



WOFIRE NEWS

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Working on Fire



Working on Fire - WOF TV News Channel



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WILDFIRES UNDER CLIMATE CHANGE - A BURNING ISSUE



The WOF Programme is living by one of its values of Accountability regarding the burning issue of climate change and it is committed and responsible for raising awareness and finding solutions.

Uncontrolled disaster wildland fires have been one of the most visible negative impacts of climate change on a global scale. According to Working on Fire Programme Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, the present trajectory of climate change suggests that much worse is yet to come, even as the fire emergency services in many parts of the country struggle to meet the demand for their services.

“A glimmer of hope emerges from the gloom and that is the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment funded WOF Programme, which has grown over the past 18 years to become a globally recognised wildland fire fighting force.”

Accountability

The Programme is living by one of its values of Accountability regarding the issue of climate change and it is committed and responsible for raising awareness, finding solutions, and providing a firefighting service to this global issue that has impacted the rise of unwanted veld and forest fires.

WOF Climate Change webinar

The Programme hosted an online webinar on Thursday, 12 May 2022, and invited environmental specialists and researchers in an information-sharing session to discuss climate change and its impacts, especially those affecting the escalation of wildland fires.

Abrahams highlighted the important role and the continuous contribution of the Programme in the management of this issue with its Integrated Fire Management Solutions, a globally recognised approach to managing wildland fires. This consists of fire detection, prevention, suppression, rehabilitation, and awareness education, just to name a few.

The webinar was attended by guest speakers - specialists in their fields - who shared intensive research conducted throughout the years that highlighted all the possible solutions - using fire and prevention fire methods - to mitigate the contributions of climate change.

Spatial and temporal variability of fire in SA

Dr. Sheldon Strydom, a senior lecturer and Subject Group Chair - School of Geo-Spatial Science, North-West University, spoke on the spatial and temporal variability of fire in South Africa, where he unpacked the prevalence and the high number of fires that we have seen occur in the past years. Dr. Strydom challenged all roleplayers to consider fire climatology research going forward in the management of unwanted fires and mitigation of climate change.

“Geospatial statistical analysis of fire activity is needed and we need to identify areas where a significant change in fire activity is occurring. Climatological analysis of fire weather needs to

be conducted at smaller spatial scales - regional and district - because this analysis would probably be more beneficial to Fire Protection Associations and disaster management agencies.”

Manipulating fire as an effective carbon sequestration technique

Professor Sally Archibald, from the School of Animal, Plant, and Environmental Sciences at Wits University, touched on the lessons learned in past years that could assist in the mitigation thereof. She unpacked the findings of research conducted, including the manipulation of fire as an effective carbon-sequestration technique. This is a process of capturing, securing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, a practice considered a solution to solving climate change.

Focus on proactive fire management

Dr. Glynis Humphrey, from the University of Cape Town in African Climate and Development Initiative, added to the lessons learned and advocated for a focus on proactive fire management - in using fire to manage fire and vegetation.

“The respect for diverse knowledge, cultural understanding, communication, and governance are central to improving fire management. Scientists, fire managers, journalists, and the public must work together to learn to live with fire and create fire resilient communities - that manage the vegetation and the risks.”

WOF FEATURES AT WOMEN IN EMS AND FIREFIGHTING CONFERENCE



Ngoni Shangu (Video journalist), Bianca van Biljoen (Provincial Coordinator), and Limakatso Khaliyane (Communication Officer) accompany Christalene De Kella (Manager: Video Unit) and Melany Duthie-Surtie (WOF Western Cape General Manager) at the Women in EMS and Fire Services conference.

Melany Duthie-Surtie (WOF Western Cape General Manager) and Christalene De Kella (Manager: Video Unit) represented the Working on Fire Programme at the Women in Emergency, Medical and Firefighting Services Conference at the Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel in Cape Town, Western Cape. They joined the many women speakers from various organisations, including Netcare, ER24, and National Sea and Rescue.

The conference aimed to close and address the gender gap in the workplace in these fields and also celebrate and encourage women who continuously make a difference.

Duthie-Surtie spoke about the technology the Programme uses to ensure resources respond promptly to calls for assistance and walked the delegates through the process of successfully using the newly-introduced FireWeb application.

Former firefighter, De Kella, spoke about her growth within the Programme over the past 18 years.

She spoke about the challenges women encounter in this male-dominated industry and shared her experience of telling stories, through the video lens, of women who have defied the odds to occupy their positions within the Programme.

Women from various institutions shared their experiences of climbing from entry-level positions to senior management.

The event was dedicated to improving the EMS and fire service through the involvement and success of women and providing networking opportunities and a communication platform for women in these industries. It was held under the theme “Committed to Change”.

WORKING ON FIRE WOMEN LEARN TO BE FINANCIALLY SAVVY

In a bid to rise beyond their financial struggle, make sound financial decisions and be financially savvy, the women of the Working on Fire Programme attended a Financial Literacy workshop in early May.

The online workshop was hosted by the Programme's Social Development department's Women Empowerment division, which invited financial experts from the First National Bank to share information, education, and tips on how to invest, budget, draw up a retirement plan, and a will.

Hloniphile Ndlovu, HOD: Social Development, kicked off proceedings and talked about the indigenous ways of being financially literate. Ndlovu highlighted how with the inflation of prices and the cost of living being at an all-time high, we need to go back to basics and do away with luxury and procure basic needs items.

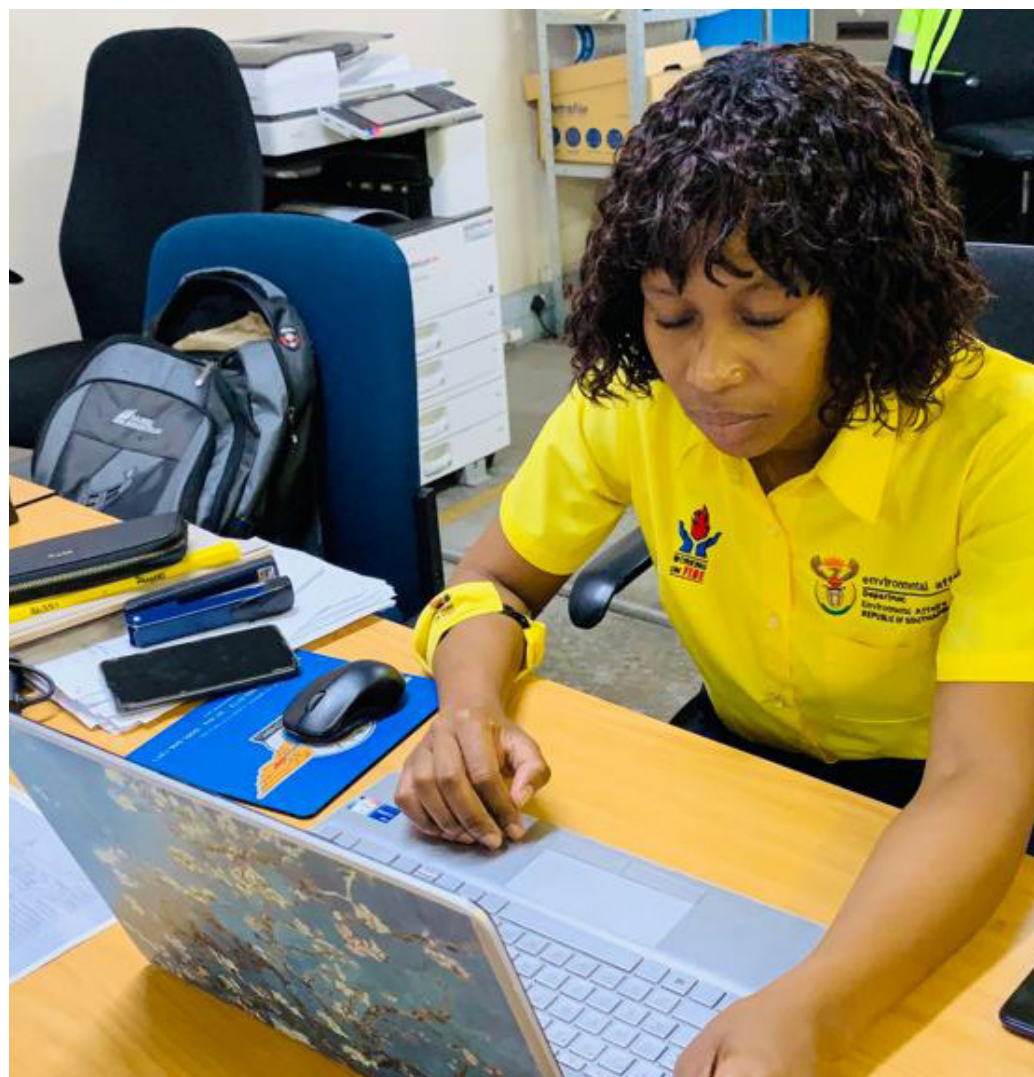
"Our mothers use to run successful households on a limited budget and we need

to practice their discipline when it comes to finances."

Eastern Cape FNB Consumer Educator, Ayanda Selokome, shared information on the basics of finance, budgeting, and investing.

Sekolome advised the women on saving wisely, having a nest egg for a rainy day, and investing money in different accounts, especially for the education of the children. "You do not have to be in a particular tax bracket to start investing your money and reaping the benefits thereof."

Mpumalanga's FNB Financial Planner, Alvina Manana, unpacked the benefits of having a retirement plan and drawing up a will. Some women of WOF had a misconception that these plans are for economically-free individuals, who have vast assets, but Manana swiftly cleared that up. "As long as you are getting a salary or any kind of money, you can talk to a financial advisor at your bank to draw up these plans."



WOF Mpumalanga Social Development Practitioner, Lindiwe Shongwe, listens attentively during the WOF women Financial Literacy workshop.

KWAZULU NATAL JOINS MINISTER IN GOOD GREEN DEEDS CAMPAIGN



WOF KwaZulu-Natal firefighters picking up litter with Minister Barbara Creecy at the Blue Lagoon beach during the Good Green Deeds campaign.

The Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal Albert Falls, Richmond, and Wessa teams joined the Minister for the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Ms. Barbara Creecy, and various other departments and organisations at the Blue Lagoon Beach for the Good Green Deeds clean-up campaign.

The minister was accompanied by Ravi Pillay, MEC of Economic, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, and Mxolisi Kaunda, the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality.

The province experienced devastating floods in April 2022 and people lost their loved ones, and properties and infrastructure were destroyed. The aim of the campaign was to swiftly clean a large

amount of debris found on beaches. Fire Awareness Training Officer, Khulani Zulu, said: "The clean-up was also aimed at encouraging the youth to participate in such activities and display exemplary behaviour and show leadership attributes."

Zulu said Working on Fire will continue to partner with different spheres of government, the private sector, and civic society to ensure beaches are clean and ready for use.

"I believe we all must take accountability and ensure our environment and surroundings are clean for the future generations to come. We will strive to assist in any way possible to protect the environment of the province," Zulu concluded.

WOF RESOURCES GO BACK TO NORTHERN PROVINCES



WOF resources, including pilots and ASV drivers, return to their provinces after a successful summer fire season.

After a successful Summer Fire Season in the Western Cape, all Working on Fire resources have returned to the northern provinces where they will be on standby and preparing for the Winter Fire Season.

WOF Western Cape's General Manager, Melany Duthie-Surtie, commended the visiting teams for spending five (5) months away from their families to lend a helping hand to the Western Cape, which is renowned for its usually aggressive fire season.

"Although this fire season was not as chaotic as expected, the extra WOF

resources provided a sense of reassurance and confidence." A total of 100 firefighters from WOF Eastern Cape, Free State, and Mpumalanga left the province at the end of April. WOF Aerial resources have also gone back to the provinces where they will standby.

Meanwhile, the WOF Western Cape firefighters will take turns in taking their well-deserved rest and will continue to educate school learners and the communities about fire safety. They will also be assisting partners with Integrated Fire Management activities such as constructing fire breaks, manual fuel reduction, and control burns.

CLEANING PUBLIC FACILITIES

According to Working on Fire Gauteng JS Moroka crew leader, Surprise Kgwedi, there is a need to slash tall grasses in the public facilities in Tweefontein because the winter fire season is fast approaching and puts infrastructure at the risk of fires.

His team continues to conduct manual fuel load reduction, especially in clinics, old age homes, magistrate courts, and emergency and medical services.

“Ours is to ensure the lives of the communities are safe. Secondly, we protect the environment and our IFMS activities mean the risk of a breakout of veld fires in these facilities is less,” explained Kgwedi.

Around June, Kgwedi said they will start conducting firebreaks in the area of Tweefontein and cleaning these public spaces.



The WOF Gauteng JS Moroka team is hard at work conducting fuel load reduction activities in public facilities in Tweefontein.



WOF Mpumalanga Community Fire Awareness Officer, Estella Cossa, educates the officials of the Barberton Correctional Services during the Fire Safety workshop.

ARMING CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS WITH LIFE-SAVING EDUCATION

Working on Fire Mpumalanga has forged a great working relationship with the Barberton Correctional Centre throughout the years and annually visits the centre to conduct Fire Safety talks and workshops.

In recent years, the WOF Programme has even visited the Barberton Maximum Security Prison to assist the centre’s Occupational Health and Safety Officer (OHS), Bheki Ngobeni, with a risk reduction exercise by identifying various fire risks and hazards that could endanger the staff and inmates. The Programme has also taught inmates how to conduct manual fuel load reduction to minimise fire risks.

The centre once again requested the services of WOF and Community Fire Awareness Officer,

Estella Cossa visited the centre in April 2022 to conduct a Fire Safety workshop for officials. Cossa discussed a range of Fire Safety topics including the Evacuation Plan, Personal Safety, and protecting homes and property.

“The centre officials always look forward to our workshops because they get information that is important and will assist greatly in the event a fire was to break out and with the many lives at risk within the centres,” said Cossa.

“Working on Fire always respond when we ask for help and a workshop. They honour our invites and teach us vital life-saving skills and for that we are thankful,” said Bheki Ngobeni, OHS at Barberton Correctional Services.

EARLY START TO THE SEASON FOR NORTH WEST TEAMS



WOF North West is anticipating a busy fire season.

Working on Fire North West teams are working hard in assisting partners and stakeholders across the province with Integrated Fire Management exercises such as firebreaks, prescribed burns, and manual fuel load reduction.

It is anticipated the province will be experiencing an extremely busy winter fire season due to the heavy rains which increased vegetation fuel.

Various teams have already attended to four (4) different fires thus far and are looking forward to more huge fires this coming winter fire season.

The province has been receiving numerous compliments from landowners on the hard and dedicated work the teams have been doing across the province by reducing the fuel loads around their properties to reduce the danger of possible unwanted wildfires.

EQUIPPING CAPE NATURE BASE MANAGERS WITH OPERATIONAL SKILLS



A group of Cape Nature base managers and WOF operational staff during the workshop.

Working on Fire Western Cape conducted a workshop with Cape Nature Base Managers to discuss crucial operational matters.

All bases that are managed in partnership with the Nature Conservation entity, congregated at the Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve for a two-day workshop with the WOF Western Cape’s Ground Operations department.

Cape Nature is one of the big WOF

partners within the province and they host nine (9) teams in total.

The workshop allowed the valued partners to raise concerns and highlight successes and it is through these types of engagements the province ensures the upcoming Summer Fire season will be a safe and successful one.

The workshop aims to ensure a single message is relayed to all WOF teams, management, partners, and base managers.

BEEFING UP THE ROYAL NATAL TEAM

Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal recently conducted a top-up recruitment drive for the Royal Natal team, which is partnered with the Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

A total of seven (7) positions were filled with the recruitment process comprising of an interview, 40 push-ups, sit-ups, and pull-ups, and a 2.4 km run in a set time.

Regional Manager, Philani Memela, said:

“The recruits will attend a 25-day vigorous veld and forest firefighting training, which includes advanced firefighting, fire safety, and other specialised skills at the Kishugu Training Academy, in Nelspruit.”

“This top-up recruitment is in preparation for the winter fire season, which commences in June and ensures the team strength is at full capacity as per Best Operations Procedure,” Memela concluded.



Unemployed youth enduring the intense fitness test to ensure their employment in the Programme.

GEARING UP



WOF Limpopo Leseding and Alma teams are hard at work in protecting the environment.

The preparations for the winter fire season continue across Limpopo with WOF teams conducting Integrated Fire Management activities to lower the risks of unwanted wildfires.

The Leseding and Alma teams were hard at work in conducting the Fuel Reduction.

These burns manage the ecosystems where wildfires would naturally occur. This is another measure that is conducted

in preparing for the winter fire season which commences annually from 1 June to October, apart from awareness campaigns and workshops.

Before landowners decide to conduct burning, they need to take accountability for the amount of fuel load they are intending to burn in the identified area. The people's safety, the environment in the surrounding regions, and weather conditions need to be taken into consideration.



Newly-appointed WOF Western Cape Regional Manager, Elroy Esau, has a burning passion for fighting veld and forest fires.

TAKING THE LEADERSHIP ROLE IN HESSEQUA

Although Elroy Esau joined the much-sought-after structural firefighting team in the Hessequa Municipality, he still has a passion for fighting veld and forest fires.

Esau was over the moon in April, when he received news he had been appointed as the new Regional Manager for the WOF teams in the Hessequa region.

At the time of his appointment, he was the supervisor of the structural team. “I knew I would go back but I just did not know it would be as a manager. I am happy to be given this opportunity to continue to grow

within the Programme,” Esau said.

The former firefighter joined the WOF Programme in 2011, at the Riversdale team. He served as a veld and forest and later a structural firefighter. Like many former firefighters who have grown within the Programme, he served in numerous positions, including first aider and crew leader.

The young man will be managing seven (7) teams which include: Riversdale, Albertinia, Melkhoutfontein, Gouritzmond, Slangrivers, and Heilderberg.

SPREADING THE MESSAGE DURING BURN AWARENESS WEEK

The Working on Fire Mpumalanga Fire Awareness and Social Development departments visited the learners of John Mdluli Primary School, in Mattafin, during Burn Awareness Week to educate them on the dangers of fire burns.

Fire burns are the third most common cause of accidental deaths amongst children under 14 years, exceeded only by motor vehicle accidents and drowning in South Africa.

National Burns Awareness Week is observed from 6 to 12 May every year and WOF joins the country in raising awareness.

The WOF contingent talked about a range of topics, including “How to cool a Burn” and “Keeping children and pets one metre away from the stove, and areas where hot food is prepared and served”.

During an engagement session, the learners shared their burning experiences and what not to do in the event of them happening again. Social Development Practitioner, Peter Mampuru, led a question and answer session where learners must answer questions about what they learned during the information session. A learner who responded correctly received a WOF goody bag.



WOF Mpumalanga Social Development Practitioner, Peter Mampuru, facilitates a question and answer session with the learners of John Mdluli Primary School during a Burn Awareness activity.

ROPE TECHNICIANS REFRESH THEIR SPECIALISED SKILLS

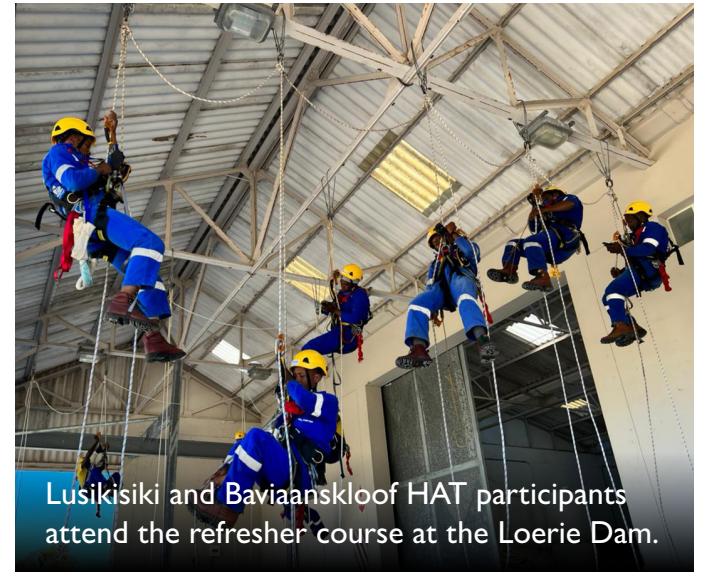
The Working on Fire High Altitude (HAT) Project specialises in the clearing of alien plants on steep mountain slopes and ravines to assist with water conservation.

There are more than 80 HAT participants based at seven bases within WOF Eastern Cape, namely Van Stands, Cata, Katberg, Lusikisiki, Gamdeboo, Baviaanskloof, and Addo. These young men and women work hard in protecting the environment, as well as give back to the communities.

A total of 13 participants from the Lusikisiki and Baviaanskloof

HAT teams recently completed their 10-day rope access refresher course, which was held in Loerie Dam from 25 April 2022. The training was facilitated by the High Angle Rope Access Training Company and consisted of checking ropes, devices, PPE, tying knots, and basic rigging.

The training is refreshed every three years to cover any changes to the technician and certification scheme that occurred since the previous assessment. The safety of the teams is a priority and, therefore, they should constantly learn and abide by evolving safety measures at all times.



Lusikisiki and Baviaanskloof HAT participants attend the refresher course at the Loerie Dam.

PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

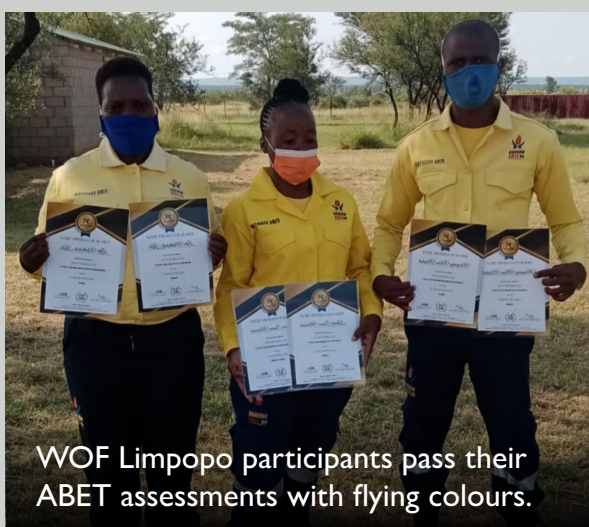


Potential hopefuls are put through the WOF Fitness selection process during the recent WOF Mpumalanga recruitment drive.

Working on Fire Mpumalanga held a recruitment drive at five bases to beef up teams ahead of the upcoming 2020 Winter Fire Season. A total of 16 recruits were selected and join the Badplaas, Belfast, Balfour, Sasol, and Wilgeboom teams.

Potential hopefuls turned up at the recruitment drives hoping to secure placement within the Working on Fire Programme. They went through a gruelling WOF fitness selection process, which included a 2.4-kilometre race, push-ups, pull-ups, and sit-ups at a set time. The successful candidates will attend New recruit training at the Kishugu Training Academy, where they will learn specialised veld and forest firefighting skills.

"It was a successful recruitment drive and we are now prepared to face the fire season. Not only is this drive beneficial for us but it also makes a difference and provides job opportunities to the young men and women," said Walter Khoza, the Highveld Ground Operation Manager.



WOF Limpopo participants pass their ABET assessments with flying colours.

NORTH WEST FIREFIGHTERS ACE THEIR ABET EXAMS

The Working on Fire Programme is giving its employees a second chance to gain secondary education through the Programme's Adult Basic Education Training project.

WOF North West firefighters wrote their final exam with the group divided into two (2) groups at different examination centres to ensure COVID-19 regulations are adhered to. The firefighters passed with flying colours and got their ABET certificates.

"Our participants did very well. I thank all management for providing support to our students during their study period, and more especially during the exams," said Floyd Tshenkeng, Human Resource Practitioner.

"I recently got my ABET certificate and am very grateful for the opportunity I received from WOF", said Obakeng Senosi, OHS Administrator.



WOF equips its firefighters with various skills to prepare them for the future.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION WITH NEW BASE IN EASTERN CAPE

More than 50 young people from Humersdop and surrounding areas made their way to Humersdop Fire Station early this month, in attempts to be a part of the Working on Fire Programme as veld and forest firefighters.

According to the General Manager of WOF Eastern Cape, Phumza Dyantyi, the recruitment process started around 9h00 am on Wednesday, 11 May 2022, where the determined young people had to undergo the extensive fitness tests which included a 2.4km run in under 12 minutes for males and 14 minutes for females, 40 push-ups, 40 sit-ups and eight pull-ups for both males and females, in just a minute.

"The turnout for this recruitment shows how young people need jobs" explained Dyantyi.

She said with the present unkind economic climate, this is the way WOF carries out the government's mandate of job creation and skills development for the youth, especially in marginalised communities.



Working on Fire Eastern Cape provides job opportunities by recruiting 33 young people who will form part of a new base.

After the fitness tests and interviews, 12 young people were selected for the Humersdop base. There was also a top-up at the following teams: Langeni, Sarah Baartman, Tsitsikamma, Bloukrams, Lottering, Blue Lilies, and Hogsback to ensure every base is at its team strength.

"These successful candidates will undergo training at the Kishugu Training Academy, Nelspruit where specialised veld and forest firefighting training will be facilitated.

"This opportunity will also help alleviate poverty in the homes of these firefighters," Dyantyi concluded.

THE POWER OF EDUCATION

A total of 38 Working on Fire Limpopo participants, who were enrolled in the Adult Based Education Training (ABET) project, passed their assessments with flying colours. The ABET project was introduced in 2019 to empower WOF participants with knowledge and skills and to give them another chance to gain secondary education.

The project consists of different levels and the participants

were assessed in the beginning to evaluate their knowledge of the curriculum standards. Upon the successful completion of these assessments, they were placed according to their level of competency, ranging from level 1 to 4, with level 4 being equivalent to NQF level 1.

All 38 completed all the levels and received their certificates recently, with some considering furthering their studies to obtain tertiary qualifications.

"I thank Working on Fire for giving us such a great opportunity that will allow us to make a difference in our lives academically. I will now be eligible to further my tertiary education which is something I have been longing for," said Letta Kobe, store person from the Leseding base.

WINBURG COMES TO THE AID OF A FAMILY IN NEED

The Working on Fire Free State Winburg team came to the aid of the family residing under extreme conditions in their community. The family is made up of a 69-year-old grandmother who lives with her nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. They are all dependent on the pension granted to her.

In making a difference to the family, the WOF firefighters donated part of their stipends to raise funds for the family, and through the funds, they bought groceries and donated a bed for the grandmother to sleep on.

Crew leader Type 2, Johannes Koalane, said: "I am proud of the selflessness of my team.

They went all out to make a difference in the family and we will continue to support this family until they are back on their feet."

The team has also roped in their Employee Assistant Practitioners to come on board in assisting this family. The grandmother reported that all the grandchildren do not have birth certificates, which makes it difficult for her to apply for their social grants.

The firefighters also started with the renovations of the shack that serves as a shelter for the whole family. "The shack leaks when it rains so we are making it safe and suitable for the family," concluded Koalane.



WOF Free State Winburg participants donate groceries to a family in need in their community.

FREE STATE RAISES AWARENESS OF AUTISM WITH SPIRIT WEEK



Free State management raising autism awareness through their clothes.

April is World Autism Acceptance Month and this month aims to encourage members of the public to take measures to raise awareness about people living with an autism spectrum disorder.

The Working on Fire Free State management carried on Autism awareness in May and embarked on an awareness drive for the whole week from 9 May to 13 May. The staff participated in an Autism Acceptance spirit week where each day was assigned a clothing theme to signify a certain characteristic associated with people living with Autism.

The brains of people living with autism function differently from those of non-autistic people and the team celebrated this variation by wearing hats and styling their hair

in a fun way to celebrate the diversity of the human mind. The staff also wore rainbow, colourful, and tie-dyed items of clothing.

Another characteristic of Autism is the direct focus on a topic of interest. To signify this, the staff dressed in a manner that shows their passion. The expression of love and acceptance was done by dressing in gold and red. People living with Autism have several different sensory sensitivities and the staff wore sunglasses and comfortable clothes to go with the theme of being comfortable.

Mahloma Molakeng, Employee Assistant Practitioner said: "The awareness was a success and everyone came on board to support this worthy cause."

BETHLEHEM PARTICIPANTS SAY NO TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Learners from Moriting wa Thuto Secondary School listening to presentations during the GBV awareness.

The Working on Fire Free State Bethlehem team joined various stakeholders on a campaign to raise awareness of Gender-Based Violence. They visited learners of Moriting wa Thuto Secondary School to educate them on this pandemic that has gripped South African communities.

The objective of the day was to educate the learners about sexual assault and to encourage them to report cases of rape or any form of sexual abuse they may encounter or witness. The learners were also educated

on the different types of sexual abuse.

Firefighter and Social Buddy, Mphoka Mampofi said: "These types of awareness are very important to us, especially those that are still in school. Through education and access to information, we hope to make a positive impact and to prevent such incidents from happening in our community."

The learners were empowered with knowledge and encouraged not to fall victim to sexual abuse by keeping quiet.

MOVE FOR HEALTHIER BODIES



WOF KwaZulu-Natal management is taken through its paces by KwaGubeshe crew leader, Zama Ngcobo.

The global community celebrates "Move for Health" day on 10 May, which forms part of the development of strategies on a diet, physical activity and health.

The WOF KwaZulu-Natal management honoured this day by participating in a fitness session, which was facilitated by Kwagubeshe crew leader type 1 - Zama Ngcobo - who is also a fitness coach.

Social Development Practitioner, Nozuko Mkhize, said: "The objective of this day is to facilitate the development of sustained

national and local physical activity initiatives, policies, and programmes. This day promotes healthy behaviour and lifestyles and also addresses health-related issues through sports and physical activity. These include refraining from smoking, a healthy diet, reduction of violence, stress and social isolation."

Mkhize added management was also encouraged to take ownership of their health and create 10 minutes a day to exercise their body and avoid unhealthy activities to deal with stress.

NEED ALL YOUR VOTES

Sandile Mdawe, a firefighter for the Working on Fire Gauteng Krugersdorp team is an aspiring musician and has been nominated in the Best Hip-Hop Artist category at the Mzansi Arts Media Awards.

Mdawe has his recording instruments at home and has had a passion for music since childhood. "I love music and have produced a couple of songs that are known in the townships and my colleagues have been very supportive."

The voting period for the nominees has begun and it will be ending in July. Mdawe urges his colleagues, followers, and supporters to vote for him.

"This is going to be an opportunity to market my music brand and I want to take this opportunity to get publicity and marketing.

Mdawe has performed at parties, nightclubs, and pubs in and around the West Rand and is determined to make a dent in his genre.

"It is time I breakthrough. I have been doing music in my spare time and have produced my music video, which got a lot of traction. The reason I got nominated is that people listen to my music. Winning this award will make a difference in my life and your support will be appreciated."

TO VOTE SMS "mamap 2459" to 47439.



WOF Gauteng Krugersdorp firefighter, Sandile Mdawe, is a rising hip-hop music star.



Former Lefpa Base Communication Representative, Wonder Mashego, is now the Fire Awareness Facilitator for WOF Mpumalanga.

USING MY SKILLS AS A FOUNDATION FOR MY CLIMB

The Working on Fire Mpumalanga Fire Awareness cluster welcomed Wonder Mashego into their fold after the LEFPA Base Communication Representative (BCR) was appointed a Fire Awareness Facilitator.

Mashego joins the team of Estella Cossa (Community Fire Awareness Officer) and Elliot Nyathi (Fire Awareness Training Officer), who have taken him under their wing to show him the ropes.

Mashego obtained qualifications in Project Management through UNIGRAD College last year after taking it upon himself to pursue tertiary education because he only

had secondary education when he joined the WOF Programme. Mashego joined the Programme at the Graskop base as a firefighter in 2017. He later transferred to the LEFPA team. He was appointed a BCR in Graskop and subsequently became one in LEFPA. It was in this capacity he acquired various skills, including public speaking, writing, and photography.

"I enjoy what I do and hope to step up even higher within the WOF Programme. For now, I am arming myself with the necessary tools and skills as a foundation for my climb," Mashego said.

CANADA DEPLOYMENT TAKES ME A STEP CLOSER



Castello firefighter, Papi Keeditswe, credits the 2021 Canada Deployment as a big turning point towards being debt-free.

Working on Fire prides itself on making a huge difference to the young men and women of South Africa by equipping them with various skills and providing job opportunities, for most who never worked before.

Working on Fire North West Castello firefighter, Papi Keeditswe credits the 2021 Canada Deployment as a big turning point toward being debt-free.

"Being deployed to Canada was like a dream come true to me, as it was always my dream to cross borders and explore other countries," he said.

"I extend my gratitude to the WOF Programme for trusting me to be part of the International Deployment because the remuneration I earned changed my situation at home and today I am a free debt man. I also paid for my Security course and invested some of my money."

WOF'S FITNESS REGIME HELPS TO BETTER COMMUNITY

WOF Limpopo Aganang Base Communication Representative (BCR), Aubrey Kgomo, is living up to one of the WOF values of Making a Difference by taking children around his community off the streets with his physical training and exercises.

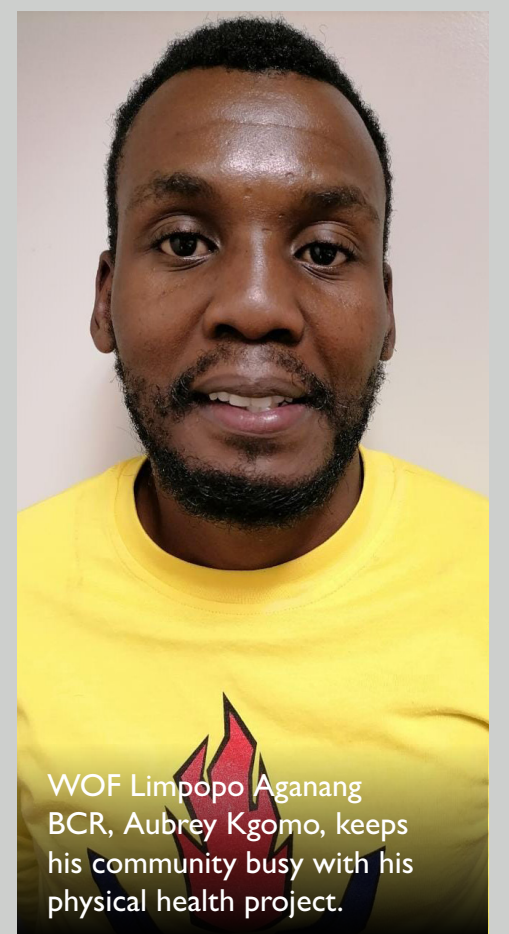
Kgomo established the Obla Body project which focuses on the physical health of school children by promoting physical activities.

The BCR uses his WOF fitness experience to get the children moving in an entertaining way because he believes physically active children tend to produce good grades in their academia, school attendance, cognitive performance, and sound classroom behavior.

"This is as well associated with an improved concentration and an improved memory."

Kgomo joined the Working on Fire Programme in 2014 and served as a firefighter where his life started blossoming because he gained a platform to develop and improve himself.

It was in 2021 when he was promoted to serve as a BCR, which also motivated him to establish the Obla Body Project. "I am grateful to the Programme for every skill and knowledge I have acquired while



WOF Limpopo Aganang BCR, Aubrey Kgomo, keeps his community busy with his physical health project.

serving as a firefighter and a BCR. It was through WOF I became exposed to a lot of things and I saw it fit to pass what I have learned to my community," Kgomo concluded.

MOVING ON TO MTO

Khanyisa Mnyingizane (28) recently exited the Working on Fire Programme to join Mountain to Ocean (MTO) as a multiskilled firefighter and First Aider.

This young and dedicated woman said being part of Working on Fire assisted her in gaining many valuable skills which played a big role in opening doors.

“I joined the WOF Programme in March 2021 at the WOF Eastern Cape Sarah Baartman base and within a very short time I was promoted to be the Base Communications Representative,” Mnyingizane said.

Before she joined WOF, Mnyingizane was unemployed and navigating the job market. When she got the job in WOF she gained confidence and with the stipend she received, she was able to support her family and took her daughter to a better school.

“WOF helps its firefighters to be a better people and we learn to be part of the team, be accountable for everything we do, and always adapt to new and challenging situations.”

She thanked the Programme for its role in her life and advised every firefighter to be positive, work hard and improve their studies where possible.



Former WOF Eastern Cape participant, Khanyisa Mnyingizane, is joining Mountain to Ocean (MTO).

SCHOOL AWARENESS ACTIVITIES LAY THE FOUNDATION

Working on Fire Limpopo firefighter, Thabo Mabokela, has exited the Programme and is now serving as an Assistant Educator at the Tielelo High School, Lephalale. He is specialising in the Mathematics and Science streams.

Mabokela served as a firefighter and a Base Communication Representative (BCR) for the Lephalale team until his exit. During his stay at WOF, he not only worked with learners at schools doing fire awareness activities, but he also offered extra lessons to the high school learners in his community during his spare time.

It has always been his dream to inspire young people from disadvantaged families to accomplish their dreams without having to spend extra money on paying for lessons.

“Being a high school learner is not easy, especially in grade 12, and that is where there are a lot of expectations coming from families and friends. All of this requires an effort and one has to invest all their time to make it. It soothes my heart that I am contributing to the educational success of the learners under my care. I am excited about this journey I am taking.”

DIGGING FOR GOLD



WOF Gauteng Wedela firefighter, Mosehle Mosehle, is now a miner at Anglo American Gold.

Mosehle Mosehle, a former firefighter for the Working on Fire Gauteng Wedela team has exited the Programme to become a miner at the Mponeng Gold Mine in Carletonville.

Mosehle was a part of the crew that was deployed to Manitoba, Canada in 2021 and said it was great being a part of the WOF Programme.

It served him as a refugee when he was unemployed. This, Mosehle said, has aided him to do structural firefighting courses

and acquire drivers' licenses. “I was able to build myself a room at home with the stipend I earned. It has been interesting to be deployed twice to Canada. I will never forget the role this Programme has played in my life.”

To his ex-colleagues, he said it is important to be focused and disciplined for one to succeed. Mosehle had always wanted to be a miner because he grew up in South Africa's gold mining hub.

“This opportunity came at the right time.”



Lephalale BCR, Thabo Mabokela, is following his dream of being an educator.