

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Swarovski Foundation names new *Creatives for Our Future*:
Young innovators with sustainable ideas such as ice cream from
plastic waste, cosmetics from bacteria, textiles from fungi and
building blocks from landfill waste**

- Swarovski Foundation and United Nations Office for Partnerships announce winners of young creatives grant for sustainable development projects
- Six successful applicants from across the world secured €20,000, paired with an education program including one-on-one mentorship and networking opportunities
- Winning projects span fields of fashion, beauty, design, architecture, engineering and cartography and include ice cream made from plastic waste, cosmetics from bacteria, textiles from fungi and building blocks from landfill waste
- Marking the Foundation's 10th year, the Foundation believes that empowering individuals through learning and education is the way to achieve sustainable change.

Six young, global creatives have been announced as winners of the Swarovski Foundation Creatives for Our Future program in recognition of their innovative work designing sustainable solutions in the fields of fashion, beauty, design, architecture, engineering and cartography. Winning projects include ice cream made from plastic waste, cosmetics from bacteria, textiles from fungi and building blocks from landfill waste.

The program, designed alongside the United Nations Office for Partnerships, aims to support and accelerate the next generation of creative leaders in sustainability by awarding them a €20,000 grant, plus access to an education program in collaboration with top international institutions, tailored one-on-one mentorship, and industry networking opportunities to advance their innovation and help scale up each project.

Out of 900 applicants from across the world, six projects were selected based on their acceleration of awareness, technology or solutions for sustainable development, driving progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations.

The Swarovski Foundation's work is driven by its belief in empowerment. This is reflected in its commitment to two of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Quality Education, and Decent Work and Economic Growth. By focusing its efforts on these two Goals, the Foundation's work contributes directly to creating a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous world.

The winning cohort includes: :

Stanley Anigbogu, a 23-year-old Nigerian innovator who has launched a program to teach young people and communities how to build clean light sources. After struggling to study by candlelight in his early years, he developed an eco-friendly energy solution that recycles e-waste and plastic bottles to bring light to marginalised communities.

Julieta Gaitan, a 27-year-old Colombian fashion designer fighting to reduce pollution and environmental damage in the textile industry by developing sustainable textiles and natural dyes using fungi. The pigment released by fungi results in unexpected and unique designs that are used throughout her sustainable fashion brand.

J. Sebastian Garcia-Medina, a 27-year-old scientist from the United States, works with bacterial-cellulose to develop sustainable cosmetic products - such as face masks. He believes that bacterial manufacturing has the potential to create sustainable industrial ecosystems and his bio-manufactured cosmetics could replace an estimated 2 million metric tons of plastic waste per year.

Namra Khalid, a 25-year-old Pakistani cartographer who, following the devastating Karachi floods in 2022, launched a data collection programme to protect her home town from flooding. Recognising that urban flooding is caused by a combination of climate change and pre-existing dysfunctional water networks, she believes that detailed mapping is crucial for effective infrastructure and socio-climatic planning.

Elenora Ortolani, a 27-year-old innovator from the United Kingdom pushing creative boundaries through material experimentation, proposes a groundbreaking approach to eradicating plastic waste by consuming it through her vanilla ice cream made from PET plastic. Using digestion enzymes and bacteria engineering, she collaborates with scientists and food experts to shift public perceptions of future food possibilities in the wake of climate change.

Gunraagh Singh Talwar, a 26-year-old Indian architect who is committed to enhancing the equity and resilience of urban environments. Having witnessed the adverse impact of dumpsites on ecosystems and communities, he developed an upcycled construction block - Dumpcrete. Crafted from legacy wastes like inert soil, Dumpcrete serves as a circular construction alternative and simultaneously addresses the pressing issue of sustainable legacy waste management.

The six winners were announced on Wednesday 13 September at a reception hosted at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Jakhya Rahman-Corey, Director of the Swarovski Foundation said: "The Swarovski Foundation believes education is the most valuable asset to empower people across the world. As we mark the Foundation's 10th anniversary, our mission is to promote sustainable livelihoods through education to reduce inequality and through this program we are able to achieve this by providing financial support and education to young innovators striving to make a difference.

"This is the third year of the Creatives for Our Future, and since inception we have received 1,500 applicants across 122 countries and supported 21 successful applicants with the skills, tools and opportunities to develop their ground-breaking ideas and turn them into reality. Previous cohort members have gone on to create fashion beads from algae and a hand pump monitoring system for clean water in sub-Saharan Africa, among many other innovations. These creative solutions achieve positive impact and drive progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our cohort this year spans a wide range of fields and industries, and we are grateful to have a broad selection of advocates to guide and mentor the winners as they continue to bring their incredible projects to life".

Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, said:

"It is my pleasure to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the Swarovski Foundation. Congratulations on your efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular on education and equality including the Waterschool and Creatives for our Future.

Creatives for our Future is an innovative program that works with the United Nations Office for Partnerships to drive innovation and today we welcome the third group of Creatives.

My message to these talented young people who are designing a sustainable future for us all is to be bold, be informed, stand unwaveringly by your values, and embrace your innate potential as changemakers.

We are counting on your creativity and expertise to instill transformative change. Together, as partners, as creatives, and as stewards of this planet, we must all work to build a brighter and more sustainable future."

The Creatives For Our Future program aims to empower the next generation of creative talent (ages 21-30 years) to unlock innovative new approaches to global sustainability challenges and drive progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. For more information visit www.sfcreatives.org.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Please see the press pack [here](#), which contains:

- [Cohort biographies and quotes](#)
- [Cohort images](#)
- [Advocate biographies](#)

KEY PROGRAM DATES:

- **October 2023** – Online education programs and mentorship begins
- **December 2023** – Mid-program check-in
- **March 2024** – Virtual roundtable with creative network
- **April 2024** – Graduation

ABOUT THE SWAROVSKI FOUNDATION

Established in 2013, the Swarovski Foundation brings focus to Swarovski's historical commitment to philanthropy by supporting charitable initiatives to achieve positive social and environmental impact whilst driving progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Its mission strives to promote sustainable livelihoods through education to reduce inequality by supporting initiatives that focus on Equity, Water, and Creativity, and through two signature programs Waterschool and Creatives for Our Future.

swarovskifoundation.org

ABOUT SWAROVSKI FOUNDATION CREATIVES FOR OUR FUTURE

Creatives for Our Future builds on the Swarovski Foundation's commitment to advance creative talent to drive positive change through collaborations addressing social and environmental issues. The cornerstone of the Swarovski Foundation's work is the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations, in turn these goals are the anchor for Creatives for Our Future.

The program leverages the Swarovski Foundation's position to combine investment and education with a stakeholder network crossing borders and industries. It harnesses young creatives' unique critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in this pivotal era. Creative expression is a vehicle for evolution – not only for concepts and products but also for changes in thinking and behavior.

sfcreatives.org

ABOUT UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PARTNERSHIPS

The United Nations Office for Partnerships is your global gateway to connect and co-create partnerships to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. UN Partnerships seeks to mobilise everyone, everywhere; demand ambition and accountability to act now to deliver the SDGs. UN Partnerships works globally, regionally and in countries—to transform the world through SDG partnerships—for people and for the planet.

ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

sdgs.un.org/goals