



WOFIRE NEWS

— Saving Lives • Protecting the Environment • Restoring Dignity —

May 2023



Working on Fire



Working on Fire - WOF TV News Channel



@wo_fire

www.workingonfire.org



SUMMER FIRE SEASON COMES TO A CLOSE



It's a wrap for the 2022/2023 summer fire season. Working on Fire, in the Western Cape and western region of the Eastern Cape, concluded the season on April 30, 2023. Over the course of five months, the two provinces have worked tirelessly, around the clock, to protect the environment and save lives.

Western Cape

The season began with a flurry of activity in November 2022 in the Western Cape, as the province joined with partners and firefighting agencies to conduct fire suppression operations outside of the normal fire season months. As the new year began, the number of fires recorded dropped, and according to Western Cape Communication Officer, Limakatso Khalianyane, the season was not as busy as previous years.

The busiest month for the province was January, with both ground and aerial resources assisting in fighting 43 fires. **Since the beginning of the summer fire season, the province recorded a total of 110 fires**, with aerial resources flying a total of 565 hours.

Teams in the Western Cape continue to engage in other integrated fire management activities, including assisting partners in putting preventive fire measures in place and conducting fire awareness activities.



Eastern Cape

In the Eastern Cape, Working on Fire assisted partners Mountain To Ocean (MTO), Eastern Cape Umbrella Fire Protection Association, and SANParks in Integrated Fire Management. This year's fire season kept firefighters and aerial resources busy in some fires that raged for days, including the Gqeberha fire that threatened residential properties and schools.

According to Sarah Baartman District Ground Operations Manager, Ongezwa Nonjiji, WOF teams were dispatched to

four fires in March. Firefighters also put preventive measures in place before and during the season, with our brave young men and women creating fire belts around areas at risk of fires around the province.

The teams that assisted in the four fires in March were the Lottering, Blueilies, Witelsbos, and Kromsrievier teams. **Only three fires were recorded in April**, bringing the total to **33 fires attended since the start of the summer fire season**.



FUEL LOAD REDUCTION MINIMISES THE RISK



The Suikerborsrand team doing the manual fuel reduction at the nature reserve.

Teams in Gauteng are intensifying efforts to mitigate the risk of runaway wildfires and are doing manual fuel load reduction ahead of the winter fire season.

Surprise Kgwedi, Crew leader Type 1 for the JS Moroka team, said his team is slashing overgrown grass. “We anticipate a busy fire season and necessary measures must be taken. In January, we responded to two fire calls which is a rare occurrence. Last fire season we responded to at least 44 fires,” Kgwedi said.

He urged landowners to collaborate with fire and emergency authorities in the area.

Bheki Dube, Assistant Project Manager, said the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve team is hard at work doing manual fuel load reduction.

“We are going to do fire breaks because we are trimming down the fuel load. These exercises help conserve the soil and avoid burning the fence during fire breaks,” explained Dube.



North West teams hit the ground running by ensuring the environment and lives are protected.

LIMPOPO RESPONDS SWIFTLY TO RUNAWAY VELD FIRES



Limpopo teams respond to fire calls as the province battles fires outside of their fire season.

Limpopo teams are hard at work saving lives and protecting the environment by assisting partners, landowners, and communities at large in suppressing wildfires in different regions of the province.

Increasing temperatures, due to climate change, have resulted in wildfires outside of the normal fire season. This saw Limpopo teams respond to fire calls with their season only beginning in June. The province

has thus far responded to a total of five (5) fires, with almost 90 hectares of vegetation lost.

The Ground Operation Management commended their teams for their continuous efforts in ensuring the safety of the environment and people. The province is also ready for the winter fire season after successfully completing its Yellow Card Assessment Camps in April.

PREPARING LANDOWNERS

All 17 North West teams are back at work after completing their Yellow Card Assessment Camp. They have started with Integrated Fire Management activities to prepare landowners for the upcoming winter fire season.

The teams created firebreaks, removed alien plants, and overhanging dry tree branches in a bid to reduce the risk of

unwanted fires. Control burns were also conducted to promote the beneficial use of fire.

The National Veld and Forest Fire ACT, ACT 101 of 1998 requires landowners to prepare a firebreak on their side of the property boundary where there is a reasonable risk of wildland fires.

STIMULATING REGROWTH WITH ECOLOGICAL BURN

Working on Fire teams in the Overberg region joined other firefighting agencies and helped the Overstrand Municipality and Cape Nature with a prescribed burn in Betty's Bay. 54 firefighters from Walkerbay, Hottentots Holland, and Bredasdorp assisted during the day while the Kelnmond team was on the line overnight.

The goal was to reduce the fuel load and stimulate the regrowth of the fynbos. Cape Nature said it has been 30 years since some of the fuel has not been burned and was a great risk

to the nearby community. Due to the intensity of the burn, which generated thick smoke, the R44 between Betty's Bay and Pringle Bay was temporarily closed for safety reasons including poor visibility.

Many more prescribed and block burns have been conducted throughout the province when teams have been on standby for fires. There have not been many fires reported in Western Cape during the Summer Fire Season, which gave landowners a chance to administer the burns.



WOF teams during a prescribed burn in Betty's Bay.

DE DOORNS RESIDENTS LEARN TO PROTECT THEMSELVES



Du Doorns residents taught fire safety skills during a fire awareness workshop.

Working on Fire, in the Western Cape, partnered with the Breede Valley Municipality and visited the Du Doorns community to equip them with information to mitigate unwanted fires.

The community gathered at the local town hall and spent a day going through extensive lessons on how they can keep themselves safe, not just from structural fires, but also from runaway fires. Earlier this year, wildfires occurred in the mountains above the community.

The community members learned about creating defensible spaces and removing flammable materials around their properties to limit the chances of their properties catching runaway fires. In the case where their houses are already on fire, residents learned how to evacuate safely without the risks of injuries and smoke inhalation.

Working on Fire continues to empower the local community, particularly in the Cape Winelands as most veld and forest fires have been reported in that region.

IMIZAMO YETHU COMMUNITY LEARNS ABOUT FIRE PREVENTION MEASURES



Community members of Hout Bay, in the Imizamo Yethu informal Settlement listen attentively.

Working on Fire, in the Western Cape, recently conducted a fire awareness workshop with the residents of Imizamo Yethu Informal Settlement in Hout Bay.

Residents were taught measures they should put in place to prevent unnecessary fires. One of the life-saving skills they acquired was the evacuation drill they will use in case their properties caught fire.

The workshop was followed by a clean-up activity for the community to demonstrate how they could limit

their exposure to unnecessary fires. As part of integrated fire management, Working on Fire visits communities in fire-prone areas and teach them to take ownership of their safety.

Imizamo Yethu is one of the informal settlements that are usually victims of shack fires. In one of the fires in 2021, Working on Fire dispatched its aerial resources to waterbomb raging flames that swept through the area. The mission was a success as ground crews were able to attack the fire after it was brought under control by aerial resources.

Yellow Card Training Camps

KWAZULU-NATAL PREPARES FOR THE WINTER FIRE SEASON

In preparation for the Winter Fire Season, Working on Fire in KwaZulu-Natal is holding its annual Yellow Card Training Camps.

The refresher training will prepare over 700 participants in the province and assess their fitness and practical, and theoretical knowledge.

The camp began on 12 April and will end on 20 May. At the end of each assessment camp, the participants will receive their Yellow Cards, which is a requirement to attend the fire line.

Each assessment readies the participants to conduct and assist landowners with the WOF Programme's much sought-after Integrated Fire Management services during the winter season. These include block burns, firebreaks, trace belts, slashing, and alien plant removal.

A total of 39 teams are stationed across KZN and will assist stakeholders, which include Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Fire Protection Associations, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, local municipalities, plantations, and nature reserves in IFMS.



Participants during the firewall exercise.

MPUMALANGA IS READY TO ASSIST PARTNERS IN FIRE SUPPRESSION



Firefighters are assessed on the line construction exercise.

Mpumalanga hosted their Yellow Card Assessment Camps in Ermelo (for Highveld teams) and Mbombela (for Lowveld teams) from Wednesday, 12 April to Friday, 21 April. These Yellow Card Training Camps (YCTC), were conducted to provide theoretical and practical training and assessment for provincial veld and forest firefighters before the start of the fire season.

The camps were designed to simulate actual fire-active situations, with the primary goal of ensuring that all firefighters are competent on the fire line. Each firefighter had the opportunity to

practice firefighting skills, such as hose lay and line construction. Furthermore, each team reviewed standard mobilisation procedures and learned environmentally sound camping methods.

At the end of the camp, firefighters who successfully passed their assessment received a yellow card, which is an accreditation certifying their readiness to be dispatched to the fire line. As a result, Mpumalanga is now prepared to assist partners, Fire Protection Associations, and stakeholders in integrated fire management and suppression of wildfires throughout the upcoming winter fire season.

ANOTHER BATCH OF LEADERS GRADUATE AT KISHUGU TRAINING



Crew leaders Type 2s play a critical role in assisting the Crew leader Type 1 in leading Working on Fire teams when conducting WOF's much sought-after Integrated Fire Management Solutions. They are also responsible for ensuring the team's overall fitness, performance, and discipline, and overseeing productivity.

This is what awaits the new Type 2s that graduated during a pass-out parade at the Kishugu Training Academy on Friday, 31 March. They completed a 26-day training course dedicated to leadership development, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in their new positions. Their leadership and expertise will be invaluable in ensuring the safety of both their teams and the communi-

ties they serve. In his keynote address, Piet van der Merwe, National Operations Manager, emphasised the significant role of crew leaders in the success of the Working on Fire Programme. He highlighted that crew leaders serve as the backbone of the ground operations and their effectiveness is critical to ensuring team productivity.

Van der Merwe encouraged the new crew leaders to continue climbing the ranks, expanding their skill sets, and striving towards management positions within the Programme.

Congratulations to our new crew leaders and good luck when leading our teams when implementing IFMS.

NORMANDIEN LEADER IS THE BEST FEMALE RUNNER

Crew leader Type 1 for the Normandie base in KwaZulu, Khethiwe Mndaweni, was crowned the best female runner at the recent Crew leader pass-out parade at the Kishugu Training Academy.

"Before I joined the Programme, I was a part-time assistant at a local butchery. Life was difficult because I was a new mother without a stable income. I was recruited on 19 March 2012 and my life changed completely," said Mndaweni.

She was promoted to Crew leader Type 2 in 2017 and recalls the training very challenging. "We had to wake up early and slept very late. We were doing the 2,4 kilometre run and route matches numerous times and got blisters every day."

Mndaweni added that she learned humility, decision-making skills, respecting everyone, and most importantly, making a difference through personal efforts, and following all programme operational systems to ensure positive outcomes during her

recent training n Crew leader Type 1. "I completed all tasks required because I was not alone. My colleagues constantly motivated me. They were very supportive during the tough activities and I am grateful to them."

The crew leader was excited to hear her name being called out as the best female runner during the graduation ceremony. "I am honoured because it was unexpected. I ensured that I went all out on all tasks and committed myself. I took charge, was responsible, and led the team in the morning parades."

Mndaweni says the Working on Fire Programme has made a huge impact on her life. She renovated her childhood home and plans to save up to buy her first home for her children.

"I encourage my peers to never doubt themselves, especially when trying out new things. Excel in everything you do and go the extra mile when doing your work," Mndaweni concluded.

BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD FOR NEW RECRUITS



Thrilled Western Cape new recruits ready to fight fires.

Working on Fire, in the Western Cape, welcomed 18 newly trained recruits in April. They join hundreds of participants in the province, who provide Integrated Fire Management Solutions on behalf of the Programme.

The graduates took part in the first pass-out parade at Kishugu's Satellite Training Centre in Calitzdorp, Southern Cape. Following their graduation, the new recruits joined their colleagues in doing fire prevention work such as

prescribed burns in various parts of the province. One of the new participants, Joy Ruiters, who was recruited from Grabouw for the Hottentots Holland team, was thrilled to have completed her advanced firefighting training.

"My journey at the academy was very exciting. I surprised myself with my endurance. I am, therefore, ready to go out and fight fires and apply all other skills I have learned at the academy," said Ruiters.



Khethiwe Mndaweni receiving her best female runner award from Hannes de Lange, National Training Manager.

HOW TO START AN AGRIBUSINESS

 IN SOUTH AFRICA

EXAMPLES OF AGRIBUSINESSES



TRADITIONAL FARMING



ANIMAL FEED MAKING



TRACTOR AND FARM MACHINERY PRODUCERS



SEED AND AGRICHEM MANUFACTURING



FOOD PROCESSING COMPANIES



HOW TO START A BUSINESS?

Research and understand the Climate

When you have established where you want to start your agribusiness, you need to check the specific climate and soil conditions of that area. Knowing the climate and soil will determine the types of crops or livestock that are suitable for that environment.

Market

There are many different agribusinesses and it is important that you understand the local market – identify competition and opportunities that exist in your area.

Business plan

You will need a solid business plan for your agricultural venture. The business plan establishes exactly what you will require to set up your agribusiness and start making money. The specific details of:

- Financial details and Capital requirements (you need to know how much money you will need to start your business)
- Expected revenue and profits;
- Operations plan
- Marketing plan (how you will get customers).

Understand that it is a process

Start small and focus on gradually growing your business. You need to plan and have a solid understanding of the industry, and by starting small with a clear plan, you could eventually establish a hugely profitable agribusiness.

Which is the biggest agricultural industry in South Africa?

Grain (maize, barley, sorghum, oats, and wheat) is one of the biggest agricultural industries in the country. The SA agricultural sector also has a large number of livestock farms. (Refer to table 1.1).

Table 1.1

Profitable Agricultural businesses in South Africa.

Grain Farming
Macadamia Nut Farming
Pig Farming
Poultry Farming
Oilseed Farming
Wine Farming

High Demand Agricultural Products in South Africa.

Grains: Maize, Wheat.
Grass: Sugarcane.
Fruits: Sunflower, Citrus.
Vegetables: Lettuce, Chicory, Pumpkins, Carrots, Tomatoes.
Livestock: Cattle, Dairy, Pigs.



OPPORTUNITY SAVES YOUTH

A newly recruited Mpho Molefe, for the Maropeng, base said words cannot describe her appreciation for being offered a work opportunity in the Working on Fire Programme. Molefe became an orphan when she was only 10 years old and lamented the pain and anguish of being parentless.

“I fell pregnant in 2020 with my daughter and in 2022, I had to drop out of ABET classes because there was literally no food,” said Molefe.

Molefe stays with her maternal grandfather and started doing odd jobs around farms in Magaliesburg last year. This meant walking long distances to conduct piece jobs. “You don’t know what this work opportunity means to me. This means my child can eat and be clothed.”

She intends to return to ABET classes next year because she wants to acquire a matric certificate. “I am optimistic about the future. I am dedicated to working hard to improve the condition of my family’s lives.”

MAROPENG NEW RECRUITS ARE READY

The newly trained five participants at the Maropeng base vow to bolster the strength of their team in executing the Integrated Fire Management operations.

Seabolela Nemukulu is one of the participants and he shared how he likes to help communities with burning fire breaks and other community-based projects.

“We have been well trained in basic firefighting. We are ready to battle the blazes in our area this winter fire season. There is a need for us to

adapt to current conditions,” said Nemukulu.

When asked about training, Nemukulu said it was such an exciting exercise. He wished it did not end. He said the crew members have done very well during the training with the best runner emerging from their base.

Regional Manager, Stephen Bokaba said the Maropeng team needed to be strengthened for the winter season. “The base partner will have a full yellow-carded team.”



Mpho Molefe appreciates the work opportunity.



Newly recruited firefighters are ready for the winter fire season.

TEAM CELEBRATES THEIR STEP TO MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES



The Winterton team with their base manager, Dion Watrus.

The Winterton team in KwaZulu-Natal celebrated 10 of its participants obtaining their learner’s licence. The team embarked on this project to advance their skills so they can benefit from job opportunities beyond the Working on Fire Programme.

“I am proud of my team. They were committed to this project. They saw my vision in gaining more skills that will benefit them in the long run,” said Crew leader Type 1, Thulasizwe Gasa.

The team contributed R100 per individual since the beginning of the year and the first group of five wrote to their learner’s licenses in January. In February, the second group contributed

and obtained their learners.

“The next step is for them to obtain their driver’s licences. They are happy, excited, and confident in continuing to the next step,” Gasa added.

The Winterton team thanked their leader for implementing this project, which has gotten them excited again, and they are also grateful to WOF for developing leaders such as Gasa.

“We appreciate the support from our management when we initiate such projects. Our base manager also played a crucial role in the success of our learner licence project,” Gasa concluded.

WOF KIDS LEARN ABOUT HISTORY

“Working on Fire played a wonderful role by taking us to the Amathole and Steve Biko Museums, where we learned a lot about the human rights origins of this country.”

These are the words of Yeyama Nte, who was amongst 20 WOF Kids that participated in an educational tour organised by the WOF’s social development department. Nte said it was thoughtful of WOF to take them to

this museum as it provides an environment where people can learn, experience, and share information.

“We were told the Amathole museum was established in 1884 and it’s one of the oldest museums in the country. We had fun at this place and got an opportunity to see exhibits of the animals,” he added.

The children are the offspring of

WOF managers in the Eastern Cape who were invited as part of Human Rights Month activities. They were also taken to the Steve Biko Museum to learn about the stalwart’s contribution to the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

The day concluded with a visit to the library to learn the importance of reading and books, and they went to watch a movie.



VAALHARTS TEAM SAYS NO TO GENDER VIOLENCE

The North West Vaalharts team raised awareness of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) during a campaign that honoured women, children, and LGBTQI+ community members who lost their lives due to GBV.

The campaign was held on 29 March at the Detective Lapa in Jan Kempdorp. Various stakeholders from different departments, which included the South African Police Service, Jankempdorp Social Development, Child Protection, Sexual Offences (FCS), Family South Africa (FAMSA), Lifeline, and Aids Foundation South Africa united in this common goal.

The SAPS presented the worrying statistics of GBV and encouraged all genders not to be afraid in raising their

voices against any form of abuse. They furthermore emphasised that each and every person in this world has the right to live in a free world and live their lives the way they choose.

Members of the LGBTQI+ community raised their concerns and pleaded with everyone in attendance that they also want to be treated as humans and that discrimination against them should stop.

“We also have the right to live our lives. Treat us the way you want to be treated. Being a part of the LGBTQI+ community does not mean that we are different,” said Itumeleng Pitse from the Lifeline department.



The Vaalharts team joins the Gender-Based Violence awareness campaign at the Detective Lapa in Jankempdorp.

CREATING SUSTAINABLE VEGETABLE GARDENS

The Working on Fire Programme works tirelessly to make a difference and restore dignity to the participants and communities where its bases are located, through various activities and programmes.

WOF Limpopo established an organic garden at the Phiphidi Base in 2020, with the aim of creating sustainable food resources to feed families, schools, and the community at large. The project was headed by the Employee Assistant Programme Practitioners (EAPs).

To ensure that a difference is made and dignity is restored, the EAPs expanded the project to more bases in the prov-

ince. This was the case when Selaelo Mathokwane conducted food security training for the Aganang team recently.

The aim of the training was to capacitate the team with knowledge and skills on how to establish their own organic garden using permaculture farming. The garden will serve the team and the community members around the base.

Permaculture involves indigenous or traditional knowledge that has been developed over many generations to form farming systems that are regenerative, self-sustaining, and resilient systems from natural ecosystems.



Selaelo Mathokwane trains the Aganang team at their new organic garden.

KEEPING A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE

The United Nations observes the World Day for Safety and Health at Work annually on 28 April. This international day aims to promote safe work environments and raise awareness about the impacts of work-related accidents and illnesses. It prioritises occupational safety and health (OSH) by bringing

attention to it on a global and national scale, while also supporting efforts to improve OSH systems and programs in alignment with relevant international labor standards. At WOF Kishugu Joint Venture, we take OHS compliance seriously and have committed to ensuring complete adherence. We expect every employee to

actively participate in day-to-day compliance with legislation and company standards, as OHS is a team effort and everyone's responsibility. As we celebrate this important day, our OHS department would like to share some helpful tips to maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

FIKISWA MWANDA EASTERN CAPE OHS ADMINISTRATOR

A safe and healthy workplace protects employees from injuries and illness. It also increases productivity and work quality.

Conducting safety audits allows hazards to be spotted early. Setting and following emergency protocols assist employees to respond quickly and effectively if there is any emergency happening.

Keeping workers safe will improve employee morale and when employees are happy with their job, the more productive they will be.

I joined the WOF family as a firefighter in 2014 October for the Tsomo base.

Before joining the Pogramme, I struggled a lot to get a better job because I was not qualified. I matriculated in 2008 and I went to MSC Business College to further my studies with the hope that things will go my way. I did Human Resource Management for a year due to financial problems.



Working on Fire gave me numerous skills, including communication, presentation, and firefighting skills.

I was also a SHE Representative at my base and I believe this played an instrumental role in my promotion to OS Admin.

SIMANGELE MAZIBUKO KWAZULU-NATAL JUNIOR SAFETY OFFICER

Safety is essential for living a normal life and maintaining a safe working environment can be difficult. I encourage our supervisors, and SHE Representatives to develop a safety culture by creating relevant workplace safety tips for their teams.

It may appear that success, productivity, and efficiency are at odds with safe work practices at times. It is therefore critical to remind workers that unsafe work is never successful work.

Productivity and quality follow from safety, not the other way around.

I wish you all a productive, safe, and injury-free upcoming winter fire season.

Remember safety starts with you, think before you act.



KHUTSO MOKOTO LIMPOPO SAFETY OFFICER



Safety is not an intellectual exercise to keep us at work. It is a matter of life and death. It is the sum of our contributions to safety management that determines whether the people we work with live or die, "Sir Brian Appleton.

I urge the Working on Fire Family to practice safe and healthy working

procedures. When working at a computer for long periods of time, take frequent breaks to stretch and move around. This can help prevent eye strain, back pain, and other discomforts associated with prolonged sitting. Additionally, adjusting the position of your computer screen and chair can also help improve ergonomics and reduce the risk of injury.

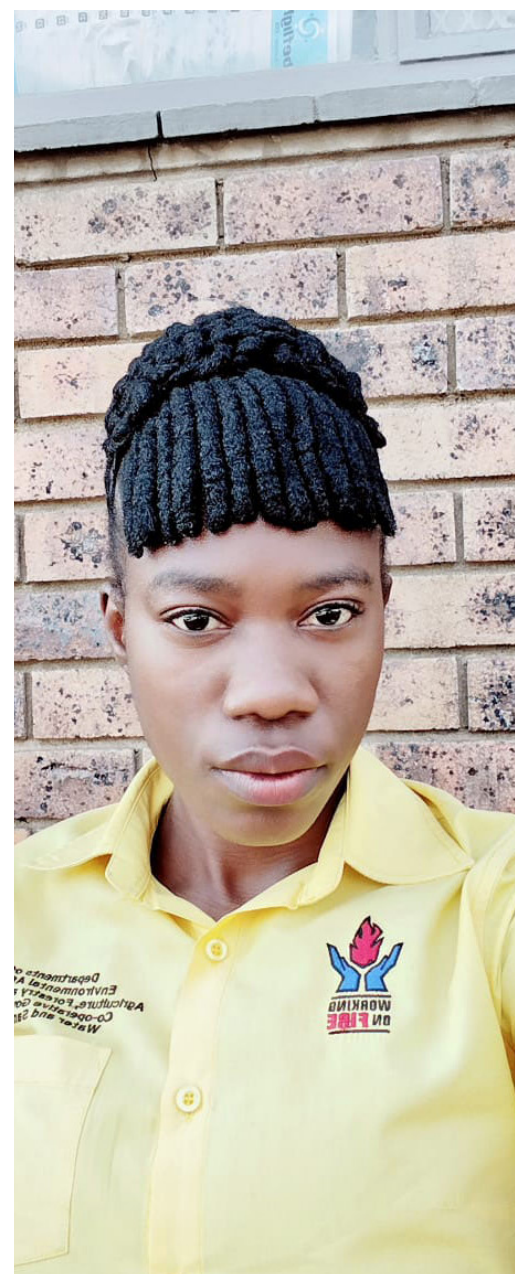
ZANELE SEDIBE MPUMALANGA SAFETY OFFICER

When I joined the LEFPA base in 2011, becoming a Safety Officer was not part of my career plan. I started as a firefighter and worked in that role for four years before being chosen to be a SHE representative. I then moved on to become an OHS administrator at the Mpumalanga provincial office.

I am proud to be among the many former firefighters who have been equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications through the Working on Fire Programme. With the assistance of WOF, I was able to further my education and obtain a SAMTRAC qualification from NOSA in 2018. This certificate has given me a valuable advantage in my field.

Thanks to my qualifications, I was promoted to the role of Junior Safety Officer in Mpumalanga. As we celebrate World Day for Safety and Health at Work, it is crucial that we follow the rules and maintain a safe and healthy work environment. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Always follow labels and safety signs.
- Do not attempt anything for which you are not trained.
- Avoid horseplay while at work.
- Keep the workplace tidy and clean.
- Report any hazardous conditions immediately.
- By following these simple guidelines, we can help ensure that everyone stays safe and healthy while on the job.



A BIG BUSINESS STARTS SMALL



Gift Mokoena encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams.

Many participants in Working on Fire use the Programme as a stepping stone. They either move on to greener pastures in both public and private sectors or save their stipends to establish their own businesses.

Former Mookgophong Chainsaw Operator, Gift Mokoena, is one of those who are pursuing entrepreneurship. He became a part of the WOF Family in November 2016 through recruitment, after knocking on different doors without any luck.

While serving with dedication and determination as a participant for the Mookgophong team, Mokoena was promoted to Chainsaw Operator for his base after receiving training at Kishugu Academy in 2017.

It was in 2018 that he left the Programme and became a Driver in Gauteng. However, that didn't turn out well, and due to unforeseen circumstances, he lost his job.

Mokoena did not give up. The challenges motivated him to establish a business and after careful consideration and thorough market research, he began selling Kotas, targeting the community members around his area.

"My business has been doing well. I encountered challenges after its establishment, but I never allowed them to have an impact on reaching my goal. I encourage all individuals who aspire to become entrepreneurs to pursue their dream and never call it quits."

DIGGING FOR PLATINUM

Former participant, Thabang Dyasi is now a miner at the Impala Platinum Mine in Rustenburg, North West.

Dyasi was a participant based at the Abe Bailey Nature Reserve team in Gauteng.

"It was my wish to be a miner. I must applaud the Working on Fire Programme for training me in structural firefighting at the Greytown Rural Metro Academy in KwaZulu Natal. I gained more skills," he said.

Part of Dyasi's plan is to obtain a dump truck driving certificate. "I am grabbing any opportunity which will better my life. I am also very much interested in Occupational Health and Safety because it is crucial in mines. I am glad WOF has empowered and strengthened me with knowledge and information about safety," he explained.

Dyasi is taking his wealth of skills gained from Working on Fire to his new



Thabang Dyasi plies his trade as a platinum miner in Rustenburg.

employment. "I will not disappoint all those who support my journey."

A STEPPING STONE



Thembile Sajini thanks WOF for being his stepping stone.

Thembile Sajini is a former firefighter for the Lusikisiki base and currently works at the Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment as the General Assistant.

He joined the Working on Fire Programme in 2010 and moved to Crew leader Type 2 and 1. He became a rope technician when his base was closed and the Lusikisiki High Altitude Team was opened.

He exited the Programme in 2013 and is thankful to WOF for providing him with skills that assisted him in being a better person today. "I acquired skills such as advanced firefighting, leadership, helicopter safety, and communications skills," Sajini said.

He thanks WOF for providing him with a job when he was unemployed and also for being his stepping stone. "To all firefighters, work hard, be patient, and always set goals for yourself."

FLOURISHING IN STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTING CAREER



Simpiwe Mabuda is waving the WOF flag high as a structural firefighter for the City of Matlosana.

Working on Fire continues to create job opportunities for thousands of young women and men from disadvantaged communities and is restoring their dignity by making a difference in their lives.

Former Highveld team participant, Simphiwe Mabuda is one of these youths and is currently serving as a structural firefighter for the City of Matlosana fire department in Klerksdorp, North West.

Mabuda joined WOF in 2020 and left the Programme in 2022. "I am very thankful to WOF for giving me the skills and the opportunity. The

Programme taught me discipline and how to interact with different people from all walks of life."

Mabuda continues to wave the Working on Fire flag in her new career and said the skills and experience gained from the Programme contributed to her successful completion of the tough structural firefighting training.

"I encourage my former colleagues to never give up on their dreams. Pray and stay positive at all times. Remember it's never too late to try again in life. Grab all opportunities that come your way and always do your best," concluded Mabuda.