

# Residents question EPWP selection process

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**H**angberg residents have questioned why they were promised work through the Expanded Public Works Programme, but later removed from the list.

According to the residents, they were meant to start working on the Hangberg In Situ Development Association (HIDA) Project on Wednesday April 28, and had already submitted their banking details, medical clearance certificates and received the green light from contractors.

A resident, who didn't want to be named for fear of being victimised, said: "We phoned the contractor on the morning of when we were supposed to start. He then told us our names were scratched off after they were advised by a community leader to remove people from the list."

The unemployed resident lives in a two-bedroom council flat with her pensioner mother, a brother who was retrenched recently, her two children aged 7 and 14, as well as her fiancé, who is the only one working in the household.

She explained that she

was dependent on the work and had been happy to be selected, particularly because her daughter's birthday is later this month.

"I was going to give her a cake table using the money I get paid. I cannot do that now and those plans go out the window. But I want to know how we got removed and replaced and for what reasons."

At the same time, the resident questioned the process, claiming that many of the "same people" received work through the EPWP.

"We want to know what is going on and why were we removed from the list."

Earlier this year, the City revealed plans to launch the EPWP in Hangberg and Imizamo Yethu, through an initiative that would see unemployed people between 18 and 45 being able to place themselves on the City's databases for short-term work opportunities, which could earn them a stipend, ("Plans to extend EPWP programme to Hout Bay", Sentinel News, March 26).

The resident confirmed that she had received the forms from a neighbour, which she

filled out and handed into the City before she received the call that she was selected for work.

Sentinel News is aware of others who also claim to have been removed from the list. They, however, were either not willing to go on record or were unavailable for comment.

The matter was escalated by the Hangberg Development Forum, who called on the Office of the Public Protector to investigate the allegations of "undue influence of community leaders and Hout Bay ward councillor in the City's EPWP job opportunities".

"Our call is for an immediate investigation into the allegations of undue influence and interference by the Hout Bay ward councillor and the community leaders," spokesperson for the HDF, Roscoe Jacobs, said.

Workers were meant to assist with a project that is part of the ongoing roll-out of legal and compliant electrical metres in the area.

Good Hope Sub-council manager, Girshwin Fouldien, explained that the project was supposed to have taken place during the 2019/20 financial year.

"This is therefore not a new project, but one that the community has been aware of for years," he said.

He downplayed talks of the ward councillor being involved with having names removed from or added to the list.

"Ward councillor Roberto Quintas has at no point recommended any names or persons for consideration for this project, neither as a community liaison officer (CLO) nor any other EPWP role. Mr Quintas was at no stage requested to suggest names and as a principle, as this will be contrary to the EPWP policy. He prefers not to be involved in appointments for jobs exactly to avoid matters such as these."

He added that the City's electricity department confirmed that no EPWP workers nor the CLO for the project had been appointed.

"I am unfortunately not at liberty to give the names of the people that the electricity department met with, suffice to say that a meeting did take place just to inform community leaders that the project is about to re-commence," Mr Fouldien said.