

Opinion

from Prof. Dr Siyka Chavdarova – Kostova

member of scientific jury in a concurs for holding the academic position of „professor“ in a professional field 3.4. Social activities (Methods of social work, Gerontological social work), announced by Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” in the State Gazette, No105/11.12.2020

The only candidate in the competition is assoc. prof. Ginka Mehandzhiyska, PhD. Her teaching experience is entirely linked with the Faculty of Pedagogy at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The main subjects that she teaches are in the profile of the competition: Methods of social work, Gerontological social work, Techniques of interviewing in social work, Supervision in social work and others. Her research and project work are also directly related to her publishing and teaching work. She has been leader of projects with topics: "Psychosocial support in gerontological social work", "Supervision in gerontological social work", "The social worker, the client, the environment - in the focus of social services methodologies", "Psychosocial interventions in clinical social work". She is a member of the editorial boards of the Annual of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", book Social activities and magazine “Social Work”. She has two successfully defended doctoral students on the issue of social work methods. The numerous expert participations in the field of social work emphasize the evaluation of her competence both nationally (e.g. Ministry of labor and social policy, National agency for evaluation and accreditation, etc.), as well as at local (municipal) level.

In the publications of assoc. prof. Dr. G. Mehandzhiyska several main accents are highlighted. They outline her research interests and are the basis for outlining relevant contributions:

- *Opportunities and limitations of individualization in social work.* The leading publication here is the monograph "Social work with individual

clients" /2019/, where main aspects of the application of the individual approach in social work are presented in details. The empirical research that was realized provokes the interest. It shows the real application of individualized social work, reflecting the attitude of the respondents to advantages, but also barriers in this direction.

- *Methods of social work.* The monograph "On the nature and classification of methods of social work" /2021/ is a valuable source of information on different, but also similar in certain respects, points of view regarding the attempts to systematize the methods of social work. The meta-analysis made at the end of the book impresses with its depth and focus on a comprehensive interpretation of the problem for the classifications of methods of social work. The publication "Methodology of home visits in social work" /2020/ is not only extremely useful for the education of students, but also has a clear practical orientation, visible in its name as a "study and practical manual". It fills an obvious gap in the methodical literature related to the main specifics of the home visits. Other publications in this field are: "Preferences and orientations of students in social work to the methods and forms of professional practice" /2021/; "Methodical orientations of social workers according to the preferred ways of practicing" /2020/; "Methods of social work - possibilities for support and changes" /2020/, "The role of the translator in social work with refugees and migrants - methodical and psychosocial perspective" /2020/, "Monitoring in social work by case" /2016/, "Individual plans in social work - methodical issues" /2015/; "Negotiating with clients in social work" /2014/, "Social work on case - reconceptualization of traditional understandings in a modern applied perspective" /2013/, "Approaches and interventions in social work with families" /2013/, "Methods of social work in the field of mental health"/2011/.
- *Methodological dimensions of social work.* In this category these publications may be included: "Social support in personality-centered social

work" /2017/, "The social worker and the client – the helping relationships" /2016/; "The client and his environment - the supportive environment in the institutions for social services" /2016/.

- *Gerontological social work*. Through a number of publications in Bulgarian and English - articles and studies, a multifaceted presentation of the main dimensions of social work with the elderly people was made: "Social work education and the myths of old age" /2020/, "Social adaptation and independent life - connection and evaluation in gerontological social work" /2019/, "New technologies and methods of gerontological social work" /2019/, "Psychosocial aspects of occupational and recreational therapy in the elderly" /2017/, "Culture of successful aging - formation of active adults through the integration of gerontological and pedagogical knowledge" /2016/, "Loneliness and life satisfaction in the elderly users of social services" /2015/, "Clinical supervision in gerontological social work: a reflection of practice in Bulgaria" /2015/, "Elder abuse and neglect – trends and practices in Bulgarian social work" /2015/, "Clients needs in gerontological social work" /2015/, "The method of autobiographical groups in gerontological social work" /2015/, "Psychosocial aspects of satisfaction with the state of health of elderly people" /2015/, "Depression and social functioning in the elderly users of social services" /2014/, "Individual plans in gerontological social work" /2014/, "Functional autonomy in the elderly age - assessment and planning of support and care" /2013/, "Integration of gerontological knowledge in social work" /2013/, "Models of education and supervision in the field of gerontological social work" /2012/, "Steps toward others: intervention for activity and cohesion in a group of Older people" /2012/, "Modeling of competence in gerontological social work in the process of university education" /2012/, "Psychosocial support in a group of elderly people" /2012/, "Occupational and entertaining therapy in gerontological practice" /2011/.

- *Clinical social work* The book "Psychosocial occupational and recreational therapy in clinical social work" /2018/ is a valuable contribution as presenting the main characteristics of specific interventions in clinical social work in the context of labor activity and recreation. It is a useful source of information not only for professionals in the field of social work, but also for educators who are engaged in activities with such direction. Other publications in this field are: "Psychosocial occupational therapy within the sphere of interventions, applied in clinical social work" /2018 /, "How clinical social work helps: areas and methods of intervention" /2017/.

The texts, developed by assoc. prof. Dr. G. Mehandjiyska are characterized by logic, consistency, strict adherence to the requirements of scientific style, terminological correctness. At the same time, they are extremely readable and do not bother with overcrowding or striving for scientificity, which is a very valuable their quality. Their usefulness for professionals in the field of social work is undoubted, incl. for the purposes of the training of social workers and in academic disciplines studied by students from other professional fields, with educational content related in one or another aspect to the developed problem areas.

The aspiration of assoc. prof. Dr. G. Mehandzhiyska to publish not only in Bulgarian, but also in other languages - English, Polish, Czech, Russian, in foreign editions, which makes more accessible for users using the respective languages the results of her researches, deserves attention.

The reference for the citations convincingly illustrates the recognizability of assoc. prof. Dr. G. Mehandjiyska as a specialist in the researched and taught by her problems of social work.

Conclusion:

The documents submitted in connection with the competition show compliance with the minimal national requirements for holding the academic position of "professor".

The scientific production of assoc. prof. Dr. G. Mehandzhiyska presented for the purposes of the competition, her research activity, expert activity, citations of the publications are convincing proofs that her candidacy meets the requirements for the academic position of "professor". That is why I strongly support the award of the academic position of professor on PF 3.4. Social activities (Methods of social work, Gerontological social work) to assoc. prof. Dr. Ginka Mehandjiyska.

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Sofia

Signature:

/prof. Dr S. Chavdarova-Kostova/