

Working on Fire attends Presidential Women's Day event

Eighty Working on Fire North West firefighters gathered at the Vryburg Showgrounds for the Presidential Women's Day celebrations on 9 August.

Firefighters from the Molemane, Barberspan, Bloemhof, Mamusa, Vaalharts and Reivilo teams served as marshals and assisted guests with their seats and parking.

During his keynote address at the event, President Cyril Ramaphosa recognised and saluted the women of 1956, including Mama Ruth Mompoti, who marched to the

Union Buildings against the apartheid regime. He also paid tribute to the present generation of women who have taken up the baton to continue to change South Africa for the better.

President Ramaphosa also shared some of the strides South



President Cyril Ramaphosa, speaking at the Presidential Women's Day event

Africa has made towards the emancipation of women and called for civil society to deepen its activism to ensure that equal pay for equal work is enforced and that women are protected from harassment in the workplace.

Written by Editorial team



Working on Fire is a world leader in empowering women in the fire service sector. Thirty percent of our firefighters are women. This is among the highest levels of women representation in any comparable fire service in the world.

WOF joined the Women's Month celebrations with the 2019 Women's Forums which were hosted across the country to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. These forums also made a call to action to accelerate gender parity and create greater awareness of women and girls' issues pertaining to women's rights.

Seven provinces hosted their Women's Forum events which were addressed by women who serve

Working on Fire – a world leader in empowering women in fire service sector

Working on Fire and High Altitude Teams in various leadership roles. The speakers shared their stories to inspire and motivate the attendees who, in turn, fully participated in discussions around the challenges faced by women.

WOF celebrates all the women in the programme who, on a daily basis, contribute at various levels to making Working on Fire a success. Working on Fire will continue to empower women and provide them with equal opportunities to men, so they can realise their maximum potential. In this issue,

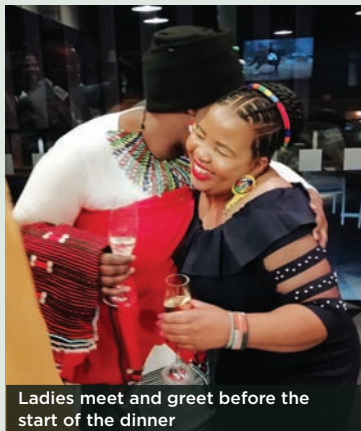


Thank you to all the Working on Fire women who contribute to making the Working on Fire programme a success

we showcase the inspiring stories of the women in the programme's

leadership, who share what drives them in a male-dominated industry.

WORKING ON FIRE HONOURS WOMEN IN THE PROGRAMME



Ladies meet and greet before the start of the dinner



The ladies having snacks and drinks at the hotel's reception area before the start of the dinner



Phumza Dyantyi started as a firefighter before she was a Type1 and 2 Crew Leader, Regional Manager, Assistant General Manager before becoming the General Manager

Working on Fire hosted its first National Women's Empowerment Forum Dinner to honour the women who make up 30% of the firefighters in the programme.

The celebratory dinner was held under the theme 'A Celebration of Our Journey through Adversity and Success' at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Cape Town and was attended by 21 women who came from various provinces.

The women present included several who have developed from firefighters to leadership positions, with some having over 13 years of WOF firefighting experience. The dinner functioned as an empowerment forum and was an opportunity to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women while also making a call to action for accelerating gender equity.

The women shared their stories of rising up the ranks and recounted how the WOF spirit of family and teamwork helped them hold on when the going got so tough that they wanted to quit.

Welcoming the guests, the Working on Fire Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams said: "Today, we honour you and encourage you to continue to contribute toward the betterment of the programme. Some of you have been with the programme since the beginning in 2003 and have over the years developed up the ranks. Today, you represent the 30% of participants who are women in the programme. We would have loved to have all of them here but unfortunately logistically we couldn't. We want you to enjoy the day and know that we honour you."

Special guest Professor Edith Vries shared some of the challenges she faced as a woman in the workplace and in the Cape Flats community where she grew up. She said she was pleased to



Group picture of all the women in attendance together with the Special guest, Professor Edith Vries and WOF Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams

see women well represented in such a male-dominated industry.

"I encourage you to claim your voice in the workplace and rise above the challenges you face. Pursue other income streams and don't stop empowering yourselves," said Prof Vries.

Former firefighter, Martha Tepo, who is now employed as the North West Fire Awareness Training Officer said, "I feel very much honoured to be here tonight and I would like to thank WOF for honouring women such as us in the programme."

POEM BY PHUMZA DYANTYI

Nanku umba unzulu, utshisa isibunzi!
Aphi ama Tshezi Ayiyizele !
Nanku umtwana womgquba egqwesa
Wagwetywa ndlala, wohlala uli gwala!
Qaqamba nzala yomgquba, iinkwenkwezi sis'hlalo
sama gorchakazi

Rhola ikhukho unabe, imbali ngumthombo wolwazi
Intombi iphuma ku qobo-qobo ne ngondo eqiqe
yaqonda, impumelelo ngumnqweno oleqwa ngemi
sebenzi enzima
Intombi exel' indoda unyamezela
Nditsho mna intombi ekwaz' ukhulisa intsana ezi
khazimlayo kuqhawuke iqhina lomtshato
Bapi ooTshezi oJola noMaduna bayiyizele
Qaqamba nzala ka Dyantyi iinkwenkwezi sis'hlalo
sama gorchakazi

Ndibile ndisoma , ndibudinwarha, ewe ndibu
nxapharha, ntonje unikezela ayilo siko lwasekhaya
Ndishiye ikhaya, ndaleqa iphupha, okwe bhaku emva
kwebhokwe
Ewe kaloku, Nkomo yobuthongo, zange ndava
ngayo

Langa phuma ndikotho, bude ubusuku ndiqothole
Imfundo phambili mtana womgquba
Rhola ikhukho unabe ndikuphakele iinkobe zase
makhaya. . .
Iinkwenkwezi sis'hlalo sama gorchakazi!
BoJola yekani uWoF andikhulise lidlulile elenu ixesha
ngoku ndidinga ukuba yinxalenye ka- ATEAM.
Ndiyabulela!!!



The women looked beautiful in their traditional and formal wear



Firefighters in Mpumalanga battled a total of 129 fires in July

Mpumalanga firefighters experienced a hectic July

Working on Fire firefighters in Mpumalanga suppressed a total of 129 veld and forest fires during the month of July, an average of more than four fires a day.

On 19 July alone, the firefighters suppressed 18 fires, with the fires recorded on the day occurring throughout the province. A total of 24 teams were dispatched to assist their FPAs and local municipalities in fire suppression operations and in ad-

dition to the ground crews, WOF aerial resources provided aerial fire-fighting assistance and flew a total of 260 hours. WOF continues to partner with various provincial government departments, municipalities and private and public landowners to minimise the dire effects of veld and forest fires.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Fort Cox students equipped with fire safety techniques



Working on Fire plays a major role in protecting the environment by raising fire awareness

More than 30 students from Fort Cox College in the Eastern Cape were equipped with fire safety techniques during a FireSafe presentation that was conducted by Community Fire Awareness Officer Thulani Mkhosi and Fire Awareness Training Officer Zola Hans.

The workshop was part of WOF's strategy of protecting the environment through integrated fire management, which includes fire prevention, suppression and fire awareness.

During the presentation at the college, the students also learned why the WOF programme was needed and how it works. Hans says the main

objective was to educate students about how to be fire safe so that they could implement and practice what they have learnt at the school. Hans says students must identify fire risks in their area and mitigate such risks.

The students thanked WOF for the workshop saying that the information that they received will aid them in helping their communities and safeguarding their neighbourhoods.

One student said that WOF should continue with these presentations to minimise risks in the lives of students.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Learners learn how to avoid burn injuries



Learners get ready to practice the stop, drop and roll technique

The WOF Newlands Team was invited by the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital to attend the Child Burn Prevention Seminar which was hosted at the hospital early in August to mark national Child Safety Month. The seminar aimed to raise awareness about how to prevent child burn injuries.

The Newlands Team conducted a fire awareness activity for Grade 7 learners with the topic being fire safety inside the house. The team taught the learners fire safety tips, what to look out for and how to protect themselves.

The team explained some of the most common fire risks in the home, cautioning learners to take extra care when using candles or stoves by placing them far from any material that can burn. The learners were also taught the stop, drop and roll technique which could be used to escape a burning building.

The learners committed to sharing what they had learned with their friends and families and also to report wildland fires.

Written by Editorial team

Seventy wildfires suppressed



Limpopo firefighters hard at work as they get to the peak of the fire season

Working on Fire Limpopo's firefighters have been kept on their toes by the wildfires in the province. Prior to the fire season, WOF firefighters had worked very hard putting precautionary measures in place. Waterberg was one of the districts that were given priority attention.

"Due to the dry season, we are expecting the number of fires to increase over the coming three months. The past two fire seasons were just average and there are also areas that never burnt at all. As such, the vegetation

is too dense and poses a high risk of wildfires," says Felicia Ngwasheng, the Ground Operations Manager for Limpopo South.

Ngwasheng says, "We are expecting the increase in wildfires in the Waterberg because our fire season starts late in this district. We've also planned to mobilise more teams from the north if the need arises to come and assist the southern teams to combat these fires before they destroy our environment."

It is hoped that all the hard preparation will assist in reducing the

number of fires. The WOF firefighters are on standby and ready to be dispatched to suppress wildfires anywhere in the province.

"We are pleading with the communities to work hand in hand with the municipalities and with us and to report all fires that they come across to the relevant authorities," adds Ngwasheng.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Women engage in dialogue to map way forward



The WOF crew leaders and management staff who attended the Free State Women's Forum

Women armed with self defence techniques



The women of Working on Fire in Mpumalanga were in good spirits after spending the day at the Women's Day Forum

WOF Mpumalanga convened its Women's Day Forum at the Mpumalanga Tourism Parks Board Auditorium on 7 August. Delegates included 23 firefighters from various bases, the Mpumalanga Provincial Office staff, the national Head Office staff and the national HAT staff.

The women soaked up information from a representative from the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), who explained how the women could take up entrepreneurship as a career and all the potential funding the NYDA facilitates to assist entrepreneurs.

A keynote address by Sheila Makhubela, an education specialist, had the women enthralled and encouraged as she shared her life experiences and

described how she tackled getting her doctorate at the age of 47.

A debate on women in business brought emotions to the fore as the women passionately stated their arguments.

The women were treated to lunch and received WOF gift bags as a memento of the day. The firefighters received extra gift bags to take to all the participants at their bases.

The forum concluded with self-defence lessons from Sensei Comfort Mavuso of Mpumalanga Kyokushin Karate, who demonstrated how the women could counter a physical attack.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

KwaZulu-Natal Women's Empowerment Workshop



WOF leaders in front of the Tatum Art Gallery

Working on Fire recently held its annual WOF Women's Forum event in each province. WOF women staff and participants from across the Free State travelled to Bethlehem to engage in critical dialogue to map the way forward for women in the programme.

The objectives of the Women's Forum are to develop and enrich women leadership in the WOF programme by bringing women together provincially and nationally to discuss the various challenges that women face and to highlight their achievements. The goal is to ensure that WOF is an organisation that takes a stand and recognises issues faced by women in the workplace.

Representatives from SEDA and Young Women in Construction addressed attendees to motivate them to enter

the construction industry and to try and create multiple income streams alongside their everyday careers. They were taught how to apply for funding, what small ventures were the most likely to receive funding and how to create a comprehensive business plan that will result in successful sourcing of funding.

"The event was a great success and the participants and staff who were in attendance were very motivated. Most stated that they were already running small businesses on the side to supplement their income and that the information they received will assist them in applying for funding and starting new ventures that will see them being uplifted," says Administrative Assistant, Glauria Motsoeneng.



Wayne Mokhehi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

Eastern Cape Working on Fire focuses on life skills in Women's Month



Participants equipped with life skills during WOF Women's Forum

More than 30 women from the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Working on Fire programme gathered in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape at the 2019 Women's Forum, part of WOF's Women's Month celebrations.

According to the Eastern Cape Social Development Practitioner, Yvonne Nte, the main objectives of the forum were to empower WOF women with leadership skills, share achievements and challenges and also to motivate and support one another.

The forum started with exercises to encourage the women to live a healthy lifestyle. Participants enjoyed a motivational talk by Violet Lupuwana, the Director of Chumile Holdings,

whose topic covered empowering women with business skills, life skills and how to be a better woman.

After the session, the women had a gala dinner at Tsitsikamma Adventures where every woman was given a gift of appreciation and words of encouragement.

The crew leaders who attended the forum will ensure that the lessons learned will be relayed to all other WOF women in the province.

In this Women's Month the province also celebrated the appointment of the first female General Manager in the Eastern Cape.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Women are the backbones of families and communities. Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal celebrated National Women's Day by attending the Women's Empowerment Workshop at the Tatum Art Gallery.

KZN Social Development Practitioner, Hloniphile Ndlovu, says, "Women's Month is not a celebration of feminism against men. It is actually an effort to allow women to embrace their natural purpose, and empower them to discover and reclaim their stand in life."

The programme was designed to allow for debate and discussion of

key issues such as changes in female leadership in the province and women in business. The delegates were joined by external stakeholders who also shared their journey to motivate our women in leadership. "There is a need for a continuous growth of opportunities for women to venture into various development spheres through education, work, personal talents and change in the status quo to pave the way for the future generation of women," says Ndlovu.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Canadian deployment inspires growth

Palesa Tshabalala is a formidable leader in all respects who has earned a reputation in the Working on Fire programme because of her track record of outstanding work, dedication to the completion of her duties and fierce drive to ensure the safety of those she leads on and off the fire line.

Her passion for health and safety pushed her to complete a tertiary qualification in employee wellness which included aspects of health and safety. She states enthusiastically that her goal is to become a Health and Safety Practitioner in the near future.

Before Tshabalala started her fire-fighting career in Working on Fire she was employed as a stacker and machine operator at a local company. When she heard about WOF recruitment taking place she decided to attend as she was physically fit from playing soccer in her spare time.

She was recruited into the programme in 2012 and never looked back. In 2016, she was deployed to Canada where she underwent training in the equipment used to fight fires in the Canadian terrain. In 2017, Tshabalala was promoted to her current position of Type 2 Crew Leader and she currently serves in this capacity in the small town of Parys.

Tshabalala was deployed to Alberta, Canada, in May to assist with the firefighting efforts taking place. She emphasises



Palesa Tshabalala, a Type 2 Crew Leader from the Parys Base

how special it was for her as a woman to be deployed internationally.

"Not many females were serving as firefighters in the Alberta fires so for Working on Fire to entrust us with such an important deployment really means the world to me, I would like to encourage all the women out there to remain positive. Don't be dictated to by your circumstances and your emotions because eventually, through hard work and sacrifice, things will work out," says Tshabalala.



Wayne Mokheithi, Provincial Communication Officer, Free State

Vryheid firefighter raises the South Africa flag high in Canada

KwaZulu-Natal Vryheid firefighter, Penny Ndlovu, recently returned from the 2019 Canadian deployment. She was selected to join the team in June in Canada to assist in combatting the huge Chuckegg Creek fire which had

burnt more than 350 000 hectares since May 2019.

The First Aider, who was recruited to WOF in 2007, says, "I am appreciative of Working on Fire for giving me the opportunity to be a firefighter as I was unemployed before I was recruited."

Ndlovu adds, "I had a great experience for my first flight, to Canada and back to South Africa."

She says that this opportunity equipped her with more experience with fires and also taught her the value of team building with people from different nationalities.

"I also had to adapt to the different weather conditions and the time difference between the two countries. I learnt new firefighting methods, especially dealing with underground fires, using different tools and transports," says Ndlovu.

"This experience really assisted me a lot in my career and I was able to share with my team more about the Canadian culture and how to abide by foreign country rules and regulations to fly the SA flag high," says Ndlovu.



Penny Ndlovu from the Vryheid Team



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Working on Fire continues to change the lives of young people

Twenty-six-year-old Nomaphelo Mdayi, a firefighter from the Hogsback Team in the Eastern Cape, is one of the female firefighters who formed part of the recent deployment to Canada.

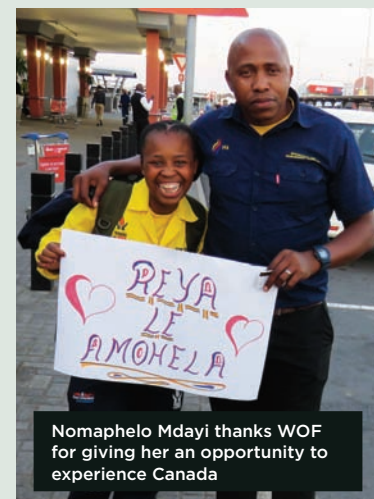
She said that going to Canada was a lifetime opportunity. "It was not easy fighting fires in that area but with the support from other firefighters, everything went very well," Mdayi says.

It had always been her dream to visit other countries and that dream became true because of Working on Fire. She says, "Going to Canada will also open more opportunities for me as I received more experience during the deployment."

Mdayi joined the Working on Fire programme in 2013 as a firefighter and says that she has been equipped with many skills in the programme and is now able to support her family and her son.

"I am very proud to be part of this programme which continues to be committed to changing the lives of young people in many ways," says Mdayi.

"I am living a healthy lifestyle because of the fitness activities we



Nomaphelo Mdayi thanks WOF for giving her an opportunity to experience Canada

do in the programme and with the little money I get, I have managed to register at a college where I am currently studying Office Administration," says Mdayi.

She says that she is doing this course because she wants to improve her qualifications to be able to get better opportunities outside the programme.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

WOF provided international opportunity for growth

Nine months after joining the Working on Fire programme, Motshidisi Yvonne Melamu's hard work earned her a place on the Type 2 Crew Leader course. She had joined the programme in 2012 as a firefighter at the WOF North West Barberspan Base and was determined to grow within the programme.

After completing her Type 2 Crew Leader course, she went on to pass the Type 1 Crew Leader course, which is known for its physically and emotionally demanding training.

"I have gained so many skills in the programme. I now have wildfire firefighting skills, First Aid, brushcutter and leadership skills. WOF has shaped me into the leader that I am today and I'm grateful to be part of the programme," she says.

Melamu was selected to one of the teams deployed to Canada in June to assist with firefighting operations (30% of the contingent were women).

Melamu says, "When the selection was made for the deployment, WOF obviously chose some of the best firefighters from the various provinces. That proved to me that my firefighting expertise is valued in the programme. Going to Canada provided me with the opportunity to expand my expertise as in Canada, we dealt with underground fires, whereas



Motshidisi Yvonne Melamu was one of the women firefighters who were deployed to Canada to assist with the firefighting operations

in my province we only deal with surface fires.

"I would like to thank WOF for continually providing equal opportunities for women to grow. To women out there, work hard so your work can speak volumes for you."

Written by Editorial team

From firefighter to regional manager

“Unemployment and poverty are the biggest stumbling blocks to success for many young people in the rural areas of Eastern Cape,” says Ongezwa Nonjiji, the regional manager of Rolihlahla region in the province.

Nonjiji grew up in Mpasane Location near Mthatha. “I passed my matric in 2000 and I did my two years of Electrical Engineering at King Sabatha Dalindyebo FET but could not find any job after that,” explains Nonjiji.

She said that being unemployed was difficult as she had to support her children as well as her family.

“In 2006, I got an opportunity to join the Working on Fire programme as a firefighter at Langeni Base,” says Nonjiji. “The following year, I was taken to the Crew Leader Type 2 course where

I passed very well and became the crew leader.”

Nonjiji says that people believed then that women could not survive being firefighters but she proved them wrong as she worked very hard, even on the fire line. Her passion and commitment to her work led to an opportunity to undertake the Type 1 Crew Leader course in 2008.

“Tears of happiness could not stop rolling down the face of my mother when I told her that I got another chance to become better within the programme,” she says. After this, she was able to support her mother and her three children could attend better schools.

In 2012, Nonjiji was promoted to become the regional manager and she says this proved WOF’s commitment to employing females in what is generally said to be a male-dominant environment.



Regional Manager praises WOF for employing females in the programme

“It’s been years since I joined this programme but my life has changed from nothing to something as now I’m a manager and I have got so many skills acquired through the programme,” Nonjiji says.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Being female was motivation to excel

One of two female Regional Managers in KwaZulu-Natal, Thubelihle Nkwanyana manages the Zululand Coastal region.

“To be in a male-dominated industry was a challenge in the beginning, but on the flip side, working with them motivated me to work harder and grow in my role,” says Nkwanyana.



Before joining the programme in 2006, Nkwanyana was unemployed. In the same year she was recruited, she attended and passed the Type Two Crew Leader course and later completed her Type One Crew Leader training. Thereafter, she was promoted to an Assistant Regional Manager position, managing her region by herself. In 2013, she was promoted to Regional Manager, which required moving around the province a lot.

“Being a woman and parent was a challenge as to live away from my kids was very difficult for me. At times, as a woman people underestimate you in your position. Some even believe women are unable to lead,” says Nkwanyana. Nkwanyana says women are challenged every day but that’s where they must find the strength to trust in the decisions they take at work.

Nkwanyana currently also holds two other portfolios as a KZN BEE representative and the province’s sports administrator. “I enjoy staying healthy and fit and I believe that is why I was trusted with these roles in my province,” she says.

“There is no such thing as I can’t if a man can do it. As women, we must believe in ourselves. We have capabilities of doing anything we put our minds to,” says Nkwanyana.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

certificate, the mother of a five-year-old has now set her sights on pursuing a qualification in Supply Chain Management, which is her desired career area.

“All of this has been made possible by this opportunity and I would like to thank WOF for giving it to me,” Ngomane says.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

WOF participant chosen to represent her province



Vangile Kambule

Vangile Kambule, from the Working on Fire Heilbron Team, was recently selected to represent the Free State at the 2019 South African Half Marathon Championship.

It took many hours of gruelling training to achieve selection as one of the best female athletes competing in half marathons. Kambule had to prepare herself physically and mentally to ensure she was adequately prepared to compete at such a high level.

Despite numerous financial challenges, Kambule and her team travelled from Welkom to Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. She was able to finish the 21 km race in a respectable time of 01:22:26.

“The pace throughout the race was very fast. I ran against seasoned athletes from countries such as Ethiopia, Namibia and Lesotho. I think, moving forward, I will need some assistance in the form of a coach as well as to prepare very thoroughly to compete on this level,” says Kambule.



Wayne Mokheithi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

Helping to eradicate poverty

Vicky Makwaeba is a passionate gardener and has dedicated much time to promoting healthy eating and eradicating poverty within her community.

Makwaeba joined Working on Fire as a Store Controller in 2011 and is a great motivator to the team at Mapungubwe Base.

“I’ve always been passionate about making a difference in my society. Most people think it takes more money to make a difference in people’s lives, while it is the little things that count and touch one’s heart,” says Makwaeba.

Makwaeba approached her base manager and asked to use the former nursery space that was no longer used by Mapungubwe National Park. Her base manager donated the seedlings to assist her in this project.

“I also used some of my savings to buy more seedlings to enable my garden to have a variety of vegetables, because I had a vision of seeing this being successful,” says Makwaeba.

Initially, she gave the ripe vegetables to her colleagues to encourage them to eat healthily.



Vicky Makwaeba spends her spare time in the garden that she is planning to use to raise funds to assist local crèches

Makwaeba says, “I then decided to start charging for my products because the small money that I will be making through the vegetables will enable me to buy more seedlings to sustain my vegetable garden, and this will assist me to grow this project to the next level.”



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

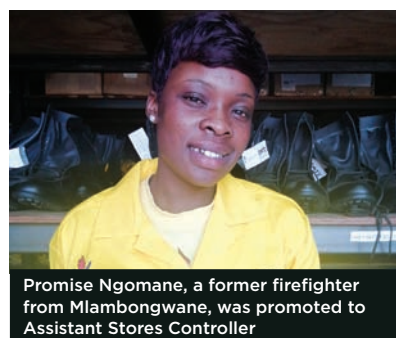
Mlambongwane firefighter promoted to National Stores

“I am excited about this new chapter in my life and I am looking forward to bettering my life with this opportunity.”

These were the words of Promise Ngomane, who was recently promoted to Assistant National Stores Controller and joins the National Stores team of Moses Daya, Patrick Ngonyama and Sibusiso Ngomane. Her duties will include issuing and receiving stock at the National Stores at the Mpumalanga Provincial Office.

Ngomane is one of many participants at WOF, who have gone through the ranks and found their career interest.

Her journey at WOF began at Mlambongwane Base, where she was recruited. She did a short stint at Injaka Base, before going back to Mlambongwane, where she was also a First Aider.



Promise Ngomane, a former firefighter from Mlambongwane, was promoted to Assistant Stores Controller

During her time as a firefighter, Ngomane took the opportunities WOF provides participants to arm themselves with knowledge and develop marketable skills. After furthering her studies and obtaining an Office Administration

Newly appointed GOM shares her journey

A force to be reckoned with, Wanda Siximba was one of the first Working on Fire women to climb the ranks to a management position.

Siximba started off as a firefighter in 2005 at the WOF Western Cape Newlands Base. Through determination and perseverance, she became a Crew Leader Type 1 and 2. She then progressed to many other positions at WOF, including Training Academy Instructor and Structural Regional Manager. She is currently the WOF Southern Cape Ground Operations Manager.

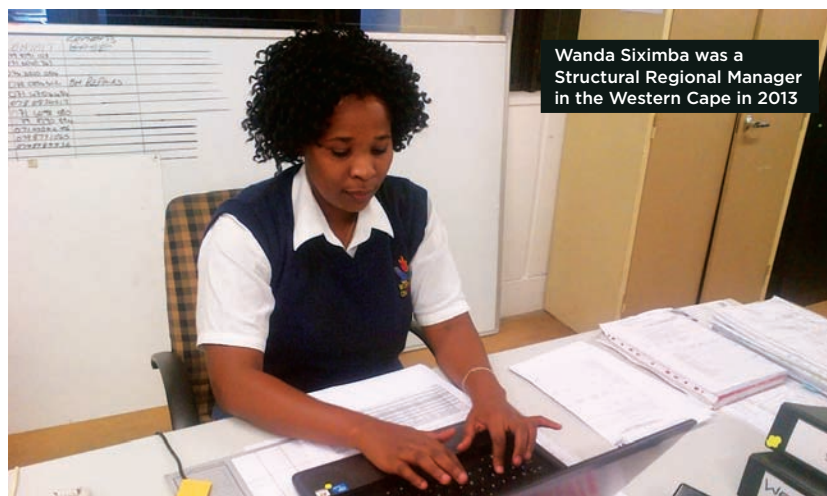
Asked what inspired her growth in the programme, she says, "Opportunities for growth in the programme are open but as women, we have to work extra

hard to tap into these opportunities so we can be equal to our male colleagues."

Looking back on her 14-year fire-fighting career, Siximba says, "I have led teams to so many fires, but among my highlights were being involved in the Knysna firefighting operations, the Onrus area peat fire and being deployed nationally to assist with firefighting operations."

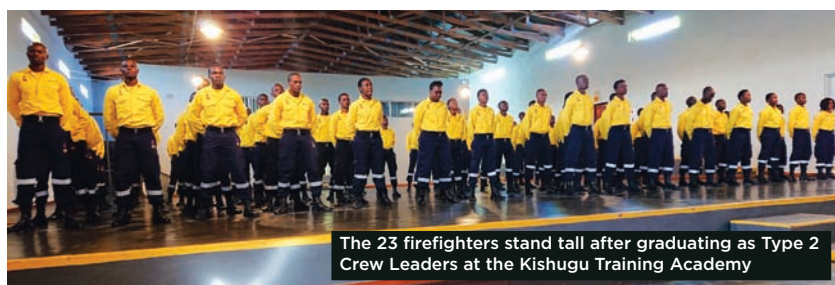
Siximba says, "I always encourage women to put aside the fact that we are women. Rather roll up your sleeves and get the job at hand done. As women, there's nothing we can't do when we put our minds to it."

Written by Editorial team



Wanda Siximba was a Structural Regional Manager in the Western Cape in 2013

Firefighters graduate to Type 2 Crew Leaders



The 23 firefighters stand tall after graduating as Type 2 Crew Leaders at the Kishugu Training Academy

A total of 23 firefighters from the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape graduated as Type 2 Crew Leaders at Kishugu Training Academy on 19 July.

The graduates completed a 43-day Type 2 Crew Leader training course before participating in the passing out parade ceremony at the academy.

During the ceremony, firefighters received awards in various categories for outstanding achievement during the training.

In the E-learning Programme, first place went to Njabulo Ntuli from KZN, who completed nine modules. Jerome Williams from the Western Cape came in

second after completing eight modules and Linda Tembe from KZN rounded out the top three after completing seven modules.

Patrick Mothulatsipe and Megan Brown were crowned the best male and female runners respectively.

Sello Mothsegon was awarded the best student in theory award and Glen Maisela was awarded the best student overall.

The Type 2 Crew Leaders will now continue with the three-month work-integrated learning component of the training.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

MPU teams form guard of honour for MECs



The LEFPA and Barberton teams accompany the MECs of COGTA and Education as they enter the Legislature Building in Mbombela

The Communications Cluster of Mpumalanga had the privilege of giving a short presentation on the Working on Fire programme to the MEC of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Mandla Msibi, on the occasion of the tabling of the department's budget at the Legislature Building in Mbombela.

The WOF LEFPA and Barberton teams formed a guard of honour for Mr Msibi and his Department of Education (DoE) counterpart, Bonakele Majuba, as they entered the Legislature Building to the enjoyment of the attendees.

Provincial communications officer, Amanda Mthembu, explained how Working on Fire partners with landowners, local municipalities and various provincial government departments, including COGTA and DoE, in attempts to minimise the dire effects of veld and forest fires.

Mthembu added that the programme also visited schools and communities to educate people about fire risks and prevention.



Amanda Mthembu, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Western Cape Crew Leaders attend compliance workshop

Working on Fire Western Cape hosted a two-day Crew Leader Type 1 and 2 compliance training workshop for 32 Crew Leaders from across the province. The training, held at the Okkie Jooste Camping Site in Jonkershoek valley, started on 19 August.

Western Cape Ground Operations Manager, Alfred Boer, says because Crew Leaders play an important role as junior management in the programme, they have to be empowered so they can perform their day-to-day duties as best they can.

"We had a variety of management, from Regional Managers to Human Resources, address the Crew Leaders on compliance issues to enable them to lead their teams better and improve their management performance," says Boer.

On the second day of the workshop, the Crew Leaders were tested to evaluate their understanding of the training content. Boer is confident that the workshop will ensure the smooth operations of teams and improve leadership.

Written by Editorial team



Crew Leaders from 27 teams across the province attended the workshop



Dansile Mthimunye

Cleaning the path to success

Dansile Mthimunye, of the JS Moroka Base, has exited the programme and taken a position as a cleaner at a local mine in Mpumalanga.

"It has been exciting to be part of the programme because it served as a refuge during tough and difficult economic conditions," says Mthimunye, who is from Tweefontein in Mpumalanga.

Mthimunye says although the new job as a cleaner is only an entry-level position, she wants it to launch a career path to greater heights and better things in life.

"I want to become an electrical engineer. In the coming year, I will be

registering at the local TVET college," she says.

Mthimunye says that unemployment is the worst nightmare for many young people and the WOF programme had restored her dignity during a time of need.

"I started to be a breadwinner with the stipend I earned in the programme. I will never undermine the role the programme played in my life as a young person," she says.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Fighting for gender space

Maria Mashiane of the Mdala Team is preparing for her exit from the programme by doing a security training course with a private organisation.

She says that doing the course was long overdue but she was delayed by financial constraints as, although 25 years old, she has never had formal employment.

Mashiane says four of her ex-colleagues who had joined SBV as security guards were progressing fast. She says women were discouraged from entering the cash-in-transit security services sector.

"It is still dominated by males. If I am not wrong, I have not seen a single woman in that space," she says.

Now that she has been able to save money to do the course she wants to continue until the grade B level. She feels she is at a turning point for herself and her family because she is ageing and the WOF programme is there to serve as a stepping stone for youth to kick-start their lives.

"I realised it is time for me to rise to the occasion and turn the corner too. It has been difficult as a firefighter but these years unearthed a new vision and mission in life," she says.

Mashiane says she has greatly enjoyed being a firefighter and it has



Maria Mashiane

been rewarding to her in terms of her fitness and health.

She is pursuing her training course during time off and over weekends.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Personal trainer heads to academy



Louisa Moumakoe

Louisa Moumakoe of the Roodeplaat Team is assuming a new role as an instructor at Kishugu's Training Academy.

After working for eight years as a personal trainer at Virgin Active in Pretoria, she joined the WOF programme as a firefighter at Roodeplaat Base this year. Crew Leader Katlego Molapo says Moumakoe is very good when it comes to physical training. "Our crew members really enjoyed her weekly exercises and they will sorely miss her presence."

Moumakoe is looking forward to interacting with more firefighters at the Academy, which will add to her skills and experience.

"It is a great opportunity to share my skills and talents with my former colleagues in the programme," she says. She says many firefighters will find some of the new personal training methods and exercises exciting and interesting.

"I know the Academy prefers a military style of training. I will suggest some of the most progressive styles of personal training and exercise to make physical training interesting," says Moumakoe, who sees personal training as a calling that she has always practiced with passion.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Huge number of applicants at recruitment drive in Tzaneen

Reflecting the high youth unemployment rate in South Africa, hundreds of youths gathered at Tzaneen dam to compete for vacant positions at the Limpopo High Altitude Team that were advertised. HAT employs young male and females from previously disadvantaged backgrounds and trains them as rope technicians. They are mainly responsible for clearing alien plants in hard-to-reach areas.

HAT Tzaneen conducted the recruitment drive to increase the team strength at the base. The day started well with the candidates taking part in the fitness challenges such as 2,4 km run which males are expected to complete in 12 minutes and females in

14 minutes, and sets of 40 push-ups and 40 sit-ups that each has to be done in under a minute.

"Fitness plays a major role at HAT due to the nature of the environment that we work in. The job that we do requires one to be physically and mentally fit," says Ellek Mukansi, the Base Communications Representative for HAT in Limpopo.

"We recruited four males and one female who were taken for the medical assessment before they could sign their contracts and proceed to training," says Mukansi.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer



Young males and females giving their all during the HAT recruitment drive