



## Industry

Healthcare-Education

## Daily Use

- Medical training
- Patient consultations and care
- International collaboration
- Access to international medical resources

## Solution

- The creation of a world class health care system which educates and empowers regional medical practitioners and students, enabled by Polycom teleconferencing solutions

## Results and Benefits

- Faster consultations and improved healthcare
- World-class healthcare system
- Educate and empower regional medical practitioners and students
- Ability to access and introduce life-saving resources and procedures

## Polycom® solutions breathe new life into the healthcare systems of developing countries

### Overview

Polycom® has contributed to the international success of a self-sustainable telemedicine and e-health programme in Kosovo by helping to rebuild the medical resources of the country.

Named the Telemedicine Programme of Kosovo (TPK), the programme has established a network of telemedicine centres throughout the country designed to enable knowledge-sharing and medical collaboration.

Each telemedicine centre is based on a Polycom room video conferencing system that links to the other telemedicine centres in Kosovo as well as to seven local hospitals, along with links to international medical expertise in well-equipped and resourced hospitals in the University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, Graz University, Austria, Regensburg University, Germany, Oslo University, Oslo, Norway and more than 20 other universities and hospitals across Europe and the rest of the world.

The TPK is the first of many initiatives of this kind to be instigated in underdeveloped countries by the International Virtual e-Hospital (IVeH) programme and is now world-renowned as a model for telemedicine success in developing countries.

### The International Virtual e-Hospital Programme

The International Virtual e-Hospital (IVeH) programme ([www.iveh.org](http://www.iveh.org)) was established in 2001 by Dr. Rifat Latifi, President and Chairman of the Board of the IVeH. Dr Latifi had the energy and vision to campaign at the highest political level for a programme for rebuilding the medical systems in developing countries through the introduction and implementation of telemedicine, tele-health and virtual education programmes.

“The most significant challenges in implementing the IVeH programme is changing the mindset of physicians and convincing governments of the need for such investments,” explained Dr Latifi. “Creating true partnerships and transparency in the region has been the key to the programme’s success.”

Since 2001, Dr Latifi and his team, have brought their vision to life by creating a network of international partnership and sponsors. The result is that the IVeH has attracted support by European Union (European Agency for Reconstruction, State Department of USA, USAID and industry partners).

### The Telemedicine Programme of Kosovo

As a Kosovar himself, Dr Latifi recognised the medical infrastructure of Kosovo in particular was left in a poor state by the 1990s Balkans war, by subsequent neglect, lack of funding and poor management.

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*“Kosovo had a stagnant and under-resourced healthcare system that urgently needed a cost-effective and practical solution.”*

*Dr Latifi, Founder of the International Virtual e-Hospital, and Director of the Telemedicine Programme of Kosovo*

For instance, the new generation of medical graduates after the war had not seen a patient in a clinic throughout their entire education and medical school classes were being held in the basements of homes. Furthermore, many older professors, surgeons and other doctors had not practiced advanced medicine and/or surgery for more than a decade. This situation severely hindered redevelopment of the healthcare system in Kosovo. To Dr Latifi, telemedicine and medical distance learning were the only practical solutions for developing countries such as Kosovo. Dr Latifi stated: “Kosovo, like so many other countries in the developing world, had a stagnant and under-resourced healthcare system that urgently needed a cost-effective and practical solution.”

### **Polycom Powering the Programme**

With government approval and the financial backing of the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR), United States Department of State, the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, the TPK was able to implement Polycom room video conferencing equipment in its network of telemedicine centres. These enabled them to connect to national and international sources of medical expertise, including the University Clinical Centre of Kosovo (UCCK).

The result was the delivery of a high level of medical and clinical expertise to the heart of the Kosovo medical community where it was urgently needed. Each telemedicine centre throughout Kosovo comprises video conferencing rooms, tele-consultation rooms and telemedicine training rooms. The video conferencing rooms are equipped with a Polycom HD (high definition) room video conferencing system supported by a central Polycom® RSS™ 2000 video recording and streaming solution. The RSS 2000 is a centralised server used by each centre for recording, streaming and archiving multimedia conferences and training sessions. This saves time and resources while extending communication and enabling knowledge-sharing throughout Kosovo and international medical communities. Polycom® Video Border Proxy™ (VBP™) solution is a critical factor for ensuring secure, seamless video collaboration with these outside organisations.

### **Delivering Life-saving Medical Resources**

Employing the Polycom HD room video conferencing systems, the TPK is able to deliver powerful educational tools to medical personnel at the right time and at the point of learning. As a result, the programme is able to train tens of thousands of doctors, nurses, other healthcare professionals and IT personnel on how to use telemedicine and e-health applications through a series of interactive and hands-on lectures.

Likewise, the Polycom equipment is contributing to better diagnosis and improved patient care. For example, the highly mobile Polycom video conferencing units can be located at the patient's bedside to allow real-time expert observations from specialist physicians in other countries. Everyone is a winner. Not only patients but also doctors and nurses are benefiting from the improved educational training and access to the medical expertise provided by the network.

### **Big Plans for the Future**

As a result of the proven success of the TPK programme, the telemedicine model is subsequently rolling out, as the Balkan Telemedicine Programme, to further hospital networks in Albania, where 13 telemedicine centers are currently being build (six already have been build and are operational), Macedonia and Montenegro and other countries in the region.

Furthermore, Dr Latifi and his colleagues are driving the IVeH telemedicine initiative beyond the Balkans into South Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and South America.

Dr. Latifi concludes by confirming the replicable nature of IVeH programme: “I picked Kosovo to launch the programme because I knew the country the best. But from the beginning, the concept of the International Virtual e-Hospital was not meant only for Kosovo. The concept is bigger than any one country.”

### **Learn More**

To find out how Polycom solutions can help your organisation, visit us at [www.polycom.eu](http://www.polycom.eu) or speak with a Polycom Account Representative.

### **Product Listing**

#### **Video Conferencing solution**

- Polycom room video conferencing systems
- Polycom® RSS™ 2000 recording and streaming solution

#### **Infrastructure:**

- Polycom® Video Border Proxy™ (VBP™)

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