



## PMIEF Resources Inspire Work With Youth Querétaro, Mexico, Hosts Robotics and Project Management Contest

**N**early 1,000 students, parents and teachers recently took part in the First Academic Contest of Robotics and Project Management in Querétaro, Mexico. A number of technologically oriented companies are based in Querétaro, which is located 200 kilometers north of Mexico City. Members of the press and state government officials were also present at the event.

### AN IDEA TAKES HOLD

The idea for the contest stemmed from a PMI Leadership Institute Meeting held in Cancún, Mexico in 2007. Volunteers from the PMI Mexico Chapter discussed educational initiatives with representatives from the PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF), a not-for-

profit charitable organization, and decided to create a “cell of educative innovation.” The object was to promote the use of project management practices for young people throughout their lives.

This idea motivated the project management community in Querétaro to accept the invitation of Cuauhtémoc Acevedo, a chapter member and manager of Inte-QSoft, to organize a contest of robotic dance and project management for students. The goal was to teach student teams how to employ project management skills as each team designed and built a dancing robot, which would compete in a dance contest.

### PLANNING, ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION

Planning began for the contest in August 2009. The PMIEF resource,

“Project Management Skills for Life,” as adapted by the PMI Northern Italy Chapter and available on PMIEF.org, was very useful. Companies, universities, high schools, associations and the PMI Mexico Chapter participated in the process.

More than 400 students from various schools in Querétaro state participated in the contest. The students were trained through seminars on basic concepts. Chapter members in Querétaro held several seminars demonstrating how to use and implement basic project management tools to help the students achieve the project objective with organized activities.

A committee of volunteers, companies, academic organizations and institutions supported the organization of the contest. Chapter members were in charge of training for staff, judges and students in the basic tools of project management. They also were responsible for establishing the project management evaluation criteria. Chapter volunteers had only two hours to train the staff and judges, and four hours to (virtually) train 400 students in the 34 different student teams.

Each student team had a mentor to help it in the implementation of the project management tools. A meeting between mentors and the students occurred two weeks before the contest to review progress.

### THE CONTEST IS LAUNCHED

The contest was inaugurated by Querétaro State Governor José





PMI Educational  
Foundation  
Grant Recipient



Real-World Project Training Is Part of the Course

## Getting Unemployed Project Professionals Back to Work

**W**ork it UP, a not-for-profit organization based in the U.S. state of Maine, has created an applied learning-based training course designed to benefit out-of-work project management and other professionals. Founded in 2009, Work it UP received a grant from the PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF) to develop the program, which helps participants prepare for the Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)<sup>®</sup> examination.

The Work it UP CAPM course goes beyond certification training alone, however. The strength of the course is verification that certified knowledge has been applied to a real-world project in a hands-on environment.

The course serves three types of unemployed professionals: those who have worked as a project manager but have never been certified, those who earned project management certifica-

PMI's certification testing process.

To provide real-world management experience, the Work it UP program solicits projects from businesses to help them fill unmet or unfunded needs.

Businesses pay a nominal fee in order to participate in the program. The

projects offer unemployed professionals the chance to work on many types of projects in a variety of industries for their applied-learning verification.

The projects are short-term (8-12 weeks in length). Participants are assigned to a project at its planning phase and help carry it through to completion. A Project Management Professional (PMP)<sup>®</sup> credential holder from Work it UP's project management office acts as mentor during the project's duration.



Calzada Rovirosa, the secretary of public education and the director of the state university, Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro.

Each team had five minutes to decorate their scenes and three minutes to present their robot show.

Scoring in the First Academic Contest of Robotics and Project Management of Querétaro was based 50 percent on project management and 50 percent on the robot dance including clothes, set, coherence, routine and choreography.

Project management was evaluated by the deliverables each student group was required to create, including documentation of:

- Project scope;
- Work breakdown structure;
- Critical path;
- Dashboard display on deliverables fulfillment;
- Lessons learned; and
- Photographs of the deliverables development process, planning meetings and students working on project activities.

### A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

The First Academic Contest of Robotics and Project Management in Querétaro City was a very successful event, thanks to the PMIEF Project Management Skills for Life resource. This is a great tool to teach project management as a life skill and to prepare young people to be successful. When an interesting topic using technology and project management comes together, students' creativity can be challenged and amazing results can be obtained.

The PMI Mexico Chapter thanks volunteers who worked on this project: Cuahtémoc Acevedo; Rogelio Cardenas, PMP; Vanessa Islas Padilla, PMP; Maria José Tiro, PMP; Janette Dominguez, PMP; Yolanda Padron; Claudia Herrera, PMP; and Dulce Morales. It also thanks all the people who participated as mentors, judges and staff for the time they dedicated to make this dream a reality.

To view or download the Skills for Life resource, visit [www.PMIEF.org](http://www.PMIEF.org) or e-mail [pmief@pmi.org](mailto:pmief@pmi.org).



The Work It UP steering committee, from left: Bill Taylor, president; Dana Dumond, communications director; Ralph Gamache, senior project designer; Allison Fichera, executive assistant; Ron Burke, director of operations; and Thomas Norton, director, internet technology.

tion from a college or university but have never actually managed a project, and those who have worked in other professions and seek to make a career change. Work it UP's CAPM training offers online CAPM course work for these individuals through TechMaine, and also facilitates certification through

In order to receive Work it UP's endorsement, participants must successfully perform activities in all nine Knowledge Areas of *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK<sup>®</sup> Guide)*–Fourth Edition, and in four Process Groups (all but Initiating).

Once they have completed the program, Work it UP actively assists the unemployed professionals with their employment search and placement.

The result is that a higher-caliber, certified project management practitioner leaves the program with verified training and experience—and improved chances of finding gainful employment.

For more information on this program and on PMIEF grants, contact [pmief@pmi.org](mailto:pmief@pmi.org).