



Lincoln Centers Afghanistan

Lincoln Centers, known as American Corners in most of the world, are partnerships between the Public Affairs section of Embassy Kabul and the Afghan government. They provide access to current and reliable information about the U.S. via book collections, the Internet and programming for the general public. They are open, accessible and free-of-charge. Associated reading or meeting rooms are also made available to host program events and activities (i.e. author readings, films, speaker programs, workshops, films, meetings, and exhibits). Locally hired personnel staff the Centers.

“The Lincoln Center is the best place in town where we can spend time, get an education, entertainment and improve our knowledge.”

- Visitor, LC Herat

In Afghanistan, Lincoln Centers are often the only place the average person can access books and the Internet. The existing internet cafes are often too expensive for many people to regularly use. Public libraries are generally either unavailable or seriously under-resourced. Lincoln Centers are also often the only safe place available to the population for use as a community center.

Examples of the programs run at Afghanistan’s Lincoln Centers are English conversation clubs, Internet courses, viewings of President Obama’s speech in Cairo, events for UN international days, speakers on Muslim life in America, and screenings of American movies and documentaries.

Visitors

Lincoln Center Statistics January - October 2009

	Total Visitors	Avg. Daily Visitors	Programs Held	Program Participants	Female Participants	Female %
Bamyan	19,448	97	79	5,178	2,696	13.9
Gardez	1,664	76	11	276	5	0.3
Herat	47,717	191	115	4,716	8,764	18.4
Jalalabad	15,644	63	122	3,179	2,183	14.0
Kabul Univ	8,955	40	83	2,281	3,867	43.2
Khost	14,609	83	52	2,161	11	0.1
Kunduz	4,424	35	33	1,792	792	17.9
Mazar	29,710	149	109	3,646	8,767	29.5
TOTALS	142,171	733	604	23,229	27,085	

Notes: Bamyan and Mazar were closed for two months to hire new Coordinators, Gardez opened to visitors in August 2009, Khost opened to visitors in April 2009. Kunduz opened to visitors in June 2009.

Program Highlight

International Democracy Day

Lincoln Center (LC) Kunduz celebrated International Democracy Day September 16, 2009 with sixteen local youths. The LC Coordinator kicked off the program with a speech that defined the role of democracy, particularly in an Islamic society. She then opened up the floor to the participants for their thoughts. The lively discussion that followed delved into the toughest questions about democracy, Islam, and modern versus traditional customs

The discussion truly opened up when one of the participants asked “How we can have democracy when our elders don’t want it. Especially nowadays, because of some abuses of people in our society, some people don’t have a good idea about democracy.” As described by one participant, the Muslim world is not ideologically monolithic – it presents a broad spectrum of perspectives ranging from the extremes of those who deny a connection between Islam and democracy to those who argue that Islam requires a democratic system. Most participants felt that the beliefs of many Muslims lie between these extremes. As stated by another participant, “All of the great world faith traditions represent major bodies of ideas, visions and concepts fundamental to understanding human life and destiny.”

The participants also expressed hope for the future of Afghanistan, saying that after decades of war, terrorism and human right violations, they still time to improve the true democracy in their country, not just democracy in name. Some of the improvements still wished for include the areas of media, women’s rights and freedom of speech. The program concluded with the best wishes of the LC for Eid-u-Fiter to all the participants, the Khatm-e- Quran and the distribution of Dari and Pashtu versions of an IIP publication on democracy.



“Learning these programs is really important for us, because we can get good jobs by learning new technologies.”

- Visitor, LC Khost





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Bamyan

Bamyan University
Bamyan City
Grand Opening: October 6, 2008
Tel: 0093-0799-221022
E-mail: lcbamyan@gmail.com
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bamyan-Afghanistan/Lincoln-Center-Bamyan/121102149144?ref=ts>

Gardez

Governor's Compound
Gardez City
Grand Opening: October 8, 2009
Tel: 0093-0797-087635
E-mail: lccgardez@gmail.com
Facebook: *Coming soon*

Herat

Herat Public Library
Herat City
Grand Opening: November 16, 2008
Tel: 0093-0799-208770
E-mail: lcherat@yahoo.com
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shahr-e-Herat-Afghanistan/Lincoln-Center-Herat/137305125729?ref=ts>

Jalalabad

Ministry of Information and Culture
Jalalabad City
Grand Opening: February 14, 2005
Tel: 0093-070-603481
E-mail: lcjalalabad@gmail.com
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lincoln-Center-Jalalabad/92521361669?ref=search&sid=1333563897.951276464..1>

Kabul

Main Library, Kabul University
Kabul City
Grand Opening: February 12, 2005
Tel: 0093-0777-909095
E-mail: lckabulu@gmail.com
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lincoln-Center-Kabul-University/108969025129?ref=search&sid=1333563897.351285736..1>

Khost

Ministry of Telecommunications
Khost City
Grand Opening: April 14, 2009
Tel: 0093-0700-346667
E-mail: lckhost@yahoo.com
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lincoln-Center-Khost/126263119656?ref=ts>

Kunduz

Mayor's Park
Kunduz City
Grand Opening: June 10, 2009
Tel: 0093-0796-225305
E-mail: lckunduz@gmail.com
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kunduz-Afghanistan/Lincoln-Center-Kunduz/215568045110?ref=search&sid=1333563897.2504328049..1&v=app_2344061033

Mazar-e Sharif

Ministry of Information and Culture
Public Press Center, Mazar-e-Sharif City
Grand Opening: December 6, 2006
Tel: 0093-0799-530 926
E-mail: lcmazar@yahoo.com
Facebook: *Coming soon*

"I didn't know that Americans were the first astronauts who stepped on the Moon. I thought Russians were the first."

- Visitor, LC Jalalabad