



February 2010 Newsletter

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Introduction

Hello friends and supporters,

This year is off to a great start for APOPO, and we hope the same for you.

We have received approval from the Belgian Ministry of Development Co-operation to become an official Non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

APOPO was present at the Cartagena Summit on a Mine Free World and had the opportunity to discuss the issues at hand with the larger demining community, and lay groundwork for future collaboration.

Our work will be featured in the BBC series "Alvin's Guide to Good Business" that is airing each weekend between now and the Skoll World Forum in April. Our segment will air next month on March 6 and 7, and we will keep you posted as more information becomes available.

APOPO's pioneering Rat Detection Technology is being replicated in

Colombia, while the stories you share with us inspire us onward. In this issue, we share one of these stories with you.

Thank you for your support and enthusiasm. Together we are saving lives and we look forward to sharing our work with you.

With best wishes,

The APOPO team

APOPO becomes an official Belgian NGO

APOPO is pleased to announce that the Belgian Ministry of Development Co-operation officially approved APOPO as a Belgium Non-Governmental Organization or NGO. (We were previously categorized as a registered non-profit organization). APOPO received the official designation after a long application process whereby APOPO was evaluated based on multiple standards. In order to get this approval, APOPO had to show sound leadership and governance, efficiency of implementation, as well as our technological strengths and sound financial planning. Furthermore, we were asked to prove our social and economic impact with respect for the values of gender equality and environmental stewardship.

We are proud to assist the Belgian Ministry of Development Co-operation to reach its goals of strengthening basic healthcare, building local capacity, improving access to infrastructure and agricultural land, and conflict-resolution and society building. This recognition will lend us greater global credibility, and will open doors to co-finance funding channels.

APOPO participated in The Cartagena Summit on a Mine Free World

One-hundred-twenty-seven (127) States took part in the Summit with over 40 represented at a high political level. In total over 1,000 delegates took part in what stands as one of the largest gatherings ever of States and activists dedicated to ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium, Honorary President of APOPO, and APOPO Founder, Bart Weetjens, were both in attendance.

Finalizing five days of work of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Cartagena Action Plan has been adopted by the international community. “Our aim is to rid the world of anti-personnel mines,” said the Cartagena Summit President, Ambassador Susan Eckley of Norway. Four States - Albania, Greece, Rwanda, and Zambia - announced that they have completed clearance of all known mined areas, thereby fulfilling their Convention obligations. For APOPO this Summit was a great networking opportunity with Mine Action Centers, like the Colombian Presidential Program Against Landmines and the Thai Mine Action Center, with NGO’s that plan to use HeroRATS services in the future, and with with the international donor community in view of the larger work at hand.

APOPO to be featured in a new 8-part world series on BBC news, March 6 & 7, 2010

BBC World News will be launching a new 8-part series on social entrepreneurs later this month called, “Alvin’s Guide to Good Business.” Alvin Hall, a business veteran with 25 years experience on Wall Street, travels the world meeting social entrepreneurs, business leaders more interested in doing good than making money, to learn and advise them on how to make their enterprises even more effective.

APOPO will be featured on their fourth segment of the series, to be run on March 6, 2010 at 2:30 and 8:30 (GMT) and again on March 7, 2010 at 14:30 and 21:30 (GMT). The program will also be online and free to stream at those times at www.rockhopper.tv. Please join us there and tell your friends! You can view the trailer [here](#).

APOPO Technology Being Replicated in Colombia

The latest issue of The Journal of ERW and Mine Action (Issue 13.3), covered the progress of an interdisciplinary research group, INVESTUD of the Colombian National Police, that has been exploring if white Wistar rats are capable of detecting explosives in an open field. Although the research project has yet to test their rats' abilities in the real minefield they are very positive about their potential.

APOPO is honored to have our technology replicated and stands ready to

assist INVESTUD in their work. The ultimate goal of any social enterprise is to create large-scale positive social impact. Replication is both a testament to the technology and a vessel to reach that scale of impact. APOPO wishes the research project INVESTUD all success and welcomes collaboration.

Inspiration from the field comes full circle

The following is a letter from one of our supporters that warmed our hearts and encourages us on in our work. We wanted to share it here, as it gets at the heart of what we do and how we are each a part of this work.

Dear Mr Weetjens,

I hope you are well. My name is Louise, I am a teacher at a British primary school in Stoke On Trent England, I teach difficult and challenging children from England but also other countries such as Afghanistan and Angola, these children have hard lives but they have been very touched by your work and what you have done, and are trying to do, to help their home countries. So much so that they are intending to raise money to adopt a rat and support your work. I realize you must get lots of much more important e-mails than this, from people who can give you lots more help, but I really don't think you will ever get one with more joy and enthusiasm than this one – you have the support and respect of children who have for a very longtime existed rather than lived and who would rather die than admit that they had feelings – but you have inspired them and made them realise they can help to change things and make the world better, they also have a much healthier respect for animals. We all wish you well and hope your organisation continues its successes.

Kind Regards,

Louise Grimley and Class 5/6G Summerbank

Support APOPO's Work

APOPO's staff and HeroRATs are working hard to save lives and limbs from disaster and disease. For information about the work we are doing, or to contribute to the HeroRATs cause, please visit www.herorat.org.