUMES – what has the programme meant to them?

“LUMES has meant to me a new life vision with a better understanding that challenges need to be tackled from many angles. This “big picture” perspective is something I took with me both personally and professionally.”

“Critical thinking, intercultural communication skills.”

“LUMES is a unique programme. It might be a programme that confronts students with thoughts, working styles, methods and tools they aren’t used to. I think it is a once in a lifetime chance to get inspired by brilliant teachers and smart fellow students. Perhaps more than any other programme, LUMES is what you make out of it!”

“I see that there is a different perspective to everything, not only one way to consider anything. The programme has helped me work with different people and see different perspectives – I can find broad common ground with people I meet.”

“I made a journey around the world without having to travel. You have so many different cultures and many perspectives on one issue.”

“Connecting and communicating with others, explaining sustainability concepts in an easy-to-understand way, communicating my knowledge of the sustainability field to students, academic writing, research skills, understanding of global sustainability issues.”

“The ability to explore other disciplines and work closely with others from different backgrounds (disciplinary and cultural); being moved out of one’s comfort zone and picking up the ability to think critically.”

“The network of people I connected with, in such a strong community-minded setting, was crucial to accepting and integrating other world views into my own perspective, both professionally and personally.”

“The multi-cultural background of participants and the interdisciplinary education.”

“There is really no “one thing” or “most important”. In some respects some experiences have been useful in ways I could not imagine.”

“Interdisciplinary thinking – understand that a challenge should be tackled from different perspectives. Not absolute truths.”
LUMES 20 Years, 1997–2017

INTERNATIONAL MASTER PROGRAMME IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE

The home of the LUMES Programme (and LUCSUS): the Wrangel and Josephson buildings, Biskopsgatan 5, Lund.

www.lumes.lu.se | www.lucsus.lu.se