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Jan Roorda - Gered Gereedschap Zwolle

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A SAW REMAINS A SAW – UNTIL YOU SHARE IT



A hammer. A sewing machine. A box of screwdrivers. What you have left over here can make a world of difference elsewhere. Not because it's worth a lot, but because someone can use it. To create something. To build something.

At Gered Gereedschap, we share every day: tools, machines, time, and knowledge. In workshops where volunteers carefully inspect, repair, and prepare everything for a second life. In videos where we show how to fix a machine. Not just for colleagues here, but also for craftsmen and women in Africa.

What we share grows in value. Not literally – a saw remains a saw. But the impact multiplies. A woman in Malawi who can earn her own income again thanks to a sewing machine. A young technician in Uganda who, with the right skills, can work independently. A school that expands because there are finally enough tools – helping an entire community move forward.

That's why sharing is so powerful – and fun to do. Anyone can do it. Including you. So share what you can: your time, your attention, or your knowledge. Donate your old tools, lend a hand in a workshop, or make a contribution. I can promise you this: the feeling it gives you is priceless.

With warm regards,
Arjan van Dijk
Chairman, Gered Gereedschap

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PRIME CONTINUES TO GROW: SECOND PHASE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

At the Prime Vocational Institute in Jinja, Uganda, the second phase of our collaboration was recently completed successfully. Since 2022, we have been working together to strengthen practical vocational education for young people with limited access to schooling.

This phase focused on the fields of motor vehicle technology and electrical engineering. The workshops were expanded and equipped with modern tools and machinery. Teachers received training to improve their lessons, the curriculum was updated, and thanks to scholarships, vulnerable youth were also able to join the programs.

"Our students now learn with professional equipment and are better prepared for employment or entrepreneurship," says principal Harriet Kwebwawera. The impact is clearly visible: students receive more hands-on training, teachers work more efficiently, and graduates are able to take steps toward an independent future with the help of starter kits.

The completion of this phase marks an important milestone in improving vocational education in the region. Watch the video and see for yourself what this collaboration means in practice.

Watch the video: <https://shorturl.at/mzkvX>

"DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND SUSTAINABILITY GO HAND IN HAND HERE"

Gered Gereedschap expands with a new workshop on Ceintuurbaan in Zwolle



Gered Gereedschap has gained a new workshop – this time in Zwolle! Here too, used tools are refurbished and prepared for a second life in developing countries. Thanks to the efforts of enthusiastic volunteers, craftspeople in Africa gain access to the equipment they need to practice their trade and build an independent livelihood. The workshop on Ceintuurbaan in Zwolle contributes to both sustainability and social impact.

A passion for sustainability and collaboration

Jan Roorda immediately fell in love with Gered Gereedschap's mission and, with his background as a project manager and policy advisor, he was eager to contribute to the development of the Zwolle workshop. "I wanted to build something while also refurbishing tools. Development cooperation and sustainability go hand in hand here, and I wholeheartedly embrace that combination."

Challenges in setting up the workshop

The workshop quickly received materials to work with. "Setting up the workshop took more time," says Jan. "And actually, we're still working on it, because there are some logistical challenges. How do you sort everything neatly and create a good overview?" Of course, the Zwolle team took inspiration from other Gered Gereedschap workshops, but challenges remain – such as setting up electricity and handling all the small but essential details to make part of an old warehouse ready for Gered Gereedschap use.

Room for new ideas and commitment

But they're well on track in the capital of Overijssel! Within a year, they've already saved large amounts of hand tools and power

tools. And they want to keep growing. With a passionate team, they're exploring new opportunities. "Sewing machines, for example, are badly needed in Uganda, but we don't repair those yet. We're always open to new partnerships, volunteers, and donations. That way, we can expand and open the workshop more than just a few afternoons a week."

Building engagement and impact

There's no lack of ambition. Jan sees it as his mission to offer more people meaningful ways to spend their time and to find a place within Zwolle's sustainability movement. "There are many initiatives in the region, and we're eager to be part of that landscape." Jan is optimistic about the future of the workshop. With more volunteers, more materials, and greater visibility, Gered Gereedschap is set to become a well-known name in Zwolle. Jan: "Tinkering in the workshop and building something meaningful – I'm far from done yet!"



Jan Roorda



HELP EMPOWER YOUNG WOMEN IN GHANA THROUGH VOCATIONAL TRAINING

“A sewing machine isn’t a luxury here. It’s a key to independence.” – Sherifatu Yakubu

“Many girls here grow up without prospects,” says Sherifatu Yakubu, founder of She 360 LBG in northern Ghana. “They drop out of school because there’s no money or because they’re forced to marry young. Some become pregnant, others face violence or exclusion. For girls with disabilities, it’s even harder. Meanwhile, problems like drug abuse and conflict are increasing in our region. We see young people getting stuck.”

She 360:
From mentorship to Skills Lab

With her organization, Sherifatu aims to break this vicious cycle. What started in 2012 as a small mentorship program became an officially registered organization in 2023. “We began by simply talking and listening, but now we have a place where

young people can truly learn something: our Skills Lab.”

At this center, 150 youth — mainly girls — learn practical skills each year, such as tailoring, soap and candle making, wood-working with recycled materials, tiling, and digital skills. But according to Sherifatu, it’s about more than just technical knowledge: “We also teach soft skills — teamwork, self-confidence, communication. These are the skills you need to stand strong in today’s world.”

Promising results and future plans

The results are hopeful. “Over 70% of the girls who graduate with us start their own small business or find paid work. They earn money, make decisions, and gain a voice in their families and communities. That makes me proud.”

But the need remains high. “We want to expand so we can train 200 young people in the next two years,” Sherifatu says. “But to do that, we need materials. We dream of 50 electric and 50 manual sewing machines to give every student the chance to practice.”



Sherifatu Yakubu

CIJFERS GHANA

Capital: Accra
Official language: English
Government: Republic
Religions: Christianity 71%, Islam 19%
Area: 240,000 km² (4.6% water)
Population: 34 million



The power of a sewing machine

She glances outside, where a group of girls is hard at work. “A sewing machine isn’t a luxury here. It’s a key to independence. With a sewing machine, a girl can earn her own income, make her own decisions, and take control of her future.”

With the support of Gered Gereedschap — and donors like you — She 360 can take this next step. “Every contribution helps,” says Sherifatu. “Will you help make it possible?”



WILL YOU HELP?

Your donation enables Gered Gereedschap to provide the sewing machines and tools needed by She 360. This gives young women in northern Ghana the opportunity to build independent futures. We need a total of € 6,228 to support She 360. Every donation, big or small, makes a world of difference!

Donate now: IBAN: NL34 TRIO 021 21 12 430
Gered Gereedschap, Amsterdam
The Netherlands. (BIC/SWIFT: TRIONL2U)

Thank you for your support!

HOW A TOOL DONATION SET A VILLAGE IN MOTION



In Uganda’s Kayunga district lies the Kitimbwa Technical and Vocational Institute (KITAVI). This technical school was founded in 2021, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a response to growing poverty and rising school dropout rates. Many parents simply could no longer afford school fees. The founders chose not to stand by, but to act. Their mission: to equip young people with vocational skills so they can earn their own income.

A first donor, a new beginning

In 2024, KITAVI received support from an international partner for the first time: Gered Gereedschap. The donation of tools marked a turning point. “We always lacked enough training kits to work with larger groups,” says director Sseruzzi David. “Thanks to this donation, we could not only train more students but also expand and improve our training programs.”

Growth and community impact

The impact is visible at every level: the number of students has doubled, five new vocational teachers have been hired, and in 2025, five students from low-income families will receive free education for the first time. “We generate income through our school farm. We use these funds as seed capital for graduates who want to start their own businesses.” Each year, around fifteen young people launch their own ventures. They support their families, pay school fees, ensure food security, and contribute to their communities.

A name as a sign of gratitude

Appreciation for Gered Gereedschap runs deep. “We’ve decided to name one of our first school buildings after you,” writes David. “Gereedschap-block. Because your support means future, pride, and perspective to us.”

HOW A SEWING MACHINE MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN DZALEKA REFUGEE CAMP

The story of Fountain of Hope Africa – Malawi



Amid the chaos and crowded conditions of Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi, a remarkable organization is making a difference: Fountain of Hope Africa (FOHA). This initiative not only offers refugees — especially women — a safe place, but also the chance to build a new life. With support from Gered Gereedschap, the organization has taken a major step forward.

Step by step toward independence

“The sewing machines we received from Gered Gereedschap have truly boosted our training activities,” says Marcel Cirhuza, coordinator of FOHA. “Before, we could train at most twelve women at a time. Now we’re up to forty.”

The quality of the training has also greatly improved. With professional machines, students gain hands-on experience — from cutting fabric to finishing garments.

More than 86% of participants now demonstrate solid vocational skills, and student satisfaction is impressive: 97% say they are happy with the training. Through regular evaluations, the curriculum is continuously adapted to meet both student needs and local market demands.

More than just tailoring

The program offers more than just technical skills. Students also learn bookkeeping, customer service, and time management — essential skills for anyone looking to start a small business. And it’s paying off: 82% of graduates find work in tailoring or start their

own business within six months. “Our approach is inclusive and community-driven,” says Cirhuza. “We’ve seen women who were once marginalized become leaders in their communities. They earn money, make decisions, and are treated with respect. That might be our biggest success.”

Rachel’s story: from victim to self-reliant

One of the students who embodies this transformation is Rachel Nabintu, a 26-year-old refugee from Congo and a single mother. After traumatic experiences with human trafficking and psychological struggles, she found safety at FOHA in 2024.

“Rachel had lost everything,” Cirhuza recalls. “But here, for the first time, she held something of her own again: a sewing machine. After graduation, we supported her in getting her own machine. Her plan? Start a home-based tailoring business to support herself and her child.”

Rachel is not alone. The program’s success has drawn interest not only from others in the camp but also from surrounding communities. It’s a powerful example of shared hope and progress.

Training with a future in sight

The expansion of the training program has made FOHA more visible and better connected with local tailors and businesses. This helps graduates gain easier access to internships and employment.

“A sewing machine isn’t a luxury in this camp — it’s a tool for financial security. This collaboration with Gered Gereedschap is a meaningful step toward lasting impact,” Cirhuza concludes.



“EVERY BOX OF TOOLS IS A GIFT”

Volunteer portrait: Ad Brouwer – GG Wolvega

After 17 years of wholehearted commitment, she’s stepping down from her volunteer role at the Gered Gereedschap workshop in Wolvega. Ad Brouwer, a vibrant just-turned-70-year-old, is putting down her tools. “Yes, it feels a bit strange. But we’re moving to a house we’re building ourselves, our sailboat still needs finishing, and we want to take longer trips. I’ve also got big plans for our new garden. Together with my husband Werner, we’re starting a new chapter. Oh, and more time for sculpting...”

Africa and Wolvega

Ad has felt a strong connection with Africa since she was young and has visited often. “You really see how life works there and the difference education and aid can make.” When her children grew older, she had more time — which she chose to spend volunteering. Seventeen years ago, the Wolvega workshop held an open day. Ad visited, had a chat with Piet (who repairs sewing machines), and thought, “This is great — I’m in!”

Ad admits she’s not particularly technically skilled, so sewing machine repairs weren’t her thing. Packing was more her style. “But make no mistake, it has to be done right! I inspect all the tools carefully, and if something isn’t good enough, it goes back for rework. People in Africa will be using these tools intensively, so we don’t cut

corners.” Gered Gereedschap found a warm place in her heart — and that even led her husband to join the board of the workshop.

Every box a gift

Once the donated tools are approved, Ad gets to work. “Every box is a gift — that’s how I see it. When someone opens it, it has to look great. No batteries, no plastic, no Styrofoam — there’s already a plastic crisis in Africa, and we’re not adding to it. I wrap everything in newspaper, even new items, and pack them neatly with wooden spacers. They can even turn the box into a cabinet — we include a picture with an example and some extra materials.”

Seventeen years, two mornings a week, and over a thousand boxes later, Ad is closing the workshop door behind her. “That’ll take some getting used to. I loved working with the guys — and a few strong women too. Great atmosphere, many volunteers have been around for years, and we work hard. Not too much chatting, keep it frugal, and get the job done. I’m leaving my work in good hands. Gered Gereedschap truly makes a difference!”



YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACTION FOR CRAFTSMANSHIP!



How great is this? Together with graffiti artist Jochem Cats, young people from the Protestant Church of Gouda recently teamed up to transform one of our containers at De Baanderij — our logistics hub — into a vibrant work of art.

And this is no ordinary container... Soon it will be filled with refurbished tools and machines that, thanks to the support of church members, we'll be sending to vocational schools in Uganda. With these, craftspeople will have the tools they need to truly make a difference.



Watch the video: geredgereedschap.nl/GoudaKleurtContainer



OUR PARTNERS

Gered Gereedschap receives support in the form of knowledge, manpower, and resources from, among others, the following organizations:

Praxis

STICHTING WEES EEN KANS

ADDAX & ORYX FOUNDATION

VAN DORP

BOON COEUR

De Nieuwste

CHOCOLONELY foundation

ELBA

IFS Ultimo

LOUWMAN

BOUWMAAT

BOUWBEURS 2025

VolkerRail

AFAS FOUNDATION inspireert beter doen

HILTI

CCHO Fonds voor opleiding en ondernemerschap

INDI technische ondersteuning

BOERBOOM hout en meer

HBM Machines



GREAT INITIATIVE BY PRAXIS

For over 25 years, Praxis has been a proud partner of Gered Gereedschap. Recently, we were honored to receive a generous donation from Corine Duchenne and Frits Voorhout of Praxis. The full proceeds from the 2024 Wecycle collection — gathered through Praxis stores — were donated to our foundation.

Thanks to this support, we can refurbish even more used tools and make them available to craftspeople in Africa. We are grateful for this long-standing, sustainable partnership — and proud of what we're achieving together!

IN MEMORIAM – JOHAN GARLICH

Johan Garlich and Gered Gereedschap were deeply connected. He was the leading figure of the Waddinxveen workshop, where he volunteered for 29 years. Johan had extensive knowledge of tools and machines. He was a deeply dedicated person who maintained contact with the national office in Amsterdam, secured orders, and packed the toolboxes.



As a token of gratitude for his many years of commitment, the square in front of the workshop was renamed the Johan Garlichplein two years ago. We could not have imagined a more fitting tribute. We will miss him — as a craftsman, as a colleague, and above all, as a person.

COLOPHON

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