

THE ACTION CENTER TO END WORLD HUNGER

An innovative public learning space that inspires and equips visitors of all ages to combat global hunger and poverty.



The Action Center to End World Hunger, located along the Hudson River just west of the World Trade Center site, in New York City. Photo: Paul Warchol for Mercy Corps

Awareness and Change

Mercy Corps, the international relief and development organization, has developed a powerful new resource in the fight against global hunger and poverty – an innovative, museum-quality space in the heart of Lower Manhattan. The Action Center to End World Hunger, opened in October 2008, offers a platform for education and activism. Once they are educated about the root causes of global hunger and poverty, visitors are presented with specific steps they can take to become part of the solution.

Each night, almost 1 billion people around the world go to bed hungry. Yet hunger itself is a symptom of wider problems. Exhibits at the Action Center explain and illustrate some of the underlying causes, including unsustainable agricultural practices, inefficient markets, war and conflict, weak health and education services, climate change and poor governance. By helping people understand these issues, the Action Center moves people to take action and to generate the public will necessary to make substantial progress toward ending hunger.

With 30 years of experience working in the world's toughest places, Mercy Corps understands that a well-informed, *mobilized* constituency in the developed world

is critical to realizing its mission of alleviating suffering, poverty and oppression. The solutions to the most complex global challenges require skilled and scaled advocacy to help the world's poor. Targeted policy reform, including government aid spending and fair trade agreements, as well as responsible corporate practices and consumer preferences, can save many lives. The Action Center is a cornerstone of Mercy Corps' efforts to radically alter the way people think about the world, and their role within it.

Designed by Ed Schlossberg and his expert team at ESI Design, the Action Center welcomes thousands of visitors from all ages and walks of life, with an emphasis on students, parents and teachers.

In October 2009, a second Action Center will open in Portland, Oregon, located in Mercy Corps' new global headquarters building downtown. Together, the Action Centers will serve as physical anchors for a movement of globally engaged citizens who are committed to ending hunger and poverty, and have access to the tools they need to succeed at this crucial work of saving lives.

From Education to Action

The Action Center uses a wide range of interactive multimedia content to bring to life the daily experiences of community members and aid/development agencies as they strive to improve lives around the globe. Beyond providing information to visitors, the Action Center challenges them to analyze pressing global issues and commit to taking meaningful action.

Briefing Area – A video hosted by actress and comedienne Tina Fey introduces visitors to the issues of hunger and poverty.

Training Towers – The interactive training towers present case studies of specific challenges, and offer a behind-the-scenes look at how local residents and aid agencies like Mercy Corps work together address them.

Global Status Interactive Wall – A large projection screen using sophisticated Google mapping software enables visitors to scan the globe and drill down to explore what the solutions are in poverty hotspots.

Video Field Dispatches – Community members and aid workers from around the world file firsthand reports of what they are doing to combat global poverty.

Information Hub - News feeds constantly update visitors about how the effects of hunger and poverty are being felt and addressed.



*Interactive exhibits inspire young people and their families to take action in the fight against hunger.
Photo: Lou Rocco for Mercy Corps*

One Minute. One Hour. One Day.

Visitors are encouraged to build on what they've learned to start making change right away.

At the **Action Stations**, visitors are presented with a menu of specific actions which invite them into immediate action-taking. Hundreds of actions are suggested, according to how much time people are able to devote – one minute, one hour, one day, one month or one lifetime. Guests can choose to mentor an aspiring entrepreneur in the developing world, sign a fair trade petition, mobilize friends and community members to join the fight against hunger, think through aspects of their own personal consumption or volunteer their time with a local hunger organization.

Youth and Educator Workshops

The Action Center seeks to engage students and their educators through a full cycle of learning and action opportunities. Visiting school groups participate in guided interactive workshops and leave with concrete steps they can take to make a difference, both locally and globally.

Workshops inside the Action Center are augmented by pre-visit activities that assess the students' existing knowledge and perspectives on global poverty-related issues and prepare them for the lessons they'll learn during their visit.

Following visits to the Action Center, educators can participate in ongoing professional development trainings, while students can tap into online resources or join the Global Citizen Corps, a national network of youth who educate and mobilize their schools and communities to fight global poverty.

ABOUT MERCY CORPS

Mercy Corps helps people in the world's toughest places turn the crises of natural disaster, poverty and conflict into opportunities for progress. Driven by local needs and market conditions, the agency's programs provide communities with the tools and support they need to transform their own lives. Mercy Corps' worldwide team of 3,700 professionals is improving the lives of 16.7 million people in more than 40 countries. For more information, see mercy Corps.org.



ACTION CENTER

TO END WORLD HUNGER

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Action Center Hours

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Be the change