

EVENTS/CAUSES

Kering continues to champion women's rights with UK charter

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Alexander McQueen ad campaign image

By SARAH JONES

French luxury conglomerate Kering's corporate foundation is extending the impact of its female-focused efforts with a new charter between the company's United Kingdom brands and non-governmental agency Women's Aid.

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Through the "Charter to combat and prevent domestic violence," the 1,260 Kering employees based in the U.K. will receive training from Women's Aid for two years and internal policies will be established. This allows the Kering Foundation to get the company's employees actively involved in its cause, creating ambassadors who will help to spread awareness for the issue.

"Violence against women is a universal issue," said Marie-Claire Daveu, chief sustainability officer and head of international institutional affairs at **Kering**, Paris. "We have all the populations all around the world, and all classes—you can be rich, you can be poor, you can be educated or you can be without education—every woman is concerned.

"And this idea as an entrepreneur to say with the NGO, with the public authority, Kering has

a role to play," she said. "So, of course, it was not to make competition with the public policies or with the NGO, but we have a feeling it will be a cause where we can bring something in addition."

Support system

In the U.K., 20 percent of working women have taken medical leave due to domestic violence, with one in five of them absent for more than a month. Despite it affecting work, a mere one in 10 feel comfortable disclosing an incident to a boss or colleague.

Only 35 percent of domestic violence victims report the crime to the police.



Signing of the charter

"We are really pleased to be collaborating with the Kering Foundation," said Polly Neate, chief executive of Women's Aid. "Work is often a lifeline for women experiencing domestic violence, so it is essential that employers have the confidence and knowledge to support their employees.

"Kering's commitment shows great leadership, and we hope the partnership will inspire other businesses to follow suit," she said. "The Kering Foundation contacted Women's Aid, as the leading domestic violence charity in England, to build on work fighting domestic violence the Foundation already undertakes across Europe. Our shared commitment to ending domestic violence makes the organizations a good fit.

"Two women a week are killed by a partner or ex-partner in England and Wales, and millions will experience abuse in their lifetimes, which makes action all the more urgent and important."

Kering was drawn to Women's Aid both for its knowledge and understanding of the UK system and its digital platform, which allows women to seek information and reach out and connect to other individuals.

This charter was signed following two previous partnerships. In 2010 in France, Kering teamed with the Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes, and 2013 saw the signing of an agreement between the conglomerate and Italy's Donne in Rete contro la violenza. In France and Italy, 400 employees have been trained as of press time.



Photo from Women's Aid SOS campaign

The Kering Foundation was launched in 2009 to combat violence against women and bring attention to the issue.

Kering monitors the impact of its efforts as if it were a private company, calculating that to-date, it has benefited 140,000 women.

One of its events is the White Ribbon campaign.

For the third consecutive year, luxury conglomerate Kering used social media to combat violence against women by sharing a white ribbon via Twitter.

The initiative in its original form was started in 1991 as a male-led campaign and became highly active in North America, Australia and the United Kingdom. Since Nov. 15, Stella McCartney-designed white ribbons have been distributed to more than 700 boutiques operated by Kering brands ([see story](#)).

NOVEMBER 25
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FOR WOMEN
AROUND THE WORLD**
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**KERING
FOUNDATION**
STOP VIOLENCE. IMPROVE WOMEN'S LIVES.

Kering White Ribbon button

Representing one of the British brands in Kering's collection, Ms. McCartney's home operations will be taking part.

More than 60 percent of Kering's workforce is female, and most of its consumers are women, making this a cause that hits close to home.

"We want our employees to be aware and to rise inside our brand," Ms. Daveu said. "Our objective is really to develop internal ambassadors of this cause."

Community commitment

Kering feels a responsibility as a private company to assist in the public good.

The group is very vocal about its sustainability initiatives, writing and publicizing a commitment, which includes the statement, "We are propelling our brands to lead with new business models that contribute to a better world economically, socially and environmentally."

Part of the commitment are goals the company has for 2016, including becoming completely PVC-free, getting all of its diamonds from verified sources and procuring its paper for packaging from recycled materials and sustainably managed forests. Kering will measure and analyze its environmental impact in 2016 and put a monetary value on it.

Gucci switched out the plastic in its eyewear production to liquid wood, and Saint Laurent Paris began using LED lights in its stores in 2012 to reduce its energy consumption ([see story](#)).

Kering keeps its causes front and center within its organization, becoming an advocate within the communities it belongs to.

"We have a CEO and chairman Francois-Henri Pinault that believes it's really the role of private enterprise to create wealth, but also to try to create a better world socially and ecologically," Ms. Daveu said. "So that's why sustainability is really at the core of our business strategy."

"In addition to the environmental side, the social side is really important and he sees the role of the Kering group to have a specific responsibility for women's equality in society," she said. "In the two pillars: first to help them to achieve in their personal and professional life, but also to be sure that outside we can support women."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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