

Project Snapshot:

APOPO

Location: Morogoro, Tanzania

Website: www.apopo.org

Partner: Ashoka

Partner Website: www.ashoka.org

Summary of project:

APOPO uses African giant pouched rats to provide cheap, reliable, and locally manageable solutions to save lives around the world. APOPO trains these "HeroRats" to use their incredible sense of smell to detect landmines and Tuberculosis.

Wars around the world have resulted in a deadly legacy of millions of landmines that claim between 10 and 20 thousand lives each year. In Africa, landmines kill, injure and disable over 12,000 people per year.

Expert de-miners use metal detectors to detect and remove landmines. Highly complex technology such as ground-penetrating radar or airborne infrared detection would be needed, but African countries lack the resources to pay for such technologies or the experts to use them. APOPO discovered that HeroRats could be trained to detect mines at very little cost. They are able to work much more efficiently: a rat scans 100 square meters in twenty minutes, which would take a deminer 2 full days. Since they are small, their body weight does not set off the mines. HeroRats will be deployed to enable displaced people to return to their villages, borders to open again to connect communities on both sides, and save thousands of lives.

Recently, APOPO has discovered that the HeroRats can also use their powerful sense of smell to detect the first signs of Tuberculosis (TB). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the combination of TB and HIV result in the highest casualty rate per capita, worldwide. Left untreated, a person with active TB will infect on average 10 to 15 persons a year. TB is hard to detect, with 40% of cases not discovered or treated, making TB a quickly spreading disease. The main reason for TB's low detection is the lack of cheap and reliable detection tools. HeroRats are cheap, reliable, and can detect TB early, which can help curb the spread of this deadly disease.

Funds for the project:

\$1 USD provides TB screening for one person.

\$7 USD provides landmine detection training of one Hero Rat for one month.

\$10,000 allows HeroRats to clear one soccer field sized patch of land of landmines.

"Do your little bit of good where you are; its those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." *Desmond Tutu*



Land Mine and TB Info:

1249 Estimated annual casualties from landmines in Africa (Landmine Monitor 2006)

4800 Deaths a day from TB in 2007 (*World Health Organization*)

200 Million people, 1/3 of the world's population, are infected with the TB bacilli (*World Health Organization*)

