

PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS IGNITE THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

Can project management skills be a catalyst in the fight against world hunger?

That's what one international nonprofit is counting on after exposing two dozen of its staff to project management fundamentals, thanks to a PMIEF grant.

"We were really fortunate and excited to get the grant," says Joseph Brumley, Learning Manager at Rise Against Hunger, a global hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable, mobilizing the necessary resources to end hunger by 2030.

"One of our priorities has been to broaden and deepen our impact and be better stewards of our resources," he adds. "The PMIEF grant fit right into that. It's really enabled us to move forward with our mission. It couldn't have tied in better."

Formerly known as Stop Hunger Now, the Raleigh, North Carolina-based nonprofit has program locations in 20 U.S. cities and five international offices in India, Italy, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Africa. Project management training has provided a way for everyone organization-wide, including affiliates and partners, to speak the same language and be more purposeful about how they initiate projects. All of the staff who participated live in the U.S., but many are part of international teams that go abroad to work with Rise Against Hunger partners and donors in other countries.

"The grant paid for us to hire a PMI-certified trainer who led workshops at our headquarters office in Raleigh. To further our capacity-building efforts, the trainer is helping us develop a guidebook — a toolkit with templates and guidelines for projects," Brumley says. "It will be available through our internal network and learning management system to all staff, including those at our international affiliates."

He adds that during the workshops, Rise Against Hunger staff worked on launching a real-life sustainability project in India. They were excited about how project management skills would help them be more effective and efficient.

"People were into it," Brumley says. "It's been great to see things get put in action; within days I saw work breakdown structures on the walls in our offices. I've been part of project management training for over 20 years but have never seen an organization jump in and use it like this. I'm seriously impressed by the buy-in."

Lance Morrison, Program Monitoring and Evaluation Associate at Rise Against Hunger, took part in the project management training program. "I thought of all the ways I could apply what I learned to the benefit of my team by taking a more precise approach to our work," he says. "We are an ambitious group; we're passionate, but that can be a double-edged sword. We set lofty goals and idealistic deadlines, but there are only so many of us and so little time."

Brumley says project management skills were critical during recent natural disasters, as Rise Against Hunger worked to distribute emergency aid. "During Hurricane Irma, we worked in partnership with the St. Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association to respond to the devastation and catastrophic infrastructural damage on the island of St. Maarten. Rise Against Hunger airlifted more than 64,000 meals for distribution to nearly 300 vulnerable families. We had direct impact in the community by being able to coordinate multiple agencies through a project plan."

Brumley wants PMIEF supporters to know how much it means to a nonprofit to get access to training.

"As a nonprofit organization, finding resources to train and develop your organization is hard," he says. "You don't usually get a lot of budget money for that. Grants like what we received from PMIEF are critical from a learning management standpoint. Having outside resources like this is a huge help, so we can get better at doing what we do."

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT: ERIC S. NORMAN, PMI FELLOW

Eric Norman, PMP, PgMP and PMI Fellow, was introduced to project management about 30 years ago, while working at AT&T. He could not have known then the prominent role the discipline would play in his life.

An active member since 1992, he has volunteered for PMI in a number of different ways, including serving on committees to develop and publish standards and establish certification. He currently sits on the Certification Governance Council.

Along the way, he learned about the work PMIEF does to inspire and empower people to realize their potential and transform their lives and their communities through the use of project management knowledge.

"I didn't know that much about the foundation at the time, but as I learned about the mission, it really struck me as something valuable," says Norman, who now has his own consultancy, Norman & Norman Consulting, LLC. He specializes in strategic project/program initiative management and business process leadership for a broad array of public and private organizations.



Norman's relationship with PMI and the foundation are really "two separate paths," he says — each rewarding in its own way.

Over the last six years he has helped PMIEF from a process standpoint on a number of initiatives. For example, he was instrumental on the project management digital badging initiative, developing a resource that accurately quantifies student and teacher learning of project management skills.

Norman also is a Leadership Society donor. "I'm pleased to have the opportunity to give and will likely continue because I want to do what I can do. I'm a small company, but I feel like this is a worthwhile investment, that my money is well placed. PMIEF is impacting the people who are going to be leading organizations in the future."

Norman says he is inspired watching [videos like this one](#) on PMIEF's website that show the foundation's mission in action.

"They really illustrate how exciting it is," he says. "When you see high school kids working on a project and being part of a team, it's really inspirational. The foundation is providing not only work and social interaction skills but also a set of tools that will help pre-college students socially and professionally, and in their personal relationships and their world. I think it's a really valuable, worthwhile cause."

He adds, "I absolutely am fascinated by what PMIEF is doing. I really believe this is the future, and I want to help in whatever way I can so they are successful."

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