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NEWSLETTER

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HERORATS SAVE LIVES AND LIMBS

OCTOBER 2010

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Latest results from the field and TB lab

It has been a productive year for APOPO's HeroRAT teams so far. Our [Mine Action team](#) in Mozambique continues to reduce the impact of landmines in the Gaza Province. Since the start of our operations, we have helped to return 1,951,917 square meters of land to the population in Mozambique! In 2010 alone, our HeroRAT team has found 817 mines, 350 unexploded ordnance, and 6,216 small arms and ammunitions.

At our [Tuberculosis \(TB\) detection center](#) in September, our HeroRAT team discovered a total of 69 TB-positive patients, bringing our total to over 1,500 patients that were previously missed by microscopy at local hospitals. In a country where about half of all active TB cases go undetected, these findings make a huge difference in reducing the spread of this deadly disease. For every patient with active TB that our HeroRATs help diagnose, we help prevent an additional 10-15 people from contracting it annually!

We are extremely proud of both of our HeroRAT teams in Mozambique and Tanzania for their life saving contributions to the communities we serve. Keep up the great work!

Heading off to Mozambique

In the next few weeks, one of our experienced Tanzanian trainers, Shafii, will embark on his first humanitarian demining assignment to the [Gaza Province](#) in [Mozambique](#). While there, he will be working with our HeroRATs, including some of those he trained from socialization right through to their internal accreditation in Tanzania. He will also be exchanging some valuable skills with his colleagues in our Mozambique Mine Action team.

Before Shafii can enter the real minefield as an official humanitarian deminer, he will first need to pass an accreditation test with the National Institute of Demining (IND) in Mozambique. Although Shafii went to Mozambique in 2006 with APOPO, he was primarily involved with training and did not get to experience working with the HeroRATs in the minefields.

This time around, he is very excited for the chance to put all his hard work training mine detection HeroRATs into practice! “I want to go to Mozambique so that I can get an experience in the real landmine field...in the real landmine field, I will be a full trainer.” For our Tanzanian staff, this is an incredible opportunity to see first-hand how important their everyday work at our training base is and the benefits it brings to mine-affected areas.

In order to prepare himself for the challenges ahead, Shafii has been trying to learn a bit of Portuguese, the language spoken in Mozambique, as well as talking with other trainers who have recently returned from six months working in our Mine Action Program.

Shafii will not be making the journey alone. He will be travelling with eight new HeroRAT graduates including his very own rat, Santola. The new recruits will also have to pass an accreditation test in Mozambique, in order to be recognized as official MDRs (Mine Detection Rats).

Shafii enjoys working with the rats and is looking forward to seeing them in action. “I am trusting the rats. I believe they are doing a good job.”

We wish Shafii and his eight furry colleagues a safe journey!



HeroRAT project now featured on Soential.org

APOPO and our HeroRATs are the newest project featured on [Soential](#), a Swiss social enterprise and platform that aspires to connect social entrepreneurs with potential social investors and donors. With a clear focus on social impact, “Soential aims to provide investors and donors with an opportunity to empower innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to society’s problems.”

The first project we are featuring in the Soential marketplace will fund

the training of five young landmine detection HeroRATs. Not only will these funds prepare five HeroRATs to enter the real minefields to help save lives and limbs, but they also represent the potential for long-lasting socio-economic benefits to the communities in which these heroes will be deployed.

APOPO is delighted to partner with Socential, in working towards empowering social entrepreneurs to create lasting change through their innovative solutions to social problems facing the world today. A huge thanks to all of the team at Socential, and especially to Naoko Felder-Kuzu for her help and support in connecting APOPO's HeroRATs with the Socential community.

For more information about the HeroRAT project on Socential, and the impact these five HeroRATs can have, please look at the full project listing on the Socential website [here](#). You can also check out www.socential.org to learn more about the work Socential is doing.

Back to school at HeroRAT Headquarters

We are proud to announce APOPO is now offering free English language classes to our staff at our Tanzanian headquarters for those interested in learning a new language or brushing up on old skills. A basic knowledge of the English language is essential for our trainers who are deployed to mine action programs abroad, as it helps makes the transition into a new country easier where the native language is not Swahili.

The English language program has been set up by our Communications Coordinator, Felicia Byrne, who prepared an optional placement test to separate the staff into three levels: Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced. With the help of a local language teacher, Fred Chiwanga, the three classes have now been running for one month and cover a range of topics such as pronunciation, conversation skills, reading, and grammar.

So far, the response has been very positive with some of our staff choosing to attend two classes in one day! It has been wonderful to see the staff's excitement and enthusiasm for learning. We look forward to watching (and hearing!) their skills develop over the coming months.





Awareness-raising from afar

Denise Chorley and the education team at [Knowsley Safari Park](#) in the United Kingdom came up with a unique way to share our HeroRATs' work with the public, while raising important funds at the same time. In August, the team at Knowsley put on daily demonstrations to show their visitors how amazing African giant pouched rats are. They began initial preparations for these demos back in September of 2009, when they started training their very own rat, Jake!

Throughout their education program, each afternoon the team introduced Jake and talked about how our HeroRATs use their sense of smell to locate landmines. The team then set up a table with 20 identical pots in a row, three of which contained a piece of avocado (Jake's favorite!) and at the end of the row was a pot with a fake landmine around it to remind people about the work of our HeroRATs.

Next, it was Jake's time to shine: he wowed the audience by quickly and accurately locating his avocado treats as he ran along the table smelling each of the pots. The audience was able to have a close-up encounter with Jake, learn about the sociability of the species, and see first-hand how amazing the African giant pouched rat's sense of smell is! Jake and the education team even managed to raise over £480 for our HeroRATs!

A huge thanks to the team at Knowsley Safari Park for helping us to share the amazing sniffing skills of pouched rats, while educating the public about HeroRATs' life-saving work.

Visit the [Knowsley Safari Park website](#) for more information about their programs and upcoming attractions.

Dont forget! The holidays are just around the corner. Our HeroRATs make great presents through our Adopt-A-Rat program. For more information please go [here](#).

As always, many thanks for your continued support of APOPO and our HeroRATs!

Warm regards,

The HeroRATs Team

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HeroRAT is a campaign of APOPO



For more information please see www.herorat.org or contact us at herorats@herorat.org

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