

# "This is not a man's world": protesters demand construction jobs for women

By [Velani Ludidi](#)

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Residents of Lower Crossroads in Philippi, Cape Town, brought construction of a new school to a halt on Tuesday, 26 March, demanding more jobs for women and for residents. Police kept a watchful eye on the protest but did not intervene.



The building of a school in Lower Crossroads was brought to a halt by protesting residents demanding construction jobs for women. Photo: Velani Ludidi

Kwa-Faku primary school is scheduled to be completed before the end of the year and opened in 2020.

"We want whoever is hiring people here to start from scratch," said protester Zukhanye Ngingi. "When we protested last year for this school to be built these people were not here, but now that there is money involved we are being pushed aside."

Ningi said not enough women were being hired on the site. "We heard that in order for a woman to be hired she must sleep with those hiring or pay R1,000. Where are we supposed to get the money to pay for a job while we are not working?"

“These workers must go home,” said another resident, who did not want to be named. “We can’t just let people come and take our jobs. Where were they while we were fighting with the department of education for this school last year?”

Xolisa Pukayi, the chairperson of the construction steering committee confirmed that promises had been made that residents would be hired on the building site. But Pukayi denied that women had to pay bribes or have sex in order to get jobs. “This is not true. We do have women here doing office work and we were going to employ others before September.”



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## Work too "dangerous" for women

He said women would not be able to do dangerous construction work. “But when we move to the next stage we will employ them.” Resident Iviwe Lumkwana was not impressed. “This is not a man’s world,” she said. “There are women who can build. All you should have done is ask.”

Lumkwana said residents did not want to delay the building of the school but had to make their voices heard. “Men must let go of the idea that we belong in the kitchen.”

Pukayi told GroundUp the committee had met the residents and reiterated the promise to hire locals. “We are working on balancing the numbers, because that is where the main concern is.”

*[Article](#) produced for [GroundUp](#) by West Cape News.*

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