



## Report: BK participation at LCOY – the Local Conference of Youth for Climate Change in Netherlands

16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019, Amsterdam

The Local Conference of Youth for Climate Change Netherlands (LCOYNL) 2019 took place from 16-17 November at the Amsterdam University College. The Conference of Youth (COY) is a youth-powered conference which take place prior to the Conference of the Parties (COP) with regards to the United Nations Framework for the Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). LCOYs are held to bring forward the voice of the youth in policy decisions regarding actions for climate change.

The Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative (BKEI) has been taking part in the COP for 10 years and in the international COYs since 2011. Youth are especially very active in raising awareness of climate related issues and have started local chapters of the COY. This year more than 20 LCOYs have taken place across the world.

A delegation of five members representing BKEI travelled to Amsterdam for the LCOYNL including Akansha from Bielefeld (Germany), Deepa from Berlin (Germany), Ilja from Hilversum (Netherlands), Madhava from Buchhold (Germany) and Niranjn from Berlin (Germany). Sister JC from the Philippines who happened to be in Amsterdam at the time also spontaneously participated with her enthusiastic interest in environmental awareness.



Delegates of Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative at LCOY Netherlands  
(from left to right, Niranjn, Deepa, Akansha, Ilja, JC, Madhava)

Day 1 of conference, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 10.00,

## Opening ceremony and workshops

The opening ceremony of the LCOY NL shared real stories of some of the participants; how they have experienced the effects of climate change in their lives. There were stories of beaches disappearing in Kerala due to rising sea levels to ice sports disappearing in the Netherlands due to rising global temperatures. There were more than 150 participants, 25 workshops and 20 volunteers.

The first half of the day most of us attended different workshops. These included Introduction to Climate Science, the IPCC report, the UN process on climate negotiations with the member countries, and climate litigation with the case of Shell, the largest mineral oil and natural gas company.

The workshop on the IPCC report shared some surprising scientific facts. For example: to limit the climate change temperature increase to 1.5 C is difficult and the temperature might even increase to 3 C. In general, it widened our knowledge about the different kinds of activism taking place in the environmental sector. It made us aware of the needs and points of concern of the participants.



The opening ceremony of the LCOY NL



BKEI stand at the LCOY



Environmental Blessing Cards



In the afternoon, we set up the exhibition stand. We put up our poster of the 10 Ways to Change the World ([click here](#)), the solar plant at Shantivan, Solar One, and we displayed blessing cards linked to the 10 Ways.

### 16<sup>th</sup> November, 15:30, Plenary discussion



Representative of the Indigenous People's Movement from Papua New Guinea



The plenary discussions at LCOY

The format of the LCOY was very open. In the afternoon, they organized a plenary session with all the participants. We were divided into 10 big themes including Rail to the COP, Indigenous People's Movement in Climate Change, Mental Health and Climate Change and so on.

A group called Extinction Rebellion devises ways of civil disobedience by disrupting daily functioning of cities and financial institutions. Eco-anxiety is becoming more of an issue.



Wrapping up for Day 1. From left to right: Deepa, Akansha, Ilja, JC, Niranjana, Madhava

The LCOY participants were very interested in our workshop. Many participants were open to hearing about spirituality and, in the face of environmental challenges, feminine and indigenous consciousness. We heard statements like "We cannot keep on running all the time. There is a need to stop and reflect."

## Day 2, 17<sup>th</sup> November, 10.30, Workshop "Consciousness, Consumption and Climate Change"

This workshop offered by BK and entitled, "Consciousness, Consumption and Climate Change" had 15 participants. Most participants were in the age of 20-30 years old. The participants were very aware of their environmental duties. Many followed a vegan diet and practiced other environmentally friendly ways of living.



Some highlights from the workshop

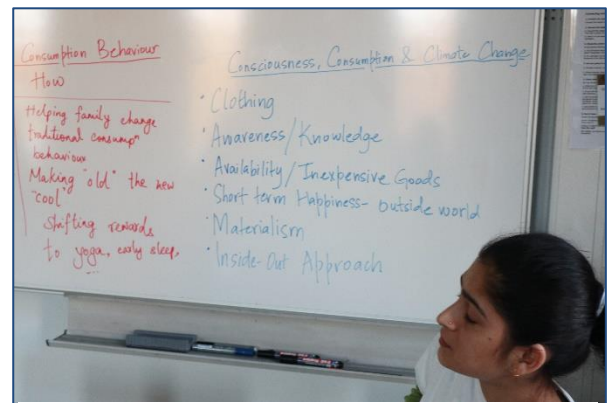
Overall the students were well informed, organised, aware, exploring the new avenues towards their contribution to climate change, consciously motivated and active. However, we also observed the underlying overload of information and the dilemma and anxiety on the uncertainty of future aspects.

Participants took part in an appreciative inquiry where each one was asked for a point in their lives when a deep change took place in their consciousness. The exercise was designed for the participants to reach into their pool of inner resources and realize their strengths to deal with present and future challenges.

The discussions during the attended sessions concluded that behavioural change and value systems as key challenges in achieving climate change goals. Apart from the protest and campaigning tools, students were continually in search for new methods to be heard. We found this to be inspiring.



The participants became aware that trying to seek happiness from the outside world was a major cause of excessive consumption. We concluded the workshop in the awareness that each one of us needs to be introspective to find the correct balance. A final guided meditation was held where the participants visualized the future while seated on their throne of empowerment.



Contributions from participants



BKEI on the day of the Workshop (Left to right: Madhava, Niranjan, Ilja, Deepa, Akansha)

## Day 2, November 17, 14:00

Madhava attended a session called "Working towards ending racism in the climate movement (sustaining all life)" Deepa joined a session on Netherland municipality goals on being Carbon Neutral by 2050.

Concluding, the LCOY was informative and inspirational with knowledgeable guests and speakers. The sessions gave us much more insight into climate change and the consequences of it. There was a rich mix of cultures and a wide variety of personal stories were told. These stories touched us and brought us back to simplicity. Ultimately, a vision of a better world has much more impact than an individual might think. It helps one to make the first move; others will follow.

## Glimpses from LCOY NL 2019



"Stop Ecocide" Environmental Campaign



Potato Artwork at LCOY

## A big thanks to...

Ellen, Shanti, Jacqueline, Louis, Rakesh of the Amsterdam family who supported the entire stay, food and transport logistics of the event and Daksh from Cologne (Germany) for organizing BKEI T-shirts for the LCOY NL team.



From left to right : Ilja, Deepa and Ellen



The Brahma Kumaris Centre in Amsterdam