



Fundraising "Team" in Holland, December 1998. From left to right: Aileen Rambow, External Relations Officer; Oleksandr Shtokvych, Belarus-Ukraine-Moldova Country Director; Liana Ghent, Regional Director of Central & East European Programs; Donna Culpepper, CEP President

P r o f i l e

Liana Ghent, CEP Regional Director of Central and East European Programs

▪ Would you tell us something about your background?

After I graduated from the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Bucharest, I worked for the British Council in Bucharest and then as a program manager for an Irish non-governmental organisation which works in the field of child protection.

▪ How and why did you get interested in CEP?

One of the last projects I worked on was to establish a school for children with HIV infection and AIDS, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. I was interested in the position of CEP Country Director for Romania, because CEP was similar to the kind of voluntary organisation I was working with at that time, and because it offered the opportunity to work in the academic field, for which I have always had an interest.

▪ From your experience with higher education how do you see CEP's role?

I studied English and Romanian Language and Literature, and I have been fortunate to have several very good professors at the University of Bucharest, including a Fulbright professor from the US. We did have professors who expected us to memorise things that were being dictated in class, but at the same time we had many professors who used interactive teaching methods. With my experience as a student and later on,

▪ I was always impressed with her ability to deal with problems, and the very positive attitude she invariably manifested – never impatient, never annoyed, always ready able easily to deal with any problem. Her readiness to help in anything at any time was something we all have appreciated. She has great imagination in devising new programs, and successfully carrying them off. The Balkan Debate is one good example. This year, we have the Lecture Series, bringing the talents of the CEP professors and Eastern Scholars to different universities over the country. She is organizing the first moot court competition ever to be held in Romania, a matter naturally of great interest to me. And even at student conferences, she always finds some new event to include in the program to make it more lively.

She has been the ideal Country Director for Romania, and I know that I speak not only for myself, but for my other colleagues as well.

Nicholas Sellers

for a short period of time as a teacher, I saw CEP as a potential way to make a difference in some of the departments in Romania. I believe that academic exchanges are very beneficial. The knowledge, the teaching methods and the resources that a Visiting Professor brings along to the host university can add a lot to local reform efforts.

▪ Describe your experience as a country director?

I have worked as the Country Director for Romania for 4 years, beginning in June 1994. This job has allowed me to grow professionally, to develop many new skills. The most valuable things for me were, on one hand working with my colleagues, and on the other hand having the opportunity to initiate and develop new projects. It was challenging but also rewarding to gain the respect of my CEP colleagues and of our partner universities in the country. Every year I tried to encourage, inspire, motivate and support CEP Fellows in their work in their classroom work and in extra-curricular projects. Our success was greatly due to the fact that we worked as a team. I have

always appreciated the fact that CEP allows and supports each country program to develop projects that meet the local needs, within the larger framework of the organisation. Thus in Romania we were able to carry out a wide range of activities: student conferences, debate forums, teaching workshops, guest lectures, academic publications, study trips, internship centers and many more. This variety and the feedback that what we do is useful, made the job extremely rewarding.

▪ What do you think are the priorities for this region?

Although the reform has taken great steps in the last few years, there is still a long way to go for countries in this region. There are more resources available now, but the teaching methods often need a lot of improvement. Scholars need support in order to be able to stay in teaching, without being forced to have several jobs. I believe that strengthening relationships between different universities of this region would be very beneficial. There have been a lot of West-East exchanges in the last few years, but not so many among scholars from this region.