

Final Report

Local Conference of Youth United Arab Emirates

This report is meant to serve as a documentation of the work that the organizing group of this specific LCOY has done over the past weeks and months. In order to archive the take-aways, best-practice examples and lessons-learned from the process of planning, implementing and evaluating an LCOY, the LCOY Working Group is asking the members of the organizing group to fill in this report. Thank you for your commitment and the effort and time you have put into organizing your LCOY.

I. Introduction & Mission

The Local Conference of Youth United Arab Emirates is the first climate change conference for the youth hosted in the country.

As a non-profit organization with youth-focused initiatives, Raja Yoga Center has taken the lead to host the environment event considering the diverse nature of the population in the country, majority of which are non-UAE citizens.

This is the first time as well for the Raja Yoga Center to host such event. The purpose was to provide a common platform for all youth from various backgrounds to come together and share their insights and activities related to climate change.

The key target goals were to educate the youth about climate action and promote sustainable living practices; develop outputs that can be fed into COY16 and COP26; support UAE's vision towards Climate plan and Green agenda.

II. Executive Summary

Please provide the following data and information form your LCOY.

Country: United Arab Emirates

Location: Dubai

Date: January 28-29, 2021

Duration: 3 sessions of 2 hours each spread over two days

Online / offline: Online

Website: <https://lcoy.rajayogacenter.org/>

Social Media Channels:

<https://www.facebook.com/LCOYUAE/>

<https://www.instagram.com/lcoyuae/>

Number of participants: 103 on Day 1; 120 on Day 2 (combined attendees of 2 sessions)

Number of volunteers: 22

Size organizing team: 10

Specifics about the local / national environment (political situation, restrictions, ect.):

As all volunteers are residents of the UAE, but not citizens, the activities are centered more on initiatives that are global in nature and not specifically focused on national goals.

Please elaborate more in detail on the following points.

Theme of conference: United Youth for Climate Change

Reasoning behind the chosen theme (e.g. local context, specific goal, ect.):

The conference theme aptly represents the diversity of the UAE constituents and the passion of residents to play their part and role to advance climate action in the UAE, even though they are not citizens of the nation. The unique aspect of this event presents that concern for the environment and taking action surpasses nationality. Except for the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, all participants, including organizations, are members of the expatriate community.

Because all LCOYs are organized under the auspices of the LCOY Working Group, it would be great to hear your organizing team's individual stance on the following question. What is your perception of the common mission of LCOY?

The common mission of LCOY presents a great opportunity to unite the voice of youth from around the world. It creates a feeling of belonging and oneness among the youth as part of a larger common goal – for the love of the planet. It resonates well with the values of the organizing team to promote the spirit of harmony and cooperation in this common task.

III. Methodology

Please provide information on the questions in the following six subsections to your best experience.

1. Program

The organizing team has met entirely online to discuss how to execute the program soon as it received the approval to host the event. Lead coordinator Deepti Serai took the initiative to create subteams to facilitate the volunteers and enable a more efficient flow of activities. (Please see attached Appendix 1 for the map of activities and role of volunteers.)

For the pre-event, the team tapped social media as the means to engage the youth as well as promote the event. (Please find separate report on Appendix 2, outlining the activities done throughout the social media campaign.)

To encourage participation, the team categorized participation into four: Change Enablers, Change Supporters, Volunteers, Attendees. Change enablers became the basis of the agenda flow as these are the group of people and organizations that have been contributing to climate action. Change supporters were organizations supporting LCOY UAE to spread awareness about the event, and Volunteers were supporting the organizing of the event. Attendees were listeners and participants during the conference.

A full report on the agenda flow and the sessions' activities are presented in Appendix 3.

Please provide a short overview of the brainstorm process that led to the final program of your LCOY.

To extend LCOY UAE beyond the event and be considered as a movement, the team decided to create a means to engage with the youth through social media campaigns:

1. **Green Champion Challenge** was held for 4 weeks prior the conference from 1-28 Jan 2021. Weekly challenges in the form of polls on Instagram stories encouraged youth towards: Fostering a Go green mindset; Green living at home; Green living at work/college/school and Zero waste respectively.

At the end of each week, positive responses were recognized and the youth were tagged with a virtual Green Champion trophy

2. **Weekly social media posts on –**

Climate facts titled, ‘Did you Know?’; News titled as New Wave and guided meditation were aimed to create awareness about climate change and raised importance of climate action by youth.

Please include the program schedule for the conference day(s). If there are interesting details or information on specific speakers or workshops that you would like to share, please feel free to include those descriptions here.

29 January from 4.00-6.00pm on Sustainability					
Organization/Initiative	Speakers	Role in the organization	Session role	Duration	Topic
Ministry of Climate Change and environment	Mashaal Al Ansari	Climate Change Specialist	Pre-recorded Video	10 mins	Opening speech
Earthly Behavior Initiative	Zeina Al Hashmi	Environmental Sustainability Advocate	Panel dialogue	25 minutes	Conscious Consumerism
Bioware Trading LLC	Natesh Iyer	Co-founder of Bioware Trading LLC			
Bee'ah	Sherry Mathew	Head of Sustainability - Commercial Collections	Presenter	30 minutes	What can I do?
WeCareDXB Initiative	Riva Tulpule	Founder of WeCareDXB campaign Award Winner :DIANA Award,UK 2020 MEYE UN Sustainability Young Leader of the year, 2020, Action For Nature- Eco Hero Award 2020, San Francisco, USA	Pre-recorded Video	7 minutes	Eco heroes making a difference
BKEI – Denmark	Sonja Ohlsson	UN COP active participant, International Coordinator BKEI, Environment advocate	Presenter	15 minutes	Eco-values for climate action

30 January from 11.00am-1.00pm on Conservation					
Organization/Initiative	Speakers	Role in the organization	Session role	Duration	Topic
Azraq	Azalea Watfa	Education Coordinator	Presenter	30 minutes	Youth & Marine Conservation
Goumbook	Tatiana Antonelli Abella	Founder & Managing Director	Presenter	20 minutes	Nurturing nature
Tender Hearts Arena- enhancing skills of kids with special abilities	Video by Special needs students		Talent inspirer	7 minutes	Inspiration from people of determination
Vegan advocate	Chetan G Punjani	Dubai based ethical vegan for 6 years Certified in Plant Based Nutrition	Presenter	15 minutes	Lifestyle Changes to fight Climate Crisis

RR's Happy Planet Initiative	Eco artists - Rahul and Rohan Raju	Founder of RR's Happy Planet Initiative Global Child Prodigy Award 2020 International Young Eco Hero Award 2018 Action For Nature USA	Talent inspirer	7 minutes	Eco heroes making a difference
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30 January from 4.00-6.00pm on Innovation					
Organization/Initiative	Speakers	Role in the organization	Session role	Duration	Topic
Eco Innovator	13 years old Sainath Manikanandan	Aspiring environmentalist Grade 8 student at GEMS United Indian School Active member: Emirates Environmental Group (EEG) Drop It Youth (DIY) ambassador Students for the Earth (SfE) Tunza Eco Generation	Presenter	7 mins	Innovation for climate action
D Grade	Ella Clemits	Simply Bottles Coordinator Creator of ECONets – reusable fruit & vegetable bags made from recycled plastic bottles	Presenter	15 minutes	Practical solution for Plastic pollution
Ecube Training	Prakash Chugani	Founder of Ecube Training, Leadership, Negotiation & Sales Coach and Facilitator	Presenter	25 minutes	Innovative thinking for green living
Holistic Wellbeing Consultant – Canada	Juan Vazquez	NGO Representative at the United Nations, Certified Climate Reality leader, Holistic Wellbeing Consultant, Sustainable Development Squad at National Bank of Canada	Presenter	15 minutes	Consciousness and Climate Change

A full report on the agenda flow and the sessions' activities are presented in Appendix 3.

In addition, some reflections and insights about the entire LCOY UAE process have been documented in Appendix 4.

The LCOY Team also contacted the media to cover the sessions. There were no responses, however, the pre-event got one coverage and the post-event got full coverage from one green website. (See Appendix 5)

2. Logistics

Please provide information on the following aspects. Just answer the section that corresponds with the format of your LCOY: offline or online.

LCOY online

How was the application / registration process for your LCOY designed and facilitated?

The registrations took place through the website lcoy.rajayogacenter.org linked to Eventbrite to distinguish participants between 13-35 years and those above 35 years.

Which online platform or software was used to host your LCOY?

The conference was held and recorded on ZOOM.

How were group interactions / group work / networking processes facilitated throughout the online conference?

Before the conference:

Exclusive networking opportunity was available for 20 minutes as a pre-conference program before each session facilitated by 2 youth moderators for that session where informal engagement through value-based questions posed by moderators prompted interesting responses by participants and Change Enablers on chat.

During the conference:

Change enablers (speakers) facilitated experiential exercises such as meditation and artwork that served as common ground for participants to share their experiences and creative work. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions to speakers via chat and at times were allowed to unmute and share ideas.

Apart from that, moderators invited responses to engage the audience between speakers sessions that further enthused and united them.

3. Human Resources & Administration

Please provide a description of the structures within the organizing group of your LCOY.

Group size: 10 members

How were tasks distributed?

- **Jyothi Hulmani (Raja Yoga Center Partner and Managing Director)**
 - Spread LCOY UAE awareness among VIP & corporate network
 - Email communication with attendees
 - Review website & video content before publishing
 - Review press release, change enabler forms and all host organization content before publishing
 - Guide moderator practice before the conference
 - Ensure smooth flow of the whole conference in a timely manner

- **Deepti Serai (LCOY UAE Lead coordinator)**
 - Spread LCOY UAE awareness and encourage participation among UAE educational institutions, partner organizations and government ministry
 - Identify and formulate volunteer teams, team induction to LCOY, lead meetings to share responsibilities
 - Work with each team to synchronize tasks with other teams
 - Draft website content, registration form, Change enabler & supporter form
 - Create social media handles & review social media content before publishing
 - Create presentation for Change Enabler, supporter, volunteers and conference
 - Establish partner relations and communication, draft and mediate signing of Change enabler forms between partner and host company
 - Work with core team to finalize program agenda
 - Contribute to LCOY UAE report writing and output documentation
 - Moderator at one of the sessions of the conference
 - Issue and send Volunteer and participant certificates and letter of appreciation to Change Enablers

- **Deepa Iyer (LCOY UAE Lead designer)**
 - Create LCOY UAE logo design, templates for presentation, letterhead, social media posts and certificates for attendees and volunteers

- Create audio visual video content for LCOY UAE teaser, introduction & meditation
 - Lead creative team to ensure content match design
 - Brainstorm creative ideas for social media campaigns and lead social media team activities
 - Work with core team to finalize program agenda
- **Natesh Iyer (LCOY UAE web developer & IT support)**
 - Create LCOY UAE website and ensure seamless registrations
 - Help establish partner network
 - Brainstorm structural process with core team
 - Work with core team to finalize program agenda
 - Email communication with attendees
- **Ankita Manjunath (LCOY UAE design coordinator, social media manager & IT support)**
 - Spread awareness and encourage participation at LCOY UAE among artists and educational institutions
 - Create content and design artwork for Green champion challenges
 - Create designs and posts for LCOY UAE social media & ensure daily audience engagement
 - Draft content for Change enabler & supporter form
 - Help establish partner network
 - Guide moderator practice before the conference
 - Key role in IT management for smooth functioning of conference
 - Write report for LCOY UAE
- **Medilyn Manibo (LCOY UAE content writer)**
 - Help establish partner network
 - Write press release for media
 - Draft website and video content
 - Review and edit communication content including website, change enabler & supporter form, feedback form and presentation
 - Work with core team to finalize agenda flow
 - Lead report writing team, collate and finalize report and output document
- **Prakash Chugani (LCOY UAE planning and development)**
 - Brainstorm structural process with core team
 - Help establish partner network
 - Review communication content including website, change enabler & supporter form and presentation
 - Work with core team to finalize agenda flow
- **Barkavi Shanthikumar (LCOY UAE content creator and design)**
 - Create content and design artwork for Green champion challenges
 - Spread awareness and encourage participation at LCOY UAE
 - Moderator at one of the sessions of the conference
- **Shatheesananthan Vivekananthan (LCOY UAE research & IT manager)**

- Lead research team to create partner network and ensure selection as per LCOY rules and regulations
- Guide moderator practice before the conference
- Key role in IT management for smooth functioning of conference with timely audio-visual preparation

- **Ajay Yadav (LCOY UAE Digital support)**

- Creating videos for LCOY UAE marketing
- Moderator at one of the sessions of the conference

What was the total time effort for the organizing body (approx. in hours / weeks)?

We received approval to host LCOY UAE in November 2020. Following which brainstorming with core team for following process took place. Website and coordination email ID was ready by 11 December 2020, following which teams performed their respective roles. Partnership network was established in January 2021. Overall, the program was organized approximately within 10 weeks.

How did you structure your planning timeline (when to do what, the order of completing certain tasks in time, ect.)?

After approval, our timeline included:

Week 1 & 2 – Brainstorm with core team, design processes and timeline, create website content and research on current national climate initiatives.

Week 1 to 3 – Reach out to volunteers and formulate teams as per their interest and skills.

Week 3 & 4 – Logo design, website creation, listing potential partners, creating social media handles and creating dedicated email ID for communication.

Week 4 to 6 – Establish volunteer teams, meetings for team induction, finalizing team roles and groundwork on identifying partners.

Weeks 6 to 8 – Media communications, establishing partner network, finalizing speakers and their respective topics, finalizing program flow, partner timeslot communications

Weeks 6 to 10 – Design social media campaigns, challenges, artwork & posts.

Week 10 – Preparing moderator script, time keeping practice with IT team, Audio visual set ups and coordinating timely attendance with Change enablers prior to the conference.

Any best practices to share in how to accommodate group planning processes (strategies, online tools, decision making processes, ect.)?

1. It helps to have a dedicated volunteer team when applying to host LCOY in order to commence work towards the conference as soon as approval comes through.
2. Having volunteer professional designers who are passionate about the environment adds a lot of value given that the conference and campaigns were held online.
3. Having a volunteer professional writer made it possible to establish media contacts to invite them to cover the event and send them press release for marketing before the conference.
4. Online tools used included:
 - Canva.com for creating templates and designs for social media posts and certificates

- Adobe premier for creating professional videos
- The IT team made use of OBS studio software for scheduling videos and slides to be played according to program agenda.
- Google drive for saving presentations, videos and scripts for access by core team, moderators and IT team

Please provide a description of the organization and coordination of the workforce needed during the conference itself (volunteers, moderators, tech support, ect.).

For each of the 2 hours sessions, 2 moderators including male & female were selected.

A common team of 4 volunteers took charge of IT responsibilities throughout the conference:

1. Shatheesanathan Vivekanathan – Using OBS studio to share audio visuals and slides; making speakers co-hosts; managing zoom settings for waiting room before official start and recording the sessions.
 2. Jyothi Hulmani – making announcements on zoom chat; identifying speakers as they join; spotlighting speakers as per their timeslot and recording the sessions.
 3. Ankita Manjunath – identifying speakers as they join; making them co-hosts; spotlighting speakers as per their timeslot and recording the sessions.
3. Udaya Annakottan – time keeping for speakers and conference photographs

Please provide a description of your marketing strategy. How did you design your public relations work? Cover topics such as social media strategies, promotion material (digital and analog), press work and media coverage here. You can include examples of your strategies in the appendix (make a remark here).

Please provide a list of the partners of your LCOY (pro-bono partners, NGOs, schools, political bodies, ect.) and their role in supporting your LCOY.

The partners were titled as Change Enablers who had opportunity to present at the conference. Partners list and their role given under methodology program section.

Whereas Change Supporters were organizations who believed in the cause and helped market the event by spreading awareness within their network.

Change Supporters included:

- Parallel Solutions Technology
- ASSKK music and dance centre
- The Meditation Space DMCC
- Mei Ling Pranic Healing Center

4. Accessibility & Inclusivity

How was accessibility guaranteed and inclusivity achieved within the organizing group of your LCOY?

Since the conference was held online, it became easy for participants around the world to attend with ease.

At LCOY UAE, we ensured inclusivity by

- Inviting partners from diverse nationalities across UAE and internationally.
- Our partners included Tender Hearts Arena – recreation school for people of determination (special needs) where youth provided inspiration and encouragement on green living as a natural lifestyle

- Each session at the conference included 2 moderator youth (male & female) to ensure gender equality

How was accessibility guaranteed and inclusivity achieved among the participants of your LCOY (including participants with handicaps, POC, underrepresented groups, ect.)?

Not applicable

5. Finances

From which sponsors have you received financial support? Please include a list here and provide background information on the sponsors and their kind of involvement in your LCOY (solely financially, also involvement in the conference itself, ect.).

We did not seek financial support from any organization.

What are your recommendations in finding sponsors and receiving / applying for financial support?

Not applicable

Have you requested participation fees or fees for accommodation from participants? If yes, on which scale?

No fees were charged for participation, the conference was held entirely online and was free to attend.

Please provide a breakdown of your expenses (for venue, catering, speakers, ect.)?

Not applicable

IV. Evaluation

This part is to provide a space for reflection on and evaluation of your LCOY and the prior planning and organizational process.

Please provide an analysis / list of strengths and weaknesses of your planning process, the conference itself or work within the team. Drawing from these strengths and weaknesses, do you have any recommendations for other groups to improve their processes?

It was our first time to host an event for the environment and climate change that would produce output towards global COY. Within a short span of time, we learned a lot and gained confidence with the receptivity of volunteers, partners and youth audiences that were equally passionate about the cause. We are grateful to have received this opportunity and would not like to recommend but learn from LCOYs around the world.

Would you say that you have met the goals you had set prior to your LCOY?

We are humbled that as envisioned, we received the support from UAE government for their participation as a Change Enabler. Mashael Al Ansari, climate change specialist representation from UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment had shared the opening remarks for the conference through a pre-recorded video.

Secondly, we had an aim to bring in about 300 participants which was achieved only in the form of registrations. Nevertheless, we do believe, this conference laid the foundation and paved way for many more youth to step up towards climate action.

V. Recommendations Towards the Working Group

Do you have any recommendations or ideas for improvement towards the LCOY Working Group on how to enhance the processes around LCOYs?

1. It would be great to receive an acknowledgment email upon application to know whether it has gone through.
2. A follow up email to suggest whether it is likely that we will be approved so we can prepare ourselves accordingly.
3. Reduction in response time would be an added advantage.

VI. Contact Information

Please provide the contact information of your team here.

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Ajay Yadav	ajayateis@yahoo.com

VII. Appendix

You can attach any documents / pictures / videos / social media content / templates / other material ect. that you consider helpful for other groups or insightful about your conference here.

APPENDIX 1: Map of Volunteer Work Activities

APPENDIX 2: Social Media Campaign Report

APPENDIX 3: Event Sessions Report

APPENDIX 4: Reflections and Insights

APPENDIX 5: Media Coverage

APPENDIX 2: LCOY UAE – SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN REPORT

For the first ever Local Conference of Youth held in UAE, a group of volunteers organized by the youth of Raja Yoga Center dedicated a Social Media team who devised a weekly social media campaign focused on challenging the audience to make a sustainable change in their practices.

These are simple routinely activities that target some of the basic areas that we as individuals can focus upon. These challenges were a reminder for the Youth to reflect upon, to pave way for a greener planet. Through these weekly challenges, the Social Media team at LCOY, UAE encouraged the youth, to do their bit, and contribute in small ways towards sustainability.

The weekly challenges were held for a period of four weeks during the month of January. At the end of every week, a post was put up on both Facebook as well as the Instagram handle of LCOY, UAE – “@lcoyuae”, which displayed a virtual trophy rewarding each person who took up the challenge for that week. This was done to motivate the Youth, and to instill a sense of achievement within them.

The challenges could be taken up as individuals or in groups. Participants inviting their friends to take the challenge with them was motivational like a friendly competition for the groups. With everyone doing their tiny bit, together a huge change can be made. Working together made it much easier to complete these simple tasks. The main aim was to transform these tasks into new habits for the youth, as they followed the checklist for every week.

We targeted an audience that had the will to make a change but did not know where to start. These challenges acted as a starting point for so many people who took part in it.

The challenges were divided into four categories namely:

- 1) Eco Lifestyle for the Self/Mindset
- 2) Go Green at Home
- 3) Go Green at Work/College
- 4) Zero Waste

The four categories had varied challenges for 5-7 days within the period of four weeks.

The following tables below display all the challenges, with information consisting of the number of people who participated, and the net outcome of every week’s challenge.

Sno	Challenge Description	Participants	Results	
			Yes	No
1	I will switch to reusable, biodegradable cutlery bags or cups.	17	92%	8%
2	I will switch to Cruelty free.			

3	I will foster a GoGreen mindset by discussing with friends & family.			
4	Lemon/Orange peels can be used to make a natural cleaner. Shall we try it out? DIY Recipe			
5	I will consider making purchases from local businesses.			
6	I will read good natural living blogs - "Zero Waste Home", "The Good Trade" & "The Sustainable Edit"			
7	I will stop, think a minute to reflect on my consumption of resources like water, energy, waste, etc.			

Week 1 – Eco Lifestyle for the Self/Mindset

The first week's challenge was all about beginning this journey with yourself. It aimed at allowing individuals to inculcate an eco-friendly lifestyle as part of their routine or habit. It challenged the participants to focus on the simple steps that would lead to a huge impact – steps that had to be initiated by them.

This challenge raised awareness of the fact that the road to a sustainable living, a greener environment and a cleaner planet had to begin with our thoughts and our mindsets.

A total of 17 people voted, out of which a massive 92% voted Yes.

Sno	Challenge Description	Participants	Results	
			Yes	No
1	I will set up a recycling area with separate bins for paper, plastic, and metal.	18	92%	8%
2	I will turn off the lights if I am the last to leave.			
3	I will drive less, do more. Combine as many errands as you can in one trip.			
4	I will turn off the water when brushing teeth or in between rinsing dishes.			
5	I will turn off the PC or monitor when not in use.			

6	I will wash laundry in cold water instead of hot, and line dry clothes.			
7	I will limit showers to five minutes.			

Week 2 – GoGreen at Home

The second week’s challenge was having to do your make a change in youelr surroundings, starting from your home. Home is every individual’s first environment. This challenge made our participants realize that how very mundane eco friendly alternatives through the tasks can bring about a huge difference just by following them at home.

This challenge also made individuals spread their eco-friendly thoughts to their family members. This meant creating more awareness and a collective effort to combat climate change.

A total of 18 people voted, out of which 92% voted Yes.

Sno	Challenge Description	Participants	Results	
			Yes	No
1	GO PAPERLESS: I will avoid printing unless absolutely necessary. Wherever possible I will take or read notes on my laptop or tablet instead of printing them out.	18	100%	0%
2	GREEN MINDSET: I will raise environmental awareness amongst my colleagues by talking to them about GoGreen and sharing information and top tips online.			
3	DRIVE MORE EFFICIENTLY: If I need to drive, I will drive in a more eco-friendly way such as avoiding sudden accelerations and hard braking.			
4	AVOID SINGLE USE PRODUCTS: Switch to reusable earth friendly products where possible for e.g., Steel or glass containers, wooden brushes.			
5	TRAVEL MORE CONSCIOUSLY: I will think about how I travel. Can I use metro/bus instead of car? Or is it possible to use video conferencing instead of face-to-face meeting.			

6	MINDFUL MEALS: I will substitute meat with plant-based food at least once a week.			
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Week 3 – GoGreen at Work/College

The third week’s challenge took a step head with a few green practices at your workplace or college. Participants challenged themselves to take up measures that can reduce their overall carbon footprint. These measures are as simple as not printing out anything unnecessary, and yet just as much effective.

With one individual spreading these green values, your colleagues or friends will be inspired to make the change with you.

A total of 18 people voted, out of which a whopping 100% voted Yes.

Week 4 – Zero Waste

Sno	Challenge Description	Participants	Results	
			Yes	No
1	I will use cloth rags for cleaning instead of paper towels.	15	98%	2%
2	Be creative when wrapping gifts such as using newspaper and old maps.			
3	I will reuse scrap paper. Print on two sides or let your siblings color on the back side of used paper.			
4	I will reuse leftover instead of tossing it out.			
5	I will consider freezing fruits and veggies in glass jars instead of plastic containers.			

The fourth week’s challenge was all about incorporating a few green practices which would amount to achieving zero waste. These everyday practices are extremely vital habits that individuals must keep in mind.

We aim for zero waste, and that can only be achieved by assimilating these tasks into our routinely activities. A change can be made by making a single decision to take something

seriously – dedication to this decision will keep our participants on the right path, and as a result of that a habit will be formed.

A total of 15 people voted, out of which 98% voted Yes.

Appendix 3: The Local Conference of Youth UAE, Sessions Report

January 28-29, 2021

Day 1: Friday, 29th Jan 2021

Timing: 4.00-6.15pm

Session 1: Sustainability

Moderated by Deepti Serai and Krishna Panicker

15:45 Networking

16:00 Opening

16:15 Welcome Remarks

16:30 Panel Discussion - Conscious Consumerism: How to Move Forward

17:00 Experience Sharing: What can I do?

17:35 Inspiration Boosters: The Journey of an E-waste recycler

17:40 Eco-Values for Climate Action

17:55 Closing Session

The first session focused on the sustainability efforts of individuals and organizations in the country. It kicked off with an opening remark from the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, represented by climate change specialist Ms. Mashaal Al Ansari, who encouraged the youth to become sustainability advocates.

Al Ansari said: “Being part of this event will enable the new generation to actively contribute to designing the next 50 years of this nation. It will bridge the gap between young people who have the passion and the right mindset to come with innovative ideas and decision makers who can help translate these ideas into reality. Your input and commitment to shaping a better world is more important than ever.”

A panel discussion focused on ‘conscious consumerism’ followed with Zeina Al Hashmi, an environmental sustainability advocate and Natesh Iyer, co-founder of Bioware LLC, which deals with biodegradable products catering mainly to hospitality industry.

The discussion explored different aspects such as the ways to achieve conscious consumerism, what drove them into leading an eco-friendly lifestyle and business. They shared the advantages and values they practice as conscious consumers.

Meanwhile, Mr Sherry Mathew, Head of Sustainability of Bee'ah, the only fully integrated environmental and waste management company in the region presented valuable inputs about the journey of waste and the effort they are doing to achieve this using technology applications and enhanced Bee'ah reward program.

This was followed by a video recording of Miss Riva Tulpule, a 15-year-old electronic waste campaigner, who served as an inspiration for the day for the youth participants as she shared

her experience about starting the e-waste recycling initiative and setting up a campaign on collecting the e-waste herself. Ms. Tulpule was noted her other philanthropic initiatives.

The session concluded with a presentation by Ms. Sonjha Ohlsson, International Coordinator at Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative. Ms. Ohlsson shared the importance on how practising values can contribute to a sustainable living and impacting positive climate changes by ending the session with a nature meditation.

A total of 103 participants listened to the discussions and interacted through the Zoom chatbox in sharing their questions and feedback.

Day 2: Saturday, 30 Jan 2021

Timing: 11.00am-1.00pm

Session 2 – Conservation with Passion

Moderated by Barkavi Shantikumar and Piyush Ahuja

10:45 Networking

11:00 Opening Session

11:10 Welcome Remarks

11:15 Inspiration Booster: A Musical Tribute to Water

11:20 Youth's Role in Marine Conservation

11:50 Brothers for Wildlife: Eco-Artists Rajul and Rohan

12:02 Nurturing Nature with Youth Ambassadors

12:27 A Tender Hearts' Special

12:37 Lifestyle Changes to Fight Climate Crisis

12:52 Virtue Café Reflections: The Seed of Light

12:57 Closing Session

The second session highlighted the importance of conservation as a means to restore the environment and the engagement of the youth from the UAE to help achieve them. The moderators first engaged with the audience to gain insight on what eco-friendly changes they would make to their respective lifestyles. Facts and statistics about the environment were shared with the audience.

The opening segment of the session was marked by a video, which portrayed human dependence on nature. Moderators further shared personal experiences with the audience about spending time in nature and environmentally conscious activities adopted into their daily routines, alongside personal items such as plants and re-usable straws.

An excerpt of the speech of Ms. Mashael Al Ansari of MOCCA was shared, followed by a musical tribute to water by Mr. Suraj Bhartti, a vocalist and musical healer. He emphasized on the healing power of music and chose to express his gratitude to nature through his chosen medium of music.

Ms. Azalea Watfa from Azraq UAE, then opened the talk on the importance of marine conservation and youth empowerment to accelerate climate action. She, along with Azraq's youth ambassadors, stressed upon individual action and engagement with organizations like Azraq to help build support for the cause. The team from Azraq conveyed to the audience the various activities they do such as beach clean-ups, social media advocacy on marine

conservation, mangrove planting, and partnerships with organizations to help make a difference at the national, and ultimately international level to address climate change.

The youth inspirers of the day, eco-artists Rahul and Rohan Raju, shared how they were inspired by the UAE's founding father and first president Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Both young advocates use their paintings to raise awareness about wildlife conservation and the importance of individual action to address the climate crisis. The Raju brothers have done so via their artwork, through which they have appealed to large audiences including national ambassadors from across the globe.

Change enabler Ms. Tatiana Abella, Founder and Managing Director of Goumbook, informed the audience about the significance of the Ghaf tree. A once endangered species, the Ghaf tree as a cultural and historical symbol is vital to maintaining life in the desert. Goumbook plays its part in taking climate action by nursing Ghaf saplings and planting them in the desert at the appropriate stage to ensure their uninhibited survival. Goumbook has also gathered public support for their campaign.

The session then moved to a short message from Ms. Neena Raina and Ms. Arti Khazanchi, co-founders of Tender Hearts Arena (THA) UAE, who spoke on the immense capacity of the youth to achieve anything when they are very determined to do so. This is expressed through a video played during the session which showcased students of THA, who are People of Determination (the term is used in the UAE to refer to people with different abilities). They too, participate in making a difference by practicing eco-friendly habits as well as creating projects with reusable and recyclable items, consciously using water, and planting saplings.

Another speaker, Mr. Chetan Punjani, who is an advocate for veganism, called for a change in our diets to combat the climate crisis. He claimed that nearly 51% of greenhouse gas emissions originate from the processing of meat and animal products. Modifying one's diet to make it plant-based can help conserve nature, as well as prevent lifestyle-induced diseases. He left the audience with recommendations of documentaries to educate oneself on the issue and possible action to alleviate the Earth of the climate crisis.

The session concluded with a video documenting the efforts of Raja Yoga Centre volunteers to tidy up Al Qudra Lake, an eco-tourism spot in Dubai, UAE. It was followed by a five-minute guided reflection and meditative session themed, 'The Seed of Light'.

Day 2: Saturday, 30 Jan 2021

Timing: 4.00-6.00pm

Session 3 – Inspiring Innovations

Moderated by Shweta Pakti and Ajay Yadav

15:45 Networking

16:00 Opening Session

16:13 Practical Solution to Plastic Pollution

16:33 Inspiration Booster: A Young Innovator's Love for Robots

16:50 Youth for A Sustainable Future

17:20 Let's Get Energized

17:30 Consciousness and Climate Change

17:45 Closing Session: Pledge for Climate Action

The third session focused on innovation and how the youth are taking it forward towards a sustainable future.

The networking started with a short video displaying the beauty of the nature, environmental transitions happening presently and expected in future if we continue to treat Earth without care.

Then the moderators led an ice breaker with an interesting activity to interact with the participants. The activity was based on respective colors linked with specific qualities and virtues. Participants were asked on their favourite color/s and moderators then read out their qualities.

Afterwards, the participants were asked about what change or experience they had in 2020 due to the lockdown and their feelings about it.

Moderators continued to discuss on how everything has evolved – working from home concept, nature and wild-life has come to normal, empty streets, flights cancellation, factories being closed temporarily, reducing the emissions, less operational costs etc. All these have brought positive effect on the environment without government changing the policies.

A short video of the Raja Yoga Center's Virtue Café team was presented showing their clean up drive and meditation programme at Al Qudra Lakes, Dubai.

Afterwards, the session formally started and an introduction about LCOY, COY and YOUNGO as well as the upcoming event in Glasgow was shared to the audience.

A quote from MOCCA's Ms. Mashaal Al Ansari's speech from the previous day was shared, "Whatever path you may choose to take in life, remember to be a friend to the environment and make decisions responsibly."

Ms Ella Clemits, Simply Bottles Coordinator and Creator of ECONets – DGrade, then rolled out their activities, and how they are repurposing discarded plastic bottles. Simply Bottles gives an opportunity to recycle all plastic bottles and are made into fabric and clothing with efficient use of resources.

A young change enabler, Sainath Manikanandan, an eighth standard student, is the innovator of the 'Marine Robot Cleaner and AgriBot'. Sainath talked live about his inventions and stressed the importance of today's youths engagement to make a difference by their creative ideas and can bring change to protect the environment.

Prakash Chugani, Founder of Ecube Training, talked about innovating thinking and green living. Harmony between nature and human beings, beauty and abundance are the possibilities of the initiative we are taking towards the environment and that does involve some efforts and hard work with dedicated mind from our side.

The session was concluded by Juan Vazquez, a holistic consultant who has been an active youth participant in the youth climate change conferences. In his talk themed, 'Consciousness and Climate Change', he discussed the power of thoughts and the vibration it creates has a direct connection with nature. To enhance and make this practical, he took us to a beautiful meditation journey by a guided commentary.

Deepti Serai, LCOY Lead Coordinator, wrapped up the entire event, with a short summary of every presenter and made announcement of the e-Certificate of Appreciation for participants who joined all the sessions.

Appendix 4: Reflections

Local Conference of Youth United Arab Emirates

This reflection is part of the output gained by the youth participants regarding the level of engagement in the UAE towards climate action.

Based on the event and engagement of LCOY UAE organizing team, volunteers and participants, the following can help advance the youth's efforts to contribute to positive climate action.

1. There is a need to continuously engage the youth in activities that promote climate action.
2. Waste segregation remains a huge challenge in the UAE as there are not sufficient recycling centers that are easily accessible within residential communities.
3. Policies such as mandatory waste segregation at individuals' end may help enhance the waste management system and get residents involved in climate action.
4. Government support on how sustainable lifestyles can be easily achieved by citizens and residents. However, there is a need to strengthen efforts on engaging the youth into action.
5. Importance of values-based action can enhance the efforts towards climate action among the youth.
6. A dedicated information resource that is easily accessible for citizens and residents on how they can learn about following sustainable living practices.
7. The community for people who seek for sustainable lifestyle needs to be increased and become more activated.
8. Food alternatives that reduce carbon emissions such as practicing vegan lifestyle is increasing, however, the benefits and value to larger communities need to be adopted and supported by key institutions.
9. Regular environment activities where youth can get involved are growing but limited to clean up campaigns such as beach and desert clean-ups. There is a need to explore other eco-friendly activities that help promote climate action and attract youth's interest and help them improve on their personal commitment to themselves and to the community.
10. Government and business sector supporting and encouraging eco-friendly initiatives, enabling it to be feasible and easily available for end users need better communication to citizens and residents.

Appendix 5: Media Coverage

Pre-event:

Environmental heroes inspire youth to 'Be the Change'

DUBAI: The first-ever Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) on climate change in the UAE will take place online on Friday-Saturday to inspire the young generation to be the change and act for nature.

Youth, aged between 15 and 35 years, from various nationalities are invited to join the first-ever Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) on climate change in the UAE, a global movement of youth led by Youth NGOs (YOUNGO) under the umbrella of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Themed 'United Youth for Climate Change', the event is being hosted by the Raja Yoga Centre as part of its programme, Raja Yoga Centre Environment Initiative, to enable like-minded youth and organisations to come together and give back to nature. It also promotes positive thinking as the foundation of leading a sustainable lifestyle.

LCOY UAE is set to bring together young individuals and various environmental organisations under one platform to interact with the youth and support them in their contribution to address the challenges of climate change. The event will feature inspiring young leaders in the UAE who have made a remarkable contribution in addressing the negative impact of human actions against the environment through their initiatives.

Deepti Serai, Lead Coordinator of LCOY UAE, said, "This event will inspire young people across the UAE to learn about current environment initiatives and empower them to take climate action. It is a pivotal opportunity for us to be part of a global movement that recognises the energy of the young people by seeking their views on how they can make a difference."

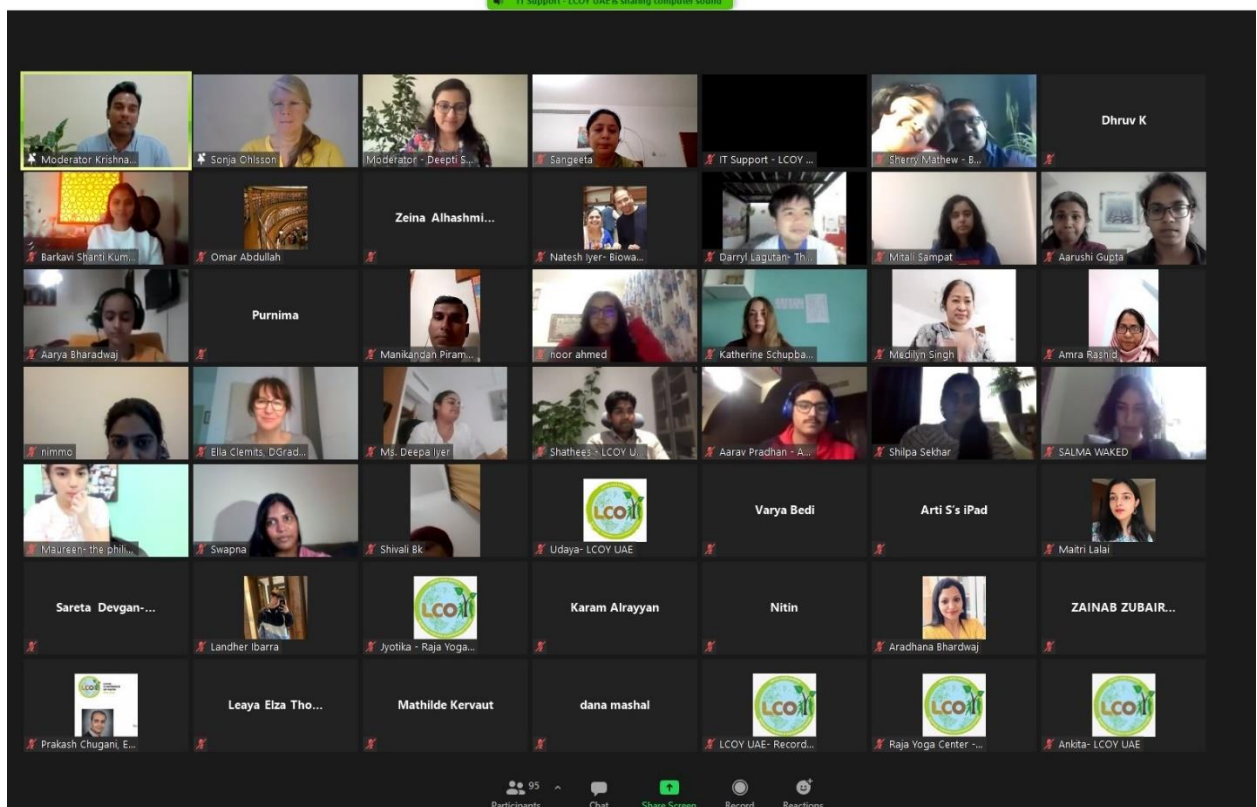
There are many multi-awarded young change-enablers in the UAE who continue to be an inspiration to many young people in the world. The list includes 15-year-old Riva Tulpule, an international award-winner who has been spearheading an e-waste recycling campaign, and young artists Rahul and Rohan Raju who have been awarded as eco-heroes internationally.

Imran Mojiib, Special Correspondent

Post Event:

<https://www.go-green.ae/youth-put-spotlight-on-sustainability-conservation-innovation-and-meditation-at-the-first-local-conference-of-youth-uae/>

[Youth Put Spotlight On Sustainability, Conservation, Innovation, And Meditation At The First Local Conference Of Youth UAE](https://www.go-green.ae/youth-put-spotlight-on-sustainability-conservation-innovation-and-meditation-at-the-first-local-conference-of-youth-uae/)



The energy of the youth came alive in full force to deliver a one-of-a-kind experience that inspire climate action at the first-ever Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) on climate change in the UAE over the weekend (Friday and Saturday, January 29-30, 2021) with an inspiring variety of topics related to conscious consumerism, conservation, innovation, and the role of values and mindsets in driving climate action.

Established by the youth for the youth, LCOY is a global movement led by Youth NGOs (YOUNGO) under the umbrella of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Initiated in the UAE by the youth of Raja Yoga Center Environment Initiative, the two-day conference themed 'United Youth for Climate Change' featured 18 environment 'change enablers' who shared their experiences and journey towards sustainability.

The event held three different sessions over the weekend which gathered a total of 220 participation comprising individuals, schools, and environmental organizations. The first session opened with a keynote speech from Mashaal Al Ansari, a youth climate change specialist at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment.

Al Ansari said: "Being part of this event will enable the new generation to actively contribute to designing the next 50 years of this nation. It will bridge the gap between young people who have the passion and the right mindset to come with innovative ideas and decision makers who can help translate these ideas into reality. Your input and commitment to shaping a better world is more important than ever."

She added: “No one is too young to make a difference, so we are here to support your ambitions for a greener, more resilient planet. Under the guidance of our wise leadership, we are committed to helping you protect your future and the future of the generations to come.”

Some of the UAE-based multi-awarded young change enablers who inspired the audience included 15-year-old Riva Tulpule, an international award-winner who shared her journey as an e-waste recycler; young eco-artists Rahul and Rohan Raju who educated the audience about wildlife conservation through their paintings; and 13-year-old Sainath Manikandan who showcased his marine robot cleaner to clean up the ocean.

Sustainability advocate Zeina ALHashmi urged the youth that live a sustainable lifestyle by investing in experiences rather than products while green entrepreneur Natesh Iyer advised to start the change from within to practice a sustainable lifestyle. Vegan advocate Chetan Punjani encouraged the audience to make their compassion for animals be the force to take climate action by turning to a plant-based diet.

In the area of conservation, young ocean ambassadors from Azraq led by Azalea Watfa explained how the youth can join the campaign to conserve marine life, while Tatiana Antonelli Abella, Founder of Goumbook, enlightened the participants about the beauty of the ghaf tree and what her organization has been doing to save the national tree of the UAE from extinction.

Innovative efforts of environment management company Bee’ah’s sustainability chief Sherry Mathew gave key insights to the participants about the new developments in waste management and the trends towards achieving a circular economy, while Ella Clemits of DGrade showed how her company supports the circular trend by turning used plastic bottles into clothes and how schools can join their campaign of collecting plastic bottles to turn them into yarns.

Meanwhile, the growing importance of values, mindset, and consciousness were exemplified through unique guided meditations of change enablers such as Sonja Ohlsson, a participant at the UN COP events, who raised the importance of practicing values to make a step towards climate action. Medilyn Singh, a volunteer facilitator at Raja Yoga Center’s Virtue Café initiative, led the participants in a creative visualization of growing an idea and turning it into reality through a ‘seed of light’ that is within everyone.

Prakash Chugani, founder of Ecube Training, led the participants to appreciate innovative thinking through simple activities and adopt a thinking that focuses on harmony, abundance, and beauty. Finally, Juan Vazquez, an NGO representative to the UN, emphasized the power of awareness or consciousness to influence the environment, and what is happening within the self can affect the environment outside. He suggested meditation as a tool to empower the self that can positively influence the state of nature through silence.

Suraj Bharti, a Dubai-based musician, also rendered a musical performance to express his tribute to water. Tender Hearts Arena, an organization for children of determination also served as an inspiration on how the children uniquely contribute to making a change for the environment.

The event concluded successfully filling the participants with new inspirations and with a pledge to commit to environmental actions now to make a difference. Hosted by the Raja

Yoga Center as part of its environment initiative, it enabled like-minded youth and organizations to come together and give back to nature while promoting positive thinking as the foundation of leading a sustainable lifestyle.