Articulation(s) Articulations

NumeRev

N° 3 | 2022
Pourquoi et en quoi le travail social est-il concerné par le changement climatique ? / Why and how is Social Work affected by climate change?

Green Social Work

Interview with Professor Lena Dominelli, PhD, AcSS, Chair in Social Work at the University of Stirling, Great-Britain

Lena DOMINELLI

Robert BERGOUGNAN

Édition électronique :
URL : https://articulations.numerev.com/articles/revue-3/614-green-social-work
DOI : numerev_1863
ISSN : 2728-834X
Date de publication : 30/11/2022

This submission is licensed under **CC BY-NC-ND** (Attribution - No commercial - No derivatives).

Pour **citer cette publication** : DOMINELLI, L., BERGOUGNAN, R. (2022) Green Social Work. *Articulations*, (3). https://doi.org/10.34745/numerev_1863

Interview conducted with Professor Lena Dominelli, by video conference, by Robert Bergougnan and two SW professionnels from ERASME- Institute of Social Work, in the framework of the Transnational RetSaSo project of the POCTEFA programme.

Mots-clés :
Green social work

R: Dear Lena Dominelli, thank you very much for agreeing to discuss with us this issue of the journal Articulation(s), dedicated to Green Social Work, which you initiated.

LD : Good morning, everyone. It's my pleasure to talk to you about Green Social Work and I really wish I were in Labelle France with you today instead of "La Belle Angleterre" je ne sais pas et même "La Belle Ecosse" qui a beaucoup de relations avec la France hein ! Depuis longtemps... Okay? Ca c'est mon Français pour le moment hey ! je parle en Anglais maintenant !

R : Can you tell us how you have constructed the "Green Social Work" approach and what it covers, in particular what characterises it in relation to the "Environmental Social Work" or the "Ecological Social Work" approaches.

LD : *I was at Durham University. I am now at Sterling University where I teach the MSC "on disaster interventions and humanitarian" aid where green social work is very important. I developed Green Social Work in Durham, England, at the University of Durham, where I was before I came to Sterling. At Durham University, I was the codirector of the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience and we worked on disasters all the time. And I worked with colleagues from the natural sciences, physics, chemists, biologists, seismologists, volcanologists, geographers, engineers, the whole lot.*

And I brought the community engagement part of the social sciences to that institute. And I was responsible for the programme on Vulnerability and Resilience, which of course is at the heart of social work. So this made me think about why was it that as a social worker, I had never worked on environmental issues, I had never worked on disasters, I had not been trained in these areas, but I learned very quickly. So I started learning from my natural science colleagues and they started learning from me. So Green Social Work came about because I was working in a transdisciplinary way, where I learned from them and they learned from me, which of course is part of our social work background, because we like to work in partnership with people, but we want to be equal to them.

Not them telling us what to do or us telling them what to do, but an egalitarian partnership. So we had that at Durham. I then developed course materials for green social work. But I kept thinking, why do I not like I knew about eco social work, I knew about environmental social work, but I did not like them. And it took me a couple of years to understand why not.

And there are two key reasons for this. One is that environmental social work is very good at telling social

workers, go and work in the environment. The environment is important, that's good, but it stops there. Ecological social work for too long focused only on the importance of the social. And my experience with my colleagues in Durham with the physical scientist was it wasn't enough to be only in the environment, it wasn't enough to be only in the social we had to bring the two together.

So I thought for a very long time, okay, I understand what I need to do, I understand the issues, but what am I going to call this new thing? Because I can't call it environmental social work. I can't call it Ecological Social Work because it has too much baggage that it is carrying. So that was when I thought, but it's Green Social Work because it is about protecting the Earth renewable energy. And what it does that neither Ecological Social Work or Environmental Social Work do is to unite the methods of production and the methods of consumption.

So it brings together how we produce goods and services for our everyday life and how we consume goods and services for our everyday life. Now, those of you who know me from before, like you Robert, will know I have always been a critic of neoliberalism and capitalism because it does not use wisely either labour or resources. So Green Social Work started off as a critique of the failure environmental Social Work and Ecological Social Work to address the issues that I saw as at the heart of that relationship between people and the environment. So because of that, it differs. So Green Social Work is about our relationship with nature, the environment, the animals, the plants, the environment itself, the minerals, everything that's in the Earth, on the Earth and us as people. So it's about that relationship between humanity, it's demands for resources to produce what we need, goods and services to live. And at the same time it has added which neither Environmental Social Work nor Ecological Social Work did a duty of care towards Mother Earth.

R : ***For you, this is part of a critical dynamic that is linked to radical social work, isn't it?***

LD : So we as human beings have an equation which is if we want the planet to care for us, to provide us with the goods that we need, the material resources we need to live, we have to take care of that planet. Now, this knowledge came to me because some of you would know I have Canadian ancestors, street, and my Canadianness has a very important population called the First Nations, who have said since I was little, we are custodians of the Earth. And as custodians of the Earth, we must take care of the Earth. So much so that we do not leave a footprint on the Earth. This isn't just carbon footprints, it's any kind of footprint. Because we must learn how to use the resources that the bounty of the Earth gives us so that they are there for many, many generations to come. And it says each one of us is responsible for seven generations. Not just one, but seven.

And that means that if we go on and on, it'll continue to eternity. So that is where the duty of care for our planet came into the philosophy of Green Social Work. So Green Social Work had to develop a new theory as well as a practice that was different from Ecological and Environmental social work that mean critiquing.

So I do not expect to be very popular with capitalists. So if you look at my Twitter feeds, there are plenty of comments about why Jeff Bezos is going into outer space? Or Elon Musk. He's also going into outer space that is taking away our oxygen. Because to get up there, they have to burn fossil fuels. That is taking away from the rest of us the right to breathe pure air, clean air, unpolluted air. And they are adding and we don't even know how much to the carbon footprint. So that is a very radical critique. So my radical social work credentials are still there in this.

R : ***You have done a lot of work on natural disasters in the South and the East, with colleagues from these regions, but what links can be made with our Western regions?***

LD : The other way in which Green social work differs is that it says all of us will experience disasters of some kind or another. They're just different disasters that affect us social. So in

the UK we have floods, we have droughts, we have terrorism, but we do not have earthquakes. In the Mediterranean countries, you have earthquakes.

So I've worked in earthquakes all the way into China for the last 30 years. I have worked on volcanoes in Indonesia, for example, because we don't have them here. But we all felt the Eyjafjöll , the Icelandic volcano, when it stopped us flying for a week. And it stopped me from flying, which was probably a good thing, but I didn't appreciate it at the time. But I decided that that fundamental analysis was necessary for social workers to understand why the people we work with, which are the poor, the marginalised, the dispossessed, people who have very little, the people who live in the global south, who feel the worst experiences of climate change, for example, even though they have consumed fossil fuels less than anybody else.

That is why we, as social workers, have to wonder what is driving disasters, what is driving these forces? And of course the driver is the need for a few people whom we call entrepreneurs, capitalists, rich people, elites, oligarchs, it doesn't matter. They're the same people who are interested only in using the Earth's resources as a means to an end. The means is the resources. The end is to make money, lots of profit for the few. In the course of doing that, they treat the Earth as a sink for dumping their garbage, everything they don't want. Which is why there is no reason why we do not. We could use fossil fuel if, and it's a big if, if we captured all the byproducts, the minerals that come out and go into the air to pollute our soil and our water, the gases that come out, use them for heat. There are many things we could do if we put our mind to it. But of course it's cheaper to just let everything go out into the air.

Somebody else picks up the tab, they pick it up in bad health, or they pick it up in not being able to eat clean, pure food or whatever. There are lots of other things I could go into, but we as social workers know, because we go into the homes where poor people live. And you know what the statistics tell us? Most toxic environments, I.E. , Polluted environments are inhabited by poor people.*

**Industrial Emissions*

That is also true in our countries. Where are the chemical factories based? In poor communities. Where are all the pollutants going through the ground in poor communities, the houses that poor people live in are right next to polluting industries. We could stop all that like (she try to clap her fingers without success) this, except that I broke my hand and I can't make sound. But you can trust about here. But anyway, it could be done. It costs money, but it could be done. We know we have the technology to do it. And I can tell you because I still keep in touch with my wonderful colleagues at Durham. I also have wonderful colleagues at Sterling. I'm very blessed. They have already worked out how to heat 60,000 homes. This is experimental still by using the water in coal mines, you know market capture closed all our coal mines and then started importing coal from Poland. So it's exporting the cost of fossil fuel, not getting rid of it.

But our wonderful colleagues, the scientists, the engineers in Durham have now got 60,000 homes getting hot water and heating from coal mines. The water in the coal mines because now they filled up with water. Yes, because if you don't pump them out, they fill up with water. The water is warm 15 deg c. So they can heat houses.

And that's amazing. Yeah, so that's why I'm saying now they do call themselves Green and they say, well, we're involving communities, Lena. Does that make us green social workers? I said absolutely. Anyone who works with communities is a green social worker.

R: ***After these introductory details, can you give a definition of green social work, and what values underpin it?***

LD : *So that is the definition of green social work is caring for the environment by linking together with how we consume and produce the goods and services we need for everyday life. Why is it important to*

social workers? Because we work with the people who are sick from the pollution caused by this method of production. And we also know that we are exporting our dirty work to other countries. And that means that we're involving the whole world in an unfit a model of production that is unfit for humanity and unfit for planet Earth.

So what about the values of green social work? I've told you what it is and what it does. It works with people to create a better environment in which to live. A better environment in which we can use the bounty of the Earth in ways that are most useful for us, but protect the future for seven generations for each one of us. So even in that room, because you're three different ages from what I can see, you have well over 21 generations just amongst the three of you.

So that goes about 1000 years into the future. So it's great, this model of green social work because it does continue if we use it wisely and do what I've been arguing for. I am glad to say that many, and I'll come back to this later, many people across the world are using green social work. And I was told by one group in New Zealand that they use the idea that the Earth has to be cared for to turn it into the Earth has rights. So they took a river that was very polluted, the Whaganui, something like that. It's a Maori term, I'm not sure exactly how to pronounce it, but I can send it to you in writing. They took that idea and turned it into "the river has the right to be clean". They took the company to court. They won. So the company had to clean up the river.

So you see, green social workers, they were community workers, because like me, I'm a community development worker. And that's probably why I have such strange, it seems, when I start off ideas and then everybody else starts following them. That was true with antiracist social work, feminist social work, globalisation and social work. It didn't matter, I was out there. But then suddenly everybody was doing it. So I hope everybody will also do the same with Green social Work. But they took it to a new level, as far as I'm concerned, by saying the Earth has rights. And now that model is being followed in many other places as well, which is fantastic. So what Green Social Work does is, first of all, it values the planet we live on. And I really worry about us going to Mars and everywhere else.

I think we have made such a mess of Planet Earth. Why do we need to go somewhere else to make more mess? Because the people who are going there, not you and I, who care about the Earth, they're the rich people who don't, who just see everything as a means. So now they can make more money. Why on earth do they need more money? Jeff Bezos as Amazon's, worth over a trillion dollars. I can't even imagine how much that is. It's so much. And he's the richest man on Earth, except Elon Musk is giving him. So it's a competition between Elton Musk and Jeff Bezos. They're fighting each other. Who's going to be the richest? You know what? What do you need all that money for? You're not going to be able to do much with it once you're gone.

So it raises huge ethical questions. And of course, social workers do raise ethical questions because for me, if I don't critique it, I am then committing an ethical fault as a social worker, because I see an injustice and I have to speak about it. I cannot just keep it to myself. So the values of social work are equality for everyone. Taking care of Planet Earth, using the resources we have sustainably in the way I've defined it, going into the future, not just one generation, but many, many, many generations, so that we become responsible for up to infinity. Infinity is where we stop, not before. And that's a different way of defining sustainability, that relationship between us and the Earth.

And the other thing that I think is very important as a value is to critique injustice. Now that builds on our values of social justice. And what say Green Social Work, which was the only one to argue this says, is that environmental justice, the right to a clean air, the right to unpolluted water, the right to unpolluted soil is part of our rights.

They are part of our social justice, human rights. So environmental justice is part of social justice. Now, the other two, ecological and environmental social work did not say that. But now they are beginning to take that on board, which means I'm beginning to have an effect, which is great. I don't need to be told,

yes, you were the first one that did this. I just want to see other people doing it because the earth for my son. And if he ever has any children, I would like them to also enjoy what I enjoyed as a child in the wilderness where I could just drink from the river and know it wasn't polluted. Cannot do that now. You wouldn't dare go into a river in England and drink the water from it without boiling it first. And I'm sure that there are many similar problems in France, but I leave those for you. So who can then become a green social worker? The answer is anyone who is doing social work.

*R :**Can you give us some examples to clarify this definition***

LD : In everyday life, I am a social worker. This is true. This has happened to me many years ago when I was a social worker and didn't even know green social work existed. But I obviously had some thoughts about it. I went to see a woman with four children in her home. I was a protection officer. And I went and the house was wreaking with mould because it was damp, so there was mould on the walls, everywhere and everything. I looked around the room, we were in the kitchen and I said, Why are your beds are those beds? There are just maps for the kids to play. It looked like beds to me. Why are your beds in the kitchen? Oh, she said, well, come and look at the rest of the house. It was a big house with three bedrooms, so I went to look at it. The ceiling had fallen down in the front room, so that meant upstairs was not safe. So she had to keep everyone in the one room that was safe. And I said to her, who owns this place? And she gave me the name of the landlord. And I said, have you complained? Yes. And nothing is being done? No. I said, okay, well, we will see about this.

So I started working with her. Now, this was not a social work issue. My job would have been to say, okay, I'll put you on the council housing list and you will be given a house, God knows when, 510 years from now. But no, I thought, this place is unfit because I had been a housing worker before this. As a community worker, this is unfit for human habitation.

She cannot stay here. I need to do something right now. So I got in touch with the landlord and I said to him what the situation was, and he said, oh. She's Exaggerating I said, Excuse me, I am here, I am talking to you from that place. So do not tell me that what I see is a fabrication of her imagination.

I want you to come down here right now, I said, because if you don't, I will take you to court and I will also go and talk to the media about what kind of a landlord you are. Now, thank God for my community action, because that's where I'm sure my ideas about what to do came from. More than the training I've had as a social worker or a probation officer, but I was able to use that knowledge about a physical environmental issue, housing, which we deal with all the time in social work. And most of the people that certainly in the UK that I have worked with, and most of the people who are poor have terrible housing in the UK, students. And I know my son and his son still have to live in terrible housing, but he's learned from his mum, so he knows how to ring up the agencies and get things done.

Because there is an assumption amongst rich people that poor people are too stupid, which they're not, they're quite bright, they just haven't had all the advantages that they've had and they don't know their rights, but actually they do, but they just say, nobody listens to us, so we can empower them. So empowering people is part of green social work. And in many ways, what I'm saying is nothing new to you. You know this as social workers who were trained without green social work. And so green social work builds on the skills, the knowledge that we have as social workers.

R : **So your approach to green social work leads to a broadening of the social worker's perspective and action?**

LD :It builds on the many roles we play, from gatekeepers to advocates to coordinators. I have 18 roles that I've identified that social workers play and that are useful in green social work. So anyone who is a social worker can be a green social worker. They just have to think about that relationship between the physical environment and the human environment. It's a relationship, so it affects everything, because without mothers, we wouldn't be here.So that's important.

Another one is, of course, why was I seeing these people? Well, there were child protection issues there, so I went there to investigate a child protection. Were the children being abused? Well, I found out, no, the children were not being abused, except by poverty, which was not the mother's fault, because she was trying to earn money, look after her kids, use her networks, which we would call social capital, to develop them.

But I made the difference as a green social worker because I didn't even have the title then. Looking back on that, that's where I think it started me thinking, because I felt so angry and incensed by the injustice of this woman paying her rent and still living in terrible accommodation. And yet I had gone there for child protection issue. And I said, which is where redefining the problems that we see is so important. I said, she cannot be living in this house and you asking her to look after her children and not abuse her when she is being abused and the family is being abused by a landlord who is not meeting the legal requirements upon him because he was supposed to fix the house, that he could get away without doing it because the woman could only complain to him. She didn't have the money to go and complain anywhere else and she couldn't do what I did, which was to threaten legal action. Now, part of it was a bluff because I don't know where would I have got the money for a lawyer, but I would have gone to the university law department and I would have asked for somebody to come and help me for free to help her. Yeah. So that's where our creativity as social workers is also part of green social workers. So we must be creative because the problems we encounter will be a little bit different all the time.

So I say to my students, I can only give you the principles of green social work, which are that it is holistic. You look at the whole picture, not just at one little area. So I was there for child protection, but suddenly I was looking at housing, I was looking at poverty, I was looking at finances, I was looking at everything. So it is really a system based approach, but it is holistic and it is radical because it is critical of the way we treat people, the way we make goods and services and the way we consume goods and services which are unequal. And some people don't have the basics of life and others can go to planet Mars without batting an eyelid.

So that's one example of the beginnings of green social work. Now, I can give you other examples of green social work

R: ***This sheds light on what the approach brings in a conflictual framework, what about cooperative aspects?***

LD :.I gave you the one of the people in New Zealand giving the river rights to be clean, that's green social work. Another example is in Argentina, people have provided support communities in the mountains with solar panels and solar power. Now, I am very critical of rich people who do not do their duty visa the rest of us, but I am not against business per se. So in the example in Argentina, social workers, community workers, NGOs, it was a small NGO in the local area working with social workers, bringing in business, like I did in the Jawscape project. I'll tell you about that in a minute in Durham. And bringing in business means that you will have access to the people who manufacture solar panels. So the NGO was able to find the money by asking for donations to buy every single person. There were 40,000 of them in this community. Every single one of them was given a solar panel for heating and lighting and a solar panel powered stove to cook.

What did that mean? No more work for women going out to get water and walking several hours a day just to get water. No more walking for women to get firewood for their cooking and their heating and their lighting, because now it just came from the sky in their homes. And guess what?

Each household was spared 2000 megatons of carbon dioxide, so they cleaned up their atmosphere by 800 megatons. Fantastic. We can all do that because all of us and now solar panels. I know this from my physical sciences in the University of Durham. You have photovoltaic solar panels. They work on light. And all of us, except if you live in the North Pole, then you'll only have light for six months of the year, so you have the storage problem. But you know what? If we all use solar power whenever we could, or wind

power, or ocean power whenever we could, we could then use that very sparingly fossil fuels when we needed it. Not all the time, because it's easy and cheap.

So we have to start thinking differently. And I think that's another thing social workers can do. Green social workers will lobby for us to think differently about how we live our everyday life, how we use the technology. Now, the one important thing I found this out represents social work in the meetings on climate change. And I've been going to them since 2010, making and giving the same message.

One, climate change is an issue for social workers. Two, we do things to try and change the balance of power between those who tell us, this is how you have to live your life, and those of us who offer us alternatives which are more earth and environmentally friendly. And I said, we, as green social workers, would be arguing for the environmentally friendly alternatives, so we can mobilise communities, business and everyone else together to change things. So I did this in the Jawscape project, and I have written this up in Green social work, but basically in the Jawscape project. I brought our local counsellors together, the Member of Parliament for Durham City, because Jawscape is in Durham.

I brought a company that was making solar panels, a company that was making special blinds to bring in heat in the winter and reflect heat in the summer and the community, because when I said to them, what is the most important problem for you? They all said fuel poverty. Now, we know in Europe as a whole, 30% of the people are poor. Fuel poor. This was before we just had these big heights this year. 30%. That is disgraceful for a rich continent like Europe. And to me, Europe includes the UK as well. I'm not a Brexit here.

Anyway, when I told them that what have you been doing about this? Well, first of all, they said, we did what we were told. We have all the benefits, we can't get any more help. We're just poor. So I thought, okay, I was a community worker. I started off 30 years ago when we did fuel poverty. Then we did benefits. And all this getting you to pay a little bit at a week instead of a big bill, that hasn't worked. So we have to think differently. So I was talking to my colleagues in the physical scientist with a civil engineer who was responsible for electric power, and I said to him, you know, I don't understand what's going on. So I was telling him how fed up I was as a social worker, that we still hadn't solved the problem that we'd known about for 30 years.

And he said, well, he said, it's very difficult, he said, because we lose 75% of our power as it goes down the wires, the further away it is from the source where you produce it. So I said to him, we must look at self sufficient energy, self sufficient communities. And all of a sudden, a light bulb went on in my head and I said to him, I know what we're going to do. I am going to figure out how we're going to get these people renewable energy in their community so that they can become fuel, self sufficient. And you are going to help me, because you know about the turbines, you know about the solar panels, you know about electricity. You are coming. The first thing we're going to do is do an exhibition to explain what we're trying to do to people. So we took students, the engineers, and we had a number of exhibitions. The kids were playing with the toys we made for them to see what happened when you used energy unwisely. And we helped people by monitoring their electricity usage.

And we found one woman that every day her electricity went up and down like this. And I thought I said sure. Do you have lots of people over for lunch or dinner? No, she said, It's just me. I said, well, look at your bill. It doesn't make any sense because we are able to analyse patterns, right, as social workers. So I called one of the engineers and I said, look at this pattern. This is ridiculous. Something is going on. So he said, okay, he checked all her electrical.

Do you know what the problem was? And it had been going on for years. The seal around her oven had gone, it had perished. So every time she cooked anything, she was heating the room, not the oven. So what did we do?

We put a new seal on her oven, her bill went down. So that's where we, as green social workers, we just

have to look at the problems we face all the time with social workers a little bit differently and we can do things. The company, eventually it went bust, but the company was willing to put solar panels up on every home free, provided that we created the energy that would pay for the solar panels. And it's a long story that I don't have time to go into, but those are some examples of Green social work and I think they're all doable. They will be able to be done anywhere else, including in France.

R: **On this subject, what would you have to say to French social workers?**

LD : You just have to account for the French context and the laws which will be different from the ones that I've had here to deal with. But the model is transferable. So what is my advice to French colleagues? Well, first of all, you can be Green social workers and I encourage you very strongly to do that. But of course I would.

I am a green social worker so I would like to see everybody being green social workers. But beyond that, I want to say yes, you can do it. Why can you do it? One, because you already have the skills you need. Green Social Work builds on the bedrock skills we have as social workers communication skills, risk assessment skills, analytical skills, knowledge base, knowledge of our communities, knowledge of power and how it operates, knowledge of our society and the fact that we can do research if we need to find answers to questions we don't know the answers to, we know how to go about finding answers to them.

As I have shown you. When I couldn't find out the answers in Green social Work, I went to my colleagues until they helped me find the answer if they didn't know the answers at the time. So you can do all that. The other thing that you can also do, which is nothing new for social workers, is that you can lobby, you can coordinate, you can advocate, you can mobilise communities, you can do so many things. The only thing that's new that Green social Work has introduced for social workers to learn about, it's not difficult, but you have to learn about it is to translate scientific knowledge into local knowledge that people understand and to get dialogue going between the scientists who like to work top down and social workers who like to work bottom up. So I now call this the top down and bottom up model is two way communication and it becomes horizontal. So we're talking to each other. Valuing so this is another important addition. We have to get scientists who value the knowledge of communities because they do know a lot about their lives as we know. We call them experts and live experienced.

Yeah, so they have knowledge. And I will give you my last example because I think this will work for you too. In my Green social Workbook I have charts that make it easy to understand and I can send you some of these charts so you can share them with the people. I will write an article for you so that these charts will be there for people to use. But I talk about two way dialogue, which is about getting the physical scientists to share their knowledge in a way that people can understand.

R: ***According to you, social workers act as translators and co-producers of social transformations, can you specify this?***

And we act as translators for those physical scientists because they're actually and I was surprised they're scared to talk to people. We do it so naturally, we don't even think about it, that they say. And I remember when I first went with my Seismology friends in Greece, I said, okay, now we're going to go. Oh, no, you go and do that. You're the social scientist. I said, no, you're coming with me. I had to come with you and learn how to recognise earthquake faults, which I do. I even discovered one for them because I said, Well, I learned. You taught me. So of course, you're the best seismologist in the world. Why wouldn't I learn from you? You can come and learn from me. So they had to come and learn from me. And they watched me squat down and talked to people who were washing clothes and all the rest of it, getting on with their everyday life. And I said, yeah, you just carry on.

We'll talk to you while you're talking and working. So they had to learn about that. But I was saying to them, this is two way dialogue. We talk. We can be translators for you to help you get that dialogue going, but you have to talk, too. And the other thing is, Coproduction, if we work together, we will find new solution. And this is the last example of Green social work being done by someone who is a civil engineer.

He was my boss in Durham at the Institute because he was the chief executive officer, I was a co director, and he was brilliant. He fought to get me there because I did not want to go. I said, no, I got too much to do.

Social media, leave me alone. And my then headed department knew me very well. They knew what to tell me that made me say, no, I will come and do it. No, you're not going to have that other person do it because they'd make a mess of it. So I went and we started talking about community engagement, coproductions participatory action research, which are really essential in us as social workers, finding out what's going on.

Now, we all know this because we do this in our individual casework, but now I'm saying we've got to do it on the basis because of all the important things that are going on at community level, because most disasters are not individual ones, they're collective ones, which require collective knowledge and collective sharing of resources to resolve. So there was a place called Pickering in North Yorkshire, in England, which flooded every year, and he was told to go and fix it, stop this happening, because it's not good for the people of Pickering, which of course it isn't. And. So he went there with his hat, as a civil engineer, and he said to the people I told him to talk to the people. So he talked to the people and he said, I'm here, this is what I want to do.

Explained what he was going to do in the middle of town to build flood defences. And apparently an old man,(I wasn't there, but he obviously listened to me and he's written it up. Now, it's called Doing Flood Science Differently by Lane, and I will send you the references for that).said, what do you mean this won't work? (Because of course, the science was perfect.)

And he said, come with me and I'll show you what will work. So the whole group of people from the community, I don't know how many they were, they all walked up to the top of the mountain where the river began. And he said, the resident said, you need to do and explain what he wanted doing. And my boss listened to him, his name is Stuart Lane. He said, yes, that would work, except for one thing that's wrong, because of course he knew the physics, the ordinary people did not.

So he said, we have to do this and this and then it will work. He said, okay, go ahead. So the two of them, the residents and the expert, got together, dialogue, came up with a new solution that neither one had thought of before. And guess what? There has been, and I hope I'm not so touch wood, I'm not wishing them any ill vibes.

So all positive vibes to Pickering in North Yorkshire, which is not that far from Durham, and they've had no floods since then because a new solution was found, which is green. It hasn't destroyed I've been there since the work was done. It hasn't destroyed the countryside, it hasn't destroyed and made ugly. I don't know if you've seen them in cities, but flood barriers, they do look very ugly, but to me they do. And I've seen them all over England because they keep going every time there's a flood to help and then go to look at what is the solution that has been used, because, unfortunately, this is still a job for us to do.

Green social workers are not listened to by government unless they live in your community and you're working with them. It hasn't caught on politically, globally, and it must, because we do have solutions. And I can only urge you, people of France, march on with green social work. Thank you very much. That's it.

R: Thanks for all Lena.