

## **REVIEW**

### **of the works of ASSOC. DR. GINKA ANDONOVA MECHANDZHIYSKA**

participant in a competition for "professor", field of higher education 3.  
Social, economic and legal sciences, by professional field 3.4. Social activities  
(Methods of social work, Gerontological social work),  
announced in SG no. 105 / 11.12.2020

Prepared by: Prof. Krasimira PETROVA Koleva-Mineva

#### **1. Information about the competition.**

The competition was announced by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the needs of the Department of Social Work at the Faculty of Pedagogy - RD - 38-8 / 07.012021. During the preparation of the review of the competition, the main documents complying with the requirements of the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Regulations of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". There are no violations in the competition procedure. One candidate participates in the competition - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Andonova Mehandzhiyska, a lecturer in the same department. The reference for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under art. 2b of ZRASRB for holding the academic position "Professor" scores 1960.35 points, which significantly exceeds the required minimum. This report has been prepared precisely, in detail and with the necessary evidence - documents 10.C, 12, 13.

#### **2. Information about the candidate.**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Mehandjiiska was born on March 4, 1970. In 1993 graduated as a Master of Pedagogy at Sofia University, and in 1997. - Master of Psychology at the same university. In 2004 became a Doctor of Theory of

Education and Didactics, and in 2009. - Associate Professor of Theory of Education and Didactics / Methods of social work and supervision in social work /. English, French and Russian, as well as computer skills are indicated in varying degrees of proficiency. Her teaching work at Sofia University began in 1996 as a full-time doctoral student, part-time lecturer, assistant, senior assistant, chief assistant and associate professor in 2009. and currently / references from Sofia University /. After the doctorate he participated in 11 national and international research and applied projects, of which he was the leader of 4 of them. Their focus is thematically related to her teaching and research work. He is a member of a number of prestigious organizations - Association "Child Protection", the Bulgarian Organization for Education and Social Work, SOS - Children's Villages, a member of the editorial boards - the magazine "Social Work", Yearbook of Sofia University - Book of Social Activities, has two defended doctoral students, participates in research laboratories. Numerous expert participations in state institutions, municipal structures, social service establishments, non-governmental organizations such as expert, consultant, supervisor, lecturer, incl. and to the MLSP. Also mentioned in the CV is mobility abroad, which builds on her teaching, research and expert work. She is the author of over 90 publications.

### **3. Description and evaluation of scientific papers.**

The candidate in the competition for professor presents a sufficient list of scientific papers from almost all scientific genres, containing: one habilitation monograph, second monograph, 3 teaching and methodical aids - 1 of them in co-authorship, 3 chapters of books - 1 of them in a foreign language. language, 33 studies, articles and reports, 1 of which is in a referenced and indexed edition, and 8 - in a foreign language. Her participations in scientific forums are numerous - conferences, round tables, public presentations and rich review activity. I can only note that the total volume of publications of Assoc. Prof.

Mehandzhiyska and impressive - over 90, the author also has a translation activity.

The volume of scientific production is only one of the criteria for evaluating the scientific achievements of the candidate. It is important to emphasize that these developments cover specifically the issues of the announced competition for a professor, namely - Methods of social work and Gerontological social work. It should be noted that the publications of Assoc. Prof. Mehandjiiska include models, methodologies, technologies with high readiness for implementation and already implemented ones. The candidate has been quoted more than 161 times, which is a serious testament to her popularity. The citations highlight those that are in referenced and indexed editions, which bring her 67.5 points on the minimum national requirements of a total of 930 submitted for this competition.

**"Social work with individual clients"**. S., University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski ", 2019, 311 pages, ISBN-978-954-07-4724-8 is a monograph with the character of a habilitation thesis. Its relevance and contribution to the theoretical and practical social work is indisputable, as individual social work is the main form of social assistance. The idea of this book is to systematize and present the main theoretical and methodological dimensions of the practice of basic methods of social work with individual clients, linking them with the concept and methodology of individualization in the helping process and provide empirical evidence for practical manifestations and relationships of individualized support. in the real helping process. And this idea is perfectly realized in the trinity of theory / first chapter /, methodology / second chapter / and practice / third chapter /. This guarantees the quality of any scientific work.

In the first part the main theoretical bases of social work with an individual case are conceptualized, and the main theoretical array of various

models for individual social work is successfully analyzed - psychological, medical, personality-centered, etc. Here the contribution is in the eclectic approach to the client, based on a wide base of models, methods, techniques, technologies, tailored to the client's needs for help and support. Individualization is set as a basic requirement for the helper and the client's right to be provided in the process of interaction, with his active participation.

The second part is a well-structured presentation of methods, models, approaches and techniques, which is far from just an overview, but is an in-depth reading and analysis of existing in theory and practice models for individual work with clients. This reading is marked by a personal attitude to the issue, with care for the client, with commitment and detailing of each component of the work on a case, refracted through the author's idea of individualization. Impressive is the excellent knowledge of the models for social work on an individual case, the emphasis on those elements of the stages that allow deepening the individual approach to the client, combined with the perspective of a comprehensive approach and integrative trends in social work.

This part can be defined as bearing for the overall monograph, if it was not equal to the third part, which is a well-organized and implemented empirical study focusing on the regulatory environment in which the individual client and the practice of individualization of social work point of social workers - 256 people from social services, child protection and social assistance.

The conclusions and summaries are in the direction of the fact that social workers know, use individualization as an approach, they recognize themselves as individualizing the helping process, but are also aware of the limitations and barriers arising on the one hand, from the very features and characteristics on the other hand - from purely objective parameters, such as the large number of cases, lack of time, etc.

I would refer this monograph to the part of the announced competition related to the Methods of Social Work. It includes both chapters from the book **"The social worker, the client, the environment - in the focus of the methodology of social services"** / co-authored with Em. Tsenova, T. Milusheva, T. Manasieva /, namely: "The social worker and the client - the helpers relations", as well as "The client and his environment - the supportive environment in social service institutions." The first work, which is the first chapter in the book, presents the essence of the relationship "client-helper", based on the principles of independence, confidence, independence, sense of self-worth and importance; the topic of boundaries in relationships and relationships with clients, but the most valuable in it are the methodological guidelines for building full-fledged working relationships "social worker-client". In the last chapter of the book, the material of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Mehandjiiska, based on an in-depth analysis of the existing features of the helping environment in social services, offers models and tools for assessing the quality of social climate and supportive environment in them. in addition to measurement, they can also serve as a kind of standard for what the environment should be in order to facilitate the adaptation of the user and to support the achievement of the goals of individual work in each case.

The third monograph **"On the nature and classifications of methods of social work"** / 2021 / can be defined as an indispensable publication - anyone who teaches Methods of social work has encountered the difficulty of determining the nature of a method and its correlation to other methods. The monographic work impresses in several aspects: first, the author defends the idea of an interdisciplinary approach in the interpretation of methods in social theory and practice, without ceasing to look for the specifics that are characteristic of social work; secondly, the conceptualizations of the methods of social work proposed in the second chapter bring the necessary clarity about

their essence, participation in the helping process, placed from the position of the helper, the client, etc., , which presents different classifications of methods in social work - comprehensively, competently - from the standpoint of the classification approach, clarification of classification criteria, identification of relationships, delineation of the classification scheme. The fourth chapter can be defined as an indisputable contribution, as 7 models were evaluated according to different criteria, in order to enrich the practical training of future and current social workers.

**"Methodology of home visits in social work"** / 2020 / is defined by the author as a textbook and practical tool and it has the character of such. It is divided into 4 logically related chapters and its main merits can be defined as follows: it is aimed at the needs of students and professionals in the field of helping professions and in particular - to social workers who visit homes, collect information, prepare assessments, provide care and support, perform interventions and monitoring in the home environment of their clients. Apart from the nature and status of home visits, the principles of safe social work in the home environment, a well-deserved appreciation can be given for the procedure and methodological guidelines for conducting home visits, reflected in Chapter Four and in the Annexes.

Articles and studies with numbers № 9, 13, 16, 23, 25, 34, 35 with similar content in the direction Methods of social work are discussed, in which more specific problems related to the methods of social work with aspects of negotiation are considered, the development of individual plans in social practice, monitoring of social work on a case-by-case basis, social work with families, etc., which not only supplement, but also represent independent valuable publications in the interpreted issues.

Regarding Gerontological social work, we can focus on many of the publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Mehandjiiska. The Elder abuse and

neglect-trends and practices in Bulgarian social work, published in 2015, presents the main trends in the Bulgarian practice of the work of social institutions in connection with the protection of elderly people - victims of violence and abuse. I define this chapter of the book as significant, as very rarely are problems related to the abuse of the elderly in the world, and in particular - in the Bulgarian context. Contributions to the development are the outlined methodological and practical guidelines for improving the methodology for action on prevention and assistance in cases of violence and abuse. This chapter of the book presents Assoc. Prof. Dr. G. Mehandjiiska as a researcher who has far exceeded the limitations of university teaching and research work, and as a citizen and expert in a slightly interpreted issue.

The other publications in the field of gerontological social work can be conditionally divided into two subspheres.

One area concerns the general psycho-social and socio-pedagogical problems of the elderly, including the problem of depression, autonomy, education, adaptation to independent living, successful aging, loneliness and satisfaction, as common in this publications is, in addition to the competent presentation of the issue, and the welfare and understanding of a little studied age period. To this subfield I include articles, studies and reports with numbers 10, 11, 12, 18, 26, 27,29, 31. Among them are presented empirical studies on samples and cases of users of social services. Both adapted and author's tools, correlation and regression analysis and other methods are used to reach scientific data and conclusions. These results expand the understanding of the influences and dependencies in the spectrum of psychosocial functioning of the elderly and on this basis - show methodological guidelines for providing social services and conducting social work based on empirically proven features of user functioning in the context. of the laws of aging and old age.

The other sub-direction can be called methodical, as it concerns problems related to psychosocial support, techniques and methods of working with older people, groups for psychosocial support with older clients, work models that are more general issues, but also such, which have a specific focus - the application of the autobiographical method, the preparation of individual plans for the elderly, aspects of working with an individual case, with group work, etc. These are articles, studies and reports with numbers № 19, 24, 28, 30, 321 37, 381 39, 40, 41.

In summary, I recommend to Assoc. Prof. Dr. G. Mehandzhiyska to develop a second doctoral dissertation on the problems of gerontological social work. Understanding and preparing it in this direction would be very useful for theory and practice. There is also a third area of interest of Assoc. Prof. Dr. G. Mehandzhiyska, which I can generally define as Clinical social work.

One of the publications on the issues addressed is the book "**Psychosocial occupational and recreational therapy in clinical social work**" / 2018 /. This book, defined by the author as a methodological manual, has monographic components that relate to the disclosure of the theoretical foundations of occupational and recreational therapy in clinical cases of social work, as well as in-depth analysis of current practices in this direction, and even more - in the preparation of models, techniques and programs in specialized clinical practice with people with mental retardation, dementia, etc. The idea of the need for a comprehensive approach, teamwork and specialized training of assistants in clinical social practice is protected.

"**Community Life - A Handbook for Professionals in Organizations for Psychosocial Rehabilitation**" / 2011 / is the next publication that can be related to this area of research by Assoc. Prof. Dr. G. Mehandzhiyska. Part two, entitled in the Handbook "Methods of social work in the field of mental health" presents the nature and system-structural classification of methods of social



work, with emphasis on case work, aspects of the methodology of assessment, planning and interventions with individuals, families and groups. Methods for individual and family counseling are also presented, as well as other methods for interaction with clients, methodical programs for working with relatives of the users, programs for group work. The idea of this handbook is to enrich the knowledge and further develop the skills of those helping to work with people with mental disorders. This intention is perfectly realized - not only in terms of content, but also as accessibility of the scientific language, clarity of speech and competent presence of the author. The problems of studies, articles and reports with numbers № 17, 20, 21, 22, 36 are similar, which concern some aspects of clinical social practice, but also look for other fields of applied activity in social work - the problems of refugees and migrants; purpose, possibilities of the specialized electronic scientific periodicals in the field of social work.

**Summary of the description and analysis of scientific works** - Assoc. Prof. Dr. G. Mehandzhiyska presents a sufficiently rich and in-depth publication, which gives me reason to define it as a modern, valuable, mature scientist, with a significant contribution to the development of social work as a theory, methodology, practice, as well as gerontological social work.

#### **4. Scientific contributions.**

I fully accept the precisely formulated contributions of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Mehandjiiska and comment on them as follows:

##### I. Scientific and theoretical contributions:

1. Conceptualization of the essence, content and methodology of social work from the standpoint of analyzing various theories, approaches and models. In this sense, the contribution is in the argumentation of the status of social work as a profession with its own professional image and identity.

2. Scientific definition and classification development of the methods of social work through meta-analysis of various explanatory theories, which complements and develops their characteristics and allows the construction of working, current and modern models in their application, while allowing to delineate the boundaries of modern social work.

3. Comprehension, enrichment and conceptualization of theories about the nature, patterns and development of gerontological social work as an independent part of the social sciences with its own status, methodology, approaches, principles.

## II. Methodological contributions:

1. Field-tested models for social work with adult clients, adaptable to the various fields of social services - institutional and community services.

2. Essential and meaningful definition of the methods in social work, which allows their adequate application, both in the scientific and in the practical work of the assisting specialists.

3. Creation of programs, models, techniques, technologies for working with clients in a situation of risk / need /, which are verified in the practical social work and can be easily transferred to different areas in the field of social practice.

4. Development of many methodological approaches, models, programs, technologies and techniques for optimal interaction between clients and helpers, which should be used not only by practicing social workers, but also are a good basis for training students, pedagogues, social workers, psychologists.

## III. Practical and practical contributions:

1. Accumulated research array of data on the psychosocial dimensions of status and functioning in the elderly and senile. Organized and conducted

experimental research with the target age group, on the one hand, can be useful for specialists, and on the other - to be a model for future similar research.

2. A methodological product has been created to support practicing social workers in terms of their joint activities in a team with occupational therapists in the field of social services, which allows them to provide methodological knowledge with occupational therapy, applied tools, program models, etc., optimizing their activity.

3. The author's methodological developments support the idea of the integrative paradigm and the complex-oriented practice of social work, which leads to scientific conceptualization of the essence of social work, to rethinking the existing normative and applied models in social practice.

### **5. Teaching work.**

The teaching work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Mehandzhiyska corresponds to the announced competition - in Bachelor's degree she leads Methods of social work, Gerontological social work, Techniques of interviewing in social work, Supervision in social work, Social work with community, Field practice, Workshop on methods of social work. He teaches the following subjects at the Master's Degree: Methods of Social Work, Supervision in Social Work, Supervision in Social Work with Children and Families, Interviewing Techniques for Children with Deviant Behavior, Social Work with a Group and Group Therapy, Social Work with the Unemployed 6 postgraduate qualification courses are also indicated. Her teaching experience and many years of practical, advisory and social work make her a competent, innovative and desirable lecturer. There is an equality between research, teaching and expert work, which is a sign of a mature, modern and competitive scientist.

## **6. Notes and recommendations.**

My acquaintance with the overall scientific and academic activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Mehandzhiyska gives me grounds for recommendations related to deepening her research and developing a second dissertation for a scientific degree, for which she has extensive experience, research capacity and future as one established and successful scientist. This could be realized with the scientific guidance of graduates, postgraduates and doctoral students, which is an integral part of her teaching and research work.

## **7. Conclusion.**

Expressing my excellent impression of the overall scientific and applied achievements of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Andonova Mehandzhiyska, I appreciate the relevance, significance of the developments, I support her candidacy for professor at Sofia University "St. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI", **I voted positively and recommended** to the Scientific Jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy **to award the title “Professor”** in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field 3.4. Social activities / Methods of social work, Gerontological social work /.

March 23, 2021  
Veliko Tarnovo

Signature: /...../  
/prof. Kr.Petrova /