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TRAINING RATS TO SAVE HUMAN



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Introduction

Dear friends and supporters,

Greetings from Tanzania, where the rainy season is almost upon us! Hopefully this update finds you in your part of the world. This weekend, check out the HeroRATs in action on BBC World News Alvin's Guide to Good Business, airing March 6 and 7 (see times below).

APOPO reached an exciting milestone in February: the ten year anniversary of our operations commencing in Tanzania! Special guests, staff and family shared a wonderful evening of celebration reflecting on how far we've come since those early days.

In other news, it has been a busy month here at APOPO headquarters, with the introduction of some expertise and equipment! We welcomed on board Dimitri Geelhand from Belgium, who will spend months with APOPO, researching our breeding program and looking at ways to maximize its potential. APOPO's Remote Explosive Scent Tracing (REST) program and resident analytical chemist Neg Beyene welcomed new scientific equipment, which will aid in their work to analyze explosive v

This edition of the newsletter features a profile of one of our HeroRAT trainers, Miraji, who has worked with APOPO for a number of years. We also pay tribute to Harold Mangesho, a dear friend and employee of APOPO who sadly passed away recently. Our two newest HeroRAT pups have been named in his honor, and will continue Harold's great work.

Thank you for your ongoing support of APOPO's work!

With warm wishes,

The APOPO team

HeroRATs take the stage: BBC segment March 6 & 7

APOPO is featured in the fourth segment of BBC World News series, Alvin's Guide to Good Business. Business veteran Alvin Hall visits APOPO's Center of Excellence in Tanzania, and our operational base in Mozambique, and shares his advice with APOPO Founder Bart Weetjens and CEO Christophe Cox.

Don't forget to put the dates in your calendar! The APOPO segment airs on:

*** March 6, 2010 at 2:30 am and 8:30 am (GMT)**

*** March 7, 2010 at 14:30 pm and 21:30 pm (GMT)**

The program will be available online [here](#) and free to stream as of Friday March 5, 2010. Please join us there and tell your friends!



APOPO Celebrates Ten Years in Tanzania!

APOPO recently passed an exciting milestone: the ten year anniversary of operations in Tanzania! Celebrations were held at the nearby Magadu Officers' Club on Friday 19 February, with approximately 120 in attendance. Special guests included TPDF-APOPO Coordinator, General Charles Muzanila, and his wife Professor Yacinta Muzanila, and APOPO's Chairman of the Board, Professor Mic Billet.

The evening began with a presentation from APOPO's CEO, Christophe Cox, who reflected on our first ten years in Tanzania and how far we've come. This was followed by speeches from our special guests, and the announcements of our annual staff awards. The deserving winners were:

- Best Worker: Mark Shukuru, Field Supervisor
- Best Caretaker: Lucy Bashekanako "Mama Lucy"
- Best Trainers: Senga Sagan'ha and Heri Mgode
- Best TB Worker: Haruni Ramadhani
- Best Field Worker: Juma Amri
- Ten Year Service Awards: Koba Akilimari, Asnathi Mtitu, Alex Iyungu, Shirima Vendelin, Abu

Chongolre, Mkumbo Jared, and Alfani Sudi

Entertainment throughout the night included a performance from a traditional dance group, acrobatic displays, and reggae renditions from one of our trainers, Niko, backed up by APOPO caretaker Albert. Then in true Tanzanian style, the team danced non-stop until the early hours of the morning!

It was a great opportunity to celebrate together the achievements of APOPO's staff and HeroRATs over the past ten years...while looking ahead to all the possibilities of rat detection technology in the future. APOPO sends out a massive thanks to everyone who has supported us in reaching this important milestone!

REST program receives new mass spectrometer



APOPO's Remote Explosive Scent Tracing (REST) program and resident analytical chemist Negussie Beyene are excited to receive new instruments (headspace sampler and mass spectrometric detector) to aide in their work to analyze explosive vapors. Previously, it used to take them a full working day to extract explosive compounds from contaminated soils to be ready for analysis by the gas chromatograph. Now, the headspace sampler can take vapor samples directly from the soil (without any solvent extraction, purification and concentration steps) within few minutes and transfer it directly to the gas

chromatograph. This is now coupled with a much better detector that gives the profile of most volatile compounds present in the soil samples.

The new set up avoids all the painstaking extraction steps for Negussie and Alex Iyungu, our REST lab technician. Our partner in the REST project, the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), covered the expense for these machines. It is highly anticipated that acquisition of these modern instruments will greatly enhance the contribution of APOPO's analytical chemistry laboratory towards making REST operational.

Belgian breeding expert

In February, APOPO welcomed the arrival of a new volunteer researcher, Dimitri Geelhand from Belgium. Dimitri has completed a Masters in Evolutionary and Behavioral Biology at the University of Antwerp. His thesis involved a study of the small mammals inhabiting Saadani National Park, in the coastal region of Tanzania. Dimitri became familiar with APOPO's work during time spent at the Pest Management Centre of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in 2008. He has also spent time working as a research assistant for a project on sea turtles in Costa Rica.



Dimitri's initial interest in APOPO's rats led to him offering his valuable time and skills in a research capacity, and we are very excited to have him on board. He will be in Morogoro until June, observing our HeroRATs in their breeding enclosures and gathering information about our breeding program. Dimitri will also conduct some research experiments; looking into possible areas of improvement and suggesting ways we can get the most out of our breeding program. Welcome to the team, Dimitri, and we look forward to your input!

Meet Miraji



Miraji started with APOPO in 2005 as a trainer, but received his first contract with us in 2002 as a casual worker. He helped to build the training field we still use today and laid out the boxes in which our rats train. Prior to starting with us, Miraji was a carpenter who built roofs, houses, furniture, and fences. He currently trains a number of rats with his training partner, Linda, including: Munah, Sasha, Raula, Cooper, Stanley, Harvey, Survivor I, Sniffles, Mtarami, Letti, and Barker.

Miraji was born in the Mgeta region, but has spent most of his life in a nearby village called Magadu. He has a wife, Zaituni, and three children: Saidi, Hassani, and Zuhura. Miraji raises chickens and learns a lot about raising animals here at APOPO, including the feeding and treatment necessary to bring up strong rats. He uses this knowledge to raise good chickens near his home and earns a bit of income from the venture as well.

On the weekend, Miraji stays home and teaches his children. He works with them after school as well, helping with their homework and trying to encourage them to learn in different ways. In the future, Miraji would love to help kids learn more by becoming a teacher. He also helps his neighbors and friends with repairs on their chairs and tables, and enjoys a good motor bike ride as well.

Miraji hopes that more people here in Tanzania will find out about APOPO's work. He is glad that the local news agencies are starting to cover our story more.

In Memory and Honor of Harold Mangesho



At the beginning of this year, we lost a dear friend to the APOPO family, Mr. Harold Mangesho. He was a born leader and someone you could never forget.

A very kind-hearted man, Harold came from the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, from a long line of farmers and mechanics. He kept many animals and on the weekends enjoyed lively dancing, working on cars, walking, and watching football. A loving husband and father, Harold put those around him at ease and made things happen.

He worked at APOPO for three years, acting as the "point man" for logistics, driving, mechanics, and our TB detection center. CEO Christophe Cox noted, "we will miss his ever-positive attitude and generous contributions to our

work."

On January 29, there was a memorial service held in Harold's hometown of Moshi, Tanzania, where he was laid to rest. Harold is survived by his wife, Rose, and his three children: Doreen, Judith and Robert, who helped to nurse him in his final days. He will be greatly missed by family, friends and all of us at APOPO.

In his memory we have named our two newest HeroRAT pups, Harold and Mangesho. They will continue Harold's great work and remind us every day of his unshakable spirit and dedication.

Support APOPO's Work

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

We are deeply grateful for your support. If you have any comments or suggestions about the newsletter and how we can improve they are most welcome. Please send to herorats@herorat.org. Thank you!

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