

# Social workers share their challenges

DURBAN: Social workers from across the country have raised a number of challenges which they face on a daily basis at a Social Work Indaba being held in Durban...

They have made a call to make the profession relevant to the current issues facing South African society as well as revise the curricula offered at universities to better prepare social workers for the reality of community work.

The social workers said they were providing services to an ever-increased number of poor immigrants entering the country and catering to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people - one of the most misunderstood sectors of society.



Psychosocial support for social workers also needed to improve because practitioners are often confronted with traumatic situations on the field. The view was that effective social work practice cannot take place unless social workers were healed from their own scars and receive emotional and trauma counselling.

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These were the views expressed during the Social Work Practice Commission - one of six commissions that took place on the second day of the Social Work Indaba at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre on Wednesday.

## Working conditions and retention strategies

Another commission that dealt with working conditions and retention strategies discussed a number of issues ranging from improved remuneration, availability of resources, access to developmental programmes and enabling tools, especially for disabled social workers.

This, according to the social workers, would go a long way in improving the quality of services they render.

Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, who participated in the working conditions and retention strategies commission, urged social workers to organise themselves so they can have a stronger and unified voice speaking out on their interests.

The three-day indaba, which started on Tuesday, aims to develop proposals and interventions aimed at addressing factors that impact on social work practice, critically look at the social work approaches and techniques which are applied within the practice.

It also aims to develop strategies that will promote integration and a multi-disciplinary approach among relevant role players in the delivery of social services.