



WOFIRE NEWS

Saving Lives • Protecting the Environment • Restoring Dignity

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Working on Fire



Working on Fire - WOF TV News Channel



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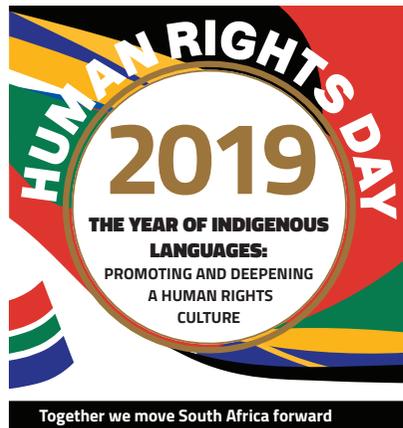
Making a Difference on Human Rights Day

In the Western Cape, the Vrolijkheid Team showed how Working on Fire remains committed to 'Making a Difference' through helping to improve the lives of the individuals and communities served by the programme.

As part of their Human Rights Day contributions, the Vrolijkheid Team came to the assistance of the Dagbreek Primary School and repainted 16 classrooms ahead of the new school term in April.

They used this project as an opportunity to not only make a difference to the school by repainting the classrooms and cleaning up around the school, but to also recognise and acknowledge the children's right to a free and safe learning environment.

A huge thank-you to Dagbreek Primary School for allowing us to give back in a small way. Thank you also to AH Marais, Build It and Robertson Verwe for donating the painting materials in aid of such a good cause. (the Vrolijkheid Team is in partnership with the Greater Cederberg Fire Protection Association)



On 21 March, South Africa celebrated Human Rights Day under the theme, "The Year of Indigenous Languages: Promoting and Deepening a Human Rights Culture".

Our Social Development Department is hosting human rights workshops at bases across the country to ensure that our participants understand their rights and the responsibilities that come with these rights.

Working on Fire supports the Good Green Deeds Programme



Working on Fire was on hand to support the Department of Environmental Affairs when President Cyril Ramaphosa launched the Good Green Deeds Programme in Mdantsane, Eastern Cape, on 8 March 2019.

The Good Green Deeds programme is a groundbreaking environmental awareness programme that seeks to mobilise all sectors in South Africa to become more environmentally conscious. The programme aims to create a positive drive towards a clean South Africa free of litter and illegal dumping.

As part of the launch, the President planted trees in one of the parks in Mdantsane. The President said that by performing just one Good Green Deed a day, one can make a huge difference, whether it is in recycling waste or conducting a clean-up activity in one's community.

Prior to the Good Green Deeds Programme launch, the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Nomvula Mokonyane, together with Working on Fire participants, the mayor of Buffalo City, members of the Eastern Cape Provincial Executive Committee and community members, conducted a beach clean-up campaign.

Written by Editorial team



WOF firefighters with President Cyril Ramaphosa and Minister of Environmental Affairs, Nomvula Mokonyane at launch and beach clean-up during Good Green Deeds launch.

The 2018-19 financial year, which has just come to an end, has been in many aspects a very good year for Working on Fire as we continued to stabilise our operations.

We had a moderate winter fire season and our participants played a significant role in providing a much-needed firefighting and fire prevention service to landowners through the season.

The summer fire season in the Western Cape continued to challenge landowners and fire authorities throughout the province. We are proud of the work our firefighters did in providing critical firefighting resources on the ground as well as aerial support.

And then we had the disastrous Garden Route fires in October 2018 and the Overberg fires in January 2019, where our firefighting resources were once again instrumental in bringing these fires under control.

We were particularly moved by the support the communities in the Overberg showed towards our firefighters when they came out in their numbers to bid farewell to our teams who were deployed there for more than two weeks.

On a sad note, we lost one of our most experienced and loved

Communique from the Executive Committee (EXCO)



Executive Committee (front, l-t): Shane Christian, National General Manager; Luthfia Cader, Executive: Communications; Jacob Singo, Executive: OHS; Trevor Abrahams, MD; Natalie Sauls, Executive: HCM; Ancil Lee, Executive: IT. Back, l-r: Tony Mancos, Risk Manager; Piet van der Merwe, Executive: Operations; and Sandiso Ntshoni, Financial Manager. Photo inset: Fatima Gilbert

pilots, Nico Heyns, during firefighting operations in the Western Cape.

As we end the fifth year of our contract to implement the Working on

Fire programme, we have largely been able to deliver on the key Department of Environmental Affairs' deliverables in terms of this contract.

Last year marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Working on Fire programme, which was launched in September 2003 as part of the South African government's initiative to create jobs and to alleviate poverty.

During the latter part of 2018, we celebrated the remarkable success of WOF, one of the South African government's most successful Expanded Public Works Programmes, with activities at provincial and base levels as well as with partners and stakeholders.

In February this year, the entire management team of Working on Fire got together in Mbombela, Mpumalanga, to chart a new vision for the programme to become 'the leading global integrated fire management agency, making a sustainable difference in our environment and people's lives'.

We have already started to roll out provincial and departmental workshops to discuss this new vision and this process will be concluded shortly.

A huge thank-you to all our firefighters, management, partners and stakeholders for their support throughout these past 12 months.



Normandien firefighters and school learners with their trophies

Normandien Team celebrates Human Rights Month with learners

The Normandien Team coordinated a Human Rights Art Competition for school learners at Chelmsford Primary School to mark Human Rights Day. The event was used as an opportunity to educate learners more about the sacrifices made during the struggle for the attainment of democracy in South Africa. Ncandu Combined, Haig Combined, SC Valdar and Chelmsford Primary School learners participated in the competition.

Normandien Type 1 Crew Leader Deneesh Premnath says, "Our objective was to see how learners express themselves about Human Rights Day by drawing.

"The learners and teachers appreciated this initiative, which encouraged learners to learn more about South Africa history, not just for school purposes, but also for competitions like these that make educating yourself fun."

First place went to Chelmsford Primary, second to Haig Combined and third place was also awarded to Chelmsford Primary. Two participants from Normandien also received medals for drawings they created.

Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Human Rights Day celebrations in full swing



The Mamre Team painted posters for Human Rights Day that expressed what they view as their rights



To commemorate Human Rights Day, Wadela Team members spent time with the elderly and worked on the vegetable garden at the old age home

65 000 hectares burnt during summer fire season



The Limietberg Team on the fire line at the Franschhoek fires in February

As the 2018/19 summer fire season continues in the Western Cape, firefighters from the Department of Environmental Affairs' Working on Fire (WOF) programme and its aerial resources are supporting partners with firefighting efforts across the province.

Since the start of the summer fire season, over 1 200 firefighters, 11 spotter planes, eight Huey helicopters, four Air Tractor AT-802 fixed-wing bombers and the recently arrived UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, have assisted partners such

as the Provincial Disaster Management Centre, CapeNature, the Greater Overberg FPA and SANParks-Table Mountain National Park at 75 fires, including at Lion's Head, Van der Stel Pass/Overberg region, Ganzekraal, Wupperthal, Botrivier and Franschhoek. Even with our aircraft flying 956 hours battling these fires, 65 195 hectares of vegetation were burnt.

The 2018/19 summer fire season officially started on 1 December 2018 and normally continues to the end of April 2019. WOF has 700 firefighters stationed

at 27 bases in the province, 100 of whom are from the Free State. Five hundred more firefighters stationed across the country were placed on national standby to provide relief and assistance when needed. During the fire season, firefighting resources are provided to public and private landowners, fire protection associations and district and local fire authorities.



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Black Hawk bolsters Western Cape aerial firefighting resources



File image of the UH-60 Black Hawk

In an effort to strengthen the aerial firefighting capabilities supplied by the Western Cape Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC) in collaboration with the Working on Fire Programme (WOF), an additional resource in the form of a Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter arrived at the Stellenbosch airbase on 23 February 2019.

Leading Edge Aviation, the owner and operator of the Black Hawk, made the helicopter available to bolster aerial firefighting resources. The helicopter, capable of carrying a Bambi Bucket with 3 000 litres of water mixed with fire suppressant foam, will greatly enhance local aerial firefighting capacity and will be stationed in the Western Cape for the remainder of the 2018/19 summer fire season.

WOF Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, believes this joint venture is an excellent example of teamwork within the firefighting community. "Our end goal is to ensure reliable and efficient firefighting resources for firefighting fraternities," he explains. "The Black Hawk is a valuable addition to the 'toolbox' of resources available to an already successful firefighting team and will bolster our current aerial firefighting fleet of nine fixed-wing command and control spotter planes, eight Huey helicopters and four Air Tractor AT-802 fixed-wing water bombers."

The Black Hawk was utilised in the recent multi-day fires in the Overberg and Cape Winelands regions.



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Team gets learners ready for upcoming fire season



The Castello Team presenting tips on fire safety in the home for the learners. Picture by Castello Team BCR, Zukile Ndhlovu

The Castello Team conducted a fire awareness activity for Grade 3 learners at the Toeplug and Letshelemane Primary Schools. The team taught learners about fire safety in the home, warning them about the fire risks in the home such as unattended stoves and overloaded electrical wires.

Base Communications Representative, Zukile Ndhlovu, says the team did the awareness activity to prepare learners for the upcoming fire season. "We explained to the learners some of the things that can start a fire in their

homes and asked them to be vigilant and not have flammable material such as curtains hanging too close to stoves or blankets near a heater. Equipping learners with these safety tips will help prevent fires and reduce the number of fires this coming fire season," says Ndhlovu.

The team will continue to raise awareness in schools and communities in an effort to reduce fire risks and damage while also getting communities ready for the coming fire season.

Written by Editorial team

WOF equips stakeholders with fire suppression skills

The WOF firefighters in the Waterberg District in Limpopo are working around the clock to prepare landowners and farmers for the upcoming winter fire season.

Modimolle participants attended the Modimolle Wildlife and Agriculture Expo with the fire awareness team. Various stakeholders exhibited at the Expo, which was held at Castle De Wildt. WOF Community Fire Awareness Officer, Sello Matlhare, educated the stakeholders about the impact of wildfires.

"As we are the second response, we saw it beneficial to train our stakeholders in how to suppress wildfires. This will assist in preventing wildfires from spreading further or reducing the damage," says Letters Lehutso, Type 1 Crew Leader for the Modimolle Team.

WOF participants also did a demonstration of fire suppression followed by the practical session for the stakeholders.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer



The Modimolle Team training the Waterberg stakeholders in fire suppression

WOF Operational Managers upgrade driving skills

Wildfire firefighters do not battle flames only on smooth and even terrain. They fight fires against forest slopes and in rocky mountainous areas, overgrown veld and valleys. Working on Fire's firefighters are well trained to deal with all types of fires. But before anyone can put 'a beater to a flame', ground teams need to swiftly and safely reach the fire line - which can be a mission on its own.

The WOF Transport Department requires all its drivers to pass a Yellow Card Driver's course before they are allowed to go to a fire line. The course includes vehicle type ratings, fitness tests and theoretical and practical assessments. Additional 4x4 training is provided. While this was limited in the past to the drivers of Fire Trucks and High-Altitude Team (HAT) vehicles, this year, in line with the revised WOF Transport Basic Operating Procedures (BOPs), all WOF operational managers were required to pass the 4x4 Yellow Card Driver training to enable them to safely reach and support their teams during high-pressure operations.

During the week-long training, hosted by Kishugu Training in Nelspruit, attend-



The training included vehicle type ratings, fitness tests and theoretical and practical assessments

ees worked through accredited advanced 4x4 LDV training, fire line safety modules, practical water pump operations, hand signals, radio communications, fitness assessments, resource management and administration, fuel management and reporting.

"Our personnel operate in a high-risk environment. We need to ensure they have the skills and knowledge required to conduct their tasks as safely and effectively as possible," explains Amor Adlem, WOF Transport Manager. "We are confident that this training course will address these needs."

Western Cape drought relief project completed

The national drought relief project, initiated by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) to assist with the efforts towards water conservation in the Western Cape, has been completed.

The overall objective of the project was to clear 1 000 hectares of alien vegetation, predominately pine trees, by the end of March 2019. Since September 2018, participants of the High Altitude Teams (HAT) worked hard in steep conditions to ensure that their target of 1 000 hectares was met.

Innovative methods were used to clear mature pine trees in areas such as the Berg Dam, Theewaterskloof Dam and water catchment areas in Plettenberg Bay.



The drought relief projects aimed to clear 1 000 hectares of alien vegetation, predominately pine trees, by the end of March

Following a recruitment process that took place in October and November 2018, more than 230 new job opportunities were created for young men and women across the Western Cape. Under the leadership and supervision of WOF High Altitude Teams and CapeNature, they were trained as rope access technicians and chainsaw operators and will be operational throughout the course of the project.



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Nearly 80 Northern Region managers (GOMs, RMs and ARMs) will have attended this course by

the time the winter fire season starts.

Written by Zania Viljoen

Base partners reduce fuel load in the community



Firefighters slashing

As the winter fire season approaches, teams in KwaZulu-Natal are preparing by reducing the fuel load in communities. This activity is done by slashing, using a chainsaw or a rake hoe or constructing a firebreak.

The base managers of the Winterton and Bergville Teams worked together to reduce the risk of fires in their communities and make the town safer for the public to travel at night.

KZN Ground Operations Manager, Dave Kleyn, says, "We were really happy to see our partners finding cheaper solutions to ensure their communities are ready for the winter fire season." The teams also cleared fuels overgrown

bushes that were making it difficult for technicians to do monthly maintenance checks on water pumps.

"Criminals have also taken advantage of the overgrown bushes by mugging community members walking to or from work. This project will assist the public to feel safer when going back home in the late afternoon," adds Kleyn.

The teams started working at the Okhahlamba Local Municipality. Having two teams will ensure that they finish quickly whereafter they will move to the Bergville community.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Working on Fire encourages stewardship in Thoyana

Working on Fire recently participated in the Thoyana Stewardship Community Engagement Workshop. KwaZulu-Natal Community Fire Awareness Officer, Makhosi Dladla, facilitated the workshop.

"The aim of the workshop was to provide vital information to the community of Thoyana about laws and regulations of owning and maintaining land and their environment," says Dladla.

Also there to raise awareness in the community of the government departments and organisations that could assist them to empower themselves were representatives of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, who addressed the Veld and Forest Act, characteristics of veld fires, responsibility of landowners, the importance of firebreaks

and the advantages of joining a fire protection association. Other stakeholders present were Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife, SANBI, eThekweni Municipality, the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Mangosuthu University of Technology.

After all the presentations were completed community members were given the chance to comment and ask questions about the different departments and organisations. A community leader, Mr Blose, says, "I am thankful to community members who came and engaged all the various departments. We are appreciative of all the presentations as we see the need to engage further."



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer



Community members asking questions

Dagbreek Primary School repainted



The Vrolijkheid Team firefighters repainting the classrooms of the Dagbreek Primary School in Robertson

The Vrolijkheid Team recently assisted the Dagbreek Primary School by repainting 16 classrooms ahead of the new school term in April. The activity was the team's way of marking Human Rights Month.

"We used this project as an opportunity to not only give back to the school by repainting the classrooms and cleaning up around the school, but to recognise and acknowledge the fact that the children have a right to a free and safe learning environment. I'd like to thank Dagbreek Primary School for allowing us

to give back in a small way, and to thank AH Marais, Build It and Robertson Verwe for donating the painting materials in aid of such a good cause," says Benjamin Fielies, the GCFPA Base Manager.

This year, the country commemorated Human Rights Month under the theme: "The Year of Indigenous Languages: Promoting and Deepening a Human Rights Culture".



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

WOF Kids have fun and learn about human rights



WOF Kids were treated to a fun-filled educational outing in East London

Working on Fire in the Eastern Cape took a group of WOF participants' children to East London for an educational outing as part of the WOF Kids initiative. The outing included a visit to the museum, where the children saw historical items, and the zoo.

The Social Development Practitioner also educated the children about human rights in general, their personal rights and the responsibilities that come with having rights.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Human Rights Day Free State



The Vrede Team

21 March 1960 was the day when 69 Pan Africanist Congress sympathisers were shot and killed by apartheid police during an anti-pass laws protest outside a police station in the township of Sharpeville and four others were gunned down in Langa township in Cape Town.

This was the biggest single massacre at the time of people of colour during the apartheid regime. Human Rights Day has always been and will hopefully continue to be a day commemorated for the bravery and sacrifice of those killed in Sharpeville and elsewhere in the struggle against apartheid. Human Rights Day is thus both a celebration of the rights of all citizens and a remembrance of the suffering and sacrifice necessary to secure those rights.

Working on Fire teams across the Free State commemorated the day during the month of March through various events and activities.

The Vrede Team participated in a prayer against social ills event and also collected sanitary towels to be donated to girls in need.

The Zastron Team participated in the human rights march together with their community, to protest the spree of recent killings that occurred in the small town, while the Bloemfontein and Thaba N'chu teams visited old age homes close to their bases and spent the day with the elderly.



Wayne Mokhehi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

Commemorating fallen heroes

The Vaal Marina Team paid tribute to the fallen heroes and heroines of the Sharpeville massacre committed by apartheid security forces on 21 March 1960, the day we now remember as Human Rights Day.

Social Development Officer Sabelo Buthelezi initiated a visit for the firefighters to the memorial centre and gravesite of the victims of the 1960 tragedy to commemorate these fallen spirits.

He says it was fitting to visit the site during Human Rights Month to highlight the vital need for human rights and dignity.

They laid down their lives, says Buthelezi, so that we could have human rights as the generation of today.

Buthelezi says it was sad to learn about the brutality that led to the death of 69 people who were simply demanding not to carry the hated pass document anymore.

Buthelezi says the fallen heroes did not die in vain because we are



able to remember them in the commemorative programme of the day. The crew members would relay what they learned about the struggle and history of the Sharpeville massacre.

"We hope the site visits will inspire our team to do more in ensuring that human rights are observed and maintained at all times. We will also help old age centres and crèches to prepare vegetable gardens. Ensuring food security for others is a selfless act," he says.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer



The Elliot Team continues to make a difference

WOF participants live by the values

The Working on Fire Elliot Team continues to show commitment in giving back to the community and making a huge difference in people's lives.

They have a garden project where they plant vegetables that they always donate to nearby communities and schools.

Recently, the team donated spinach, pumpkin and potatoes to some of the community members, including 80-year-old Nelly Breakfast.

Breakfast says, "I really appreciated what these young men and woman have done for me as nowadays the cost of food is too high and

having people assisting you in with such donations makes a big difference and will save me a lot."

Crew Leader Gulwa Pumzo says that they are always happy to make a difference in the lives of people.

"Making a difference is one of our values and as the Elliot Team we live by and are committed to those values," says Pumzo.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Vrede Team do their part to uplift the community

Engaging in community service provides Working on Fire participants with the opportunity to become active members of their community and it has a lasting, positive impact on society at large. Community service or volunteerism enables them to acquire life skills and knowledge, as well as provide a service to those who need it most.

The Vrede Team recently identified Poppy Twala as an elderly community member in need of assistance, as she can no longer provide for herself and do basic tasks around her home. The team collected money among themselves and purchased groceries and a pair of shoes for Mrs Twala. They also cleaned her home and cut her overgrown grass.

Type 2 Crew Leader, Jane Mluli, says, "We identified her as someone in need of help. We saw her in our community and as a team we decided to help her out by buying a food hamper for her. When we arrived to deliver the food hamper we saw that she was barefoot and decided to buy a pair of shoes as well."



The Vrede Team hands over items to community members



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

Balfour Team brings colour to the lives of pre-schoolers

The WOF Balfour Team in Mpumalanga recently did a social development outreach at a Balfour pre-school. This activity supported Working on Fire's value of 'Making a Difference'. Some of the team members painted cartoons, the months of the year and letters of the alphabet on the classroom walls while others prepared a vegetable garden to supplement the school's feeding scheme.

"Our team visited the school a while ago to do fire awareness," explains Nomasonto Dhlamini, the team BCR. "During our visit, we noticed that there was very little colour on the walls and the few painted pictures that were there, were incomplete. So we decided that this was something we could help with."

Type 2 Crew Leader William Mathelele and Sbusiso Mkhize drew the pictures on the walls, while a few of their team members (Thokozane, Hlengiwe and Nhlanhla) helped with the painting. The rest of the team worked outside in the garden where vegetables will be planted.



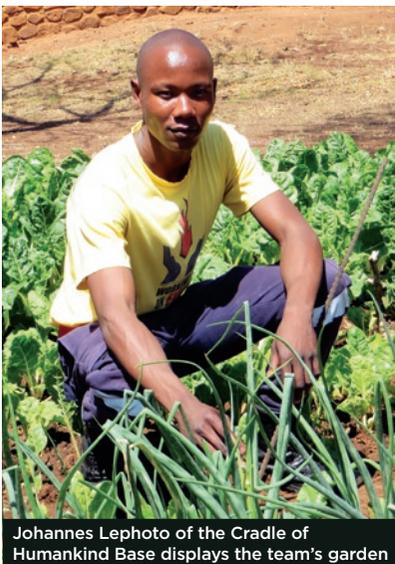
Some members of the Balfour Team painted murals at the local pre-school while others prepared a vegetable garden

"The teachers and children really appreciated our effort. We worked well together as a team and enjoyed seeing the joy this small gesture brought," Dhlamini says. "Doing social development is important as it promotes the principles of good citizenship."

Written by Zania Viljoen

Tackling food security

There is a need to encourage firefighters to establish vegetable gardens at the bases as part of food security programmes to address challenges of poverty, says Gauteng's Social Development Officer, Sabelo Buthelezi.



Johannes Lephoto of the Cradle of Humankind Base displays the team's garden

Buthelezi says that he will be giving vegetable seeds to all the teams in the province to encourage vegetable gardening.

General Manager Stephen Boyes says, "I am inspired by other teams which take gardening very seriously. During the fire season they can rely on the vegetables for food and save that tiny stipend they earn." This, he says, will positively impact on their well-being and their finances.

Buthelezi says he is on a drive to educate firefighters so that they can also plant at their homes. The purpose was not to encourage them to donate the produce but to feed the crew members for their health and wellness. They would also save on their costs of living.

"Some of the firefighters underestimate the positive impact vegetable gardens can have on their budgets," he says. "All the bases will have productive gardens and be monitored often going forward."



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

WOF participants save lives through blood donations

The Mogalakwena Team participants in Limpopo joined the quarterly annual blood drive that was held by Mokopane SANBS at their premises.

"Every quarter we support this initiative where we voluntarily donate blood that will be used to save lives. Not only are we saving the lives of those who need blood, this initiative also helps us to live a healthy life because only those who are healthy can donate blood," says Lebogang Maletle, Type 2 Crew Leader at the Mogalakwena Base.

The Mogalakwena participants started donating blood three years ago after they attended a presentation by SANBS about the importance of donating blood and have been donating blood quarterly since then.

"Donating blood has become part of our lifestyle and the fact that we



Lebogang Maletle, donating blood during the blood drive at Mokopane

know that it saves lives also motivates us to continue supporting this initiative," Maletle says.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Twenty-five WOF participants recently graduated from a gruelling, hands-on, 43-day, accredited Field Ranger course. The course, conducted by Kishugu Training in Nelspruit, empowered these men and women with valuable conservation guardianship and anti-poaching skills, adding to their CVs and improving their chances of securing permanent employment outside the programme.

"Many of our participants come from regions where there are large landowners, conservation areas, game farms and the like. By adding field ranger skills to their already valuable firefighting skills, they are more likely to secure employment with the aforementioned entities," explains Shane Christian, WOF National Coordinator.

"During this course they learnt about vegetation, animal behaviour, patrolling, weapon handling, anti-tracking, team tracking, fitness and more," says Paulus Kavavu, Assistant Campus Manager for Kishugu Training. "The course has a very large practical element. They spent days

WOF firefighters add anti-poaching to their skill sets

and even nights in the veld, patrolling on farms and disabling snares, during which they caught an actual gang of poachers."

WOF participants from the northern provinces were given the opportunity to apply for this course. Requirements included having passed Grade 12 Geography and Mathematics in addition to being located close to a possible future employer. At their graduation ceremony on 25 February, Letaba Rapolia from Nebo Base in Limpopo recited a poem in which she expressed her gratitude towards everyone who made this training possible. "We are field rangers! And we will help protect the heritage left to us by our ancestors," she said.

"We hope to continue with this great initiative which not only upskills our participants, but will also help guard



The group learned about rifle handling so that they can apprehend poachers while ensuring their own safety

against the poaching of South Africa's wildlife," Christian says.

Written by Zania Viljoen

Former crew leader promoted to Assistant Stock Controller



Working on Fire empowers women

"Dedication and hard work can take you to a better place," says Lydia Goba, the former Crew Leader from the Tsitsikamma Team who was recently promoted to be the Assistant Stock Controller in the Eastern Cape.

"The journey has been tough, rocky and exciting sometimes and with passion and hard work, I managed to be where I am today," Goba says.

"I never matriculated and finding a job was not easy without a Grade 12 certificate," says fifty-year-old Goba, who joined the WOF family in 2004 at Stutterheim Base in the Eastern Cape.

"In 2005, I was nominated to attend the Type 2 Crew Leader course in

Mpumalanga and I passed very well," says Goba.

She says that she worked with the Ongeluksnek, Tsitsikamma and Stutterheim teams while she was a Crew Leader and acquired valuable experience there of all the challenges of the Working on Fire programme.

"I was later sent to the Type 1 Crew Leader course in 2008 which I also passed very well and that made me realise how the programme added value in my life," says Goba.

Goba was one of the participants who recently received their 15th anniversary long service awards.

"The province has empowered me a lot as a woman and today I have so many skills that help me a lot in my day-to-day work," says Goba.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Investing in property to secure her future



Maleeto Mabe, a Type 2 Crew Leader at the Abe Bailey Team, built six rooms to rent out to tenants

Abe Bailey Team's Type 2 Crew Leader, Maleeto Mabe, has managed to build six rooms to rent out with savings from her monthly stipends.

Mabe says it took a sacrifice to save money in a building material store account. But the concerted efforts are finally beginning to bear fruit.

"All of the rooms are currently occupied and the money is good. People always need places to stay. I observed how other people in Bekkersdal township make money. I took that chance," she says.

Mabe intends to expand by acquiring a new stand to develop more rooms, to have electricity meter boxes for each tenant so that they could manage their usage and to have a double-story building.

"It is a life-time investment for me and my family. I am making money to make ends meet," says Mabe.

She says even if she doesn't work tomorrow she at least has a stable income going forward.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer



WOF Limpopo General Manager, Samora Gusha, awards the Molemole Team for being the best team in Limpopo for the third quarter

Molemole Team receives rewards for hard work

WOF Limpopo Molemole Team participants couldn't hold back their happiness when Limpopo General Manager, Samora Gusha, visited them to hand over the awards and prize for being the number one team in the province.

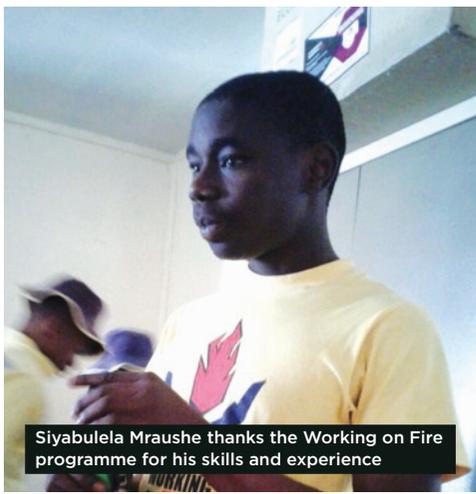
"This didn't come as a surprise because we have upped our game and have been working very hard in all the activities," says Selaelo Chepape, Type 1 Crew Leader at the Molemole Base.

Every quarter WOF selects the best-performing teams and rewards them for their hard work. The teams are measured on fire awareness, production, social development activities and on occupational health and safety measures.

"We would like to thank WOF for implementing this as the awards give us a motivation to work harder and to always go an extra mile. As the team we haven't decided how we will spend our prize, but we will keep you posted!" says Chepape.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer



Siyabulela Mraushe thanks the Working on Fire programme for his skills and experience

Former WOF participant gets a better job at SAPS

‘Work hard, be passionate about what you do and aim high all the times.’ These are the words of Siyabulela Mraushe, a former participant from the Matatiele Base in the Eastern Cape.

“Prior to joining the WOF programme I worked as a merchandiser in the Western Cape for three years. Finding a permanent job was a challenge as I only had matric with no university qualifications,” Mraushe says.

He says that he could not further his studies after matriculating in 2010 due to financial problems.

“That did not pull me down. I never lost hope in life and I told myself that aiming high will be my motto,” he says.

He says that after joining Working on Fire as a firefighter in 2014 at the Matatiele Base, he worked hard and motivated himself so that WOF would be a stepping stone to somewhere better.

“I was then taken to the Type 2 Crew Leader course where I worked very hard and passed,” says Mraushe.

After applying to the South African Police Service he says, “I could not believe when I was told that I should be starting my new job this month.”

Mraushe says that he really appreciates having been given the opportunity to be in the WOF programme as it had assisted him with getting skills, experience and motivation.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Perseverance opens doors for participant’s dreams

Working on Fire takes pride in exposing participants to the work environment, helping youth to discover possible careers they can branch off into in the future.

Former firefighter at KwaZulu-Natal eShowe, Philani Mthembu, is now a lifeguard at the Umlalazi Local Municipality.

Mthembu recalls that, before he joined the Working in Fire Programme in 2006, he used to do part-time jobs.

“I fell in love with water back in 2001. When I was unemployed, I used to visit the local pool. The lifeguards taught me how to swim,” he says.

After Mthembu learnt how to swim, he volunteered as a lifeguard at his community pool and at the local beach between part-time jobs.

In early October last year, Eshowe Base Manager, Mkhozeni Sangweni, informed participants that volunteer lifeguards were needed at the community pool. Having a lifeguard certificate, Philani volunteered regularly, even working



Philani Mthembu on a fire truck

during weekends, until the vacancy was advertised.

“I advise people to volunteer when the opportunity arises, as that is your window to showcase your work ethic,” says Mthembu.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

WOF paved the journey of life for Brian

Brian Boikhutso was unemployed and looking for a job when he was recruited to WOF on 26 January 2015 at the Marakele Base in Thabazimbi.

He says, “WOF saw the potential in me and recruited me as an unskilled person and trained me in firefighting.”

In 2017, Boikhutso was appointed as the Base Communications Representative for Marakele and as the Type 2 Crew Leader in the same year. In January 2018, Boikhutso bid farewell to WOF and joined Northam Platinum Mine as an assistant metallurgical operator.

“WOF played a major part in me getting my current job because it motivated me to chase after my dreams. It made me passionate about developing myself and dreaming big. WOF taught me that working hard brings out excellent results,” says Boikhutso.

He is grateful to WOF for paving the way for him and now sees a brighter future ahead.



Former WOF participant, Brian Boikhutso, is now flying the WOF flag high at Northam Platinum Mine

“All I can say is that the life that I’ve always dreamed of has just began,” says Boikhutso.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Former firefighter joins the fight against crime

Former firefighter and Base Communications Representative (BCR) for the Mothibistad Team, Vuyani Setholoeng, has exited Working on Fire to join the South African Police Services. Setholoeng has described his journey in the programme as a fulfilling learning curve which prepared him for his current job.

After being unemployed for some time, he joined the programme in August 2014 as a firefighter at the Mothibistad Base and later became the BCR for his team.

“At WOF I learned a lot of communication stuff, how to address people, presenting skills and how to write for communication. The programme prepared me for the work environment and I enjoyed the experience,” says Setholoeng.

Setholoeng says being part of WOF woke his ambition in life and pushed him to do better. He was



Former firefighter, Vuyani Setholoeng, is undergoing training at the Eastern Cape SAPS College in Graaff-Reinet

recruited by the SAPS last year and is currently at the Eastern Cape SAPS College in Graaff-Reinet.

He says, “In July, I wrote the psychometric test which was followed by fitness, then the integrity test and the medical test. I was able to pass all these tests because of the experience I gained at WOF.”

Setholoeng advises former colleagues to work hard and take advantage of the opportunities WOF provides as this will help them secure better jobs.

New teams in the Free State



The recruitment that took place in Parys

Working on Fire in the Free State takes pride in providing work opportunities to young men and women by recruiting them from marginalised communities and equipping them with various skills in fire prevention and fire suppression, as well as fire awareness and education, communications, first aid and health and safety.

Three new Free State teams were recently established in Reitz, Parys and Van Stadensrus. Twelve participants were recruited in Reitz, 13 participants in Parys and 12

participants in Van Stadensrus. Regional Manager Johnson Mafisa says, “I would like to thank all those involved in the opening of these new teams. It is never easy recruiting because of the high numbers of unemployed youth that come to the recruitment. But we managed to provide the best candidates with work opportunities that will enable them to provide for themselves and their families.”



Wayne Mokhethi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer