

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON FOUNDATION DAY
DOCTOR OF SCIENCE (SOCIAL SCIENCES) HONORIS CAUSA
RESPONSE BY DR DAVID N JONES



I am sincerely grateful to the University of London for this unexpected honour which is much appreciated. I am also immensely grateful to Rachel, my wife, and to my family for their support and understanding and to the professional associations (especially BASW, IFSW, COSW, IASSW) for enabling opportunities to serve, meet and learn from so many colleagues around the world.

It is perhaps appropriate that a social worker is honoured in this way by the University of London which was among the first in the world to support social work education and training. Goldsmiths College and Royal Holloway College offer well regarded social work courses but sadly, the LSE social work course (attended by my mother) closed in the 1990s.

My life and social work have been guided by a commitment to social justice, social service and respect for all, inspired by family example and Christian and humanitarian values. Social work faces up to the often-brutal realities as well as the joys of human relationships and cannot avoid difficult choices. Those choices must be informed by high quality education and training, alongside other professions, and guided by robust research involving those who are most affected. I have been privileged to engage with social workers and others in local communities and around the world and with people of differing faiths and none, all sharing the same commitment. I thank them for the friendship I have experienced and all that I have learnt from them.

There is too much hatred and too little understanding expressed in the world today, sometimes from the highest offices and from those who should know better. As people cohabiting an over-heating and crowded planet, we must keep searching for mutual understanding and respect for peoples and the environment. That is the hard graft of social work (to which I have made a contribution recognised today) which deserves support and respect.

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NOTE

The University of London was among the first in the world to support social work education and training. Probably the first 'social work' course in the UK was started in London in the 1890s and taken over by the London School of Economics in 1912. Former Prime Minister Clement Atlee was a tutor on the course from the start and published his book 'The Social Worker' in 1920.

Two of the key Charity Organisation Society leaders on the 1890 committee were Helen Bosanquet and Charles Loch. The quotations below demonstrate their views on education for social work:

'Perhaps the greatest public obstacle to getting a sound public opinion on matters of social policy lies in the general ignoring of the fact that scientific principles are as much involved in them as chemistry or architecture, or any other of the arts of life' (Helen Bosanquet of COS in 1902, quoted in Jones 1979: 76).

'..just as doctors have to be educated methodically, registered and certificated, [so] charity is the work of the social physician. It is in the interests of the community that it should not be entrusted to novices, or to dilettanti, or to quacks' (Charles Loch of COS in 1906, quoted in Jones 1979: 76).

See <https://sw100.ed.ac.uk/timeline> for a summary of the global history of social work education.