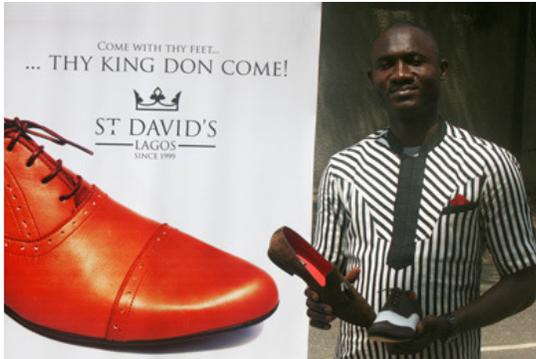


GEMS1 visits Lagos to interview Finished Leather Goods (FLG) brand owners **David Ibe** and **Haowa Bello** at their galleries. The brand owners are key partners for the Project in driving sector business growth at home and abroad that creates employment directly and through contracting their work to FLG artisans. GEMS1 is supporting markets and linkages for brand owners through trade show events as well as product innovation training.

The Project is also supporting their Lagos Business Membership Organization, the **Leather Fashion Designers Association (LFDA)**, to strengthen brand owner networking to resolve business constraints, facilitate information and idea sharing, and advocate for changes needed to improve the business environment.

St. David's...



“I commenced my brand business in 1999. Men’s shoes dominate my product range which also includes belts and ladies bags. My business is on the up and GEMS1 has helped here”, says David.

“I have taken a very active role in LFDA in developing ‘buy Nigerian’ campaigns and exploring how we can project an image of quality and value: through the Association I learnt that the perception of our products is abroad is poor. We are also trying to change the view that Nigerian products should be cheaper when in actual fact we have better quality shoes than those imported.

The LFDA is making good progress. GEMS1 is facilitating productive meetings that are helping us to elaborate a vision that ultimately 10,000 Nigerian shoemakers can understand and align with. Then our producers can increase market share versus the stiff competition currently faced from European and Chinese products.

I enjoyed good exposure and markets from GEMS1 support for the Lagos MTN Fashion week and Abuja trade shows, and used the Project’s innovation training to do onward training with 45 artisans I contract for production. I have bought some new equipment and hired five more staff.”

For more, visit:

www.facebook.com/StdavidsLeatherWorld

Madame Coquette...



“GEMS1 highlighted the importance of strong Association organization for networking between brand owners and addressing our sector business issues. The Association provides me with access to trade shows for promoting my ladies bags: I outsource my production to several artisans.

I have benefited from networking at the Association meetings and sold out at the MTN Fashion Week. My business is growing. The brand owners could expand further with access to finance and business mentoring.”



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Produced by GEMS1, the DFID-funded programme supporting the Nigerian Meat and Leather Industry implemented by GRM International Limited