

## ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration

Saturday, 11 June 2011

Balkan Sunflowersâ€™ Learning Centers Network has been short-listed for the prestigious Erste Foundation Award for Social Integration. The Foundation writes on their website:

The ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration promotes and recognises organisations in the public and non-profit sectors that engage peopleâ€™s abilities, capacities, and initiatives for socially-oriented practice and progressive change in society. The Award is integral to the ERSTE Foundation Social Development programme, which emphasises a commitment to human and cultural diversity, holistic human development, social and economic justice, and individual and group self-determination. Social development in civil societies in Central and South Eastern European countries

The ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration adds value to social practice by highlighting innovative projects in CSEE countries. The Award gives due recognition to the role of individuals and groups in that region in creating societies with equal opportunities for everyone. Social integration is applied here to mean policies and programmes which foster stable, safe and just societies and therefore are inclusive of disadvantaged, vulnerable groups and people with special needs.

The Award is given to innovative and creative social integration projects that have made a valuable impact and difference in the lives of intended beneficiaries. The financial component of the Award is intended to further the awardees in their social practice.

The Learning Centers Network serves approximately 450 children daily, children primarily from Kosovoâ€™s Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minorities. The program includes preschool, language club â€“ a program to help first and second graders work in the language of the school they attend, homework help, school materials and books, a daily hot meal, an innovative summer learning program, and womenâ€™s literacy. Local youth, primarily from these minority communities work as tutors for the younger children. In doing so, they develop skills, pride, commitment to the children and their communities, and also receive support for their own continuing education.

More than 1850 projects from Central and Eastern European countries were submitted to the Foundation for consideration for the Erste Award. 130 have been short-listed. Balkan Sunflowers is proud and grateful to be among them.

The final winners will be announced in Prague on 20 June 2011.

### Links:

Website of the ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration 2011: [erstestiftung.org/integration-award](http://erstestiftung.org/integration-award)

Balkan Sunflowers website: [www.balkansunflowers.org](http://www.balkansunflowers.org)

Learning Centers Network website: [learningcentersnetwork.org](http://learningcentersnetwork.org)