



WOFIRE NEWS

— Saving Lives • Protecting the Environment • Restoring Dignity —

September 2022



Working on Fire



Working on Fire - WOF TV News Channel



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CELEBRATING 19 YEARS OF WORKING ON FIRE



Saving Lives, Protecting the Environment,
Restoring Dignity Through Partnerships.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment's Working on Fire Programme is turning 19! Widely regarded as one of the South African government's most successful Expanded Public Works programmes, WOF is celebrating almost two decades of saving lives, protecting the environment, and restoring dignity, through partnerships.

The beginning

The WOF Programme began in September 2003, as part of the South African government's initiative to create jobs and alleviate poverty. The Programme employs young men and women who are first trained as veld and forest firefighters and are then stationed at WOF's more than 200 bases across the country.

Leader in youth empowerment

The Programme's biggest success story throughout the past 19 years has been the transformation in the lives of our disadvantaged youth. More than 15 thousand youth have gone through the Programme with former participants in management positions within the Programme. Others have exited to join the formal employment sector in state structures and conservation agencies. Some have entered the private sector and are pursuing entrepreneurial careers.

Critical fire interventions



A global leader in integrated fire management, Working on Fire teams have helped combat fires across the country, including the Knysna fires in 2017, the George fires in 2018, and the Cape Town Table Mountain fires in 2015 and 2021.

On average, our participants combat more than 2 500 fires annually, tirelessly executing our values of Accountability, Teamwork, Excellence, Adaptability, and Making a Difference.

A global footprint

Our participation in the international Wildfire Conferences in Spain in 2005, South Africa in 2011, and South Korea in 2016 is our many achievements. Our Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, flew the WOF flag high on Thursday, 26 May, at

the International Association of Wildland Fire's (IAWF) Fire & Climate 2022 Conference in Pasadena, USA, which took place from 23 to 27 May. He presented on "Poverty Alleviation through Integrated Fire Management: Creating Platform for Global Collaboration in Combating Unwanted Wildland Fires."

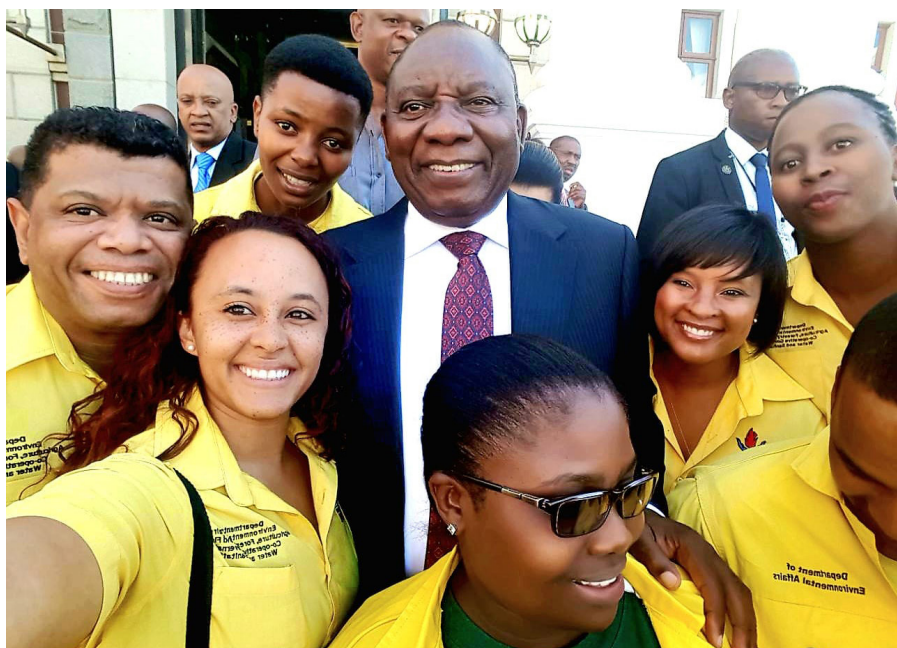
International deployment



Working on Fire has deployed firefighters and management to Canada, Indonesia, and Chile. In 2021, 109 firefighters and management assisted the province of Manitoba in Canada to fight one of the province's worst fires. This was Working on Fire's fourth deployment to Canada and the team returned with high praise from both Canadian and South African authorities.

International Accreditation

Recently, several senior managers completed training from the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, gaining knowledge and expertise that they will pass on to the hundreds of young men and women under their leadership.



ANOTHER CROP OF NEW RECRUITS BEGIN THEIR FIREFIGHTING JOURNEY

A group of 96 New Recruits graduated during a pass-out parade at the Kishugu Training Academy, in Nelspruit, on 9 September 2022. The recruits completed the vigorous 24-day training after being selected in recruitment drives to top up existing teams who conduct WOF's much-sought-after Integrated Fire Management Services (IFMS).

The group trained in various subjects, including basic firefighting, herbicide application, vegetation management, and managing personal finance. The pass-out parade was a culmination of their hard work and these climate change warriors go back to their respective bases armed with specialised skills in veld and forest firefighting.

WOF Mpumalanga General Manager, Martin

Bolton, gave the keynote address during the ceremony and wished the new members of the WOF Family well as they reached another milestone in their firefighting journey.

"Many within the Working on Fire Programme have been where you are today. We have seen selected youth begin amazing journeys in the firefighting industry, with some of them now in senior positions within this ground breaking Programme. Some have used it as a stepping stone, have exited, and are now occupying permanent positions in various sectors, including government and the private sector," said Bolton.

"We are the A-TEAM. We live by the values of Accountability, Teamwork, Excellence,



Hard work culminates in a pass-out parade for new recruits.

Adaptability, and Making a Difference. Take these values and execute them in your daily lives at the base, in your communities, and your homes. They will take you far during operations, within WOF, and the world

at large." With South Africa's youth facing a harsh economic climate and scarcity of employment opportunities, WOF is a beacon of hope for young men and women living in disadvantaged communities.

CLOSING OFF WOMEN'S MONTH IN STYLE

Working on Fire North West ended Women's Month with their annual Women's Forum held at the provincial offices. The province brought together women from management and participants who dressed in black with the theme of the day being: "Celebrating Women in Leadership".

Various speakers were invited to give presentations and talks. These included representatives from the North West University Disability Rights Unit and fitness facilitators from the L-Cone Fitnessentials.

They encouraged the women of WOF to celebrate, discussed business ideas, motivate

each other, and stand up against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

General Manager, Nolvuyo Mashologu, who is the first woman GM in the province, shared her journey and inspired the women to strive in their leadership positions and outside the workplace.

After the session, the women participated in a fitness exercise conducted by the L-Cone fitness facilitators in promoting a healthier and happier lifestyle, which lowers the risk of developing many long-term or chronic conditions such as heart diseases, diabetes, stroke, and cancer.



WOF North West women discuss burning issues that affect women during the forum.

OUR WOF SUPERHEROES

COMPETING IN TOUGHEST FIREFIGHTER COMPETITION

Five participants from the Working on Fire Gauteng Krugersdorp team participated in the Toughest Firefighter competition from 14 to 19 September 2022 in Cape Town.

Maite Thoka is a female participant who took part in the competition which fosters the value of teamwork.

"We worked as a team and our colleagues assisted us in the preparation for the competition," said Thoka.

Thoka said there was stiff competition, however, she added that her colleagues were fit and ready.

She said this was an opportunity to display their talents and fit levels to other firefighters across the country, who descended to the Mother City.

"We are grateful to the Regional Commander, Gerhardt Nieuwoudt, who is the base partner for our team. He selected us to be a part of this competition."

Grounds Operation Manager, Khomotso Moagi, appreciated the firefighter's participation in the competition.



Maite Thoka is one of the participants who competed in the Toughest Firefighter competition.

"They represented the Programme very well and flew our flag high. Teamwork was on display, well done," said Moagi.

SITHOLE COMPLETES THE ULTIMATE HUMAN RACE

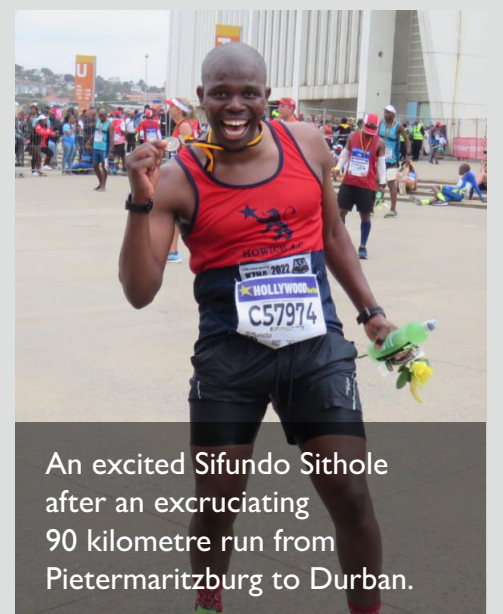
Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal Community Fire Awareness Officer (CFAO), Sifundo Sithole, completed his fourth Comrades Marathon on Sunday, 28 August despite an injury setback during that same month.

Sithole qualified for the marathon in July, however, during his training and building up to the Ultimate Human Race, he picked up injuries trying to make up for the lost time.

"This year's journey to the Comrades Marathon has not been easy because I did not plan to run it. I decided in the last week of June after persuasion and motivation from my fellow club member, Mike Edgecombe (Howick Athletics), who also paid for my entry fee."

Sithole shared how the race was extremely tough. "During the first 45 kilometres, I was experiencing cramps, however, I saw my WOF colleagues at the various running spots and this motivated me to finish the race. I completed it in 9:23 hours and received the Robert Mtshali Medal."

The CFAO has been running since 2014 until COVID-19 halted his plans and he took a break from serious running.



An excited Sifundo Sithole after an excruciating 90 kilometre run from Pietermaritzburg to Durban.

"The three years of experience in running the Comrades also played a big part in my ability to complete the race. My personal best time is 07:52 hours which I achieved in 2015.

Sithole's love for running was ignited when he joined the Programme because of the fitness tests. When not running the Comrades, Sithole participates in park runs with his son during the weekends.

TEAMWORK ORDER OF THE DAY AS EASTERN CAPE SUPPRESSES 27 FIRES

Working on Fire Eastern Cape urges everyone to remain vigilant as the winter fire season continues and a huge number of fires are experienced in the province.

The province has been at its busiest and assisted various partners in successfully suppressing 27 fires that destroyed approximately 390.263 hectares of vegetation in August.

A total of 15 teams were dispatched to assist partners that included the Greater Stutterheim FPA, Sakhisizwe FPA, PG Bison, Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, SanParks, Eastern Cape Umbrella FPA, Singisi Forest, and Sakhisizwe FPA with suppression efforts.

The busiest teams were Mhlahlane, Langeni, Ugie, Baziya, Nqadu, Mkhambathi, Elliot, Libode, Nomadamba, and Ntywenka.

Nyanisile Faku, crew leader from one of the teams, said that teamwork and

communication were some of the main factors that helped them a lot when fighting such fires.

"It is impossible to fight a fire alone as that can be dangerous. With teamwork, we were motivating, supporting, and helping one other in case there is a danger during firefighting," said Faku.

Faku said teamwork is vital in firefighting because it assists in four key elements: problem-solving, motivation, interpersonal skills, and efficiency.

While other teams are busy fighting fires, others are busy with prevention measures that include fuel reduction, and school and community awareness.

WOF Eastern Cape has more than 400 firefighters stationed at 27 bases across the province to be able to render firefighting support to partners across the province.



Working on Fire EC experiencing a busy winter fire season.

ASSISTING IN 95 FIRES IN FREE STATE



Harrismith team fight the fire.

Working on Fire Free State assisted in fighting and successfully containing 95 fires that destroyed more than 40,000 hectares of vegetation.

Since the winter fire season began in June, the province has assisted in suppressing 213 fires where more than 130,000 hectares of vegetation burned to ashes. The Eastern Free State remains the area of concern as most of the fires were reported in the

region. The preparation work undertaken to construct fire breaks and other integrated fire management activities are playing a part in ensuring that properties and lives are protected from these fires.

Until the end of the winter fire season, all 26 teams in the province remain on high alert to promptly respond to fires as quickly as possible.

ETHEKWINI TEAM APPLAUDED



An eThekweni firefighter diligently monitoring the fire during the fire break at Msinsi Grassland.

The Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal eThekweni Project Team was applauded for their professionalism in executing a grassland controlled burn at the Msinsi Grassland Project, in partnership with the Kloof Conservancy.

The team, in partnership with the eThekweni Metro Municipality under the Biodiversity Management Branch, implements integrated fire management systems within the district.

Project Manager, Howard Mathebula, said: "Controlled burns are important for the health of the grasslands and would normally occur naturally in the wild areas. They assist to reduce the risk of

wildfire which could result in damage to neighbouring properties." Paolo Condotti, from the Msinsi Kloof Conservancy, was very impressed with the WOF team, and said: "We thank Howard Mathebula and his very professional team who conducted the burn with minimal fuss and disruption."

According to Condotti, the eThekweni team also provided free herbicide and invasive alien plant clearing services to assist on occasion.

"I am very proud of my team for continuing to live the WOF values at any site we operate in. It gives me joy when stakeholders recognised our work ethic," Mathebula concluded.

ELIMINATING RUNAWAY FIRES

Working on Fire Limpopo is confident with the efforts participants invest in combating wildfires that affects various areas since the start of the winter fire season. Limpopo teams were dispatched 118 times in fires that damaged 23 428 hectares of vegetation in different districts.

The teams lived according to the WOF value of teamwork to ensure properties, farms, and land were not affected by the runaway wildfires.

They have also been working tirelessly in providing Integrated Fire Management

Services (IFMS) to save lives and protect the environment.

This year's winter fire season is expected to be the busiest and will keep the teams in the province on their toes. This is due to continuous climate change - a global concern. This is also due to heavy winds, and rainfalls that influence the growth of fuel.

With the training the teams received during the Yellow Card Training Camp, the province is confident that teams will deal with any eventualities.



Working on Fire Limpopo teams work tirelessly to protect the environment and save lives.

SAVING LIVES ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME

The Working on Fire Mpumalanga Fire Awareness team is saving lives one community at a time with their Fire Awareness workshops and presentations. The team was hard at work in August and the beginning of September educating community members, farmers, and landowners on how to be fire safe.

Teamwork was the common goal these past weeks with the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) inviting the team to educate black landowners and farmers throughout the province. Community Fire Awareness Officer, Estella Cossa, led the team when they accompanied DARDLEA to Wakkerstroom, Nkomazi, and Badplaas to conduct workshops and presentations. DARDLEA gifted these farmers with fire beaters, which the WOF team demonstrated how to use.

Fire Awareness Training Officer, Elliot Nyathi, honoured the invite of the South

African National Defence Force (SANDF) in Macadamia, Nkomazi. The SANDF wanted WOF to educate their soldiers on fire safety. Nyathi conducted a Fire Safe workshop that armed the soldiers with the information they can use when they are deployed to border posts in and around Mpumalanga.

Fire Awareness Facilitator (FAF), Wonder Mashego, contributed to the teamwork and conducted a presentation for educators of the Stintile Secondary School in Luphisi, Nelspruit.

The team also successfully hosted the annual WOF school debate competition for Lowveld learners at the Lowveld Botanical gardens. The South African National Biodiversity Institute, DARDLEA, Ehlanzeni District Municipality, City of Mbombela, Silulamanzi, and the Department of Education and Water and Sanitation lent their support to WOF during this competition. ZB Kunene Secondary School was crowned the winner.



Community Fire Awareness Officer, Estella Cossa, educating the community of Langeloo in Nkomazi.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT



WOF Eastern Cape management clean the Stutterheim river.

Working on Fire Eastern Cape dispatched more than 20 participants, supported by management and led by General Manager, Phumza Dyantyi, to join the clean-up campaign as part of their initiative to protect the environment.

The campaign was in collaboration with Amahlani Local Municipality, the Department of Water and Sanitation, and CWP took place beside the Stutterheim river which is polluted because it is near a dumpsite.

WOF used the opportunity to inform and educate the community about pollution and the prevention of wildfires. WOF Assistant

General Manager, Nkululeko Mlanjeni, said he is very happy because WOF is part of this initiative, adding: "Working on Fire protecting the environment and are always happy to support initiatives aimed at empowering our communities."

He further added that some of the community members around this area use the water from this river so it is important it is kept clean and pollution does not take place.

The Forest Support Programme Project Manager, Chris Hay, also played his part in this activity by removing the big logs that were blocking water from flowing easily.

PETUNIA SECONDARY SCHOOL WINS FREE STATE ENVIRONMENTAL DEBATE



Winning schools receive their accolades.

Working on Fire Free State held its annual environmental educational debates where Petunia Secondary School was crowned the winner.

Kagisho and Grassland Secondary Schools were named second and third place respectively.

The schools debated about climate change, its causes, and human actions that continue to worsen it. Learners also suggested measures that could be put in place to

mitigate the impacts of climate change. The purpose of the debate is to create an opportunity for grade 8 and 9 learners to debate environmental issues that harm their social livelihood and natural environment.

The province's Fire Awareness Officer, Moipone Motaung, said five schools participated in the debates which were supported by the South African National Biodiversity Institute and the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs.

LIDGETTON COMMUNITY TAKES OWNERSHIP OF THEIR SAFETY

Working on Fire KwaZulu-Natal, uMngeni Disaster Management Centre, Dargle Poles, NCT Forestry, Department of Health Community Care Workers, and uMgungundlovu Fire and Rescue, were invited by the community of Lidgettton to their FireSafe Day.

Community Fire Awareness, Sifundo Sithole, said: "The FireSafe Day is an information-sharing day hosted by community members who invite organisations that operate near the area and they educate them on how to stay safe this winter fire season and appeal to them to take ownership of reducing fire risks."

A representative from uMgungundlovu Fire

and Rescue, Alfred Mazibuko, shared the common causes of fires in the households and demonstrated how to use electrical appliances safely and how to store them properly after use.

Stakeholder presentations were followed by a question and answer session where community members were given a platform to get clarity because they plan to create a Fire Forum.

"The trained volunteers will create a forum who will start identifying fire risks in their community and table possible mitigating measures to ensure the safety of all community members and conduct fire awareness initiatives," said Sithole.



uMgungundlovu Fire and Rescue representative, Alfred Mazibuko, talks about how to safely store household appliances.

FREE STATE RECRUITS 40 YOUTHS

Working on Fire Free State embarked on a recruitment drive to top up teams recently. The 40 participants were recruited from areas such as Clocola, Vrede, Devesdrop, Winburg, Brandfort, Rouxville, Memel, and Ficksburg.

They began their 25-day extensive training at the Kishugu Training Academy in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga. They will be trained in veld and forest firefighting skills that will cover

advanced firefighting, fire safety, and other specialized skills.

The Working on Fire selection criteria includes a fitness test which consists of 40 push-ups, 40 sit-ups, and running the 2.4 kilometre race in 14 minutes for females and 12 minutes for males.

The 40 new recruits bring the total number of participants to 607 in the province.



Recruitment process in Brandfort.

REINFORCING THE TEAMS

Working on Fire Gauteng recruited 15 participants for the three teams of Vaal Marina, Suikerbosrand, and Abe Bailey Nature Reserve. Regional Manager, Stephen Bokaba, said the response to the recruitment was positive, numbers high and the competition very tight. The participants will be sent to a 25-day of basic firefighting course.

Grounds Operations Manager, Khomotso Moagi, said the new recruits are looking forward to acquiring the firefighting skills at the training

academy. "The training will foster and forge teamwork amongst the new participants at the academy and I know they will not disappoint," she said.

Moagi further said that base partners need to have full teams, adding: "We are in the grip of the fire season. When new recruits come back it means teams will be strong in their operations. This will boost the morale of the current participants."



Young men and women try their luck during the recruitment.

FORMER PARTICIPANT SECURES PROMOTION

"There is no secret to success. It is the outcome of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure and disappointments. Humble beginnings do exist, but one needs to be humble to begin and nothing ever stays the same."

These are the words of Temosho Mphahlele, the newly-appointed Human Resource Practitioner for Working on Fire Limpopo.

Mphahlele began his career as an experiential learner at the Department of Health as OPD Administrator in 2015. This was after obtaining a B.Tech in Public Management from the Tshwane University of Technology. He eventually worked as a Human Resource Management and Development Systems Intern in 2016.

After his contract ended at the government organisation, Mphahlele had no job prospects and showed an interest in joining a WOF team. He went through the recruitment process and was appointed as a participant for the Lepelle-Nkumpi base. He served with dedication, and it was in 2020 that he was promoted to become the Human Resource Assistant.

Through the Programme, Mphahlele was able to enroll with UNISA and obtained



Former participant, Temosho Mphahlele, is the new Human Resource Practitioner for WOF Limpopo.

accreditation in Education and Advanced Labour Law.

"I am very excited to be given the opportunity to climb the ladder and become a Human Resource Practitioner. This is not just a position but a mission I have accomplished and a step closer to greener pastures. I am ready to continue learning to further my education and knowledge. I also want to grow further in the Human Capital Management field."

NALEDI TEAM WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBERS

A huge number of unemployed youth from disadvantaged communities across the North West were given the opportunity to go through the WOF standard selection criteria with the hope of joining the Working on Fire Programme. The selection criteria included the 2.4 kilometre race, 40 push-ups and 40 pull-ups, and eight pull-ups.

Three candidates were selected and recruited

for the Naledi base, namely Bakang Kgokong, Ofentse Tsimane, and Refentse Pitoro.

Bakang Kgokong was awarded the best 2,4km male runner, with a time of 9:03 during the fitness evaluation.

"I have always wanted to become a firefighter and this is a dream come true for me. It is unbelievable," said Kgokong.

WELCOMING NEW RECRUITS

Organisations have a responsibility of conducting an induction to their newly-appointed employees to integrate them into the company and ensure they understand the systems and procedures followed within. Induction assists the new employees to settle quickly in the new working environment and gives them a sense of belonging.

In welcoming the recruits to the Working on Fire Programme and supporting them to adjust to their new roles and working environment, Regional Manager for the East Region in Limpopo, Renier van der Merwe conducted induction to the recruits in his region.

During the induction, he explained in detail about WOF, the scope of work, and the environment. He also spoke about the WOF values and emphasised the importance of teamwork to achieve the common goal and vision.

Studies show that collaborative problem-solving leads to better outcomes and employees that work together as a team certainly accomplish tasks faster and much more efficiently than those who work individually.



Regional Manager, Renier van der Merwe, prepares the new recruits during an induction.

"With the scarcity of job opportunities, it was difficult to select only a few people from the numbers that competed for firefighting positions. I hope to uplift the recruits and provide them with relevant skills to enable them to qualify for permanent employment in both the private and public sectors. This opportunity will also uplift their livelihoods," van der Merwe said.



New recruit, Bakang Kgokong (left), gets the best 2,4km runner award.

TAKING CARE OF OUR ELDERLY CITIZENS

The Working on Fire Mpumalanga Volksrust team restored the dignity of Gogo Miemie Shabalala, who is living alone in her home in the township of Vukuzakhe. The team conducted Integrated Fire Management Services, in the form of fuel load reduction, around her house and yard and also cleaned inside her home.

The team, led by the Social Development Practitioners, has continuously made a difference in the lives of the elderly citizens

in the township by conducting regular visits to put in place fire prevention measures. This is in the form of manual fuel load reduction where they remove overgrown vegetation and clear litter which fuels a fire.

The team also visited the two old age homes in their town and spends the day with the citizens partaking in various activities that promote physical health.

FRANSCHHOEK HAT GIVES BACK TO LOCAL SCHOOLS



Franschhoek team after educating learners about invasive plants at a school in Paarl.

The Western Cape has been experiencing wet weather conditions and the Franschhoek High Altitude Team (HAT) has been giving back to communities on days they cannot go to the field.

The activities included visiting local schools and putting their skills to work. The team recently visited the Dalubuhle Primary School, where they helped with rejuvenating the school's garden and planting vegetables that will benefit the learners.

On a different day, the team visited another school in Paarl where they did alien invasive

plants clearing around the dam that feeds water to the school. This was to ensure the school is secured with water sources as alien plants are known for consuming large amounts of water.

The team's Base Communications Representative, Abongile Hintshi, said the team also cleared trees hanging over classes.

"The schools were appreciative of our services and we promised the continue giving our assistance when we can to do so," Hintshi said.



The Volksrust team assists Gogo Miemie Shabalala in keeping her home fire safe.

ESTABLISHING A VEGETABLE GARDEN AT PLACE OF SAFETY



Western Cape management working at a newly established garden.

In commemoration of Women's Month, the Western Cape management established a garden at a place of safety in Kenilworth, Cape Town.

Management and the Newlands team worked together on the day and were led by Social Development Practitioner, Collen Paulus. They spent time working in the garden around a house that keeps children and young people who have been removed from their families due to various types of abuse.

Paulus said the aim of the initiative was not

only to plant physical seeds but also to sow great seeds by introducing the little ones to organic food security.

"We have a shortage of food globally and it is important for children to learn at a young age to participate in food security initiatives to fight poverty or establish a food security business," she said.

The children will be involved in the maintenance of the garden, under the guidance of the Newlands team and WOF management.

RESTORING DIGNITY

Manuel Ratseki, a crew leader Type 2 from Working on Fire Free State, is happy to be associated with the WOF Programme that improves the lives of many young people.

He was recruited as a participant in 2010 and his life has improved for the better. "I was among the group deployed to Canada last year and I had been on standby for five months in the Western Cape," he said.

Ratseki was promoted to his current position in 2019 and leads the Clocolan team when executing Integrated Fire Management

Services. He has gone through various training through the Programme that has made him the effective leader he is.

"Working on Fire changed my life. I have experienced things I never thought I will experience in my life. I have traveled the world and seen all kinds of things and people," he said.

The proud father particularly appreciates WOF for allowing him to provide for his family and his siblings.

JOB OPPORTUNITY SAVES A LIFE



Nkosenhle Mbatha secures a work opportunity as a participant for the Suikerbosrand team.

At least 15 young men and women were recruited to become veld and forest firefighters in Working on Fire Gauteng. Nkosenhle Mbatha is one of them and said WOF has saved his life.

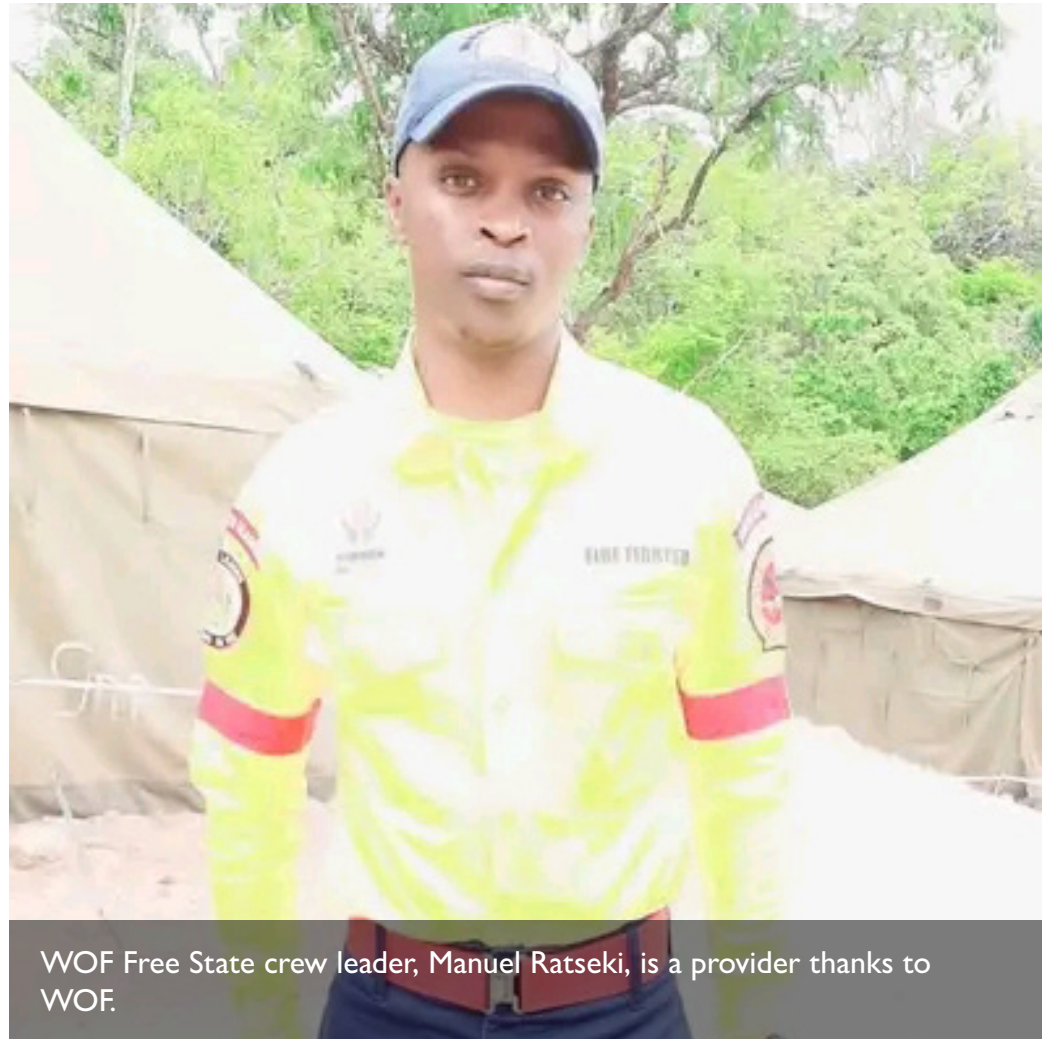
"It was tough during the recruitment process but I had to give my best to be employed. I had nothing to do at home and life was monotonous," said an enthusiastic Mbatha.

The new recruit hails from Magagula Heights, Vosloorus, and since matriculating, has struggled to secure any kind of job. This,

he has said, gives him hope and purpose in life.

On the day of the recruitment, he said young people turned out in their numbers because jobs are scarce. "The recruitment process was transparent and fair for everybody to see where they failed."

Grounds Operations Manager, Khomotso Moagi, welcomed the new recruits, adding: "Through this recruitment, we are fighting youth unemployment and poverty in these communities."



WOF Free State crew leader, Manuel Ratseki, is a provider thanks to WOF.

NEWLANDS LEADER CLAIMS VICTORY IN PROVINCIAL RACES



Tumelo Mokoatsi after winning the 8 kilometre run in Kuilsriver, Cape Town.

Tumelo Mokoatsi, a crew leader for the Newlands team in Working on Fire Western Cape flew the WOF flag high when he won the Western Province Athletics Cross Country Championships in Cape Town.

The 8 kilometre run is a pre-selection run for a bigger race that will be taking place in Rustenburg. Mokoatsi cruised into the next level with ease.

He runs for Sanlam Road Running Club and has been running since his primary school days and continued through to high school in Clarens, Eastern Free State.

"I was so happy when I joined Working on Fire because they do fitness tests regularly. They help me a lot as a runner because I get to be fit for my marathons. WOF also helped a lot with discipline because as a runner you need to be disciplined," he said.

He said the longest marathon he has run was the 56 km Two Oceans Marathon which he did in four hours. He has also participated in the 40 km Soweto Marathon, which he completed in three hours.

"I do 20 km in an hour and 10 km in 30 minutes. Running is in my blood and it is my passion," Mokoatsi concluded.

WOF VALUES HELPED ME

30-year-old Olwethu Tshingana recently exited the Working on Fire Programme to join Manzamnyama Forestry as part of security personnel.

This young and dedicated woman said through Working on Fire she gained many skills which played a significant role in opening the door to her new job.

"I joined WOF in 2012 at the Qumbu base and was moved to the Dwesa team when the base was closed. A few years later I went to Langeni base when Dwesa was also closed.

I joined Libode base in the latter part of my WOF journey where I served as the acting crew leader," said Tshingana.

She shared that in all the teams she worked at, she learned a lot from her leaders who were team players.

"WOF lives by the values that help everyone to be a better person. We learn to play our roles in a team through teamwork, be accountable for everything we do, and always adapt to new situations," Tshingana said.



Olwethu Tshingana says the skills she got from WOF opened the door for her.

MOVING ON TO GREENER PASTURES

Former Working on Fire Limpopo crew leader Type I, Jim Kobe, added to the number of many participants who have left the Programme for greener pastures.

Kobe was a leader for the Northam team and recently joined Siyanda Bakgatla Mining at Swartklip and is working as a Scraper Winch Operator.

He was in the Programme for 11 years after being recruited in May 2010 at the Modimolle base. It was in the same year he was appointed

Chainsaw Operator at the same base until promotion to SHE Representative the following year.

"I am grateful to Working on Fire for granting me an opportunity to acquire all the vital skills, especially leadership. They made the greatest impact. Serving as a Crew leader taught me a lot about teamwork and managing people. Many people fail when they lack the teamwork spirit, but achieve tremendously when working together."

HITTING THE FAST LANE



Tshiamo Lamola is a former participant at the Roodeplaat base.

Tshiamo Lamola has exited the Working on Fire Programme to be self-sufficient and be running his scholar transport business in Mamelodi, Pretoria. Lamola joined the Programme in 2019 at the Roodeplaat base as a participant.

Lamola saved his monthly stipends to buy a second hand car. "When I joined the Programme, I had one car. I needed extra money to increase the number of my cars and I had to save every cent."

The former participant said the financial

management skills offered at the Kishugu Training Academy have really helped a lot because he had no knowledge.

"This programme has served as a springboard for my business interests in the transport sector. My crew members were compassionate and supportive."

Lamola has an employee drive the other car while he drives the new one. "I am working with children because I transport them daily and that gives me joy," said Lamola.



Former WOF Limpopo crew leader, Jim Kobe, thanks Working on Fire for paving his way.