

Dare to Excel – Oradea, Romania 8th – 10th May 2008

It is with a foundation of 4 years of gathering together that steps forward were made again in Romania at the 'Dare to Excel' Publisher training event put on by LINKS. Relationship building has always been a highlight for those that attend and a lot of networking takes place over these days between national publishers and also with those that come from abroad to help with the training. For Ken Stephens, former CEO of B and H publishing house in the USA, 'the one on one times were what really stood out and blessed me. It was great to see their dedication, as many of these people involved in publishing in Eastern Europe are bi-vocational in order to survive. They were so receptive and thankful for the input, which makes teaching a pleasure. It was good to be together and we even enjoyed a game of football one evening!'



Ken Stephens It is always great to have the consistency of people like Bob Clark from Cook International attending each year not only to teach, but also to spend time with participants explaining what's new on the market. Many said they look first for books from Cook International when they are choosing titles, as they know Bob personally and know he will be at the training event. They plan for time to spend with him talking over these things at the training event.

Voicu Bojan from Aqua Forte Publishing house Romania, joined us to teach on 'translation do's and don't', along with bringing his expertise in photography to teach on getting 'good pictures for book covers'. It was great to have a national's perspective and he brought some very helpful tips for all.



As the 22 participants from 10 publishing houses came together it was encouraging for them to set some final statutes for the Foundation they have been working on grounding for Romanian Christian Publishers. The scheduled time for the Romanians to discuss this and other topics was so helpful, along with having Ken Stephens, Bob Clark and Rick Iles sitting with them to give input as questions arose, giving the Romanians more of an international perspective.

The participants enjoyed the book table which displayed books from a number of publishing houses, as it gave them time over these days to read a few pages and get a feel for what's on the market. We were thankful to the publishing houses that sent catalogues out for the Czech and Romanian training events. The participants of both training events were able to have up to date catalogues along with a better perspective of what is on the market, because many do not attend the Frankfurt book fair, or have contact with so many foreign publishers.



For some it was Bob Clarks session on 'working with foreign publishers' that was most helpful and brought more understanding, while for others it was Ken's sessions on 'developing national authors' and how to get these authors to work with you in promoting their books around the country. We were encouraged to hear that most publishing houses had published at least one book from a national author and would like to see growth in this area. Rick's session on finances was helpful to those which are directly involved in business planning and they left with more tangible material in their hands.

On closing we heard from different ones about their view of the time together, along with setting dates for the coming year. Here are their words...'The conference is always worthwhile because it gives us an occasion to meet and discuss points which are specific to Romania and also meet new people'. The relationship building is so vital. 'I was able to talk with other editors exchanging ideas, getting their opinions and just understanding what their focus is in publishing'. 'I saw improvement in communication with several publishing houses which we are involved with as we simply spent time together talking'.

We asked what topics would be helpful to have teaching on in the future...the list was too long to mention all, but a number suggested to have a couple of different tracts running at the same time. A tract on Romanian laws, one for editors and translators, one for authors and training for potential writers, along with more marketing strategies...were just a few mentioned.

It is only as we look back that we see the blessings and the effect of the opportunities which we have had. We know that 'Dare to Excel' will continue to build a better foundation for publishing in Romania and thank those involved for investing in Eastern European Publishers.

Rick Iles
LINKS

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