

URBAN SHOES, MADE IN AFRICA



Amid all the many charity-focused efforts to help the people of developing African nations, others strive to provide economic empowerment and help African entrepreneurs establish sustainable businesses. We've covered several of these—including some of the microfinance initiatives that have popped up—but Canadian shoe company [Oliberté](#) is taking a different approach by sourcing and setting up its manufacturing operations in Africa instead. Oliberté makes and sells what it says is the first line of footwear to be made from natural rubber in Liberia. Two styles of lightweight shoes are currently available: Elika for women, and Rovia for men. Both feature a rubber sole crafted naturally and fairly in Liberia along with premium goat and cow leather sewn in Ethiopia. Elika is priced at CAD 106, while Rovia is CAD 115. Oliberté ensures that farmers, factory workers and suppliers are all paid fairly and treated responsibly, and it supports local training and communities in every country it works in. It's also working in partnership with factories to improve its environmental footprint, it says. Toward that end, Oliberté even promises to take its shoes back at the end of their useful life, with plans to recycle and make them new again. The company's website explains: "Africa is more than just poverty and Oliberté is the start of a revolution that shows, through urban footwear, this is the real Africa! With every pair of Oliberté bought, we are making a powerful statement that Africa is proud, free and full of potential. You do this all while being a hero, because you are the reason men and women from Liberia to Swaziland to Ethiopia have a job, have food on the table and can send their children to school. Oliberté is not a charity—it is a company that believes you can change how the world views Africa and help build lives every time you buy a pair of Oliberté shoes." Oliberté's shoes are available both online and through select stores in the US and Canada. Retailers: one to offer up to your own ethical consumers...? (Related: [Shoes for good — Coffee life stories](#) — [Yak down: luxury yarn with a story and a cause](#).) Spotted by: Cole

25th September 2009

Email: info@oliberte.com

Website: www.oliberte.com