

# Christian Aid Week

11 - 17 May 2025

## Story Sharing Guide

### Introduction

This guide has been created to help you share about Aurelia during your Christian Aid Week events and services. A PowerPoint Presentation has been created to accompany this resource, with images to help illustrate Aurelia's story, and there is also a film available for you to download from [caweek.ie/resources](http://caweek.ie/resources)



### Children's Resource

We have created a fun activity sheet to accompany Aurelia's story, suitable for children of primary school age. You can download it from [caweek.ie/resources](http://caweek.ie/resources)



Aurelia holding the fertiliser she learned how to make with the support of our partner, Congcoop.

## Aurelia's Story

**Slide 2:** Christian Aid is a charity that supports people to build better futures. It works in three main ways:

1. Through partners to support communities to live full lives, free from poverty.
2. Responding to emergencies and helping people who have experienced disasters such as earthquakes, floods, famine and conflict.
3. Calling on decision makers to make the world a fairer place for everyone.

**Slide 3:** We're going to learn about Aurelia today and how Christian Aid, through our partners, is supporting her as she makes lives better for those she knows and loves - including her grandchildren, seen in this picture.

Aurelia lives in Guatemala where gruelling heatwaves and extreme weather are destroying her farm, due to the climate crisis. We're also going to be learning about how Aurelia is finding solutions as a result of gaining skills, knowledge and tools, helping her to hold hope in her hands.

**Slide 4:** Together, we're going to learn what an amazing person Aurelia is and how she takes things into her own hands, finding ways to make life better for her family and community.



**Slide 5:** Aurelia is an inspirational farmer and community leader, and lives in Guatemala. She has eight grown-up children and lives with one of her sons and his wife. Aurelia's grandchildren visit her home every day.

**Slide 6:** Aurelia's family belongs to the Indigenous Q'eqchi' (pronounced: Co-WAY-chee) community of the Alta Verapaz region. It's a close and supportive rural community who hold the natural world as precious and sacred.



**Slide 7:** The climate crisis and industrial plantations have changed Q'eqchi' land dramatically. Heatwaves, storms and unpredictable seasons are ravaging farms. Industrial agriculture is taking over the last of the region's natural resources to feed the world's richest countries. Many of the vital crops Aurelia grows to feed her family are withering and dying before her eyes. It's a heartbreaking injustice that a community should be threatened by a climate crisis they didn't cause.

**Slide 8:** Like the other women and girls in her community, Aurelia must go twice a day to collect water from a cenote – a natural sinkhole like a cave, with water at the bottom. Her walk takes around an hour each way, and part of it follows a steep, dark and slippery route that journeys in and out of the cenote.

In Aurelia's lifetime, water sources could be found much closer to home, but both heatwaves and industrial plantations have drained them dry. Collecting water takes longer, which means community members have less time for other activities, such as selling produce that allows them to then buy other things their family needs. This pushes families further into the poverty trap.

**Slide 9:** Fortunately, Aurelia heard about an organisation called Congcoop that works in her area of Guatemala. A Christian Aid partner, Congcoop trains people like Aurelia in ways of farming that work with nature so that they produce crops that can cope with the impact of the climate crisis. By working with Congcoop, Aurelia has learnt skills and knowledge to grow native seeds that are better suited to the climate crisis. She's producing her own organic fertiliser, creating nurseries, constructing rainwater collection systems, and making nutritious food and medicine for her chickens. Congcoop also provided Aurelia with seeds and tools.

**Slide 10:** Aurelia can now grow cacao, sugarcane, cinnamon, corn and pineapples. She's restoring her ability to provide food for her family. Because Aurelia's now hopeful for the future, she's developed and leads other activities in her community, including producing chocolate, establishing a farmers' market, and fighting for women's rights.

**Slide 11:** With the support from Congcoop, Aurelia's learned how to make chocolate and to sell it at a good price. With her profits, Aurelia can buy household essentials like soap and salt, and support her young grandchildren to stay in school.

**Slide 12:**

Aurelia is a celebrated leader who holds the hopes of her community in her hands. Whatever she learns with Congcoop, she shares. As Aurelia trains other women in climate resilient farming, they too can adapt their practices and protect their families.

**Slide 13:** Aurelia's story reminds us that even the most proactive, determined and ambitious among us can need a helping hand in life. Aurelia's tackling multiple threats to her family's survival on a daily basis: extreme weather, failing crops, lack of water, loss of income, hunger, and malnutrition. But Aurelia's defiantly staring down these threats, remaining strong, resourceful and adaptable.

Your support is urgently needed to ensure we can be there for Indigenous families who are bearing the full force of the climate crisis. It's vital that our programme with Congcoop continues, so more farmers like Aurelia can build their resilience to extreme weather and take back control of their harvests.

Your gifts can fund vital agricultural training and tools that unlock climate resilient farming methods. Together, we can support people like Aurelia to protect their communities from hunger and poverty.

**Slide 14:** Many of us will witness the joy of new growth this springtime. We'll feel the fresh rain and gentle sunshine that nurtures the land around us. While giving praise for God's glories this spring, let's support our global neighbours, for whom the seasons are dramatically and dangerously shifting. People who are living the brutal reality of ever-intensifying temperatures, storms, droughts and floods. Families whose children don't have enough food to thrive and grow.

Together, we can be more like Aurelia, and put the unstoppable power of hope into action, because a brighter, fairer future is possible.



Aurelia with her dried plantains, ready to grind with cacao to make chocolate plantain bread, to consume and sell. Our partner lends the dehydrators seen here to communities, to help with their income generation projects.