
Ensuring safe production optimisation of oil and gas assets

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A trained process technician at an oil and gas facility is expected to minimise equipment downtime in order to maximise production and do so safely – a highly critical role.

You meet expectations or you exceed them and for Lydia Warubi, Oil Search and PNG's pioneering female process technician, it also means breaking new ground and creating a pathway for others.

Lydia who comes from Kutubu in the Southern Highlands joined Oil Search in 2004 with the inaugural batch of apprentices. She opened doors for women when she became the first female to graduate from the programme. After four years as a tradesperson at the Company's Central Processing Facility (CPF), Lydia secured an AusAid scholarship and went on to study Chemical Engineering at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia. She graduated with a Diploma in Engineering and returned to Oil Search in 2015.

In her current role as a Production Safety Officer, Lydia helps to ensure safe and reliable operations for Oil Search through detailed risk assessments and regular site inspections and tours. This helps ensure safety standards set by the Company are being met by each facility. She is also required to coach and mentor the production team in operational discipline, something she enjoys. Her knowledge on process safety and behaviours has also been invaluable during plant shutdowns and major project construction works. A planned shutdown involves a controlled shutdown of the entire plant or part of the plant for the purpose of planned maintenance on the plant and equipment. Planned maintenance can involve cleaning, repairs, parts changeouts and other basic servicing of the plant and equipment. The objective of the planned maintenance is to make the equipment fully operational and reliable and to increase effectiveness, efficiency and operate safely as per design. The planned maintenance can also extend the equipment's lifespan.

Lydia is also required to conduct site specific inductions for any new person entering the process plant she is attached to.

"A highlight of my career was being part of the team that led the induction for the Australian Ministerial Team led by Julie Bishop in 2009. I also provided a process overview to Japanese VIPs and government delegates during the project sanction for PNG LNG."

In 2011 and 2012, Lydia became part of the team that developed safe work procedures for the Associated Gas Related Project (AGRP). She also worked with the AGRP construction and operations maintenance group on the CPF development extension for LNG condensate and commissioning of the gas tie-ins. The work enabled Oil Search to begin LNG gas exports.

"It has been quite a journey, made even more remarkable on many different levels. I chose this Company because of my dad, Warubi Masahimu. He worked for Chevron and later Oil Search and would fly in and out for work. I wanted to be just like him. Being from the project area, it was a dream of mine to also one day see how oil was extracted from Kutubu and processed for export to the world.

“That dream became a reality when dad along with his colleagues Peter Cannell, late Augustine Girannah Snr and late Leonard Dallow made it possible through the then Oil Search Academy for the Accreditation of the Process Technician Trade in PNG. I had to apply and worked hard to remain on the programme. It was an honour for me when I graduated as the pioneering female process technician for the Company and the country.”

Lydia has not taken the opportunity for granted and driven by her deep sense of responsibility, is giving back to her community in more ways than one through working with local women groups and on youth empowerment programs. She also helped set up the Kutubu Disaster Relief Committee volunteer group which provided much assistance to her community during the 2018 earthquake.

“Off course, none of this would be possible without the experiences, knowledge including the values and leadership behaviours I gained from my employment with Oil Search. This year I will be celebrating my 15 years of continuous service with the Company. Oil Search has given me the opportunity to work with people from all over the world and it equipped me with the necessary skills to be successful beyond the workplace.

“I was sharing my story with the youth in my community and I must have inspired my dad more as he went home to Pimaga and built a technical school. Naturally, I am helping him. I also receive support from the Oil Search Foundation and the Champions of Change initiative. We hope to get kids interested in the sciences and technical trades.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the industry and to society. I would like to thank my family especially my parents and my daughter – the pillar of my strength, my employer Oil Search and everyone who has supported me on this journey. I feel so humble to be here.

“To work in a science and engineering field, you must be disciplined and determined to succeed and above all enjoy what you do! In the words of Nelson Mandela; it always seems impossible until it’s done.”

End.

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Photo



Lydia Warubi, Oil Search Safety Officer helps ensure safe production optimisation of oil and gas assets.

Photo courtesy of Rocky Roe