

Permanent jobs for KSD's 156 casuals

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Labour unions in King Sabata Dalindyebo municipality are claiming victory after 156 casuals and Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers were issued with permanent letters of employment.

The Daily Dispatch has reported on how Imatu (Independent Municipal & Allied Trade Union) and a faction of Samwu had embarked on protests that brought Mthatha to a standstill this year.

Among their demands was the absorption of more than 200 casuals and EPWP workers into the municipality's permanent workforce.

KSD municipal spokesperson Sonwabo Mampoza confirmed on Monday that the group had been issued with letters informing them of their permanent employment.

"It was agreed that the first 100 started working officially on June 1.

"The other 56 will start in the next financial year which begins of July 1," he said.

The rest will be absorbed in a second phase although no time frame was given.

Imatu's deputy chair in KSD, Anam Mkile, hailed the move as a victory for the unions.

"It shows that our fight was genuine. We broke a record as this has never been done before in KSD. It's a victory for us," he added.

Lwazi Madyibi, who led the Samwu faction that fought for the permanent absorption of casual workers, said the journey had not been easy.

One of those who could not contain their excitement was Siyabulela Tyekela, a married mother of three who joined the EPWP programme in KSD in 2009.

She had been working in the solid waste section as a general worker for almost a decade when she received a letter on Wednesday last week.

She said the money she earned all those years was too little for her household and the fact that she was not employed permanently added to her anxiety.

"I had even lost hope that we would be absorbed permanently because there were many promises that were made but this one thing we craved so much never materialised.

"I had even contemplated quitting and looking for another job."

She said many workers were languishing in debt as they had to take out loans to make ends meet.

Abongile Ndinisa, a father of two, has been working as a casual worker in the EPWP programme since 2015.

He said his children would now be able to receive benefits even when he had passed on.

"Every night before going to bed I prayed hard for this day and now it is here. I am so excited," he said.

Mampoza said the municipality was not able to employ all of the more than 200 casuals at once due to financial constraints.