



# POWERSHIFT 2013

GLOBAL CLIMATE CONFERENCE OF YOUTH (COY) | WARSAW POLAND 2013

November 7th—11th 2013

## What is it?

This year Poland hosted the 9th Conference of Youth (COY), a 4 day conference held in Warsaw. 350 youth from over 20 countries participated to share stories, learn skills, perform solidarity acts and sharpen strategies. COY's focus has always been to unite youth all over the world in order to strengthen their voice towards global climate change. Following the success of Powershift events all over the world, COY9 renamed itself **Powershift Central and Eastern Europe (PS CEE)**—<http://www.powershift-cee.org> to attract attention towards climate change within Poland.

## The attitude towards Climate Change in Poland

- Poland draws 96% of its power needs from Coal energy with growing plans to continue investment in fossil fuel exploitation
- The COP conference cost Poland \$25m and this is perceived as a wasted investment by the Polish people
- Poland has continually blocked EU carbon targets that are set to govern emissions
- The climate movement has been branded 'eco terrorists' by corporations and politicians

## In this Update

- Key facts about Climate Change
- Key service highlights
- Pictures & next steps

*"What the Brahma Kumaris offer is essential to the conference as it addresses the needs of the time and empowers people"*

- Koen Verbruggen -

Planning Team Coordinator



The Cheerful Team—Back (Left to Right) - Nonie, Romina and Gaby, Front—Juan and Aashish



BK Juan Milling with the COY Planning Team

## Key Facts about Climate Change

- Global warming is the increase of Earth's average surface temperature due to greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels or from deforestation, which trap heat that would otherwise escape from Earth.
- 18% of greenhouse gases are released in every part of the meat production cycle.
- Consequences of global warming include drought, severe hurricanes, massive fires, and melting of the polar caps.

## Our Involvement

Our role in this conference has been as a result of relationships being formed with key members of the planning team during a separate planning event earlier this year.

For this Powershift event, we were invited to lead a couple of workshops however, our opportunities to serve increased when we arrived and were asked to be involved in the following:

- Five key workshops and daily group meditation sessions
- Supporting the core planning team in reflection groups and participant check-in
- Sister Nonie was invited to share a few words at the closing plenary as the only representative from Peru, next years host for COP. Following this, she was invited to give a talk at the local university arranged by the Polish Youth Climate Movement.
- We were offered a space to promote our exhibition stand on Inner Change for Climate Change, and networked throughout the 4 days forging several connections that we will look to follow up with.



Food was never going to be a problem :)

## Day 1 - Key Highlights

- Arrived in the afternoon to deliver our workshop on Empowerment which Gaby and Ash facilitated
- Participated in some interesting workshops. One in particular that stood out was the impact of big business on climate lobbying
- Greeted the core planning team



Brahma Kumaris

# A Journey to Empowerment

Part of the official workshops  
Power Shift Central & Eastern  
Europe COY 9

November 7th  
14:30

The Location  
Nowy Fort, 51 Czarnieckiego St, Warsaw

To know more about us  
<http://environment.brahmakumaris.org>



Our Day 1 Workshop

## Day 2 - Key Highlights

- Started the morning with a mini group meditation inviting 10 students from China and Taiwan. As a direct consequence, we formed a connection with a school teacher and students from China, with whom we spent more time sharing our views on spiritual development for young people
- Ash led an interesting workshop entitled "Being vegan and vegetarian in to-days world". This was completely spontaneous as the facilitator had not turned up and a group of 30 were very interested in exploring how it is possible to transition to this way of life and overcome cultural conditioning and social pressures
- Ash and Juan were interviewed on their views on the cause and impact of climate change in their countries
- Ash met with Chinese students and provided an introduction on the BK's
- Romina and Juan facilitated our planned workshop on Inner resilience

## Day 1 Workshop

Biggest turnout of 45 participants

Workshop structure was balanced with a creative element where participants identified the qualities that they associated with personal empowerment using images that were placed on in front them

We also explored empowerment in context to their relationships in their organisations, aiming to recognise how to approach relationship building differently at COY

The group recognised the value of openness and appreciation with an attitude of learning and taking something of value from their engagements at COY



He isn't really ;)

## Day 2 Workshop

Approx. 30 participants attended

Interactive workshop with a mix of reflective questions and meditations aimed to create awareness of values to resilience.

We asked the audience why they had attended. A significant number of participants had expressed a positive experience from the first workshop

We set the context by showing the image of a plant resisting challenges to visually describe inner resilience.

We received positive feedback from participants that were new to reflection and meditation as they were able to understand the inner dynamics of resilience.

Brahma Kumaris

# Creating Inner Resilience in Challenging Times

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Our Day 2 Workshop



## Day 3— Action Day Key Highlights

- Morning Meditation: attended by 8 people
- Interview and photo session with Japanese Climate Coalition to motivate the youth of Japan to act and support the cause of climate change. <http://climateyouthjapan.jimdo.com>
- Meeting with Latin American youth to discuss COP20 taking place in Peru. Nonie and Juan met with a group from Brazil. Discussions centred around how to do things better in Peru for COY and COP
- Participated in action filming to create awareness among polish youth. The objective of the short film was to link Independence day in Poland to independence from 'dirty' energy and to use this as means to increase awareness among polish youth. [direct link to the video is <http://vimeo.com/79083291> ]



Action Day , where we created a short film

### Day 3—Action Day



The making of a classic



## Day 4 Solidarity Action



### Day 4– Key Highlights

- Morning meditation session: about 5 people
- We received a lot of positive feedback from the planning team on our contributions that added value to the COY. The inside-out approach was the missing element in this event that we were able to offer
- Romina and Gaby attended a workshop by Koen from Push Europe entitled 'Validation' which was about appreciating everyone for their unique contributions. A powerful meditative exercise of gratitude and appreciation at a human level
- Ash led a workshop on the power to make decisions, which was well received and included two members of the planning team, one of whom wanted to explore meditation further after the workshop
- A large no of participants gathered for an action of Solidarity in support of all those affected by the recent typhoon in the Philippines. We all stood together in the formation of a heart – a symbolic message of 'We're sending our hearts out to you'. Photographs of the action were taken and published using on-line media
- We were offered a space to promote our exhibition during the ' world café' slot. Many NGOs and youth became aware of our approach and contribution to COY
- Juan's presence in the LATAM (Latin American) meeting led to Nonie ( Peru) being invited as the keynote speaker to the closing ceremony for COY. Nonie was the only Youth representing Peru in COY. She delivered a very moving and inspiring speech
- Romina ran an open experiential workshop session on ' Remaining inspired and uplifted during our journey' which was based on recognizing our values and remembering the reasons behind our purpose.





## Our Wonderful Polish Family

It was wonderful to experience meeting the Polish family, who were so warm and took such good care of us. Everything was provided with so much love and care, making our stay even more special.

There was also a lot of happiness in coming together as a youth team, being part of the green team and to be served with such generosity by our Polish family.

Seeing each one's specialities and desire to serve shining through was very uplifting and inspiring.

## Next Steps

Green Youth Service will continue to expand based on our successes and following are key next steps:

- BK Juan has been invited to join the core planning team for next year's COY, at Peru. This team, formed of a number of environmental organizations, will hold overall responsibility in organizing COY
- Romina, Gaby and Ash will continue focusing on developing and sustaining relationships with environmental organizations across Europe. There is a thought to create a specific retreat to serve this group
- The team to follow up with all connections made and ensure that more information on local centers, courses is passed.
- Ash and Romina to begin service with the Polish Youth Climate Movement as the group had valued our contribution to COY

## Contact Us

Brahma Kumaris Environment Youth Team

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