

EMBASSY UPDATES

NEWSLETTER FOR U.S. CITIZENS IN KOSOVO



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2 SPRING 2018

American Corners in Kosovo

U.S. Embassy Pristina's Public Affairs Section in partnership with local libraries sponsors three American Corners across the country. These small, program-driven, American-style libraries are located in Pristina, Prizren, and Mitrovica and are open to the public year round.

Their overarching mission is to build and strengthen relationships between the United States and Kosovo, showcase American culture and values, promote English language learning, encourage study in the United States, and foster goodwill and mutual understanding.



What to do there:

You can participate in public events; check out materials (adult and kids novels, films on DVD, teaching resources, board & electronic games appropriate for individual development and for classes in case you teach, etc.); use resources in house; or even volunteer to host activities, including English classes, for various audiences.



Kids in American Corner Mitrovica Preparing for a dance performance

[American Corner Pristina](#) is located on the ground floor of the National Library of Kosovo in Pristina. Working hours are Monday 8:00 – 16:00, Tuesday through Friday 8:00 - 20:00, and Saturday 8:00 – 14:00.

Contact info: phone: +381 38 212 206; email: acpristina@gmail.com

[American Corner Mitrovica](#) is located at the Public Library "Vuk St. Karadzic" in Mitrovica North. Their working hours are 8:00 – 15:00 Monday to Friday. Contact info: phone: +381 29 631 636;

Email: acmitrovica@gmail.com

[American Corner Prizren](#) is located on the top floor of the Public Library in Prizren. Their working hours are 8:00 – 16:00 Monday to Friday.

Contact info: phone: 028 / 421-089; email: acprizren@gmail.com



Each American Corner has its own website accessible through: <http://ackosovo.com/>. Navigate to their Contact Us & Location on their homepage sidebar for further information.

Access

All American Corners are open to the public, and their services are free of charge.

Programs

All American Corners in Kosovo run different programs, including:

- English language courses
- cultural activities
- business related programs
- CV writing and preparing for a job interview
- reading and conversation clubs
- teacher training courses
- debate clubs
- celebrating U.S. holidays
- hackathon days
- web programming
- 3D printing workshops



Pristina Hackathon Day

Overall, the American Corners carried out more than 700 programs in 2017, attracting close to 90,000 walk-in visitors in their spaces. In addition, the Department of State negotiates film-showing licenses for all American Corners, so they can host public viewing parties.

Resources

American Corners have a variety of American media materials, including novels for kids and adults, films on DVD, board and electronic games (OSMO kits, littleBits), study guides and test-preparatory materials (SAT, GRE, GMAT, TOEFL), and various technologies, such as smart boards, public PCs, etc. American Corners can also be used as venue resources, where you can host a program close to your education, skills and interest, or for meetings, discussions, film showing, etc.

Staffing & Volunteers

American Corner Pristina has two full-time and one part-time staff, all with very good English speaking skills. American Corner Prizren has two full-time staff, while Mitrovica has just one full-time staff.

Each American Corner recruits volunteers annually and engages up to 20 volunteers to run and support programs. They are always looking for native speakers to host or support their various programs with local audiences (students, kids and general public) who wish to improve their English language skills.

The U.S. Embassy will be closed on these dates:

May 1, 2018—May Day
May 9, 2018—Europe Day
May 28, 2018—Memorial Day

June 15, 2018—Eid-Al-Fitr
July 4, 2018—Independence Day

Flood Preparedness

It's spring, and spring means swollen rivers and floods, especially in the mountain valleys of Kosovo. Floods can be unpredictable, and, with flash floods, can happen quickly. There are simple things you can do to keep you and your family safe.

Before a flood, it's always good to get things together or renew your emergency preparedness kit. Here are some things that should be in it:

1. A list of phone numbers you may need, including the number for your insurance company.
2. A list of irreplaceable items for the insurance company.
3. Important personal documents, such as birth certificates and insurance policy, sealed in a plastic bag.
4. Food and water for at least three days, including for your pets.
5. Sandbags and sand to build a water barrier around your house and to seal possible water entrance into the house.
6. Necessary items like medicine and clothing in the event you evacuate.
7. Mobile phones and chargers.

You may also want to take photos of your house, especially the interior. This will make it easier if the water comes inside. When evacuating, turn off the water and electrical mains and put sandbags in toilets and sinks (so water doesn't come up through them) before you leave the house. Remember to take your pets!

If you are out and about and see flooding, take these precautions:

- * Don't drive through water over the road. As little as six inches of flooding can cause your car to be swept away or the engine to stop. You also can't see major potholes or missing manhole covers below the water.
- * Avoid contact with floodwater. You don't know where it's been! There could be contaminants large and small in it.
- * Be careful around bridges. Floodwaters can wash away their foundations, making them unsafe.
- * If floodwater rises around your car but does not have a strong current, abandon your car and make for higher ground immediately.



Kosovo's radio and television stations will inform you of the risk of floods in your area. Stay safe and enjoy the April showers - just keep an eye on the ground, too.

[Ready.gov flood page](#)

[Red Cross UK flood page](#)

[2016 flooding in Kosovo](#)

[2018 flooding in Kosovo](#)

STEP On It!

The **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** registers you with the American Embassy during your time overseas. It allows us to contact you in case someone back home asks us to, or in case of a larger emergency or other announcement. You can go into the STEP system and specify what country you'll be in on any given date. Please keep your family's information updated -- it may be the only way we can find you in an emergency. You can enroll and edit your information online at <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

Adjusting to Expat Life

Moving away from your home country is a leap into the dark. No matter how well you are prepared, something will surprise, frighten, baffle, or delight you daily. Taking that first step is brave. Keeping on the path of expat life is even braver. There is an expat adjustment cycle just like a grief cycle or a new parent cycle or a moving across the country cycle. Stages mark the transitions in your life, and, while individuals may skip a few parts of the cycle or experience them in a different order, knowing that you are not the first one to experience the rollercoaster gives a bit of comfort. No, when you're in culture shock, it's not just you. You are not alone.

The basic stages of the expat adjustment cycle are preparation, honeymoon, culture shock, adaptation, and possibly repatriation. Preparation takes place before the move. It includes everything from applying for a visa to packing up your family and your stuff and hopping on the plane that takes you to your new home. This is one of the most exciting and anxious times in the whole process. So much is unknown and so much is anticipated. Proper preparation can make the transition much easier or, if not done, much worse.

Right after you land and while you're still jet lagged, you may experience the honeymoon – oh, what a great house! Look at that view! How friendly the people are! We're going to love it here! This stage can last as little as a few hours or up to several weeks. Part of that time difference is the amount of support you get from the people around you. Were you set up with a house and internet and food in the fridge when you arrived? Do you have someone you can rely on as a translator? The honeymoon stage lets you fall in love with your new country. It provides a cushion and resilience, for when you do run into a problem.

Culture shock can take many forms. It can be walking into a grocery store and not being able to find anything you know. It can be an overload of language you don't understand from every source. It can be an inability to make friends. Sometimes it's

triggered by necessary visit to the doctor, to the local government, or to find a specific item. Culture shock is the worst. As time goes by, it eases. You learn where to go for the best price on eggs; you learn some of the language and understand people who talk to you; you begin to understand local viewpoints. Culture shock never goes away and can be triggered by something small, even years into an expat experience. The underlying reasons for culture shock are homesickness, the realization that you truly are in a "different" place, and loneliness. While culture shock makes you feel like you want to withdraw into your own cocoon, the best way to combat it is to go out and make friends. Set up a routine. Routines are our ways of making the extraordinary more ordinary.

Once the initial culture shock fades, which can take months or even a year, you find yourself accommodated to living in your new place. You know enough of the language to make yourself understood and make improvements every day. You know where to find the best pastries and where you like to go out to dinner. Routines have made you a "regular" at some places, and, even though you stick out because you are not truly a local, you are accepted by the population around you. Congratulations, you've now adjusted! You will still experience homesickness and there will always be something that surprises you about your new home, but you've learned how you cope with this kind of life. The important thing to remember when going through all this is that, while everyone who moves abroad has the same general progression, no two people have the same experience. Remember the value of the internet and FaceTime or Skype. Keep in contact with your loved ones at home. Talk with others and find solutions and work arounds, or even a shoulder to cry on. The better your network, the more likely you are to be happy with your decision to move to a different culture.

[Expat Adjustment Cycle](#)
[Life As An Expatriate](#)
[Adjusting to Expat Life](#)
[Not Always A Smooth Ride](#)

What does this road sign mean?



- a. Your tire is going flat.
- b. Your car is spewing rocks.
- c. The road is making funny noises.
- d. There is loose gravel on the road.

The answer is d.