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Chesneau, a Frenchman by birth, is not new to the luxury leather handbag market. He spent 20 years in Ireland building his brand, which is his surname, and training craftsman. He received training from a craftsman for Hermes, arguably the most recognized leather-focused luxury accessories company in the world. He now trains others.

But it’s not Chesneau who is transforming LULEA, it’s his young Kenyan daughter, Verline. She designed the hot-selling parachute bag and is now hiring other young women just out of university to contribute to the family business. Since its success at Coterie, LULEA has hired eight new full-time employees.

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The East Africa Trade and Investment Hub (the Hub), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), provides firm-level technical assistance to East African businesses like LULEA to build their export capacity and facilitate connections with U.S. buyers. This increases duty-free exports under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and deepens trade relations with the U.S.

The USAID Hub has provided export assistance to 1,431 firms since October 2014; LULEA is just one example. These firms have achieved $312.1 million in exports under AGOA.

The USAID Hub’s support to LULEA demonstrates USAID’s contribution to beneficiary self-reliance and resilience. The LULEA brand is taking off and so are employment opportunities with the company. “This is what we needed to realize our potential,” said LULEA Founder Edmond Chesneau. Verline is confident that they can.