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MUCH-NEEDED BOOST FOR SOCIAL WORK



NEW CAREER: Social development MEC Sisi Ntombela hands out laptops to the 52 enthusiastic social work graduates.
Picture: GETRUDE MAKHAFOLA

Getrude Makhafola

A group of social work graduates recently began an induction programme in the department of social development after which they will start work across the province.

The 52 graduates benefitted from a joint programme by the national and provincial departments of social development, in which they were recruited and sent to study at various universities across the country.

They were sponsored by the departments and have been earmarked to help reduce the severe shortage of social workers and health professionals in the province.

Sisi Ntombela, MEC of social development, said the province was supposed to have at least 1000 social workers. "We have about 300 social workers at the moment. About 200 more are still studying.

"The 52 today will help in increasing the number. I think we are getting there," she said. Ntombela said the department lost 16 social workers to other departments last year.

"I was heartbroken last year when they left the department. This year, the contract stipulates you will have to work for the department for at least four years. We have internal problems but we are also adults. I appeal to you to be prepared to face challenges and not walk away," she said to the graduates.

The new social workers will receive laptops, cellphones and vehicles to enable them to visit communities across the province.

“You have been studying for four years and today you are here; ready to embark on your career. There is a lot to be done; people out there who are really poor need your help. I hope you are going to stay and help this department,” said Ntombela. The graduates will work in the social welfare and community development services within the department.

[Source: www.thenewage.co.za]