

WILD SHOTS Outreach

**Wild Shots Outreach's Rifumo Mathebula WINS international
"Young Environmentalist of the Year" Award 2022.**



Press Release:

Wild Shots Outreach Programme Director Rifumo Mathebula has WON The Young Environmentalist of the Year Award in the international CIWEM (Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management) competition!

This prestigious award recognises 'passionate, proactive individuals actively working towards positive environmental change with lasting impact.'

Rifumo (aged 25) is from a rural community bordering Kruger Park, South Africa and he is a dedicated environmental educator, photo-journalist and filmmaker. He is Programme Director of Wild Shots Outreach - a not-for-profit organization that connects young Africans from disadvantaged communities with nature through photography. Rifumo is himself a product of the Wild Shots Outreach programme which runs in partnership with the Canon Young People Programme in South Africa.

Rifumo explains "I want to connect young people with our natural heritage – we're the future of Africa's conservation. Though I live next to Kruger National Park, 99% of young people in my community have never been into a game reserve. How will we save Africa's wildlife and wild places if there is this huge disconnect with young Africans? Over the past three years I have taught photography to more than 500 young people and taken them on their first ever game drive, so the students can capture their memories and stories upon seeing wildlife for the first time."

The judges said “we were incredibly impressed by Rifumo’s drive, commitment, and passion for promoting awareness of sustainability through his community work and photography, always working to inspire others. It is clear Rifumo has committed his career and personal life to the cause and has empowered others to make a difference too. Rifumo’s work is exceptional and is clearly going from strength to strength, leaving a positive and long-lasting environmental legacy.”

On learning he’d won the award Rifumo exclaimed “I’ve achieved things I’d not dreamed possible. I’m really grateful for this amazing opportunity and It is such a privilege to me to win this award. I hope this will inspire other young Africans that we can make a difference and reach for our dreams. We are flipping the script and changing the narrative – making photography and conservation more diverse and inclusive.”

Mike Kendrick, Founder of Wild Shots Outreach, reflecting on Rifumo’s journey, explains “I first met Rifumo when he was still at high school, and he persuaded me to run the Wild Shots Outreach for his class. His passion for making positive changes for the young people in his community shone out. After leaving school Rifumo volunteered and started joining me on conservation photography assignments. Five years later he is now Programme Director, running the workshop programmes, working with the schools, youth foundations, safari lodges and game reserves. Rifumo is a born teacher with a passion and enthusiasm for passing on his knowledge of conservation and his photography skills. I am so proud of this hard working, dedicated and humble young man and delighted he is getting this international recognition.”

CIWEM hope that this prize award will provide Rifumo with the platform and tools, as well as networking and mentoring opportunities, to grow the awareness and impact of his ambitions.

For more information contact:

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Rifumo (far right) taking Wild Shots Outreach students on their first ever game drive.