



Global Climate Youth conference COY13 Bonn, Germany

2nd – 4th November 2017

What is it?

Conference of Youth (COY13) for Climate Change takes place each year before the Conference of Parties (COP, organised by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)) and is hosted by youth organisations of the COP host country.

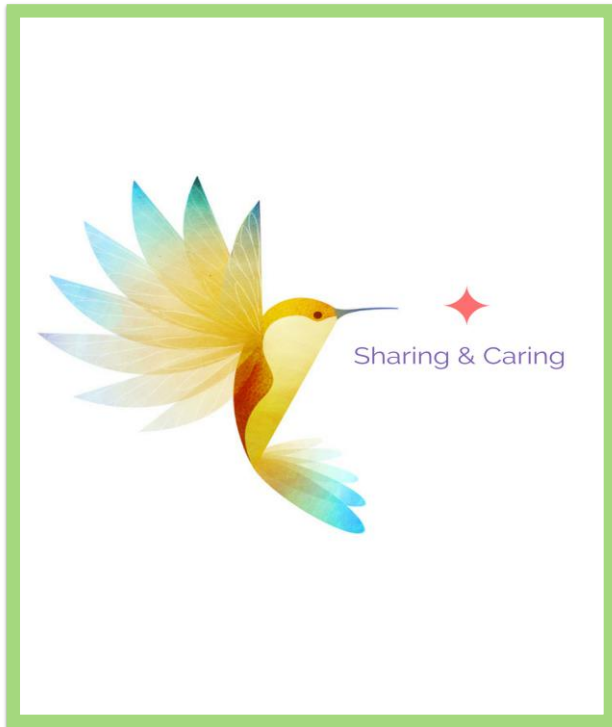
For 2017, COY13 was managed by youth organisations from Germany. It was a three-day event. Around 1300 young people from 114 countries united to present the voice of youth for the Climate Change negotiations. The aim of COY is to give young people a platform to share skills, connect and be part of a movement towards a more sustainable society.



Brahma Kumaris (BK) COY13 Youth Delegation

The BK Youth delegation included:

- Stephanie (Austria),
- Diana (Germany)
- Daksh (Germany)
- Juan (Canada)
- Manish (Germany) and
- Christophe (France)



Main highlights

This year, we had the opportunity to be part of the Wellbeing Team, organising activities around health within the official program of COY13. We had three rooms available:

- The "Inner Space Room", designated specifically for silence time, meditation and prayers.
- The "Sustainable Activism Room" designated for workshops related with personal development and climate change and
- The "Active WellBeing Room" for yoga, stretching, tai-chi dancing etc.

Juan conducted the closing appreciation exercise, for the organizing team of around 50 volunteers, which included a small briefing on sacred activism, inner well-being and hope. A powerful meditation ended the exercise making it one of the most beautiful moments of the entire COY13.

Our Main Contribution

Our main contribution was to assist in creating and co-ordinating the WellBeing area. We presented four workshops, presented by Stephanie, Manish and Juan. We had a stand on the market place where Christophe and Daksh presented the BK Environment Initiative and the India One project. We also had a space where Diana displayed her beautiful artwork based on the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.





Highlights from Day1

The first day, 2nd November, began with full energy, in spite of the cold winter morning. The slogan of this COY was "Talanoa Mada", which means "Let's talk".

Adriana (Education and Youth at UNFCCC co-ordinator) said climate change is a critical challenge. She added, "addressing climate change is protecting people" and described the participants as global climate champions.

We presented two workshops.

- Hummingbird: Sharing and caring, our responsibility for the planet. This was about personal empowerment and inner resilience in times of transition.
- Mudras, an ancient 'finger yoga technique' from India.

Many participated in these beautiful and colourful activities.

Highlights from Day 2

We used the Inner Space room for programmes for the well-being of the participants. We conducted short guided meditations which gave an opportunity for the participants to relax, focus their energy and find a connection with themselves. Were able to conduct ten meditation sessions of 15 to 20 minutes each over the three days.

We also had a 90-minute discussion session on "Mind, brain and Meditation". For the active well-being of the participants, a one hour "Indian Dance workshop was conducted in the Active Wellbeing room. The participants co-operated enthusiastically. It gave them an opportunity to have more fun and to build team spirit among themselves.

The team spirit of the COY 13 team was excellent and everything happened smoothly, giving the impression of a celestial dance.

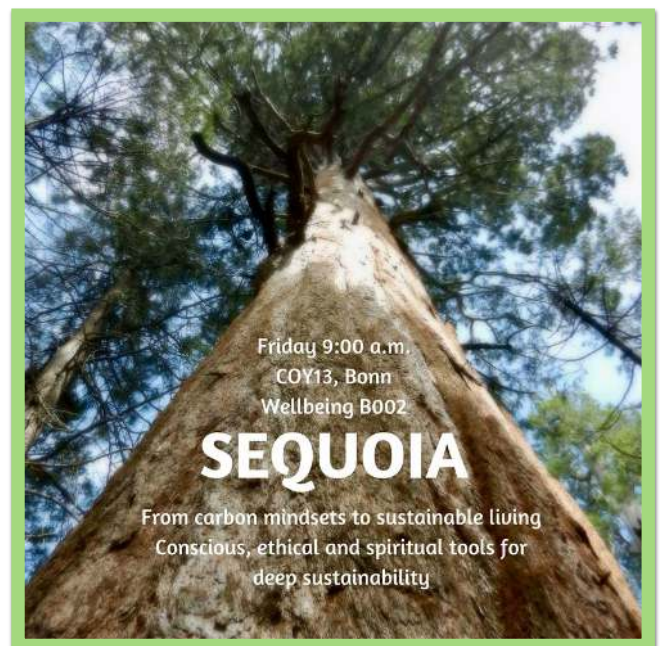




Highlights from Day 3

The workshop Sequoia was about deep sustainability and spirituality, where participants explored different ways to change the world through the lens of spirituality. They learned practical solutions, such as eating well by following a vegetarian or vegan diet, and by living simply.

Juan participated in YOUNGO (the official youth constituency at UNFCCC) working groups to help draft two documents. One was the opening ceremony statement from YOUNGO at COP23 and the other was the schedule of questions for Patricia Espinosa during the Youth day at COP.





Closing Ceremony

After 3 days and 271 programmes, the COY13 events closed with hopes of real actions on climate change. The main guests were Ms. Patricia Espinosa, the UNFCCC executive secretary, Mr. Frank Bainimarama, the Fijian Prime Minister and Mr. Ashok Shridharan, the mayor of Bonn.



Ms. Espinosa said that participants have potential and leadership and she will convey the voice of COY13 to COP 23. In thanking the German government, Mr Bainimarama said that Fiji is the first small island country to have the presidency of COP. He strongly believed that, in climate change conferences, we are not just 'Talkers' but 'Doers'. Mr. Shridharan expressed appreciation of the COY youths using the words 'Young Climate activists' and said these youths are our future. At COY's closing ceremony, we had the opportunity to meet Mr Frank Bainimarama and to share some environment blessing cards with him.

