Preface

This collection of viewpoints on cross-cultural training and teamwork serves at least two purposes: to point out the variety of ways in which training and teamwork take place across cultures in sensitive areas like education and healthcare and to make available the state of the art in the works of the researchers devoted to the domain.

The book is structured in two sections: the first one, comprising the introductory three chapters, discusses the transformation of education in Romania, as a framework for all researches on healthcare and teamwork having Eastern Europe as a setting. Thus, this section sets the background for the second one, which is dedicated to teamwork, with a particular focus on healthcare premises.

The first chapter discusses the possibility for European education to convergence in the Bologna framework by studying the literature dedicated to educational policies in leading academic journals. Using a content analysis methodology, the qualitative research aims to highlight the key topics and research concerns of academics in European higher education and to correlate their research focuses, which are being promoted and implemented in European universities as effective policy. The results may serve as guidelines for both policy makers and executives in higher education, as well as for broader categories of stakeholders.

The second chapter discusses the internationalization process of Romanian universities against a background of increasing multiculturalism. The authors collect and analyze data related to the flows of international students and staff in Romanian universities, as well as measures taken to promote student and staff circulation and to attract candidates from abroad. The conclusions of the study point to the fact that not only do Romanian universities do too little to become attractive to foreign students but due to a chronic lack of accurate data they also do not really know where they stand as to be able to improve. The present research attempted, thus, to advance knowledge about the status quo and to promote strategies for improvement.

To conclude the first section of the book, the third chapter discusses, comparatively, funding mechanisms for universities in Europe and advances potential ways for their harmonization in the framework of their Bologna convergence. The findings of the research suggest that, while there is a European-level shift to performance-based funding and quantitative indicators tend to say that European HE funding systems are to a certain degree convergent, qualitative analysis indicates that the outcomes are still divergent and more efforts have to be put into really bringing these systems to a common ground.
The second section starts with a transition chapter, which links cross-cultural issues with inside hospital teamwork. The fourth chapter discusses the specificities of organizational culture in healthcare environments, taking into account general managerial theories and their suitability to particular professional settings. The challenges of teamwork and the things to be particularly considered by decision-makers in the healthcare system are discussed and critically analyzed.

The fifth chapter discusses, on research-based findings, the particularities of culture in hospitals, in a cross-cultural perspective with a particular focus on the Polish case. The findings of the study point to the fact that exterior factors and perceptions have a decisive impact on the patient evaluation of the hospital experience, so hospitals should dedicate some of their efforts to improving organizational culture and its perceived effects on patients.

The sixth chapter attempts to analyze the problem of defining the concept of organizational culture as well as models and typologies used in reference materials. Moreover, based on the quality pilot study, it strives to explain peculiarity of this concept in relation to Polish hospitals.

Next, the seventh chapter reviews the clash between personal and organizational culture in multicultural settings, advancing ways to mediate between the two and to apply proper strategies in order to establish sound interpersonal relations while not losing sight of the general objectives of the business organization.

The eighth chapter discusses the marketing strategies of private Romanian healthcare clinics from a communication perspective, advancing methods to improve customer outreach. The study puts together data from the private medical services market and comparatively analyzes the marketing strategies, making recommendations towards the optimal cost-benefit mix.

The ninth chapter links again with education, in an attempt to round up the approach. The chapter provides an overview of the changes suffered by the secondary and higher education systems in the communism to post-communism transition and discusses the transformation of the teaching methods and the impact of these transformations. Most teachers aspire to make critical thinking the main objective of their instruction; most of them do not realize that to develop as thinkers students must pass through stages of development in critical thinking. The conclusions point to the fact that most teachers are unaware of the levels of intellectual development that students go through as they improve as thinkers. The research shows that significant gains in the intellectual quality of student work will not be achieved if teachers do not recognize that skilled critical thinking develops only if properly cultivated and only through predictable stages.

The tenth chapter underlines the importance of communication within an organization among its main stakeholders and its influence on the external market. It passes through explaining the communication in all fields and domains, creating an overview of the institutional communication, and why it is considered difficult to effectively propagate within a large institution. In addition, the internal communication and information and research so far conducted is analyzed with respect to the findings and lessons learned. In addition, it is important to know and understand how the internal communication evolved during years and which were the main approaches identified throughout the organizations. The case study aims to evaluate the level of information and the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal communication process within Bucharest University of Economic Studies with respect to its projects developed and financed through
European funds in the last six years. The study is mainly run through the help of the question-
naire that was addressed to teachers and students within the faculty and has also the purpose to
help improve the related communication in the foreseeable future based on the relevant findings.

Thus, the book assures a fair balance between training-related and healthcare-focused top-
ics, as well as an equilibrium between chapters employing quantitative methods and chapters
relying on qualitative or discursive techniques for defending their point.

Given its focus on Eastern Europe, an area which, after the fall of communism more than
two decades ago, experienced dramatic shifts in its educational and medical systems and con-
troversies that are not properly healed today, the book may provide useful insights into a domain
that remains highly controversial and, at the same time, highly attractive for both professionals
and the general public.

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