



International Children's charity partners with Assima to train thousands of employees around the world on new SAP systems quickly, consistently and cost effectively



For non-profit organisations, information and communications technology (ICT) is a critical asset for maximising performance and efficiency, streamlining project and portfolio management, and delivering the best services for communities and individuals.

This is the case at Plan International, a leading children's charity that works in 50+ developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas to promote child rights and lift millions of children out of poverty. Understanding the potential of ICT to improve efficiency and reduce spending on non-core activities, the organisation decided to replace outdated legacy systems at locations around the world with efficient, centralised SAP applications.

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- Training thousands of distributed employees on new SAP systems
- Minimising training times and costs
- Ensuring that 'hard to reach' employees gain the skills they need
- Delivering training in three different languages

SOLUTION

- Training creation and delivery supported by Assima professional services
- Interactive lessons based on key SAP functionality created with Assima Training Suite
- Training for internal 'trainers' delivered at regional events
- Training cascaded down to country managers and local managers
- Training delivered online to thousands of employees across 53 countries

BENEFITS

- Fast, consistent, cost-effective training for thousands of distributed employees
- Support for training in English, Spanish and French
- Interactive lessons quickly build end users' skills and confidence
- Special classes for 'hard-to-reach' employees working on the front line
- Strong partnership with Assima ensures project success

THE CHALLENGE

Plan International's first global SAP deployment, known internally as the Systems Integration Project (SIP) is replacing three legacy systems that were difficult and costly to support. Systems being phased out include the organisation's ageing finance system, Grants Tracking System (GTS), and Projects and Program Module (PPM), which was deployed locally at 275 locations in 53 countries worldwide.

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Simon Barker, SIP Project Lead at Plan International, says, “We wanted to replace the three legacy systems with SAP to increase efficiency, reduce support risks and improve functionality. We also wanted to centralise our systems to provide a more accurate, real-time view of our global operations for senior managers.”

For Plan International's second major SAP project, the organisation decided to deploy a standardised HR system to all locations worldwide, giving employees access to useful information and forms wherever they work. This solution builds



on SAP HR, which holds information about employees across the organisation and SAP Employee Self Service (ESS) and Manager Self Service (MSS) modules that enable employees to manage their own HR processes, such as holiday requests. A complementary solution based on SAP Success Factors was also rolled out to help manage employees' professional development and annual reviews.

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With operations in 53 countries, standardising systems on SAP is a major undertaking, requiring phased country-by-country deployment. As well as physically deploying the hardware and software required, Plan International needed to train thousands of users to use the new systems. “We knew that sending

professional SAP trainers to each of the 53 countries we operate in was impossible – both from a time and cost perspective,” says Barker. “We needed a more cost-effective, pragmatic way to train a large number of distributed users in a compressed period of time and in their native languages.”

“When you are working on complex, global programs, delays are common and flexibility is vital. Assima understands that, and they have been an extremely flexible and committed partner for us”

SOLUTION

After evaluating available training solutions and partners, Plan International chose Assima as its training partner – initially for the SIP project and later for the HR project. In each case, Assima teams helped Plan International create appropriate training materials using Assima Training Suite (ATS). This creates clones of the live SAP applications and uses innovative features to produce interactive online lessons.



“After conducting an in-depth training needs analysis for the SIP project, Assima put together an appropriate training curriculum that covered all the core SAP functionality,” says Barker. “They then worked with subject matter experts across our business to create storyboards for lessons, cloning screens from the live application to deliver an interactive learning experience.”

“With Assima, we can give users a hands-on experience which helps them gain confidence using complex SAP applications very quickly”

For the SIP program, Plan International and Assima grouped lessons into seven training courses for people with different needs in different functions, from senior accountants, to procurement professionals and grants managers. “People access the Assima training course that suits their specific needs,” says Barker. “If they get stuck on a particular lesson, they can access on-screen prompts to help them complete the training successfully on their own.”

The Assima training for the SIP

program is being delivered using both online learning and classroom training delivered by Assima specialists. “Assima professionals have already delivered SIP training at our regional headquarters for the Eastern and Southern Africa region and will be doing the same for our other three regions in the near future,” says Barker. “Country managers that attend Assima’s regional training sessions then return to their countries and use Assima lessons to train local managers there, cascading the new skills across the organisation.”

Based on the success of the SIP project, Plan International chose Assima to support its global SAP HR project. “The Assima team came in and cloned core functionality from both SAP HR and Success Factors to create interactive training materials,” says Steve Doune, HRIS Project Manager at Plan International. “Using these lessons, we have trained members of the HR team from each country at regional events and delivered training for thousands of end users across the business online.”

Training for the SIP project has already been delivered to hundreds of end users across Eastern and Southern Africa region, with plans to train around 4,000 users in all 53 countries globally.

RESULTS & BENEFITS

Assima technology and professional services have enabled Plan International to train thousands of distributed end users consistently and cost effectively. Ann Firth, Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director at Plan International, says, “Assima has applied all its experience to help us design appropriate training curricula and cascade training across entire regions. And because all classroom training is supported with interactive Assima lessons, there are no Chinese whispers when managers deliver training to local users.”

“Translating training into different languages is faster and more cost efficient with Assima. We can simply extract text from pages, translate it, and plug it back in”

The availability of Assima training online has also been instrumental for the HR project. “Training thousands of employees around the world using classroom methods is far too time consuming and expensive,” says Doune. “The interactive online training from Assima, on the other hand, is a highly effective option that is also reasonably priced.”

To achieve success, Plan International needs to deliver training in multiple languages, including English, Spanish





and French. “Translating training into different languages is faster and more cost efficient with Assima,” says Doune. “We can simply extract text from pages, translate it, and plug it back in, which has saved us a lot of time.”

“Assima’s willingness to go the extra mile for us made our decision very easy when we were choosing a training partner for the HR project”

The Assima Training Suite helps users build their confidence quickly, providing an exact replica of the live SAP application and allowing users to ‘learn by doing’. “Our biggest user group is the people who build wells and deliver other services for children and communities on the front line, but they are also the least

tech-savvy,” says Barker. “With Assima, we can give users a hands-on experience which helps them gain confidence using complex SAP applications very quickly.”

Feedback for the Assima training materials has been overwhelmingly positive so far, both for the SIP and HR projects. “People have commented that the Assima training materials look identical to the live application, which helps to build user confidence,” says Doune. “We’ve also had feedback that the Assima training is very intuitive and easy to use, which is a key benefit for us.”

Assima has worked in partnership to ensure the success of Plan International’s training programs. Mark Banbury, Global Chief Information Officer at Plan International, says, “When you are working on complex, global programs, delays are common and flexibility is vital. Assima understands that, and has been an extremely flexible and committed partner for us.”

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The flexibility of Assima’s partnering approach helped Plan International overcome a number of challenges. “When we needed help with developing scripts or organising training events that were beyond the scope of training development, Assima stepped up to help us,” says Barker. “Assima’s willingness to go the extra mile for us made our decision very easy when we were choosing a training partner for the HR project.

SOLUTIONS OVERVIEW

The SAP software deployed by Plan International to lower IT costs and improve process efficiency include:

SIP PROJECT

- SAP Portfolio and Project Management
- SAP Financial Management

HR PROJECT

- SAP HR
- SAP Employee Self Service (ESS)
- SAP Manager Self Service (MSS)
- SAP Success Factors

