

# MERCY CORPS

## CASE STUDY: business

BIAMP®

### MERCY CORPS' NEW INTERACTIVE SPACE CALLS FOR ACTION WITH MULTIMEDIA AV SOLUTIONS FROM COMVIEW.

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- JOHN CATHEY, COMVIEW, SYSTEMS INTEGRATION SALES TEAM.



MERCY CORPS ACTION CENTER, PORTLAND, OREGON

#### CHALLENGE

Mercy Corps, one of the Northwest's biggest NGOs, is launching its' Action Center—a hands-on, interactive space for public education about global poverty issues. The center needs a top-notch, multimedia AV solution that will appeal to the senses.

#### SOLUTION

The experts at CompView Audio Visual design and implement just that: a system complete with touchscreen computers, surround sound, wireless microphones, videoconferencing, and projection screens. Offering a fun, interactive, and educational experience, the Action Center draws around 2000 visitors a month.

## CONCLUSIONS

When school groups and curious passers-by walk into Mercy Corps' new Action Center in downtown Portland, Oregon, they're immediately drawn in by the sights and sounds of the globe at their fingertips. World music plays softly over surround-sound speakers, touchscreen computers show compelling videos created by Mercy Corps field staff and beneficiaries, an enormous virtual image of the Earth offers an invitation to explore issues of poverty in countries near and far.

These sensory-stimulating experiences make the Mercy Corps Action Center a dynamic, hands-on space for the public to explore issues of global importance in places thousands of miles away. Along with the Action Center to End World Hunger in Battery Park City, New York, the Portland center is the first of its kind and a cornerstone of the organization's mission. This is made possible because of a networked, multimedia AV solution created and installed by CompView Audio Visual.

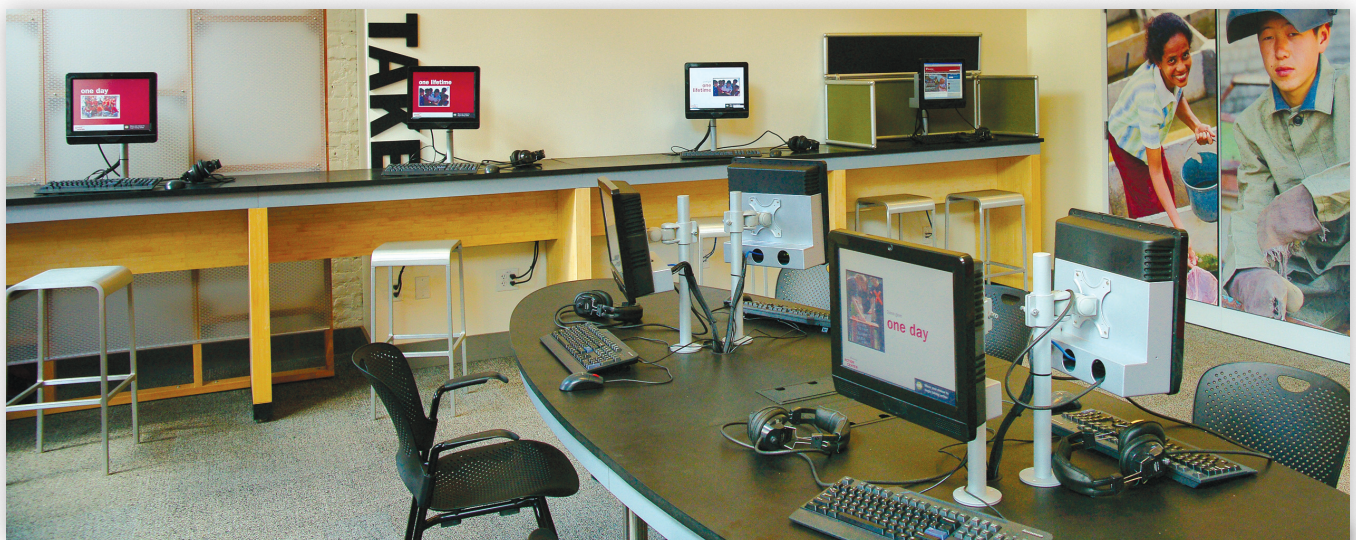
"There's a lot happening in the space," says Erin Shannon, a CompView engineer who designed and implemented the system. "Working with Mercy Corps' firm ESI Design, Shannon created a flexible, networked system that utilizes Biamp® Systems' Audia® products. "It's an open area with a lot of media going on at one time," says John Cathey, a member of CompView's Systems Integration Sales team. "Erin had to design and we had to install a very focused system to ensure zones wouldn't interfere with each other and spill sound throughout the space."

They also wanted the control system to be user friendly. A Crestron® control system with two wall panels allow simple volume and routing control in all zones. As with all of its clients, CompView provided a user manual for the control panels. But Jesse Mejia, Mercy Corps Action Center Technology Specialist, says the system is so stable and easy to operate, he hasn't yet needed to use it.

CompView's networked design breaks the 3,484 square-foot space into six zones and acts as a true matrix system of any input to any output, one-to-all, or one-to-one. This flexibility is convenient, Mejia says. He can show a video on all screens and monitors in the space, for example, or route a videoconference to the projection screen in the Briefing Hut. Equipment is housed in two racks, and digital signals are transmitted via CobraNet®.

As Mejia says, the Action Center serves as an education hub and a public space where anyone can come in and learn about general issues of global poverty and what Mercy Corps is doing out in the world. Of course, inspiring visitors to take action in their own lives and communities is an important goal, too.

Visitors at the Mercy Corps Action Center benefit from the CompView design in nearly every step of their experience. Whether they're attending a videoconference about Haiti in the Briefing Hut, watching a case study about Niger at one of the Training Towers, or listening to a report by staff in Indonesia at a Video Field Dispatch station, CompView's AV plan ensures every visitor experiences a seamless and inspiring virtual trip around the world.●





## ACTION STATIONS

At these eight computer stations, visitors can find out more about global issues and get suggestions for actions they can take in their own lives and communities. AV components: touchscreen computers with webcams.

## GLOBAL STATUS WALL

In this area, an image of the Earth is projected onto a large screen, controlled by a touchscreen computer at the podium. Utilizing Google® Earth software, the display lets visitors spin the globe to learn about poverty issues worldwide and the areas where Mercy Corps staff are currently working. AV components: LCD projector, screen, and podium with touchscreen computer, microphone, laptop input, and videoconferencing connection.

## VIDEO FIELD DISPATCHES

Four stations show web-cam videos shot by Mercy Corps field staff and beneficiaries. AV components: touchscreen computers and speakers with proximity sensor for automatic volume control.



## TRAINING TOWERS

At these three custom-built mobile units, visitors watch case studies about region-specific issues of poverty and learn what they can do to help. The towers can move around the space and can even be brought to another building or city. AV components: touchscreen monitors, built-in computers, and localized sound bars.

## BRIEFING HUT

Built from reclaimed wood, this space allows groups to gather for presentations, videoconferences, and to watch movies. AV components: surround-sound speakers; LCD projector and screen; and presentation lectern with touchscreen computer, webcam, microphone, and videoconferencing connection panel.