



Report: BK participation at COY15 – the Conference of Youth for Climate Change held in Spain

November 29 - December 1, 2019, Madrid

The Conference of Youth (COY) is held annually in the same country and prior to the Conference of the Parties (COP), which is the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). COY serves as a preparation session for youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to develop position papers, network and form strategic decisions on climate change solutions.

COY 15 was planned to be held in Valparaiso, Chile as Chile had the presidency of this year's COP. However, due to civil unrest in Chile, the COP, as well as the COY, were relocated to Madrid, Spain. In consequence, the original team of Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative (BKEI) youth, consisting of Ricardo, Victor and Dolly from Chile and Maria Paula from Colombia, could not take part. Their helpful contributions were however much appreciated.



The BKEI at COY Madrid was represented by 3 youth from Europe: Susanne from Sweden, Masé from Spain and Niranjana from Germany.

Day 1, Friday, 29 November, 10am - 1pm: Opening Ceremony



The COY Opening Ceremony began with directors of the hosting institutes and UNFCCC youth representatives highlighting the importance of climate action and youth involvement. This year more than 20 local COYs took place all over the world and this was represented here too. LCOY India was for the first time hosted at the BK Shantivan Campus in Madhuban.

The official youth constituency at the UNFCCC, called YOUNGO, explained the process of the Paris Climate Agreement and the different working groups formed within the COY covering themes such as Eco-restoration, Agriculture and Renewable Energy. All were welcome to join a working group, as membership is based only on individual expression of interest. For more information on YOUNGO, visit their website at: <http://youthclimatemovement.wordpress.com/youngo/>

Day 1, 3pm - 4.30pm, Workshop on "Consciousness, Lifestyle and Climate Change"

It was beautiful to witness such a big group of youth from all over the world gathering together for our workshop and sharing about their deepest consumerism patterns. In silence, they would arrive, read a blessing that was awaiting in their chairs and smile. In pairs, we began to discuss the relationship between consciousness, lifestyle, and climate change. There was a noticeable swift increase in welcoming and warm energy as everyone opened up. Niranjana led a meditation introducing self-reflecting questions such as:

- What do I consume?
- What am I feeling at that time?
- What is the need I am trying to fulfil?

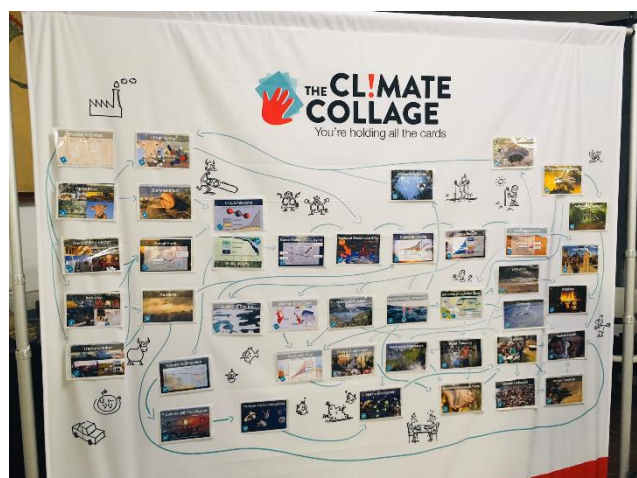


These aspects were explored as they shared and came to their own conclusions. We all agreed on the importance of being very mindful before consuming without awareness: especially on what kind of information we consume. We finished the session with a meditation on self-empowerment and connection to our inner qualities. The meditations were appreciated as a break from an overload of information. Many were interested in knowing more about the work of Brahma Kumaris.

Day 2, Saturday, 30 November 2019, 10am - 1pm

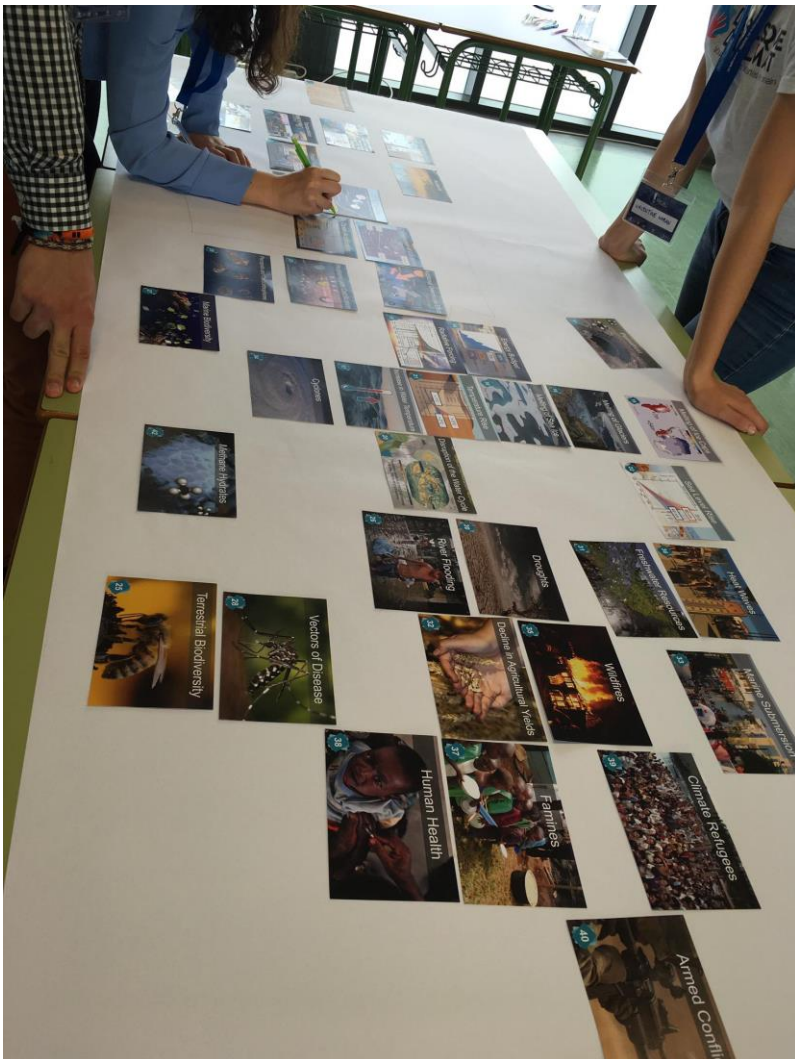
The BK team attended workshops on different approaches to climate issues. The climate collage was a very creative idea that invited us to reflect on and understand the consequences of human activities on the climate.

It is an activity that allows you to utilise your inner knowledge. You work together with a group until you fully understand all the effects that come from simple day to day activities. In the end, you can draw positive messages that emerge from the inside in order to focus on hope, peace, and on inspiring others by a shift in our awareness.





The Climate Collage in
Progress at COY15



Day 2, 3pm - 4.30pm, Workshop on "Cultivation of Inner Qualities for Sustainability"



On day 2, Susanne moderated a workshop on why the cultivation of inner qualities is important in our quest to a sustainable society. We saw some participants coming back from the workshop of the previous day. Twelve souls joined the workshop. They were welcomed by blessing cards on their seats that were much appreciated.

Susanne asked everyone their favourite location in nature. This idea was useful during the meditation when participants were asked to visualize a peaceful location. The meditations were welcomed by participants as they felt relaxed after so much activity and information deluge at the conference.



The format of the workshop was based on Appreciative Inquiry where groups of three were formed: each with a Speaker, Listener and Observer. Each group was asked to remember a moment when a deep change in their awareness took place which resulted in a change in their consumption behaviour in a specific area.

The workshop enabled participants to share their stories of realization and change. In doing so, they consciously became aware of their inner powers that are needed during times of transformation.

The workshop attracted a particular youth delegate, who wished to make a mental health a priority in the face of the climate crisis and he is collaborating with the WHO.

Many participants showed interest in meditating with the Brahma Kumaris when we exchanged contact information.

A big thanks to ...



Antonio, Bill, José Mari, Juan, Maria Jesus, Shanti and the local Madrid family for their loving co-operation and tireless service. All food, logistics and transport were planned by them ensuring smooth, seamless functioning for the COY Team. A big thankyou to Carolin (Germany) from the COP Team for invaluable intellectual input in providing an appropriate framework for all the workshops and Daksh (Germany) for organizing BKEI T-shirts.