

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Gucci launches scholarship, nonprofit fund aimed at diversity

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Gucci's revenues topped 8 billion euros last year. Image credit: Gucci

By STAFF REPORTS

Italian label Gucci is looking to increase diversity and representation in fashion through the creation of a community fund and scholarship program.

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Gucci Changemakers is part of the company's commitment to inclusion following backlash surrounding a product deemed by many to be racist. The program includes a \$5 million fund and a \$1.5 million scholarship in North America, which will be focused on helping the next generation of fashion talent pay for college.

"I believe in dialogue, building bridges and taking quick action," said Marco Bizzarri, president and CEO of Gucci, in a statement. "This is why we started working immediately on the long-term infrastructure at Gucci to address our shortcomings.

"And now through our Changemakers program, we will invest important resources to unify and strengthen our communities across North America, with a focus on programs that will impact youth and the African-American community," he said. "I believe in the promise of the next generation, and through our scholarship fund we will also create more opportunities for talented young people of diverse backgrounds to gain access to careers in the fashion industry."

Courting change

The Gucci Changemakers Fund will go towards community programs in North America, focusing on African-Americans and consumers of color.

Gucci is also working to establish a Changemakers Council of community leaders, which will partner with nonprofits in cities such as New York, Miami, Atlanta, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Another part of Changemakers is a scholarship program for college students looking to move into fashion careers. Students who are chosen will receive \$20,000 per year towards their education.

Last year, Gucci launched a Changemakers volunteering program, which enables its 18,000 employees to use up to four paid days to do outreach in their communities. This program was first launched in North America, before

rolling out globally.



Gucci's partnership with Dapper Dan now extends to community outreach. Image courtesy of Gucci

This June, Gucci will launch a \$5 million Changemakers program in the Asia-Pacific region.

In February, Gucci pulled a sweater after consumers believed the design resembled blackface. After apologizing for the offense, Gucci launched the first initiatives in a long-term plan to amplify cultural diversity and awareness in its company, which will extend to hiring and educational programs ([see story](#)).

"As a partner, I am proud to work with Gucci and other community leaders to help guide programs that will create meaningful impact for the black community and fashion as a whole," said Dapper Dan, Harlem-based couturier, in a statement. "It is imperative that we have a seat at the table to say how we should be represented and reimagined.

"Through our work together, Gucci is in a position to lead the overall industry toward becoming a better more inclusive one," he said.

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