



The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Young Heroes Award Arshak Makichyan

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute is proud to present its Young Heroes Award to Arshak Makichyan. For years Arshak has been courageously taking a stand to awaken his fellow Russians to the climate crisis, and now to stop the war against Ukraine.

Arshak first gained worldwide recognition when he was invited to share the stage with Greta Thunberg at COP25 in Madrid. His bold climate action has galvanized climate activists from around the world.

The Young Heroes Award was presented to Arshak at a special invitation-only online event on April 11 with young climate activists whose stories are featured in the book *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World*. During this event, Arshak renewed his connections with COP 26 youth delegates he met in Scotland last November.

“We’re trying to organize a campaign for an embargo on fossil fuels,” Arshak said. “Our priority for now is to stop buying fossil fuels from Russia because this money is supporting this terrible war. We’re trying to put pressure on European politicians to have this embargo: Russian civil society should not be left alone in the battle with this dictatorship,” he said.

Our global youth leaders are moved by Arshak’s passionate commitment and lend their solidarity and support. “Sometimes I feel quite discouraged in this climate activism field,” said Shreya K.C. of Nepalese Youth for Climate Action. “I feel privileged to know you, Arshak and am inspired by you. Thank you for everything that you’re doing.”

“Arshak, I want to commend you on the incredible work you are doing in these difficult times,” said Kevin Patel, of One Up Action, based in Los Angeles. “Your story inspires me to keep going and keep fighting the systems that are not meant for us. I’m here to support and amplify you in any way I can.”

While the youth delegates were all grateful to meet each other at COP26, they expressed deep disappointment in the lack of commitment of the world leaders gathered there. “They’re bargaining with our lives,” Shreya said. “It’s time for action, not just empty and broken promises.”

Iqbal Badruddin, the 2021 Young Heroes Award recipient from Fridays for Future Pakistan, said, “Arshak, we are behind you as a family: we will be helping you no matter what sort of help you need.” Iqbal is now studying for

his Masters' Degree in Sustainable Development at the University of Waterloo in Canada. He is eager to further develop his leadership skills so he can build bridges between developing countries like his home country of Pakistan, and Western countries.

Our youth leaders were eager to hear from our intergenerational leaders like Srdja Popovic, founder of [CANVAS](#), Center for Applied Non-Violent Actions and Strategies. As a youth activist in the late 1990s, he with other youth activists, founded Otpor! And led a successful nonviolent revolution that ultimately brought down the Milosevic dictatorship in Serbia. Srdja offered his encouragement, support, and expertise in nonviolent resistance to Arshak to continue and expand his work. "Arshak, you are doing fine," he said. "You are amazing, you are powerful, you are focused: You are my hero!"

Given the increasing threats on his life in Russia, Arshak is now in Berlin, where he is free to speak his mind and share his voice with the world. He is working with FFF Germany to actively protest the war in Ukraine. He has been featured by *The Guardian*, the *Atlantic*, the *New York Times*, the *BBC*, and *People* magazine.

Before he became involved in climate activism, Arshak, a talented violinist, was focused on music. "We need action more now than ever because fossil fuel money is funding this war," Arshak said. "So we need to take action. Maybe tomorrow it will be too late."

Watch Arshak's videos: [Hero Report](#) [COP26 Youth Message](#)

Read Arshak's story: [Standing Alone, Together](#)

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Young Heroes Award provides support, mentorship, training, and partnerships for young leaders featured in the book *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes*, to support and scale their efforts, and help engage others in rebuilding the planet.

Past recipients include COP26 youth delegates: **Iqbal Badruddin, Pakistan** for helping to rehabilitate Afghani refugees and preventing local conflict while they are being integrated into his country. **Shreya KC, Nepal** for her leadership with COP26; **Benita Davis, Guyana** with the River Guardian Project; **Autumn Peltier, Canada**: Water Walker, Anishinabek Nation, Canada and **Vanessa Nakate, Uganda** - founder of Rise Up Africa! for her Green Schools Solar Panel Project in Uganda. COP26 youth delegates who received support for travel and lodging: Xiye Bastida, Mexico/US; Nicki Becker, Argentina; Kevin J. Patel, Los Angeles; Jerome Foster II, President Biden's Environmental Justice Council. The Stone Soup Leadership Institute is a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 1997 in Massachusetts. 100% of the donations made to the Young Heroes Fund are directed to these recipients.



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