

## **Interview with IPMA Young Crew Chairman Daniel Collado-Ruiz**

At the 2013 IPMA World Congress in Croatia

By Ivy Elizabeth Bai



**Dr. Daniel Collado-Ruiz**

*Dr. Daniel Collado-Ruiz is Associate Professor at the Universidad Politècnica de València, Spain, and has spent the last 8 years researching and teaching in different universities in the world, in the areas of new product development, sustainability, eco-innovation, creativity and distributed teamwork. He is also the current Chairman of the Young Crew Management Board, at the International Project Management Association (IPMA). Daniel often takes off his academic hat to chair AEIPRO Joven and organize workshops in and for the IPMA. He is passionate about fostering networking capabilities, learning more and more each day, and challenging those that say “it is impossible”. Through this network, Daniel has been involved in Coaching for Development as the project manager, has actively participated in the start-up and organization of the creACTivity workshops, and was co-lead in the organization of Young Crew Workshops during the IPMA World Congresses in recent years, including 2013 in Croatia.*

**Ivy Elizabeth Bai (Ivy):** Hello, Daniel. I am from Beijing Wow Project Management Consulting Company which is famous for project/programme management training, consulting and certification in China and ranks the top 10 Chinese Project Management Consulting Company by PMRC. We have been providing World Top 500 construction companies, large scale central enterprises and their subsidiaries, publicly-held companies, etc. project/programme management training, consulting and certification for ten years. There are 40-50 thousand project managers who attended our project management training.

Thank you very much for your time for this interview. The IPMA Young Crew (YC) congress had finished before the international congress began. What kind of opinion will you give to this YC congress, as the chairman?

**Dr. Daniel Collado-Ruiz (Daniel):** I really appreciated this year's Global Young Crew Workshop. The team considerably raised the bar; they increased the quality level compared to the previous editions. They had very good training sessions in conjunction with a very engaging and thought-provoking plan. Saturday they had during the whole day training sessions, topped with a workshop about group dynamics. The aim of this workshop was to prepare them for the next day, on which they set sail and navigated a ship to an island together, working as a team.

**Ivy:** So, that is a real sail. In Wuhan, we talked about the sail. It sounds like a simulation sail.

**Daniel:** No, no it was a real sail, with real ship, in real sea, with wind and real people! One could see lot of interactions, a lot of noteworthy learning items on communication, leadership styles or personality types: I am sure it was a great experience. Every person who I have talked to had a good opinion about the overall workshop. I am sure it will leave good memories to all the participants.

**Ivy:** Great! You must be very happy and proud.

**Daniel:** More than proud of myself, I'm proud of the group we had. This year, Young Crew Croatia took on the challenge since very early, with a lot of energy, and very professionally. We are really lucky and proud to have Goga, the current chairwoman for YC Croatia, also as the project manager of this event. She prepared a very competent team, and executed the project without any issues (or at least without any visible issues). I am very happy with the result.

**Ivy:** What is the topic of the Global Young Crew Workshop this year?

**Daniel:** Most years the workshop does not have a specific topic. We aim to cover a wide range of interests, all related to project management of course. What we always have is a motto, that all trainers to asked to adhere to. This year we took the motto of the IPMA World Congress: 'Finding balance, moving forward'. All the topics in our workshop were somehow adapted to this theme.

**Ivy:** As the chairman of YC, could you please tell the young project managers and professionals, how to understand this topic?

**Daniel:** Well, I believe balance is very relevant to project management, and this is profoundly shared and understood in the IPMA. During decades we have constantly put forward the importance of human aspects in project management. Project success is as much about the project manager as about the project or processes, if not more. It's about having competent people. And when you deal with people, balance is paramount. You need to look for balance in teams to keep them motivated, or when you have conflict situations, you need to balance time, resources, and scope... it's all about balance! And of course, projects are what move the world forward. I think it is a good time to bring this topic to the table at the congress. Otherwise, many people might get the impression that project managers

are stressful people running around, instead of the balanced, competent and confident individuals they should be.

**Ivy:** So Perfect topic, perfect timing. And what do you think of the world congress this year?

**Daniel:** I think the execution has been absolutely great. Unfortunately, my disadvantage as chairman of the Young Crew is that I have to miss a lot of the conference sessions to participate in meetings organized by the different IPMA boards. Of course, one of them is the one I chair, but we also collaborate – more and more – with the different IPMA boards.

But regarding the conference, everything I've managed to see has been very interesting, and everybody I'm talking to is finding it like that as well. I think content-wise, it has been excellent. Also, knowing the project manager, Mladen Vukomanovic, and seeing him going from session to session, I know the conference is in good hands. Of course, there are always things that one can think "oh, for next time we better do this", but overall I think the congress organization team should be very proud of themselves and the job they've done.

**Ivy:** The time of this congress is special, the beginning of the last quarter of 2013, almost the end of this year and the new year is at the corner, at this turning point, could you please tell us, what are the main achievements this year, let's say in research area, and in the practical area? And what are the trends, new development or the direction of project management? Let's put a timeframe like next year or in 2015.

**Daniel:** I've seen a lot of discussion about organizational maturity when it comes to project management. That is definitely one of the trending topics. It is something that has been in the agenda for a long while, but now we are way beyond whether a company is project-oriented or not: new insights are gained in that direction, in particular when it comes to complex projects and portfolios. We also have here a lot of very good examples in the award winners. Those institutions are delivering huge projects in a very competent way!

Another part that keeps growing year after year is the human aspect of project management, of course. Research is considerably advancing in understanding how people behave, how they communicate, how they react, how team dynamics affect the correct delivery of the project, etc. I might also be drawn to this side because of my personal research, I guess. This whole area also seems to be getting somehow more tangible as research advances, more rigorous in some aspects. I also believe that we will see some very interesting advances in this area in the near future. Also, since projects are becoming more global, cultural issues are also more present, be it directly or transversally. The whole "human side" of projects I think is very interesting.

And another part I have seen on the rise, and I believe this impacts at societal level, is to what extent project management goes beyond our conventional examples: to

what extent project management can reach other parts of our society. I would call this project management projects and manages projects in a non-professional way.

**Ivy:** Yes, just like Steven Jobs said, he did not think everybody should be a lawyer or to be a programmer, but he did think that everybody should go to law school or learn how to make programming, because in this way they learn certain good ways of thinking which is very important. Just like project management.

As you know, with the development of Chinese economy, Chinese enterprises, more and more Chinese companies are going abroad to do projects, many of them are complex or mega projects. We do have a lot of project managers, a lot of good project managers, but the issue is first of all, we do not have enough project managers for all the projects. Secondly, we need more excellent project managers, do you have any suggestions for us? And how can young project professionals and managers make good advantage of this opportunity to develop their career?

**Daniel:** It is indeed a big challenge to deal with. All the topics I mentioned before are relevant, of course. And obviously, you need to train and educate high-level project managers, to develop more or bigger master programs on project management, I guess. But additionally, I believe that a great deal can be accomplished by means of mentoring inside companies. People with experience in project management can mentor younger professionals. And young professionals that have been working for a while can mentor newer project managers. I believe that for young people who are starting and materializing their a career, it is important to figure out where their career is going. Having competent people mentoring and supporting them, and showing them how their next steps look like, is crucial for their professional development.

**Ivy:** So, high end education, combined with mentoring and coaching.

**Daniel:** I believe coaching is one of the best solutions to deliver competence in project management.

Of course, I am a professor and involved in projects, so I assumed that I can give my point view with my young crew hat or with my academic hat. As a matter of fact, I can also wear both at the same time, since we have also started some combined efforts with the research management board. We were planning a joint workshop for young researchers. That is obviously a target market that both boards share, so what better than doing it jointly?



**Ivy:** Chinese construction companies do deliver trainings, but not all delivering training within a structured system and the fact is that the speed of the business development is much faster than the speed of growth of people, talents or project managers. So, could you please give us some suggestions?

**Daniel:** I think the best potential is attained when following a framework. Of course, being here, the framework guide I tend to take as reference is the ICB, the IPMA Competency Baseline, because it is a comprehensive framework of areas (competence elements) in which professionals must be competent in, in order to be a competent manager. Based on that, they can figure out a program to have their young professionals develop each one of those competencies. They can even define a career path based on this. The IPMA can again serve as a reference for this, based on its four-level certification scheme. Starting from project team members, looking to reach level D, then level C, and going on progressively, in some cases managing big portfolios and reaching level A. Having such clear scheme and framework on what people must be competent in to be a professional is key to define their internal training scheme, and career development scheme.

**Ivy:** Thank you for your suggestions. For many different reasons, many Chinese project managers or project management professionals just could not come here to attend the YC congress, could you please say something to them and introduce yourself briefly, your background, your responsibility as your role of the chairman, so Chinese project managers can know more about you and IPMA YC?

**Daniel:** My background? I started in engineering, which I slowly grew away from. I pursued an academic career, so I did my Ph.D in sustainability and new product development, and have researched on those areas since. That was my entry point to the Spanish member association of IPMA, AEIPRO.

As for my role as chairman, I guess my most important role is to help define a vision, and to make sure that the very competent individuals who are working with me are coherently working towards that vision. In other words I am empowering people to make the change that we believe society needs.

I believe that from the IPMA Young Crew side, there is a great potential in China. I was there recently, and had the pleasure of meeting a lot of eager young professionals. I can see a very important role of Young Crew China in the international activities in the near future, and I am looking forward to see a very strong contribution in the next two years, to the global Young Crew portfolio, and also here in the congress.

**Ivy:** Thank you for having me, and thank you so much for your insight and words for Chinese project professionals.



*IPMA Young Crew Leadership Team in Dubrovnik*

## About the Author



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**Ivy Elizabeth Bai** graduated from Beijing Normal University, Master's Degree in Comparative Education. Ivy has 18 years of working experience in education and training industry, working as management in Chinese and global top business schools such as Chinese European International Business School and Management School of Fudan University, working as director in education group. Ivy has been involved in project management education and training for years; currently she is general manager of Beijing Wow Project Management Consulting Company, Shanghai Branch. She is an assessor and language owner of PRINCE2 certifications. She translated the books of P3O, PRINCE2 and all of the courseware of PRINCE2, MSP and MoR for use in China. Ivy can be contacted at [baiwei@wowproject.org](mailto:baiwei@wowproject.org).