

## **OPINION**

From Prof. Dr. Minko Stoev Hadzhyiski

For Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Lyubenova Cholakova

Participant in a competition for acquiring the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy / Social Pedagogy /, Published in the State Gazette No. 21 / 15.03.1922, and Rector's Order RD 2117 / 03.05.1922, for the needs of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "- Sofia.

### **1. Contest data**

The competition for associate professor in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy / Social pedagogy / for the needs of the Faculty of Sciences, Education and Arts / at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ".

One candidate participates in the competition and all the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act and the ACAP are met. No irregularities were found during the procedure.

### **2. Details of the candidate.**

Associate Professor Dr. Maya Lyubenova Cholakova was born on May 17, 1966. He graduated in 1988 with a master's degree in Special Pedagogy. He obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in pedagogy after successfully defending a dissertation on "Socio-pedagogical dimensions of learning potential for children from ethnic and minority communities" in 2003.

Associate Professor Dr. Maya Lyubenova Cholakova has many additional qualifications and specialized training, certified by the relevant diplomas and certificates.

Her professional activity began in 1988. as an educator. From 1992 to 1999 was an assistant and senior assistant at SWU "Neofit Rilski" Blagoevgrad. From 1999 to 2006 is an inspector at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski ", and from 2005-2009 he was Director of the Directorate for Ethnic and Demographic Issues in the Council of Ministers. Since 2009 he has been a full-time associate professor at SWU "N. Rilski ".

### **3. Description of scientific works.**

In the competition for associate professor participates with 1 pc. monograph - habilitation thesis, 1pc. book based on a defended dissertation, 13 pcs. articles and reports in refereed, indexed editions, / including those in world-famous databases / and 2 pcs. studios. As a volume and in terms of content to the topic of the announced competition, they fully correspond to the application for associate professor of social pedagogy. Apart from the list of papers submitted for review, the candidate has an impressive number of publications that complement the idea of her scientific productivity.

The monograph "Cultural Humility" is presented as a habilitation thesis. It is an in-depth attempt at an innovative view in the discourse of social assistance. Humility as an ethical-philosophical, theological and value-cultural phenomenon is shown as a possible and necessary for the success of social work attitude between and to cultural communities and individuals. Its substantive emphasis on self-awareness and self-evaluation is a prerequisite in itself for the necessary intercultural orientation, necessary for effective social pedagogy and activity. The author advocates this idea by referring to various interpretations of humility -

from Christian virtue to psychological disposition. Cultural humility is not just a construct that is available or not. According to the author's view, it is something that is cultivated in training and practice. His ability is successfully illustrated with an empirical study of his projection in educational activities and the training of specialists in social pedagogy and social work. In general, work promotes the idea of cultural humility, as a value and virtue, to be realized in helping professions. This expands and deepens the existing notion of modern social pedagogy in a new discourse.

The second book "Potential for learning in children from minority communities" is a further development of research ideas defended in her dissertation from 2003. It is obvious that the candidate's interest in the problems of children from minorities studying in general or special schools is lasting. This is evidenced by the fact that she has several separate publications in this field. Consistently and scientifically argued, the author considers this extremely acute problem for education and society. By launching her original views on the mismatch between the goals and approaches of the traditional education system and the specific ethnocultural and mental characteristics of some minority children, she affirmed the idea of a holistic approach that takes into account the living conditions and social inclusion of their families. One of the solutions to the problem of educating these children is the correct diagnosis, which goes beyond the stigmatizing medical model and goes far beyond the psychological testing of intelligence. The empirical research in the last chapter of the book is not an illustration of a launched model. The analysis of the obtained data gives an opportunity to improve the practice through socio-pedagogical methods.

The idea of the scientific and creative potential and realization of the candidate is formed by the articles, studies and reports. They are focused on different, significant and current areas of social pedagogy and support activities. In terms of content, they support and further develop innovative author's ideas

and practical views. Indirect proof of their scientific viability are the publications in which they were published.

#### **4. Contributions**

- Theoretically, the analysis of cultural humility and its reading in the field of pedagogical, humanities and social sciences is an indisputable contribution.

- Theoretical contribution is the enrichment of social and socio-pedagogical paradigms with values and ethical ideas.

- Research contributions are seen in the analysis of good practices in distance learning and the methodology for determining the learning potential of problem children from minority communities.

- In practical terms, the most significant contribution is related to the promotion of cultural humility by adapting the American experience in teaching students in social pedagogy and social activities.

#### **5. Scientometrics**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Cholakova has fulfilled the indicators in all groups according to the requirements of ZRASRB with a total number of 515 points.

#### **6. Teaching activity**

As can be seen from the biography, her teaching career so far is as follows:

Lecture courses in a bachelor's program in a professional field 3.4. Social activities:

Social Pedagogy; Social work with ethnocultural communities; Social work with children; Pedagogy and habilitation for children with disabilities; Anti-oppressive social work; Social work with refugees and migrants.

Lecture courses in master's programs in a professional field 3.4. Social activities:

Methodology and methods of research in social work; Social integration of ethnocultural communities; Mediation in conflict resolution.

Lecture course in the doctoral program "Organization and management of social activities":

Methodology and methodology of scientific research in social activities.

Apart from that, he has doctoral guides and is engaged in a doctoral program "Organization and Management of Social Activities". She is involved in many international and national projects, which further presents her as a scientist and specialist in the field of social activities.

## **7. Conclusion**

Based on the above, I believe that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Cholakova fully meets the conditions for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" in higher education 1.2 Pedagogy (social pedagogy) and I suggest the esteemed jury to vote positively.

13.06.2022

Veliko Tarnovo

SIGNATURE:

/ Prof. Dr. M. Hadzhyiski /