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Cartier celebrates the 2025 Impact Awardees of its global women's entrepreneurship program

Osaka, May 22, 2025 – Cartier honoured nine exceptional women entrepreneurs during a moving Impact Awards Ceremony at the Sakai Performing Arts Center. The event brought together more than 800 guests to celebrate former fellows of the Cartier Women's Initiative whose ventures have achieved tangible, lasting impact on society and the environment. The ceremony marked the culmination of the Cartier Women's Initiative Impact Awards Week, held from May 20 to 23 amid the vibrant setting of World Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, where Cartier co-created the emblematic Women's Pavilion. Guided by the theme "Forces for Good", the evening reaffirmed Cartier's conviction that when women thrive, humanity thrives.

Since its inception, the Cartier Women's Initiative has recognized and supported women entrepreneurs who harness the power of business to drive meaningful change. It has supported 330 fellows from 66 countries, providing over \$12 million in funding and nurturing a growing community of more than 500 changemakers.

The initiative offers financial support, a year-long fellowship program encompassing executive education at INSEAD and tailored business training, peer mentoring and global visibility.

In 2025, the program paid tribute to nine former fellows whose ventures have significantly scaled their missions over time. These Impact Awardees were selected across three categories, Preserving the Planet, Improving Lives, and Creating Opportunities, each aligned with the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and collectively addressing the full spectrum of the 17 goals.

Chosen through a rigorous evaluation and jury process, this year's awardees embody the spirit of visionary leadership and scalable innovation.

In the category **Preserving the Planet**, **Tracy O'Rourke** of Vivid Edge (Ireland), 2019 Fellow offers energy efficiency as a service, enabling businesses to reduce their carbon footprint through affordable access to clean technology. Since joining the Cartier Women's Initiative, Vivid Edge has helped organizations save over 36,457 tons of carbon emissions and 119.6 GWh of energy, equivalent to powering nearly 28,500 homes, achieving energy savings of up to 82% per customer. **Kresse Wesling**, co-founder of Elvis & Kresse (United Kingdom), 2011 Fellow, transforms decommissioned fire hoses and leather offcuts into luxury goods, embedding circularity and philanthropy into her business model. Since her participation in the Cartier Women's Initiative, her company has rescued over 315 tons of waste from landfill and donated more than \$500,000 to charities supporting firefighter communities. **Kristin Kagetsu** of Saathi (India), 2018 Fellow manufactures biodegradable sanitary pads made from banana fibre, providing a sustainable solution to menstrual health while reducing plastic pollution and empowering rural women. Saathi has reached over 114,000 women, reduced 161 metric tons of carbon emissions, avoided 92 metric tons of plastic waste, and created employment opportunities for 485 women from underserved communities.

In the category **Improving Lives**, **Caitlin Dolkart**, founder of Flare (Kenya), 2019 Fellow, has developed a centralized emergency response platform that significantly shortens ambulance response times, saving thousands of lives across East Africa. Since joining the Cartier Women's Initiative, Flare has expanded across East Africa, cutting average emergency response times in Kenya by 97%, from three hours to just sixteen minutes. **Namita Banka** of Banka Biolo (India), 2013 Fellow brings sanitation to underserved communities through biotoilets and wastewater treatment solutions that improve public health and environmental outcomes. Since her fellowship, Banka Biolo has installed 3,000 biotoilets for Indian Railways, serving 10 million daily travelers, supplied 30,000 units to rural areas, and become the first publicly listed sanitation company in India, now employing over 1,000 people. **Yvette Ishimwe**, leading IRIWA Water Group (Rwanda), 2023 Fellow, provides affordable access to clean drinking water via solar-powered water ATMs, improving hygiene and reducing waterborne diseases in low-income

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regions. Since its creation, IRIBA has delivered safe water to over 517,000 people and achieved a 37% reduction in waterborne diseases in schools where their systems are deployed.

Under the category **Creating Opportunities**, **Rama Kayyali** of Little Thinking Minds (Jordan), 2014 Fellow addresses regional learning poverty with digital Arabic literacy platforms that improve reading outcomes for children across the Middle East. Since her fellowship, her solutions have improved literacy outcomes by 25% among students and now reach over 400,000 learners across 11 countries, including refugee communities. **Mariam Torosyan**, founder of Safe YOU (Armenia), 2023 Fellow has created a mobile and AI-driven ecosystem to support survivors of gender-based violence, offering emergency services and community resources across five countries. Since joining the Cartier Women's Initiative, Safe YOU has expanded to five countries, served 40,000 users, responded to 18,000 emergency alerts, and introduced a new financial empowerment module for survivors in New Mexico. **Jackie Stenson** of Essmart (India), 2014 Fellow delivers life-improving products such as solar lanterns and clean cookstoves to rural communities via a robust last-mile distribution network that also empowers local retailers. To date, Essmart has positively impacted over 1.4 million lives, enabled 125 million additional hours of productivity, reduced 101 million kg of CO₂ emissions, and helped over 5,000 rural shop owners increase their earnings.

Together, these nine visionary leaders represent a powerful collective of women who are not only redefining what leadership looks like, but also expanding the boundaries of what impact can achieve.

Each of the nine Impact Awardees was recognized not only for their past achievements, but also for the journey that lies ahead. In addition to receiving a \$100,000 grant, the impact awardees will benefit from expanded media exposure and take part in a dedicated one-year fellowship program designed to enhance their capacity for impact measurement, refine leadership skills, and scale their operational reach. This year's fellowship integrates new components in time management, peer learning, and strategic planning, delivered in collaboration with new program partners.

A Ceremony of vision, stories and celebration

The Impact Awards Ceremony unfolded as a vibrant and emotionally resonant evening, celebrating the remarkable journeys and achievements of the nine awardees.

The event opened with an uplifting performance featuring celebrated Japanese artists: Keiichiro Shibuya on piano, Sumire Hirotsuru on violin and Chiaki Horita as dancer. The piece, "Ring for Violin and Piano (2025)," composed specifically for the Cartier Women's Initiative, presented a dynamic interplay of sound and movement, an expressive dialogue born from the resonance of the three artists' distinct sensibilities.

Following this artistic prelude, the ceremony officially commenced with the screening of "Shaping the Future", a short film in which young voices share their aspirations for addressing global challenges, underscoring the importance of inter-generational collaboration in advancing lasting change.

The evening's host, **Sandi Toksvig** OBE, broadcaster, writer, and gender equality champion, then delivered welcoming remarks that set an engaging and heartfelt tone for a program that was as intellectually engaging as it was emotionally uplifting.

Her introduction paved the way for a keynote address by **June Miyachi**, President and CEO of Cartier Japan, emphasizing the importance of cultivating environments where women can thrive and lead. A warm and insightful fireside chat between **Wingee Sin**, Global Program Director of the Cartier Women's Initiative, and **Sandi Toksvig** then explored the evolution of women's leadership in entrepreneurship. Their conversation reflected both on the progress achieved and the journey ahead.

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The ceremony progressed with the first round of lightning talks, spotlighting the three awardees recognized in the category Preserving the Planet, each presenting the impact and vision behind their pioneering ventures.

Their testimonies were followed by a touching video tribute from their allies, reinforcing the importance of community in scaling impact.

The evening continued with a panel discussion featuring the awardees in the category Improving Lives, who shared insights into their respective missions and the ripple effects their work has created within communities. Their testimonies were complemented by a poignant short film composed of letters written by those they uplift, a powerful reminder of the human dimension behind every enterprise honoured.

The final part of the program highlighted the last series of lightning talks, this time by the awardees in the category Creating Opportunities, followed by a moving short film entitled “Letter to Our Younger Selves”. This reflective piece captured the courage, doubts, enduring aspirations, and strength of the women who took risks to build a better future, beyond themselves.

The evening reached its emotional peak with a compelling keynote address from **Cyrille Vigneron**, Chairman, Cartier Culture and Philanthropy, who underscored the Maison’s belief in long-term support, shared responsibility, and the catalytic role of women entrepreneurs in solving the world’s most pressing challenges.

“Women impact entrepreneurs have the collective power to change the world. All along this week and particularly tonight, we celebrated not only their success in scaling up what began with simple ideas, but their ability to forge pathways for generations to come. Their courage and vision are a source of hope and inspiration for all of us”.

Cyrille Vigneron, Chairman, Cartier Culture and Philanthropy

To close the ceremony, guests were treated to a dynamic closing artistic performance by KAORlalive, choreographed to embody the Cartier Women’s Initiative “Forces for Good” theme, celebrating hope and unity, leaving the audience uplifted and energized.

The evening concluded with final reflections from the host, bringing a memorable celebration of impact, creativity, and community to a graceful close. It left guests with a renewed sense of purpose and heartfelt conviction that everyone has a role to play in driving meaningful change in building a more inclusive and durable future.

A holistic week of immersion and community

This year, the Impact Awards Week was designed as a week-long journey of connection, reflection, and recognition. It convened a diverse community of over 180 changemakers, including fellows, jury members, experts, local students and global partners, all united by a shared commitment to advancing gender equity and impact entrepreneurship. This immersive experience featured a series of events that fostered both professional growth and personal connection.

The week began with an opening day devoted to community-building. On May 21st, attendees gathered for the ceremonial inauguration of the Women’s Pavilion, centred around the theme “Tomoni” (Japanese for “Together”) and reaffirming the importance of multi-collaborations to shape a brighter and inclusive future. On May 23, the program culminated in a series of community-led workshops followed by a farewell cocktail, bringing the week to a close with renewed connections and a shared sense of purpose.

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Looking ahead: the 2026 Edition

As the 2025 edition drew to a close, Cartier announced the forthcoming launch of the 2026 edition of the Cartier Women's Initiative. The call for applications opened on mid-April 2025 and will culminate in a global awards ceremony to be held in Thailand. This next edition will spotlight 30 exceptional women impact entrepreneurs, selected as the top three candidates across ten award categories.

The 2026 awards will include nine Regional Awards, alongside the Science & Technology Pioneer Award, which honours innovations grounded in scientific or technological breakthroughs.

Each fellow will receive robust financial, social, and human capital support, designed to help them scale their impact-driven ventures and deepen their leadership capacity.

The 2026 edition will continue to affirm the program's enduring commitment to amplifying women's voices, accelerating inclusive entrepreneurship, and shaping a more durable future.

About Cartier

A reference in the world of luxury, Cartier, whose name is synonymous with open-mindedness and curiosity, stands out with its creations and reveals beauty wherever it may lie. Jewellery, high jewellery, watchmaking and fragrances, leather goods and accessories: Cartier's creations symbolize the convergence between exceptional craftsmanship and a timeless signature. Cartier is part of Richemont and has a worldwide presence through its network of flagships and boutiques, authorised retail partners, and online.

[Cartier.com](https://www.cartier.com)

About Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan

Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan will bring together millions of people for The World's Greatest Show, celebrating human brilliance and achievement under the theme 'Designing Future Society for Our Lives'.

The 184 days from April 13 to October 13, 2025 will be a moment in time to be part of an unparalleled event. 28.2 million visits are expected.

[Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan Official Website](https://www.expo2025.or.jp/en)