



HAFDE Leather Tannery

'Brother Vellies x HAFDE'
Spring-Summer 2016 and Fall-Winter 2016
ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative: Ethiopia

Brother Vellies Spring-Summer 2016 and Fall-Winter 2016 Sustainability report

HAFDE – Addis Ababa – Ethiopia

In association with the International Trade Centre’s (ITC) Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI), Brother Vellies (BV) partnered with HAFDE for their Spring-Summer 2016 and Fall-Winter 2016 collections. HAFDE is a tannery and a shoes and leather goods workshop producing high-quality leather goods and shoes according to fair labour and environmental standards. 1,000 pairs of sandals and high-heel shoes were produced for BV’s Spring-Summer 2016 collection and 1,200 pairs of boots, high-heel shoes, sandals and moccasins for their Fall-Winter 2016 range. Approximately 70 artisans were involved in producing each order, learning the necessary skillsets to handle delicate fabrics, work with fur and make high-heel sandals. The orders also supported the development of HAFDE’s green leather production programme, created jobs and contributed towards unlocking the artisans’ future business opportunities. This improved the well-being and living standards of the artisans and their families, fostering a positive social impact and alleviating poverty.



Drying vegetable leather used for BV soles



A well-deserved break for the workers

Order summary

	Spring-Summer 2016	Fall-Winter 2016
Product type	Flat sandals, high-heel sandals	Flat sandals, high-heel sandals, boots moccasins
# of products	1,000 pairs of shoes	1,200 pairs of shoes
Materials	- Leather (HAFDE, Ethiopia) - Fur (sent by client, USA) - Components (Italy)	- Leather (HAFDE, Ethiopia) - Fur (sent by client, USA) - Components (Italy)
Number of workers	Workers at HAFDE: 60	Workers at HAFDE: 60 Artisans from Sacro Cuore: 6
Skills developed	High-heel sandal and shoe making Fur cutting and application Fabric cutting	High-heel sandal and shoe making Fur cutting and application Fabric cutting

Most of the BV shoe models were produced using chrome-free and vegetable leathers. The environmental impact of these leathers is considerably less compared to conventional chrome leathers, thus the BV orders contributed towards reducing the impact of tanning on the environment and people. Fabric handwoven by communities in Burkina Faso was also used, alongside embroidered embellishments by Sacro Cuore artisans in Addis Ababa.

Brother Vellies x HAFDE: A strong ethical agenda

BV are working alongside a reputable company with a strong ethical agenda. HAFDE Leather Tannery and Workshop promotes sustainable practices within both its main premises and the surrounding community, with key elements of its agenda including:

- ❖ **Free water** for the surrounding community;
- ❖ **Partnership with a local school**, the Technical and Vocational Training College of Sebeta, providing young trainees with **'on-the-job' learning opportunities**;
- ❖ Donated leather school bags to **orphans** and **disadvantaged children**;
- ❖ Cooperation with NGO's to provide **education** for workers about **important issues**, including HIV/AIDS;
- ❖ **Subsidised lunches**, ensuring workers enjoy **good, healthy and traditional food** to receive the required intake of energy;
- ❖ **Transportation for workers** to the various neighbourhoods they come from;
- ❖ **Greening programme** in the tannery, with the planting of over **100 trees** to create new **green spaces** for the workers to have a break and to reduce the ecological footprint of the tannery.



Brave donkeys used to carry the water given by HAFDE



A group of workers enjoying a break in the green areas at HAFDE

Supporting the development of a green leather production programme

HAFDE's team has been carrying out considerable research on **chrome-free leather production** for several years and is aiming to produce **fully green** leathers within the **next 5 years**, eliminating the use of all harmful chemicals (chrome and sulphides). By using chrome-free and vegetable leathers, BV are supporting HAFDE's greening program and demonstrating the market interest for more responsible products.

- ❖ Flat sandals were produced using **vegetable leathers**, while certain high-heel sandals used **chrome-free leather uppers**;
- ❖ By using these chrome-free and vegetable leathers for their shoe collection, BV helped reduce the impact of tanning on the **environment and people**;
- ❖ Due to this positive environmental effect, HAFDE and EFI were able to secure **funding** to sustain the research project and **encourage green leather consumption**.



Supporting the creation of an artisan cluster, to directly tackle poverty

For the orders, BV hugely supported the ongoing work of HAFDE and EFI to create a cluster of artisans built around their production chain needs, based on the model of Artisan.Fashion in Kenya. By promoting local creativity and work opportunities for stay-at-home mothers and citizens facing hard living conditions or social constraints, the orders helped to supplement their income and improve their well-being.

- ❖ Though the project is still in its early stages with artisans primarily involved with embroidery, there will soon be artisans locally producing **additional components**, such as wooden heels and metal pieces;
- ❖ By collaborating with BV, HAFDE was able to raise funding to **train and integrate people to work at the tannery**;
- ❖ Within the next three years the project is aiming to create **at least 300 jobs**, providing a **fair and stable source of income**.



Birds hand-embroidered by the artisans of Sacro Cuore



Artisan at work at HAFDE

Going forward: Building on feedback

The production processes are closely followed and feedback sessions are organised with BV on quality improvements to be made, providing a continual learning experience for the artisans at HAFDE and Sacro Cuore. The Spring-Summer 2016 feedback highlighted several improvements and changes to be made in production methods at the cluster (in terms of cutting neatness, packaging, final quality control, etc.). These were implemented for the production of the Fall-Winter 2016 collection. Cutting dices were also developed for the Fall-Winter collection to improve the productivity of the workshop. The BV orders also enabled HAFDE to purchase new machinery to improve the efficiency and working conditions in the workshop.



Production of Fall-Winter 2016 high-heel shoes



Feedback board to improve quality



Lama cutting flat sandal insoles

Enhanced job and training opportunities

By choosing to partner with HAFDE, the BV orders provided new opportunities and training schemes for surrounding communities.

- ❖ Along with other buyers, the BV orders contributed to the creation of **15 jobs** and the number of artisans working on BV orders went from 60 to 76;
- ❖ BV fostered HAFDE's **product development skills**, as HAFDE had to develop and grade multiple patterns to prepare shoes for production;
- ❖ BV provided a recurrent source of **learning and training opportunities** for workers to learn or improve existing **skills and methods** required to complete the order. HAFDE's artisans initially learnt how to produce flat sandals, before progressing towards more **intricate designs** including high-heel sandals, moccasins and high-heel boots using leather, handwoven fabric from Burkina Faso and fur;
- ❖ Two additional workers were also employed to **maintain the new green areas** at the tannery.



Cutting insoles for Spring-Summer (before the cutting dices)



Dereje embossing BV insoles with the BV logo and size

Poverty alleviation in Burkina Faso

In addition to their main work in Ethiopia, BV sourced handwoven fabrics from the GIE CABES¹, a social enterprise created by EFI to act as a trade interface for disadvantaged communities of artisans in Burkina Faso. Doing so, BV provided work opportunities for artisans in Burkina Faso who produced fabric for several of the shoe styles.

- ❖ Employment prospects were enhanced for **disadvantaged communities of weavers**, promoting **empowerment for women** and contributing to **poverty reduction**.



Sandals with handwoven fabric from BV SS16 collection



Weaver in Burkina Faso

¹Groupement d'Intérêt Economique Commerce et Artisanat Pour le Bien Etre Social

Meet the artisans



Gudissa Hirpha, 20 years old

At 20 years old, Gudissa recently finished the technical training school in Sebeta Town and has a permanent job at HAFDE's after beginning as a trainee. With a speciality in cutting, Gudissa is a careful worker and is an expert in cutting fabrics from Burkina Faso and delicate furs for several of the BV shoe styles.



Shanbel Tolasa, 20 years old

Shanbel has also recently finished the technical training school in Sebeta Town and has a permanent role at HAFDE's. Shanbel is responsible for all embossing techniques at HAFDE's, including the precise embossing with metal foils for the delicate BV high heel shoes. Not to mention, he's also passionate about wushu and is a great singer! He can often be heard throughout the workshop!

Brother Vellies Spring-Summer 2017: The introduction of RISE

For the next season EFI's RISE framework will be implemented to ensure traceability, measure impact and improve sustainability across the entire production process and value chain. BV products will be accompanied by a RISE tag, allowing consumers to learn about the manufacturing of their item and its impact on the lives of artisan communities.

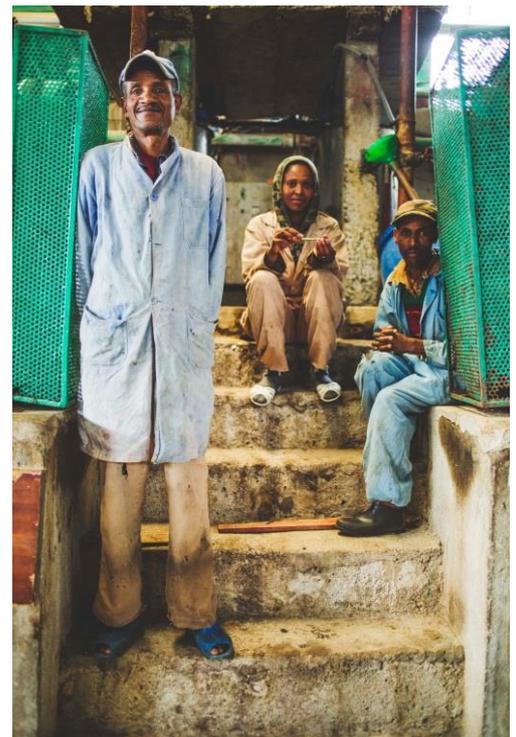
Conclusion

BV's Spring-Summer 2016 and Fall-Winter 2016 orders were highly beneficial for the artisans involved and helped to expand sustainable activities at HAFDE's. The work contributed to job creation in Ethiopia and ensured a regular flow of work to the artisans in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso. HAFDE's team learnt the necessary skills to produce shoes of a high standard for the international market, therefore learning to abide to universal quality requirements which can also be transferred to other domains of life and work. In spite of the initial challenges faced, the artisans grew accustomed to the requirements of the BV orders and learnt how to deal with these issues for future orders.

Benefits of the orders also extend beyond the shoe production itself. The commitment of BV to use greener leathers contributed to enhancing HAFDE's green production plans and to secure funding for research toward green leather production. BV have chosen to work with HAFDE for their Spring-Summer 2017 collection, where the RISE framework will be implemented to provide greater information to all stakeholders. This will further enhance HAFDE's ethical and sustainable agenda.

More about the Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI) and its work in Ethiopia:

EFI is a flagship programme of the International Trade Centre, a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. EFI links micro-producers from developing countries to the international supply chain of fashion, facilitating dignified work at a fair wage. EFI supports local creativity, female empowerment and gender equality, with an overall aim to reduce global poverty by promoting job creation and increasing the export capacities of the region in which it operates. EFI began operations in Ethiopia in 2014, working with HAFDE to provide high-quality finished leather goods and accessories to its international fashion partners. EFI is supporting HAFDE in becoming a state of the art production and training hub, to create a cluster of artisans and to achieve fully green leather production within the next 5 years.



Photos (from left to right):

- HAFDE tannery – drying machines
- HAFDE workers preparing leather skins
- Artisan hand-weaving fabric in Burkina Faso
- Water provision for the surrounding community
- Entrance to HAFDE
- Suede leather produced at HAFDE
- HAFDE tannery workers having a break
- Development of new green spaces at HAFDE
- Yarn preparation in Burkina Faso
- HAFDE tannery worker
- Weaving loom in Burkina Faso