

Participant's Corner: Ekurhuleni Municipality Fails EPWPs

By Lawrence Simelane

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My name is Lawrence Madonsela, I am 36 years old, and I was part of the EPWP (Expanded Public Workers Programme), as a brigade. The name of the project was the Lungile Mtshali Community Project which was outsourced by Ekurhuleni Municipality. I worked on this project from 2014 – 2015 as it was a contract for 1 year. I was earning a stipend of R2000 per month. In September 2014, there was an agreement between the Department of Labour and Ekurhuleni Municipality that the brigade's stipends will be increased to R4000, we only got this for one month, the following months, the stipend went back to R1980. They then sent us training certificates, which we later found were not accredited.

In April 2015, we decided to open a case at the Bargaining Council because the municipality was not implementing its agreement with the Department of Labour, after that we got letters of termination as our contracts were ending but we still did not get back the money that was owed to us. The case was transferred to court, it has been 3 years, and the Bargaining Council failed us, they kept changing commissioners and we had to start again. After 3 years of waiting, they agreed to give each brigade R3000 per month, which favoured the employer, because we did not just want our money back, we also wanted to be made permanent workers of the municipality. We then appealed to the Labour Court, but it also ruled that we must be given R24 000, even though this award did not favour us. We worked towards appealing this, which failed as the court ruled that we get R18 000. We have decided to go to the Constitutional Court, but until today, nothing has happened and we are still waiting for them.

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