

Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes

Marianne Larned

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The inspirational book Stone Soup for a Sustainable World profiles young activists and their practical means of affecting positive change.

Marianne Larned's uplifting *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World* profiles almost a hundred international youth activists who organize for the environment and for social justice causes.

Each chapter profiles one youth activist in an inspirational, if formulaic, format: detailing the first steps they took to make changes, how their understanding of the issues expanded, how they organized others, and how they ended up with their remarkable achievements. The activists are seen organizing trash cleanup days, climate strikes, and voter registration drives. They come from all over the world and represent different social, ethnic, political, and economic perspectives. They are united, though, by their sense of urgency about climate change and ecosystem health.

The book includes well-known names, like Arun Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, but also people from families of small farmers and urban workers. Their common goals illustrate that their individual interests—the survival of ocean mammals, the imperative of renewable energy, and food security—are connected. One girl discusses the intersectional implications of extreme weather: “The climate crisis makes homelessness worse. It’s not an isolated issue.”

Motivational quotes from activists and celebrities close the chapters, but do not always align with the content that preceded them. They are comparatively facile, working to paste an external seal of approval on the young activists’ work. More effective are the calls to action that follow the chapters, often with links to the youth activists’ organizations and social media. Indeed, their environmentalist messages are the book’s greatest strength. They prove passionate and direct when quoted: “Our planet is not a credit card, with no spending limit,” one twelve-year-old notes. The supporting text comes in plain, accessible language, though it’s interspersed with specialized environmental terms, including “mega-mining” and “greenhouse gases.”

A detailed record of the accomplishments of youth activism, this is an insightful text populated by young people who are motivated to make positive change at local and global levels through their personal, social, and political actions. Its up-to-date information on getting involved in each activist’s area of concern makes this a valuable reference tool for those who wish to become activists themselves.

Honoring young people who’re taking positive action in desperate ecological times, the inspirational *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World* profiles young activists and their practical means of affecting positive change.

MICHELE SHARPE (July 24, 2021)

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