

Welcome to Aurora's monthly newsletter, **Gratitude in Action**. Heavy on the *action* this month, we've been on the road and in the news.

We went to Munich



- We sent a delegation to the Munich Security Conference (MSC), where I spoke on a panel moderated by Norwegian Nobel Institute Director Kristian Berg Harpviken. We discussed [how prizes meet this complicated moment](#) with Mo Ibrahim, Founder and Chairman of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation; Anousheh Ansari, CEO of the XPRIZE; and Armin Laschet, Chairperson of the German Bundestag's Committee on Foreign Affairs.
- We were fortunate to have [2019 Aurora Prize Laureate Mirza Dinnayi](#) with us at MSC. Asked how Aurora measures success, I spoke to his lasting impact in Iraq on over 100,000 lives. For every person who left the room thinking of Mirza and remembering him when they hear "humanitarian," we're one step closer to the world we want to live in, where grassroots humanitarians are the best of us.

Tell us what you think: What is success in humanitarianism? Is there a place for prizes today?




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We shared our story

- In Germany, I had the chance to speak with *Devex* and weigh in on the conversation about [trade-offs between defense and aid spending](#) (spoiler: we can and must pursue both, even and *especially* now).
- On *Scripps News*, 2025 Aurora Prize Laureate [Dr. Jamal Eltaeb](#) explained, amid the devastating war in Sudan, that staying to serve the wounded was the [right thing for him to do](#).
- In *Forbes Women*, I was honored to be featured as one of the ["The Women Redefining Humanitarian Leadership in 2026,"](#) alongside 2021 Aurora Prize Laureate [Julienne Lusenge](#), WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain, Mercy Corps CEO Tjada McKenna, President of Social Impact and The UPS Foundation Nikki Clifton, President and CEO of CARE Michelle Nunn, and Executive Director of UNICEF Catherine Russell.



Join the conversation: How do you think about the defense vs. aid trade-off? Who are the other women you see shaping humanitarian leadership in 2026 and beyond?



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Finally, on recent events

- With over half of our team in Yerevan and 13 Aurora humanitarians across the Middle East, we're tracking regional developments closely.
- Our hearts are with the affected communities, especially the brave doctors, teachers, lawyers, activists – humanitarians all – standing up for their families, friends, and neighbors in these uncertain times.

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Around the world, [Inhumanitarians](#) are on the move. The further they push, the more relentlessly we focus on individual interventions and their downstream impacts. We center on [Aurora humanitarians](#), the sick they heal, the underserved they uplift, and the children they raise.

One such child is Issa (name changed for protection). Born in Burkina Faso with a disability, he faced barriers to getting an education. With a grant from the 2024 Aurora Prize Laureate [Dr. Denis Mukwege](#), Issa was able to attend preschool with the care he needed and the dignity he deserved. He's now learning at his own pace. We can't know for certain where it will lead him, but a boost over the hurdles of getting into a classroom has given him a positive start.



We do what we do so that Issa and his Yennenga School classmates might grow up in a world that's more humanitarian and, just maybe, feel inspired to pick up the mantle themselves. As we emphasize the "human" in humanitarian, we also draw out the **humanitarian in each and every one of us**. At a time that can feel out of control, this is our best chance to strengthen our shared sense of humanity. And it's the reason we're expanding our reach in our next phase.

In just a few weeks, we'll publish our new vision, mission, and theory of change – "Aurora 2.0," as we've been calling it. Look for more on how we got here in our next *Gratitude in Action* newsletter.

Until then, **consider helping us widen the circle of who gets supported**. As global humanitarian needs grow, Aurora is meeting the moment by funding more grassroots humanitarians delivering direct, effective, and enduring aid.

Aurora humanitarians are there long before the cavalry arrives and remain long after they go home, and **they need our help**. Together, we can serve more humanitarians and their communities than ever before.

SUPPORT AURORA'S NEXT PHASE



With warm regards,
Armine Afeyan
CEO, Aurora Humanitarian Initiative

Aurora Book Club

With the extraordinary lives they lead, perhaps it's no surprise that many Aurora humanitarians have books written about them!



We'll spotlight one monthly going forward to share their stories.

Starting off strong: It's fitting that we begin with inaugural Aurora Prize Laureate [Marguerite Barankitse's](#) [Love Made Me an Inventor: The Story of Maggy Barankitse](#) by David Toole. From surviving ethnic violence in Burundi to founding Maison Shalom, Marguerite has saved and transformed tens of thousands of lives. Her story is a powerful reminder that love, lived boldly, can rebuild communities and restore hope.



Another amazing read: In a moving [Vanity Fair tribute](#), Aurora Prize Selection Committee Member [Chelsea Clinton](#) reflects on the legacy of Aurora Prize finalist [Dr. Paul Farmer](#). His accompaniment framework centers on the responsibility of the caregiver to stick with a mission until it's taken over by the person or people they are accompanying. It perfectly describes the dedicated partnerships that are the basis of the support Aurora humanitarians provide around the world. Thank you, Paul, for your inspiration, always, and Chelsea for keeping his spirit alive.

Enjoy the reads? Tell us about it!



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