

Teenagers from low-income families in Brazil learn how project management concepts can be applied to better manage everyday challenges.

An article in the September 2004 issue of *PMI Today* described an initiative by the PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF) in Brazil, which was undertaken in partnership with Unisys and the PMI São Paulo Chapter. The learning program, titled "Making it Happen through Project Management," was designed to expose students to the concepts of project management and demonstrate how project management concepts can be applied to better manage everyday challenges.

The project was aligned with the purpose of the PMI Educational Foundation, which is to promote economic, educational, cultural, and social advancement through the application, development and promotion of project management concepts and life skills. It also was fully aligned with the strategic goals of increasing project management awareness in local and global communities, and promoting project management as a life skill.

Since its launch, the project has received attention from the news media in Brazil, including *ComputerWorld* magazine, increasing the awareness of how project management can influence social and economic development of communities in Brazil.

Project Management Curriculum

Given the intended audience (students aged 14 to 17 years), the program had to contain practical day-to-day examples, be fun to learn and have visible immediate applications. This project management-integrated curriculum, lesson plan and reference materials were all based on *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*, and were developed by the PMI São Paulo Chapter.

The curriculum was conceived around four reinforcing themes:

- Great projects of the world;
- Projects around us;
- The elements of a project; and
- Projects in life, school and work.

The pilot program was designed for a total duration of six hours divided, into two sessions.

Train the Trainer at Unisys From left to right: Abraham Farah, PMP (Unisys Volunteer); Janette Sakamoto, PMP (Unisys Volunteer); Vanessa Cuzziol (Unisys Project Leader); Paulo Ferreira, PMP (Vice President, PMI São Paulo Chapter and PMIEF Chapter Liaison); Suelli Rabaca (Vice President, PMI São Paulo Chapter and Project Manager).



Students in Brazil Benefit From Project Management Life Skills Initiative



Learning Project Management
Students in the project management classes discussed their work with instructors and also worked as teams.



"Train-the-Trainer" Workshops Prepare Instructors

To enable volunteers to successfully apply the program, the PMI São Paulo Chapter developed a "train-the-trainer" workshop to provide volunteer instructors with the required concepts and give them practice conducting the training. A one-day train-the-trainer workshop was held in late 2004 at Unisys EIC (Unisys

School for Information Technology and Citizenship) facilities for eight Unisys employees who had volunteered for the program. Most of the volunteers were Project Management Professional (PMP®) certified, and two were ultimately selected for the pilot class.

Project Management Classes Are Rated a Success

In early 2005, two pilot project management classes were launched with a group of 14- to 17-year-old students from low-income São Paulo families, who were enrolled at Unisys EIC. Students considered the course a success, and gave it high marks in their evaluations. Their key recommendation for improvement—to increase course duration—was especially satisfying since classes were held on weekends.

What Volunteers Say

"The partnership with PMIEF was an important addition to the volunteer program of Unisys Brazil," said Vanessa Cuzziol, the project leader for Unisys. "The innovative course is a valuable instrument for students coming from low income families."

The project is now part of Unisys social volunteering initiatives in Brazil, as highlighted in Unisys's social responsibility actions Web site in Brazil.

"The PMI São Paulo Chapter was extremely happy with the results, especially with the interest of the students and how they quickly absorbed the concepts," said Chapter Vice President Paulo Ferreira, PMP. "It was a great opportunity for the Chapter to work with PMIEF in this project in Brazil."

Next Steps

There are already requests to expand the Project Management Life Skills project. Currently two types of expansions are under way:

- Expansion beyond the state of São Paulo to other states of Brazil; and
- Expansion to other organizations that have shown interest in the project.

The expansions will occur in cooperation with a sponsoring component and a sponsoring organization. The PMIEF course materials will be available soon in Portuguese and English, and the PMI São Paulo Chapter will be collaborating with components interested in deploying the project into other regions.

— Pedro C. Ribeiro, MBA, PMP

PMI Educational Foundation Liaison for Brazil

Educational Foundation Plans New Strategic Direction as It Turns 15

The PMI Educational Foundation celebrated its 15th anniversary in August 2005. Founded by PMI in 1990 to promote economic, educational, cultural and social advancement through project management life skills, the Foundation provides scholarships and fellowships, endows and establishes professorships, and assists in establishing degree programs. It also administers

and supports student organizations, and solicits, receives and expends gifts, legacies and grants.

The Foundation plans strategic and organizational changes in the near future. Watch for details in a future *PMI Today*. In the meantime, you can visit the PMIEF at PMI Global Congress 2005—North America in Toronto to learn more about the Foundation's plans and programs.

