

How to Run an American Corner



A GUIDE FOR EMBASSY PARTNERS

CELEBRATING
AMERICAN
CORNERS
WORLDWIDE





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS
OFFICE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES
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CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

In some 400 locations around the world U.S. embassies and local institutions have joined together to create small libraries where visitors can go to find information about the United States. Typically the embassy provides funding, programs, training, computer equipment, and other support while the local partner supplies a space, personnel, collection maintenance, and other basic services. We call these libraries “American Corners,” a name chosen for them in Russia where the first such partnerships emerged in the spring of 2000. In some countries these sites are known locally as Windows on America or Lincoln Learning Centers, and in a few places, they have been named after other famous Americans.

There are American Corners in every region of the world, usually situated far from the capital city in each country. Every year several million people visit an American Corner, where they find books, magazines, music, and electronic databases with accurate information about the USA. Most Corners also offer access to the Internet and use video conferencing to span time zones and vast distances. Corners also offer an ever-changing array of programs with speakers, films, workshops, and classes.

Last year, the U.S. Department of State provided about \$3 million for the administration of the world’s American Corners. In terms of return on investment, few American taxpayer dollars are better spent as these funds support programs that bring in more than 3 million people per year to events and activities at the American Corners.

From Gaza, one visitor to the local Corner said, “To love the place means to love the people who made the place. In this way we can bridge the gap and make the ice of hatred melt.” A teacher in Turkmenistan noted, “I’m a constant participant of the American Corner Teachers Club and I’d say this is the single place for teachers to develop their teaching skills, use Internet, and check out books”.

In 2009, American Corners worldwide welcomed 3.56 million people. In total, the American Corners held an average of 1,600 events every month to showcase American culture, society, and values. Film screenings, language clubs, story hours, guest speakers, and workshops – these are a few of the more popular events regularly held at American Corners.

American Corners operate in the information sphere under the same principle as the highly successful microcredit loans initiated by the famous Grameen Bank. A small amount of funding is wedded to a strong commitment from a local institution that knows local conditions and is itself invested in the project. “When tiny, tiny things start happening a million times, “Grameen Bank founder Muhammad Yunus once said, “it becomes a large thing.”

In Washington, D.C., the American Corners Steering Committee meets annually to monitor the progress of Corners in all regions. The Information Resources Office has day-to-day management responsibility for American Corners. State Department librarians stationed at embassies worldwide play a key role in establishing a new Corner and look after those in operation.

This book is a compendium of the best practices of American Corners around the world 10 years into this experiment in localism. It reflects the accumulated wisdom of many dedicated people working at many Corners. We hope that existing American Corners will use the book as a trove of ideas, and that as new Corners are launched, it will offer them a series of templates on how to succeed.

Jean Cavanaugh

Office Director

Office of Information Resources

U.S. Department of State

Washington, D.C.

AMERICAN CORNERS OVERVIEW

MISSION STATEMENT

Each American Corner is a partner in promoting mutual understanding between the people of its host country and the people of the United States.

GOALS

- To provide accurate information about U.S. history, government, society, and values;
- To maintain an open dialogue with host-country audiences through programs that build bridges of understanding;
- To provide access to English-language resources, computers, and the Internet;
- To maximize the effectiveness of U.S. assistance and exchange programs in the host country.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

American Corners are jointly sponsored partnerships between the Public Affairs Sections of U.S. embassies or consulates and host-country institutions. They provide access to current, reliable information about the United States through book collections, the Internet, and local programming.

An American Corner serves as an information center similar to a U.S. public library reference service. The multi-media, book, and periodical collections are open to members of the host institution and, usually, to the general public. Often, meeting rooms are made available for program events and activities like author readings, lectures, films, workshops, and exhibits.

At a minimum, an American Corner houses a collection of books in English about the United States. This collection may include reference titles, books about English teaching and learning, works of fiction, business manuals, and U.S. State Department publications about such topics as studying in the USA. American Corners also provide access to the Internet, audio and video products, and CD-ROMS. Host institutions staff the Corners.

These partnerships are usually called American Corners, but in some countries, they are also known as Lincoln Corners or Windows on America. Some are named after other famous Americans. Anyone working in an institution partnering with a U.S. embassy or consulate is welcome to use this manual.

The job title of the person who works in the AC varies from country to country. For instructional purposes in this manual, the person in the partner institution is called the coordinator while the embassy may designate an AC liaison, supervisor, relay person, or other job title.

Central and South American countries host a number of Binational Centers (BNCs) that perform a function similar to that of American Corners. BNCs work with the U.S. embassy in their respective countries. The funding, staffing, and administration of BNCs is independent of the embassy but there are many points of coordination and cooperation.

ROLE OF THE BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS

The Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) engages international audiences on issues of foreign policy, society and values to help create an environment receptive to U.S. national interests. IIP is part of the U.S. Department of State's Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs administered by Under Secretary Judith A. McHale.

IIP communicates with foreign opinion makers and other publics through a wide range of print and electronic outreach materials published in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Persian, Russian, and Spanish. IIP also provides information outreach support to U.S. embassies and consulates in more than 140 countries worldwide.

The IIP website is a welcoming compendium of articles, photos, videos, podcasts and many other resources that will provide materials and ideas for American Corners worldwide. Please visit www.america.gov often to review the resources.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Office of Information Resources (IIP/IR) is the Washington, D.C., headquarters for Information Resource Officers (IROs), Information Resource Centers (IRCs), and American Corners (ACs). IR's information professionals provide centralized guidance and administrative support to these three groups and produce information tools to advance the Department of State's public diplomacy objectives. With its staff in Vienna, Austria, IIP/IR maintains the worldwide American Corners support website.

INFORMATION RESOURCE OFFICERS

IROs are professional librarians who work as Foreign Service specialists in the Department of State. Regionally based in Public Affairs Sections at selected U.S. embassies, IROs travel to countries within their regions. They provide advice and guidance on issues related to the needs of U.S. embassy IRCs and host-country libraries, including American Corners.

AMERICAN CORNERS COORDINATION IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The primary AC Coordinator is the Washington-based IRO responsible for providing centralized support and policy development to American Corners. The Coordinator manages and disperses centralized funding, considers proposals for new ACs and sustaining funds, coordinates regional training programs, develops policy and guidelines, chairs the American Corners Steering Committee, and constructs evaluation tools to measure program effectiveness.

The Public Affairs Section of the embassy provides some funding and resources for the local AC partners. Initial funding for the annual budget of the U.S. Department of State comes from the U.S. Congress and the American taxpayer. The fiscal year of the embassy begins October 1 and ends September 30. Starting in December, information is gathered from AC partners to assist the Washington, D.C. office in making the funding decisions. Each post is asked to submit a detailed proposal for funding. The proposals follow a standard format and various key statistics and descriptive data are required. In February, the AC Steering Committee meets to review the proposals and make recommendations for funding. The funds are usually distributed in June to the embassies. From year to year, funding for ACs is unpredictable and the availability of funding depends on the priorities of the U.S. Department of State.

To collect information about the 400-plus partnerships in the American Corners network, the AC Coordinator administers the American Corners Cooperative Database (ACCD). This is an internal database where directory information for every AC can be found. It is a searchable repository for a variety of documents: monthly reports, photos, annual plans, activity reports, and basic guidelines of the AC program. Usually, an embassy employee has the duty to record needed information about the local ACs in a country.

The current AC Coordinator in Washington can be reached at: americancorners@state.gov

ROLE OF THE U.S. EMBASSY

INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTERS

The main job of Information Resource Centers is to provide current, authoritative information about the U.S. to host-country audiences on legislative, economic, cultural, and social issues. IRCs offer specialized reference and research services to government officials, journalists, researchers, students, and the general public. But IRC staff are also a resource for American Corners staff: they help select U.S. books and reference materials, aid in answering questions about the U.S., and can help with AC planning, programming, and reporting.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS STAFF

The Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. embassy or consulate coordinates cultural programs, supports English-language programs, organizes Fulbright and other exchange programs, distributes U.S. publications, and is the main contact for media relations and information dissemination in the host country. The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) supervises the IRC and provides some funding and training support to American Corners. The PAS works with American Corners to coordinate public programs and events. A PAS staff member is normally designated as the embassy liaison with American Corners counterparts.

OTHER CONTACTS WITH U.S. OFFICES AND AGENCIES

Not all U.S. embassies and consulates have IROs, PAOs, or IRCs. American Corners workers in some countries may have contact with other embassy staff who are responsible for monitoring and working with the AC partner.

Many American Corners rely not on embassy staff but on other individuals working for the U.S. government. For example, Peace Corps volunteers often use ACs for their work with students while English Language Fellows make the local AC their headquarters for some regular classes and programs.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Each American Corners partnership depends on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a signed agreement between the U.S. embassy and the hosting institution. The directors of the host institution and the PAO (or other representative of the U.S. embassy) sign an MOU annually or bi-annually. It outlines the institution's contributions to the American Corner and describes what the embassy will contribute to the partnership.

Property (books, equipment, etc.) is not listed in the MOU, but detailed in specific property grants issued by PAS. The document should state the length of time it will be in effect. Many find an MOU of two years' duration easier to manage than a one-year agreement.

Any agreement that significantly differs from the basic MOU template that follows must be reviewed by the embassy's legal advisor.

**SAMPLE
(REVISED MARCH 18, 2008)**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING MADE BY AND
BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION OF THE U.S. EMBASSY
AND THE [INSERT NAME] LIBRARY**

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy, [INSERT NAME] (“PAS”) and the [Insert Name] Library (“the Library”), hereinafter the “Participants,”

Seeking to jointly establish an information center known as the [Insert Name] Corner (“the Corner”) during the period of XXX and XXX;

Affirming their intention to participate jointly in the American Corners program:

Have reached the following understanding:

The Library is to provide support for the maintenance and operation of the Corner. In carrying out this function, the Library intends to take program and policy guidance from the Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, PAS or his designate.

Specifically, the Library is to provide the following support:

1. Provide space, free of charge and satisfactory to PAS in the Library located at [Insert Address]in [Insert City Name], to accommodate the Corner including its print and electronic collections, its public access Internet site, and other related program activities. The Library is to provide furniture, including bookshelves, for the Corner and pay for maintenance and utilities for space occupied by the Corner.
2. Provide at least one outside telephone line for the use of Corner staff.
3. Take steps to provide that use and access to the Corner is free of charge and is not restricted to any segment of the population. The Corner should be opened to the general public at least 20 hours per week.
4. Provide at least one qualified English-speaking staff member for the Corner and pay staff salary costs. The Library should further designate a Director for the Corner who will be responsible for Corner operations.
5. Employ all security measures necessary to confirm that the equipment and materials provided to the Corner under this Memorandum of Understanding remain in the Corner and are not dispersed or damaged in any way.
6. Reserve revenues generated from the use of PAS-provided equipment and services, such as photocopying and computer printouts, to provide for maintenance and supply of said equipment and services.

PAS is to provide the following support:

1. Provide the Corner with a basic print and CD-ROM collection about the United States and then maintain and supplement this collection. At PAS discretion and with guidance from the Library, PAS is to select and purchase new print and electronic publications for inclusion in the Corner's collection on topics related to PAS Mission Performance

Plan themes, including but not limited to: economics, management, business, American studies, literature, English teaching, English language, politics, law, and democratic societies, chosen to reflect PAS and the Library's target user groups. PAS is to supply the Corner with multiple copies of State Department-produced publications designated for public distribution.

2. Whenever possible, PAS is to assist the Library in the maintenance of PAS-provided equipment such as computers, faxes, and photocopying equipment. At PAS discretion and with Library guidance, PAS is to replace broken or out-dated PAS-provided equipment to insure continued Corner services and information access to Corner patrons.

3. Designate one PAS employee to serve as liaison between the Library and PAS.

4. At PAS discretion and with Library concurrence, PAS is to provide training and consultations for Corner staff. When and if possible, PAS is to provide funds for travel, per diem, and tuition for Corner participants in PAS-sponsored training programs at locations in other cities.

5. Provide materials on U.S. Government programs and grants, educational opportunities, and possibilities for financial support in the United States for dissemination at the Corner.

6. Conduct U.S. Speaker programs, cultural events, educational exchange programs and alumni activities at the Corner and provide coordination and information concerning similar PAS-sponsored activities.

7. Availability of Funds: The terms of this Memorandum of Understanding are subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Signatures

The Participants hereto have executed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the [Insert date of signing].

For the Public Affairs Section:

For the Library:

[Insert Name]
[Counselor for Public Affairs]
Embassy of the United States of America
In [insert name of country]

[Insert Name of Institution]
[Minister Director]
[Insert Name of Institution]
[Insert City and Country]

MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

PERSONNEL

The host institution is responsible for paying staff salary costs and for providing at least one qualified English-speaking staff member to be in charge of American Corner operations. Although the U.S. embassy does not supervise the institution's staff, it should play an active role in this appointment if possible. The embassy should remain proactive in managing the AC programs it sponsors and in contributing to AC staff decisions. This position description describes a person whose full-time work is the administration of the AC and so is included here only to illustrate the qualifications that a supervisor or library director might consider for the position.

SAMPLE POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR THE HEAD OF AN AMERICAN CORNER

Position Description Coordinator, American Corner of xxx

General Description:

Under the general supervision of _____ at the (Institution name), the Coordinator of the American Corner in (city) coordinates, plans, organizes and directs the activities of the Corner. The Corner Coordinator serves as a liaison between the (Institution) and the U.S. embassy (city), as well as local agencies, businesses, schools and organizations with an interest in the United States. The Corner is a small, American-style library and program center created to increase mutual understanding between (country) and the United States by making available information about America in a variety of formats. The Corner offers books, CD-ROMs, videos, Internet access, programs, and discussion groups. Some weekend and evening hours may be required.

Recommended Qualifications:

- Education – university degree or candidacy;
- General knowledge of American history, values, society, culture, education, and politics of the United States of America;
- Ability to assess community interest in American topics;
- Ability to create, promote and evaluate programs and events that promote the Corner and its resources;
- An “entrepreneurial spirit” that can identify and follow up on alternate sources of financial support for the Corner in the region;
- Ability to plan and maintain a budget;
- Ability to plan and organize speaker programs;
- Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, in the host-country language, and in English;
- Skill in working with youth audiences;
- Ability to prepare written reports and correspondence and to maintain accurate records;
- Skill in prioritizing work assignments;

- Ability to present information effectively to groups of different ages and educational levels;
- Ability to respond in a timely manner to questions from supervisors, customers, and the general public;
- Basic knowledge of computers and the Internet;
- Skill in use of a wide range of current computer applications, including Internet, Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Office (Word processing and spreadsheet), and web-page design (Good typing skills are also required);
- Skill in communicating confidentially and diplomatically with visiting speakers and university and embassy staff.

Physical Requirements:

- Must be able to stoop, bend, walk and reach to heights of 2 meters;
- Must be able to pull or lift up to 20 kg;
- Must have manual dexterity to operate computer keyboard.

SPACE CONFIGURATION, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Although there is no prescribed size for an American Corner, the following should be considered:

- Shelving for books, reference materials, periodicals, etc.;
- Tables and chairs for reading, studying, group work;
- Programming, activity space;
- Children’s or Youth Corner, if applicable;
- Computers;
- Television, DVD player, projector, screen;
- Internet service.

To assist AC staff in selecting and acquiring books and other suitable materials, there is a “shopping cart” site available through the embassy or consulate’s Information Resource Center. Many suitable sets and series can be ordered for AC use through the shopping cart.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

AC Website

A special website supports the staffs of American Corners in their work. It is a clearinghouse for ideas, programs, photos, and other materials that can be shared throughout the worldwide AC community. The URL is:

<http://americancorners.state.gov/>

The use of this site is restricted though with the password, the site can be viewed easily. To share your comments and contribute to the blog, be sure to register as a user:

UserID: american (lower case)

Password: corners (lower case)

AC Mailing List

ACSTAFF-L@statelists.state.gov

This electronic mailing list is maintained by the U.S. Department of State. American Corners' staff worldwide and interested embassy personnel subscribe to this list to share best practices and to receive current information about activities and events for ACs.

- New American Corner Coordinators can be signed up for the list by their embassy or consulate liaison person.
- You can subscribe yourself to the list by visiting the <http://americancorners.state.gov> website described above.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR AC STAFF AND PARTNERS

Online Courses in Library and Information Studies

American Library Association's Distance Learning – Current workshops include reference, children's issues, management issues, and copyright. Fee-based

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=eventsdist&Template=/Conference/ConferenceList.cfm&ConferenceTypeCode=D>

Association of College and Research Libraries – Current courses include designing websites, creating plans for information literacy, virtual reference, leading change, and Web 2.0. Fee-based

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/events/elearning/index.cfm>

Bibliographical Center for Research – Workshops pertaining to the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), Internet, Web design, cataloging and Inter Library Loan (ILL) topics. Free (Free Friday Forum) and fee-based.

<http://www.bcr.org/training/index.html>

Alternative Basic Library Education (ABLE) – Designed to help those who have no formal education in library science acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed to work in a library. The online courses provide “just-in-time” training. Anyone may enroll for free.

<http://libraries.idaho.gov/able>

Supplemental Alternative Basic Library Education (SABLE) – Designed to provide additional resources to help those who have no formal education in library science acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed to operate or work in a library. This program, a supplement to the ABLE courses, provides training on specialized services, including children and youth services.

<http://libraries.idaho.gov/sable>

Kovacs Consulting offers in-depth online workshops on a wide variety of library topics, including medical research, reference skills, Web design, and electronic collection development. Primarily fee-based

<http://www.kovacs.com/training.html>

LEAD –Lifelong Education @ Desktop – Fee-based, two-hour-long courses on a wide variety of topics, including budgeting, volunteers, and information ethics.

<http://leadonline.info/>

WebJunction – Online community and clearinghouse for resources and distance-learning opportunities for library staff. Most resources are free, though distance-education courses tend to be fee-based. Many courses cover new technologies.

<http://www.webjunction.org/do/Home>

International Relations Round Table (IRRT) of the American Library Association and the International Partnership for Advocacy and Library Services (IPALS) invite users to the IRRT Free Links Program Website where many professional development links have been collected.

<http://sites.google.com/site/irrtfreelinks/home>

The American Library Association offers all of its online professional development resources as a single website. The site is open to all.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/onlinelearning/index.cfm>

Podcasts, Webcasts, and More

The Library of Congress makes available three outstanding sites:

Videoconferences. Interactive, distance-learning programs; excellent for professional development, programming, and training.

<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/educators/video/index.html>

Webcasts on topics, including Zotero, LibraryThing, and the National Digital Newspaper Program.

<http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/results.php?cat=2&mode=a>

Self-Serve Workshops. Free online modules on a variety of topics including search skills, primary sources, and basic technology.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/learn/educators/workshop/ssindex.html>

InfoSpeak Interviews with Library Leaders – Free podcasts by leaders in U.S. library and information fields discussing Google, new technology, leadership, and embracing change.

<http://www.webjunction.org/do/DisplayContent?id=19396>

Librarian Live – Free podcasts on topics such as social networking, library services for youth, and resource sharing.

<http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=263>

Shaping Outcomes – Evaluation techniques using the Outcomes Based Planning and Evaluation (OBPE) method. Online course to learn how to better evaluate effectiveness of services and programming.

<http://www.shapingoutcomes.com/>

PROGRAMMING

Creative programming is what brings an AC alive, and special events are a key to the success of American Corners. Nearly 50 percent of AC patrons surveyed are first drawn to the AC by events ranging from small discussion groups and live music performances to lectures, seminars, film showings, exhibits, roundtable discussions, holiday celebrations, and English-language classes.

For good ideas, log on to the American Corners website to read about the types of events the local coordinators are organizing. Many of these messages come from the ACSTAFF-L listserv, so consider checking the archives of the listserv as well for more ideas.

Event participants can include primary- and secondary-school students, teachers, undergraduate students, university faculty, professionals, and U.S. exchange program alumni. Speakers can be found among U.S. embassy and consulate staff, visiting Fulbright scholars, U.S. exchange program alumni, U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, English Language Fellows, and U.S. citizens studying, working, or traveling abroad.

PROGRAMMING SUGGESTIONS FOR AMERICAN CORNERS

Games and Game Events

Gaming days and events are very popular in U.S. libraries so there is a lot of free information on the Internet. By games, we mean board games, word games, and interactive video games. The American Library Association usually designates a day in November as National Gaming Day: <http://ngd.ala.org/>

There are many benefits to gaming for AC visitors:

- Interactive games help build social skills such as sharing, teamwork, following directions, and friendly competition.
- Games develop literacy skills, such as English-language proficiency and computer/technology literacy.
- Games at the AC can give adults a sense of community and a supportive network. In some libraries, teenagers show the elderly to how to play interactive video games.
- Games in ACs foster a sense of community. They show that ACs are more than books.

Suggested board games (see <http://www.wikipedia.org> for more information about each game):

- Scrabble and Scrabble Me!
- Boggle and BananaGrams
- Taboo (also an online version at <http://www.playtaboo.com/playpage.php>)
- Scattergories
- Pictionary and QuickWord
- Catchphrase and Apples to Apples

Games you can create on your own (no purchase necessary and free info on Internet):

- Hangman
- Dictionary, Fictionary
- Charades
- Twenty Questions

Interactive video games:

- Video game consoles (Nintendo Wii, Xbox, PlayStation) offer interactive, fun games where participants can play a variety of sports and develop language proficiency through song. Video games are rated, so it's easy to make sure that games are appropriate for an AC audience.

Clubs, Contests, and Series

Regularly scheduled club events at an AC provide a lot of momentum and community. Drama clubs, poetry slams, contests based on essays, photography, poetry readings, and community service activities all provide opportunities for AC guests to become frequent and steady visitors.

Book Clubs

An American Corner is an ideal location to hold a book club, a group of readers who gather periodically, either in person or electronically, to discuss a particular work. An AC book club might discuss new novels by American authors or books on American society, values, or foreign policy. It's also an excellent opportunity for members to use and practice their English. Resources on starting book clubs can be found on the American Corners website:

<http://americancorners.state.gov>

Debate Clubs

A “debate” is a formal contest or method of argument. The International Debate Education Association (IDEA) has a great website that provides a good overview on the benefits of debates and resources on how to hold a debate. From IDEA, “With its emphasis on critical thinking, effective communication, independent research, and teamwork, debate teaches skills that serve individuals well in school, in the workplace, in political life, and in fulfilling their responsibilities as citizens of democratic societies.”

<http://www.idebate.org>

Conversation Cafes

Conversation cafes are groups of people who gather together to share conversation around a specific topic. Less formal than debates, their aim is to provide a comfortable environment in which to discuss issues. They promote “community, democracy and wisdom world-wide through generating millions of open, respectful public conversations.” This quote comes from the Conversation Cafe website, which also provides ideas and resources on how to run a conversation cafe.

<http://www.conversationcafe.org/>

Especially for Young Visitors

Spelling bees originated in the United States in the early 1900s. They are contests in which participants, usually students, are asked to spell a word. Spelling bees are very popular in the United States and most students participate in them throughout elementary school. For more information on spelling bees and how to run them, please see the Scripps National Spelling Bee website:

<http://www.spellingbee.com/>.

International Children’s Digital Library Foundation (ICDL Foundation) makes the best in children’s literature available. Children can expand upon these stories to create games, parents can extract themes to help explain important lessons, teachers can utilize the multicultural nature of the collection to teach languages, librarians can enrich community outreach programs with tales from around the world, and, of course, anyone can just open a book to read for pleasure.

<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>

Programming with Films in American Corners

American Corners are permitted to hold public screenings of feature films on DVD and videotape because of a license agreement between the U.S. Department of State and the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC). Under the terms of this agreement, ACs may not charge admission to these film screenings, but there is no limit on the number of attendees.

The agreement specifies that ACs must observe the following rules in promoting film showings via the Internet and inside the premises of an AC:

- U.S. embassy websites, American Corner websites, other websites, and electronic newsletters may be used to communicate specific details of upcoming film programs, including the title of the movie.
- U.S. embassies and American Corners may send emails or monthly bulletins to specific contacts, members, friends, or registered users containing details about the upcoming film programs, including the title of the movie.
- AC staff may pass out or post flyers listing the name of the movies they are showing and basic facts about the event.
- AC staff may pass out flyers containing downloaded movie graphics.
- AC staff may send email to their Corner's registered users containing specific information about the film and the event – including the name of the film and downloaded movie graphics.
- The films must be available in home video or DVD release in the country in which the film showing will occur. From the date the film was released in the USA, some companies require that six months have passed. Other companies require that nine months have passed. Check with your Public Affairs contact person to verify this time restriction.
- The tapes or DVDs must be legally obtained from a legitimate source. U.S. embassies and American Corners are responsible for obtaining their own videotapes and DVDs.

Caution in paying for advertisements

The use of specific film titles, characters from such titles, or producers' names in PAID advertisements to the general public is NOT ALLOWED under the agreement.

More Film Resources for Programming

Milestone is a site "dedicated to discovering and distributing films of enduring artistry from both yesterday and today":

<http://www.milestonefilms.com/history.php>

Cinematical hosts blogs, publishes original articles, and connects you to the world of cine:

<http://www.cinematical.com/meet-the-team>

Kodak Cinema and Television has a lot on film history, education, and technology:

<http://motion.kodak.com/US/en/motion/index.htm>

The Internet Movie Database is an Internet standard that offers film reviews, history, interactive blogs, and message boards:

<http://www.imdb.com/>

The Bad Film Society likes to say that even bad films have their fans:

<http://badfilmsociety.org/>

The U.S. Library of Congress maintains film collections, and many early films are free for online viewing:

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/>

The U.S. National Archives Catalog allows a search for U.S. government films and videos in the public domain:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/>

Footage.net provides global keyword search capabilities for numerous commercial stock, archival, and news footage collections worldwide:

<http://www.footage.net/>

The University of California, Berkeley, Media Resource Center's links to sources of audio and video resources on the Web:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC>

The National Film Preservation Board provides numerous links to film- and television-related sites, including archives, research centers, motion pictures studios, film schools, and preservation publications:

www.loc.gov/film

The American Widescreen Museum links to history-of-film technology, including widescreen, color systems, and sound:

<http://www.widescreenmuseum.com/>

The American Film Institute Catalog Online provides non-AFI members access to credit and plot information on over 25,000 silent American films from the years 1893 to 1930:

<http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/>

Links to Cinema History and Cinema Studies, a labor of love by Professor Robert Yahnke at the University of Minnesota, is his personal listing of favorite films and teaching resources associated with them:

<http://www.tc.umn.edu/~ryahnke/film/cinema.htm>

PROGRAMMING WITH UNIVERSITY COURSES AND COURSE MATERIALS

Some American Corners are using online U.S. university courses as programming tools – especially where there are willing volunteers to help facilitate the courses, homework, and readings. Here are some good sources for these courses:

Carnegie Mellon's OpenLearning Initiative:

<http://www.cmu.edu/oli/index.html>

Open Yale Courses – free undergraduate courses delivered as video lectures:

<http://open.yale.edu/courses/>

MIT OpenCourseWare – material from 1,800 courses online. Text, videos, slides and assignments supplement current and past MIT courses:

<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/home/home/index.htm>

Rice University – Connections – a clearinghouse of educational modules that can be organized as courses, books, reports, etc. Anyone may view or contribute:

<http://cnx.org/>

Open Educational Resources – a clearinghouse of free teaching and learning resources – from K-12 lesson plans to college curriculum:

<http://www.oercommons.org/>

Open Culture – Free audio books, free online courses, free movies, free language lessons, free ebooks, and other enriching content – it's all at this site:

<http://www.openculture.com/>

Podcasts

Many universities are offering podcasts of course lectures and prominent speakers. Most are available either through the university website or through iTunes University. The universities are too numerous to list here, but include:

Video and podcasts from Berkeley – includes some lectures on information science. Also available through iTunes University:

<http://webcast.berkeley.edu/courses.php>

Educators Corner: podcasts from Stanford – currently offering speeches by Entrepreneurial Thought Leaders:

<http://edcorner.stanford.edu/podcasts.html>

iTunes University:

http://www.apple.com/education/itunesu_mobilelearning/itunesu.html

PROGRAMMING FOR HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

U.S. holidays and traditional celebrations are ideal occasions for programs at American Corners. Listed below are the major U.S. holidays and some additional celebrations that our partner institutions have found to be useful for programming.

For a list of U.S. federal holidays three years into the future and the dates on which they are observed, please see: <https://www.opm.gov/fedhol/>

For a general explanation of holidays and other special days celebrated in the United States, please see: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/January/20080113151228abretnuh0.5784265.html>

January	New Year's Day (January 1) Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (third Monday in January) Birthday of Elvis Presley (January 8)
February	Black History Month, Presidents' Day (third Monday in February)
March	National Women's History Month National Grammar Day (March 4)
April	Earth Day (April 22) Jazz Appreciation Month Poetry Month National Library Week
May	Memorial Day (last Monday in May) Asian Pacific Heritage American Month
July	Independence Day (July 4)
September	Labor Day (first Monday in September) Talk Like a Pirate Day (September 19) International Literacy Day (September 8) Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15)
October	Columbus Day (second Monday in October) Halloween (October 31) Dictionary Day (October 16)
November	Veterans Day (November 11) International Education Week (third week in November) Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November) Native American Heritage Month
December	World AIDS Day (December 1)

PLANNING PROGRAMS IN MONTHLY EVENT CALENDARS

An effective way to promote an American Corner and attract more patrons to AC events is to distribute a monthly calendar by email and post it on the website. For example:

Sun 31	Mon Feb 1	Tue 2	Wed 3	Thu 4	Fri 5	Sat 6
Phonetic Contest						
3pm English Speaking Club		4pm English Club with Robert Bates	3pm Groundhog Day		4pm Conversation Club	12pm Discussion Club
		5:30pm Discussion club with Alyson Faller	5pm "Friends" TV-Show			3pm Fiction Club with Alyson Faller
						4pm Movie Show "BELOVED" (part
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Phonetic Contest						
1pm Discussion club with Chris Rasmussen	3:30pm Film "Snatch" in English	3pm American Film Demonstration	5pm Student Discussion Club		12pm Discussion Club	
3pm English Speaking Club	4pm English club with Robert Bates	5pm "Friends" TV-Show		4pm Movie Show "BELOVED" (part 2)	1pm English Speakers Club Discussing February Holidays With Kristen Lahoda	
	5:30pm Discussion club with Alyson Faller		3pm Fiction Club with Alyson Faller			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Phonetic Contest						
11am The St. Valentine's day	11am Video viewing at the american Corner	3pm American Film Demonstration	3:30pm Meeting with U.S. Vice-Consul in Yekaterinburg Christopher Van Bebber	11am The Importance of Work in American Society	12pm Discussion Club	
3pm English Speaking Club	3:30pm Film "Love Actually"	5pm "Friends" TV-Show	5pm Student Discussion Club	4pm Lecture "Music World/indie"	3pm Fiction Club with Alyson Faller	
4pm English club with Robert Bates	+2 more				4:30pm Update your English 2. Hip Hop battle	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Phonetic Contest						
1pm The project "50 States: discover America!"	4pm English club with Robert Bates	9am Bradley Gorski	10am Vladivostok American Corner presents "AMISTAD"		12pm Discussion Club	
3pm English Speaking Club		3pm American Film Demonstration "America. Hawaii"	5pm Documentary "Discoveries..." Alyson Faller	3pm Fiction Club with		
		5pm "Friends" TV-Show				

Some convenient and free ways to make monthly calendars are available at http://www.ehow.com/how_2014970_calendar-microsoft-word.html

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR AMERICAN CORNERS

The arrival of social media tools like YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and many others means that a typical American Corner audience is now more segmented than ever; each segment may use different media to stay current and to get involved. Indeed, some American Corners are already engaged in cyberspace communities and have been using websites, blogs, and Facebook to engage their visitors and users.

Russia's American Centers and Corners network, for example, includes 28 locations and supports a shared website at:

<http://amcorners.ru/info/>

Greece, with six American Corner sites, named its shared site Mozaiko:

<http://amcorners.gr/>

Macedonia with four locations operates a blog for its AC community through Google's Blogspot:

www.americancornersmacedonia.blogspot.com.

In Hungary, with several American Corners locations, Facebook is used to make announcements.

Depending on the policies and resources of the host institution, an American Corner may want to experiment with new media and choose a couple of tools that reach special audiences like students or young professionals. Investing staff time and resources in social media can be costly, so it is important to plan a move into social media by setting goals, ranking priorities, and starting small. It's important in the beginning to build measurement, benchmarks for effectiveness, and reporting channels into social media projects.

Learning the how-to of social media creation and participation is not difficult. There are many free instructional videos, handouts, and other materials for beginners. Here are a few to try.

To learn about blogs:

Read Technorati's *State of the Blogosphere 2009*:

<http://technorati.com/state-of-the-blogosphere/>

Read *7 Things You Should Know About Blogs* (from Educause):

<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7006.pdf>

Watch the Commoncraft video *Blogs in Plain English* on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN2I1pWXjXI>

To create a blog for free, use one of these sites:

- Blogger
<http://www.blogger.com>
- LiveJournal
<http://www.livejournal.com>
- Wordpress
<http://www.wordpress.com>

To learn about microblogging on Twitter (www.twitter.com)

- Read *7 Things You Should Know about Twitter* (Educause)
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7027.pdf>

- Read *7 Things You Should Know about Microblogging* (Educause)
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7051.pdf>
- Read *The Twitter Guide Book*
<http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/>
- Read *Twitter: Best Practices and Tips*
<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/the-complete-guide-to-twitter-pdf/>

To learn about social networking with Facebook or Ning

- Read *7 Things You Should Know about Facebook II* (from Educause)
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7025.pdf>
- Read *7 Things You Should Know about Ning* (from Educause)
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7036.pdf>
- Read *How to Use Privacy Settings and Avoid Disaster*
<http://mashable.com/2009/04/28/facebook-privacy-settings/>
- Watch the Common Craft video *Social Networking I Plain English*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a_KF7TYKvc

To learn about photo sharing:

- Read *7 Things You Should Know about Flickr* (Educause)
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7034.pdf>
- See *Photostream* on America.gov from Flickr
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/americagov>
- See map of Flickr contributors
<http://www.flickr.com/map/>
- Explore Big Huge Labs
<http://bighugelabs.com/>

ELECTRONIC BOOK PROGRAM RESOURCES

To support programming at the American Corners, it is important to have interesting materials. Most American Corners have limited resources so it is difficult to acquire new items. One of the ways to supplement the books on the shelf is to rely on electronic formats available on the Internet. This section is intended to give you some ideas about transforming your laptop, personal computer, and the computers at the American Corners into gateways to electronic books and other materials.

LitLovers began as an online course and has grown into a literature community. Look here for ideas on how to start and run a book club, how to discuss a book, and more.

<http://www.litlovers.com/>

Kidsreads and teenreads are great places for young people to find information about books and authors. Book reviews, interviews with authors, games and other information are here.

<http://www.kidsreads.com/> <http://www.teenreads.com/>

Wired for Books is a project sponsored by Ohio University. It provides audio interviews with famous authors, including major prize winners. <http://wiredforbooks.org/index2.htm>

Audio Books

LibriVox provides free audio books from the public domain. You can listen from your computer or on a portable device such as an iPod. <http://librivox.org/>

Open Culture links to audio books, including university course materials, foreign language learning resources, and more. <http://www.openculture.com/>

eBooks

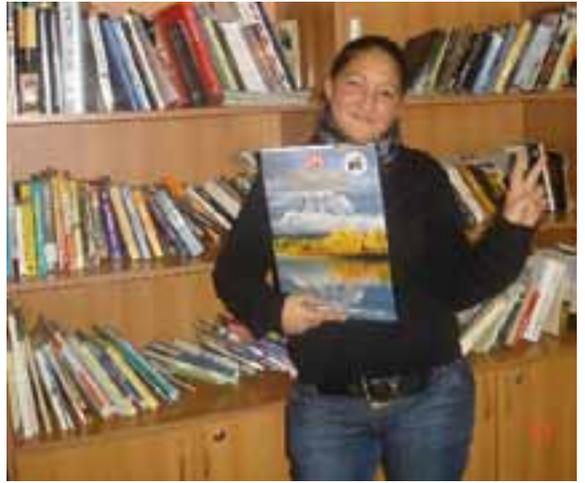
Electronic books, or ebooks, are read on your computer, on a mobile device, or on an ebook reader such as a Kindle or an iPad. Some good sources of free or low-cost ebooks are:

- Ebrary offers over 20,000 free ebooks with a \$5 registration fee.
<http://shop.ebrary.com/home.action>
- Books in My Phone
<http://www.booksinmyphone.com/>
- Books from Google for mobile phones
<http://books.google.com/>
- University of Pennsylvania lists over 35,000 electronic books
<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>
- Project Gutenberg was the first producer of electronic books
http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page
- Did you know that NetLibrary has lots of free ebooks in its catalog?
<http://www.netlibrary.com/>

Facebook Applications

There are several applications on Facebook that focus on books. Here are just a few:

- Visual Bookshelf
http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2481647302&b=&ref=pd_r
- We Read <http://www.facebook.com/BooksweRead>
- World Cat from OCLC <http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=7644880307>



Clockwise from top left:

These visitors in Khost, Afghanistan, celebrated the first anniversary of the Lincoln Learning Center with an elaborate cake and were among the 32,000 people who came to this AC in its first year of operations.

In Armenia, a university student who volunteers at AC Gyumri by teaching English to children holds a gift book of famous U.S. landscapes that she received for being the corner's 100,000th patron.

Children perform in celebrations for the first anniversary of the AC in Patna, a joint project opened in 2008 between the Bihar Industries Association and the U.S. Consulate in Kolkata, India. The current AC partner is the Indian Institute of Business Management.



Clockwise from top left:

PAO Tom Mitnacht and Hasmik Karapetyan, director of the City Central Library and host of the AC, cut the book-shaped cake prepared to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Yerevan AC, the first of Armenia's four ACs.

Romania, with eight ACs currently, celebrated the first anniversary of the Bacau AC in 2007 with a full array of activities including photo and book exhibits, high school projects, and a brief theatrical program.

In Ahmedabad, India, the host organization Ahmedabad Management Association held events over a three-day period in 2009 to mark the fifth anniversary of the AC and included a "Know America" contest as well as a panel on volunteerism in the United States.

In Afghanistan, local musicians from the Herat Classic Music School performed at the first anniversary celebrations of the Lincoln Learning Center in the Herat Public Library, where more than 100 programs were offered in 2009.



Clockwise from top left:

Students, U.S. Ambassador John Bass, and an official from the Georgian Ministry of Environment take part in AC Tbilisi's 2010 Earth Day program, which featured a garden clean-up, tree planting, artwork exhibit, and an environmental-issues discussion.

Operating at the Academy of Sciences Library since 2006, the AC in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, hosted a Thanksgiving arts and crafts day for the city's children complete with making colorful turkeys from paper.

Nepal's four ACs, known as Community Information Centers, often feature American holidays in their programming. In 2007 the Bhirahawa AC hosted a Fourth of July event that included a panel discussion on the history of the American Revolution and on contemporary American-Nepali relations.

In Georgia, students in colorful costumes and AC Coordinator Natela Urushadze enjoy AC Tbilisi's Halloween party, which featured contests, trick-or-treat games, and hand-made holiday decorations.

In Tomsk, Russia, children were the special guests at a Fourth of July party that included three-legged races, singing American and Russian songs, and balloon volleyball. Tomsk's American Center, established in 1994, is one of five PAS locations in Russia that predate the AC program, which originated in Russia in 2000.

In Kosovo, 40 middle school students competed for prizes in a spelling bee conducted by IRO Cathy Marsicek in one of several popular events organized by AC Pristina to celebrate International Library Week in 2010.



Clockwise from top left:

During International Education Week, visitors at the Lincoln Corner in Karachi, Pakistan, learn about the Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES), whose scholarships enable students to attend high school and live with host families in the US.

Macedonia, with four ACs, celebrated Halloween in 2007 with a festive event in Bitola's AC at the city's Center for Culture. The party included a costume contest for three age groups where all contestants described their characters in English.

At a workshop featuring world rhythms, U.S. musician Gilad Dobrecky displayed a percussion instrument to students at the American Connection hosted by the Temasek Junior College in Singapore in 2010.

In Venezuela, the city of Lecheria is home to an AC, which makes a special effort to reach out to children with daily English-language classes after school. At the Halloween party, kids learned how Americans enjoy this holiday followed by crafts, English vocabulary lessons, movies, and snacks.



Clockwise from top left:

IROs Holly Murten, Laura Kaspari Hohmann, and Bill Middleton along with IRC Director Marina Shubina wrap up a workshop for AC coordinators in Eastern Europe in 2007. Regional workshops, funded by IIP/IR and participating posts, are offered several times a year to promote professional development and exchange of AC ideas and best practices.

In 2010, area IROs Anne Johnson, Sheila Weir, Steve Perry, and IIP/IR's program analyst Eileen Deegan conducted a regional workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, where 25 AC coordinators from 15 countries gathered to build skills in marketing and reporting on programs at their ACs.

Consul General Andrew Passen in Johannesburg welcomed a group of AC coordinators to training in 2010. Embassy personnel such as Regional English Language officers, educational advisors, and other Foreign Service officers and Public Affairs staffers are significant providers of training, guidance, and support for AC partners.

Participants at regional workshops for AC partners gather for a group photo as a memento of the workshop where networking and future contacts are among the long-term goals.

Russian AC Coordinators, visiting the Department of State in Washington, D.C., during their International Visitors Program in 2009, receive a briefing about AC resources and management from IROs Barbara Conaty and Andrea McGlinchey. PAS Moscow administers partnerships with 28 local institutions that host ACs and American Centers.

Turkmenistan's first AC opened in 2002; the AC in Mary opened in 2004. Here the local coordinator is conducting a workshop for local teachers, one of 60 events hosted at this AC in 2009.



Clockwise from top left:

In 2009, AC Coordinators from Chile's five ACs attended a workshop and learned about utilizing "CO.NX" webcasts in their programming.

Journalists practice hands-on exercises during a blogging workshop at the Lincoln Learning Center in Herat, Afghanistan, in 2009.

In Pakistan, the 2007 workshop for partners in the country's four ACs was conducted in Lahore at the U.S. Consulate and participants travelled from Peshawar, Karachi, Islamabad, and Muzaffarabad.

Annually, PAS Moscow conducts a countrywide conference to bring all 28 of its AC coordinators together for training and information sessions where Foreign Service officers, such as Jeffrey Sexton and Geoffrey Anisman shown here, emphasize key current themes in the sessions.



Clockwise from top left:

The AC in Marrakech, Morocco, sponsored an essay contest in 2007 on the topic of "Why I Study English" for secondary school and university students.

Kids earned certificates for their work at the AC in Lecheria, Venezuela, and in 2008 closed their year with a play in the English language entitled "Let's Save the Environment."

A key tool in AC programming is Digital Video Conferencing. Here the AC in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, hosts a DVC in 2007.

In Yerevan, Armenia, an AC program in 2007 entitled "Different Culture, Different Values" included break-out sessions for visiting students to discuss different aspects of American identity and closed with group presentations on varied topics such as sports, patriotism, and history.

In Macedonia's Bitola AC, a student earns a certificate for her successful answers in a quiz during Women's History Month, March, 2007.

At the AC in Kosice, Slovakia, the poetry of Emily Dickinson was featured at a meeting of the AC's Literature Club in March, 2010.



Clockwise from top left:

Earth Day is celebrated in many ACs in April, and in Managua, Nicaragua, an environmental program for young adults attracted a standing-room-only crowd in 2007.

In 2007 The AC hosted by the Diego Portales University in Santiago, Chile, featured a travelling exhibit on "The Graphic Novel as Art" viewed here by PAO Laurie B. Weitzenkorn.

The AC in Corfu, Greece, marked Black History Month by holding a discussion on the short story by Alice Walker entitled "Everyday Use."

Seventh-graders in Iasi, Romania, read Edgar Allan Poe together at the AC, which is hosted by Gheorghe Asachi County Library .

In Romania, Constanta's AC marked Education Day with an open house that included a workshop for 60 high school students on how to use AC resources effectively.

The Kabul University AC, Afghanistan, hosted a gathering in 2006 for journalism students that included a chance to work with a professional American journalist on the topics of media, reporting, writing, and editing.



Clockwise from top left:

IRO Pamela Dragovich explains the Congressional Research Service and how a bill becomes law to a class in the AC in Gwangju, South Korea.

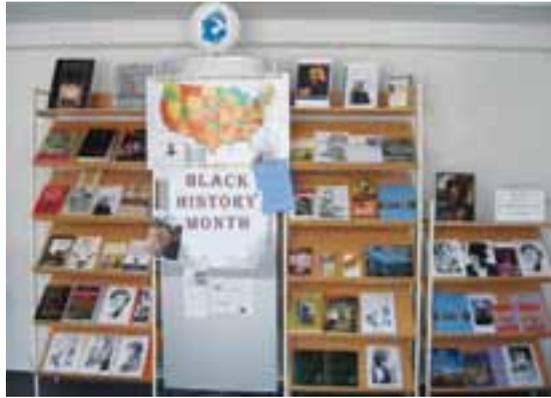
The English Conversation Club for young students gathers for its first meeting at the AC at Austral University in Valdivia, Chile.

In Brasilia, Brazil, these youngsters from a local primary school gathered to hear story-telling American style at the Sala Elizabeth Bishop located at the Biblioteca Demonstrativa de Brasília.

In 2010, in Russia, more than 100 students used an Internet Bridge to have a face-to-face meeting. The students were from local high schools in their home cities of Novosibirsk and Arlington, Virginia.

Ambassador Richard Jones welcomed participants – all alumni from U.S.-sponsored exchange programs – to the Karmiel AC, Israel. They had gathered for the International Education Week program co-sponsored by the Municipality of Karmiel.

In Niger, the AC in Zinder, hosted by the Maison des Jeunes et de la Culture Abdoulsalam Adam, observed Black History Month by featuring four American films about the heroes of the Civil Rights Movement.



Clockwise from top left:

The AC in Macau is hosted by the University of Macau Library and has been in operation since 2004. The AC is administered by the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong.

The Karaganda AC, Kazakhstan, uses this display arrangement to feature books and materials about special events such as Black History Month.

In Nicaragua at the AC in Managua, the display features contemporary American periodicals, a popular feature at most ACs worldwide.

In Oran, Algeria, the AC, which is hosted by the University of Oran Es-Senia, welcomes youngsters to its Kiddie Corner, where a program is held every Monday for them.

In Constantine, Algeria, at the University of Mentouri, the English Language Club programs are consistently the most popular activities. The AC has enrolled about 600 regular subscribers.

The AC in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, is named after W.E.B. DuBois, American author and political scientist. The AC's equipment was upgraded in 2010 and now includes JAWS software for the blind and eight computers for public use.

In Managua, Nicaragua, this light and airy space is enjoyed by patrons of the AC, which is hosted by Nicaragua's Central Bank.



Clockwise from top left:

In Blantyre, Malawi, the AC hosts the Ben Carson Social Club, named after a famed American neurosurgeon whose international philanthropic activities inspired Blantyre's university students to conduct events to benefit their community.

In Turkey, the AC in Bursa set up an information stand at the city's annual Book Fair which drew visitors eager to receive copies of the publications that staff distributed.

In March, 2010, the Lincoln Learning Center in Herat, Afghanistan, hosted a group of second-grade girls and their teachers from a local primary school for a program about Abraham Lincoln and a tour of the premises. Similar programs were held for three other primary schools in the area.

High school students at AC Mary, Turkmenistan, work on a group exercise during a three-day seminar, entitled "Developing Critical Thinking."

The AC Coordinator at the Lincoln Corner in Karachi, Pakistan, reads a story about Halloween to a group of inquisitive children.

In Bacau, Romania, the AC hosted a program about Native Americans for students at a nearby college. Using resources available at the AC, the students presented the results of their research covering music, clothing, and other key topics.



Clockwise from top left:

Children in Rashaya, Lebanon, were invited to a special session at the AC where American coloring books, crayons, and book bags were distributed for a fun session of learning about the heroes of American history.

Youth at the AC in Rustavi, Georgia, enjoy playing a ball game during the Fourth of July holiday celebration at the host institution, Ilia Chavchavadze Rustavi Central Library.

In Vietnam, students participated in a wide-ranging Earth Day program jointly produced by the U.S.-Vietnam Studies Corner in Da Nang as well as other academic and government sponsors.

In Malé, Maldives, the AC organized a library orientation program for 48 students in Grade 4 at the Billabong International School in 2009.

IRO Karen Hartman greets children at a program in the AC at the Kenya National Museum in Lamu during International Education Week in 2007.

In Karachi, Pakistan, a Fashion Design Workshop at the Lincoln Corner attracted interested participants in 2007.



Clockwise from top left:

The American "Promising Arts" gospel-music group conducted a workshop for children at the AC Limon in Costa Rica.

In Kazakhstan, at a Jazz Appreciation Month event, AC Karaganda patrons viewed Smithsonian Institution jazz posters provided by the U.S. Embassy in Astana.

Louisiana singer and songwriter Johnette Downing entertained an enthusiastic group of grade school students at AC Fujairah at the Higher College of Technology, United Arab Emirates.

In Singapore, U.S. musician Freddie Bryant taught students guitar skills at the Temasek Junior College AC. Singapore's ACs are called "American Connections."

At AC Koper, located at the University of Primorska in Slovenia, young actors re-enacted the development of country music in Nashville, Tennessee.

The AC in Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, held a musical event to celebrate Jazz Appreciation Month in April, 2007. Cooperating with a local art school, the program encouraged students to paint works on themes of pop art which were displayed at the concert.



Clockwise from top left:

The Deputy Mayor of Khorog, Tajikistan, and the American Cultural Affairs officer opened the AC in 2009 which brought the country's total of ACs to five. The AC is open 40 hours per week and offers English-language activities, educational advising, and information about exchange programs.

In Quito, the first AC in Ecuador opened in 2009 with Ambassador Heather Hodges and Quito Mayor Andres Vallejo doing the honors.

At Austral University in Valdivia, Chile, students peruse American periodicals such as U. S. News & World Report at the newly opened AC.

In Daugavpils, Latvia, this reading room area is a typical example of the kinds of facilities and furnishings that are provided in ACs worldwide.

PAS Addis Ababa opened its fourth AC in 2008 in the town of Jimma, Ethiopia, where university students are frequent users of work stations connected to the Internet, a valued service in this country.

Located in the Muslim North of Nigeria, this AC opened in 2007 and is hosted by the University of Maiduguri. This AC is one of 10 in Africa's most populous nation.



Clockwise from top left:

Costa Rica's AC is located in Limon at the Major Thomas Lynch Public Library and opened in 2007. Its programming focuses on workshops for teachers of English, presentations by guest artists, and outreach by US Embassy colleagues.

Paraguay's AC in Asuncion opened in 2007 and now offers a wide variety of programming to university students in the area as well as to the visitors of the binational center that hosts the AC.

Volgograd's AC, Russia, was opened in 2001 and is hosted by the Volgograd Regional Research Library. Most recently, in May 2010, this AC pioneered in the use of Skype for videoconferencing when it held a session to bring local residents in touch with colleagues currently studying at American universities.

Former Under Secretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes cuts the opening ribbon at the AC in Marrakech, Morocco, in 2006. This AC, located at the Dar Athakafa Cultural Center, was the second AC to open in this country.

Located in the Lori Regional Library, the Vanadzor AC was the third AC to open in Armenia. Ambassador Rudolf Perina and the Governor of the Lori region officiated at the opening.



Clockwise from top left:

Right to left, IRO Andrea McGlinchey, PAS Warsaw, and Anna Poplavko, PAS Moscow, welcomed visitors to the U.S. Embassy booth at Crimea 2010, an international library conference held in Ukraine.

PAO Eric Johnson, PAS St. Petersburg (center), originator of the AC concept. From left to right: Speakers L. Sviridova (Novosibirsk), S. Slesarchuk (Perm), A. Murashova (St. Petersburg), K. Timofeeva (Kaliningrad), A. Loginova (Yekaterinburg), M. Woods (Copyright Office, Library of Congress), IRO Conaty (IIP/IR), A. Poplavko (PAS Moscow), E. Markova (Vologda), and IRO A. McGlinchey (PAS Warsaw).

IROs congratulate Kyiv IRC Director Valentyna Pashkova (center) on her book about the history of library associations at the Crimea 2010 conference.

IIP/IR sponsored a U.S. Embassy booth at the Crimea 2010 conference where IIP publications, posters, AC brochures, and other literature were freely available to visitors.

Senior Advisor Michele Woods, Copyright Office, Library of Congress, delivered a session on "Copyright in American Corners".

Kseniya Timofeeva, Kaliningrad, explained in her presentation at Crimea 2010 how her AC reaches out to provide services to schools for children with special needs and other patrons at the Central City Library.

Odessa's AC Coordinator Natalya Dyba (in blue) joins the dance line for the popular YouTube video "Librarians Go Gaga" at Crimea 2010. Photos on this page: Olesia Trachuk, IRC assistant, PAS Kyiv.

REPORTING

Reporting is one of the most important responsibilities of an American Corner coordinator. Remember that your partners at the embassy and your colleagues in Washington, D.C., need to see your reports to strengthen the case for continuing support of ACs worldwide and in your country.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AMERICAN CORNER COORDINATORS

American Corner coordinators should report to their U.S. embassy or consulate all major events and programs held at the Corner, especially if an American officer did not plan or execute the event.

The more detailed and specific the descriptions of events, the better. Small events should be at least one paragraph (five sentences) in length. Mid- to large-scale events should be two to three paragraphs in length.

When writing the summary of each event, please keep in mind the following questions. Not all of these will be relevant to every event, but they are useful as a guideline.

- When did the event take place? (Beginning and ending dates)
- Where was the event held? (Include this information only if the event was not held at the Corner.)
- What type of event was it? Conference, seminar, roundtable discussion, debate, movie viewing and discussion, art or photo exhibit, reception, etc.
- What was the title of the event?
- Why was the event held, or what was the occasion? Example: "To celebrate the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday, a nutrition expert working with the U.S. Peace Corps was invited to talk about typical American holiday foods."
- Who attended the event, and how many attended? Example: High school instructors from six city schools; 48 students from Guayaquil State University; six businessmen from Sao Paulo. (Please include in your report the presence of U.S. exchange program alumni, including Fulbright scholars.)
- Who were the speakers? (If the speaker is a U.S. exchange program alumnus, please include the name of the program and the year that he or she took part in the program.)
- What topics did the speaker cover? Example: "Mr. Jones talked about the national park system in the United States and explained the role of the U.S. Environmental Protection Administration."
- What type of discussion followed the presentation? Question and answer, informal discussion at a reception, etc.
- What questions did the attendees have? Example: "Students asked the speaker about English language requirements for international students attending universities in the USA."
- Who co-organized or sponsored the event with the American Corner? (Name and brief identification of organization, if needed.)
- What were the outcomes of the event? Example: "The lecture on U.S. nonprofit organizations led to the formation of a fund-raising group to build a local library."

- What follow-up activities are planned? Example: “As a result of this discussion, the AC will sponsor a videoconference with a group of Native Americans from Wisconsin.”

Participant quotes

Quotations from participants attesting to the value of an event can greatly enrich event summaries. They should include the first and last name of the individual, his or her occupation, and place of work or study.

Example: “In his first visit to the American Corner in Managua, President Bolaños was briefed on the services and resources available. ‘Once I retire I will become a regular and read all these books,’ he exclaimed.”

Good photographs of events

- Are well-lighted.
- Feature no more than four individuals.
- Show patrons enjoying themselves.
- Are taken at close range and clearly show the faces of those being photographed.
- Are “action shots.” Persons in the photograph are doing something (speaking to a group, working together on a project, engaged in a discussion).
- Include a caption that identifies who is in the photograph and what is happening.

The most common reasons for less effective photographs:

- Participants are looking down and their faces are not visible. Everyone in the photo looks bored or unhappy.
- The photo is too dark.
- Tables and desks in foreground have plastic water bottles and other objects in the way.
- The photographer was too far away from the subjects of the photograph.
- The photo is “static” and simply shows people sitting passively or staring at the camera.
- It is unclear who the people in the photo are or what they are doing.

Sample American Corner Monthly Report

Statistical Record	
Number of visitors	
Number of programs held	
Total attendance at programs	
Number of books charged out (if applicable)	
Number of embassy visits	

List of Programs Held					
Title	Presenter	Date	Audience	Attendance Level	Comments

List of Programs Held

Most popular programs by category and audience:

1. _____
2. _____

Most popular materials (books, magazines, DVDs, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____

Highlights:

1. _____
2. _____

Suggestions for improvement: (types and number of programs; subject areas for collection; specific books, magazines, DVDs)

MONTHLY STATISTICS REPORT – SAMPLE COMPLETED FORM

**American Corner Gyumri Monthly Report
December 2009**

Statistical Record

Number of visitors	432
Number of programs held	4
Total attendance at programs	88
Number of books charged out	189
Number of embassy visits	1

List of Programs Held

Title	Presenter	Date	Audience Level	Attendance	Comments
English Conversation Club	Brian Harper, Dominic Monley Scott Demyan	December 6,13	Club Members	22	
				35	
American Presidential Elections (Primaries and Electoral College)	Edward Keller	December 12	Students, NGO representatives	16	
Christmas in the United States	Lilit Greyan	December 20	Students, NGO Representatives	15	

Most popular programs by category and audience:

1. English Conversation Club
2. Americans at the American Corner

Most popular materials (books, magazines, DVDs, etc.)

Books:

- *New Ways of Teaching Grammar*, Jack C. Richards
- *Message in a Bottle*, Nicholas Sparks
- *American Slang Dictionary*
- *English Idioms*

Magazines:

- *National Geographic*, *Forbes*, *Newsweek*, *State*

Reporting on AC Events

1. Kansas National Guard

On December 12, U.S. embassy representative Edward Keller gave a lecture in English on the history of the Kansas National Guard.

Mr. Keller gave a general introduction to the Kansas National Guard, talking about when it was organized and what the aim of the guard is. He discussed the U.S. flag as well. After Mr. Keller's speech, the presenters watched *The 34th Star*, a documentary film about Kansas in the American Civil War.

2. Christmas Party at Gyumri American Corner

Initiated by Gyumri American Corner English Club members and Peace Corps volunteers, the Gyumri American Corner organized a Christmas party. Santa Claus greeted the participants, which was a nice surprise for all. After that, Peace Corps volunteers sang Christmas carols and other Christmas songs together. One of the patrons, Astxik Gomtsyan, prepared a game with balloons. Everybody enjoyed it. Club members also baked some sweets and brought drinks

3. Christmas in the United States

On December 20, FLEX alumna Lilit Greyan gave a public lecture at the Gyumri American Corner. The topic was Christmas in the United States. First, she discussed the historic roots of Christmas in America. She noted that the holiday is permitted by the U.S. Constitution. Lilit spoke about Christmas carols, Santa Claus, and other Christmas traditions. She said that each state celebrates Christmas in its own way and each has its own traditions. She also talked about her own Christmas experience in the United States. Lilit said she was amazed by how much money Americans spend on presents. They start buying presents in November and finish on Christmas Eve.

After Lilit's presentation, the audience had an opportunity to watch a video about the Gyumri American Corner Christmas party. The participants had a lot of fun. Then, American Corner Coordinator Amalia Stepanyan offered books to all participants as a Christmas present.

Suggestions for improvement: (types and number of programs; subject areas for collection; specific books, magazines, DVDs)

Book Suggestions:

1. TOEFL, GRE, GMAT,
2. *The Citadel* by A.J. Cronin
3. Grammar Books
4. Linguistics

U.S. EXCHANGE PROGRAM ALUMNI

ALUMNI AND AMERICAN CORNERS

Each year thousands of citizens from countries around the world take part in a U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. These exchanges range from academic to professional and vary in length and depth. Upon returning home, alumni find many ways to implement what they learned while on their exchange program. For many alumni, having American Corners in their areas serves to maintain their connection with the USA and share the lessons they learned on their exchange with their local community. ACs interact with alumni in many ways.

- Providing alumni associations with a space for meetings;
- Welcoming alumni to participate in AC-organized events;
- Inviting alumni to speak at events;
- Acting as a partner organization on alumni grant proposals.

All participants in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs are considered to be alumni. Alumni participate in a variety of programs sponsored by various Departments (i.e., the Department of State, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, etc.). Major State Department programs include:

Academic Programs

- Fulbright Program, Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program, Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program, Global Undergraduate Exchange Program, Study of the U.S. Institutes for Scholars and Undergraduate Student Leaders, English Access Microscholarship Program

Professional and Citizen Exchanges

- FORTUNE/State Department Global Women's Mentoring Partnership, American Council of Young Political Leaders, Sports Visitor Program, International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists

Cultural Programs

- Cultural Envoys, Cultural Visitors, International Writing Program, Performing Arts Initiatives, Rhythm Road – American Music Abroad

Youth Programs

- Youth Ambassadors, American-Serbia & Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange, Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, Future Leaders Exchange, Youth Exchange and Study

Exchange program alumni bring a variety of experiences, ideas, and knowledge to ACs. While in the USA they may have received a graduate degree from a university, interned at an NGO, attended a high school, lectured or researched at a university, volunteered, or cooperated with professionals in their respective fields. The amount of time they spent in the USA can range from a few weeks to many years. Regardless of the time spent abroad or level of English competency, they share a common interest in the USA.

Because of this, there is a natural synergy between ACs and exchange program alumni. ACs play an important role in helping alumni maintain ties to the USA, share their experiences and impressions of the USA with a local audience, and readjust to life in their home community. Some ACs have a formal and successful working relationship with local and regional alumni associations. Other ACs work more informally with alumni, but regularly invite them to speak at events and participate in workshops and seminars.

ALUMNI PARTICIPATION IN AMERICAN CORNER EVENTS

Exchanges alumni may want to participate in, or speak at, events related to their areas of expertise, interest, or other topics of local interest. They may also be instrumental in selecting appropriate topics for discussions, seminars, conferences, and Web chats. Alumni have volunteered at ACs as trainers or assistants, and some have helped by contributing their talents, such as arranging an art exhibit. The following are examples of how alumni have been involved with programming at various ACs:

A-SMYLE Alumni Continue to Volunteer for American Corner in Nis

Nis, Serbia – Throughout 2009, A-SMYLE alumni developed an ongoing volunteer program at the American Corner in Nis. Alumni volunteer to play games with students and kids, teach English, give presentations on various topics, and organize holiday parties and other American cultural events for the youngest ones. “I can see that the children that I work with are having fun while learning English. They don’t even see me as a real teacher, which is good because they are not scared that they will say something wrong... It’s nice knowing that you can help someone, even if it’s such a small gesture,” said one of the A-SMYLE alumni.

Israel Celebrates International Education Week at American Corners

Karmiel, Yaffo, and Beersheva, Israel – In November of 2007, the U.S. Embassy, in coordination with three American Corners and alumni throughout Israel, promoted the importance of International Education Week and educational exchanges to the United States and abroad. Ambassador Jones and several prominent speakers kicked off the first event at the American Corner in Karmiel on November 13. The audience of more than 70 attendees included the Mayor of Karmiel, local government officials, members of alumni associations, and high school students who participated in the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) and the English Access Microscholarship Programs.

The initiative continued on November 14 at the American Corner in Yaffo. English Language Fellows (ELFs) and alumni from the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) conducted a program that shared their experiences in the United States. They divided the audience into small groups so that participants could work more directly with each facilitator. On November 15th, ELF alumni and the assistant cultural affairs officer at the embassy conducted a program in Beersheva. Participants included a group of 10-12th grade girls from Albayan Tel Sheva Aleph High School. The guest speaker and alumnus, Dr. El-Sana, discussed his experience as a grantee of the Israeli-Arab Scholarship Program. He spoke about life as a foreign student in the USA and underlined the importance of getting to know the American people. After the program, the ELF alumni led the students in English-educational activities. All the events succeeded in both attracting Israeli educational leaders and students to learn, develop exchanges, and promote mutual understanding.

AMERICAN CORNERS AS PARTNERS ON ALUMNI GRANT PROPOSALS

Many ACs have supported the grant proposals of U.S. exchange program alumni. For example, an AC might offer free use of its space, a computer terminal, or a telephone for the duration of a grant project. At times, alumni may request a letter that shows the AC’s commitment of support for their project or grant proposal.

AC coordinators may want to consider highlighting the following points in a letter of support:

- Details of the AC, such as location (i.e., close to town, located in a resource library) and how long the AC has been there;
- Resources available at the AC that will aid with the project implementation;
- Ways that the AC has worked with alumni in the past;

- Reasons why people come to the AC and how the project could complement current activities;
- General numbers of people, including alumni, who utilize the AC.

THE STATE ALUMNI WEBSITE

American Corner coordinators are eligible for guest accounts on the State Alumni website. If the coordinators participated in an exchange program, they are eligible to register as alumni.

State Alumni is the official website for more than 1 million alumni of exchange programs sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Interactive, dynamic, and password-protected, the site offers alumni from U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs a place to network with other alumni from around the globe; share information about exchange programs and alumni activities; participate in Q&A Live discussions with experts; and access resources such as grants, jobs, and research databases.

To sign up for a guest account, please email the following to: webmaster@alumni.state.gov

- Full name
- Official title and name of American Corner
- Official email address

If signing up as an alum, please do the following:

- Go to <https://alumni.state.gov>
- Click on “Join now” or “Click here to register.”
- Follow the prompts on the screen to Set Up Your Account.
 1. Please note that when entering a password for your account, the password must include 3 of the 4 types of characters: upper case (A,B,C), lower case (a,b,c), numbers (1,2,3), or symbols (!,*,\$).
 2. Make sure to include all appropriate program information (enter your name as it appears on your passport, the program dates, etc.).
 3. Please select the appropriate program name from the dropdown menu.
- Once all appropriate information has been entered, click “Submit” at the bottom of the screen.

Upon submitting the registration information, registrants will receive an email stating that their registration has been received. However, applicants will not have full access to the website until the information they submitted has been verified. This is a safety precaution that can take up to 10 business days, but is often completed in a shorter amount of time. Once the information has been verified, the registrant will receive a second email stating that he/she has been verified and now has full access to the website. All users are verified to ensure that only alumni of U.S. government-sponsored programs are on the website.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

REGIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE OFFICERS

Regional English Language Officers (RELO) are language teaching professionals who work as Foreign Service specialists in the U.S. Department of State. Regionally based in Public Affairs Sections at selected U.S. embassies, RELOs travel to countries within their regions.

RELOs advise posts on all aspects of English Language Programming. RELOs consult with host-country ministry, university, and teacher-training officials, visit local schools and institutions, and attend local conferences and seminars in order to help posts implement ECA English Programs in the most effective manner. RELOs also develop, monitor, and fund targeted local programs, support the development of local teachers' organizations, and serve as resources to teachers and other education professionals in their region to improve the overall quality of English-language instruction.

For more information about English-language-learning, check with your Public Affairs section at the U.S. embassy.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE FELLOWS

The English Language Fellow Program fosters mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and those of other countries. It sends talented, highly qualified educators in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) on 10-month fellowships to overseas academic institutions in all regions of the world. The program promotes English-language learning and enhances English-teaching capacity abroad. More than 500 English-language professionals have conducted programs in over 80 countries. Some of the projects are:

- EFL Classroom Teaching
- Teacher Training
- In-Service and Pre-Service Training
- Curriculum Development
- Workshop and Seminar Design
- Program Evaluation
- Needs Assessment
- Testing
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Some additional resources for English learning can be found at the following sites.

- Office of English Language Programs, U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

<http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/index.html>

- U.S. Department of State materials

<http://eca.state.gov/education/engteaching/pubs/>

- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), a global association

http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp

- ESL Cafe on the Web – Dave Sperling’s regularly updated Cafe is among the most widely visited English-language sites on the Web.

<http://www.eslcafe.com/>

- Internet TESL Journal – In addition to its role as a monthly journal, this site gives access to over 1500 regularly updated ESL\EFL links.

<http://iteslj.org/>

- Linguistic Funland TESL Page – A large number of links, regularly updated.

<http://www.tesol.net/tesl.html>

EDUCATIONAL ADVISING

EducationUSA is a network of more than 400 certified student advising centers supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which offer accurate, comprehensive, objective, and timely information about educational opportunities in the USA and guidance to qualified individuals on how best to access those opportunities. This includes information about application procedures, standardized test requirements, student visas, financial aid, and the full range of accredited U.S. higher education institutions.

EducationUSA advising centers operate within a wide variety of institutions, including U.S. embassies, Fulbright Commissions, U.S. nonprofit organizations with overseas operations, binational centers, local universities, and private foundations. Centers are staffed by professional advisers, many of whom have first-hand experience through having studied in the USA themselves. Advisers adhere to ethical standards and have received State Department-approved training about U.S. higher education and the advising process. The EducationUSA website provides information on higher education in the USA as well as contact information for educational advisors in your region.

<http://educationusa.state.gov/>

Fourteen ECA-funded Regional Educational Advising Coordinators (REACs) contribute vital expertise and field-based knowledge to develop and strengthen the EducationUSA advising network. Additionally, the EducationUSA website enables advising centers, prospective students, and U.S. universities to share the latest information and resources on academic opportunities.

American Corners are encouraged to include information about studying in the USA in their collections. Such materials may be available from advising centers in the region or from the Public Affairs Section at the American embassy. Educational advisers may find American Corners a useful venue for promoting advising services or for conducting advising activities. ECA actively encourages advising centers to take advantage of local American Corners whenever appropriate.

GETTING MORE RESOURCES FOR YOUR AC

This section will give you some guidelines on in-kind support, identifying sources of that support, and how to obtain it.

What is in-kind support?

In-kind support is a way for your AC, or volunteers who work at your AC, to seek resources other than monetary donations. When someone wants to give your AC a service, supplies, or free help, you're receiving in-kind support. You can look for in-kind support from your members and within your local community.

In-kind support could be an important part of the resource pool available to your AC. It can help build community support for your organization because in-kind contributions illustrate to grant makers that your American Corner is self-sustainable and fills a need in the community. In other words, in-kind contributions can lead to more in-kind donations and will make your grant proposals stronger.

Seeking in-kind support should be an integral part of your American Corner plan for action and sustainability.

Why should you solicit in-kind support?

Many groups and individuals can't donate cash or feel uncomfortable doing so, but if asked would be happy to give supplies, space or time. Since community groups often need these kinds of resources, this can be a great match.

- In-kind support helps build community support for your work. When people donate a computer or some staff time, their connection to your cause grows stronger. They have more of a stake in seeing you succeed. So it's not only goods and services you are receiving; you are getting some goodwill in the bargain, building credibility and respect in the community, and developing new allies, too.
- In-kind supporters can also steer you to other sources of in-kind support, sources you might not have known about before. By using their connections, you might be able to acquire that support as well. In this way, both your in-kind resources and overall community support can grow. Your new supporters may be able to help you later on in ways no one could have anticipated.
- In some jurisdictions, outright donations of cash to an American Corner could raise attention from the local tax authorities.

Types of in-kind donations

Goods are just about anything that isn't money – a car, paper, equipment, or furniture. Goods are a vital non-cash resource for any organization. They can be new products and merchandise or they can be used. They can also be loaned, or they can be purchased cooperatively with another group. Goods include:

- Equipment and furniture;
- Space, including maintenance and utilities;
- Food that people bring to your regular meetings or events.

Services are often grouped with goods as in-kind gifts. Corporations are the best-known contributors, but the giving of services is a community-wide practice. Small businesses, vendors, colleges, other nonprofits, individual professionals and trades people all have services to offer. Services include:

- Construction and renovation;
- Printing facilities;
- Public relations and promotional activities.

People are the key to all resources in most service-oriented nonprofit groups. People resources are persons giving their time free of charge. Anyone who offers your group technical assistance or consultation, or who provides financial services and bookkeeping, or who volunteers, is making an in-kind donation to your group.

People resources are not only volunteers, but they can also be paid employees whose employers have “lent” them to you to work on AC efforts. Because people are everywhere, know everyone, and do everything, their resource potential is unlimited. The challenge is to discover how to use interested people in the best combination to your organization’s advantage. People resources include:

- Staffing;
- Professionals who volunteer to participate in your group – even for short periods of time.

Planning for Solicitation of In-Kind Support

As you approach potential contributors, it is important to remember that you not only hope to take something from them, but you are also offering them an opportunity to put their organization in a positive light to a large audience. When communicating with potential donors do your homework and be prepared.

Plan how you will approach various members of your community to ask for non-cash resources. Do your members have good contacts with particular businesses, companies, institutions, or individuals? Think positively and creatively. In some ways, seeking in-kind support is less intimidating than asking for money. Some businesses are looking for ways to show their involvement and generosity toward their host community.

Tool #1 in this section, the In-Kind Donor Prospect Profile, will be useful in collecting the information you will need to discuss the ways in which the business will benefit by their donation. Fill out these worksheets before calling, writing, or meeting with potential donors, and you’ll be better prepared and focused.

A lot of in-kind support you get will come from the relationships you’ve already established with people in your community. If they know and trust you, they will want to support you. The moral is to take the time to develop and cultivate such relationships, and to make them reciprocal.

If your solicitation doesn’t work with a particular group, try another. If there is a lesson to be learned, it is that persistence pays.

Tool #1: In-Kind Donor Prospect Profile

Name of Organization or Business	
Prospect Profile	
Name of Contact Person	
Title/Position of Contact	
Address/Phone/Email of Contact	
Relationship to Contact	

Known Giving Patterns of Org/Bus	
Name of AC Project	
Brief Description of AC Project	
AC Project Partners	
Other Project In-Kind Supporters	
Benefits to Community	
Possible Benefits to Org/Bus	
Suggested In-Kind Support	

After Soliciting In-Kind Support

Keep a careful accounting of the monetary values of your in-kind solicitations. This will be important for your group when you apply for grants. Use the worksheet, Tool #2, at the end of this section for tracking in-kind support.

And be sure to write thank you notes to your donors.

In-kind contributions are a demonstration of community support for your group when applying for grants. When funders see that people in your community are willing to donate services and goods to your group, they know your group has strong local support. You are also showing that your group is ready to manage its own affairs.

Tool #2: Worksheet for Tracking In-Kind Support

In-kind support for the month of: _____

Donor	In-Kind Support	Monetary Value	Contact Person	Thank You Note Sent?

VOLUNTEERS

Many American Corner coordinators report that volunteers help them with their work. Some Corners only invite volunteers to assist them on a short-term basis – for big events, for example – while others have volunteers who give their time to the Corner or BNC on a regular basis, working with patrons and the collections in addition to helping with events. Volunteers come from all walks of life. They may be students who need some work experience, professionals hoping to share their knowledge with others, or retirees looking for a place to put their energy and experience. Volunteers might be from your local community, or they may be Americans residing temporarily in your city.

These relationships can be beneficial for both the volunteer and the American Corner or BNC. The Corner gets much-needed help in carrying out programming and other activities, and the volunteers receive work experience, training, the opportunity to use Corner or BNC resources, a letter of recommendation that can be shown to future employers, or simply the satisfaction of having freely given of their time.

Following are first-hand impressions from an American Corner staff member and a volunteer whose experience provided these real-life examples.

THE AC VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

My American Corner is located at a university where there is a culture-based language-learning program so our students study not only the language, but also history and culture. They know that volunteering is an American value, so some of them want to put their theoretical knowledge into practice.

Our experience has shown that there are two types of volunteers. Some students approach us and ask how they can help. Others are what we refer to as “passive volunteers.” They don’t mind helping and volunteering, but they don’t make the first step. They need to be asked.

Volunteers are recruited using different means depending on the kind of help we need. If it is a long-term project, we make an announcement to the general student population. For general help at the library, we invite those who seem to be interested and spend a lot of time at the American Center. And finally, we work closely with professors of English who tell their students when we need help and who help us recruit reliable, creative, and enthusiastic students.

We depend on volunteers a lot. They help us with the everyday routine of the library, which includes putting books on the shelves, cataloging books, helping users find the information they need, and finding the necessary information to answer reference questions. They also help us prepare for public events and they help us take care of our guests.

For first-year students we conduct a course called Library and Information Science. Our aim is to teach them how to use the library efficiently. Over the course of a month, we meet once a week for class, and once a week for three months the students are required to get practical training by helping us in the library. Those who complete the course, receive an official academic credit. Depending on need, we also provide training for other volunteers.

In addition to training, volunteers receive other benefits as well. Firstly, they can use all library resources at any time when an AC staff member is present. We are open to the general public from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., but usually someone is at the AC from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. so volunteers can be here during this time. Additional privileges include being allowed to check out more books for a longer period of time, and to check out magazines and videotapes, which we generally don’t allow.

Volunteers get the opportunity to meet interesting guests. Last year we had a student who provided translation once a month for the U.S. guest speakers who spoke at a series of roundtable discussions we hosted for alumni. He not only received valuable translation experience that he can include on his resume; he met a lot of interesting people. Volunteers receive letters of reference from us when they need it. For some, volunteering might turn into a job. Recently we were able to offer two of our best volunteers, who are fourth-year students at the university, part-time jobs at the Center. Volunteers become a part of our American family, and they know that they can rely on us and that we will help them.

We strongly believe in the importance of volunteers and volunteering. Like many of my colleagues, I was once a volunteer myself. We also understand that we need to dedicate our time to them and share our knowledge with them. To have a successful volunteer program, one needs to have a vision, set up goals and tasks that can be accomplished, and of course be appreciative of the help one receives.

How Does a Volunteer Fall in Love with an American Corner?

I feel so much more positive about this city since I started to have my one-on-one conversation sessions with so many different local people. Their appreciation of me—for finding time to talk to them—is very heart-warming. If they only realized how much I enjoy their thoughts and eagerness to find out about the world beyond this country. Many of my visitors study English all on their own and after overcoming their shyness, seem to be very comfortable talking with me.

Yesterday I was kept busy from the time I arrived until I left at three. I couldn't believe it. I talked to a young theater actress, a woman who won a green card in the lottery, a business man in a suit who used to run a cultural newspaper and brought me a bar of chocolate, a 13-year-old girl who thinks I'm cool, and a highly educated married lady looking for a job.

I am very happy that I followed my intuition to call the American Corner coordinator when she was asking for volunteers. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to find local life so enriching.

Volunteer Websites

Several U.S.-based volunteer organizations host websites with numerous ideas on recruiting, supporting and recognizing volunteers.



- Points of Light & Hands on Network: <http://www.pointsoflight.org/>

SISTER LIBRARY RELATIONSHIPS

A number of libraries have established sister library relationships under the international Sister Libraries program of the American Library Association. Some have come about as a result of sister city relationships. Many cities in which American Corners and Binational Centers are located have a sister city in the United States – some have more than one sister city or state – and several American Corners are active in their sister city activities.

If your city has a sister city in the U.S, your library, through the American Corner, might consider contacting libraries located in your sister city to set up such a relationship (see sample letter in this section). The scope of the activities that you might engage in with your sister library or city need not cost anything more than your time, but could further enhance your international activities and build additional bridges of understanding between your countries. For more details, please visit the Sister Cities International site:

<http://www.sister-cities.org/>

Another way to explore the possibility of establishing a sister library relationship would be to browse the American Library Association's database of libraries that seek to establish a sister library relationship with libraries around the world:

http://wikis.ala.org/sisterlibraries/index.php/The_Directory

The American Library Association's Sister Library subcommittee commissioned a research study in 2008 to identify communities in the USA which are likely to be interested in supporting a Sister Library relationship between their academic or public library and an American Corner library overseas. The researcher identified American cities with significant diaspora populations that maintain ties with cities and towns where American Corners have been established. This website identifies these populations in the USA.

http://wikis.ala.org/sisterlibraries/index.php/Partner_Libraries_Match_People_to_People

Before making any inquiries, however, please make sure that the director of your library would like to see such a relationship develop, and discuss ways you might like to cooperate with a sister library.

American Library Association's International Relations Roundtable Sister Library Wiki

"To promote the concept of a global community of libraries, the American Library Association (ALA) is encouraging U.S. libraries to form partnerships with libraries in other countries. Participants in the ALA Sister Library Initiative should choose the level of involvement with their sister library based upon the mutual needs of the libraries. Sister libraries should make commitments at levels that are comfortable for both participants. Some partnerships will be informal, while others may involve formal contracts and ceremonies. The links below will provide ideas and resources to help you arrange this type of partnership." From the ALA/IRRT Sister Library Initiative Wiki: http://wikis.ala.org/sisterlibraries/index.php/Main_Page

Sister library participants can enter their own suggested activities and success stories in the ALA / IRRT Wiki: http://wikis.ala.org/sisterlibraries/index.php/Main_Page

Matched by geographic area	Matched by type of library
Alaska	Academic Libraries
Arizona	Academic Libraries
California	Academic Libraries
Colorado	Academic Libraries
Connecticut	Academic Libraries
Florida	Academic Libraries
Georgia	Academic Libraries
Illinois	Academic Libraries
Indiana	Academic Libraries
Iowa	Academic Libraries
Kansas	Academic Libraries
Michigan	Academic Libraries
Minnesota	Academic Libraries
Missouri	Academic Libraries
Montana	Academic Libraries
Nebraska	Academic Libraries
Nevada	Academic Libraries
New York	Academic Libraries
North Carolina	Academic Libraries
North Dakota	Academic Libraries
Ohio	Academic Libraries
Oklahoma	Academic Libraries
Oregon	Academic Libraries
South Carolina	Academic Libraries
South Dakota	Academic Libraries
Texas	Academic Libraries
Utah	Academic Libraries
Virginia	Academic Libraries
Washington	Academic Libraries
West Virginia	Academic Libraries
Wisconsin	Academic Libraries
Wyoming	Academic Libraries

Sample Letter of Inquiry to a Potential Sister Library

*American Corner
Regional Universal Research Library
A Small Country, Telephone, Email address*

*South Carolina State Library
PO Box 11469
Columbia, South Carolina 29211*

February 3, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Regional Universal Research Library, I am writing to inquire if your library would be interested in establishing a sister library relationship with our library. Our library is committed to sharing information about the United States with the local community, and we would be interested in furthering our commitment to that goal and bringing our two communities closer together.

In June of 2003, the U.S. embassy opened an American Corner in the Regional Universal Research Library. The mission of American Corners is to promote mutual understanding between the USA and my country. The American Corner provides information about U.S. history, culture, government, society and values to residents of my city and its surrounding region.

The embassy supplies American Corners with an initial collection of books, documentary films, CD-ROMs, and equipment. Our book and video collection has now grown as a result of private and U.S. embassy donations to several thousand items.

The American Corner hosts a variety of events connected with U.S. life – meetings with Americans, celebration of American holidays, discussion clubs, and projects. For more information about our program, please visit our website.

The Regional Universal Research Library, established 105 years ago, is one of the oldest in the region. It has always functioned as a public library, and today its book collection numbers over 2 million items in 20 languages. Annually, the collection increases by 25,000-27,000 items. The library serves 1.3 million residents in the city and takes a leading role in formulating library policy in the region.

The library welcomes new ideas and methods of work. It is a participant in many programs and also realizes its own projects with financial support from the Ministry of Culture, foundations and non-profit organizations. The library works in partnership with libraries, universities, museums and many organizations worldwide.

The library is interested in establishing partnerships, creating cultural and informational exchanges, and promoting better understanding between the United States and my country, and we would particularly enjoy having the opportunity to do that with South Carolina State Library.

I look forward to having the chance to discuss this possibility in more detail with your library. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require more information about our library.

With best regards,

Coordinator, American Corner

CONCLUSION

In ten years of development, the American Corners program has been an effective way for American embassies to extend their reach into communities far from the capital cities to bring accurate and current information about the USA to people interested in its politics and policies. While modest in size and resources, the partnerships between embassy Public Affairs Sections and local libraries or other suitable institutions have produced results that are long-lasting and cost-effective. Worldwide, ACs hosted nearly 20,000 programs in 2009 achieving an overall attendance of 770,000 people. Leaders of local communities repeatedly approach the embassies to request that new American Corners be initiated with local institutions because these leaders realize along with Grameen Bank's Muhammad Yunus that small steps can lead to big strides in human development and quality of life even in remote communities. One visitor to a new American Corner that opened in April, 2010 in Banjul, The Gambia, noted, "I wish to thank you very, very much for the excellent discussions we had at the American Corner. Yesterday's topic was great and you can see how hungry our youths are in search of knowledge, especially in the topic you selected for the discussion. Please keep up the wonderful work you are doing and we wish that other diplomatic missions emulate you."

At the U.S. Department of State, we are grateful for the help and cooperation of the more than 400 local partners that support their local American Corners Programs. Because of their commitment and energy, there is a warm welcome to the visitors to American Corners located in universities, colleges, public libraries, community centers, and other host institutions.

Every year, the home office of the American Corners Program, working with field-based Information Resource Officers, sponsors regional workshops where individuals who staff the American Corners receive training in key skills such as reporting and programming and learn about new materials and resources for their AC clientele. While it is not possible to offer such workshops to all our AC partners, the regional workshops give us an opportunity to meet and train about 120 AC partners every year.

As our readers use this manual, we invite comments and observations. The American Corners Program relies on its partners for fresh ideas about how to meet the information needs of AC members and visitors. Please write to the American Corners Coordinator, americancorners@state.gov so that future editions of this manual can be updated with useful insights, ideas for practical management, and resources.

U.S. GOVERNMENT ACRONYMS

AC	American Corner
ACS	American Citizen Services
AF	African Affairs (DOS Designation)
AmCit	American Citizen
APAO	Assistant Public Affairs Officer
BNC	Binational Center (common throughout Latin America)
CAO	Cultural Affairs Officer
CODEL	Congressional Delegation
CG	Consul General
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DAO	Defense Attaché Office
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
DVC	Digital Video Conference
EAP	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (DOS Designation)
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
ELF	English Language Fellow
ESL	English as a Second Language
EUR	European and Eurasian Affairs (DOS Designation)
FAS	Foreign Agriculture Service
FCS	Foreign Commercial Service
FLOTUS	First Lady of the United States
FSN	Foreign Service National (Locally Employed USG staff)
IIP	Bureau of International Information Programs
IO	Information Officer (aka Press Officer)
IO	International Organizations
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IR	Office of Information Resources (also IIP/IR)
IRC	Information Resource Center
IRO	Information Resource Officer
IV/IVP	International Visitor Program
L	Office of the Legal Advisor
LC	Library of Congress

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEA	Near Eastern Affairs (DOS Designation)
OELP	Office of English Language Programs
PAO	Public Affairs Officer
PAS	Public Affairs Section
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PD	Public Diplomacy
PDO	Public Diplomacy Office (Officer)
PO	Principal Officer
POTUS	President of the United States
REAC	Regional Educational Advising Coordinator
RELO	Regional English Language Officer
SCA	South and Central Asian Affairs (DOS Designation)
SECSTATE	Secretary of State
USG	United States Government
VIP	Very Important Person
WHA	Western Hemisphere Affairs (DOS Designation)

URLS FOR RESOURCES CITED IN THE MANUAL

Bureau of International Information Programs

www.america.gov

American Corners Website

<http://americancorners.state.gov/>

Continuing Education for AC Staff and Partners

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=eventsdist&Template=/Conference/ConferenceList.cfm&ConferenceTypeCode=D>

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/events/elearning/index.cfm>

<http://www.bcr.org/training/index.html>

<http://libraries.idaho.gov/able>

<http://libraries.idaho.gov/sable>

<http://www.kovacs.com/training.html>

<http://leadonline.info/>

<http://www.webjunction.org/do/Home>

<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/educators/video/index.html>

<http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/results.php?cat=2&mode=a>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/learn/educators/workshop/ssindex.html>

<http://www.webjunction.org/do/DisplayContent?id=19396>

<http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=263>

http://www.sirsidynixinstitute.com/seminar_page.php?sid=101

<http://www.shapingoutcomes.com/>

<http://sites.google.com/site/irrtfreelinks/home>

<http://www.ala.org/ala/onlinelearning/index.cfm>

<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/educators/video/index.html>

<http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/results.php?cat=2&mode=a>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/learn/educators/workshop/ssindex.html>

<http://www.webjunction.org/do/DisplayContent?id=19396>

<http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=263>

<http://www.shapingoutcomes.com/>

Programming

<http://ngd.ala.org/>

<http://www.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.playtaboo.com/playpage.php>

<http://www.idebate.org>

<http://www.conversationcafe.org/>

<http://www.spellingbee.com/>

<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>

More Film Resources

<http://www.milestonefilms.com/history.php>

<http://www.cinematical.com/meet-the-team>

<http://motion.kodak.com/US/en/motion/index.htm>

<http://www.imdb.com/>

<http://badfilmsociety.org/>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/>
<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/>
<http://www.footage.net/>
<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC>
www.loc.gov/film
<http://www.widescreenmuseum.com/>
<http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/>

University Courses and Course Materials

<http://www.tc.umn.edu/~ryahnke/film/cinema.htm>
<http://www.cmu.edu/oli/index.html>
<http://open.yale.edu/courses/>
<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/home/home/index.htm>
<http://cnx.org/>
<http://www.oercommons.org/>
<http://www.openculture.com/>
<http://webcast.berkeley.edu/courses.php>
<http://edcorner.stanford.edu/podcasts.html>
http://www.apple.com/education/itunesu_mobilelearning/itunesu.html

Holidays and Observances

<https://www.opm.gov/fedhol/>
<http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/January/20080113151228abretnuh0.5784265.html>
http://www.ehow.com/how_2014970_calendar-microsoft-word.html

Social Media Tips for American Corners

<http://amcorners.ru/info/>
<http://amcorners.gr/>
www.americancornersmacedonia.blogspot.com
<http://technorati.com/state-of-the-blogsphere/>
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7006.pdf>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN2I1pWXjXI>
<http://www.blogger.com>
<http://www.livejournal.com>
<http://www.wordpress.com>
www.twitter.com
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7027.pdf>
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7051.pdf>
<http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/>
<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/the-complete-guide-to-twitter-pdf/>
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7025.pdf>
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7036.pdf>
<http://mashable.com/2009/04/28/facebook-privacy-settings/>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a_KF7TYKVC
<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7034.pdf>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/americagov>
<http://www.flickr.com/map/>
<http://bighugelabs.com/>

E-Book Program Resources

<http://www.litlovers.com/>
<http://www.kidsreads.com/>
<http://www.teenreads.com/>
<http://wiredforbooks.org/index2.htm>
<http://librivox.org/>
<http://www.openculture.com/>
<http://shop.ebrary.com/home.action>
<http://www.booksinmyphone.com/>
<http://books.google.com/m>
<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>
http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page
<http://www.netlibrary.com/>
http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2481647302&b=&ref=pd_r
<http://www.facebook.com/BooksweRead>
<http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=7644880307>

U.S. Exchange Program Alumni

<https://alumni.state.gov>
English Language Learning
<http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/index.html>
<http://eca.state.gov/education/engteaching/pubs/>
http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp
<http://www.eslcafe.com/>
<http://iteslj.org/>
<http://www.tesol.net/tesl.html>

Educational Advising

<http://educationusa.state.gov/>

Volunteer Websites

<http://www.pointsoflight.org/>

Sister Library Relationships

<http://www.sister-cities.org/>
http://wikis.ala.org/sisterlibraries/index.php/The_Directory
http://wikis.ala.org/sisterlibraries/index.php/Partner_Libraries_Match_People_to_People
http://wikis.ala.org/sisterlibraries/index.php/Main_Page

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Giese, Ashton. "Centers and Corners Program Puts America at Russians' Fingertips." *State Magazine*, no. 473. November, 2003.

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