

## Policies and Instruments for Social Development

*Book review*

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### **Abstract**

*Current paper presents a book review made by Prof. Dr. Margarita Bogdanova on the monograph "Policies and instruments for social development" – an edition of Innovations and Sustainability Academy – Bulgaria authored by Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Natural History Prof. Dr. Eng. Venelin Terziev.*

**Keywords:** *social policy, social development, social workers, vocational training, human resources, social enterprises, capacity building.*

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This monograph is aimed at a difficult field for research - social development and the capacity of the administration to provide effective social support. Undoubtedly, the topic is particularly relevant both theoretically and practically. Theoretical - because research and analysis in this area only affects individual aspects of social development issues and often misses the "big picture". Instead, the author has chosen to apply a single integrated approach combining structural, normative, functional and prospective analysis of the object and the subject of the study. This requires a very thorough knowledge on the system in different perspectives, as well as prospective thinking and a high prognostic culture, as few researchers hold. The topic is also relevant in practice due to the complex nature of the social system, which is saturated with numerous contradictions - between different social groups, between needs and instruments to meet these needs, between short and long-term effects of

policies and regulatory instruments, etc. These painful social inconsistencies reduce the effect of the functioning of the social system, and therefore the science-based proposals for their resolution or removal are more than necessary, up-to-date and meaningful.

While considering the possible alternatives for action in order to overcome the controversies, the monograph clearly states intentions to answer at least some of the most serious problems in the subject of research. However, in order to limit the field of research, there has been chosen the goal *to create and verify a scientific theory applied to social development and to develop adapted scientific applied models for increasing the efficiency of social assistance aimed at developing and improving social policy, social enterprises and the training of social work professionals through continuing vocational training.*

Various theoretical and empirical methods of analysis appropriate to the object and subject of the study were used in the study, all of which were used correctly and competently. It is based on a solid empirical database of national research conducted by specialized institutions.

Structurally, the monograph is divided into four distinct parts, which are logically justified and closely related to the research tasks.

The first part examines and critically analyzes the problems related to the contemporary approaches in the research of social policy and social work. The achievements of the leading authors have been extensively analyzed, new theoretical formulations defining social development and social policy have been developed. The critical European and world practices in the field of social security and their reflection on the management approaches and on the capacity of the relevant administrations in Bulgaria are critically considered. On this basis, the principles of social policy are outlined. This chapter also explores the theory of social work as a process. There is a retrospective economic analysis of the trends in the world and in Bulgaria, and the necessity of developing the social work is pointed out. Key concepts such as "institutionalization", "identification" and "internationalization of social work" have been defined. On the bases of theoretical and applied analysis several concepts are enriched, such as "social state", "social security", "social protection", "social benefits", "social services", "social security" and "social assistance system". The author has analyzed in depth the structure of the social assistance system and the organization of the social protection activities of the vulnerable groups in Bulgaria. A definition of the "social worker" is introduced, outlining its profile and

qualification. This is an important starting point in the process of securing the social assistance system with competent specialists.

The second part is devoted to the social economy and, in particular social enterprises, which are presented as a model for effective social assistance and social development. The European social model is considered as a recognized key instrument for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth in line with the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy and as a vision for Europe 2030. A very interesting and in-depth analysis of the condition and prerequisites for development of social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria is presented, outlining normative conjunctions and constraints, sectoral and territorial characteristics, trends in development. The author pays special attention to the typology of social enterprises in terms of their goals (including social goals), size, forms of support for groups in risk, development phases, social effects, etc. The proposed typology is a methodological issue of utmost importance. It is related to the metrics, analysis and assessment of social enterprises in order to provide objective, reliable and relevant information on their regulation with appropriate policies and instruments. Last but not least, the author presents a broad vision of social enterprise innovation and promotion policies, both at national and regional level, with different financial and non-financial tools and instruments. Particularly interesting are the presented innovative practices such as "positive discrimination", the introduction of the "social enterprise product" brand, and etc., that break the stereotypes in this field and contribute to the imposition of a modern understanding of the phenomenon of social enterprises. The strategic framework for the development of social entrepreneurship complements the statement in chapter two. Relevant European and national strategic and operational documents are mentioned. Opportunities for supporting social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria have been outlined, but not only as financial instruments, but also as partnership initiatives, models and various already proven good practices for strengthening the institutional capacity of social enterprises, public sector organizations and the sector as a whole .

In support of the defined goal the third part of the study is devoted to continuing vocational training. The author's significant contribution is that he enriches the theory of continuing vocational training as a tool for social development. The legislative and institutional framework of continuing vocational training, the trends, the factors and challenges as well as the methodological basis of continuing vocational training in the context of lifelong learning have been consistently

examined. The most adequate forms of continuing vocational training in the social sphere are presented and a methodology is proposed for the implementation of continuing vocational training based on the concept of lifelong learning.

The fourth part presents the author's ideas regarding the preparation and professional qualification of social work professionals in Bulgaria through continuing vocational training. The emanation of the monograph is the developed model of a system for training and professional qualification of social work specialists in Bulgaria through continuing vocational training. The steps for implementing the model are proposed and the expected benefits of its implementation are outlined.

As a researcher working mainly in the field of economics, administration and management, I strongly suggest that the author draws attention to one of the key management issues - the metrics of the performance of a system and related concepts such as efficiency and effectiveness, especially since they are addressed in their social context. The precise solution of the metric issue is an extremely challenging research task and a basic condition for the rationale of the conclusions regarding the relevance of social development policies and instruments.

Perhaps the most important message that the author makes to the readers is related to improving the sustainability of social policy. This is the leitmotif of the whole monograph, which is conceived in the second chapter - in analyzing and assessing the prospects for the development of the social economy and the social enterprises, but it is further developed in the following parts, where the problem of sustainability is also treated as part of the long and medium-term strategic impact of social interventions.

Undoubtedly, the author demonstrates his high erudition both in research and in practice, demonstrating in-depth knowledge on the process logic, the applicable tools for proving the defined research questions, and the limitations that form the framework of the study. The author reveals the different aspects of the subject of research - social policies and instruments as a basis for development and capacity building for effective social assistance, showing their forms of manifestation, relevance to other systems, possible transformations, and the potential consequences thereof. The logical justification of this author's choice is an excellent prerequisite for the creation of a research product with a high utility both for the theory and the practice of social policy and social assistance.

Among the most important merits of the work is that the author has a clear vision for the development of the Bulgarian social model and the challenges facing its successful implementation with a view to bringing it into line with the European legal

framework and the peculiarities in the country. I find that the importance of this monograph goes beyond what is common in the field of research and presents the author not only as a serious theoretician and practitioner, but also as a professional with a responsible attitude to the management of the social system continuing to be dedicated to the cause "social development".

## **REFERENCES**

Terziev, V. *Policies and instruments for social development*. Innovations and Sustainability Academy – Bulgaria, 2017, ISBN 978-619-7246-14-8.