

## Communities

Tuesday, 09 December 2008

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Community programs have been a core BSF program since we started working in 1999. Some of the first initiatives were cooperative efforts with local groups to develop a football pitch, make a neighborhood community center, teach computer skills and English in existing centers... Ideally, local and international volunteers and local community people work together to assess needs, develop responses, find resources, and do the work.

In 2004-2005 and 2007-2008, the Community Activist Network sought to learn from BSF's experience over 6 years to further youth voluntarism and activism. The Learning Centers Network aims to help disadvantaged children go to school and succeed there. The Centers have focused on education (pre-primary, homework help, language learning, and informal education), but they have also been centers of community activity - with activities for youth, women, sports, arts programs, and social services support.

Our youth video programs, since 2000, give young people and their communities a voice, and a chance to control what it said and seen. Balkan Sunflowers currently is in production of the documentary LIVES, an examination of life expectancy in Kosovo's Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma communities, and factors affecting it. Check our YouTube channel, Balkan Sunflowers Kosova .

Balkan Sunflowers as organization and individual staff members have been active in the development and monitoring of Kosovo's Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in the Republic of Kosovo, 2009-2015. Our Strategy Advocates program empowers field representatives in 9 municipalities to work with and lobby municipalities to implement the Strategy, including budgeting in their locales.