

## Jamila Afghani Awarded the 2022 Aurora Prize

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GELEBTE DANKBARKEIT  
GRATITUDE IN ACTION  
БЛАГОДАРНОСТЬ В ДЕЙСТВИИ



**AURORA**  
HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE

LA GRATITUDE EN ACTION  
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GRATITUD EN ACCIÓN

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**October 15, 2022, San Lazzaro Island, Venice** - The seventh annual Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity was awarded to Jamila Afghani, an educator, human rights defender, and founder of the Noor Educational and Capacity Development Organization (NECDO). Jamila has dedicated over 25 years of her life to giving the women of Afghanistan access to education. She was commemorated during a series of high-level philanthropy-focused events hosted by the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative in Venice, Italy on October 14-16.

Before August 2021, NECDO had more than 100,000 women enrolled in literacy programs, thanks to the establishment of small centers in many communities led by local women. The organization also provides legal aid and psychosocial support to more than 10,000 women victims of abuse from a family member or a partner. Forced to flee Afghanistan, Jamila is continuing to help others at distance.

After the Taliban took over her country, Jamila Afghani had to leave her homeland, but she has not given up on its people. NEDCO is still supporting women of Afghanistan and vulnerable families, shedding light on lack of access to education, domestic violence, and other contemporary issues faced by women today, while providing financial aid to the human rights defenders, journalists, and advocates.

“Our mission at Aurora is to recognize, celebrate and spread the work of humanitarians like Jamila Afghani around the world. Today’s modern-day heroes inspire and guide us and show us how to persevere in the face of seemingly overwhelming challenges. They remind us of our common humanity and encourage us to show the same commitment to serving the poor and marginalized. They remind us, too, of our duty to give everyone an equal chance,” said Lord Ara Darzi, Chair of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee and Co-Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London.

Every year, the Aurora Prize is granted by the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors. The Laureate receives a \$1,000,000 grant and a chance to continue the cycle of giving by supporting organizations that help people in need. As 2022 Aurora Prize Laureate, Jamila Afghani has chosen to support Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Noor Educational and Capacity Development

Organization (NECDO). WILPF is a membership-led international organization that seeks to promote world peace by advocating for disarmament, abolition of violence, women's human rights, and gender equality, and NECDO is a non-governmental organization that provides humanitarian and development assistance to women, youth, and children in Afghanistan.

"From my professional experience, I know that the human rights issue is a struggle. We go through these periods, and this is one of them, when it's not very clear how we are going to see the way forward on so many issues, when we are running out of time. People like Jamila Afghani shine a light of hope on the future and show us all a way out of the darkness," noted Aurora Prize Selection Committee member Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Since its launch, the Aurora Prize has changed the lives of over 1,000,000 people affected by war, conflict, persecution, and other humanitarian issues, with a special focus on helping children, displaced people, and women and girls. This action-based philanthropy, focused on tangible results, is possible thanks to the supporters whose contribution allows the Prize to continue empowering modern-day heroes.

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### About the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is a foundation that seeks to address on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world with the focus on helping the most destitute. Its mission is rooted in the Armenian history as the Initiative was founded on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors and strives to transform this experience into a **global movement**.

All Aurora's activities are based on the universal concept of **Gratitude in Action**. It implies that countless people around the world who have received aid in time of crisis can best express their gratitude by offering similar assistance to someone else. By involving Aurora supporters around the world, this will become a global endeavor that will snowball to expand the circle of saviors and most importantly - the number of those saved.

Addressing urgent humanitarian challenges, the Initiative provides a second chance to those who need it the most. True to its vision - **“We believe that even in the darkest times, a brighter future is in the hands of those who are committed to giving others help and hope”** - Aurora welcomes all who embrace this philosophy.

This commitment aims to promote action-based philanthropy focused on tangible results. This is achieved through the Initiative’s various programs: Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, Aurora for Artsakh, #AraratChallenge movement, Aurora Dialogues, Aurora Grants, Aurora Community, Aurora Index, and the 100 LIVES Initiative.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is the vision of philanthropists [Vartan Gregorian, Noubar Afeyan and Ruben Vardanyan](#) who have been joined by thousands of supporters and partners. Aurora’s Chair, [Dr. Tom Catena](#), draws on his experience as a surgeon, veteran, humanitarian and the 2017 Aurora Prize laureate to spread the message of Gratitude in Action to a global audience.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is represented by three organizations - the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative Foundation, Inc. (USA), the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative Foundation (Switzerland) and the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative Charitable Foundation (Armenia).

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### About the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity

The Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity is a global humanitarian award. Its mission is to recognize and support those who risk their own lives, health or freedom to save the lives, health or freedom of others suffering as a result of violent conflict, atrocity crimes or other major human rights violations. The Aurora Prize Laureate is selected based on the nominee’s demonstration of courage, commitment and impact.

On behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, an Aurora Prize Laureate is honored with a US \$1,000,000 award, which gives the Laureate a unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by supporting the organizations that help people in need.

The Aurora Prize [Selection Committee](#) is comprised of Nobel Laureates Shirin Ebadi and Leymah Gbowee; former president of Ireland Mary Robinson; human rights activist Hina Jilani; former president of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo; Médecins Sans Frontières Co-founder and former foreign minister of France Bernard Kouchner; journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner Dele Olojede, former CEO of Unilever and Co-founder and Co-Chair of IMAGINE Paul Polman; human rights activist and Co-founder of The Sentry John Prendergast and President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Vartan Gregorian (1934-2021). The Committee is chaired by the Co-Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London Lord Ara Darzi.

World famous peace and human rights activist Benjamin Ferencz and Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney are the Committee's Honorary Co-Chairs.

We honor the memory of Elie Wiesel (1928-2016), inaugural Selection Committee Co-Chair; President of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity; Nobel Laureate.