

Success Story

Exchanging global financial data is as easy as exchanging ideas

World Learning

“With Sage Intacct, we close the books faster and with more accuracy, leaving us more time to work on projects that deliver the biggest impact to our beneficiaries.”

Kote Lomidze

Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, World Learning

Company overview

World Learning is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a more peaceful and just world through education, development, and exchange. Founded in 1932, it operates a global educational exchange program, an accredited university for international training, and other educational and development programs.



Executive summary

Previous software:

- Datatel (Ellucian)

Results with Sage Intacct

- Grew revenue by 50% while reducing overhead costs by \$500,000
- Shortened the monthly close by more than 30%
- Tightened cash management with real-time visibility across 60+ countries
- Integrated revenue data with Salesforce CRM and 2CP for greater accuracy
- Saved thousands of hours each year and sped new hire onboarding by 65% via automations



Company
World Learning

Location
Washington, US

Industry
Nonprofit

Sage Products
Sage Intacct





Complex, global organization moves to the cloud

World Learning operates 79 active programs with a mission to bridge geographical gaps through student exchange and other international education programs. As both an NGO and an accredited educational institution, its funding comes from U.S. government grants and program enrollment. The organization's complex operating model requires its finance team to track revenue and expenses in local currencies for tax reporting, consolidate the books in U.S. dollars, and produce quarterly grant spending reports. All of this used to be a major struggle, due to antiquated, on-premises financial software and paper-based approval processes.

World Learning's chief financial and administrative officer, Kote Lomidze, decided to upgrade to a new financial management solution and evaluated three options, including Oracle NetSuite and Microsoft Dynamics, before choosing Sage Intacct. "The system's multi-dimensional structure, open platform services, robust audit trails, and ability to track multiple currencies and entities while offering consolidated reporting checked all of our boxes with flying colors," said Kote.

He continued, "With its great dashboard environment and slicing and dicing functionality, we gained the ability to report on anything, and what I like best about Sage Intacct is that the innovation doesn't stop. Every quarter, there's a new release that keeps Sage Intacct ahead of its competitors, and that gives me assurance that I don't have to replace my accounting system ever again." As a result, the entire organization eliminated thousands of hours of manual work and its finance team saved \$500,000 per year, all while they shortened the monthly close by 30% and significantly increased donor confidence in World Learning's fiscal responsibility.



The finance team now closes World Learning's books five days faster.

Gaining 1200+ hours of productivity via digital automation

As soon as the organization went live on Sage Intacct, they streamlined their most tedious business processes, including time and expense reporting, purchasing and accounts payable, project accounting, cash flow management across 60 countries, monthly payment reconciliations, and report preparation. World Learning's chart of accounts shrunk from 50,000 to just a couple hundred GL accounts, and the team integrated 2CP payment processing and Salesforce with Sage Intacct, gaining the ability to capture and view real-time income without having to re-enter donations or student payments by hand each month.

"Once our expense reports started flowing electronically to employees in the field, we immediately recognized the power of process automation," remembered Kote. "Expenses that used to take weeks to route for paper-based approvals by mail can now be reimbursed in hours. We thought, Sage Intacct works great for all these accounting things—maybe we can use it for other things too?," said Kote. With the help of Sage Intacct consulting partner CliftonLarsonAllen, World Learning designed more than ten custom applications using Sage Intacct platform services. These replaced paper-based workflows surrounding new hire onboarding, budgeting and planning, and vendor management. With the resulting efficiencies, Sage Intacct saves 900-plus staff members thousands of hours each year.

"We built a self-service new vendor setup portal that took that process from 30 minutes to 30 seconds, and onboarding automation that revamped time-consuming tasks across IT, facilities, and payroll. This slashed our onboarding cycle by 65%, so we can get new hires productive from day one and accelerate their ramp time by weeks," noted Kote.

The finance team now closes World Learning's books five days faster, freeing up a week each month they can spend on verifying and analyzing the data. "Since we implemented Sage Intacct, our portfolio has grown more than 50%, without requiring any added resources on our finance team—in fact, we're saving about \$500,000 in finance salaries per year. Increased productivity allows us to repurpose these positions for more mission-oriented work. Now everyone points to finance as one of the top innovation drivers in the organization," Kote added.



Achieving trusted financial and grant reporting

In the six years since World Learning first implemented Sage Intacct, the platform has dramatically increased organization-wide visibility into financial and operational management. The dimensional chart of accounts makes it easy for the finance team to tag and analyze contextual information about projects and programs, so World Learning can compare its costs and income by grant, department, school term, project, employee, user, fund, customer, and vendor.

“We receive almost \$100 million dollars in U.S. government grants and contracts, and manage the related projects in Sage Intacct to report accurate, timely data back to our donors, which increases their trust in our organization,” Kote explained. “We can compare costs for the fall, spring, and summer terms and track how each semester is going, or monitor individual projects to make mission-critical decisions about program spending on a daily basis. We know when to close or extend a project, and can see early on if we’ll need to ask donors for more funds or for a revision of a project’s scope,” said Kote.

Finally, Sage Intacct provides role-based visibility so managers can monitor their key metrics, budgets, and forecasts. Each leader has their own project management dashboard, and Kote himself relies on six Sage Intacct dashboards, including a ‘CFO Daily Dashboard’ with information about World Learning’s cash position, line of credit, endowment investments, indirect cost recovery, budget, income statement, and balance sheet.



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