

# Female oil collector refuses to be conquered in man's world

Single mom Jemimah Mofokeng started her oil collection business 10 years ago and says that despite it being a tough and competitive industry, she has managed to make a sustainable living for herself and her children.

“While I have seen many male oil collectors come and go in my industry, I have stuck it out and persisted. I have worked hard to do my best for my family. I work with a dedicated heart and a committed soul – I refuse to be conquered,” she vowed.

According to Mofokeng, one of the biggest hurdles she encountered initially was start-up capital.

“Getting funds together to start a business can be a major barrier. Also, as a woman, I received my fair share of criticism for wanting to enter what is seen as a ‘man’s world,’” she recalled.

And while she’s made a success of her oil collection, it is not without its ongoing challenges for this woman who says that the physical side of oil collecting can be taxing.

“Don’t underestimate the physical demands of doing this job! Over the years I have hired people to help me and they all find the work too hard, so don’t stick it out for long. I mostly go out there alone to collect oil.”

Being alone on the road is another challenge that the entrepreneur faces and Mofokeng says she does need to be careful – especially when working with money.

“Used-oil collectors often go around carrying cash to pay for the oil we collect from the small workshops, who do not have electronic machines, so it’s can be a very risky job for a woman on her own. I try to minimise this risk by doing electronic payments to my clients so I don’t carry cash at all – that makes you less of a target,” she noted.

But all said and done, a decade later and Mofokeng is going strong and is a registered used-oil collector with the Rose (Recycling Oil Saves the Environment) Foundation, which has successfully been driving the collection and recycling of used oil for 25 years.

Speaking to DRUM, Rose CEO Bubele Nyiba says Rose collectors are the heroes of the industry as they save the environment.

“Rose collectors such as Jemimah are the heroes of the industry,” he says.

“They are the ones who go out there and collect every possible drop of used oil that could damage the environment – it’s hard, messy work but they are making a difference.”

And besides being able to provide for her family, Mofokeng is happy to be saving the environment too.

“I like knowing that in the years I have been collecting oil I have not only continued to provide for my children, but I have contributed to keeping the used oil out of our environment,” she added. – **W24**