



Agnes Modisana and Jayson Lefisi during their passing out parade where they were declared SAPS Constables.

## Former WOF participants now SAPS Constables

Agnes Modisana, a former Working on Fire Type 3 Dispatcher and Jayson Lefisi who was a Type 1 Crewleader at Bloemfontein Base both exited the programme in 2018. They joined the South African Police Services and started their training on 1 March 2018 in Bhisho in the Eastern Cape at the SAPS academy.

Jayson says "I joined SAPS because I want to create a safe and secure environment for all South African citizens and by becoming a Constable I want to prevent criminal acts that threaten the safety, security and well being of the community that I serve in." They both reiterated that what they enjoy most about their new career is investigating criminal conduct and bringing perpetrators to justice.

"The training we went through was very difficult, especially in terms of studying the constitution and going through firearm training however the physical fitness training was easier for me because of the WOF fitness training," says Agnes.



Sibusiso Mathenjwa in SAPS uniform

## Don't limit yourself in anything in life

We catch up with a Working on Fire Alumni Sibusiso Zamokuhle Mathenjwa who is now with the South Africa Police Services. He did odd jobs such as gardening before he was recruited in 2014 at eShowe Base.

"Being a firefighter helped me stay fit, learn endurance, teamwork, using money responsibly and I was able to do my drivers licence using my monthly stipend which helped me secure my current job," said Mathenjwa.

What he enjoys about being a police officer is helping people live in a safer environment. "When community members come back to me and thank me for assisting them, I feel proud that I've made a difference in their lives."

In 5 years' time Sibusiso hopes to establish a family business, something that will sustain them for years to come, as he has already built his family a home. Things are better than before. He can now afford to pay for his younger sibling's schooling and take care of his own son.



## FORMER FIREFIGHTERS SHARE THEIR STORIES

*From fighting fires to fighting crime..*



## Creating career opportunities for our youth in fighting crime



Since 2013,  
1 146 firefighters have  
moved into these  
employment sectors:

Security	2%
Agriculture	1%
Eskom	3%
SAPS	4%
Mining	6%
Municipalities	6%
Conservation Agencies	15%
Retail	27%
Other Sectors	36%

The Working on Fire programme was launched in September 2003 as part of the South African government's initiative to create jobs and alleviate poverty. Today, Working on Fire employs more than 5000 young men and women who have been fully trained as wildland firefighters and are stationed at over 200 bases throughout South Africa. Working on Fire is widely regarded as one of the South African government's most successful EPWP (Expanded Public Works) programmes.

Among the biggest success stories of the Working on Fire programme are the many former participants who have found formal employment outside of the programme in sectors such as the police, the army and nature conservation agencies across South Africa.

We honour our young men and women from WOF who are continuing to serve and protect their country, now as police men and women at SAPS.



environmental affairs  
Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





# WOF prepared me for my new job

Twenty-three-year-old Thobile Precious Sithole, a former firefighter from the Melmoth Team, is currently employed at the South African Police Service (SAPS). Thobile was recruited to Working on Fire in 2012. "After matriculating in 2011, I wasn't working and couldn't afford to study. Fortunately I heard that WOF was hiring and I got recruited," says Sithole.

She says the WOF fitness training helped her with getting her new job, as did learning how she should present herself during an interview. "Thanks to the WOF communication workshop, I went to my interview with confidence and knew how to answer the questions asked," says Sithole.

About her eight-month training course at the SAPS Academy in Paarl, Western Cape, she said: "Things are going well. My training at WOF set me apart from the rest of my colleagues who sometimes complain about the fitness requirements. I'd like to thank WOF for equipping me with the skills to be the person I am today. I am truly grateful," says Sithole.



## WOF shaped and sharpened her life

Mmathapelo Tshehla, a former Working on Fire firefighter, is now a police officer based in her hometown Carletonville. She graduated from the police training academy in Hammanskraal.

"It was an honour to have been a firefighter in the WOF programme. It prepared me well for the challenges I encountered during my training in the police academy," she says.

Tshehla says WOF offered her renewed hope after being unemployed for a long period. With the stipend earned while in the programme, she was able to care for her child and family.

"The programme's positive role in my life will remain memorable in years to come. It shaped and sharpened my young life," says Tshehla.



## I want to be an example to SA youth

"Working on Fire gave me hope, fitness, confidence and discipline – skills I needed to qualify for a position in the South African Police Services."

Mandlenkosi Sabatha Mhlongo, a former WOF participant, now proudly serves his country in a SAPS uniform. He joined the WOF Programme in 2010 and acquired many valuable skills including leadership skills through the Crew Leader type 2 training course.

"WOF played an important role in my life," explains Mandlenkosi. "I gained valuable knowledge and improved my skills. I became a man who can stand by himself. All of this helped me move forward professionally."

Mandlenkosi left the programme in 2013 to take up a position in SAPS. He was appointed as a Constable working in the Community Service Centre (CSC).

"I want to continue growing professionally so I can be a good example for young people in South Africa."

Motivating his former colleagues, he said: "Always remember that being a WOF participant is not about making money. If you want money, it is up to you to work hard, have self-discipline, develop your skills and be on the lookout for opportunities outside the programme."



## Former participant now Metro Police officer

North West Mamusa former firefighter, Makeresemose Mampe thanks WOF for providing her with work experience which has enabled her to find better job opportunities. Mampe was recruited in 2010 as firefighters and SHE representative at Mamusa base.

Mampe attributes her high level of fitness which is a priority at WOF to ensure firefighters safety on the fireline, to the regular fitness training she did with her team while working as a firefighter.

"Because I am physically fit I can run 2,4km in less than 12 minutes and can do more than 60 sit ups in under a minute so during the METRO Police training things were easy for me, which gave me an edge among other candidates."

Makeresemose now works as a Metro Police Officer in Cape Town. She thanks WOF and encourages the programme to keep decreasing the number of unemployed youth through the programme.

"I thank WOF for the work experience and the skills instilled by them. WOF enabled me to provide for my family and motivated me to dream big and always finds ways to uplift myself."