

If you're having trouble viewing this email, you may [see it online](#).

Share This:    



# NEWSLETTER

A BRAND OF APOPO

WWW.HERORAT.ORG

HERORATS SAVE LIVES AND LIMBS

## NOVEMBER 2010

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Mine action milestone: 2 million square meters cleared!**
- **APOPO receives seven-year support from Province of Antwerp**
- **HeroRATs flood the media following AFP visit**
- **Reflections on working in Mozambique's minefields**
- **HeroRATs for the holidays!**
- **HeroRATs will be at Alternative Gift Fairs in the USA**



### Mine action milestone: 2 million square meters cleared!

APOPO's [HeroRAT Mine Action Team](#) passed an important milestone this month, in our efforts to rid Mozambique of its [landmine legacy](#): over two million square meters of land have now been returned to the local population in Mozambique! In opening this land, we have found over 1,030 landmines, helped bring electricity to communities, made traveling between villages safer, cleared access to water pits, allowed thousands of people to return to their land, prevented countless mine-related accidents, and much more!

None of this could have been possible without our dedicated supporters and funders. We want to sincerely thank everyone who has believed in our unique and [innovative approach](#) to landmine clearance. People often laughed at us in the beginning. However, now that we have proven how effective and cost-efficient our rats are in their life-saving work, perceptions are changing. Soon, when we reach our goal of helping Mozambique become mine-impact free, everyone will be celebrating with us! We look forward sharing that day with all of you.

---

## APOPO receives seven-year support from Province of Antwerp

[APOPO](#) is thrilled to announce a seven-year cooperation with the [Province of Antwerp](#), Belgium. The Province has supported APOPO in our humanitarian efforts since 1999, and has now extended its financial support for seven more years to help with the further development and expansion of APOPO's operations.

On November 11, APOPO and the HeroRATs were honored to welcome a delegation from the Province of Antwerp to Morogoro, Tanzania to mark the beginning of this cooperation. The delegation included Mrs. Inga Verhaert and Mr. Ludo Helsen, Members of the Provincial Council, and Mr. Dieter Goossens, head of the department of North-South Cooperation.

While at HeroRAT headquarters, the delegation observed APOPO's detection rats in training, and signed the official Protocol of Cooperation along with APOPO's Chairman of the Board, Rudy Van Eysendeyk, and CEO, Christophe Cox. By supporting APOPO, Mrs Inga Verhaert said the Province of Antwerp is both investing in scientific research for humanitarian purposes, while promoting local employment and training in Tanzania. She points out that "landmines and Tuberculosis (TB) affect the most vulnerable individuals and communities in the developing world. They are major obstacles in social and economic development. Therefore, the Province of Antwerp is happy to support this exceptional initiative, ensuring its expansion."

With the support of Antwerp, APOPO will have the capacity to continue to train both our HeroRATs and Tanzanian trainers, as well as make it possible for the project to expand to Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the future – two of the most mine-affected countries in Africa.

After the visit to APOPO's headquarters and training facilities, Mrs Verhaert said, "the training center and the HeroRATs leave a great impression. Not only the detection rats themselves of course, but also their trainers and all the people who work here. Time and again, I'm surprised about the surefire way in which the animals and their trainers work together, how quickly these rats can be trained, and how multifunctional they are."

APOPO is extremely grateful for the Province of Antwerp's support and belief in our efforts. Karibuni tena! (Welcome back!)





## HeroRATs flood the media following AFP visit

In November, news about our [HeroRATs](#) flooded media outlets all over the world! This newfound interest came following a visit from a media crew from Agence France-Presse (AFP), a French news agency. The team of video-journalist William Davies, reporter Otto Bakano, and photographer Yasuyoshi Chiba, were in Tanzania to cover the 2010 election in October – and couldn't miss a side-trip to our headquarters in Morogoro to see our heroes in action! They toured APOPO's headquarters and training facilities, speaking with our HeroRAT trainers and staff, CEO Christophe Cox, and Founder, Bart Weetjens.

The stories hit the news circuits on November 7<sup>th</sup> and spread like wildfire! Otto's article, [Sniffer 'hero rats' saving lives in minefields and lab](#) quickly found itself published in various print and online news sources around the world. On Yahoo! News videos, Will's news story, [Tanzania rats sniff out mines](#), was the most watched news piece and received over 200,000 views in only two days! And a collection of [Yasuyoshi's beautiful photos](#) of our heroes are featured in an online gallery on the website of The Telegraph (UK).

HeroRAT trainer, Abdullah Mchomvu, who has been with us since 2002, told Otto "This work is not easy...you have to be patient. Sometimes I get frustrated, but then again I tell myself these are animals...[and] this work saves lives." Bart Weetjens also spoke about the difficulties in promoting our work in an anti-rodent society. "Rats absolutely have an image problem. People don't like them and that is one of our biggest struggles... we are trying to change that perception. Rats are very sociable, very intelligent highly-likeable creatures."

It appears that the recent media attention has helped change a few people's opinions about rats! In the two weeks following the publication of these stories, we were overwhelmed with support and welcomed over 100 new [HeroRAT adopters](#) from all over the globe. We are thrilled that the stories about our HeroRATs moved so many people to help our cause.

APOPO would like to send a hero-sized thank you to the AFP crew, for helping us to spread the word about the great work our HeroRATs are doing to help save lives and limbs!

## Reflections on working in Mozambique's minefields

APOPO welcomes back Tanzanian HeroRAT trainer Heri Mgode, who has just returned from working in the [Gaza Province](#) in [Mozambique](#) for the past six months. Heri and his training partner, Senga, were the winners of the Best Trainers award for 2009.

While in Mozambique, Heri worked with our [Mozambique Mine Action team](#) and our HeroRATs, including Edward the HeroRAT, who Heri trained from socialization through to Edward's deployment to Mozambique. It was certainly a happy reunion as Heri was able to see how his time and efforts training Edward were being put to use in the real minefields.



However, working in Mozambique is certainly not a six-month holiday for our Tanzanian staff. Heri spoke of a variety of challenges including a lack of communication with friends and family, especially when based in remote areas, as well as tough living and working conditions because of the extreme heat and winds. Although Heri learned some Portuguese while there, he found it difficult at times to communicate with locals in some of the rural areas APOPO operates in – where local dialects are spoken rather than Portuguese.

Despite the challenges and some initial fears, Heri said “I enjoyed working there, but it is a very serious job. If you are not well-equipped with proper safety procedures and protocols, then problems can happen. But good organization with good procedures can prevent these accidents.”

APOPO thanks Heri for his contribution and efforts in Mozambique, working with our HeroRATs to help ensure a safer Gaza Province that is free of the impact of landmines by the 2014 deadline.



### **HERORATS FOR THE HOLIDAYS!**

Looking for a great alternative gift this holiday season? Surprise your friends and family with a [HeroRAT](#) for the holidays! Here are the top three reasons to adopt one of our heroes:

1. It's a fun, creative and unique gift, that has a lasting impact.
2. Your lucky gift recipient will receive a certificate of adoption, an introductory letter from the chosen HeroRAT, and regular updates on their rat's progress!
3. It's only 5 euros a month (roughly \$7) - a small amount that will be a big help to us in our efforts to sniff out more landmines and curb the spread of TB.

Your contributions go towards the training, vet check-ups, housing, food and loving-care our HeroRATs receive. [Click here](#) for more information on giving the gift of a HeroRAT, or feel free to send us an email at [herorats@herorat.org](mailto:herorats@herorat.org).

**[HeroRAT Holiday Adoption Deadline:](#)**

---

All holiday gift adoptions must reach the HeroRAT team by December 18 to ensure delivery via email before December 25, so please get them in early! Visit our [Adopt-a-Rat](#) page to choose a rat to support, and follow the payment steps via PayPal.

Make sure you [email HeroRATs](#) to let us know: 1) your name, 2) the rat you adopted, 3) full name of the lucky gift recipient of the HeroRAT adoption (for their certificate), and 4) the email address to send the adoption materials to.

**Please note:** we are not able to send adoption materials on a specified date, but they will be sent shortly after the adoption payment has been processed (please allow one week).

## HeroRATs will be at Alternative Gift Fairs in the USA

### 8th Annual Happy Hour Alternative Gift Fair

Arlington, Virginia, USA

When: Thursday, December 9, from 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Where: Hunan Number One Restaurant, 3033 Wilson Blvd

Check out the [AGGW website](#) for more info & other events in your area.

### Swarthmore Presbyterian Church Alternative Christmas Shop

Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, USA

When: Sundays, December 5, 12, 19, from 11:30 am

Where: Swarthmore Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall, 727 Harvard Ave

Email orders also accepted, visit the [Alternative Christmas Shop](#) online for more info.

APOPO and the HeroRATs are honored to be featured among the many wonderful projects, that offer an alternative approach to holiday shopping with some unique gift ideas.



Thank you for your support of our heroes. We wish everyone a very safe & happy lead-up to the festive season!

Warm regards,

The HeroRAT team

<http://www.herorat.org>

<http://twitter.com/HeroRATs>

<http://www.facebook.com/herorAT>

---



APOPO-SUA, PO Box 3078, Morogoro, Tanzania

HeroRAT is a campaign of APOPO



For more information please see [www.herorat.org](http://www.herorat.org) or contact us at [herorats@herorat.org](mailto:herorats@herorat.org)

This email was sent to **lesley@ukpouchies.co.uk**. To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

[manage](#) your preferences | [opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

Network  for Good.  
EmailNow powered by Emma

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.  
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.