From Party Planning to Homework: Project Management for Kids

In 2011, Mohamed Khalifa, PMP, of Kuwait was inspired to teach project management to children as a vital life skill. Four years later, he’s still championing the value of project management and using it to influence others—including his young daughter.

Related Resources

Mohamed used no-cost resources from the PMIEF website as the basis for his Young Project Managers Camp. How could you use resources like these to do good in your community?

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How did you first begin learning project management?
From Party Planning to Homework: Project Management for Kids

At the PMI Global Congress in 2011, Mohamed Khalifa, PMP, stopped by the PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF) table to see how the Foundation was using project management to improve the lives of children and communities. He was immediately inspired to find a way to teach project management to children in his home country of Kuwait. But although he took materials home with him and studied the PMIEF website, he wasn't sure how to proceed.

Then one day, Mohamed's wife and daughter talked him into going to the circus. As he watched the performers, Mohamed was struck by how much planning went into producing a circus, and he realized what a great tool that could be to get kids excited about project management skills.

In February 2013, PM Philanthropist shared how Mohamed sought sponsorship from his company, recruited some coworkers, and launched his Young Project Managers Camp with a Circus Project. He downloaded the no-cost resource Projects from the Future®: Kit for Primary School from the PMIEF website, adapted it, and translated it into Arabic as one of the foundations of his camp. Twenty children, ages eight to twelve, learned project management skills, from budgeting to working together as a team, to create their own model circus.

"The children felt a lot of self-esteem," Mohamed notes, "because we gave them business cards and T-shirts to show that they are project managers."

Mohamed’s daughter Maryam, now 12, was one of those children. "It was a wonderful program and full of fun," she says.

"I learned how to plan to make a circus or any other project. We used the Mind Maps, which I use now to study my lessons in school. Also, I’m able to write everything I want to do with my friends in sequence; and I can make a Project Tree, buy materials and build a project. Working with other kids in a team was very nice, especially when we added activities like a video shoot to advertise our circus. We had a lot of ideas!"

Although it’s been four years since the camp, Maryam is still reaping the benefits and uses project management almost as much as her father does. "She schedules her tasks and manages her time better than before," Mohamed says. "She is able to decompose any topic or objective into sub items to start working on it. When planning events with friends, she will create a plan B in case there is a problem with the first plan. When she buys anything, she negotiates the price and quality, as she learned to do in the program, and this is very impressive. She can also manage her money and knows how to spend it in a right way." From planning an after-school get-together with friends to getting her homework done, project management impacts Maryam’s life nearly every day.

Unfortunately, the local school system has not supported project management as a life skill. Mohamed continues to seek sponsorship for future Young Project Managers Camps, as well as advocate for project management training at all levels.

"I have a lot of ideas to apply the same concept in other ways," he says, "and I’ve shared them with some of my friends. They have applied the ideas in many countries. I talked about our camp at the PMIEF gathering at the Global Congress in 2012, at EMEA in Marseille, the PMI AGC Conference in Bahrain in 2013 and other local events.

Most of all, he says, "I’m interested to be more involved with PMIEF as an active volunteer to use project management for social good®. I hope to use my new volunteer position as PMIEF Liaison in the PMI Arab Gulf Chapter to speak to people in higher authority about adding project management to school curriculums. And I hope my daughter continues her project management skills because they will help her regardless of which field she will study and work in."
Related Resources

Projects from the Future®: Kit for Primary School was the basis for Mohamed’s camp, with tools to train teachers and tested methods to get kids involved with project management.

PMIEF’s Learning Resources page offers additional tools for nonprofits, NGOs, teachers, parents, administrators and youth.
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Share Your Story

Mohamed’s daughter Maryam began learning project management in Mohamed’s Young Project Managers Camp when she was only eight. How did you first begin learning project management?

Tell us your story!

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