



## 14<sup>th</sup> Global Climate Change Conference of Youth (COY14)

Katowice, Poland



Niranjan, Érica and Francis (left to right) at University of Silesia, Katowice for COY14

The global COY precedes and is part of the annual UN Climate Change Conference (COP24). For more about COY, [\(click here\)](#). The COY14 Team members are: Érica Berto and Francis Coviello from Brazil (Sao Paulo region) and Carolin Fraude and Niranjan Mukherjee from Germany (Berlin). All arrived on Wednesday, 28.11.2018 in Bytom near Katowice where the Polish BK family had organized comfortable accommodation facilities.



Érica, Niranjan and Francis at the Opening Ceremony with their registration (L)



Environmentally active youth (R)

### Day 1, 29.11.2018 (Thursday)

On the first day, the COY started slowly with the registration process. The entire COY14 team was representing the BK Environment Initiative at COY for the first time, although Carolin and Niranjan had attended a COY before. The conference Opening Ceremony was given by several youth and youth organisations like YOUNGO and a team that had travelled all the way from Monaco to Katowice by road spreading the message of climate action.

Since we wanted to get a better feel of the kind of public gathered there and what we as BKs could offer the COY participants, we split up and attended some workshops offered by other participants such as the “Protection of

the strong relation of humans with nature". This gave us an opportunity to invite other people attending this workshop as it was a strongly related theme. Many immediately showed interest.

Soon after, we contacted the organizers as we wanted to offer 15-min meditation sessions at some specified slots in the day. The organizers were very supportive and could update their online schedule quite promptly.

The COY14 had a dedicated room for prayer and meditation in a designated Well-being area. Since this area was being used by many of the participants to relax, spend some time with friends or to do some quiet work, we used the opportunity to invite them for a short meditation session. Many of them had heard of meditation and were curious to try it out, some of them looked stressed and used it for a break. Thus, we usually had a large mix of people including many COY14 volunteers from the region.

We offered two meditation sessions that day. The meditation experience remained very well with an atmosphere of peace in the room. Some of them were happy to share their experiences and this was another good opportunity to tell them about the workshop being offered on Friday, "Consciousness and Climate Action". We also saw a number of people turning up more than once to the meditation sessions.

After having interacted with participants and organizers alike, we tried to develop ideas as to how best we could offer the ideas of simple living to climate active youth or youth that wanted to be climate active. Once again, the volunteers remained very proactive and the team jubilant with many ideas.

### **Day 2, 30.11.2018 (Friday)**

The main agenda for Day 2 was the workshop on "Consciousness and Climate Action". The main outline for the programme had been discussed together by all 4 team members the evening before. The presentation and individual aspects to be delivered were then discussed by the team on the morn of Day 2.

We started the day with an early morning meditation at 8.30 am, with brother Francis providing positive vibrations and a collective focused vision for everyone's individual agendas. It was beautiful to hear the content each of us was creating while guiding the meditations. We were inspiring one another beautifully and learning a lot in the process ourselves.

*Carolin conducting meditation for COY14 participants*



*Carolin introducing Brahma Kumaris to workshop participants*

At 12.45 pm we started the workshop. We had around 20 participants initially. Carolin introduced the Brahma Kumaris and the Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative to the group. Niranjan interacted with the audience on patterns of consumption. The audience was quite informed and aware of many consumption patterns which are climate-unfriendly. Francis then explained the link of human thoughts and consciousness to the material and the environment. Érica and Carolin highlighted the reasons for consumption being different due to personal needs, and most of the ideas came from audience contributions.



*Workshop participants discussing effect of humans on climate change*

The participants of the workshop seemed to enjoy the group work a lot and were intensively involved in discussions with one another. They genuinely wanted to bring about a change not just with themselves but also in their local environments. At the end of the workshop, one could sense that the participants had been receptive to our message. Some of them wanted to go deeper than what they had been offered at the workshop.



*Workshop participants collectively answering, "Why we consume?"*



*The COY14 team after a successful (and freezing) day 2*

### **Day 3, 1.12.2018 (Saturday)**

After having a good experience at the workshop and receiving a sense of support from the organizers, we decided to offer a spontaneous workshop on “Healthy Mind, Healthy Planet” at noon. We took help of the Workshops content available on the website <http://environment.brahmakumaris.org/>.

Once again, we started the day at 8.30 am with a morning 10-min meditation session with 5 min for sharing experiences. Today, we had a guest from Indonesia and later we learned that a large Indonesian group was visiting the COY14. After the meditation, we prepared for the workshop and took the time to invite people for the noon workshop.

At noon, we had a large group of people turn up for the last meditation session after which a group of 4 young women remained behind for the workshop. 2 of them from Indonesia, 1 Yemeni-Polish and 1 Polish COY volunteer. Since it was such a small group, the workshop was more personal, and we started off with sharing personal stories.

During the discussions the different challenges, difficulties and problems one faces with oneself and in relationships were brought up. One could sense that the girls had found an environment in which they would be heard without being judged. They were quite open and felt at ease.



*Workshop on "Healthy Mind, Healthy Planet"*

With our experiences collected from the workshop yesterday, we were able to relate and explain the state of thoughts going on in the individual mind/intellect with that of the world. The world too is as stressed as the average human mind right now and is showing symptoms in one form as climate change. The women seemed to understand and relate to this. The importance of taking care of ones needs in a long-lasting and more meaningful way was also enunciated upon here.

The second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> day saw the end of the COY with a closing ceremony where experiences of the many events were shared and a policy brief from YOUNGO communicated. The ceremony saw many VIPs such as Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC secretary, Michał Kurtyka, the COP24 President, and Mr. Luke Daunivalu, COP23's Chief Negotiator from Fiji.



*Érica and Francis  
with COP24  
President*



*Érica and Francis  
with representative  
from Fiji*



*Group photo at COY14*



*BKEI with students from Indonesia*



*COY14 Team sharing final experiences*

We tried to reach as many people in the closing ceremony as possible. Érica and Francis managed to personally share blessings with some of the dignitaries, some even in the Polish language which touched them, as they shared with us. Seeing the power of the blessing cards, we shared it not only with the participants and volunteers who attended the workshops and meditations sessions but also the people who worked tirelessly during the COY, such as the cleaners, servers at the cafeteria, security guards and the wardrobe manager.

We specially thank the local Polish BK family who took care of our every need including our accommodation, transport, yoga and food requirements. We really enjoyed our time being there with every member of the family and wish to thank you for this opportunity! Om shanti, Eco shanti.