

PRESS RELEASE

Prada Group & UNFPA Create First-of-Its-Kind Fashion Training Programme in Ghana and Kenya

The Partnership – “Fashion Expressions: The Stories She Wears” – Seeks to Advance & Mentor Aspiring Fashion Professionals & Promote Self-agency on Sexual & Reproductive Health

New York, Accra and Nairobi, 19 October, 2022 – UNFPA, the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, and Prada Group, are bringing together the Prada Group’s leading role in the fashion industry, and UNFPA’s expertise in promoting gender equality, in a unique and innovative partnership. The pilot programme, *Fashion Expressions: The Stories She Wears*, aims to leverage the social and economic power of fashion as a vehicle to promote women’s empowerment and sexual and reproductive health in a six-month training programme for young women in Ghana and Kenya.

The program is equipping 45 participants with knowledge and practical skills relevant for the fashion industry and facilitating internships with local fashion companies to establish long-term work opportunities for them. In addition, it seeks to foster a deeper understanding of sexual and reproductive rights and reduce participants’ vulnerability to gendered inequalities and harmful practices. The training pilot launched in May 2022 with two cohorts in Ghana and Kenya made up of young women with a passion for the fashion industry.

UNFPA and Prada Group formally entered into a partnership in 2021 and have been developing this unique training programme in collaboration with local partners International Needs (Ghana) and County Government of Kitui and the Kitui County Textile Centre (Kenya). UNFPA Ghana and Kenya are further partnering with established local fashion brands to facilitate 6-month local industrial attachments ensuring long-term employment opportunities.

Mariarosa Cutillo, Chief of Strategic Partnerships, UNFPA, said: *“UNFPA is working with creative industries to find innovative ways to support young women from ‘left behind’ communities to access their rights and choices in order to unlock their full potential. Fashion is a powerful platform to provide long-term, sustainable education and development opportunities across the world. We are proud to launch our partnership with Prada Group and its people through this impactful programme that focuses on women’s economic inclusion, pushes boundaries for sustainable development solutions, and acts as a springboard for further collaboration in the years to come.”*

Lorenzo Bertelli, Prada Group Marketing Director & Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, said: *“This training programme reflects Prada Group’s belief in fashion as a force for good. We are honored to partner with UNFPA on this unique project to leverage the social and economic power of our industry to create more inclusive and equal societies.”*

Malika Savell, Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, Prada Group, The Americas said: *“We are excited to continue deepening our partnership with UNFPA to mentor and empower the next generation of female artists through the ‘Fashion Expressions: The Stories She Wears’ project. It is a privilege for Prada Group to play a role in expanding the opportunities available to aspiring young designers from around the world.”*

Through this programme, 30 young women in Ghana and 15 in Kenya are gaining valuable experience and knowledge in a number of areas, including fashion design and production, with a focus on local traditions and styles, re/upcycled fashion, traditional textile design, and financial literacy, including bookkeeping, budgeting and business management.

The programme also provides comprehensive educational sessions in sexual and reproductive health, covering topics such as menstrual health management, puberty and prevention of teenage pregnancies. In addition, participants receive training in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, equipping participants with valuable skills needed to help combat harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child marriages.

At the end of the 6-months’ industrial attachment, the trainees will showcase their works in an end of year presentation in Ghana or Kenya.

ABOUT

UNFPA

UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. UNFPA's mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. UNFPA calls for the realization of reproductive rights for all and supports access to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health services, including voluntary family planning, quality maternal health care and comprehensive sexuality education.

Prada Group

Pioneer of a dialogue with contemporary society across diverse cultural spheres and an influential leader in luxury fashion, Prada Group founds its identity on essential values such as creative independence, transformation and sustainable development, offering its brands a shared vision to interpret and express their spirit. The Group owns some of the world's most prestigious luxury brands, Prada, Miu Miu, Church's, Car Shoe, the historic Pasticceria Marchesi and Luna Rossa, and works constantly to enhance their value by increasing their visibility and appeal. The Group designs, manufactures and distributes ready-to-wear collections, leather goods and footwear in more than 70 countries through a network of 627 stores (at June 30th 2022) as well as e-commerce channels, selected e-tailers and department stores around the world. The Group, which also operates in the eyewear and fragrances sector through licensing agreements, has 23 owned factories and more than thirteen thousand employees. For more information, please visit www.pradagroup.com.

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