

## **Radheeka Jirasinha – MSc Environment and Development**

Hi, I'm Radheeka, I'm from Sri Lanka, and I'm studying the Masters in Environment and Development at the School of Geosciences. I decided to study Environment and Development here because I had a background in Environmental Economics and I was looking for something a bit broader, something that would combine development theory with sustainable environmental solutions and the course here seemed like a perfect fit.

My dissertation research was done back in Sri Lanka, which is where I'm from. I focussed on trying to look at the feasibility of the payments for ecosystems services concept in Sri Lanka and see whether they could be used as an environmental tool and a solution to some of the problems going on.

I chose Edinburgh because it's a beautiful city, it has a little **(01.00)** bit of everything to offer. You have the city life and beautiful architecture, the old town and the new town, and you also have lots of green spaces. If you travel maybe thirty minutes outside of Edinburgh you'll be completely removed from the city, which is something that I like. I guess that's why I chose Edinburgh.

My next steps, after this Masters, would be ideally to work in a developing country for a couple of years, maybe with an international environmental NGO, and then gain some experience and hopefully move back to Sri Lanka and apply that.

One of my first memories when I came here was climbing up Arthur's Seat and looking down over the entire city. I've done Arthur's Seat at sunrise and at sunset and it amazes me every time.

Environment and Development is very broad but, in a sense, it's just understanding **(02.00)** what development is about, where it comes from, who defines it and what path it's going on now. How you incorporate the environment into that and how you can pursue a development path in a sustainable way.

The staff and students definitely played a big part. I think the support team at Geosciences is really good. Especially at the start of the year, they really help you settle into the different courses, they give you guidance on which area to go and which courses to pick. I think the students this year have been great, we all really supported each other throughout the entire year and I've made friends that will last for a lifetime.