

WORKING ON FIRE

RESTORING DIGNITY • SAVING LIVES • PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT



KEY FACTS



forestry, fisheries
& the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

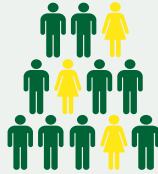


WORKING ON FIRE IS AN EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME WHICH
RESIDES WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Key Statistics

Working on Fire is an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) aimed at providing poverty and income relief through work opportunities. The Programme resides under and is funded by the Department Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Through the Programme, young men and women are trained to become skilled participants to implement Integrated Fire Management services and products and they are deployed across the country to reduce the personal and economic harm caused by unwanted wildfire.

GROWTH FROM 2003 TO 2022

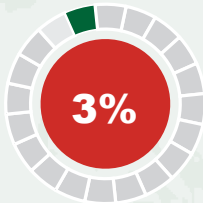


2003 : 852



2022 : 5000

Participant Representation



Disabled



Working on Fire recruits and trains young men and women from across South Africa with a strong focus on the marginalized communities and people with disabilities.

Gender Distribution

Female



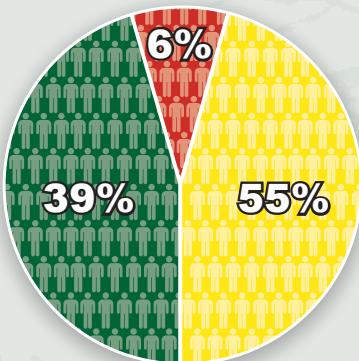
Male



Working on Fire currently employs 31% females in its ranks of fire fighters, the highest level of female participation in any fire fighting service in the world.

Employees per Age Group

Working on Fire has a strong focus on creating work opportunities for the youth and developing their skills to become employable within the formal job market.



 Age Group 18 - 25

 Age Group 26 - 35

 Age Group 35+

MORE THAN 90% OF WOF PARTICIPANTS ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 35

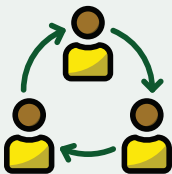
Working on Fire manages an Integrated Fire Management Programme which amongst others includes fire management planning, detection, prevention, suppression, dispatch and coordination and community fire awareness activities.

WOF FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES (MAY 2008 - APRIL 2022)



GROUND TEAMS
DISPATCHED

18 782



TOTAL FIRES
SUPPRESSED

50 759



ESTIMATED
HECTARES BURNT

16 305 816



56 739.05 HOURS FLOWN

Community Fire Awareness Education 2011 - 2022

We endeavour to create communities adapted to wildfires through education of fire management principles and promotion of partnerships. WoF crews are developed as Fire Awareness practitioners to educate people at grassroots level in schools and communities across South Africa about the safe and responsible use of fire in and around homes or properties and in the natural environment.

COMMUNITIES

10 986

FireSafe Workshops
and Activities

AUDIENCE:
889 843

SCHOOLS

10 719

School Related
Activities

AUDIENCE:
1 710 509

Participants Continue to Grow and Develop in Programme

The life skills components of the basic training provide participants with a platform for personal growth and progress up the ranks of the WoF programme.

50 Percent of former firefighters are occupying management positions within the Programme and others have secured permanent employment outside of the WOF Programme.

Social Development

The Social Development Department promotes capacity building amongst WOF participants and is a key unit that helps to develop the social cohesion of these participants. Empowering participants to make informed decisions and also to help them with financial and social related problems makes up a vital part of the programme’s initiatives. These are some of the courses and workshops which Working on Fire presents to participants in their teams throughout the country.

TRAUMA DEBRIEFING	ANGER MANAGEMENT	PERSONAL WELLNESS & GROWTH
SEXUAL PROBLEMS	MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIP	STRESS MANAGEMENT
HEALTH RELATED ISSUES	CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	SUBSTANCE DEPENDANCE
RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS	DISABILITY AWARENESS	SUICIDE PREVENTION
WORK RELATED ISSUES	EFFECTIVE PARENTING	TRAUMA MANAGEMENT
FINANCIAL PROBLEMS	ETHICAL AWARENESS	CHILD PROTECTION WEEK
ASPECTS REGARDING CAREER	HIV/AIDS	TB AWARENESS

Presidant Cyril Ramaphosa:

**President of the Republic
of South Africa - April 2021**

“The international community knows about South Africa’s Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), of which the Working on Fire programme forms part. It is internationally recognised and thus a very important programme”,



Barbara Creecy:

**Minister of the Department of Forestry,
Fisheries and the Environment - April 2021**

“Bravery, our late president Nelson Mandela told us, is not the absence of fear, but the ability to overcome fear at the time when we need you to overcome that fear. We salute WOF firefighter’s bravery. We salute your ability to fight your fears and we stand in awe of that incredible ability.”



Nomfundo Tshabalala:

**Director-General of the Department of Forestry,
Fisheries and the Environment - March 2022**

“We are at a time where climate change is taking centre stage and global temperatures are rising and fires are becoming more prevalent within our communities. The Working on Fire Programme has been instrumental in fighting many big fires in South Africa, especially in the Western Cape. WOF teams have fought and will continue to fight many fires. You have a big responsibility and I can see you carry this responsibility with pride.”



AWARDS

2005

Platinum Award, Impumelelo Innovations Trust

In 2005 WOF was awarded a Platinum Award, the highest accolade, by the Impumelelo Innovations Trust that recognises exceptional achievement by government-initiated projects that are sustainable and can be replicated.

IMPUMELELO

2009

Kamoso Award for Best Environmental Programme.

In 2009, the remarkable work done by WOF in reducing the impact of unwanted fires on people and the environment was acknowledged when the programme received the Kamoso Award for Best Environmental Programme.

KAMOSO AWARDS
Sustaining Life's Environment

2010

Certificate of Merit by the Impumelelo Awards Trust.

In March 2010, Working on Fire was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the Impumelelo Awards Trust for its KwaMemela Firewise Community project, which has successfully pioneered community-based fire management concepts in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

IMPUMELELO

2012

Centrum Guardian Awards.

In October 2012 WOF received a certificate of excellence in the Centrum Guardian Awards. Crew Leader, Jonas Zondamela, and the Nkomazi team in Mpumalanga represented WOF with their rescue efforts during the floods in the Lowveld earlier in 2012.

Centrum

RECOGNITION AND ACCOLADES

2007

On the devastating wildfires that ravaged 3 regions in Mpumalanga in 2007

Forestry SA CEO, Mike Edwards stated after a devastating fire season in 2017, that "Forestry South Africa has sustained losses of R3.6b and that if it was not for Working on Fire, that losses would have been double". Forestry SA CEO, Mike Edwards.

2012

On a visit to the Training Academy in 2012

In 2012, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Mrs. Edna Molewa, during her visit to the WOF Training Academy on the 23rd November, officially handed over the Kamoso Award for the best performing EPW programme, under the sector Environment and Culture to WOF. Minister Molewa said, "WOF has once again excelled in their commitment to create jobs, to alleviate poverty, to skill previously unemployed youth and successfully having contributed to South Africa's integrated fire management capacity." Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Mrs. Edna Molewa.

2015

The XIV World Forestry Congress

AU Chair applauds WOF for creating employment for women participants Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union, during her opening speech at the World Forestry Congress thanked WOF for having the highest ratio of women employed in the veld and forest fire fighting services throughout the world. "I am told that thirty percent of the fire fighters in the WOF programme are women, and this in itself is a major achievement for women on the continent", Dlamini-Zuma said. September 2015

During a Public Employment Programme-Inter-Ministerial Committee (PEP-IMC) tour to Thaba Nchu in the Free State on 13 October 2007, the Deputy President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, expressed his gratitude towards the firefighters from Working on Fire for serving the country in such an excellent manner. He commended the firefighters for the discipline and high fitness levels visible in their work. "The international community knows about South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), of which the Working on Fire programme forms part. It is internationally recognised and thus a very important programme. October 2017

2019

Climate Change Conference, UN Summit on Global Climate Action in New York

President's Cyril Ramaphosa's statement on South Africa's position on Climate Change which was handed to the United Nations' Secretary General at the Climate Change Conference in New York which makes mention of Working on Fire's role in the Drought Relief Project. September 2019

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) has won a bronze award for the successful implementation of youth empowerment policies.

Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Nkxoliso Kiviet, mentioned Working on Fire as one of the Expanded Public Works Programmes that were building a core of young people who have skills in various fields of infrastructure development and environmental management when she accepted the Future Policy Bronze Award 2019.

South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme received the award – for its role in promoting youth economic empowerment – at the Future Policy Awards 2019 ceremony held in Belgrade, Serbia, on 16 October.

During her acceptance speech, the Deputy Minister said government aims to have five million more youth as beneficiaries of the EPWPs and mentioned how South African youth core skills came to the rescue of Canada when WOF's firefighters were deployed to Canada to assist with firefighting operations. October 2019

2021

Firefighters receive high praise after Canada deployment

WOF receives praises from Canada and South Africa after its fourth deployment to Canada. The Programme was previously deployed in 2015, 2016, and 2019. A total of 109 firefighters and management left South Africa on 10 August 2021 for the province of Manitoba, Canada, and spent 34 days assisting with firefighting efforts.

They were welcomed back on home soil on 16 September 2021 with high praises and recognition from Canadian authorities and here at home. The High Commissioner of Canada to South Africa, Christopher Cooter, said: "You made sacrifices to be away from your loved ones and risked your lives in fighting these wildfires. I know the people of Manitoba, Canada, and the communities at large are grateful and appreciate your efforts and the team spirit you showed as evidenced by your singing and chanting upon your return."

Minister of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Barbara Creecy, said: "I extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the WOF team returning home from a successful firefighting mission in Canada, Manitoba. The praise for your professionalism and high-performance standards expressed by Canadian authorities is indicative of the success of the WOF Programme and its capabilities in Integrated Fire Management over the past 18 years. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the Expanded Public Works Programme, and indeed South Africa share in this proud moment with all of you and welcome back home."

