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# SOCIAL WORK AS A SCARCE AND CRITICAL PROFESSION

**Scarce & Critical Skills  
Research Project**

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# SOCIAL WORK AS A SCARCE AND CRITICAL PROFESSION

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## List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Virus
ASASWEI	Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
CESM	Classification of Educational Study Matter
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DoE	South African Department of Education
DoL	South African Department of Labour
DSD	South African Department of Social Development
DPSA	Department of Public Service Administration of South Africa
GSCC	General Social Care Council
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HWSETA	Health & Welfare Sector Education Training Authority
JIPSA	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGSETA	Local Government Sector Education Training Authority
Mappp-SETA	Media, Advertising, Publishing Printing & Packaging Sector Education Training Authority
NACOSS	National Coalition of Social Services
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
OHS	October Household Survey
SAASWIPP	South African Association of Social Workers in Private Practice
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professionals
SAOSWA	South African Occupational Social Workers Association
SASCO	South African Standard Classification of Occupations
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SETA	Sector Education Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Body
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
UK	United Kingdom

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## INTRODUCTION

The constraint of high-level skills within the South African labour market is considered by government to be a key obstacle to achieving its target of a six percent economic growth rate. In support of the challenges to address skills shortages, the vision of the National Skills Development strategy (NSDS: 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2010) is to develop *skills for sustainable growth, development and equity*. Through Objective 1 of the NSDS, the Department of Labour (DoL) commits itself and the SETAs to *prioritise and communicate critical skills*. In this light, the DoL commissioned the HSRC to undertake research to ascertain the nature of a range of scarce and critical skills in South Africa. Among these is the profession of social work.

The aim of this research was firstly to determine from whom the calls of social workers skills shortages were coming, and in what terms this shortage was being quantified. Primary data analysis and examination of various available sources of information to either support or refute public claims and to provide a clearer quantitative picture of shortages should they exist, constituted the second step. Yet skills shortages cannot be separated from the context of their profession and educational milieu, as well as the broader skills development and labour market environments of the country. Thus having determined in as much detail as possible the nature of social worker shortages, the qualitative context of the current skills crisis is also discussed. Finally, taking both the quantitative and qualitative information into account, this report concludes by outlining the absolute and relative nature of the shortage of social workers in South Africa, before highlighting the three key recommendations out of the range emerging from other research, which DoL's involvement is likely to be most critical for successful implementation.

### ***Who says that there is a shortage of social workers in South Africa?***

In his State of the Nation Address of 9 February 2007, the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, highlighted the need to '*Accelerate the training of Family Social Workers at professional and auxiliary levels to ensure that identified households are properly supported and monitored*'. This is considered to be one of the key requirements needed to support all the other social and economic programmes outlined in the Address. This statement represents the most high-level public acknowledgment by government of the critical role of social workers in social development and an important step towards improving the support of these professionals at both the level of education and working conditions.

Calls of social worker shortages are coming from welfare recipients, welfare agencies, social work professionals, as well as the various bodies that represent these groups. Furthermore, these calls go back a number of years. References to social worker shortages are multi-faceted and are documented in various forms in the media, in journal articles related to the practice of the profession in South Africa, and in strategies and policies recently released by the Department of Social Development.

Media articles were tracked for references to 'social workers', 'welfare' and 'the Department of Social Development', over the period October 2005 to May 2007<sup>1</sup>. Few

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<sup>1</sup> SA Media Alerts based at the University of the Free State provided this service



articles at the beginning of this period provide direct references to shortages of social workers, focusing instead on factors such as their poor pay, poor working conditions and the consequences of their low numbers in relation to the escalating need for the services they provide. Recent articles, however, are considerably more focussed on linking these factors to social worker shortages - as cause or as consequence - as well as on referencing evolving government policy on the issue. Paraphrased examples of the scope of recent articles linking social worker shortages to social problems are presented below:

- 63% of Child Welfare social workers have caseloads of more than 60, while 36% have caseloads of more than 100. Within other NGOs some social workers have caseloads in excess of 300. In such circumstances negligence is almost unavoidable.

Sowetan, 28 October 2005

- Of the estimated 1.2 million orphaned and vulnerable children in South Africa (due mostly to the impact of HIV and AIDS), NGO and government welfare services together are currently only able to reach and deal with around 200 000 - leaving 1 million to fend for themselves. The backlog of processing foster care grants, which can take up to 2 years, is blamed largely on the fact that there are insufficient numbers of social workers and magistrates to deal with applications, with the consequence that the thousands of poor families who are forced to take in these children are increasingly unable to carry the cost burden of the extra mouth to feed over such an extended period of time.

Pretoria News, 30 September 2006

- The need for social workers is greater today than ever before due to the alarming rate at which the HIV and AIDS epidemic is destroying the social fabric that holds families and communities together. Social workers are needed to protect the rights of, and bring healing to, South Africa's most vulnerable citizens through counseling and case management.

The Herald, 04 December 2006

- In the Western Cape, a programme that trains volunteers to provide therapeutic counseling to sexually abused children has been put in place due to the severe shortages in accessing qualified social workers and counselors. The measures are seen as temporary but necessary to deal with the escalating problem.

Cape Argus, 14 December 2006

- Ashley Theron, the first ever black, male national executive director of Child Welfare South Africa, states that there is no point to being able to identify vulnerable children if there aren't the social workers and financial resources to assist them.

Star, 25 January 2007

- According to the Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, who has been instrumental in having the social work profession declared a 'scarce skill', the serious shortage of social workers is one of the key reasons for under-implementation of state welfare services in South Africa and for the shortfalls in the delivery of services to large numbers of people living in communities impacted on by HIV and AIDS.

City Press, 18 February 2007

- Shortages of social workers and psychologists in the police service in the Mthatha area of the Eastern Cape is partly to blame for the rising number of suicides among officers, who are increasingly unable to cope with the high crime rate in the region in conjunction with their own social problems.

Daily Dispatch, 23 April 2007

Parallel to these references in the popular media, a number of recent academic journal articles point to shortages in the number of social workers in South Africa, particularly through focusing attention on various aspects of the working conditions they currently face.

Social workers in a study by Naidoo & Kasiram (2006) report that caseloads in South Africa are generally in excess of 120 cases (compared with a maximum of about 12 in the UK), leading to high levels of stress and frustration among professionals. Lombard (2005a) argues that the vast majority of these extremely high caseloads consist of statutory work<sup>2</sup>, for which there is an ever-increasing demand. This is due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the fact that social work in South Africa is the primary social service profession intervening on a statutory level (Lombard & Kleijn, 2006).

According to these authors, social workers within the NGO sector additionally have to face even higher caseloads than those within the government welfare sector. This arises out of a complex interplay of factors. NGOs have limited ability to refuse government referrals for fear of losing their funding subsidies. At the same time these institutions suffer from high turnover of staff as social workers seek to move – either into the government sector where workloads are not only slightly lighter but salary packages are also considerably better, or to careers in another country or outside the social welfare sector (Lombard, 2005a; Lombard & Kleijn, 2006).

These issues are directly linked to insufficient numbers of social workers available and/or willing to fill posts, with Lombard & Kleijn (2006:225) asserting that the ‘devastating impact has reached crisis proportions for social services in South Africa’. They additionally argue that if the current high caseloads are to become the norm, that social workers should not formally be charged with unprofessional conduct or negligence arising out of their inability to manage these inhuman work loads (p226).

At the more specific level, a study by Brown & Neku (2005:309) reports that social workers in rural areas describe their work as ‘overwhelming’ and ‘frustrating’ because ‘the needs of the community are many, but the numbers of professionals available to assist families in rural areas are few’. Government social workers in East London echo these sentiments: One of the key elements impacting negatively on their job satisfaction is that they are expected to do too much within the lack of resources. As such they feel that the more social workers need to be employed (Clarke-McLeod & Sela, 2005).

Only Schenck (2004a) explicitly refers to ‘shortages’ among social workers by making reference to the first announcement of social work as a ‘scarce skill’ by the Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, in a Mail&Guardian article on 22 August 2003. She argues that in light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and extensive poverty in South Africa,

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<sup>2</sup>Statutory work is the work related to fulfilling government legislation. For example the work related to the Child Care Act includes: the removal of children, children’s court appearances, case reports, placement of children in homes, foster-care or after-care etc.

developmental work needs to be undertaken on a massive scale. This will require not only increased numbers of social workers, but also an increase in the numbers of other relatedly trained professionals.

Within both the media (e.g. Cape Argus, 03 November 2006) and the academia (e.g. Schenck, 2004a) reference is made to the *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers in South Africa*, a document by the Department of Social Development. The development of this strategy stems directly from the formal declaration by government of social work as a scarce skill in 2003.

The 5<sup>th</sup> draft of this document, dated 30 August 2005, admits in relation to the welfare policies that aim to address the national priority issues of poverty, unemployment, and HIV and AIDS, that *'there is a lack of capacity to implement these policies and programmes due to amongst others, the overwhelming demand for services and the inability to cope with such demands. This is particularly true for social workers who are at the coalface of delivery to the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society'* (DSD, 2005c:4).

### ***How is this shortage quantified?***

Having outlined the range of stakeholders making claims about social worker shortages, it is instructive to report on the ways in which these shortages are being quantified. Notably, there are considerably fewer references to actual figures, than there are to statements of shortages in general.

The updated Master List of Scarce and Critical Skills of 8 August 2006 (DoL, 2006) indicates that across the categories of social and community workers, a total of 21 020 individuals are required for positions within the labour market. This figure is based on the sum of requirements of employers within the HWSETA, LGSETA and Mappp-SETA as reported in their respective Sector Skills Plans. HWSETA registered employers unsurprisingly listed the highest demand (Table 1). It is however not possible to separate the demand for social workers and social auxiliary workers from the demand for community and community development workers more generally.

**Table 1: Unmet demand for social and community workers**

Occupational Category	SETAs reporting shortages	Demand per SETA	Total Demand
Social and Community Workers	HWSETA	19 000	21 020
	LGSETA	2 000	
	MapppSETA	20	

Source: Master List of Scarce and Critical Skills, (DoL, 2006)

The Business Day of 25 November 2005, reporting on the rise in AIDS orphans and the resulting strain on grants, states that an estimated 7 000 social workers were needed across the country to deal with the crisis. The Herald of 29 May 2006, indicates that social worker vacancies are high across all provincial departments of social development, but highest in KZN (759) and lowest in the Western Cape (49). Overall the number of social worker vacancies within the public welfare system was 2 204. The most direct mention in overall quantity of the requirement for social workers specifically comes from an article in the City Press of 18 February 2007. This reports that according to Zola Skweyiya, Minister of

Social Development, the state needs 16 000 social workers in order to meet its welfare obligations.

### ***In summary***

In summary, calls of social worker shortages are coming from a range of sources and reported in an array of forms:

- Academic journal articles cover the views of social work educators and researchers
- Media reports cover the views of welfare organizations, social workers in the NGO and government welfare sectors, welfare recipients, as well as the statements of key government representatives
- Strategies, policies and other formal government releases represent the outcome of research and policy work undertaken by national government around the issues of welfare delivery more generally and the supply of social workers more specifically

References to the exact nature of these shortages are however limited, with suggestions that the current pool of social workers is insufficient to meet demands and to fill vacancies, and that a figure in the region of 16 000 are required by the Department of Social Development.

## QUANTIFYING THE SHORTAGES OF SOCIAL WORKERS USING AVAILABLE DATA

Having looked above at answering the questions of who is saying that there are social worker shortages and how they are quantifying these shortages, this section seeks to use the various available data sources to quantify shortages more specifically. Towards this end, the section will analyse and present data on the total numbers of social workers and their demographic profile and distribution before moving on to unpack data related to the demand and supply of these skills.

Data in this section is drawn from a range of sources, and in discussing any particular issue, are compared and contrasted against each other. The reason for this form of presentation is to highlight the strengths and the limitations of each source as well as the challenges faced in painting a true and accurate picture of skills shortages at the professional level.

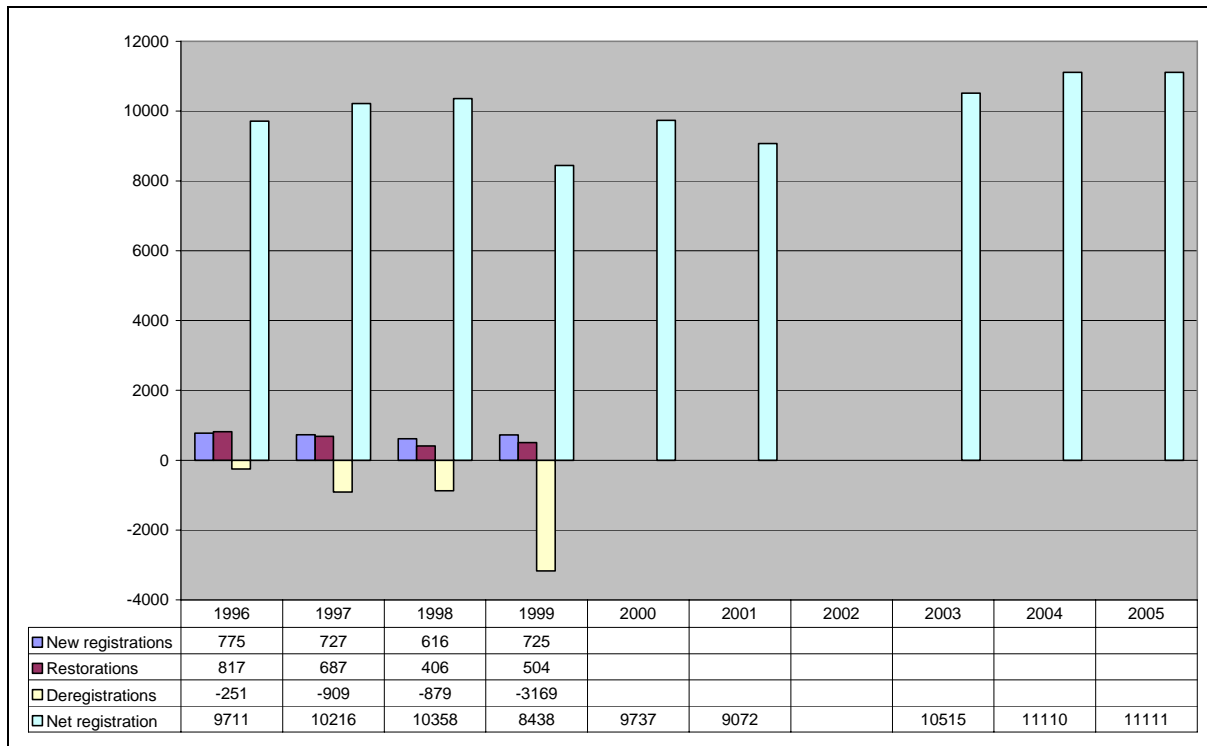
The data unpacked in this section originates from the following sources:

- The statutory regulatory body, the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)
- The Department of Education (DoE)'s Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS)
- The Department of Public Service Administration's (DPSA)'s PERSAL database
- Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)'s data on occupational migration
- StatsSA's October Household Survey (OHS) (1996 – 1999)
- StatsSA's Labour Force Survey (LFS) (2000 – 2005)
- StatsSA's Census 2001
- Social worker professional societies
- The Department of Social Development (DSD)
- The National Coalition of Social Services (NACOSS)
- The Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times supplement on job advertisements
- The United Kingdom (UK)'s General Social Care Council (GSCC)
- The Work Permits, Freedom of Information Division of the British Home Office
- The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
- The Bureau for Market Research population projection figures (Van Aardt, 2004)

### ***How many social workers do we have in the SA labour market?***

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), with whom all practicing social workers are required by law to register, had a total number of 11 111 social workers registered in October 2005 (Figure 1). From a figure of 9 711 in 1996, this represents an annual increase of only 1.5% over the nine year period.

**Figure 1: Growth in total number of registered social workers, 1996 – 2005**



Source: SACSSP, 2005a

Note: Missing data unavailable

Yet while this sum of 11 111 in 2005 represents the total number of social workers who by law may practice the profession in South Africa, the SACSSP highlighted factors that reduce the accuracy of this figure as a means of judging the availability of social work skills in the country.

Firstly, a proportion of those registered are registered as ‘non-practicing’. In 2005 this number was 465, representing 4.2% of the total registered. By registering as ‘non-practicing’ this proportion of social workers are intentionally removing themselves from the pool of available skills for a period of time, thus reducing the overall number available.

Secondly, there is no way of telling whether the social workers registered with the SACSSP to practice in South Africa are in fact living, or practicing their profession, in South Africa. Some may be ‘non-practicing’ without having changed their registration status, while others may be out of the country, practicing their profession abroad. These uncertainties also have an overall reductionary effect on the numbers available.

Thirdly, counter-balancing the above to some extent, is the fact that the SACSSP does not consider its pool of ‘practicing’ registrants to be the sum of social workers actually practicing in South Africa. After 1994 the combined factors of a proliferation in job-titles for social workers and the transition of the Council for Social Work into the South African Council for Social Service Professions, led many social workers who were not in direct welfare practice, but still essentially practicing social work, to deregister. Available information on the extent of de-registrations and restorations of registration is also presented in Figure 1. Unfortunately this is only available until 1999, with the surge in de-registrations clearly evident. Since 2004, the SACSSP has had a drive to sensitize

employers to the importance of social worker registration as well as to the range of jobs and titles for social workers that do still require these professionals to be registered. Thus the SACSSP considers there to be a (shrinking) group of social workers in the labour market who are in fact practicing social work without registration.

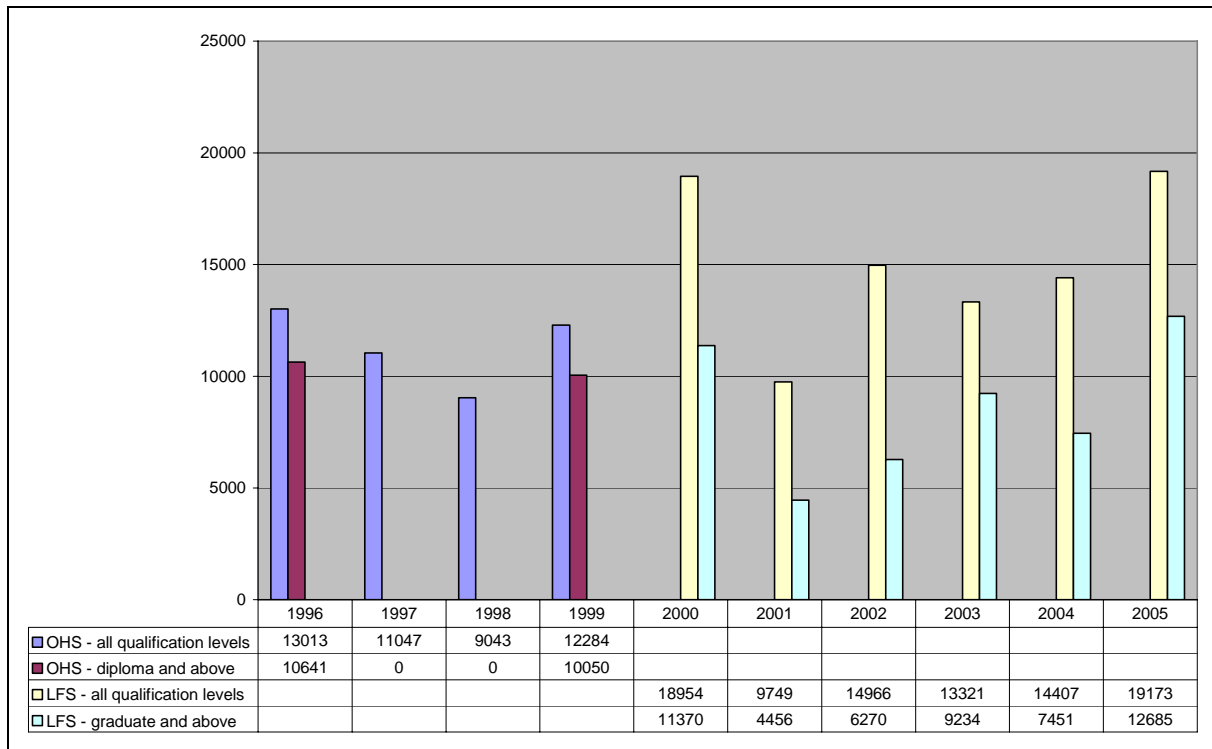
Fourthly, linked to the above and again with a potentially positive impact of the overall number available, the number of social workers registered with the SACSSP does not represent a static pool. Social workers are able to de-register and re-register a period later with little more effort than presenting their qualifications and the registration fee due. Disincentives for this, such as high re-registration fees or the requirement to prove competence after a certain period of professional inactivity, are not formally in place yet. Unfortunately, data capturing at the SACSSP does not allow for any analysis of this phenomenon past 1999, however, data available prior to this date suggests that the actual number of social workers potentially available to practice is somewhat larger than the net number of those registered to do so at any particular time.

Outside of the figures available from the SACSSP, which despite the uncertainties discussed above represent the most consistent and accurate data available on the numbers of professional social workers in South Africa, data is also available from StatSA's October Household Survey (OHS) and Labour Force Survey (LFS). These surveys are designed to be representative at a national level and disaggregation to figures below 10 000 must be treated with caution. As this is the numerical region in which the group of social workers falls, calculations using this data must be read in conjunction with the other data available.

The information extracted from the OHS (1996-1999) and the LFS (2000-2005) is jointly presented in Figure 2. Two sets of figures were extracted from each survey series. Firstly, total combined groups of 'social work professionals' and 'social work associate professionals', and secondly, those within these groups with the pre-requisite tertiary qualifications necessary for registration as a social worker with the Council. This second step was done in an attempt to isolate the numbers of professional social workers from other social science and community development professionals. Figure 2 shows that applying the qualification filter to the OHS data delivered extremely inconsistent and meaningless results. And while the application of this filter to the LFS data did not improve the consistency of the figures obtained, it did bring them into a range compatible with the SACSSP figures. Thus, while not directly comparable, throughout the analyses that follow, OHS data for social work and social work associate professionals is unpacked in its unfiltered form, while LFS data considers only those with graduate and higher qualifications.

Having considered the challenges related to the use of this data, especially in determining any trend in the exact number of social workers in the South African labour market, it is worth considering what the data can tell us. Both OHS and LFS data line up, at the ballpark level, with the SACSSP figures: In terms of the range of totals provided by each dataset (according to the chosen extractions outlined above), the OHS records a high of 13 013 in 1996 and a low of 9 043 in 1998. The LFS data ranges from a low of 4 456 in 2001 to a high of 12 685 in 2005. These figures are comparable with the SACSSP range between a low 8 438 (1999) and a high 11 111 (2005) and are therefore worth unpacking in respect of demographics and other key indicators as supplementary and comparative data to that obtained from the Council.

**Figure 2: Total numbers of social work and social work associate professions from the OHS and the LFS databases (1996 – 2005)**

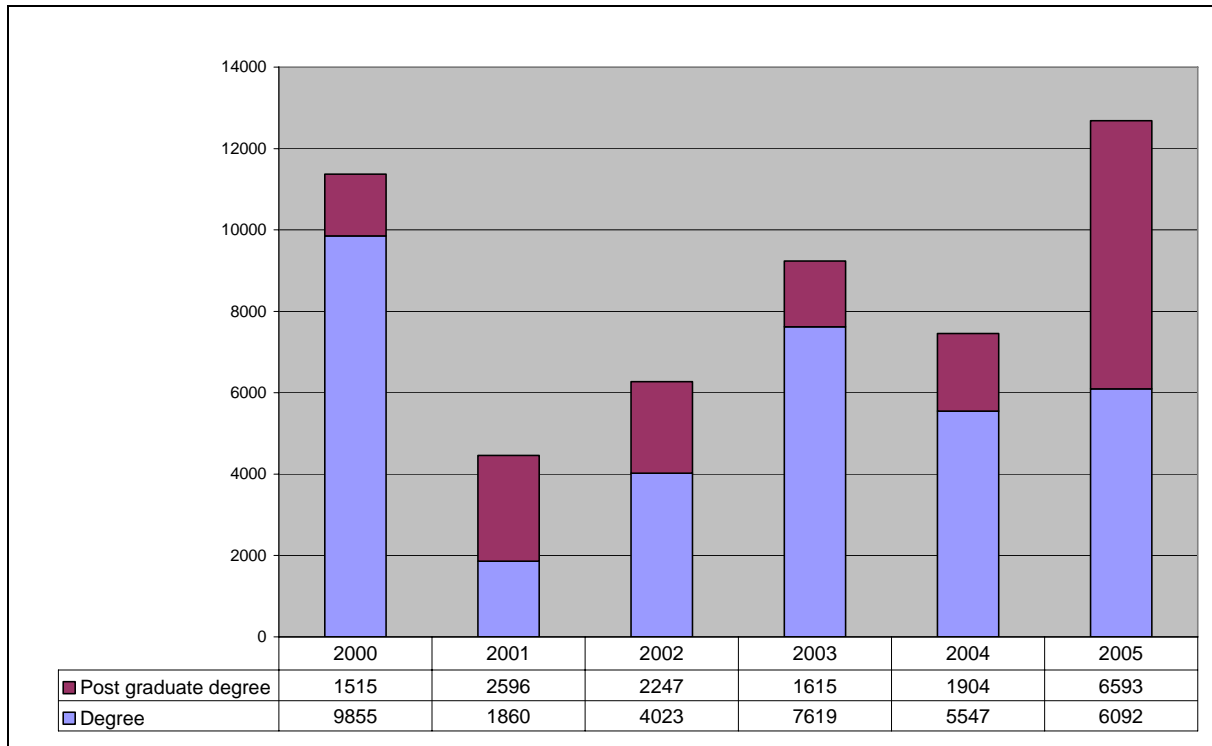


Source: Quantec, 2007 (StatsSA OHS data for 1996 – 1999; Stats SA LFS data for 2000 – 2005)

Figure 3 graphically presents the annual breakdown between those social work and social work associate professionals captured in the LFS data, with undergraduate as compared to post-graduate qualifications. Considering the figures across all six years suggests that 2001, 2002 and 2004 represent an under-count of those with undergraduate qualifications, while 2005 represents an over-count of those with post-graduate qualifications.



**Figure 3: Social work and social work associate professionals by graduate or post-graduate qualifications: 2000 - 2005**



Source: Quantec, 2007 (StatsSA LFS data 2000 – 2005)

One other national level source of data is the most recent Census, that of 2001 (StatsSA, 2003). An isolation was undertaken of all individuals between the ages of 19 and 69, whose field of education was either within the broad categories of ‘social sciences and social studies’ or ‘public admin and social service’; whose occupational categorization was either ‘social science and related professionals’ or ‘social work associate professionals’; and whose level of education was higher than Grade 12. Despite the somewhat broader margins used in the analysis as compared with the extraction of data from the OHS and LFS, this still produced a total of only 4 919 individuals. Interestingly, this is very similar to the LFS figure of 4 456 for that year.

While covering only a portion of the total group of social workers available to and/or practicing in the local labour market, data on the numbers of social workers employed by the government, in addition to those employed by NACOSS affiliated NGOs, is available and useful to provide boundaries for the range of figures extracted above. The PERSAL (DPSA, 2005) database indicates that in September 2005 a total of 3 921 social workers were employed by the state: 2 181 by the Department of Social Development and 1 298 in other government departments. The total number of social workers within the formal private welfare sector – in NACOSS affiliated NGOs - in the same year was 2 258 (DSD, 2005a).

Taken together, this data indicates with some level of certainty that in 2005 a total of 6 179 social workers were employed by either the various government departments or the private welfare sector. Considering that social workers are also self-employed within private social work practice, employed within the private corporate sector or by universities

as social work educators, this figure must be seen to be below the actual minimum within the South African labour market in that year.

Table 2 provides a summary of the data analysed above. Three points are notable:

1. Based on the range of figures presented, and taking the combined number employed by government and NACOSS affiliated NGOs as lying below the minimum number actually active in the labour market, we can estimate that the total number of social workers working in South Africa in 2005 was somewhere between 8 578 and 12 685.
2. The average annual net registrations of the SACSSP between 1996 and 1999 (11 347) is higher than the average of the OHS data over the same years (9 681) by an amount extremely similar to that by which the average annual net registrations of the SACSSP between 2000 and 2005 (10 309) is higher than the average of the LFS data over this time (8 578): 1 666 as compared with 1 731. This suggests that the number of social workers active in the labour market is somewhat less than the number actually registered with the SACSSP to practice at any one time.
3. Despite the overall slight increase in net registrations with the SACSSP over the period 1996 to 2005, national level analyses suggest that labour market participation of social workers fell in the middle of period, before recovering again towards the end of the period.



Table 2: Various estimations of the total number of social workers based on a range of data sources and analyses

OHS					LFS					Annual availability of the various data sources			
					Census								
SACSSP					SACSSP								
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Data range	Data source	Comment	
13 013										13 013	OHS	Highest annual number captured	
									12 685	12 685	LFS	Highest annual number captured	
11 347										11 347	OHS	Average annual	
									11 111	11 111	SACSSP	Highest annual net registration	
									10 646	10 646	SACSSP	Number registered as 'practicing'	
				10 309						10 309	10 309	SACSSP	Average net registrations
9 681										9 681	9 681	SACSSP	Average net registrations
		9 043								9 043	9 043	OHS	Lowest annual number captured,
				8 578						8 578	8 578	LFS	Average annual number
			8 438							8 438	8 438	SACSSP	Lowest annual net registration
									6 179	6 179	6 179	PERSAL & NACOSS	Total government employment plus total employment in NACOSS affiliated NGOs
					4 919					4 919	4 919	Census, 2001	Total number captured
					4 456					4 456	4 456	LFS	Lowest annual number captured



### ***What is the distribution of available social workers?***

Having considered the information on the total number of social workers available to and active in the South African labour market over the period 1996 to 2005, it is worth considering the distribution of these people.

From a sectoral perspective, the annual OHS data suggests that the overwhelming majority (between 98.7% and 100.0%) are working in the 'community, social and personal services' sector. Information from the Census, 2001, however provides some more detail to this picture. The analysis of the economic sectors in which 'Social Work Associate Professionals' and Social Science and Related Professionals' are involved is presented in Table 3. This shows that roughly half of the total number are (unsurprisingly) involved in 'social work activities', while about one quarter are involved in 'central government activities'. Just over one in ten are involved in 'human health activities'. Between 1% and 3% of the total work in the 'membership organizations', 'education', 'financial, insurance, real estate and business services' and 'local authority' sectors respectively. Representation in other economic sectors is very low.

**Table 3: The economic sectoral distribution of 'Social work associate professionals' and 'Social science and related professionals' in 2001**

<b>Economic Sector</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Social work activities	48.4
Central government activities	25.4
Human health activities	11.4
Local authority activities	2.9
Financial, insurance, real estate and business services	2.0
Education	1.9
Activities of other membership organisations	1.0
Transport, storage and communication	0.7
Mining and quarrying	0.6
Wholesale and retail	0.3
Electricity, gas and water supply	0.2
Activities of trade unions	0.2
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	0.2
Other community, social and personal service	4.8
<b>Total (n=4917)</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: StatsSA, 2003 (Census, 2001 data)

Using the SACSSP 2005 figure of 11 111, Earle (2007a) works backwards from known data sources to map out the distribution of social workers at that time. Data used includes the SACSSP, PERSAL, and NACOSS figures discussed above, in addition to information obtained directly from the South African Association of Social Workers in Private Practice (SAASWIPP), the South African Occupational Social Workers' Association (SAOSWA), and the UK's General Social Care Council (GSCC). This is presented in Table 4.

The analysis undertaken can account directly for 8519 (77.4%) of the social workers registered in that year. Of these, however, 342 had migrated to the UK<sup>3</sup> during the year while 465 were registered as non-practicing. The rest of this group were involved in direct formal welfare activities either through the Department of Social Development (2818) or through NACOSS affiliated NGOs (2258), working in other government departments such as the Departments of Health, Education, Correctional Services & South African Police Services (1298), in private social work practice (1268), or as occupational social workers within the corporate sector (70). The remaining 2 592 (23.6%) could not be directly accounted for and are assumed to have either been working in management positions in government or NGOs; in higher education and academia; in the informal welfare sector; in alternative careers; or to have exited the local labour force either through labour market inactivity or emigration.

**Table 4: Distribution of SACSSP registered social workers (2005)**

	Direct welfare*		Non-Welfare		Other: Known			Totals	
	National & Provincial Departments of Social Development	Formal private - NACOSS	Other government**	Private practice	Occupational social work in the business sector	Migrated to the UK within the year 2004	Registered as non-practicing	N	%
N	2818	2258	1298	1268	70	342	465	8519	
%	25.4	20.3	11.7	11.4	0.6	3.1	4.2		77.4
	Other: Unknown								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management in government and NGO's</li> <li>• Education and academia</li> <li>• Informal private welfare</li> <li>• Change career</li> <li>• Exited labour force</li> <li>• Migrated to countries other than UK or prior to 2004</li> <li>• Other***</li> </ul>								
N	2592							2592	
%	23								23.6
Total registered with SACSSP								1111	100.0
								1	

\*Excludes high-level managers who are registered social workers

\*\* Include Department of Health, Department of Education, Correctional Services & South African Police Services

\*\*\* Those that are not accurately captured within the known groups

Source: Earle (2007a)

Data on the geographical distribution of social workers is available from both the SACSSP (at the total level) and from the Department of Social Development (DSD, 2005) (at the level of social workers in direct formal welfare). Due to the Department's data being for 2004, SACSSP distribution for that same year was chosen for the comparative analysis presented in Table 5. Here the provincial population figures (Van Aardt, 2004) are compared with the SACSSP and DSD data to show not only the numerical and proportional provincial distribution of all registered social workers and all social workers

<sup>3</sup> The last available annual figure from the UK GSCC registration process via 'Letters of Verification' in 2004 (the figure used here). Starting from April 2004, all foreign social workers (regardless of their previous registration status) had to undergo registration via a process of qualification equivalence. Figures from this process thus relate to the total number of South African social workers in the UK at the time and not only to new registrations as previous annual figures provided.

involved in direct formal welfare, but also the more comparative number of social workers per 100 000 of the population for both groups.

**Table 5: SACSSP registered social workers, and social workers involved in direct formal welfare activities, per 100 000 of the population, by province, 2004**

Province	Estimated population	Total SACSSP registered social workers			Total social workers employed in direct formal* welfare			
		Social workers	Number of social workers per 100 000 of the population	Provincial distribution of those specified	Social workers	Number of social workers per 100 000 of the population	Provincial distribution of those specified	Percentage of registered social workers employed in direct formal welfare
		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
	N	N	N	%	N	N	%	%
Not specified	n/a	335	n/a	n/a	13	n/a	n/a	n/a
Western Cape	4592181	2292	49.9	21.3	721	15.7	14.2	31.5
Eastern Cape	7214427	1174	16.3	10.9	755	10.5	14.9	64.3
Northern Cape	1008985	330	32.7	3.1	206	20.4	4.1	62.4
Free State	2890546	516	17.9	4.8	313	10.8	6.2	60.7
North West	3870037	517	13.4	4.8	298	7.7	5.9	57.6
KZN	9454081	1694	17.9	15.7	965	10.2	19.1	57.0
Gauteng	9035370	3158	35.0	29.3	1096	12.1	21.6	34.7
Mpumalanga	3125925	394	12.6	3.7	256	8.2	5.1	65.0
Limpopo	5516062	700	12.7	6.5	453	8.2	8.9	64.7
Total	46707613	11110	23.8	100.0	5076	10.9	100.0	45.7

Notes: \* Formal welfare is defined as those employed by the Department of Social Development and NACOSS affiliated NGOs

Sources: Van Aardt, 2004; SACSSP, 2005a; Department of Social Development – personal correspondence, 2005 (extracted from Earle, 2007a)

What is clear from Table 5 is that the largest numbers of the total pool of SACSSP registered social workers live and work in Gauteng and the Western Cape (Column A), where the numbers of social workers per 100 000 of the population are 35.0 and 49.9 respectively (Column B). These are the country's most urban and developed provinces. The provinces with large rural populations, where poverty is generally concentrated (i.e. Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West) reveal considerably weaker social worker to population ratios. Notably, however, both Gauteng and the Western Cape have the lowest proportion of their social workers involved in direct formal welfare activities (Column G), thus narrowing the gap somewhat when looking at the ratios of social workers in direct welfare activities per 100 000 of the population (Column E). Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West, however, are again the most disadvantaged.



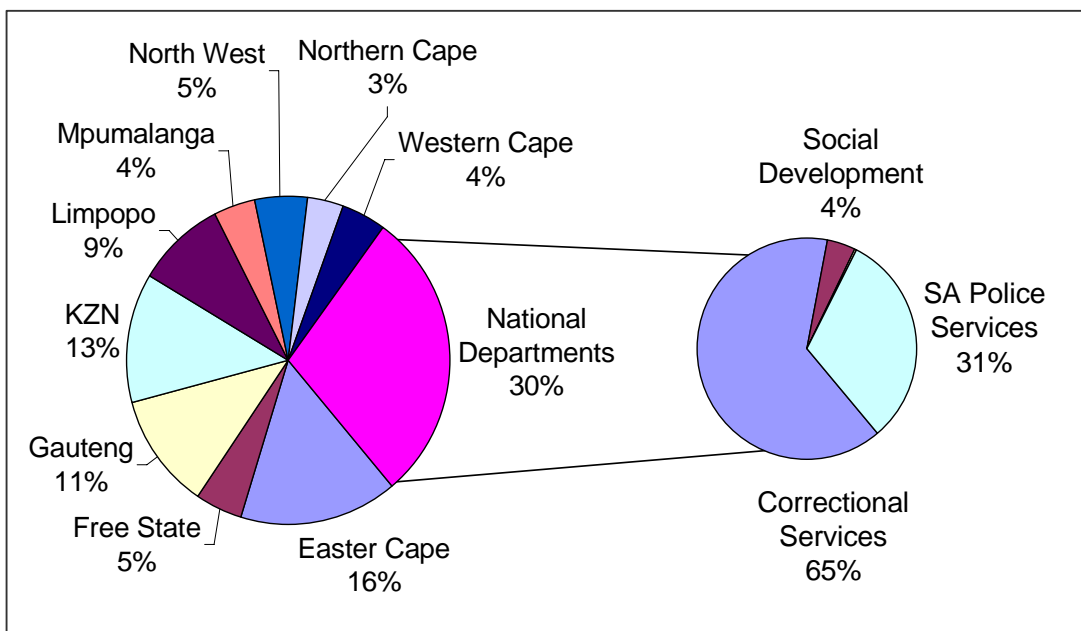
Cutting across the sectoral and geographical divides, the PERSAL database (DPSA, 2005) provides detailed information on the distribution of social workers employed by the state (Table 6). Figure 4 presents this information graphically. Within the provinces, the vast majority of social workers are employed by the departments of social development and welfare, while the departments of health employ the largest portion of the balance. The provinces with the largest proportions of state-employed social workers are the Eastern Cape, KZN and the Gauteng. The national Department of Correctional services employs 65% of social workers employed by national government, while SAPS employs 31% and the Department of Social Development only 4%.

**Table 6: Social workers employed by the state, by province and department, 2005**

	<b>Social Development / Welfare</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>SAPS</b>	<b>Correctional Services</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Western Cape	331	119	0	0	0	450
Eastern Cape	460	70	0	0	3	533
Northern Cape	49	7	0	0	0	56
Free State	187	8	0	0	1	196
North West	115	27	0	0	1	143
KwaZulu-Natal	487	102	0	0	1	590
Gauteng	388	164	0	0	1	553
Mpumalanga	210	22	0	0	0	232
Limpopo	333	42	0	0	0	375
National	63	0	255	474	1	793
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2 623</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3 921</b>

Source: PERSAL database, Sept 2005 (DPSA, 2005)

**Figure 4: Proportional distribution of social workers employed by the state, 2005**



Source: PERSAL database, Sept 2005 (DPSA, 2005)

In summary, from a major economic sectoral perspective, almost all social workers fall into the 'community, social and personal services' sector. Within this, however, Census 2001 data indicates that roughly half are involved in 'social work activities' (48.4%), one quarter are involved in 'central government activities' (25.4%) and just over one tenth (11.4%) in 'human health activities'. Available data on distribution from an employer perspective suggests that 47.5% are employed by either the government or private welfare sector and 11.7% by other state departments, while 11.4% are self-employed. Correctional Services (65%) and SAPS (31%) dominate state employment of social workers at the national level. From a provincial perspective, overall state employment is highest for the Eastern Cape (16%) and KZN (13%). However when looking at the numbers of social workers in direct formal welfare (both state and private), the Northern Cape, Western Cape and Gauteng are most advantaged, with ratios of 20.4, 15.7 and 12.1 per 100 000 of the population respectively. Most disadvantaged in these terms are Mpumalanga (8.2), Limpopo (8.2) and the North West (7.7) provinces. The uneven distribution of social workers generally, but particularly in respect of those involved in formal direct welfare activities, is undoubtedly having a negative impact on the equitable provision of social and welfare services to rural areas.

### ***What are the demographics of available social workers?***

#### **... in terms of gender?**

The gender distribution of SACSSP registered social workers over the period 1996 – 2005 is presented in Table 7. Unfortunately data at this level of disaggregation is not available for the years 1999 – 2003 due to the combination of a change in data-capturing systems and computer theft at the institution during this time. Nevertheless, the available data reveals that social workers are overwhelmingly female and that the relative proportional breakdown has remained fairly consistent over the period. The largest annual proportion of females is 89.3% in 2005 while the smallest is 86.9 % in 1996. Conversely, the smallest annual proportion of males is 10.7% in 2005 while the largest is 13.3% in 1996

**Table 7: Growth in total number of SACSSP registered social workers, by gender, 1996 - 2005**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	1999	2001	2000	2003	2004	2005
Male (%)	13.3	13.2	13.0	13.1	*	*	*	*	10.4	10.7
Female (%)	86.7	86.8	87.0	86.9	*	*	*	*	89.6	89.3
Total (N)	9711	10216	10358	8438	9737	9072	*	10515	11110	11111

Source: SACSSP, 2005a

\* Data unavailable

Table 8 presents the gender breakdown of the available OHS, LFS and Census, 2001 data. OHS data (1996 – 1999) is inconsistent, with male representation ranging from a high of 31.5% in 1999 to a low of 15.7% in 1996. These figures thus support the female domination evident in the SACSSP figures, although male representation here is generally much higher. A possible reason for this may be the less refined extraction of OHS data as described earlier.

LFS data between 2000 and 2003 corresponds closely with the SACSSP figures: Here females also represent the overwhelming majority, with a low of 90.0% in 2002 and a high of 92.5% in 2000. Conversely male representation ranges from a low of 7.5% in 2000 to a high of 10.0% in 2002.

Gender breakdown of the 2004 and 2005 LFS figures, however, runs counter to the generally accepted norm described above. Here males are in the majority with 62.4% and 56.9% respectively. When looking at the actual figures however, it is clear that the numbers of females captured remains in the range of previous years and the reduction in percentages does not represent a drop in their physical numbers. The numbers of males social work and social work associate professionals captured in the survey however jumps from an average of 677 over the period 2000 – 2004 to 2 802 in 2004 and again to 5 468 in 2005. This information, combined with the data presented in the previous section which shows the dramatic increase in the number of post-graduate qualifications in the LFS 2005, suggests that these additional people are also male and unlikely to be professional social workers, but rather working as one of the other occupations within the range of social work and social work associate professions.

Finally, the data from Census 2001 suggests a male representation of 13.5% and a female representation of 86.5%, which is again roughly in line with the SACSSP data.

**Table 8: Gender distribution of employed social work and social work associate professionals**

Year	Data source	Male		Female		Total	
		(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
1996	OHS	2040	15.7	10973	84.3	13013	100.0
1997		3351	30.3	7696	69.7	11047	100.0
1998		1637	18.1	7405	81.9	9042	100.0
1999		3872	31.5	8412	68.5	12284	100.0
2000	LFS	853	7.5	10517	92.5	11 370	100.0
2001		423	9.5	4033	90.5	4 456	100.0
2002		627	10.0	5644	90.0	6 271	100.0
2003		803	8.7	8431	91.3	9 234	100.0
2004		2802	37.6	4651	62.4	7 453	100.0
2005		5468	43.1	7218	56.9	12 686	100.0
2001	Census, 2001	666	13.5	4253	86.5	4919	100.0

Source: Quantec, 2007 (StatsSA OHS data for 1996 – 1999; StatsSA LFS data for 2000 – 2005); StatsSA, 2003

(Census, 2001)

### ... in terms of race?

The SACSSP has not recorded the racial profile of their registered social workers and so data from this source is unavailable.

The proportional racial breakdown of social work and social work associate professionals within the OHS and LFS data is presented in Table 9. The variability from year to year adds to the concerns regarding the representivity of this data at disaggregated levels. Nevertheless, the overall picture suggests that Africans are on average the largest group (48.9%), with whites the second largest group (32.1%). The average number of coloured people involved in the social work and social work associate professions is also almost three times (13.9%) the number of Indian/Asian people (5.0%).

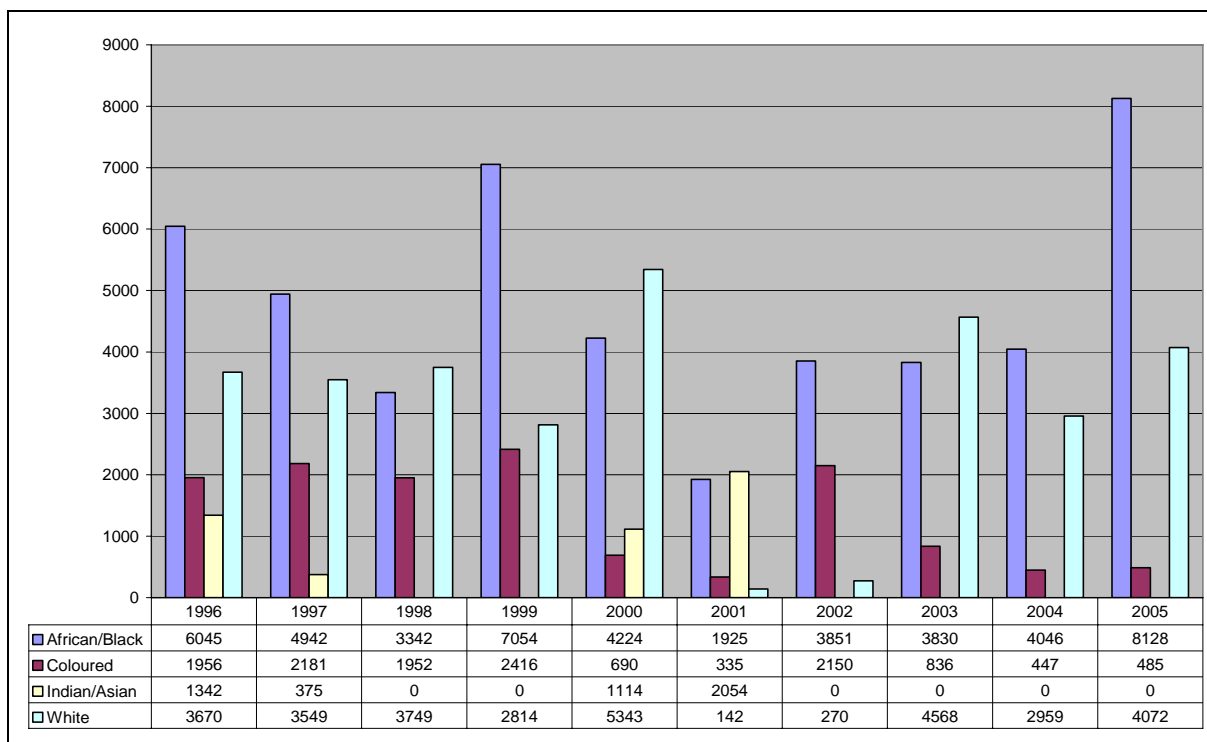
**Table 9: Social work and social work associate professionals by race: 1996 - 2005**

Race		1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average 96 - 05
African	%	46.5	44.7	37.0	57.4	37.1	43.2	61.4	41.5	54.3	64.1	48.9
Coloured	%	15.0	19.7	21.6	19.7	6.1	7.5	34.3	9.1	6.0	3.8	13.9
Indian/ Asian	%	10.3	3.4	0.0	0.0	9.8	46.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
White	%	28.2	32.1	41.5	22.9	47.0	3.2	4.3	49.5	39.7	32.1	32.1
Total	N	13 013	11 047	9 043	12 284	11 371	4 456	6 271	9 234	7 452	12 685	9 686

Source: Quantec, 2007 (StatsSA OHS data for 1996 – 1999; StatsSA LFS data for 2000 – 2005)

The graphic presentation of this information in Figure 5 clearly shows that within the OHS data (1996 – 1999) there is a much higher proportion of coloured people compared with the LFS data (2000 – 2005). For whites, with the exception of 2001 and 2002 - where extremely low numbers were captured in the survey - the numbers of white social work and social work associate professionals ranges between 2 814 and 5 343. Indian/Asian representation is most variable, with people of this race group being captured in only four of the ten surveys. African representation shows peaks in 1996, 1999 and 2005, but is otherwise relatively consistent in the 3 000 – 5 000 band. Explanations for the 1996 and 1999 peaks may lie in the fact that the OHS data is not filtered by qualification level with a number of those captured in these years thus likely not to be qualified social workers. The peak in 2005 must be read in conjunction with earlier analyses of the data, which taken together suggests that the additional group of post-graduate male social work and social work associate professionals captured in this year were also largely black.

**Figure 5: Social work and social work associate professionals by race: 1996 - 2005**



Source: Quantec, 2007 (StatsSA OHS data for 1996 – 1999; StatsSA LFS data 2000 – 2005)

Another source of data available for racial analysis is that of Census 2001. This is presented in Table 10. While based on an overall total figure considerably smaller than the average of figures obtained by the OHS and LFS, the racial breakdown is remarkably similar. The only notable difference is the fewer number of coloured people within this analysis: 9.4% compared with the OHS/LFS average of 13.9%.

**Table 10: Racial breakdown of ‘social science and related professionals’ and ‘social work associate professionals’, 2001**

African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total	
%	%	%	%	N	%
50.1	9.4	4.9	35.6	4 191	100.0

Source: StatsSA, 2003 (Census, 2001)

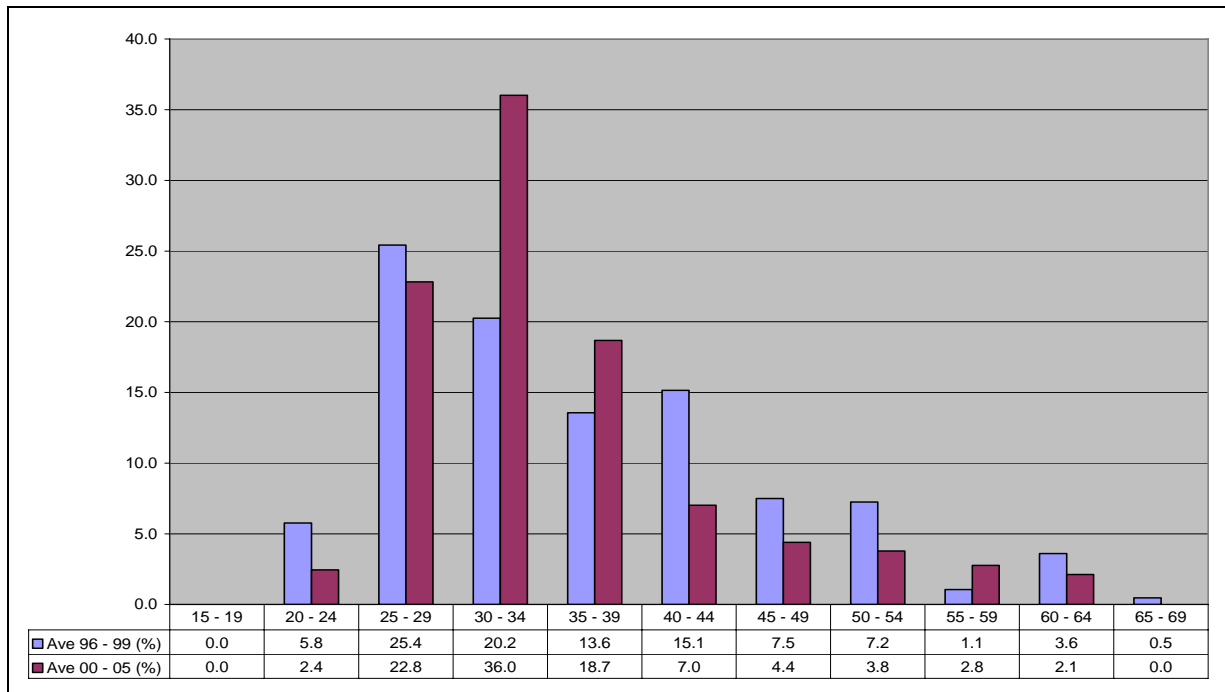
In summary, while the data available does not allow for an analysis of trends in respect of the changing race profile of social workers, the available data suggests that roughly half of all social workers are African, one third are white, one tenth are coloured and the remainder are Indian/Asian.

### ... in terms of age?

The average age distribution of the data for 1996 – 1999 (OHS) and for 2000 – 2005 (LFS) is presented in Figure 6. OHS data shows the highest number in the 25 – 29 year age group (25.4%), trailing slowly to a still substantial 7.2% in the 50 – 54 year age group. LFS data also shows a high figure of 22.8% in the 25-29 year age group, however the proportion in the 30 – 34 year age group is even higher (36.0%). Figures then trail off

quickly to 7.0% in the 40 – 45 year age group and only 3.8% in the 50 – 54 year age group. Making deductions from these shifts is extremely difficult due to the small numbers and the lack of direct comparability between datasets. What is however clear, is that the majority of social work and social work associate professionals enter the profession between the ages of 25 and 29. A small proportion enters at age 20 -24, while a not insignificant portion appears to enter at ages 30 – 34. Additionally clear is that the majority of social workers are below the age of 40 years – 59.2% on average according to the OHS data between 1996 and 1999, and 79.9% on average according to the LFS data between 2000 and 2005.

**Figure 6: Age distribution of social work and social work associate professionals: average 96 – 99 compared with average 00 – 05.**



Source: Quantec, 2007 (StatsSA OHS data for 1996 – 1999; StatsSA LFS data for 2000 – 2005)

From the Census 2001 data it is possible to extract age groups across the race categories. This is presented in Table 11. At an overall level, and in line with the OHS and LFS data, 67.4% of the ‘social science and related professionals’ and the ‘social work associate professions’ are below the age of 40 years, with the largest numbers falling into the 25-29 and 30-35 year age groups.

The breakdown according to the racial categories reveals interesting information and suggests that the racial profile is changing: For while the majority over the age of 45 is white, between the ages of 25 and 44 only roughly 30% are white. The relatively low numbers of social workers younger than 25 years could be due to delayed onset of training or the time required to complete the course, with most therefore still busy with their training at this age. The over-representation of whites within the group younger than 25 may be the result of their better access to financial resources, combined with the effects of historically higher foundational education serving to support graduation after the minimum of four years of training.

**Table 11: Race and age profile of ‘social science and related professionals’ and ‘social work associate professionals’, 2001**

Age	Percentage within age group					Age category % of total	Cumulative % of total
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total		
20-24	41.2	12.6	6.6	39.6	100.0	3.7	3.7
25-29	55.2	11.4	4.1	29.3	100.0	23.5	27.2
30-34	60.3	8.7	7.3	23.7	100.0	26.6	53.9
35-39	53.1	11.9	5.7	29.3	100.0	13.5	67.4
40-44	55.5	11.3	3.9	29.3	100.0	12.4	79.8
45-49	35.1	8.1	5.9	50.9	100.0	8.3	88.1
50-54	24.1	2.9	0.0	73.0	100.0	7.7	95.8
55-59	23.4	0.0	0.0	76.6	100.0	3.2	99.0
60-64	0.0	0.0	0.0	100	100.0	1.0	100.0
TOTAL (%)	50.2	9.4	4.9	35.6	100.0	100.0	100.0
(N)	2 468	461	241	1 750	4 920		

Source: StatsSA, 2003 (Census, 2001)

### ... of those in government employment?

While the large national databases provide only information about the broader groups of ‘social work professionals’ and ‘social work associate professionals’ in the case of the OHS and LFS and of ‘social science and related professionals’ and ‘social work associate professionals’ in the case of the Census, information from the PERSAL database (DPSA, 2005) relates directly to social workers in government employ. Analysis of this data provides a comparative source to that undertaken above.

Table 12 shows the provincial employment of social workers broken down into percentages across the eight groups: race by gender. At an overall level, 73% are African; 11.3% coloured; 12.3% white; and 2.6% Indian/Asian. In terms of gender, 85.3% are female while 14.7% are male. Compared with analyses above, these figures suggest that government employment is representative of the overall group of social work skills in respect of gender, but not in respect of race, with African figures considerably higher here than the 48.9% of the OHS/LFS data and the 50.1% of the Census 2001 data.

At the provincial level, notable findings are: The large proportion of coloured social workers within the Western Cape (53.6%) and Northern Cape (44.7%) provinces; the almost complete dominance of African social workers in Limpopo (98.1%); the higher than average proportions of white social workers in the Gauteng (20.4%) and at national level (20.5%) – although still lower than OHS/LFS and Census proportions; and the relatively high proportions of males in the Western Cape (20.0%) and in Limpopo (24.5%).

**Table 12: Social Workers in Government Employ by Province, Gender and Population Group**

Province	Gender	Population Groups				Total		Total	
		African	Coloured	White	Asian	%	N	%	N
		%	%	%	%				
Western Cape	Female	20.4	40.9	18.2	0.4	80	360	100	450
	Male	5.3	12.7	2	0	20	90		
	TOTAL	25.7	53.6	20.2	0.4	100			

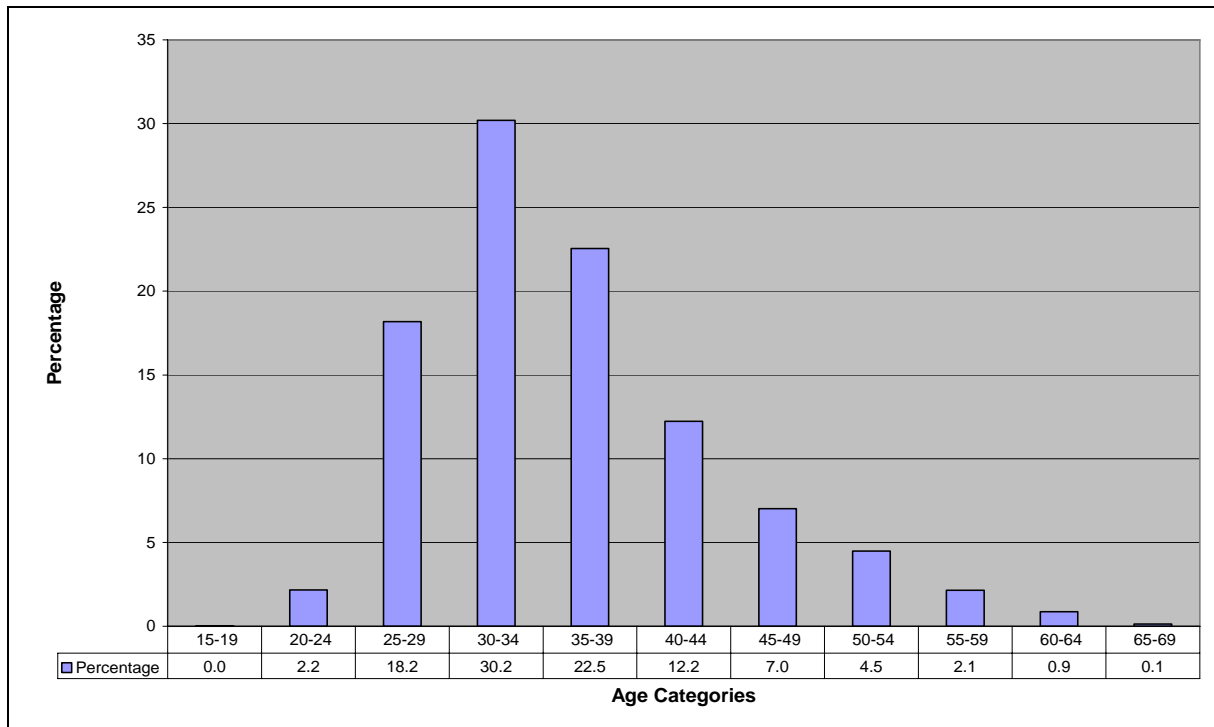
Province	Gender	Population Groups				Total		Total	
		African	Coloured	White	Asian	%	N	%	N
		%	%	%	%				
Free State	Female	69.4	1	13.8	0	84.2	165	100	196
	Male	12.8	0	3.1	0	15.8	31		
	TOTAL	82.2	1	16.9	0	100			
KwaZulu-Natal	Female	75.4	1.2	2.2	9.8	88.6	523	100	590
	Male	10	0.2	0	1.2	11.4	67		
	TOTAL	85.4	1.4	2.2	11	100			
Northern Cape	Female	37.5	39.3	7.1	1.8	85.7	48	100	56
	Male	8.9	5.4	0	0	14.3	8		
	TOTAL	46.4	44.7	7.1	1.8	100			
Limpopo	Female	73.6	0	1.9	0	75.5	283	100	375
	Male	24.5	0	0	0	24.5	92		
	TOTAL	98.1	0	1.9	0	100			
North West	Female	83.2	4.2	6.3	0.7	94.4	135	100	143
	Male	5.6	0	0	0	5.6	8		
	TOTAL	88.8	4.2	6.3	0.7	100			
Eastern Cape	Female	72.8	7.9	6.6	0	87.2	465	100	533
	Male	11.6	1.1	0	0	12.8	68		
	TOTAL	84.4	9	6.6	0	100			
Mpumalanga	Female	77.2	0.4	5.2	0.4	83.2	193	100	232
	Male	16.4	0	0.4	0	16.8	39		
	TOTAL	93.6	0.4	5.6	0.4	100			
Gauteng	Female	68.2	2.2	19	1.6	91	503	100	553
	Male	6.7	0.7	1.4	0.2	9	50		
	TOTAL	74.9	2.9	20.4	1.8	100			
National	Female	50.8	12.7	18.2	2.5	84.2	668	100	793
	Male	10.7	2.5	2.3	0.3	15.8	125		
	TOTAL	61.5	15.2	20.5	2.8	100			
Total	Female	62.1	9.6	11.2	2.3	85.3	3 921	100	3 921
	Male	11.1	2.3	1.1	0.3	14.7			
	TOTAL	73.2	11.9	12.3	2.6	100			

Source: PERSAL database, Sept 2005 (DPSA, 2005)

The age distribution of government employed social workers is presented in Figure 7. This corresponds closely with the distributions evident in the LFS and Census 2001 data, with the majority in the 30-34 year age group and 73.1% below the age of 40 years. The only significant difference between this age distribution and those of the LFS and Census data, is that the proportion in the 35-39 year age group is higher here than in the 25-29 year age group, with this being opposite in the other analyses.



**Figure 7: Age distribution of social workers in government employ**



Source: PERSAL database, Sept 2005 (DPSA, 2005)

### ... in summary?

Analyses of data available from the SACSSP, the OHS and LFS, Census 2001, and the DPSA reveals the following key information on the demographic characteristics and trends of social workers:

- The majority of social workers are female. All other data sources generally support SACSSP figures of a range of 86.7% to 89.3% for females and a range of 10.4% to 13.3% for males.
- Around half the social worker workforce are African, while around one third are white, one tenth coloured and the remainder Indian/Asian. These ratios are reflected in both the OHS/LFS averages of 48.9%, 32.1%, 13.9% and 5.0% respectively and the Census, 2001 figures of 50.1%, 35.6%, 9.4% and 4.9% respectively. While data does not allow for any trend analysis, disaggregation of racial data by age suggests transformation as the proportions of white social workers are much higher in the age groups over 45 years compared with the age groups below this.
- Between 65.0% (OHS average) and 79.9% (LFS average) of social workers are below the age of 40 years, with the majority of these falling into the 25-29 and 30-34 year age groups. Tentatively, this age distribution raises concerns around the retention of social workers in the labour market and the transfer of skills from older to younger professionals.
- Finally, comparative analysis of the demographics of those within government employ against the data obtained from the other sources, suggests that the proportion of African social workers at this employer (73.2%) is higher than the proportion within the total pool (around 50%). This would however be in line with government's employment equity policies that consider overall population

demographics at the target rather than the demographics of the pool of supply for a particular skill.

### ***How many social workers do we need?***

Having unpacked and discussed the characteristics and trends of the demographics of South African social workers, this section seeks to answer the question of how many are actually required, at present and over the next decade.

Demand for professionals such as social workers needs to be unpacked at three different levels. At the most basic level, there is the demand created by the need to maintain current levels of social workers relative to the population. This consists of two key aspects: new demand to take account of population growth and replacement demand to cover the requirements arising from social workers leaving the profession due to factors such as retirement, death or emigration. At this level, however, analysis considers only the maintenance of a proportionally consistent workforce at existing ratios.

At a second level, there is the demand created by the need to fill currently vacant social worker posts – a factor, which if addressed, would alter the current ratio of social workers to population. As a reflection of current ‘market’ demand, however, this is somewhat artificial as it reflects more accurately the demand created by the availability of funding for social work positions rather than the demand for services by the actual users, as these are generally unable to pay for the services they require.

Finally at the third level, it is important to unpack the demand for social workers arising out of the need for their services. Here comparisons of the actual availability against determined norms and standards provide the best information.

### **... to maintain the existing ratio of social workers to population?**

In 2005, the ratio of registered social workers (11 111) to the population (4 700 745) was 23.6 per 100 000. Table 13 shows that in order to maintain this ratio in the face of population growth, a total of 468 additional social workers will be needed by 2015. Assuming that of those aged 60-64, 10% retire each year with the remainder retiring at the age of 65, a total of 874 new social workers will be needed to cover this loss. In respect of the need to cover death among social workers (including mortality due to HIV/AIDS) a total of 1 967 additional professionals will be required by 2015. Thus the total requirement of new social workers by 2015 to cover losses due to retirement and death at the same time as maintain the current social worker to population ratios, is 3 282.

**Table 13: Demand for social workers to cover new demand due to population growth and replacement demand due to retirement and death, 2005 – 2015**

Year	Total		New Demand		Retirement*		Death**		Total
	Population	Social workers	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
	N	N							
Base year 2005	47004745	11111	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2006	47248766	11169	58	0.5	32	0.3	183	1.6	273
2007	47447639	11216	47	0.4	43	0.4	185	1.6	275
2008	47626961	11258	42	0.4	56	0.5	190	1.7	288
2009	47791318	11297	39	0.3	69	0.6	200	1.8	308
2010	47958250	11336	39	0.3	81	0.7	195	1.7	315
2011	48130335	11377	41	0.4	93	0.8	198	1.7	332
2012	48311927	11420	43	0.4	104	0.9	201	1.8	348
2013	48513929	11468	48	0.4	114	1	203	1.8	365
2014	48735778	11520	52	0.5	123	1.1	206	1.8	381
2015	48984542	11579	59	0.5	132	1.1	206	1.8	397
Total			468		847		1967		3282

Notes: \* Assuming that of those aged 60-64, 10% retire each year, and that the remainder retire at age 65; \*\* Including mortality due to HIV/AIDS

Sources: Earle, 2007a

The other factor impacting on replacement demand is the loss of South African qualified social workers to emigration. This factor however does not lend itself to easy analysis as hard data on the emigration of social workers from South Africa is patchy. Until 2003 StatsSA collected data on self-declared emigration of people within the 'social service occupations', the majority of whom are likely to be social workers (Stats SA 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2005). Figures for the period 1990 to 2003 are presented in column A of Table 14. Over the period a total of 636 social workers left the country permanently, with the annual average over the 1990 – 1999 period being 32, compared with an annual average over the 2000 – 2003 period of 88. Thus according to official statistics, emigration of social workers since 2000 has demonstrated a marked increase. It is however important to remember these official figures capture only *self-declared intentional, permanent emigration* as opposed to *actual emigration*.

Accurate data on immigration of South African social workers into receiving counties is also difficult to come by. Despite this, the evidence obtained in relation to just one such country – the UK – suggests that the official figures as captured by StatsSA are a substantial under-estimation of the true picture.

Until early 2004, the British General Social Care Council (GSCC, 2005 & 2007) required a 'Letter of Verification' for registration of foreign qualified social workers. Through this system a total 1 638 South African qualified social workers obtained registration to practice in the UK over the period 1990 to 2003 (column B of Table 14). Similar to the StatsSA emigration data, these figures show a marked increase from 2000, however the magnitude of the figures is considerably greater: The annual average between 1990 and 1999 was 59, jumping to 278 between 2000 and 2003. Overall, the GSCC data provides a figure over two and a half times the total formal self-reported emigration for the same period.

When considering these figures for the UK, it is important to remember that professional registration is generally a once-off process and as such can only give information on the

number being 'added' to the pool each year. Information on the duration, permanence or temporariness of stays is generally not available from such sources.

However, since 2004 all foreign qualified social workers in the UK (including all those who previously obtained a letter of verification) have been required to go through a qualification equivalence process with either the GSCC (now covering only England) or the newly established Scottish Social Services Council, Northern Ireland Social Care Council or the Care Council for Wales. GSCC information for the number of South African social workers who have undergone the qualification equivalence process since 2004 for registration to work in England is presented in column C of Table 14 (GSCC, 2007). Of the total of 1053, the majority of registrations (732) were in 2005. And while a portion of these are likely to be new registrations for that year, the majority are likely to be those who previously registered under the letter of verification system and had to complete registration prior to the end of the grace period given for this. Thus while not directly comparable with the earlier GSCC data (which covers the whole of the UK), these figures indicate that a sizable portion of those that migrated to the UK prior to 2003 were still there at the time the system changed.

In turn, this suggests that for many South African social workers, even temporary migration to the UK is for periods longer than one to two years. Recent research by Engelbrecht (2006) supports this suggestion. He indicates that 28% of his sample of 65 South African qualified social workers working in the UK would *not* be willing to return to social work in South Africa at all, and of the rest, a high 60% indicated that they had no imminent plans to do so.

A final source of information regarding the movement of South African qualified social workers to the UK is the British Home Office, Work Permits, Freedom of Information Division. While not all South African social workers require work permits (a number will either have European passports, ancestral visas or working holiday visas), this source of information provides some idea of the demand for South African qualified social workers by UK employers. The first year in which employer-sponsored work permits were issued to South African social workers was 1999, with 3 first applications approved (column D in Table 14). One year later the figure had climbed to 111 approved first applications and 2 approved extensions (column E in Table 14). The number of approved first applications continued to climb to a high of 184 in 2002, however has shown a gradual decline since then to the latest figure of 88 in 2006. The number of approved extensions has however remained fairly consistent at between 23 and 33 per year since 2002. Overall through this system, 957 South African qualified social workers have received permission to practice their profession in the UK, of which 143 applied for extensions to their work permits. Over the 2000 – 2006 period this equates to an annual average of 157 approved first applications and extensions. (Workpermits (UK) Freedom of Information, 2007).

**Table 14: Emigration of South African social workers (1990 – 2006)**

Source:	StatsSA	General Social Care Council (UK)		WorkPermitsUK		
Year	Emigration of social service occupations	Letters of verification to SA qualified social workers	Social work qualification equivalence process (England only)	First Applications Approved	Extensions Approved	Total
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
1990	4	36				
1991	11					
1992	16					
1993	*					
1994	63					
1995	44					
1996	47					
1997	43					
1998	27					
1999	31			3	0	3
2000	39	224		111	2	113
2001	146	283		127	4	131
2002	52	262		184	25	209
2003	113	342		155	33	188
2004			191	167	28	195
2005			732	122	23	145
2006			130	88	28	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>1 638</b>	<b>1 053</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>1 100</b>
<b>Annual Ave 1990 - 1999</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>59</b>				
<b>Annual Ave since 2000**</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>278</b>		<b>136</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>157</b>

Sources: StatsSA, (1989, 1991, 1993, 1996; 1999, 2000b, 2005); GSCC, 2007; WorkPermitsUK, Freedom of Information Division, 2007

Note \*: Data unavailable \*\* For the years of data availability

Considering the latest official figure of 113 from StatsSA as a reliable, albeit extremely conservative, count of permanent emigration, we are able to calculate the impact of emigration on demand for social workers. This figure represents 1.02% of the total number of SACSSP registered social workers in 2005. Using this proportion as the annual loss, Table 15 indicates that over the period 2005 to 2015, 1 156 social workers will be required to cover demand arising from emigration.

**Table 15: Demand for social workers arising from losses to official emigration (2005 – 2015)**

Year	Total		Emigration	
	Population	Social workers		
	N	N	N	%
Base year 2005	47004745	11111	113	1.02
2006	47248766	11169	114	1.02
2007	47447639	11216	114	1.02
2008	47626961	11258	114	1.02
2009	47791318	11297	115	1.02
2010	47958250	11336	115	1.02
2011	48130335	11377	116	1.02
2012	48311927	11420	116	1.02
2013	48513929	11468	117	1.02
2014	48735778	11520	117	1.02
2015	48984542	11579	118	1.02
Total			1156	

In summary, the available data regarding the emigration of South African qualified social workers suggests the following:

- Emigration generally, but also to the UK specifically, increased considerably from the year 2000 onwards compared with the previous decade.
- Emigration to the UK appears to have reached a peak between 2002 and 2004, with indications that the magnitude of movement has reduced somewhat since then.
- Official statistics suggest that since 2000 South Africa has lost on average of 88 social workers per year to emigration.
- UK data however suggests that losses of social workers are more likely to be in the region of between 157 and 278 each year. And while these figures do not take account of those social workers that do chose to return to South Africa after a period of time (which would have a positive net impact) no information is available on the losses to other countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, to which South African social workers are also migrating (DSD, 2006). Furthermore, even temporary migration has a substantially negative impact on availability of social workers in South Africa and serves to fuel local demand.
- Using the conservative figure of 1.02% of registered social workers as the annual amount lost to emigration, South Africa will need 1 156 additional social workers to cover the resulting demand.

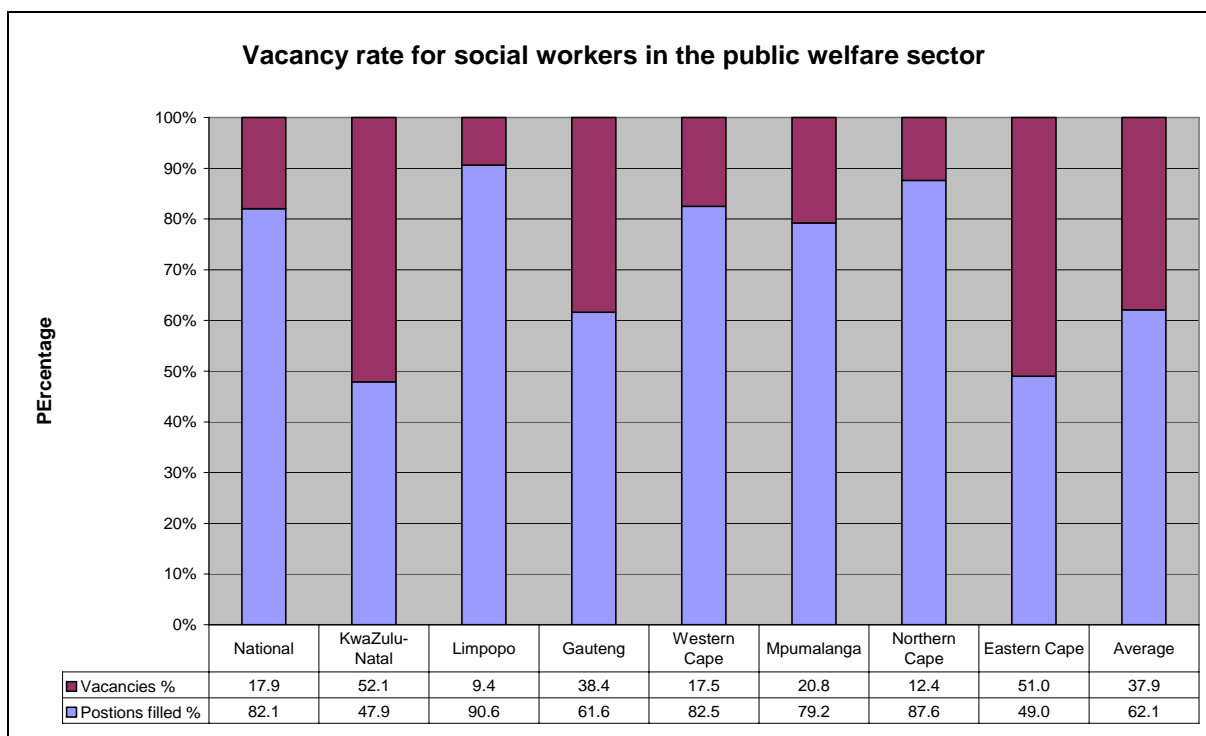
### **... to fill all available posts?**

In the section above, we considered demand only in relation to the maintenance of the current ratio of social workers to population. No account was taken of whether the current number of social workers within the local labour market is actually serving to meet the demand for their skills as created by funded positions.

The presence of vacant posts suggests unmet current demand. Data on social worker vacancies was obtained via two key channels. Firstly, the Department of Social Development (DSD, 2005b) provided information that they had managed to obtain on the number of vacancies in for six of the nine provincial departments of social development as well as for the national level. This was obtained in October 2005, although was collected from the provinces some time earlier in that year. This was supplemented for one additional province by figures on vacancies reported in the media for February 2005 (Chauke, 2005).

Figure 8 presents the available vacancy rates for social workers in the public welfare sector in 2005. This shows that all of the seven provinces for which there is data, as well as the national level, have unfilled posts. The largest proportions of vacancies are in KwaZulu-Natal (52.1%) and the Eastern Cape (51.0%) provinces. Limpopo (9.4%) and the Northern Cape (12.4%) have the lowest levels of vacancies however figures even in these provinces are not insignificant.

**Figure 8: Vacancy rate for social workers in the public welfare sector, 2005**



Sources: DSD, 2005b (data for all except the Eastern Cape, October 2005); Chauke, 2005 (data for the Eastern Cape, February 2005)

Table 16 presents the comparison of the actual figures provided by the DSD (and the media in the case of the Eastern Cape) with the information obtained from the PERSAL database (DPSA, 2005) of actual employment of social workers within the various provincial and national departments of social development. For four of the seven comparable provincial data sets, the proportion of vacancies is very similar. For the other three provinces and for the national figures, differences are worth mention: For Mpumalanga, the PERSAL database has a smaller number of positions filled compared

with DSD figures, thus showing a significantly higher vacancy rate (32.9%) than the figure presented above (20.8%). The situation is similar for the Northern Cape, although the difference is even larger (a high 64.2% vacancies compared with a low 12.4%). For the Western Cape the situation is reversed, with PERSAL figures suggesting a much smaller vacancy rate (1.8% compared with DSD figures of 17.5%), while at the national level, PERSAL suggests that considerably more social workers are employed than there are posts available according to DSD data.

**Table 16: Comparison of vacancy data for social workers in provincial government welfare (2005)**

	DSD data (2005)					PERSAL (DSD proportion) (September 2005)			
	Total demand	Filled		Vacant		Filled		Vacant	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Eastern Cape*	900	441	49.0	459	51.0	460	51.1	440	48.9
Free State				0		187			
Gauteng	662	408	61.6	254	38.4	388	58.6	274	41.4
KwaZulu-Natal	1 017	487	47.9	530	52.1	487	47.9	530	52.1
Limpopo	351	318	90.6	33	9.4	333	94.9	18	5.1
Mpumalanga	313	248	79.2	65	20.8	210	67.1	103	32.9
North West				0		115			
Northern Cape	137	120	87.6	17	12.4	49	35.8	88	64.2
Western Cape	337	278	82.5	59	17.5	331	98.2	6	1.8
National	39	32	82.1	7	17.9	63	161.5	-24	-61.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 756</b>	<b>2 332</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>1 424</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>2 560</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>1 196</b>	<b>31.8</b>

Sources: DSD, 2005b; PERSAL database (DPSA, 2005); \*Chauke, 2005 (data for the Eastern Cape)

Other than by looking at vacancies across the provinces, it is possible to disaggregate the DSD data by salary level. This is presented in Table 17. What is starkly evident is that the largest proportion of vacancies (46.9%) is also for the level of greatest demand – entry level 7. Additionally notable is that while demand in respect of actual numbers falls relatively consecutively from the lowest to the highest salary levels, the proportion of vacancies reveals another pattern: High vacancy rates are evident for levels 7 and 10, dropping consecutively to low vacancy rates for levels 9 and 12. This divide may lie between the clinical and the management functions of social work, with unmet demand being highest in the lowest bracket of each.

**Table 17: Distribution of public social development social work posts by salary level and vacancy rates (2005)**

Salary Level	Total Posts*		Filled		Vacant	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
7	1 614	56.5	857	53.1	757	46.9
8	410	14.4	312	76.1	98	23.9
9	611	21.4	580	94.9	31	5.1
10	152	5.3	83	54.6	69	45.4
11	43	1.5	34	79.1	9	20.9
12	26	0.9	25	96.2	1	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 856</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 891</b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>33.8</b>

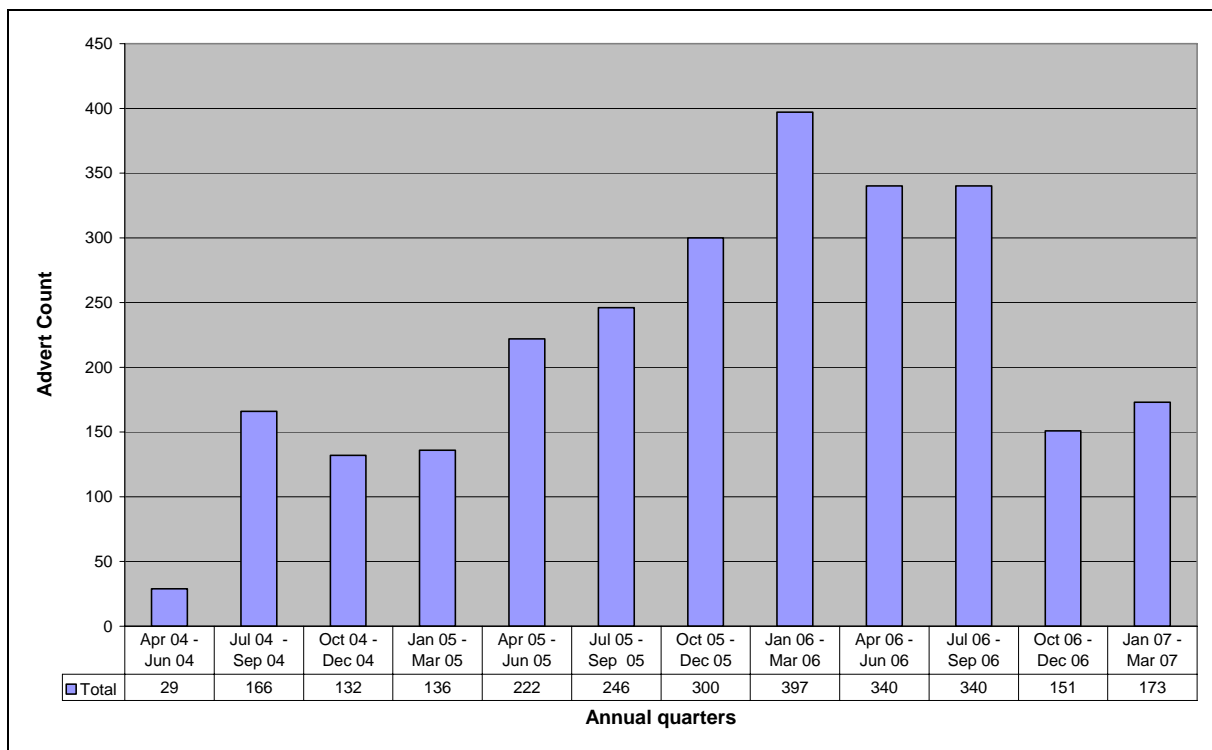
Source: DSD, 2005 (personal correspondence)

Note: \* This data excludes the Eastern Cape, Free State and North West provinces for which data at this level was not available



The second source of information on vacancies for social workers was the Business Times, Career Times supplement of the Sunday Times national newspaper. Over the period April 2004 to March 2007, vacancies for social work and social work associate professions were captured and analysed. Figure 9 shows that over the period, the number of advertised posts increased steadily to the high of 397 for the period January to March 2006 and then remained at a high (although slightly lower 340) levels between April and September 2006. The number of adverts roughly halved from these high level between October 2006 and March 2007. Between October 2006 and March 2007 the number of advertisements per quarter reduced by roughly half. In total 2632 adverts for social work and social work associate professionals were counted.

**Figure 9: Vacancy advertisements for social work and social work associate professionals: April 2004 – March 2007**



Source: Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times (April 2004 to March 2007)

This total number of adverts cannot however be related to the actual number of posts available over the time period because for many posts more than one advertisement was issued. This is however in itself an indication of scarcity, as posts require repeated advertising before being filled.

The data is however able to provide other useful information. Table 18 indicates that the vast majority of the advertisements in each period were for social workers – between 57.3% of the 195 adverts between April 2004 and September 2004 and 83.8% of the 392 adverts between April 2005 and September 2005. Other occupations that contributed substantially to the overall adverts were community workers and parole/probation officers.

**Table 18: Proportional distribution of job advertisements by social service occupation: April 2004 – March 2007**

	Apr 04 - Sept 04		Oct 04 - Mar 05		Apr 05 - Sept 05		Oct 05 - Mar 06		Apr 06 - Sep 06		Oct 06 - Mar 07	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Social Workers (Skill Level 5)	113	57.9	171	63.8	392	83.8	414	59.4	474	69.7	261	80.6
Community Worker	3	1.5	16	6.0	25	5.3	100	14.3	39	5.7	2	0.6
Parole or Probation Officer	65	33.3	30	11.2	4	0.9	130	18.7	6	0.9	3	0.9
Youth Worker	0	0.0	29	10.8	1	0.2	5	0.7	0	0.0	17	5.2
Social Auxiliary Worker	14	7.2	22	8.2	46	9.8	48	6.9	161	23.7	41	12.7
Total	195	100.0	268	100.0	468	100.0	697	100.0	680	100.0	324	100.0

Source: Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times (April 2004 to March 2007)

A more detailed analysis of the vacancies for social workers particularly over the period April 2005 to March 2006 is presented in Table 19. This shows that 73.2% of adverts were for general social work positions, 9.6% were for counsellor positions, 6.7% for senior social work positions and 3.1% for principle social work positions. The proportion of adverts was lowest for clinical specialist positions and for the higher ranking management positions, supporting the lower availability of such positions as revealed through Table 17.

**Table 19: Proportional distribution of job advertisements for social work by job title: April 2005 – March 2006**

Job Title	Proportion of adverts (%)
Social Worker	73.2
Counsellor / Family Counsellor	9.6
Senior Social Worker	6.7
Chief Social Worker	5.0
Principle Social Worker	3.1
Social Work Specialist Clinical Positions	1.5
Social Work Manager	1.0
TOTAL	100.0

Source: Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times (April 2005 – March 2006)

Over this same period, but looking at the posts for the full group of occupations, advertised positions were overwhelmingly within the various provincial and national departments requiring the skills of social workers (see Table 20) - the cost of advertising in the Sunday Times a likely cause for the lack of advertisements from the generally under-funded and under-staffed NGO sector.

**Table 20: Employers advertising for social work and social work associate professionals in the Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times: April 2005 – March 2006**

<b>Advertiser</b>	<b>Number of adverts</b>	<b>Proportion of total number specified</b>
<b>Government Departments</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Social Development	363	55.6
Justice / Correctional Services	103	15.8
Health	98	15.0
Education	46	7.0
Police Services	19	2.9
Agriculture	17	2.6
Local Municipality	1	0.2
<b>Private Companies</b>		
Mondi Paper	2	0.3
Statistics South Africa	1	0.2
Construction Company	1	0.2
Ha Swikota Project	1	0.2
Methodist Church	1	0.2
Number specified	653	100.0
Number unspecified	513	
Total number of adverts	1 166	

Source: Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times (April 2005 – March 2006)

Data on vacancies with the NGO sector is notoriously sketchy and difficult to obtain: there is no centralized information and even within large NGOs such information is not routinely collected. Furthermore, as funding is only received for filled posts and not for posts that cannot be filled, such a unit of measurement is relatively meaningless in this sector. Despite this, the coordinator of NACOSS (the National Coalition of Social Services), was able through direct contact with member organizations to obtain some useful (although incomplete) information.

Table 21 presents the available information of the total number of social work posts at general (SW), supervisory (SW sup) and management (SW mgt) levels, as well as the turnover rates for each of these for 2005 and 2006. What is clear is that turnover of social workers at the general level – the level at which the largest numbers are employed – is very high, with the average being 38.0% in 2005 and increasing to 40.4% and 2006. These averages however hide large ranges of intra organizational variation, with a significant portion of organizations reporting turnover in excess of 50%. Most critically affected appears to be Child Welfare Mpumalanga, where resignations in both years exceeded the total number of posts at this level!

The numbers of social workers employed at supervisory and management levels is considerably lower, with smaller numbers of resignations thus necessary to produce high turnover rates in certain organizations. On average turnover at the supervisory level in 2005 was 16.1% and at the management level was 12.7%. And while overall employment

at these levels appears to be considerably more stable, it is notable that turnover for management level, turnover increased in 2006 to 16.9%.

**Table 21: NACOSS affiliated NGO social worker turnover rates 2005 - 2006**

NACOSS Affiliated NGOs	Posts			2005 Turnover			2006 Turnover		
	SW	SW sup	SW mgt	SW	SW sup	SW mgt	SW	SW sup	SW mgt
	N	N	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
ACVV	122	17	3	29.5	11.8	0.0	36.1	11.8	0.0
AFM Executive Welfare Council	22	4	4	4.5	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0
Age in Action	18	8	10	44.4	25.0	40.0	50.0	25.0	60.0
Autism South Africa **	0	0	0						
Child Welfare South Africa									
<i>Eastern Cape</i>	69	8	9	47.8	37.5	11.1	46.4	25.0	11.1
<i>Free State</i>	26	4	4	46.2	50.0	50.0	42.3	25.0	50.0
<i>Gauteng</i>	147	17	28	45.6	17.6	17.9	63.9	17.6	21.4
<i>KZN</i>	258	16	23	42.6	25.0	17.4	39.5	18.8	17.4
<i>Limpopo</i>	5	1	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Mpumalanga</i>	18	0	6	177.8		33.3	155.6		16.7
<i>Northern Cape</i>	17	1	4	47.1	200.0	0.0	64.7	100.0	25.0
<i>North West</i>	9	3	1	44.4	0.0	0.0	44.4	0.0	0.0
<i>Western Cape</i>	123	15	8	35.0	13.3	12.5	36.6	26.7	12.5
<i>CWSA National Office</i>	0	0	3			33.3			33.3
Council for Church Social Services									
<i>Badisa</i>	131	20	3	48.9	10.0	0.0	38.9	10.0	0.0
<i>Christelike Maatskaplike Raad Noord</i>	46	8	1	30.4	12.5	100.0	43.5	12.5	0.0
<i>Christelike Maatskaplike Raad Oos-Kaap</i>	50	5	1	34.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Christelike Welsynsraad, Gauteng-Oos</i>	18	2	1	50.0	100.0	0.0	33.3	50.0	0.0
<i>Christian Welfare Board</i>	36	5	1	38.9	20.0	0.0	55.6	20.0	0.0
<i>NG Social Services Free State</i>	31	5	1	25.8	0.0	0.0	41.9	20.0	0.0
<i>NG Barmhartigheidsdiens, Gauteng</i>	46	7	1	50.0	28.6	0.0	45.7	0.0	0.0
<i>NG Welsyn Noord Kaap</i>	9	1	3	11.1	0.0	0.0	22.2	100.0	0.0
<i>NG Welsyn Noord-Wes</i>	50	5	4	40.0	0.0	0.0	34.0	0.0	0.0
Catholic Women's League	12	0	1	0.0		0.0	33.3		0.0
DEAFSA	17	6	4	5.9	16.7	0.0	47.1	16.7	50.0
Down Syndrome South Africa**	0	0	0						
Epilepsy South Africa	20	3	6	15.0	66.7	0.0	15.0	66.7	0.0
FAMSA *	79	11	16	26.6	9.1	0.0	40.5	0.0	0.0
National Jewish Welfare Forum	24	4	5	12.5	25.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	40.0
National Council for People with Physical Disabilities SA *	33	4	5	45.5	25.0	20.0	15.2	0.0	60.0
Ondersteuningsraad	40	5	1	45.0	0.0	0.0	45.0	40.0	0.0
Rhema Service Foundation	0	3	1		33.3	0.0		100.0	200.0
SA Federation for Mental Health	141	21	29	22.0	4.8	10.3	17.0	9.5	3.4
Salvation Army									

NACOSS Affiliated NGOs	Posts			2005 Turnover			2006 Turnover		
	SW	SW sup	SW mgt	SW	SW sup	SW mgt	SW	SW sup	SW mgt
	N	N	N	%	%	%	%	%	%
SANCA									
SAVF	82	14	4	36.6	0.0	0.0	42.7	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	1699	223	189	38.0	16.1	12.7	40.4	16.1	16.9

Source: NACOSS, 2007

\* Not all offices responded

\*\* No social workers employed due to insufficient funds

In summary, the various data sources on vacancies in the public welfare sector indicates that across the national and provincial departments of social development in 2005, between 31.8% and 37.9% of posts were unfilled, and that while vacancies exist for all salary levels, unmet demand is by far the highest for entry level clinical general social worker positions (level 7). Furthermore, the total number of positions being advertised for social work and social work associate professionals in the national Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times newspaper supplement increased with each quarter between April 2004 and March 2006, from 29 to 397, before dropping to 173 over the period January to March 2007.

Despite being incomplete, the valuable information that was provided by NACOSS on a portion of the NGO sector indicates that turnover rates for the largest group of employees (general social workers) was 38.0% in 2005, increasing to 40.4% in 2006. Additionally, increases in turnover at the level of social work management positions, confirms the high and increasing turnover trend at these organizations.

While the limitations in the available vacancy data do not justify attempts to calculate the impact on demand over the next decade, at the most immediate level they indicate an additional current requirement of 1 424 social workers within the public social development sector across the national level and seven provinces alone. Managing to fill these, as well of the other vacancies in the government non-welfare sector and the private welfare sector would of course in turn increase the demand for social workers to maintain this new social worker to population ratio in respect of covering losses to due to retirement, death and emigration as discussed in the section above. Overall the conclusion is clear: market demand at the most basic level – that of adequately filling available positions - is not being met by current supply.

### **... to meet DSD proposed norms and standards?**

As mentioned above, the inability of the majority of social service users to pay for the services they require means that the availability of social worker posts in the labour market is more a function of the availability of funding than a reflection of true demand. An alternative means of unpacking demand at the level of the service user is to compare availability against a set of considered norms and standards.

The Department of Social Development has proposed as part of its welfare service transformation process (DSD 2005a, c & d) that norms and standards be set in terms of the numbers of social workers in the welfare sector. While population based norms are considered only a first step towards determining norms that are more accurately reflect

actual need, such norms (put forward according to three provincial classifications) have formed the basis of projections of the current shortfall of social workers, and provide an initial means of calculating future demand should such norms and standards be accepted.

Gauteng is categorised as the only urban province with a ratio of 1 social worker employed in direct welfare proposed for every 5 000 of the population. KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape are regarded as peri-urban provinces with a proposed ratio of 1 : 4 500. The remainder of the provinces are regarded as rural, with proposed ratios of 1 : 3 500 to compensate for problems such as rurally concentrated poverty and the large distances involved in reaching clients. Translated into the numbers of social workers per 100 000 of the population, these norms represent roughly 20 (urban), 22 (peri-urban) and 33 (rural) respectively.

Earle (2007a) undertook an analysis of the impact that these provincial norms and standards will have on the demand for social workers based on projected provincial populations over the period 2005 to 2015. This analysis, presented in Table 22, indicates that in order to meet the provincial norms a total of 7 631 *additional* social workers are *currently* needed in direct welfare (column E), a figure which is in excess of the total number of social workers currently employed in this sector (5 076) (column C). Considering these norms along with projected population growth, the requirement for social workers in direct welfare will be a total of 13 313 by 2015 (column G).

**Table 22: Current and projected shortfall in the number of social workers employed in direct welfare based on the implementation of proposed provincial norms**

Province	Proposed provincial norm in respect of social workers in welfare per 100 000 population	Estimate population 2004	Total social workers in direct formal welfare****	Current number of welfare social workers per 100 000 population	Current shortfall in welfare social workers based on provincial norms	Estimate population 2015*****	Total demand based on norms for numbers of welfare social workers
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Not specified	n/a	n/a	13	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Western Cape*	22	4 592 181	721	15.7	289	4 816 043	1 060
Eastern Cape**	33	7 214 427	755	10.5	1626	7 566 120	2 497
Northern Cape**	33	1 008 985	206	20.4	127	1 058 172	349
Free State**	33	2 890 546	313	10.8	641	3 031 456	1 000
North West**	33	3 870 037	298	7.7	979	4 058 695	1 339
KZN*	22	9 454 081	965	10.2	1 115	9 914 954	2 181
Gauteng***	20	9 035 370	1096	12.1	711	9 475 831	1 895
Mpumalanga**	33	3 125 925	256	8.2	776	3 278 309	1 082
Limpopo**	33	5 516 062	453	8.2	1 367	5 784 962	1 909
Total		46 707 613	5076	10.9	7 631	48 984 542	13 313

\* Based on norm for peri-urban provinces of one welfare social worker per 4500 population; \*\*Based on norm for rural provinces of one welfare social worker per 3000 population; \*\*\*Based on norm for urban province of one welfare social worker per 5000 population; \*\*\*\* Formal welfare is defined as employment within the Department of Social

Development and those within NACOSS (National Coalition of Social Services) affiliated NGO's (Non-Governmental Organisations); \*\*\*\*\* Based on the assumption that distribution between the provinces will remain constant  
Source: Earle, 2007a

If the current proportion of registered social workers employed in direct welfare remains constant at 45.7 per cent (as is currently the case - see Table 4), then the total pool of social workers that will be needed by 2015 in order to satisfy these norms will be 29 131. If, however, direct welfare manages to increase its share of employment of the total group of registered social workers to 70 per cent, the projected overall requirement for social workers to meet the norms would reduce somewhat to a figure of 19 019.

### **... to implement legislation such as the Children's Bill?**

Outside of the demand for social workers arising from the general norms and standards proposed by the Department of Social Development and discussed above, the enactment of certain legislation will have a key impact on the demand for these professionals. Such legislation includes the Older Person's Bill, the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Bill and the Children's Bill. While the costing exercises of the first does not include reference to detailed human resource requirements, and of the second is still to be approved for public distribution, the third is public and extremely informative:

Cornerstone Economic Research was commissioned by the Department of Social Development to estimate the cost to government of the services envisaged by the Comprehensive Children's Bill for the period 2005 to 2010. The team of researchers was led by Conrad Barberton. Part of this costing estimation was a determination of the impact of this legislation on the demand for social workers (Barberton, 2006).

Two scenarios are described in the estimation. The first of these, the 'High' option was developed through five stakeholder workshops to determine the best practice norms and standards. It however became evident through the costing process that *'these High norms and standards were leading to costing outcomes that were impractical in that they required more social workers to implement the Bill than there were social workers in the country.'* They therefore reviewed these and produced a second set of norms and standards that would be less personnel intensive. These are referred to as the 'Low' norms and standards. The key difference between the two is that while the 'High' norms and standards maintain *'good practice norms and standards across areas, services and activities, "Low" maintain these only for priority services and describe significantly lower norms and standards for non-priority services and activities'* (Barberton, 2006:20).

In this section, tables have been extracted directly from Barberton, 2006 (pg19 – 26). Text descriptives of these tables, however focus on social workers rather than on all staffing requirements.

Table 23 and Table 24 detail the number of personnel required to implement the Children's Bill within the provincial social development departments according to the 'Low' and 'High' scenarios. Demand for social workers (excluding those at the higher management levels) according to the 'Low' scenario will escalate from 7 456 in 2050/06 to 14 255 by 2010/11, while in the 'High' scenario it will escalate from 40 163 to 56 465!

**Table 23: Children's Bill 'Low' demand scenario: Personnel required – provincial social development**

Personnel	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Professional						
Facility manager	392	458	518	547	570	589
Social work manager	220	258	298	335	380	424
Chief social worker	979	1 139	1 309	1461	1 645	1 825
Social worker	7 456	8 738	10 113	1 1327	12 810	14 255
Auxiliary social worker	7 682	8 994	10 319	1 1629	13 119	14 648
Child care worker	7 946	9 134	10 718	1 1542	12 290	12 955
Other professional	366	418	501	556	608	654
Financial management and admin	939	1 074	4 844	5 163	5 478	5 718
Support staff	3 595	4 174	4 844	5 163	5 478	5 718
<b>Total personnel</b>	<b>29 575</b>	<b>34 386</b>	<b>39 985</b>	<b>44 020</b>	<b>48 475</b>	<b>52 734</b>

Source: Barberton, 2006

**Table 24: Children's Bill 'High' demand scenario: Personnel required – provincial social development**

Personnel	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Professional						
Facility manager	3 553	3 959	4 326	4 646	4 930	5 194
Social work manager	1 406	1 518	1 654	1 717	1 863	1 945
Chief social worker	5 735	6 190	6 747	7 121	7 589	7 919
Social worker	40 163	43 635	47 675	50 551	53 938	56 465
Auxiliary social worker	34 158	37 186	40 518	43 245	46 207	48 660
Child care worker	149 861	165 532	180 830	193 856	205 916	216 831
Other professional	11 729	12 976	14 185	15 221	16 176	17 044
Financial management and admin	6 776	7 613	8 554	9 259	9 932	10 532
Support staff	37 444	42 255	46 806	50 795	54 419	57 746
<b>Total personnel</b>	<b>209 826</b>	<b>320 864</b>	<b>351 305</b>	<b>376 441</b>	<b>400 971</b>	<b>422 338</b>

Source: Barberton, 2006

Within the Department of Justice social workers are required to fill the position of family counsellor. According to the 'Low' scenario, demand for social workers within this department will thus increase from 28 in 2005/06 to 340 in 2010/11. The 'High' scenario however, requires over one thousand of these professionals, with a figure of 1 060 in 2005/06 and 1 178 by 2010/11. In both cases, the Department of Justice will be competing with the social welfare sector to employ social workers from the very limited pool that currently exists.

**Table 25: Children's Bill 'Low' demand scenario: Personnel required – Department of Justice**

Personnel	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Court personnel						
Magistrate	526	663	890	1 073	1 313	1 527
Senior administration clerk	28	35	52	65	82	97
Administration clerk	293	403	570	722	897	1 076
Maintenance investigator	3	3	3	4	4	5
Family Advocate's Office						
Family advocate	19	48	97	145	194	252
Family counsellor	28	67	132	197	262	340
Family law assistant	5	10	18	26	34	43
Legal Aid Board						
Supervising attorney	15	17	22	25	30	33
Legal Aid attorney	386	446	566	641	776	860
<b>Total personnel</b>	<b>1 302</b>	<b>1 693</b>	<b>2 350</b>	<b>2 897</b>	<b>3 593</b>	<b>4 232</b>

Source: Barberton, 2006



**Table 26: Children's Bill 'High' demand scenario: Personnel required – Department of Justice**

Personnel	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Court personnel						
Magistrate	1 633	2 752	3 068	3 170	3 450	3 545
Senior administration clerk	133	141	166	174	196	203
Administration clerk	1 747	1 820	1 967	2 023	2 150	2 203
Maintenance investigator	23	23	24	24	24	24
Family Advocate's Office						
Family advocate	361	368	375	383	390	398
Family counsellor	1 060	1 082	1 107	1 129	1 155	1 178
Family law assistant	169	173	179	183	190	194
Legal Aid Board						
Supervising attorney	89	95	114	119	135	140
Legal Aid attorney	2 324	2 477	2 955	3 087	3 510	3 621
<b>Total personnel</b>	<b>8 538</b>	<b>8 931</b>	<b>9 954</b>	<b>10 292</b>	<b>11 201</b>	<b>11 515</b>

Source: Barberton, 2006

Table 27 presents a summary of the requirements for social workers in order to implement the Children's Bill according to the 'Low' and 'High' scenarios. This indicates that if only priority activities and services are undertaken at best practice levels, 8 683 social workers will be needed across the provincial social development departments and the Department in Justice in 2005/06 and 16 844 in 2010/11 focussing exclusively on needs of children. If all areas and services are to be provided at best practice levels, the figures jump to 48 364 for 2005/06 and 67 507 for 2010/11.

**Table 27: Summary of the requirements for social workers to implement the Children's Bill according to the 'Low' and 'High' demand scenarios**

Demand for social workers		Low scenario		High scenario	
Department	Level	2005/06	2010/11	2005/06	2010/11
Social development departments	Social work manager	220	424	1 406	1 945
	Chief social worker	979	1 825	5 735	7 919
	Social worker	7 456	14 255	40 163	56 465
Department of Justice	Family counsellor	28	340	1 060	1 178
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8 683</b>	<b>16 844</b>	<b>48 364</b>	<b>67 507</b>

Source: Barberton, 2006

### ... in summary?

In this section, attempts have been made to quantify the demand for social workers at present and over the next decade, using a range of available data sources.

In order to maintain the current ratio of social workers to the population (23.6 per 100 000) in the face of population growth and losses of professionals due to factors such as retirement, death and emigration, calculations using available data suggest that a total of 4 438 additional social workers will be required by 2015. The addition of these professionals will however only raise the total pool of social workers from a figure of 11 111 in 2005 to a figure of 11 579 in 2015. Emigration at higher than official levels, in addition to temporary undocumented migration of social workers, will however push up the overall demand

required to produce this marginal increase in the total pool necessary to cover population growth.

Available vacancy data is unable to produce an overall figure of unmet current demand as defined by the availability of funded posts. Despite this, it is clear that immediate demand for social workers at this level is not being met, with between 31.8% and 37.9% of posts across the national and provincial departments of social development unfilled in 2005. This translates to a current demand for 1 424 social workers to fill posts within national department of social development and seven of the nine provinces. Furthermore, vacancy data points to highest demand for general social workers at the entry level 7, with increasing numbers of advertisements for social workers within the Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times newspaper supplement over the period April 2005 to March 2006 suggest. It is however important to consider that as no trend data is available on the actual number of funded posts, it is not possible to say whether increasing vacancies are as a result of losses of professionals in existing posts or rather due to an increase in the overall number of posts that need filling. At government level particularly, which due to the impact of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy has increased the number of funded posts as well as the salary levels of entry level social workers, the latter seems more likely to be the case. Thus increasing vacancies within the public welfare sector appear to be linked to the inability of supply to keep up with increasing demand for skills. Within the NGO sector, the incomplete data that is available supports that for the public welfare sector: turnover of social workers is highest at the general level, with organizations reporting an average turnover among this group of 38.0% in 2005 and 40.4% in 2006.

The current ratios of social workers to population are considered to be insufficient to meet the needs of the population in the face of persistent poverty and unemployment, and the increasing impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the one hand, and the improving legislative social security network (which demand the input of social workers at numerous levels) on the other. The Department of Social Development's proposed norms and standards for social workers in direct formal welfare activities to provincial populations allows for more detailed calculations of the demand for social workers. At present, in order to meet these requirements, a total of 12 707 social workers are required – 7 361 more than are currently active in this sector (5 076). By 2015 the total requirement will be 13 313. Considering the fact that direct welfare (across both the public and the private sectors) employs at present only 47.5% of the total pool of registered social workers, the total pool will have to be 29 131 in 2015 if this ratio remains constant, and a somewhat lower (although still high) 19 019 if the proportion increases to 70%

Finally, analysing the requirements for social workers related to the implementation of the Children's Bill reveals that the DSD proposed 'integrated' norms are conservative even in relation to the 'Low' scenario, which provides best practice for only key activities and services outlined by the Bill. This scenario requires a total of 8 683 social workers in direct welfare catering for children's needs only in 2005/06 and a total of 16 844 by 2010/11. For comprehensive best practice activities and services the current demand is a massive 48 364 escalating to 67 507 by 2010/11.

## ***What does the supply-line of social workers look like?***

This section presents information on the supply of social workers from the South African higher education system; the numbers and demographics of those enrolled for as well as graduating in social work. Based on this information, the output of social workers from 2005 to 2015 is also projected.

In 2005, sixteen tertiary institutions provided social work training in South Africa<sup>4</sup>. The standardised Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) registered with SAQA at the NQF level 7, started at the 1<sup>st</sup> year level at all institutions in 2007. Until this standardised system is fully implemented at all levels, registration with the SACSSP will continue to require four years of higher education (either as a professional undergraduate or as a general undergraduate plus an honours degree), of which at least fifty per cent of all modules taken each year need to be in the subject area of social work and the remaining modules in the humanities, social sciences, economics, law, and public or health administration. Unlike the health professions there is currently no requirement for compulsory community service once training is completed (SACSSP representative in an interview, 2007).

### **... enrolments over the past decade?**

Data on enrolments for social work (CESM<sup>5</sup> category 2104) are available from the Department of Education's HEMIS database (DoE, 2007). At the general level, enrolment data according to HEMIS spans registration across all academic years and thus includes everyone registered for a particular qualification level and not only those entering these qualifications for the 1<sup>st</sup> time within any particular year. At the same time, these figures do not count individuals, but are rather the sum of the fractions that social work as a subject makes up for individuals as part of their full suite of subject registrations.

Bearing the above in mind, an analysis of HEMIS data on enrolments for the subject of social work between 1999 and 2005 is presented in Table 28 and reveals interesting trends. Enrolment for the 4-year professional undergraduate qualification forms the greatest pool, with figures increasing from 1 829 in 1999 to 4 085 in 2005 – an increase of 123.3% overall and 14.3% annually. Enrolment for the 3-year undergraduate qualification was highest in 2002 (541) but has since dropped again, while enrolment for the honours qualification (which will gradually become redundant as the professional undergraduate degree – the BSW – becomes pervasive) has dropped consistently since 2001 from a figure of 167 to 91. At the post-graduate level enrolment is highest for the Masters degree with figures generally increasing to 2003 and dropping off again somewhat since then.

From a racial perspective, African students have increased their proportional representation in enrolment over the period in the professional undergraduate (73.8% - 78.3%), post-graduate certificate and diploma (73.3% - 100.0%), Honours (37.2% - 56.5%) and Masters (43.5% - 58.1%) qualifications. Conversely, proportional white enrolment has reduced in all these categories of qualification: in the professional undergraduate from 17.6% to 8.4%, in post-graduate certificates and diplomas from 26.7% to 0.0%, in Honours

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<sup>4</sup> Social Work training is currently provided at the Universities of Johannesburg (UJ), Stellenbosch (US), Fort Hare, North West (UNW), Free State (UFS), Cape Town (UCT), Western Cape (UWC), Pretoria (UP), KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Limpopo (UL), Venda (UniVen), Witwatersrand (Wits), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan (NMMU), Zululand, South Africa (Unisa), and Huguenot College (which operates independently but is legally affiliated to UNISA).

<sup>5</sup> Classification of Educational Study Matter

degrees from 39.8% to 26.4%, and in Masters degrees from 41.5% to 28.4%. Across all qualification levels, African representation in social work enrolments has increased from 62.9% to 71.9%, while white representation has reduced from 25.5% to 14.3%. Notably, at the level of doctorate enrolment, whites remain in the majority, with little evidence of any changing trend.

In respect of gender, Table 28 reveals that females make up the majority of enrolments for all qualifications levels, with representation for all qualifications a low of 84.0% in 1999 and a high of 86.3% in 2001. With the exception of the small category of post-graduate certificates and diplomas, where the proportion of females is even higher, the distribution of females to males is relatively consistent across all qualification levels. Furthermore, the key shifts evident for race are being driven by trends within the female groups: African female proportional enrolment is increasing for all qualifications bar the 3-year Bachelor degree and the Doctorate degree, while white female proportional enrolment is decreasing for all qualifications with the exception of the 3-year Bachelor degree and the Doctorate degree.

Social work as a subject is not offered exclusively to those intending to go on to qualify as social workers, but is also available as an elective subject to students registered for other 3- and 4-year degree programmes. This means that there is not a direct relationship between the numbers of students registering for the CESM category 2104 for the first time and those likely to graduate as social workers. Nevertheless, this level of data provides a much more accurate picture of those entering the system with the potential to graduate as social workers, and is thus more comparative with graduation data than the total enrolment data discussed above. In this light, data on the numbers of individuals classified as '1<sup>st</sup> time entering' for CESM 2104 into either the professional or 3-year undergraduate programme over the period 2000 to 2005 was also obtained from HEMIS and analysed. This information is presented in Table 29.

This data confirms an increasing trend of first time entering students over the period. Figures for 2000 (359) and 2001 (558) are very low compared with overall enrolment for these years. Since 2002 however, sustained growth at levels above 1 000 per annum are considerably healthier.

**Table 28: Total enrolment for social work (CESM 2104) by race and gender: 1999 – 2005**

		African			Coloured			Asian			White			Other			Totals			
		F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	Total	
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N	%
Bachelor Degree (3 year)	1999	45.9	9.6	55.5	17.8	2.2	20.0	0.9	0.0	0.9	21.0	2.6	23.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.5	14. 5	223	100
	2000	46.9	8.7	55.6	8.2	0.2	8.5	9.0	0.9	9.8	23.6	2.6	26.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.6	12. 4	115	100
	2001	55.5	9.6	65.0	10.1	0.9	11.0	3.4	0.1	3.6	17.0	3.4	20.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.1	13. 9	213	100
	2002	34.0	10.0	44.0	11.3	2.4	13.6	5.3	0.9	6.2	28.5	7.7	36.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	79.1	20. 9	541	100
	2003	37.8	9.0	46.8	9.4	1.1	10.5	7.1	0.6	7.6	30.0	4.9	34.9	0.2	0.0	0.2	84.5	15. 5	496	100
	2004	45.9	10.0	56.0	10.7	1.9	12.6	2.7	0.1	2.8	25.8	2.2	28.0	0.4	0.2	0.6	85.5	14. 5	466	100
	2005	33.8	10.6	44.4	13.9	1.5	15.4	5.2	0.3	5.5	31.2	2.8	34.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	84.5	15. 5	387	100
Bachelor Degree (4 professional)	1999	61.5	12.3	73.8	5.8	0.5	6.3	2.2	0.1	2.3	16.4	1.2	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.9	14. 1	1829	100
	2000	65.5	9.7	75.2	6.3	0.6	6.9	2.4	0.1	2.5	13.9	1.4	15.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	88.2	11. 8	1828	100
	2001	65.1	10.1	75.2	8.3	1.2	9.5	1.6	0.1	1.7	12.0	1.6	13.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.0	13. 0	2046	100
	2002	65.8	11.0	76.8	9.1	1.3	10.4	0.9	0.1	1.1	10.6	1.1	11.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.5	13. 5	2112	100
	2003	62.4	14.8	77.3	9.6	1.6	11.2	1.2	0.1	1.3	9.3	0.9	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	82.5	17. 5	2614	100
	2004	63.6	14.4	78.0	8.6	1.1	9.7	2.3	0.1	2.5	8.8	1.1	9.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.3	16. 7	3690	100
	2005	65.6	12.7	78.3	8.7	1.0	9.8	3.1	0.4	3.5	7.5	0.9	8.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.0	15. 0	4085	100
Post Graduate Certificate/Diplom a	1999	60.0	13.3	73.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	0.0	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.7	13. 3	15	100
	2000	83.9	9.7	93.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.5	0.0	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.3	9.7	16	100
	2001	71.6	6.1	77.7	3.0	1.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.3	0.0	18.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.9	7.1	33	100

		African			Coloured			Asian			White			Other			Totals			
		F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	Total	
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N	%
	2002	85.6	2.1	87.6	2.1	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.3	0.0	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	97.9	2.1	49	100
	2003	83.8	6.9	90.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.2	0.0	9.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	93.1	6.9	43	100
	2004	86.8	7.9	94.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.1	7.9	38	100
	2005	94.3	5.7	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	94.3	5.7	27	100
Honours Degree																				
	1999	31.4	5.9	37.2	18.6	1.9	20.5	2.3	0.2	2.5	36.1	3.7	39.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	88.4	11.6	161	100
	2000	38.9	13.9	52.9	10.9	0.2	11.1	0.7	0.2	0.9	28.2	6.9	35.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	78.8	21.2	138	100
	2001	49.9	10.8	60.6	6.4	0.6	7.0	2.1	0.1	2.2	27.3	2.8	30.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.7	14.3	167	100
	2002	52.0	8.6	60.6	8.2	0.8	9.0	5.1	1.0	6.1	20.4	3.8	24.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.7	14.3	152	100
	2003	45.7	9.3	55.0	8.1	0.0	8.1	4.1	0.9	5.0	29.9	2.0	32.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.8	12.2	111	100
	2004	44.8	4.0	48.8	10.8	1.7	12.4	0.4	0.0	0.4	34.9	3.4	38.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.9	9.1	119	100
	2005	51.2	5.3	56.5	10.5	2.2	12.7	4.4	0.0	4.4	23.1	3.3	26.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.2	10.8	91	100

		African			Coloured			Asian			White			Other			Totals			
		F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	Total	
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N	%
Masters Degree																				
	1999	33.9	9.6	43.5	6.8	2.0	8.7	4.8	1.2	6.1	32.6	8.9	41.5	0.2	0.0	0.2	78.3	21.7	561	100
	2000	34.2	8.2	42.3	7.1	2.4	9.6	4.5	0.4	4.9	35.6	7.3	43.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	81.6	18.4	490	100
	2001	38.6	8.4	47.0	7.9	2.1	9.9	3.5	0.5	4.0	34.8	4.3	39.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	84.7	15.3	624	100
	2002	42.6	9.9	52.5	7.4	1.3	8.7	2.9	0.1	3.0	32.8	2.9	35.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.8	14.2	692	100
	2003	40.3	8.6	49.0	7.7	1.4	9.1	3.2	0.0	3.2	35.1	3.6	38.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.3	13.7	755	100
	2004	44.8	10.5	55.2	9.1	0.9	10.0	4.5	0.2	4.7	27.6	2.5	30.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.0	14.0	663	100

	2005	48.5	9.6	58.1	7.0	0.5	7.5	5.5	0.5	6.0	26.4	2.0	28.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.4	12.6	582	100
Doctorate Degree	1999	16.4	7.1	23.5	1.1	6.6	7.7	4.4	0.0	4.4	48.1	16.4	64.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	69.9	30.1	92	100
	2000	20.2	5.8	26.0	2.9	4.8	7.7	3.8	0.0	3.8	50.0	12.5	62.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	76.9	23.1	104	100
	2001	19.8	5.2	25.0	4.3	4.3	8.6	2.6	0.0	2.6	56.0	7.8	63.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	82.8	17.2	116	100
	2002	23.1	3.8	26.9	3.1	2.3	5.4	2.3	0.0	2.3	56.9	8.5	65.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.4	14.6	130	100
	2003	18.8	2.6	21.4	4.3	2.2	6.5	4.3	0.0	4.3	58.7	9.0	67.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.2	13.8	139	100
	2004	14.8	2.6	17.4	5.6	1.5	7.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	61.5	11.1	72.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	84.8	15.2	135	100
	2005	18.6	3.6	22.1	7.1	2.9	10.0	2.1	0.0	2.1	55.0	10.7	65.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	82.9	17.1	140	100
Total Qualifications	1999	51.8	11.1	62.9	7.4	1.2	8.6	2.7	0.3	3.0	22.0	3.4	25.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	84.0	16.0	2881	100
	2000	56.0	9.4	65.4	6.6	1.0	7.6	3.0	0.2	3.2	20.4	3.2	23.6	0.0	0.0	0.1	86.1	13.9	2691	100
	2001	56.9	9.5	66.4	8.0	1.5	9.5	2.2	0.2	2.3	19.3	2.5	21.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.3	13.7	3199	100
	2002	55.0	10.2	65.1	8.8	1.5	10.2	2.1	0.3	2.4	19.4	2.7	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.3	14.7	3675	100
	2003	53.8	12.4	66.2	8.9	1.5	10.4	2.4	0.2	2.6	18.6	2.2	20.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.8	16.2	4159	100
	2004	58.0	12.9	70.9	8.7	1.2	9.9	2.6	0.1	2.7	14.7	1.7	16.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	84.1	15.9	5111	100
	2005	60.1	11.8	71.9	8.9	1.1	9.9	3.5	0.4	3.9	12.8	1.4	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	85.3	14.7	5312	100

Source: DoE, 2007, HEMIS database for 1999-2005

**Table 29: Number of first time entering students enrolled in HE institutions for a course in CESM 2104 by year, race and gender**

Year	African			Coloured			Indian			White			Other			Total					
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M		F		T	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2000	8.4	56.3	64.6	0.3	7.5	7.8	0.3	1.7	1.9	1.9	23.7	25.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	39	10.9	320	89.1	359	100.0
2001	10.2	53.8	64.0	1.1	10.2	11.3	0.0	1.1	1.1	3.9	19.7	23.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	85	15.2	473	84.8	558	100.0
2002	13.8	47.9	61.7	2.0	10.1	12.1	0.3	2.2	2.5	4.7	19.0	23.6	0.1	0.0	1.0	232	20.8	885	79.2	1 117	100.0
2003	15.2	53.3	68.4	1.3	8.0	9.3	0.5	3.3	3.8	1.6	16.8	18.4	0.0	0.1	1.0	236	18.5	1 037	81.5	1 273	100.0
2004	14.3	60.4	74.7	1.1	8.8	9.9	0.2	2.8	3.0	1.4	10.9	12.4	0.1	0.0	1.0	278	17.1	1 349	82.9	1 627	100.0
2005	15.5	61.6	77.1	0.9	5.7	6.6	1.1	7.0	8.1	0.7	7.5	8.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	309	18.2	1 387	81.8	1 696	100.0

Source: DoE, 2007, HEMIS database for 1999-2005

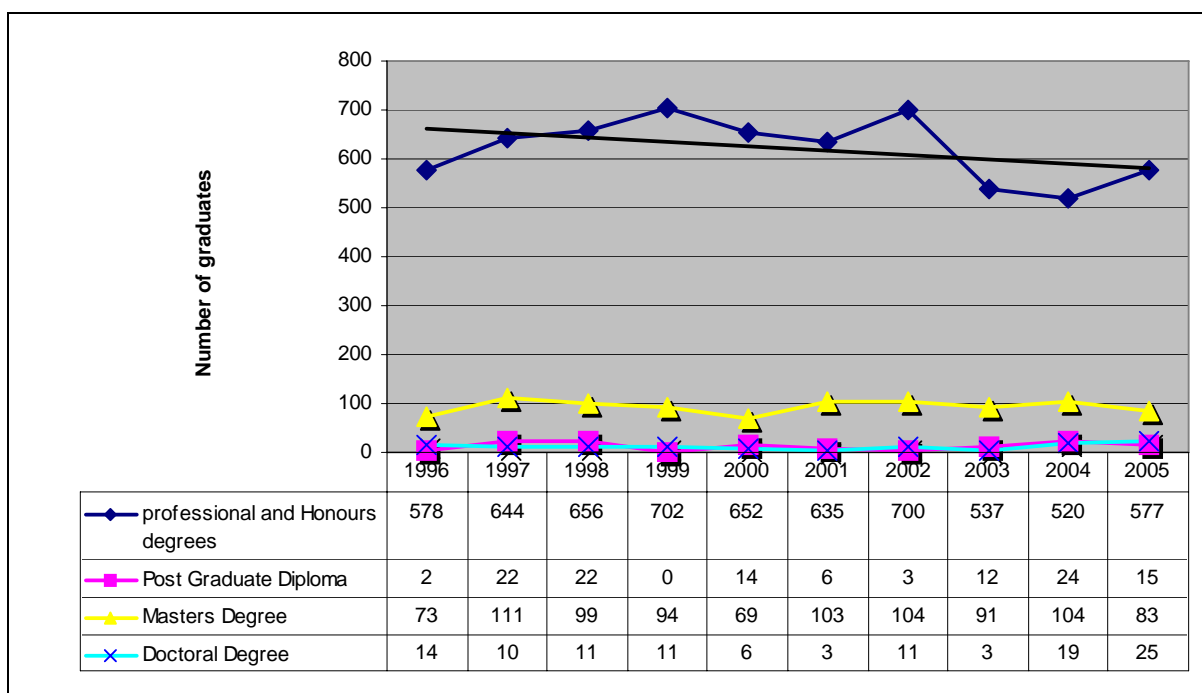




### ... graduates over the past decade?

Social work graduation trends by level of qualification from 1996 to 2005 are provided in Figure 10. In this analysis, output from the 3-year degree programme has been ignored, while professional undergraduate degree output has been combined with Honours degree output. This has been done in an attempt to get a better understanding of the supply of people with qualifications eligible to register as social workers with the SACSSP. For this critical group, the trendline has also been inserted. This trendline reveals – in contrast to the escalating enrolment figures - that while professional level output has fluctuated considerably, the trend has been generally negative, dropping from annual output levels in the mid 600s at the start of the period to figures below 600 by the end of the period. At the higher qualification levels, which do not contribute to the overall supply of social workers but to specialist- and management-level skills within the pool, the number of qualifications has remained relatively consistent at low levels. Of these, Masters level qualifications make up the majority.

**Figure 10: Social work graduation trends by level of qualification at South African Universities, 1996 - 2005**



Sources: SAQA, 2004 (data for 1996 – 1999); DoE, 2007, (data for 2000 – 2005)

The race and gender profile of the total pool of social work graduates (i.e. all qualification levels) from 1996 – 2005 is provided in Table 30. In 1996, 45.9% of social work graduates were African, a figure which had increased to 63.6% by 2005. To a smaller extent the proportion of coloured graduates also increased, from 9.1% to 11.1% over the period. Conversely, Indian representation dropped from 5.5% to 3.3% while the proportion of white graduates reduced from 37.8% to 22.0%.

Social work graduate output has consistently been dominated by females (Table 30), whose representation ranges from a high 89.7% (in 1996) to a low 85.0% (in 2003). Within the African and coloured groups, male representation is however generally higher than the annual overall male averages, while it is lower than the annual averages for the Indian and white groups. Notable changes over the period 1996 to 2005 include the increases in African females (from 39.4% to 55.3%) and African males (from 6.4% in 1996 to 11.5% in 2004), and the corresponding reductions in Indian females (from 5.1% to 3.3%) and white females (from 35.5% to 20.9%). Thus overall, social work graduate output has changed from being dominated by white females to being dominated by African females, with the proportion of male graduates fluctuating annually within a fairly consistent range.

**Table 30: Race and gender profile of total social work graduate output from SA universities, 1996 – 2005**

Year	African			Coloured			Indian			White			Unknown			Total				
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N	%
1996	39.4	6.4	45.9	8.1	1.0	9.1	5.1	0.4	5.5	35.5	2.2	37.8	1.5	0.1	1.6	89.7	10.3	667	100.0	
1997	35.6	8.8	44.3	6.4	1.1	7.5	4.7	0.5	5.2	35.1	1.1	36.2	5.7	1.0	6.7	87.4	12.6	787	100.0	
1998	40.9	7.5	48.4	5.3	1.3	6.6	3.9	0.5	4.4	32.5	2.7	35.2	4.6	0.9	5.5	87.2	12.8	788	100.0	
1999	51.1	8.8	59.9	8.7	1.5	10.2	3.7	0.4	4.1	24.7	1.2	25.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	88.1	11.9	807	100.0	
2000	48.9	9.6	58.5	9.3	0.5	9.8	3.2	0.1	3.4	24.7	3.5	28.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	86.1	13.9	742	100.0	
2001	51.3	8.4	59.7	8.8	1.7	10.6	3.6	0.1	3.7	22.9	3.1	26.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.6	13.4	747	100.0	
2002	55.0	6.9	61.9	9.8	1.2	11.0	3.6	0.4	3.9	21.0	2.2	23.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.3	10.7	816	100.0	
2003	55.7	11.6	67.3	9.5	1.6	11.0	2.2	0.2	2.3	17.7	1.7	19.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.0	15.0	645	100.0	
2004	53.5	11.5	65.1	9.3	1.3	10.6	1.0	0.0	1.0	21.3	1.9	23.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.2	14.8	667	100.0	
2005	55.3	8.3	63.6	10.0	1.1	11.1	3.3	0.0	3.3	20.9	1.1	22.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.4	10.6	700	100.0	

Sources: SAQA (2004) (data for 1996 – 1999); DoE, 2007, HEMIS data (2000 – 2005)

The race and gender profile of the professional and honours degree graduates (i.e. only those that are adding to the pool of available social workers) is presented for the period 2000 to 2005 in Table 31. Comparing this with the data presented in Table 30, it is clear that African representation of new social workers is higher in each year than their representation within the pool of total qualifications awarded, while the converse is true for whites. This data thus suggests an even higher level of transformation in respect of the demographics of qualifying social workers than the data above, with the African proportion of graduations increasing from 62.0% in 2000 to 69.5% in 2005, and the total black representation from 64.8% to 84.6% over the period. These figures support the changes in demographics of qualified social workers as suggested by labour market survey data. At the same time, however, this analysis indicates that at present African graduate social workers are less likely than their white colleagues to obtain post-graduate qualifications.

**Table 31: Race and gender profile of professional and Honours degree social work graduate output from SA universities, 2000 – 2005**

Year	African			Coloured			Indian			White			Unknown			Total				
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N	%
2000	51.8	10.1	62.0	9.7	0.3	10.0	2.8	0.2	2.9	22.1	3.1	25.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	86.3	13.8	652	100.0	
2001	57.0	9.1	66.1	9.4	1.3	10.7	3.1	0.2	3.3	17.6	2.2	19.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.2	12.8	635	100.0	
2002	60.2	7.6	67.8	9.7	1.1	10.9	3.7	0.3	4.0	15.9	1.4	17.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.5	10.5	698	100.0	
2003	60.3	12.1	72.4	9.5	1.7	11.1	1.7	0.2	1.9	13.5	1.1	14.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.0	15.0	539	100.0	

Year	African			Coloured			Indian			White			Unknown			Total			
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N	%
2004	60.4	11.2	71.5	9.6	1.0	10.6	0.8	0.0	0.8	15.6	1.5	17.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	86.3	13.7	520	100.0
2005	60.8	8.7	69.5	11.1	1.2	12.3	2.8	0.0	2.8	14.7	0.7	15.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.4	10.6	577	100.0

Source: DoE, 2007, HEMIS database

### ... graduates over the next decade?

Using the information available in respect of graduates of new social workers (those graduating from professional undergraduate or honours degrees), it is possible to estimate the output of social workers from the higher education system over the next decade. Table 32 presents these calculations according to three potential growth scenarios.

Using the actual output of 577 in 2005 as the baseline figure, Scenario 1 estimates annual output based on the growth rate of -3.22% evident between the high of 1999 (702) and the latest figure (577). If this trend continues, the total number of new social workers entering the labour market between 2006 and 2015 will be 4 841.

Scenario 2 figures are based on the overall growth rate of 0.00%. This scenario of static output is centered on output of 578 in 1996 and an almost identical figure of 577 in 2005. If annual output continued at current levels, the total number of new social workers entering the labour market between 2006 and 2015 will be a slightly larger figure of 5 770.

The extremely optimistic Scenario 3 figures are based on the continuation of the annual growth trend of 10.96% evident between the lowest figure (520 in 2004) and the latest figure (577 in 2005). If this trend can be maintained to 2015, the higher education system will be able to add a total of 10 685 new social workers to the available professional pool.

**Table 32: Projections for output of social workers 2006 to 2015**

Year	Scenario 1		Scenario 2		Scenario 3	
	Output N	Growth %	Output N	Growth %	Output N	Growth %
Baseline 2005	577	-3.22	577	0.00	577	10.96
2006	558	-3.22	577	0.00	640	10.96
2007	540	-3.22	577	0.00	710	10.96
2008	523	-3.22	577	0.00	788	10.96
2009	506	-3.22	577	0.00	875	10.96
2010	490	-3.22	577	0.00	971	10.96
2011	474	-3.22	577	0.00	1 077	10.96
2012	459	-3.22	577	0.00	1 195	10.96
2013	444	-3.22	577	0.00	1 326	10.96
2014	430	-3.22	577	0.00	1 471	10.96
2015	416	-3.22	577	0.00	1 632	10.96
Total 2006 - 2015	4 841		5 770		10 685	

Source: Authors own calculations based on DoE (2007) HEMIS data over the period 1996 - 2005

## ***How is supply of social workers matching up to demand?***

Having discussed the demand for social workers from various angles, as well as the supply of such skills through the higher education system using available data, this section seeks to unpack more closely the match (or indeed the mismatch) between them.

Table 33 compares the three higher education output scenarios presented in the section above, with the demand for social workers at the most basic level – requirements to cover demands arising from death, retirement and emigration at the same time as maintaining current levels of social workers to population – over the period 2005 – 2015. This shows that according to all three supply scenarios, demand at this basic level will be met. Supply scenario 1 produces a surplus of 403, scenario 2 a surplus of 1 332, and scenario 3 a surplus of 6 247 social workers over the next decade.

**Table 33: Comparisons between the total number of positions that need to be filled to maintain current ratios of social workers to population and the output of new graduates: 2005-2015**

Supply scenario	Total social workers employed*		Growth in demand for social workers**	Demand arising from death and retirement needs**	Demand arising from emigration***	Total number of positions that need filling	Total number of new graduates****	Surplus / Shortfall	
	2005	2015						N	%
	A	B	C (= B-A)	D	E	F (= C+D+E)			
1	11 111	11 579	4 68	2 814	1 156	4 438	4 841	+403	9.1
2	11 111	11 579	4 68	2 814	1 156	4 438	5 770	+1 332	30.0
3	11 111	11 579	4 68	2 814	1 156	4 438	10 685	+6 247	140.8

\* Drawn from Table 4: Distribution of SACSSP registered social workers (2005)\*\* Drawn from Table 13: Demand for social workers to cover new demand due to population growth and replacement demand due to retirement and death, 2005 – 2015; \*\*\* Drawn from Table 15: Demand for social workers arising from losses to official emigration (2005 – 2015); \*\*\*\* Drawn from Table 29: Number of first time entering students enrolled in HE institutions for a course in CESM 2104 by year, race and gender  
Source: Authors own calculations

However, what was made clear in the section discussing demand is that the current ratio of social workers to population is insufficient. At an immediate level an additional 1 424 social workers are needed just to fill available vacancies in the public welfare sector at the national level and in seven of the nine provinces. The filling of these vacancies would in turn lead to positive changes in the ratio of social workers to population, and subsequent increases in the replacement demand to maintain these new ratios.

Similarly, the official emigration figures used in the calculations above are almost certainly an under-estimation of the true picture, meaning that demand to cover emigration is likely much higher. And even if these can be considered to be some reflection of the permanent emigration of social workers, they do not take account of the impact of temporary migration on demand or of the impact of the losses of social workers to other professions and careers within the domestic labour market.

The Department of Social Development's proposed norms and standards – referred to by Barberton (2006) as 'integrated' norms due to their lack of distinction between children and adults – can also be used to examine the match between supply and demand for social workers in South Africa over the next decade. Table 34 compares the three supply scenarios described above with two demand scenarios. In the first of these (demand scenario A), overall demand for social workers considers the picture that will result if direct welfare's proportion of overall social worker employment remains at current levels of 45.7% (Table 4). Demand scenario B is based on the requirement to meet the norms for projected provincial populations in 2015, if direct welfare manages to increase its share of total social worker employment from the current level of 45.7 per cent to 70 per cent. Notably the figures used in this analysis as the requirement to meet replacement demands arising from retirement, death and emigration have been calculated based on consistent ratios at current levels. As these do not consider the increasing replacement demands that will accompany improving ratios, these figures need to be seen as minimums.

In essence, Table 34 provides quantitative evidence of the shortage of social worker skills in relation to the DSD's proposed 'integrated' norms. Even in the most optimistic case (demand scenario B and supply scenario 3) the Department of Social Development's proposed norms and standards will not be met by 2015 due to a shortage of 1 193 social workers. At the opposite extreme, should direct formal welfare be unable to increase its share of the total pool of registered social workers above the current 45.7% and should the number of social work graduates continue to decline by 3.22% annual as has been the trend between 1999 and 2005 (demand scenario A and supply scenario 1), the shortage of social workers by 2015 will be 17 149.

**Table 34: Comparisons between the total number of positions that need to be filled to reach provincial norms and the output of new graduates: 2005-2015**

Demand scenario	Supply scenario	Total employed*		Growth in demand social workers	Demand arising from death and retirement needs**	Demand arising from emigration***	Total number of positions that need filling	New graduates****	Supply as percent of demand	Surplus / Shortfall	
		2005	2015*							2005-15	2006-2015
		A	B	C (=B-A)	D	E	F (=C+D+E)				
A	1	11 111	29 131	18 020	2 814	1 156	21 990	4 841	22.0	-17 149	-78.0
	2	11 111	29 131	18 020	2 814	1 156	21 990	5 770	26.2	-16 220	-73.8
	3	11 111	29 131	18 020	2 814	1 156	21 990	10 685	48.6	-11 305	-51.4
B	1	11 111	19 019	7 908	2 814	1 156	11 878	4 841	40.8	- 7 037	-59.2
	2	11 111	19 019	7 908	2 814	1 156	11 878	5 770	48.6	-6 108	-51.4
	3	11 111	19 019	7 908	2 814	1 156	11 878	10 685	90.0	-1 193	-10.0

\* Drawn from Table 4: Distribution of SACSSP registered social workers (2005)\*\* Drawn from Table 13: Demand for social workers to cover new demand due to population growth and replacement demand due to retirement and death, 2005 – 2015; \*\*\* Drawn from Table 15: Demand for social workers arising from losses to official emigration (2005 – 2015); \*\*\*\* Drawn from Table 29: Number of first time entering students enrolled in HE institutions for a course in CESM 2104 by year, race and gender  
Source: Authors own calculations

The requirement for social workers arising out of the implementation of the Children's Bill is even greater than anticipated by the 'integrated' norms. Barberton (2006) compares the current availability of social workers and social auxiliary workers - in total and in the public

welfare system - with the demand according to DSD norm as well as their own 'Low' and 'High' scenarios (Table 35).

**Table 35: The supply and demand for social workers**

Personnel category	Number registered with Council (April 2005)	Total number employed by government social development sector (October 2004)	Number required to deliver services to children in terms of the 'integrated' norm	Low scenario		High scenario	
				2005/06	2010/11	2005/06	2010/11
Social workers (all levels)	11 372	2 668	4 822	8 656	16 504	47 305	66 329
Aux. social workers (all levels)	1 849	?	no norm	7 682	14 648	34 158	48 660

Source: Barberton, 2006

Note: The number of registered social workers and social auxiliary workers was obtained from the SA Council for Social Service Professionals (letter dated 12 April 2005). The Council also indicated that there are 484 registered non-practicing social workers, and 14 registered non-practicing auxiliary social workers

Deductions made are that: Firstly, government's employment of social workers in the public welfare sector at the end of 2004 was just over half the number required to satisfy the integrated norms if all these social workers focussed only on children (which they do not). Secondly, in order to satisfy the 'Low' scenario in 2005/06 some 8 656 social workers working exclusively with children would have to be employed within the welfare sector, increasing to 16 504 by 2010/11 as demand for services picks up. Finally, the number of social workers required to implement the Children's Bill according to the 'High' scenario exceeds the current number of registered social workers by almost 36 000 in 2005/06 and by 55 000 in 2010/11. Thus they conclude that the greatest obstacle to the implementation of the Children's Bill is the acute shortage of suitably qualified personnel, in particularly social workers and auxiliary social workers.

For the purposes of more detailed comparison, Table 36 shows that if the optimistic supply scenario 3 (extacted from Table 33) is realized, by 2010 a 'surplus' of just 1 953 social workers will be generated over and above the amount required to maintain the current ratios of social workers to population. Clearly, even an optimistic growth in the output of social workers from the higher education system will therefore be insufficient to meet the demands for social workers arising out of the implementation of the Children's Bill.

**Table 36: Supply scenario 3 'surplus' 2005 - 2010 according to current ratios of social workers to population**

Supply scenario	Total social workers employed		Growth in demand for social workers	Demand arising from death and retirement needs	Demand arising from emigration	Total number of positions that need filling	Total number of new graduates	Supply as percent of demand	Surplus / Shortfall	
	2005	2010							2005-10	2006-2010
	A	B	C (= B-A)	D	E	F (= C+D+E)				
3	11 111	11 336	225	1234	572	2031	3984	196.2	+1 953	96.2

Source: Drawn from Table 34: Comparisons between the total number of positions that need to be filled to reach provincial norms and the output of new graduates: 2005-2015

### ***What about social auxiliary workers?***

Barberton (2006:95) notes that 'it is often proposed that the shortfall in the number of social workers can be alleviated by employing more auxiliary social workers'. This solution is also alluded to by the lack of distinction in the DoL's Master List of Scarce and Critical Skills (DoL, 2006) between social workers, social auxiliary workers, community workers and community development workers (Table 1). This section briefly presents the limited quantitative data available on social auxiliary workers.

In September 2005, 1 862 social auxiliary workers were registered with the SACSSP (Table 37). This represents a nine-fold increase over the period since 1996, although the vast majority of this has taken place since 2000. Expressed in a different way, the numbers of registered social auxiliary workers per registered social worker (net registrations in Figure 1) has thus increased from a figure of 0.02 (in 1996) to a figure of 0.17 in 2005. If compared only against the number of social workers in direct formal welfare activities, the ratio for 2005 improves to 0.37. This figure is however still extremely low in light of the context of increasing national welfare needs, and the expectations of this group (DoSD, 2005a).

**Table 37: Growth in total number of social auxiliary workers, by gender, 1992-2005**

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Male (%)	42.9	42.7	36.4	29.7	35.0	55.0	44.9	*	25.1	23.8
Female (%)	57.1	57.3	63.6	70.3	65.0	45.0	55.1	*	74.9	76.2
Total (N)	205	227	261	327	329	651	909	*	1 604	1 862

\* Data unavailable<sup>1</sup>

Source: SACSSP, 2005a

In respect of distribution, Table 38 reveals that while 66.9% of registered social auxiliary workers have not specified their province of work or residence with the SACSSP, a breakdown of the distribution of those who have shows that a total of 62.5% are located in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces, a distribution which is even more uneven than



that of the total proportion of registered social workers within these two provinces (50.6%) (Table 5).

**Table 38: Provincial distribution of social auxiliary workers, 2005**

Province	Total	%
Western Cape	214	34.7
Eastern Cape	76	12.3
Northern Cape	11	1.8
Free State	30	4.9
North West	11	1.8
KZN	75	12.2
Gauteng	171	27.8
Mpumalanga	11	1.8
Limpopo	17	2.8
Total specified	616*	100.0

Source: SACSSP, 2005a

Notes: \*This total of provincially specified social auxiliary workers represents only 33.1% of the total number registered

In line with national moves towards qualification standardisation, the social auxiliary worker qualification is changing from a SACSSP exam to a Learnership supported by the HWSETA at the NQF Level 4, this change is one of the key factors driving the increasing numbers. Yet thus far, no norms have been set regarding the numbers of social auxiliary workers that are required to support the current or required workforce of social workers (SACSSP representative, in an interview 2007).

In summary, this analysis supports Barberton's (2006) argument that while it is true that in theory the use of social auxiliary workers instead of social workers is an option for relieving the requirements for people at the professional level, in practice the picture is somewhat less clear-cut. He states that while the idea of using these lower level personnel wherever possible underpinned their Costing Model of the implementation of the Children's Bill, their analysis (see Table 35) revealed that the shortage of registered auxiliary social workers is even greater than the shortages of social workers. In conclusion, there are simply too few auxiliary social workers available at present to substitute for social workers in real terms.

## **QUALITATIVE ISSUES IMPACTING ON THE SHORTAGE**

The introduction section of this report focussed on identifying the source of the calls of social worker shortages and reporting on the ways in which these shortages were being quantified. In the next section, available data was analysed in detail to determine the characteristics of the pool of potential and qualified social workers in South Africa against various quantifications of demand for their skills to see if in fact calls of shortages are justified. This section concluded that indeed, while the supply of social workers will be sufficient to cover replacement demand arising from social worker retirement, death and emigration to a level that can maintain current social worker to population ratios, little 'surplus' will be available to reduce the current vacancy rate, or to build the size of the pool to the numbers required to meet even the DSD's proposed 'integrated norms', let alone the requirements of legislation such as the Children's Bill.

Yet the figures presented in the section above are merely the final evidence of a complex array of factors that have impacted on the professional practice context and the professional education of social workers in South Africa over the past decade. Thus this section seeks to 'tell the story behind the figures' by presenting first the changes in the context of social work practice and secondly the consequences of this changing context. It also briefly considers the changes in social work education. In doing so, this section aims to provide the context for the final sections of this report, which look at linking the qualitative to the quantitative more specifically and then at ways to move forward.

### ***Changes in the context of social work practice***

Three distinct but related factors form the foundation of the changing context of social work practice in South Africa after the fall of Apartheid in 1994. These include changes in the national socio-economic legislative environment; changes to the welfare needs of the population; and challenges in respect of professional governance and leadership.

#### **National legislation**

Internationally, social work as a profession evolved together with the concept of national social and welfare policies, as the group formally tasked with implementation. Over the century of its development the profession's relationship with the state has become ever more intertwined and complicated: being not only legitimated and supported by the state and thus reflecting the priorities and values of the host community (Clark, 2005), but at the same time having its sphere of practice and autonomy constrained to a large extent by these same factors. Sewpaul (2001:309) argues that '*social work, as a core human service discipline, is often left to pick up the consequences of macro-social-political and economic policies as they impact directly on people's lives at the micro-level*'. In the face of the globalization and neo-liberalism pervasive of the last decade of the twentieth century, social work occupies the challenging and sometimes-contradictory roles of simultaneously being advocates of the poor and the oppressed as well as being agents for implementing state social policy Drucker (2003). Social work is thus by its very nature political (Lombard, 2005b) and a review of its changes in the practice context cannot but start with a review of relevant national policies.

In South Africa social work and the welfare system have been closely associated with Apartheid politics as both came into existence in order to address the 'poor white' problem (DSD, 2005d). Social work, through promoting primarily the rights and welfare of white South Africans, subsequently developed into an Apartheid 'tool', used to maintain and promote social oppression and the marginalisation of certain sectors of the population (Schenck, 2004a; Lombard, 2005a, Van Eeden, Ryke & De Necker, 2000).

Democracy in South Africa changed the focus of the welfare sector within less than a decade from being nationally fragmented, exclusive and predominantly focussed on the welfare needs of the minority white population, to being nationally united, inclusive and focussed predominantly on the needs of the majority, previously disadvantaged, black population (DSD, 2005d). This was accomplished through a suite of legislative changes:

- Firstly, the Apartheid welfare focus on advancing the needs of the minority white population was effectively overturned by the new Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and

through key supporting policies such as: the Reconstruction and Development Plan (ANC, 1994); the White Paper on Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997); and the Financing Policy for Developmental Social Welfare Services (Department of Welfare, 1996) (Triegaardt, 2002).

- Secondly, the duplication of efforts, inefficiency, and conflicting and different standards brought about by the racially determined decentralisation was reduced through the establishment of a single national Department of Social Development and nine provincial departments responsible for implementing social development and administering social pensions and grants. Local government, however, assumed responsibility for meeting communities' immediate physical needs (Brown & Neku, 2005).
- Thirdly, the White Paper on Social Development (1997) changed the approach of South African welfare from 'residual' to 'developmental' (DSD, 2005a) i.e. from seeing welfare as necessary for those whom the institutions of family and market had failed (Ife & Fiske, 2003) to seeing welfare as contributing to developing national human, social and economic capital (Lombard, 2003, DSD, 2005a). Welfare within the developmental approach is considered to be 'strengths-based' and 'empowering', with the aim of creating self-reliance of individuals, groups and communities (DSD, 2005d). In contrast to the residual approach, the development approach is considered to be a more efficient use of limited resources, and less likely to perpetuate dependency through the uneven balance of power relations between social worker and client that is associated with the residual approach (Bak, 2004).
- Fourthly, the social security system of grants, or direct cash transfers, was considerably expanded – giving welfare a more redistributive focus. The State Old Age Pension, the Disability Grant, the Foster Care Grant, and the Child Support Grant now form critical sources of income for millions of poor and vulnerable South Africans, and have become the major poverty alleviation programme within the country (Triegaardt, 2002).
- Finally, the amendment of the Social Work Act (110 of 1978) to become the Social Service Professions Act (110 of 1978)<sup>6</sup> made provision for the establishment of social service professions other than social work. This was partly in recognition of the contribution made by these occupations to work in the sector, and partly anticipating the need for a wider range of occupations to address escalating needs. The occupations targeted for 'professionalisation' include child and youth care work, probation work and community development work (DSD, 2005d Earle 2007b). At the same time the amendment paved the way for the transition of the Council for Social Work (CSW) into the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP or 'Council'), as the umbrella statutory regulatory body of both social work and these new 'professions' (Lombard, 2000).

However, despite the positive intentions of these changes to the legislative environment, not all outcomes were positive. Combinations of issues (such as lack of clarity and

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<sup>6</sup> Despite the amendment, the name and year of the act remained the same. The current revision process will most likely result in changes to these aspects.

definitions, inconsistencies within and across pieces of legislation, and misunderstandings and mistrust) have resulted in a number of unintended negative consequences:

*Disjuncture between social and economic policies:*

The change from a residual to a developmental model of social welfare was partly an attempt 'to integrate social and economic policies with an ongoing, dynamic developmental process' (Midgley, 1996 quoted in Sewpaul et al, 1999:16). Disjuncture between this paradigm and the macro-economic policy framework, however, emerged very soon in the new democracy, with the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy revealing economic factors taking precedence over social considerations. Thus Sewpaul (2001:316) argues that 'South Africa is currently characterised by the operation of two competing policy paradigms – one of neo-liberalism and one of social development'.

*Reduction of public social worker posts in late 1990s:*

At a second level, the recognition of additional social service professions but without a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities, combined with social work's historical association with the Apartheid government, resulted in a general idea within the DSD that social workers were not needed for developmental welfare in South Africa. As a result, many public social worker posts were frozen in the late 1990s as government focussed attention on training and employing community development workers instead (Nomathemba Kela, Chief Director: Social Welfare and Transformation of the Department of Social Development, in an interview, 2007).

*Reduction of funding for welfare activities:*

At a third level, while in respect of the overall social welfare budget, expenditure escalated to the point where it forms the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest programme in South Africa after health and education (Triegaardt, 2002), the social development portion was systematically squeezed out as increases in the total budget allocation did not keep pace with the rapid expansion of social security spending. Nationally, the portion of funding allocated to social development, including all welfare services, developmental programmes, administrative services and capital expenditure, reduced from 11% in 1994 to only 3% in 2005. These national figures furthermore hide provincial differences, with social services in some provinces receiving as little as 1% of the provincial welfare budget (Earle, 2007b). In line with the increasing demand for social security and social workers' responsibilities in respect of assisting people to access this, limited human resource capacity has been further redirected away from developmental welfare activities (DSD, 2005d).

Compounding the problems related to reduced overall funding for social welfare, was the substantial misunderstanding around what exactly the developmental welfare approach entailed. Confusion over the aims and practicalities of the Developmental Welfare Approach for social work as a profession arose because the White Paper for Social Development stated alongside the need to change the approach that the past had seen an over-dependence on remedial casework. As such all casework came to be associated with the Apartheid residual approach, and was thus considered less worthy of funding than group- and community-focussed developmental and preventative interventions. Following this argument, the DSD's Financial Awards to Service Providers policy document severely restricted NGO subsidies for individual casework, with the result that while the private welfare sector was unable to refuse statutory casework – the escalating work related to fulfilling national legislation such as the Child Care Act etc – they were limited in accessing state subsidies for these activities (Lombard, 2005a, Earle, 2007b).

Simultaneously, the funding policy changed from subsidising social worker posts to subsidising these only within 'developmentally' focussed programmes as the DSD considered this another means of effecting more rapid transformation within the sector and of achieving more transparent results (DSD, 2005d; Schenck, 2004a).

Finally, the erosion of the social development portion of the national social welfare budget, which reduced funding available by government for subsidization of the NGO sector, coincided with a reduction in donor funding to South Africa over recent years (Triegaardt, 2002) and gross and ongoing inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the new system of NGO funding allocation from the proceeds of the national lottery<sup>7</sup>.

The legislative environment has however not been static. Revised, reconsidered, refined and reactive legislation has been a characteristic of the decade although coherency of legislation and supporting budgets and human resource capacity for implementation remains a key problem:

- By 2003, due to substantial delays and problems in respect of the implementation of government developmental social welfare policy, in addition to the number of social worker vacancies that existed, the minister of Social Development had acknowledged the importance of social work as a key social service profession and simultaneously named it a scarce skill. The development of the *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers in South Africa* followed, with the final draft of the document published in October 2006 (DSD, 2006) after a long series of earlier draft documents, which were open for public input. Unfortunately, this very thorough and extremely positive document focuses almost exclusively on the public welfare sector, excluding the NGO sector.
- The enactment of the South African Social Security Agency Act (No. 9 of 2004) provided for the establishment of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) to take over as of 1 April 2005 the administration of all social security functions from the provinces. This was done not only to address discrepancies in respect of administrative, but also with the hope that provincial human resource and budgetary focus would return to developmental social welfare (DoSD, 2005a). As a result of this move, the severe lack of funds for social development was highlighted and separate budgets were provided from 2007. And while funding for social development has increased, this is off a very low base and remains insufficient.
- National government announced in February 2006 the implementation of ASGISA, and within this JIPSA. Within the context of GEAR, this move has redirected attention towards the importance of critical skills and the wider social context in

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<sup>7</sup> e.g. Beeld, 02 February 2006, *Welsynsubsidies: 'Te min en te laat' – Inflasie, Behoeftes glo geignoreer*; Beeld, 24 Feb 2006, *Welsyn gaan weer vanjaar noustrop trek: subsidies is R100m. te min vir basiese behoeftes*; Cape Argus, 09 May 2006, *NGOs struck by cash crunch over Lotto delay*; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 07 July 2006, *We need Lotto money urgently*; Pretoria News, 13 July 2006, *Lotteries board sits on cash for charities: More than R257-million unspent last year*; Star, 05 July 2006, *Lotto charity bungle: Red tape is holding up desperately needed funds*; Star, 06 July 2006, *Don't blame us, lotteries board tells charities*; Star, 10 July 2006, *Lotteries board and DTI bosses are a national disgrace*; Finweek, 16 November 2006, *Nationale Lotery sit met R2.1 miljard: nog 'n geval val van administratiewe onbeholpenheid*; Kerkbode, 8 September 2006, *Maatskaplike dienste onder druk oor personeel, geld*; Weekend Post, 7 April 2007, *Charities worried about future payouts and funds still to come*

relation to economic growth (Presidency, 2006a & b), thus bringing social work to the fore not only due to its scarce skill status, but additionally due to the potential positive impact the profession can have on improving the national social context.

- Despite early arguments by academics (e.g. McKendrick, 2001; Lombard, 2000) that a particular approach to social work does not necessarily mean a particular method, but that the developmental welfare approach should be incorporated into all social work methods, this distinction has only recently been clarified within national documents (e.g. DSD, 2004:5 & 2005e). Additionally the DSD has admitted that due to the problems surrounding funding, instead of a developmental welfare approach, 'social service practitioners have been forced to adopt a "make do" approach, dictated by limitations rather than need, priority or statutory and internationally ratified obligations' (DoSD, 2005a:11). Corrective funding policies supporting these admissions are still in the development phase (Nomathmeba Kela, Chief Director: Social Welfare and Transformation of the Department of Social Development, in an interview, June 2007), with the physical funding of NGO activities thus still preferencing group and community interventions to the detriment of equally critical casework.

### **Professional governance and leadership**

One of the primary reasons that social work has been so negatively affected by the changing legislative context has been the lack of coherent professional governance and leadership. This problem presents with a number of distinct facets:

- The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) is the statutory body regulating social work. It sets standards for education, training and development; professional conduct. Primarily however, it is the protector of the interests of the social service consumers (DSD, 2006). Among black social workers the image of the Council was particularly poor, with many viewing it as a punitive body and as yet another form of Apartheid control. Despite being a compulsory requirement, many social workers thus elected not to register with the Council. In addition to the limitations imposed by its governing legislation, this further restricted any professional leadership role that the Council could play. And while employers did not insist on registration of social workers, they could not appeal to the Council to intervene in instances of malpractice. Since 2004, the SACSSP's drive to sensitise employers has led to increased registrations. Council has also become considerably more active in promoting the interests of the profession and in working with various other stakeholders in this pursuit (Earle, 2007b).
- While the primary role of Council should be the protection the service user, the main aim of professional associations is to mobilise, support and contribute to the development of the profession, and to the professional development of its members (DSD, 2006). Racial and ideological fractures within the profession during Apartheid led to the establishment of no less than six professional associations in South Africa. Many past attempts (1983, 1989, 1998) to create a unified social work professional association all failed, with the result that South African social workers have not only lacked bargaining power, but have additionally been limited in global professional interaction because the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) has a policy that from any country seeking membership only one body can

represent the interests of its social workers (Mazibuko & Gray, 2004). Thus the establishment of such an association is considered to be critical to not only improving the image of the profession, and the benefits of its members, but also its vision and leadership. The current attempt appears to be making slow but consistent progress (SACSSP 2005b & 2007).

- Finally, due to its political nature as bearing ultimate responsibility for the implementation of national social policy, an element of the leadership of the social work profession will always lie within the national department of social development. The initial association by leaders within the new DSD of social work with Apartheid social policy resulted in their viewing the profession with considerable distrust and suspicion. Widespread misinterpretation by the DSD of social worker's defence of the casework method (as required by to fulfil critical statutory services) to be resistance on the part of the profession to embracing the developmental welfare resulted in the range of negative outcomes outlined in the section above. On the other side of the equation distrust and suspicion by the NGO sector of the government has resulted from the widely reported corruption within the department<sup>8</sup>.

Thus despite the fact that government and civil society (the NGO sector through subsidisation of social worker posts) were traditionally partners in the provision of welfare services (DSD, 2004), the post-Apartheid era has seen this partnership fraught with a general mistrust and power-struggles over perceived political agendas, as well as a disjuncture between allocated legislative responsibilities and funding (Chabikuli et al, 2005; Atkinson, 2003; Makofane, 2003; Earle, 2007b).

### **National welfare needs**

Parallel to the changing social policy context, has been the changing national welfare needs that make up the focus of social work professional attention. With the shift in focus from the white population to the previously disadvantaged population, the size of the recipient population grew exponentially almost overnight, and this by a factor not only related to the differences in population sizes of these groups, but also to the proportions within them requiring social work intervention.

For despite the transition to democracy, and the many positive changes that this resulted in for the nation's black population, 'there are still entrenched vices that threaten to erode people's basic human rights in a new South Africa' (Noyoo, 2004:360). These include poverty, inequality, and unemployment; high levels of crime; high levels of violence against women and children; malnutrition; infant mortality; teenage pregnancy; poor housing and public health; low levels of literacy and education; racism; and large-scale HIV and AIDS.

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<sup>8</sup> e.g. Sunday Tribune, 23 October 2005, *Special courts mooted to deal with social grant fraud*; Natal Witness, 26 October 2005, *Shock welfare fraud* stats: over 86 000 came forward in response to national amnesty; Sunday Tribune, 06 November 2005, *Mama mia! now welfare's watchdogs feel bite*; Daily Dispatch, 11 November 2005, *Department to get better grip on fraud*; Sunday Tribune, 18 December 2005, *Social grant fraud: 3 674 KZN officials fingered*; The Herald, 28 December 2005, *Get tough on corrupt officials*; Business Day, 10 March 2006, *Anticorruption unit save state R 4,5bn*; Sunday Independent, 12 March 2006, *Skweyiya roundly rebuked in constitutional court*; City Press, 23 April 2006, *Social worker is jailed for grant fraud*

Furthermore there is evidence that many of these social ills have increased rather than decreased over the past decade (Sewpaul et al, 1999; Bak, 2004; Makofane, 2003; Triegaardt, 2002; Scholtz, 2005; Mathews et al, 2005).

Of prime importance here is the impact of HIV and AIDS. Apart from direct issues such as ill health and unemployment, the impact is experienced through increasing social disintegration in the form of 'rising family violence, family disorganisation, mental health problems, crime, substance abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, homelessness and children living and working on the street' (DoSD, 2004:11). All these issues are the preserve of social work practice through activities (both statutory as well as non-statutory) that span assistance in the application for disability grants; planning for the future; bereavement counseling; supporting the physical and emotional aspects of placement of children into foster or state care; counseling and rehabilitation for substance abuse; probation support etc. Their escalation has exponentially increased the need for social work services (Earle, 2007b).

At the same time, the impact on the profession is more personal: 89.3% of the social workers registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions in 2005 were female (Table 7) and between 67.4% (Census, 2001 data in Table 11) and 79.9% (LFS data 2000 - 2005 average in Table 10) were between the ages of 20 and 39. According to research by Shisana et al (2005) the incidence of HIV is highest for females in these age groups, with prevalence in the 20-24, 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39 year age groups being 23.9%, 33.3%, 26.0% and 19.3% respectively. As the period between the ages of 15 and 49 is when 'would-be professionals undergo their schooling and their professional education and then enter and consolidate their professional practice' (Breier, 2006:10), the high HIV prevalence figures above for females in the age groups between 15 and 39 highlight the severity of the negative impact that this disease is having on the availability of social workers in South Africa.

### **In summary**

In summary, the context of professional social work practice in South Africa over the past decade has changed radically. The legislative environment shifted the focus of social work activities from the white to the previously disadvantaged segments of society. And while this lead instantaneously to a massive increase in the size of the focus population, escalating welfare needs due in large part to the impact of HIV/AIDS have compounded this.

A progressively increasing portion of the national welfare budget going towards social security, with a concurrent reduction in the funding available for developmental welfare activities; the change in approach from residual to developmental, along with the confusion that this wrought around the intersection of social work methods and related government subsidy; combined with government's mistrust of the profession and its lack of support for social workers as key developmental welfare implementers, have all had substantial negative impacts on the profession. While it is evident that much has been done by all stakeholders since around 2000 to improve the situation for social workers, with these efforts showing signs of paying off, it is clear that much still needs to be done.



## ***The consequences of the changing context***

In this section, the key consequences of the changing context of social work practice as outlined above, along with developments towards rectification, are discussed in slightly more detail. Issues covered include: salaries, working conditions, professional identity and emigration.

### **Salaries**

Social worker salaries have traditionally been low, not only in South Africa, but also internationally. This is attributed by key authors to the fact that the profession is largely practiced by females, and to the lower status that this affords it (e.g. Rosenfeld, 1987; McPhail, 2004; Perry & Cree, 2003; Sutton, 1982; Fortune & Hanks, 1998). Despite this, the legislative and governance contexts of social work practice in South Africa after 1994 resulted in a rapid erosion of social worker salaries and in the rise of substantial remuneration inequality: firstly between the public and the private welfare sectors, and secondly across provinces even within these sectors.

In respect of the first, while social workers entering the public sector were placed on salary level 6 (thus disregarding the 4 year professional nature of the qualification), salaries did at least receive the annual inflation related increases. This was not the case in the NGO sector, where changes in DSD funding policies and reductions in the availability of general non-state funding reduced overall revenues available, meant that low social worker salaries remained static in monetary terms.

One of the first priorities of the DSD as part of the implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy was the re-grading of social worker salaries within the department in recognition of the fact that social work is a four-year professional qualification. With the assistance of the DPSA, a process of job evaluation was undertaken, job descriptions were updated, and provision was made for people to specialize and be recognized for this. Critically, entry level was shifted from Level 6 to Level 7. While the re-grading process in the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the South African Defense Force (SADF) quickly followed the upgrading within the DSD, other government departments such as Health and Education were slower to respond, claiming budgetary constraints as the main reason (Chief Director: Social Welfare and Transformation, Department of Social Development, in an interview, 2006).

The re-grading process has however not extended to cover the NGO sector. Funding still prioritizes groupwork and community work despite the recognition by the DSD of the overwhelming demands placed on agencies by the rising load of mandatory statutory casework. Furthermore there has been an admission on the part of the DSD that the Revised Policy on Financial Awards to Service Providers cannot easily be implemented due to the 'chronic under-budgeting' by government for the subsidisation of NGO-provided social services (DSD, 2004:15) and the 'massive (salary) differential between government and the NGO sector which has been allowed to develop over the past decade' (DSD, 2005a, 21).

Compounding these inequalities has been the provision by the state of other benefits such as medical aids, pensions, housing subsidies and car allowances, which form part of the overall remuneration package, yet are virtually non-existent for social workers in the NGO sector. The Pretoria News (22 February 2007) reports that for social workers in the NGO sector, pay packages and benefits have not changed in over 20 years.

On another level, inequalities between the state and NGO sector become more pronounced with seniority. This is because opportunities exist within government employ for the recognition of specialization and career advancement – with this additionally being a key focus of the salary re-grading exercise – in contrast to the NGO sector where the scope for promotion and related salary increases is extremely limited and most senior managers earning not much more than entry-level personnel.

In respect of the second issue, provincial inequalities have been allowed to develop due the autonomy of provincial welfare departments in not only determining social worker salaries within the public welfare sector, but furthermore having the right to determine the overall proportion of the budget that will be used to subsidize the NGO sector and the proportional level of such subsidy. As a result social workers across the provinces within the same national NGO receive different salaries.

In terms of actual salary levels, after the social worker salary re-grading exercise within the DSD, the starting salaries in government now range between R 75 411 and R 109 062 per annum excluding benefits (see Table 39 for the range of salaries for social work occupations and levels as extracted from the advertisements for these posts). By comparison, starting salaries within NGOs range from R 48 000 to R 72 000 per annum and do not include any additional benefits.

**Table 39: Range of salaries offered for social work ‘occupations/levels’, with attendant education requirements**

<b>"Social Work" Occupations/Levels</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Min Salary</b>	<b>Max Salary</b>
Social Auxiliary Worker	Matric & SAW certificate	R 41 946.00	R 44 316.00
Social Fieldworker	Matric	R 89 805.00	R 89 805.00
Community Facilitator	SW diploma/degree	R 89 805.00	R 89 805.00
Counsellor	SW diploma/degree	R 89 805.00	R 173 868.00
EAP (HIV)	SW diploma/degree	R 107 316.00	R 135 438.00
Social Worker	SW diploma/degree	R 75 411.00	R 109 062.00
Senior Social Worker	SW diploma/degree	R 89 805.00	R 116 658.00
Chief / Principle Social Worker	SW diploma/degree	R 111 528.00	R 139 302.00
Social Work Manager	SW diploma/degree	R 166 221.00	R 173 868.00

Source: Sunday Times, Business Times, Career Times

The salary differential that now exists between the government and NGO welfare sectors, and between different provinces within the NGO sector, together with government’s recent focus on filling vacancies and increasing the overall number of social worker posts, has resulted in a massive flow of social workers out of the NGO sector and into the public welfare sector. As the DSD and other government departments have tight equity targets, this movement has additionally been predominantly among black social workers, with this evident in the demographic analysis undertaken earlier in this report. The result has been that not only are NGOs struggling to maintain the human resources that they assist in putting though their first year of work experience, but they are struggling to meet their own transformation targets among social work staff (Coordinator of NACOSS, in an interview, 2006). Furthermore, the natural movement of people brought about by the salary

differential, which NGOs understand and appreciate, is compounded by active and at times ethically questionable recruitment of social workers by social development departments (Earle, 2007b)

Of the NGOs who responded to the NACOSS call for information on post and turnover (see Table 21), all but one (the National Jewish Welfare Forum) indicated that the key reason for resignation related to poor social worker salaries within the sector and 'migration' of particularly black social workers to positions with the DSD.

In support of this, The Eastern Cape Herald (20 December 2006) reports that the provincial social development department has made a concerted effort following the release of its grant administration responsibilities to SASSA to focus on creating and filling vacant social worker posts. From a total number of 755 social worker posts in 2004/5, the province increased this to 974 posts by January 2007. At the same time the managed to reduce the number of vacant posts from 350 in 2004/5 to just 70 in January 2007. They report that they did not experience a shortage in applications for advertised posts, however admitted that 'a number' of those applying were social workers from the NGO sector. The reporter additionally notes that an alarming trend of movement of social workers from the NGO to the government sector started in 2005 due to better salaries, with NGOs subsequently struggling to meet their own staffing needs and suffering from productivity reductions as new staff constantly have to be trained.

Yet even with the improved salaries of social workers in the government, it is notable that social workers here are still complaining about the low level of pay in relation to the high workloads, emotional stress and occupational risks involved. Particularly, it is pointed out that the scarce skill and rural allowances promised in the Recruitment and Development Strategy have not yet materialized (Earle, 2007b).

### **Working conditions**

The working conditions for most social worker in the welfare sector in South Africa – regardless of whether they are based within the public or the private arenas – are generally very poor. The following inter-related issues emerge from the work of authors such as Schenck (2004b), Brown & Neku (2005), and Earle (2007b), as well as from the media<sup>9</sup>:

Social workers are frustrated with the overwhelming needs of the community in relation to their own relatively low numbers and their limited (or lack of) access to resources such as adequate supervision, stationary, office space and furniture, information technology, administrative and language support, vehicles and supporting professionals and institutions such as places of safety. Furthermore, with statutory work by law taking precedence over the groupwork and community work that attracts funding, the latter is generally crowded out and social workers find themselves continually torn between the

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9 e.g. Beeld, 21 Dec 2005, *As die put opdroog: gee en gee en gee ... tot daar niks meer oor is*; Beeld, 20 December 2005, *Verward en onseker en gefrustreerd*; Business Day, 25 November 2005, *Rise in AIDS orphans 'strains grants': SA faces challenges such as budgetary constraints and shortage of social workers to deal with pandemic*; Daily Dispatch, 11 Feb 2005, *Work space pathetic – King social workers*; Sowetan, 28 October 2005, *Social workers carry heavy load*; The Herald, 21 February 2005, *Social Worker Crisis Hits Poor*; The Herald, 18 November 2005, *Nehawu marches to highlight grievances*; Diamond Fields Advertiser, 22 November 2006, *Youth workers want danger pay*; Weekend Post, 2 September 2006, *Norwegian uses social work skills to help street kids*

two. There is also a lack of understanding among the general public, as well as other professionals and those involved in community development, as to what social workers know and are able to do, and what limited resources they have to work with in reality. Due to the small numbers of social workers in certain government offices and NGO agencies, the opportunity for specialisation (which is said to increase productivity and reduce work-related stress) is very limited, with social workers forced to do all forms of social work, which are sometimes considered to be conflicting<sup>10</sup>. The combination of these factors results in extremely high caseloads, inefficiency, workplace stress and anxiety, empathy exhaustion, emotional burnout, and even incidents of malpractice as social work is reduced to crisis management. Related to this, the staff turnover of social workers particularly in NGOs is high, with this exacerbating the conditions for those left behind as workloads increase proportionally and time is lost in retraining new junior staff.

The quote below is taken from the interview with two social workers working for the Limpopo government and based at sub-district level, and serves to highlight the problems:

*This one computer, we share between all six people ... And if you want to make a copy, sometimes there are no pages, and the photocopier machine is not working. I don't even get a pen – I have to buy my own. No, stationary is a problem! ...even the furniture, a table to write on ... my colleague across the way waited ...almost two years for a table and a chair! ... [yet] despite the problems, this office is not bad. In the Guiyani sub-district office, they do not even have a telephone – they have to walk or drive 2km to even make a call!*

(Earle, 2007b)

In the NGO sector, issues related to a lack of general funding for both social worker salaries and running costs are blamed for the situation. Within the public welfare sector, lack of access to adequate resources is considered to be partly the result of inadequate funding of social welfare generally, and partly the result of the bureaucratic disjunction that arises out of the physical placement of social workers at the local government level, but with provincial governments remaining responsible for filling posts and for funding all their requirements and activities (Atkinson, 2003; Chabikuli et al, 2005; Earle, 2007b). Finally, this factor was mentioned by 12 of the 21<sup>11</sup> NGOs who responded to the NACOSS call for data as being a key reason for social worker resignations.

### **Professional identity**

The White Paper on Social Development (1997) states that the country needs social development rather than social work to deal with the paramount problem of poverty, and that this social development will not be carried out only by social workers, but by a group of social service professions among which social work will only be one. The exact role of social work in relation to these other 'professions' is however left ambiguous (Bak, 2004). The amendment of the Social Work Act (110 of 1978) to become the Social Service Professions Act, took this intention further by making legislative provision for the

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<sup>10</sup> For instance Landman & Lombard (2006) report that the current situation where social workers in small NGO offices are forced to work in one community at both the levels of community development and statutory intervention (e.g. the removal of children from their families) is very challenging and leads to confusion within the community regarding the role of the social worker.

<sup>11</sup> Child Welfare South Africa has been counted as one organization despite its provincial representation in respect of the figures in Table 21

establishment of social service professions other than social work, and for the SACSSP as their governing body (Lombard, 2000).

Yet all the areas of work done by the newly identified 'professions' traditionally fell within the ambit of social work. Additionally the roles and responsibilities of the various 'professions' were still not clearly defined. These factors, together with the fact that the new 'professions' did not carry the same 'Apartheid association' as social work did; the freezing of public social worker posts in the late 1990s and its concurrent support of these other 'professions'; and welfare funding pressures coming from a range of quarters, resulted in much confusion around the future of social work as the relevant, leading and most highly trained profession among the social service occupational group (McKendrick, 2001; Lombard, 2000; Gray, 2000).

In essence, the combination of these factors caused for social workers in South Africa over the past decade what many authors have referred to as a crisis of professional identity and confidence (Lombard, 2003; Schenck, 2004a, Gray, 2000; McKendrick, 2001; Lombard, 2005b; Brown & Neku, 2005; Bak, 2004).

The Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers in South Africa (DSD, 2005c:46) recognises the poor image of the profession in the statement: '*The status of the social work profession has been undermined and has witnessed an unprecedented undermining of confidence and belief in the ability of the social work profession*' and admits that '*Strong political utterances about the relevance of the profession exacerbated this*'. Furthermore, the DSD's Service Delivery Model (2005a:22) now states that a range of professionals provide welfare services, 'key among which are social workers'.

On the other hand, the social work profession appears to have acknowledged that the support and co-operation of all occupations involved in social welfare will be needed if the demands of developmental social welfare are to be met in the face of increasing national needs and limited resources (McKendrick, 2001; Lombard, 2000). However, in support of such co-operation there are calls that the roles, functions and responsibilities of each group in relation to each other to be more clearly defined (Gray, 2000; Schenck, 2004a).

## **Migration**

The combination of all the factors placing pressure on the practice of the social work profession in South Africa, as outlined above, in addition to social issues such as the high crime rate and concerns over public health and education, serve as 'push' factors for the emigration of South African social workers. Pull factors are generally considered to be opposite of the push factors, with individuals attracted by the higher salaries, better working conditions, more satisfying jobs, greater career prospects, greater personal safety, better educational opportunities for children, and the greater personal benefits received for taxes that are available in countries such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand (Sewpaul, 2002; Sidley, 2004; Martineau et al, 2002; Bach, 2003; Sanders & Lloyd, 2005; Malherbe, 2001).

The demand in these countries for social workers arises from a combination of increasingly aging populations and a generally 'greying' workforce, which is exacerbated by lower average retirement age, falling enrolments in training and reduced working hours (Perry & Cree, 2003; Martineau et al, 2002). Table 40 shows that of the total 5 900 foreign

qualified social workers who obtained registration via the 'Letter of Verification' system to practice in the UK between 1 April 2000 and 18 May 2004 (at which time the qualification equivalence process took over), 1 111 or 18.8% were from South Africa. While an even larger portion (19.3%) were from Australia, migration to the UK from this country is overwhelmingly temporary.

**Table 40: 'Letters of Verification' issued by the UK GSCC to Social Workers qualified outside of the UK: 1 April 1990 – 18 May 2004**

COUNTRY	TOTAL	
	N	%
Australia	1 141	19.3
Canada	482	8.2
Europe (EU/EEA)	598	10.1
India	418	7.1
New Zealand	297	5.0
South Africa	1 111	18.8
USA	606	10.3
Zimbabwe	307	5.2
All other	940	15.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 900</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: GSCC, 2005

While the recipient country scores in a number of ways by the entry of professionals from developing countries into their workforces, the outcome is generally negative for donor countries such as South Africa, who not only struggle to provide their populations with vital services, but additionally lose the investment that has been made in the education of these professionals. The loss is generally greatest when migration is permanent and when new graduates leave, and the country is given no chance to recoup any of their investment (Martineau et al, 2002; Malherbe, 2001).

Sidley (2004) notes that as part of the UK proposals to strengthen the code of practice on ethical international recruitment and thus prevent agencies from stripping developing countries of their healthcare staff, the South African and UK governments have agreed to slow down the migration of South African doctors and other healthcare professionals to the UK. Annual migration figures from the various sources available discussed earlier in the report suggest that this has indeed had some positive impact on the losses of social workers to this country.

There is also evidence to suggest that many of those who wished to emigrate permanently have now done so (Earle, 2007a) and that 'barriers to entry' such as the professional registration process (equivalence and recognition of qualifications); the cost of registration; the cost of moving and initial set up; and cultural and language barriers will become of greater concern (Bach, 2003). The impact of these latter issues as deterrents to emigration is likely to increase as the demographics of the professional group continue to transform.

However, while working conditions and salaries remain poor, and the wider social environment raises questions around the quality of life for professionals and their children into the future, migration – both out of the country as well as to other sectors within the domestic labour market – is likely to remain a key drain on South African social work skills.

## **In summary**

In summary, the consequences of the changing legislative and governance context of social work practice in South Africa combined with escalating welfare needs related to the impact of HIV and AIDS has been manifested itself for the profession most clearly in relation to: low and uneven salary levels between the public and the private welfare sector, as well as across provinces within each of these sectors; poor working conditions and high workloads which are exacerbated in the NGO sector by the movement to government created by the salary differential; and a marked crisis in professional identity particularly over the late 1990s and early 2000s. In turn these factors have promoted migration of social workers out of the country as well as to other economic sectors.

## ***Changes in the context of social work education***

The section above focused on the changes, and the impact of these changes, at the level of social work practice. This section focuses on the key inter-related changes underlying the education of social workers in South Africa and their corresponding impact.

Central to the changes affecting the education and output of social workers in South Africa have been the challenges and changes related to DoE funding of social work education and their impact on the supply of social workers through the higher education system.

The first of these is historical: While universities and the Council reached an agreement on the requirement for a four-year university education for registration as a social worker (implemented from 1987), a lack of negotiation with the Department of Education at that time around the funding implications of this change towards a professional undergraduate qualification resulted in the 4<sup>th</sup> year receiving only additional general undergraduate levels of funding rather than funding at the Honours level. This shortcoming remains, with the result that the funding for social work is not comparative to other professional qualifications of a similar structure (Earle, 2007b).

The second problem, which compounds the above, has been the fact that in line with the DoE's attempt to shift the focus of higher education output away from the humanities through the development of a related funding grid, social work is funded according the lowest funding category - D4. In contrast, the education of chartered accountants and engineers is funded according to the A1 category. Funding at the D4 level ignores the fact that social work is a professional degree, with training covering the three prongs of theory, practice and research, and therefore does not provide funding at the levels necessary to provide the individual attention required of professional training. Furthermore, funding at this level ignores the fact that social work has been declared a scarce skill (Earle, 2007b).

The direct impact of this funding regime has been most evident in the reduction of permanent highly qualified staff and an increasing reliance on lesser-qualified part-time staff at the departments of social work as well as in the progressive erosion of programme depth and breadth (Earle, 2007b). Additionally many of the residential universities have capped the numbers of social work students they are willing to admit.

Thirdly, the National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001) proposes as a means of improving tertiary institutions' graduation rates that funding be linked to the output rather than the enrolment of graduates.

To understand the full impact of these latter two funding policies on social work education, it is necessary to take a step back. The challenges and uncertainties within the professional practice of social work over the past decade, and in particular factors such as its poor remuneration, work conditions and general professional image, substantially reduced the appeal of the profession to white students, who were generally made aware of these issues. Black students, on the other hand, still had experience of social workers in their communities as individuals with professional status. These factors, in addition to the fact that social work is one of the few professions that does not require maths and science at matric level for entry (Earle, 2007b), drove in large part the rapid demographic changes noted in the figures presented earlier in this report.

Overlying the above general demographic shift evident for the higher education system as a whole, has been the trend for black school-leavers with high quality passes to not only seek enrolment at historically white universities, but additionally in courses that promise more lucrative careers than does social work (Earle, 2007b).

In sum, the general applicant for social work studies has not only shifted over the period in respect of race from white to black, but has generally shifted downwards in respect of their foundational education. Historically black universities have been most affected by this (Earle, 2007b)

Returning to the impact of national higher education funding policies on social work education, it must now be clear that at a time when the average student being admitted to study social work is requiring increased individual attention and support in order to overcome their myriad of past educational and social disadvantages to graduate as a qualified professional, shifts in funding focus have not only resulted in higher student to staff ratios and thus less individual attention, but also in the use of less qualified people. The effects of this unfortunate co-incidence are clearly evident in the comparison of increasing enrolment trends and decreasing graduation trends (Earle, 2007b).

Adding to this situation the proviso that funding will only be paid to higher education institutions upon students' graduations, has led to two distinct unintended negative consequences: Talk of increasing the general admission requirements at certain historically white institutions will impact directly on the admission requirements for social work students, with the potential exclusion of those who are at risk of failure but are currently still eligible for admission. Conversely, particularly at historically black institutions for which this is not an option, there is substantial and increasing pressure on social work educators to adjust standards in order to achieve adequate pass rates (Earle, 2007b)

The implementation of the uniform BSW, with its 27 specific outcomes, is considered to be extremely positive in that it will set a minimum quality for social work student output. Furthermore it has provided individual social work departments with evidence to back up their requests for increased funding at the institutional level (Earle, 2007b). However, as the first group through this programme will only graduate in 2010, the impact on student throughput is as yet an open-ended question.



The DSD's Recruitment and Retention Strategy (DSD, 2006:17) for social workers acknowledges the challenges in relation to the low levels of social work subsidy from the DoE in light of its focus on sciences and technology, as well as the resultant capping of numbers at certain institutions as key problems and proposes that 'there needs to be urgent consultation between the two ministries in this regard'. However, it was reported by Ms Santie Pruis, manager of education and development at the SACSSP in an interview in May 2007, that there was currently no progress being made in negotiations with the DoE towards having this changed.

Also related to funding, but at the personal level rather than at the national level, the changing demographics of social work students has resulted in personal access to finance becoming a much more critical issue in relation to social work education; in terms of access, throughput and graduation (Earle, 2007b).

The provision of student bursaries forms a key tactic within the DSD's Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers (DSD, 2006). Nomathemba Kela, Chief Director: Social Welfare and Transformation of the Department of Social Development reported in an interview in June 2007 that the DSD had issued a total 190 student bursaries through 2006 (across all academic levels) and was working with higher education institutions to increase its reach in respect of this form of support. In line with this the Business Day (22 February 2007) reported an announcement by the minister of finance that R365m would be set aside for a new bursary scheme for social work students. This was in order to try to increase interest in this crucial profession, of whom larger numbers would be needed to support increasing numbers of grant recipients as well the development and implementation of new legislation aimed at protecting the rights and promoting the interests of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

## LINKING THE QUALITATIVE TO THE QUANTITATIVE

While linkages have been made throughout the report at appropriate sections in so much as the discussion allowed, this section seeks to summarize the key links between the qualitative and quantitative sections. In trying to do this, it is important to bear the following in mind: The development of legislation is slow, as is the full implementation process. The impact of legislation on the actual quantitative data related to a profession takes additional time to be seen. Furthermore, not only are there numerous policies and acts involved at once, but these have furthermore changed and been amended over the relatively short time period of review covered. Additionally, the legislative context is not the only factor impacting on the profession, but other socio-economic factors within the labour market and educational arenas are also at play both at the professional and individual levels. Thus not only are 'causal factors' inter-related and complex, but there is always some level of time disjunction between issues and impact, making direct cause-effect inferences impossible.

As the basis for later linkages, it is important to state categorically, that social work is indeed a scarce skill in South Africa, both in absolute and relative terms. This is underscored by data on the current number of vacancies with the DSD, the high levels of staff turnover within the NGO sector, and the replacement demand for social workers over the next decade as compared with output from the higher education system.

The reasons for absolute scarcity are multi-faceted, but can be summarized as follows:

- The refocus of welfare services towards the previously disadvantaged groups brought about by democracy resulted in a substantial increase in demand in respect of the focus population per social worker.
- The welfare needs of this previously disadvantaged population have escalated due to the disproportionate impact of HIV and AIDS thus increasing demand for traditional welfare services within this new client segment.
- Government is in the process of legislating welfare service delivery in order to comply with its constitutional obligations to vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, the disabled and those suffering from substance abuse. The result is that there is an increasing demand for social workers to cover these new services.

Absolute scarcity of social workers is however intersected by relative scarcity. Relative scarcity is also multi-dimensional:

- Scarcity is higher in the private (NGO) than in the government welfare sectors, due particularly to the impact of government's salary re-grading process and the differential that this has caused directly in respect of remuneration and indirectly in respect of working conditions
- Scarcity is higher in certain geographical areas than in others. This is the result of three intersecting factors: the differential in provincial budgetary allocations to social welfare in general and NGO subsidies more specifically has resulted in remuneration in certain provinces being higher than in others; the generally more attractive nature of certain provinces (Gauteng and the Western Cape) pulls skilled workers from across the board due to the availability of other social and economic opportunities and facilities that are clustered there; and the fact that NGOs with rural offices struggle to find social workers who are willing to live and work in these pockets of poverty for the salaries that these agencies are able to provide.

- There is a scarcity of black social workers in the NGO sector as a result of the compounding influences of overall scarcity, higher government salaries, and preferential employment of black professionals within government.
- There is a scarcity of black social workers at the higher age groups, resulting in scarcity of these professionals for recruitment into experienced, high-level management positions within the profession. This is exacerbated by the fact that these people have numerous more lucrative opportunities for management in the public welfare and non-welfare sectors.

At a secondary level, a number of additional associations between the qualitative and quantitative sections of this report need to be highlighted and discussed:

- Migration figures suggest a stabilization to slight decline after 2004. This can be explained by factors such as: the introduction of the much more challenging 'qualification equivalence' process for registration in the UK; the ending of large-scale direct recruitment by employers in this same country; a reduction of the push factors through an increase in public welfare sector remuneration; and the systematic unfreezing of, and active recruitment into, public sector posts after the declaration of social work as a scarce skill 2003.
- Utilizing the other extreme of human migration – that of importing skills to meet our national requirements – is not considered viable for social work skills as the SACSSP as well as the DSD are of the opinion that there are sufficient numbers of South African youth who qualify to enter social work education. Thus despite being named a scarce skill, social work does not appear on the Department of Home Affairs quota list for work permit allocation.
- Social workers are predominantly female and there is no indication of a change in this trend. While the generally low salaries are likely to be a deterrent to males, the association of social work as an extension of the traditional female role of caring is likely to continue to impact on professional demographics into the future. Yet an increase in the number of males is considered desirable. However, as the social work degree is a generic degree and allows for careers other than social work, using tools such as direct bursary allocations to increase male proportional graduations will only likely translate into an increase in overall males within the professional pool if working conditions and remuneration improve significantly.
- Due to the delay between the enrolment and graduation in social work, it is not possible to determine from the information available what the impact of government's declaration of social work as a scarce skill, the re-grading of public welfare salaries, and its commitment to increase posts, will have on graduation trends. At the level of first time entry into social work, however, figures show a positive increase.
- Dropping throughput figures (suggested by the contrasting trends of increasing enrolment and decreasing graduations) is likely to be the result of:
  - Increasing numbers of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds entering the course, compounded by
  - Reduced levels of funding leading to higher student to staff ratios and less individual attention, and
  - Low levels of incentive to complete the course based on the poor professional image, the low levels of remuneration and the poor working conditions.

- The changing demographics of social workers as suggested by the 'race by age' distribution is supported by changing demographics of the overall and first time entry enrolment data and graduation data, and can be explained by the following:
  - The poor image of the profession is more pervasive among the affluent white population, with low remuneration levels more of a deterrent to entry in this group;
  - Social work as a profession still has some status in black communities and is thus still seen as desirable – particularly as a profession that does not require maths and science for entry and for which there is guaranteed employment albeit with low salaries; and
  - Active transformation efforts on the part of social work departments and universities.
- The drop in the number of registered and practicing social workers over the 1999 – 2003 period suggested by an overview of all available labour market and professional data, corresponds to the period when government support of the profession, and its professional image, was lowest, and when migration of social workers was escalating.
- Vacancy rates are likely to increase rather than decrease over the short term as posts within the public sector are created in recognition of real demand and new legislation despite the shortage of social workers to fill them. In turn, turnover rates for the NGO sector are likely to increase even further as particularly black social workers are drawn from this segment into government employ through the higher remuneration packages and slightly lighter workloads.
- While it is difficult to make accurate calculations based on the figures available, the low proportion of social workers over the age of 40 years suggest that retention within the profession is a serious problem, with many social workers exiting the professional labour market long before mandatory retirement age. The low remuneration, high levels of stress, poor working conditions and emotional burnout are all factors that would encourage early exit.
- Social auxiliary workers are part of the social work profession and in theory have the potential to substantially reduce the numbers of professional social workers required. In practice however, there are simply too few of them. Furthermore, the training of social auxiliary workers is currently in the process of changing from a SACSSP qualification to a Learnership whose quality control lies jointly with the HWSETA and the SACSSP. While the number of accredited service providers for this learnership has increased from two to nine between 2005 and 2007, the majority of these service providers are small, making consistency of learning a challenge. Many employers are also reluctant to register for the training of social auxiliary workers as due to their small size and dependence on donor funding, they are unable to bear the cost and responsibility of the fundamental modules of the Learnership.

## THE WAY FORWARD

The first 12 years of democratic rule in South Africa have had a profound impact on the social work profession. The legislative environment shifted the focus of social work activities from the white to the previously disadvantaged segments of society, leading instantaneously to a massive increase in the size of the focus population, whose welfare needs have escalated over the period due in part to the impact of HIV/AIDS. Increasing budgetary focus on social security spending at the same time reduced the funding available for developmental welfare activities both at state and NGO levels. While large numbers of government posts were frozen in the late 1990's, social workers in NGOs in particular felt the burden of this, as misunderstandings of the practical implementation of developmental welfare approach, combined with government's mistrust of the profession were felt keenly through intense pressures on funding subsidies and often open antagonism and criticism of the profession by government representatives.

The consequences of this changing context manifested most clearly in relation to: low and uneven salary levels between the public and the private welfare sector, as well as across provinces within each of these sectors; poor working conditions and high workloads, exacerbated in the NGO sector by the movement to government created by the salary differential; and a marked crisis in professional identity particularly over the late 1990s and early 2000s. These factors in turn promoted increased migration of social workers out of the country as well as to other economic sectors.

At the level of supply, rapid demographic transformation of social work enrolments has been accompanied by a changing demographic profile of graduates. However, while enrolments have increased, graduations have demonstrated a declining trend specifically since 1999. Reduced throughput is linked closely to the combined effects of poor and reduced funding for social work education at the time when demographic transformation demanded increased resources to assist larger numbers of students with past social, academic and economic disadvantage to move efficiently through the system.

Yet by 2003, the Department of Social Development began acknowledging that social security was unsustainable without parallel and supporting social development, and that its policies in this regard were failing at the implementation level due to lack of social workers. All quantitative research since this time, including the analyses undertaken in this report, has merely served to highlight the severity of the shortages.

Stemming directly from its declaration as a scarce skill, however, the process of the development of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers was initiated. Moving through many drafts before the final draft was released in October 2006, this document has put forward a number of recommendations for increasing the numbers of social workers through increased training and improved retention. Other recent recommendations arise from the work of Barberton (2006), Earle (2007b), while still others are mentioned as the basis for the development of the Integrated Service Delivery Model (DSD, 2005e). Table 41 lists the key recommendations arising out of these documents according to the main themes.

**Table 41: Recommendations regarding the training, recruitment and retention of social workers in South Africa arising out of previous research**

<p><b>General recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Determine norms and standards for efficient service delivery of social welfare</li> <li>○ Define the roles of government versus the NGO sector in respect of service delivery</li> <li>○ Improve the funding of social welfare as separate from social security and as critical to the long-term sustainability of the latter</li> <li>○ Align funding for developmental social welfare according to determined roles and responsibilities as well as service delivery norms and standards</li> <li>○ Define the roles and responsibilities of social workers relative to the other newly defined social service professions</li> <li>○ Develop systems within both government and NGO sectors to monitor and manage social worker caseloads to ensure they remain within acceptable limits</li> <li>○ Related to the above, develop systems for monitoring and determining social work personnel needs at all levels</li> <li>○ Strengthen the governance structures within the social work profession</li> </ul>
<p><b>Remuneration related recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improve social worker salaries</li> <li>○ Provide additional monetary incentives such as a rural or scarce skills allowances, or the payment of study debts</li> <li>○ Equalize salaries across provinces and private and public welfare sectors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recruitment related recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Raise the status and image of the profession</li> <li>○ Fund all available posts and actively recruit social workers into them</li> <li>○ Encourage the return of social workers from abroad</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education and training related recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase registration of students into social work at higher education institutions through improving the recruitment of students into social work education using publicity materials, active recruitment and the provision of bursaries</li> <li>○ Reduce the financial burden on students through changing the structure of the 4<sup>th</sup> year to an internship funded through the HWSETA</li> <li>○ Improve the throughput of social work students by increasing supporting human and other resources through increased national funding allocation of social work education</li> <li>○ Enforce the system of continuous professional development among qualified social workers to maintain quality standards</li> <li>○ Increase the numbers of social auxiliary workers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Working condition related recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improve the general conditions of service related to the work environment, job-security, career pathing, sick and maternity leave, job rotation / specialization, and training opportunities</li> <li>○ Provide social workers with access to the resources such as vehicles, furniture, offices and telecommunications that they require to do their jobs</li> </ul>

- Promote safety standards within the workplace
- Increase basic social worker leave allocation to allow for recovery of compassion fatigue

What is clear from the discussion in this report is that responses to, and implementation of, these recommendations must be seen as work in progress. They not only require high-level co-ordination between groups of key stakeholders, whose current relationship with each other is relatively complex, but also require considerable budgetary and human resource support that are not mustered quickly.

In respect of the general recommendations, there appears to be improved relations between the SACSSP, the DSD, NACOSS, and educational bodies such as the Standards Generating Body (SGB) for social work. Increased co-operation towards clearly articulated objectives is having positive outcomes that can be seen in for instance: the progress made towards the establishment of a Unified Professional Association for Social Workers; the arrangement of a Social Service Skills Development Indaba in March 2007 (in line with government's ASGISA, JIPSA and National Skills Development Strategy); the separation of welfare and social security budgets and the slight increased allocation towards the former; the demarcation of the roles and responsibilities of social workers relative to the other social service professions; the work done towards determining accurate norms and standards for service delivery (DSD, 2007); and in the development of the Integrated Service Delivery Model. Government's recognition of social work as a scarce skill has been critical to opening room for discussion between the key parties and in mobilising some of the necessary resources. Continued improvement in this realm is critical for the implementation of recommendations in other areas.

With regards to the remuneration related recommendations, salary re-grading was undertaken in the DSD, SAPS and SADF, raising entry level salaries from Level 6 to Level 7. Other government departments have been slower to respond claiming budgetary constraints. For the NGO sector, where salaries were historically poorer than in government, certain provincial governments have increased subsidies, thus allowing for relative improvements. This move has not been widespread and in general there now exist an extremely large salary differential between social workers in government and NGO sectors. And despite slow movement on the part of government to implement structures for improved career pathing and specialization opportunities, as well as to action rural and scarce skills allowances, the inability of the majority of NGOs to improve on basic salaries is currently creating an exodus of social workers from the NGO to the government welfare sector. The positive consequences of government's salary increase include: improved recognition of the value of social workers to society; a contribution towards the improved image of social work as a profession; the reduction of incentives for social work graduates to leave for work abroad; and the filling of government social worker posts. Yet in the short term, the differential that this has created between government and the NGO sector also has a key negative consequence: efficient and effective national welfare service delivery through the more cost efficient NGO sector is undermined by high staff turnover and the inability to fill social worker vacancies. As the improvement of social worker salaries in the NGO sector is closely linked to the allocation of funding to the sector in general and to the determination of roles and responsibilities of the NGO versus the DSD and norms and standards for service delivery across the sector, the completion of the work related these latter points is critical. Overall, equalization of social worker salaries across the

government and NGO sectors needs to be effected with urgency, and thus the processes that are required to undertake this must be supported to speedy completion. The implementation of rural and scarce skills allowances will also be important within both sectors to ensure that social workers work in social and geographic areas that are less desirable, but desperately in need of services.

The image of social work as a profession has received a boost through government's declaration of it being a scarce skill, through the salary re-grading process, and through the provision of bursaries. All these have served to improve recruitment efforts, especially for the DSD. Conversely, in the face of overall shortages, recruitment efforts on the part of the NGO sector have deteriorated. While substantial improvements may only be realised through greatly increased numbers of social workers graduating from the national higher education system – with this in turn linked to a number of other factors – some immediate relief for the entire social welfare system is potentially available through the recruitment of South African qualified social workers from abroad. However, prior to such an effort bearing any fruit, it is critical that firstly, working conditions overall improve considerably, and secondly, that government focus its transformation agenda at the supply of social workers into the labour market rather than at recruitment efforts – choosing instead to value each individual social worker, regardless of their race, as a representative of a scarce skill profession.

The increased generation of social workers from the higher education system needs to be supported by both incentives to increase enrolment, as well as resources to promote success. The allocation of 190 student bursaries from the DSD through 2006 and 2007 to supplement those already in place from provinces, has been a welcome move, as have been the plans to increase the reach of this programme. Progress has also been made on formalising the requirement for continuous professional development (CPD): supporting research and a pilot have been completed and practitioners are being encouraged to continue compiling their CPD portfolios ahead of the formalisation of the SACSSP's CPD Policy.

Despite this progress, much still needs to be done towards supporting social worker education and training: At provincial level there needs to be more uniformity and transparency in the allocation of social work student bursaries, while all bursary allocations and their related work commitments need to be linked more clearly to the objective of an improved socio-geographical distribution of social workers nationally. The national DoE funding allocation for social work education needs urgent revision and support, as discussions appear to be making no progress in this regard. Similarly, while the SGB has recently been requested to work with the HWSETA towards having the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the professional social work qualification funded according to the internship programme, little tangible progress has been made, with the largely formally disadvantaged student body still having to carry a very high financial load. Finally, while welfare sector employers are unsure of, and feel unsupported in, the provision of Learnerships, increasing the numbers of social auxiliary workers to help support the current insufficient cadre of social workers, will be very difficult.

The improvement of general working conditions for social workers will go a long way towards improving the image and appeal of the profession and thus towards both the recruitment and retention of these critical skills. Much in this area will however depend on the development of accepted norms and standards for service delivery, and the



concomitant funding made available to support this. As such, this is an area that has seen least real impact from the focus on the profession, and in fact due to high staff turnover levels at NGOs has in fact seen a deterioration in some instances.

In essence, what is necessary to relieve the current situation of scarcity in respect of social workers in South Africa, is generally known to all key stakeholders. Furthermore, there is evidence that these key stakeholders have bought into the critical nature of these recommendations and despite some inconsistencies, are making certain strides towards their implementation. This is extremely positive, as failure to address the current shortages of social workers is likely to result in a collapse of the entire national welfare system, with consequent increased poverty and inequality; escalating social disintegration and related crime, violence and abuse; and unsustainable increases in the levels of demand for social security.

There are however three key areas in which the Department of Labour can play an important role in supporting the implementation of recommendations:

- The DoL can enter the negotiations on behalf of the social work profession, with the Department of Education around improved funding allocation of social work education at a national level. An improvement in funding from the current D4 category will allow for increased numbers of permanent and highly qualified staff to support increasing numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to convert access to success within minimal time.
- The DoL can work with the HWESTA, DSD, SACSSP, and ASSAWEI around ways to obtain funding for 4<sup>th</sup> year social work students in line with current internship funding. Such funding would not only provide financial support to all social work students, and thus complement the targeted bursary scheme, but is likely to lead to an increase in overall efficiency of graduations as those students who are forced to take time out to work and generate renewed funding would be encouraged to move directly through the system. Additionally, access to funding at this level would allow students especially from rural higher education institutions to access placements in more expensive urban areas, which would in turn provide them with a more rounded education through exposure to diverse social circumstances and welfare agencies.
- The DoL can work with the HWSETA and potential providers of the NQF Level 4 Learnership in Social Auxiliary Work around ways to reduce the burden of training provision to agencies that are already understaffed and under-funded. The provision of particularly the fundamental unit standards of literacy and numeracy appear to be a problem for these employers and alternative provision mechanisms for these need to be sought.

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