

Heifer International

Heifer International saves \$125,000 a year with Unit4 Business World and achieves its strategic priorities of strengthening core global systems to grow and diversify revenue.

Heifer International started over 70 years ago, when a farmer from the American Midwest was working on the front line as an aid worker with a mission to provide relief. While on his mission, he realized the “teach a man to fish” philosophy best serves for long-term sustainability. Based on this philosophy, he founded Heifer International. Today, Heifer empowers families to turn hunger and poverty into hope and prosperity, as they aim to end hunger and poverty for families in the communities they serve.

Operating over a thousand projects in 33 countries and managing thousands of donors, Heifer employs over 900 full-time employees and assisted 1.9 million families in 2014 alone.

The situation

The organization was struggling to keep up with its growth, relying on more than five enterprise accounting systems across different regions, including Microsoft GP, Sage Accpac and Quickbooks. This resulted in weakened financial control, infrequent consolidation, little transparency and expensive maintenance. In 2011, Heifer introduced three strategic priorities: strengthen core global systems, diversify revenue and increase scale in program impact. The global CEO challenged the organization to build best-in-class systems, in order to grow and diversify revenue and increase scale in program impact. These global systems must support large-scale projects, and meet the demands of accountability and transparency required by sophisticated donors.

The needs

Heifer’s financial visibility was poor, as information was stored in country offices with no access from the global headquarters and consolidation had to be done manually. There was no integration between systems, due to the different technologies. This lack of control led to differences in charts of accounts across the various countries.

Processes were manual and time consuming; the annual audit close took over six months. Because of the difficult consolidation process, consolidated financial reports were prepared just once a year.





“There was a lack of visibility, financial information was kept in local servers that headquarters did not have access to. There was no system in place to regularly prepare financial consolidations.”

The solution

Heifer reviewed multiple solutions, including Serenic and SAP. After careful analysis, Heifer selected Unit4 Business World to implement as its global Enterprise Resource Planning solution, supporting each of its 900 employees with general ledger, account payable, fixed assets, budgeting, human resources, US payroll, procurement and project management.

“We selected Unit4 Business World for a number of reasons,” says Jesus Pizarro, VP of Enterprise Accounting & Controller at Heifer. “Most importantly, it offers the best total cost of ownership of all the top-tier vendors. Additionally, the solution is a centralized system designed with service- and project-focused organizations in mind, which is aligned with our business model.”

“Lastly, the solution provides the flexibility needed in operating an international organization like ours.”

The benefits

Since implementing Business World, Heifer has simplified processes and enjoyed the benefits of a truly integrated, global solution.

Pizarro adds that in addition to the simplified process of closing the books and preparing consolidated financial statements, the complexities of working in a multicurrency environment are eliminated because of Business World’s revaluation capabilities. Managers are now making decisions based on real-time information, a welcome change from perceptions and outdated information driving decisions.

Heifer has significantly increased financial transparency. With a few clicks, the auditor can move from a summary statement to the details of a GL account or AP voucher. This same transparency ensures donors can follow their dollars throughout the organization.

In 2015, Heifer received the highest praise from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in part because their system can demonstrate compliance and capacity in managing multi-year projects.

Summary

Pizarro estimates that Heifer saves over \$125,000 annually since implementing Unit4 Business World. Reporting and process closes have significantly been reduced with Business World's reporting capabilities and centralized database. Pizarro shares "we save hundreds of hours of manpower since implementing Business World. In the past, it took over 15 people two months to prepare a financial report, today we can run a report instantly."

With Business World, Heifer International is equipped to provide the transparency necessary and the flexibility required to grow and adapt in a changing operational landscape.

"After three years of using Unit4 Business World, I as Controller feel very confident we can easily provide financial reporting in different ways according to our donors and users requirements. I am also confident that we can respond, very quickly, to a change in our business."



About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue over US \$550M and more than 4,000 employees world-wide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, education, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale and financial services benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

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