

## Advice to My Younger Self: The Benefits of Learning Project Management Early in Life

All of us, at least once in our lives, have thought “if I only knew then what I know now.” It could have been in a work situation where you needed just a little more experience, or maybe in life when talking with friends, or perhaps maybe even when you were in grade school. Inevitably, we all have a situation where we wish our current skill set was available to us earlier and that we had a role model to look up to.

In this Q&A series with the PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF), we apply the “shoulda, coulda, woulda” mindset to project management, and asked members in the project management field how they feel their current skill set could have helped them as a kid. We started with advice from our active PMIEF community about how they feel this skill set can help kids to achieve their goals and fulfill future dreams in life.

In this article, three women—Gina Abudi, consultant, author, speaker, and founder of Abudi Consulting Group in New Hampshire, USA; Titilola Park, director of projects for Tamgor Nigeria Ltd. in Nigeria; and Ana Carolina Gaeta, production engineer and project management specialist in Brazil—share their thoughts on teaching project management skills to youth and why they think project management is a vital tool for the future.

Read further to learn not only how project management has helped to shape them and their careers, but also what advice they have for the next generation of project managers.

*If you had learned project management skills at a young age, how would that have helped your early growth, school life, opportunities, etc.?*

**Gina Abudi:** I think learning project management skills at a younger age would have helped in getting my school work completed. I certainly could have used those skills to get research papers done!

**Titilola Park:** I have always been someone who thinks sequentially, but if I had learned project management earlier in my life, I would have been able to break down projects that felt overwhelming, and I wouldn't have given up as easily as I did. It would've provided me an opportunity to be more successful in my school projects.

**Ana Carolina Gaeta:** I've been lucky that I learned early project management skills and started to volunteer at a PMI chapter. Since then, my personal and professional lives have changed, and I have had amazing opportunities throughout my career. So, I always wanted to share with younger kids all the things that I learned because if it was this good for me, it could be good for them too. I remember when PMIEF did a presentation in Brazil and I thought, “This is what I want to teach; this is what I want to be a part of.”

*In your experience, have you seen kids with project management skills perform differently than kids without those skills?*

**Ms. Abudi:** I'm going to use my nephew as an example. I taught him project





management skills and I saw him using those skills doing school work and helping his mom to organize birthday parties (for him!). Additionally, I saw children use project management skills to plan group events in school, such as monthly birthday parties and holiday parties. It is fun and exciting for them!

**Ms. Park:** When we went to the global conference last year, we let our students showcase what they learned from the *Project Management Skills for Life*® resources. They learned that there are projects all around us, and the need for a project management skill set is crucial. Their project enabled them to make a donation to their school library and they were able to engage with adults confidently and discuss their learnings at the conference. I look forward to replicating their success outside of Nigeria.

**Ms. Gaeta:** I witnessed younger kids who have some knowledge in project management use their soft skills, like communication and leadership, for example, in a more developed way than kids without project management knowledge. These kids are able to think and react better when they are faced with some challenges or difficulty. Kids who have learned project management skills grow up to be more prepared and self-confident because they possess the tools for planning and achieving their goals.

**What advice would you give to a young person when it comes to learning project management early as a vital tool for the future?**

**Ms. Abudi:** While I am not a project manager by profession, I use my project management skills in everything I do. Project management is a way to be organized about how you approach work. I would highly recommend that everyone learn project management skills. You will be able to do so much with those skills, whether planning an event at school, organizing a birthday party for a friend, planning a surprise for parents, or any other number of things.

**Ms. Park:** I think project management is a skill that's needed in all aspects of life. It helps solve and address issues of governance and accountability. If you teach kids accountability early, then they become better students. Better students become better leaders, and better leaders help transform tomorrow. It's so important to learn these skills early.

**Ms. Gaeta:** If you have the opportunity to learn project management early, do it! Many professionals today (like doctors, lawyers, etc.) are lacking project management skills and are suffering the consequences of entering into the labor market without that essential knowledge, not only for their career but also for their lives. With project management skills, professionals are more apt to achieve their goals and fulfill their dreams.

PMIEF's work centers on bringing project management to youth. To learn more about PMIEF's work visit [pmief.org](http://pmief.org).

## Events Calendar

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### OCTOBER 2019

#### 4 October

#### PMI Belgium Chapter PM Fair 2019

Brussels, Belgium. The theme this year is "Project Management and Digital Disruption: Are You Ready?" Enjoy a combination of keynotes, workshops and booths where sponsors and authors demonstrate their products and services to a targeted group of professionals. [pmi-belgium.be](http://pmi-belgium.be).

### NOVEMBER 2019

#### 6–7 November

#### PMI Southern Caribbean Chapter 10th Biennial International Project Management Conference

San Fernando, Trinidad. "Rebooting for the Digital Age." Inherent to the fourth industrial revolution that is upon us are three key considerations: velocity, scope and impact. The chaos presents opportunities and challenges, and business leaders must understand changing environments and challenge assumptions while relentlessly innovating. [pmiscc.org](http://pmiscc.org).

#### 7 November

#### PMI Budapest, Hungarian Chapter Art of Projects Conference 2019

Budapest, Hungary. Save the date for this seventh annual conference. [pmi.hu](http://pmi.hu).

#### 23–24 November

#### PMI MENA Conference 2019

Kuwait City, Kuwait (23 November) and Manama, Bahrain (24 November). Join the third edition of the Middle East–Northern Africa (MENA) Conference. The event will have a keynote speaker from the PMI Board of Directors and other international project management experts sharing the latest topics ranging from project excellence and strategic PMOs to business analysis and much more. Whether you are a seasoned project professional, starting your career or returning to the profession, there are unique learning and networking opportunities that await you!! [pmimenaconference.org](http://pmimenaconference.org).

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