JOURNEY TO THE SOUTHERNMOST CONTINENT

With a burning passion to tackle climate change head-on, Naveen Srivatsav crowdfunded his way to an expedition in Antarctica and hopes to inspire action against global warming.

What motivated you to go to Antarctica?

While pursuing my Master's degree at Delft University, I was exposed to powerful concepts such as wicked problems and the tragedy of the commons. These theories drastically changed my worldview, awakening me to the fact that climate change is a wicked problem that has widespread and varied impact. Climate change is a topic close to the heart of Mr Srivatsav, who graduated from NTU with a Bachelor's degree in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering and a Minor in Entrepreneurship.

Now working as an emerging technologies researcher at Pricewaterhouse Coopers Europe, he shares with NTULink his motivations for crowdfunding his way to Antarctica and the valuable lessons he has learnt from the ten-day expedition.

Why did you turn to crowdfunding to raise money for the expedition?

The reality is that the expedition was pretty expensive, costing about US$10,000. Almost 75 percent of that was for the cabin on the ship itself, and the remainder was for travel costs and cold-weather clothing.

Initially, I was uncomfortable with asking favours from strangers, but some sage advice changed my mind. I started thinking of how I could show appreciation to people who might fund me, and conceived many ‘perks’ for different amounts of donation.

I raised almost US$7,500 via crowdfunding. A large percentage of that was contributed by my mentors at Kwamecorp, who graduated from NTU with a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering. My family, friends and the NTU Alumni Affairs Office also pitched in.

What's next for you now that the expedition is over?

What do you hope to inspire with your experience?

I continue to run a climate change solutions group with renewed vigour. It really helps that the research aspect of my role means that I inevitably find exciting new developments that are synergistic to my interests in this space. I am also participating in a competition to reimagine global governance and empower citizens to have more influence in local policy-making processes.

Professionally, I'm working with a small group of passionate teammates to grow the sustainability and circular economy proposition in the consulting world. Ultimately, helping even one Fortune 500 company become one percent more sustainable annually can have a disproportionately larger impact than targeting and changing the behaviours of millions of individuals. It is a daunting task, but I enjoy challenges.

For students, I challenge you to ask yourself what you are passionate about and to explore why you feel so strongly about it. A helpful question I've learnt to ask is, 'what am I willing to struggle for?' instead of 'what makes me happy?'

To my fellow alumni, I ask that you look at your networks and gauge the resources available to you. In this case, I find it helpful to ask, ‘what can I sell?’ rather than ‘what can I solve?’ Our ambition is not just to survive, but thrive, and I'm confident we can find ways to make that happen. Good luck!