

AVNET BELGIUM FRIES UP FUNDS FOR CONGO

The way to men's hearts truly is through their stomachs – something Avnet Belgium employees found when trying to raise money to aid widows in Congo. By organizing a "fritkot" (a mobile stand selling French fries) and inviting a customer to join them, employees were able to raise \$3,100 to purchase equipment to help women become more self-sufficient.

Avnet Technology Solutions (TS) employees first learned about the need in Congo from coworker Gregory Luaba Deome, a European rebate coordinator whose mother runs FOVEDES, a non-profit organization that teaches widows elementary skills for their households. FOVEDES needed sewing machines, kitchen stoves, food processors and other equipment for its training center.

"After we heard of the enormous need in Congo, three colleagues took up the initiative to do something; and after brainstorming we came up with an easy idea – a fritkot," says Steve Stevens, divisional manager of visual solutions. "Fries are Belgium's national pride – many people think they are French in origin but that is entirely untrue. The denomination "French" refers only to the original way to prepare them."

Avnet brought in a professional fries baker for the fritkot and employees purchased fries, as did one of Steve's customers, GE Healthcare, which is located in the same building. "The fritkot strengthened our bonds with GE Healthcare – standing in the lobby eating fries together got us talking to people we only briefly cross in the elevator," says Steve.

Gregory traveled to Congo to deliver the funds to FOVEDES and help install equipment at the training center.