



NEWSLETTER

A BRAND OF APOPO

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HERORATS SAVE LIVES AND LIMBS

JUNE-JULY 2010

Greetings from Tanzania, and welcome to this double edition of the HeroRAT e-newsletter for June-July!

As always, it has been a very eventful couple of months – here's the rundown of some of our HeroRAT happenings...

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HeroRATs over neckties for Father's Day!

'It's a rare dad who would choose a store-bought card over a homemade card; or for that matter, a necktie over a gigantic, bomb-sniffing rat.'

We couldn't have said it better ourselves! Following [Nicholas Kristof's thoughtful New York Times column for Father's Day](#), 'Dad Will Really Like This,' APOPO's HeroRATs received an overwhelming wave of support for our work:

- More than 4,000 individuals contributed to the cause
- More than \$170,000 USD raised
- 180 new HeroRAT adopters have been welcomed into our [Adopt-a-Rat program](#)

Nicholas highlighted many worthy charitable organizations in his article, and his message was simple and genuine. 'Wouldn't most dads feel more honored by a donation to any of these organizations than by a donation to commercialism?'

We are so grateful to Nicholas and the New York Times for the opportunity to share our HeroRATs' work with their followers.

[GlobalGiving](#) has been amazing in supporting our small team to cope with the influx of donations: huge thanks to the entire crew at GG for all your help!

A significant portion of the funds raised will be used to get things off the ground in Angola, the next country our heroes will target in their humanitarian demining work. Angola is the most mine-affected country in sub-Saharan Africa. The landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) littering the country are a result of four decades of almost continuous warfare. For more information about the landmine situation in Angola, check out the [ICBL Landmine Monitor](#).

There is a mismatch between the landmine problem itself and the resources currently used to resolve the problem. If Angola is to resolve its considerable landmine problem, there is a need to strengthen the current capacity. DanChurchAid (DCA) is currently operating a Humanitarian Mine Action Programme in one of the areas worst affected by mines, Moxico province. APOPO is looking at partnering with DCA to assist in the further expansion of their programme, by incorporating HeroRATs in the survey and clearance work to increase efficiency.

Two manual deminers with metal detectors typically clear 50 to 100 square meters of land each day, dependent on ground conditions. Two people using APOPO's mine detection rats typically clear 300 to 600 square meters of land each day, and will be able to release between 600 and 1,000 square meters of land each day if the rats can be used in technical survey (one rat covering the ground once instead of twice, which is required during clearance).

There are currently no animals used for landmine detection in Angola and APOPO's HeroRATs have the potential to compliment other efforts by DCA and increase land release rates considerably while keeping costs down. The HeroRATs will work in partnership with their other demining colleagues to do their part to clear and release suspected areas in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

To those of you who read Nicholas's column and chose to take action – by making a handmade card for your dad, or by supporting any of the organizations mentioned in the article – thank you. It is a real privilege to be a part of this global gesture of 'giving' to causes that aim to improve the lives of others, and make the world safer for everyone.

Funding successes and flying HeroRATs

APOPO and the HeroRATs were grateful to receive a significant increase in the annual funding provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). [Our operational team in Mozambique](#) is on schedule to meet the 2014 goal for Mozambique to be mine-impact free, and some new recruits have just arrived on the scene to provide additional support.

Eight recent HeroRAT graduates from the training center in Tanzania boarded the plane to Mozambique for their official accreditation test and first humanitarian demining assignment! Once they pass their accreditation test with the National Demining Institute, they will be official Mine Detection Rats (MDRs) and can start helping their teammates in clearing more land, faster!

The team at our [Tuberculosis \(TB\) Detection Center](#) also received the exciting news that the funding for our three-year research plan for TB detection by rats has been approved! A new building is almost finished at the TB Detection Center, which will create more space for our HeroRAT kennels and training rooms to conduct further experiments into our rats' disease detection abilities. New young rats are being trained for the task, and the aim for the next three years is to optimize our rat detection technology in this area and work on implementation models.



HeroRATs welcomes new corporate sponsor, A12 Business Club

The [A12 Business Club](#) of Antwerp, Belgium, recently joined APOPO as a corporate sponsor, generously offering to support the entire training journey of one of our HeroRATs!

Freddy Michiels and Johan Dillen of A12 Business Club, joined with APOPO Chairman of the Board, Professor Mic Billet, and communications volunteer, Hedwig De Pauw, in celebrating the naming of their new sponsored HeroRAT: *De Nacht van de KMO*.

The newly named pup has just begun the socialization process and will soon commence HeroRAT 'school' with her trainer, Kombani. It's the exciting beginning of a nine-month journey to become a fully accredited life-saving detection HeroRAT!

This support from A12 Business Club means that every aspect of De Nacht van de KMO's training is fully covered: food, veterinary check-ups, trainer's salary, overhead on training rooms, etc. Coverage of these costs allows us to devote more of our funds to our programs in humanitarian demining and tuberculosis detection. Thank you A12 Business Club: together, we can save more lives and limbs!

If your organization would like to learn more about supporting a HeroRAT through its training, please check out the [Corporate Adoption page](#) on our website!

Right: Johan Dillen (A12 Business Club), Mic Billet (APOPO Chairman), Freddy Michiels (A12 Business Club) and Hedwig De Pauw (APOPO Volunteer) celebrate the naming of a new HeroRAT in training!



Karibu na Kwaheri (welcome and farewell!) team members

There's been a number of comings and goings in recent months, and we just wanted to say a sincere thank you to those who have helped APOPO and the HeroRATs come this far...and to introduce and warmly welcome those who are joining the team as we continue to develop and evolve!

Thank you and farewell...

Courtney Baggett, Communications Manager

Courtney is a familiar face around APOPO, and well-known throughout our network of supporters too. She started with APOPO in 2008, initially assisting with the HeroRAT donor support program. Since then, she has worked between Tanzania and the United States, overseeing the development of the HeroRATs program. Courtney has implemented a number of systems that will help with the future expansion of the program, as well as assisting APOPO with development research, fundraising, and communications outreach. We are incredibly grateful for her tireless efforts (and late nights) over the past two years, in making the program what it is today, and wish Courtney the greatest happiness in all of her future endeavors.

Dimitri Geelhand, Volunteer Biologist & Researcher

Dimitri (aka 'Twiga') has been our Belgian breeding expert for the past four months, volunteering his time and skills to further enhance our HeroRAT breeding program. He has worked alongside our caretakers Albert and Mama Lucy, coming up with all kinds of interesting suggestions for increased productivity in the breeding department. We thank Dimi for his interest and dedication in this work – we hope to report back in a few months time with many new HeroRAT births!

Welcome to the team...

Havard Bach, Head of Operations, Mine Action and Human Security

In June, APOPO was excited to welcome Havard Bach to the team. Havard has been working closely with the APOPO team for 11 years, as Head of Operational Methods at the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). He has a vast array of experience and skills to share, having been responsible for a variety of operational demining activities and research projects, including animal detection, use of machines, manual mine clearance and mine action technology. Havard believes in APOPO's potential to play a greater role within and outside mine action, especially in the areas of land release and remote scent tracing.

Hannah Ford, Communications Manager

Hannah joined the APOPO team in February as a communications volunteer for the HeroRATs program, having previously volunteered in Tanzania in 2007. She has recently taken up the role of Communications Manager. Prior to joining APOPO, Hannah worked as a project manager for a communications consultancy in Melbourne, Australia, with a focus on educational resources and reviews. She hopes to continue raising awareness of APOPO's work and increasing public support for the HeroRATs cause through a variety of creative communications campaigns.

Felicia Byrne, Communications Coordinator

Felicia recently arrived in Tanzania from the United States, to support the HeroRATs program in communications and donor relations. Prior to joining APOPO, Felicia was the Refugee Programs Coordinator at Genesis at the Crossroads in Chicago, where she conducted grant research, collaborated with other agencies, and created and ran the organization's social media networks. Felicia has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Hispanic Studies, as well as a Master of Science in International Public Service. She brings a great deal of cross-cultural and research experience to the team, and is very passionate about working to eradicate tuberculosis and landmines around the world.

Christopher Hines, Research and Business Development

Chris recently completed a Master of Science in International Public Service, and joins APOPO to assist with research into possible future applications of our detection rats technology. He was previously working for the US Census Bureau, and also interned last year in Geneva with the US Mission to the United Nations – US Department of State. Chris has a Bachelor's degree in Business Management, and will be utilizing his experience in research, communication and relationship building, to help further develop some of the potential ideas currently in the works for our HeroRATs.



Above, from left to right: Courtney (with one of our HeroRAT trainers, Abuswai), Dimitri, Havard, Hannah, Chris & Felicia

Visit our website to meet the rest of [our HeroRATs team](#) and learn about who we are.

Bart Weetjens and the HeroRATs at TEDx events

APOPO Founder Bart Weetjens recently presented our HeroRATs to audiences at independent [TEDx events](#) in Hamburg and Rotterdam. [Click here to watch the clip](#) of Bart explaining the life-saving work of his much-loved HeroRATs at TEDx Rotterdam!

Call-out to Rotarians across the world

Are you a member of a Future Visions Rotary Club in your area, or know someone who is? The Rotary Club of Morogoro Central (District 9200) in Tanzania, together with the HeroRATs team, is keen to connect with Future Visions Rotary Clubs in other districts who are interested in sharing support of our HeroRATs' life-saving work. To find out more, please reach out to us by sending an email to herorats@herorat.org.

Thanks for reading, and enjoy the month ahead!

Warm regards,

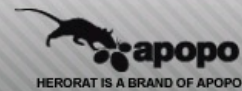
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HeroRAT is a campaign of APOPO



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