International Geneva Directory of Geneva Global Health Actors Apopo Foundation | APOPO

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BACKGROUND AND MISSION

APOPO is a social enterprise that researches, develops and implements detection rats technology for humanitarian purposes such as Mine Action and Tuberculosis detection. APOPO is a Belgian NGO that the Belgian Directorate for International Co-operation (DGIS) provided the initial financial support to develop the concept in November 1997. APOPO vzw was registered under the Belgian law as a non-commercial agency, and started its first research in early 1998. Later, APOPO became registered as a Belgian NGO before expanding to become a global NGO in 2017.

APOPO has its operational headquarters in Tanzania, with a breeding, training and R&D center and a TB research and detection center. APOPO is detecting landmines in Angola and Cambodia and has a presence in Zimbabwe and Colombia. And we help find tuberculosis alongside over 100 public clinics in Tanzania, Mozambique and Ethiopia. In Thailand, APOPO was surveying huge areas of land, accurately determining the extent of mine contamination. APOPO was also working in Vietnam and Lao PDR where we were detecting Unexploded Ordnances (UXO), as well as helping the national authorities to build capacity to handle their explosive remnants of war (ERW) problem.

AREAS OF INTEREST

- Landmines removal
- Tubercolosis detection
- Disabled people's rights and health

HEALTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

HeroRATs sniff out the chemical compounds of TNT (explosive) found in landmines and other explosive remnants of war. They ignore scrap metal making them much faster at detecting landmines than metal detectors. The APOPO tuberculosis detection rats check TB samples collected from local clinics. Any they indicate as suspect are reconfirmed by WHO endorsed methods. APOPO's TB detection rats are a diagnostic tool under ongoing research and development. To date, the rats have a higher diagnostic sensitivity (probability of correctly identifying a person with TB) than conventional microscopy. However, the diagnostic specificity (probability of correctly identifying a person without TB) of the rats remains to be improved. The rats are also relatively low cost and much faster than conventional diagnostic methods: One TB detection rat screens 100 samples in 20 minutes. This would take a lab technician using conventional microscopy up to four days.

Detection of landmines is however a complicated, dangerous, costly, and time-consuming process and many developing countries lack the resources to properly commit to the task. Meanwhile the affected communities have little choice but to live on or nearby landmine contaminated land. APOPO provides a sustainable, locally sourced and cost-effective solution for landmine detection. All of APOPO's operations are in limited resources settings in countries which otherwise remain dependent on expensive imported know-how. APOPO trains local communities on its Detection Rat Technology, empowering them to tackle mine detection tasks more independently and at lower costs. Mine detection rats can quickly and accurately detect landmines, significantly speeding up mine clearance efforts and allowing communities to once again use their land productively.

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

APOPO is structured with a management team and a board. 15 people are in the management team, with Christophe Cox as CEO and Esther Haalboom as the executive secretary. Anna Bouchier is the Swiss director. The board is chaired by Professor Herwig Leirs and 12 people are in it. On March 5th 2015, APOPO opened the APOPO Foundation in Geneva, placing APOPO at the center of International Demining efforts and World Health. The APOPO Foundation aims to support the organizations' overall global activities by strengthening its network and financial resources.

FUNDING SOURCES AND BUDGET

Total income in 2018 was nearly € 4.500.000, mostly from public fundraising and foundation's grants, while only 800.000 coming directly from the government. About 20% was spent on marketing, fundraising and administration, 5% on R&D and training, 45% on land mines project in many countries and the remaining part for the TB project.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications are available at https://www.apopo.org/en/who-we-are/publications

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