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25 FOR 25 SERIES

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25 for 25 is an original content series by Gucci and CHIME FOR CHANGE to mark the historic milestone of Beijing +25 in March, as well as Women's History Month. The series will highlight activists, CHIME Advisory Board members, partners and supporters who represent the progress made on gender equality over the past 25 years, and the emerging next generation continuing this critical work.



Katja Iversen is the President and CEO of Women Deliver and is a leading global advocate for investment in gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women, with a specific focus on maternal, sexual and reproductive health and rights. She shares her reflections on the triumphs, challenges and hopes for a gender-equal future – read more below.

What are your hopes and expectations for gender equality in the next 25 years?

In 25 years, I hope everyone pushing for gender equality has worked themselves out of a job. We will no longer need to communicate from podiums, in boardrooms and the hallways of major summits. There will be no need to argue on the pages of major newspapers, and on social media to prove that a gender equal world is healthier, wealthier, more productive and more peaceful. We won't have to because we will already be living it.

What does gender equality mean to you?

That every gender is equal, accepted, included, and enjoys equal rights as well as opportunities to apply them to their lives. It requires parity in leadership, the closing of pay and income gaps. It means equal economic and social mobility. In a few words it means breaking the barriers that are holding girls and women back.

What keeps you energized and committed as a leader for gender equality?

My biggest energizer is seeing norms change fast in some areas. A lot of that work is driven by young people and it gives me so much energy—and insight—to spend time with the many hundreds of Women Deliver Young Leaders, who are part of our youth program. It was launched in 2010 to connect young advocates to the decision-making tables. These young women are on the frontlines, fighting for gender equality (as well as for a healthy planet, universal health care, an end to racism, and every issue that needs solving).

What advice would you give younger generations on how to advocate / work for gender equality as they get older?

Dream it, do it. Speak up, stand up. Work hard, and take charge. You are not just leaders of tomorrow. You are leaders of today. The world needs your voices, ideas, and leadership now more than ever. And practice what you preach—gender equality starts at home. In how you treat your partner, raise your kids, attend to your friends, live your values, walk your own talk.

Who do you look to as an example / role model in the fight for gender equality?

Pippi Longstocking, the world's strongest girl. She says many smart things but I particularly live by these two: "If you are very strong, you must also be very kind," and "I have never tried that before, so I think I should definitely be able to do that."

