

## **Project Management Update from Turkey**



By **İpek Sahra Özgüler**  
International Correspondent  
Istanbul, Turkey

### **INTERVIEW WITH PMI TURKEY CHAPTER PRESIDENT**

#### **ISMAIL KURTOĞLU**



- ***Welcome to Mr. Kurtoglu. As a new president of PMI TR, could you introduce yourself for PM World Journal readers please?***

I am an enthusiastic engineer with about 30 years' experience. I knew that I was going to be an engineer when I was in primary school. I have started my university study at Middle East Technical University in 1982. During fourth class I started to work in ASELSAN which is still the major defense company in Turkey. In 30 years of Professional experience I have worked in several companies and I have been involved in research and development projects mainly. From 2000 till 2004 I have been in Stockholm, beautiful city, working for several companies connected to Ericsson, that

duration of my life, is very important for me because the experience working in Marconi/Chelmsford taught me a lot about working in multi-cultural international organizations.

During my professional live, I have not given up to study in academics. After graduation, I have done Master of Science study and started to PhD at the same university. After some break I have restarted to my PhD study at Black Sea Technical University and I am still continuing as PhD candidate.

- ***How did you get involved with PMI TR?***

I have been involved with projects since the date I have started to work in ASELSAN in 1986. I have been in one of R&D projects team. After gaining some experience as project engineer I have promoted to Project manager and military projects program manager. I remember when I first met with MS project Office and doing GANTT Charts at around nineties.

During my time in Ericsson Ecosystem, I experienced the modern project management tools and techniques. After my return to Turkey, I have investigated Project Management World and discover PMI and PMP certification and decided to get it. I got my PMP certification in 2009. While I was filling up the member details in PMI.org I have seen the “The Potential Turkish Chapter” and became a member of it also. It is a small world, when I tried to contact to Turkish Chapter, I saw that the president, Tolga OZEL, a person that I already know. Tolga convinced me there are a lot to do in Turkey to increase modern PM knowledge, experience, value, and I start volunteering for PMI Turkish chapter. My first big responsibility was to be PM for PM Summit: Defense at Ankara, capital of Turkey, in 2011. That was the first major event of PMI Turkish chapter in the heart of government city. The event was a big success, more than 500 PM practitioners attended the conference, with the support of Undersecretariat of Defense, it was a really big success for PMI TR chapter. After that I have worked as Director for two years for PMI TR chapter. My volunteering has been continuing since, as Vice president for two terms (4 years). I have been elected by the board as President Elect last year.

And now for 2016, I have been honored to lead the magnificent PMI Turkey team as President PMI TR Chapter.

- ***Where is the PMI TR chapter stands?***

After we erased “potential” prefix and chartered as PMI Turkey chapter, we have made significant improvements. Thanks to all volunteers working for PMI TR chapter, we became the leading NGO in Turkey’s Project Management Ecosystem. Now, we are continuously involved in the three big cities of Turkey, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir by organizing regular Professionals Development Activities. Last year 36 professional development activities organized in those cities with attendance of about 1150 practitioners. In addition to those monthly events, two major summits were held one in Istanbul another in Ankara with total attendance about 1000 practitioners. Even though PMI TR chapter recently chartered, Ankara Branch is established and approved last year.

So, PMI TR chapter, we can say, have completed our first line of evolution. We have enough number of volunteers to support our regular planned operations. Our member count has been stabilized around 650.

Turkey chapter is also very active on PMIEF activities. Last year, more than 50 teachers were trained.

Our governance model has been settled up with interlaced election scheme. Our elected officer’s duty term is 2 years. With yearly elections, half of the officers elected and changed with the other remaining half continues to their duty, so this ensures smooth transition throughout the years.

- ***What is the main features of the PMI TR strategy in 2016 and how does it differ from the previous year? And What initiatives and projects are you planning to implement as PMI TR President?***

I have already mentioned that our member count has been stabilized around 650. For a chapter in a country with population around 70 million, this figure should be around at least 1500. As 2016 board, we have decided to challenge that.

A few programs have been designed solely to increase the member count. One program that is planned in 2015 and initiated in 2016 targets this strategical aim. The name of the program is “Young candidate project manager development

program”. With that, we aimed to generate more value to the university students, so they would like to join PMI TR chapter. The core of the program is CAPM certification. We are contacting to universities especially career centers of the universities and convince them having a globally recognized certificate can significantly improve job search of recently graduated students. We offer their students to have free CAPM training that is required to apply CAPM exam in return to being a member of PMI TR chapter. Universities supply logistics needs for the training. We depend on our volunteers to give that 23 hours of training for free. At the end, the value for students is, with having a globally recognized PM certification at hand, they will be one step ahead in job search compared to others. The value for the universities is the increase of the number of their students placed in good companies especially international ones. Finally, the value for PMI TR chapter is not only increase of the member numbers but also increase in the CAPM certified practitioners in Turkey that is currently less than 10.

By chance, that program really aligned with the PMI one of 2016 strategy, that is, increase young and university member count globally, announced in Philadelphia meeting. I am stating “by chance” intentionally, because we have designed and start planning of “Young candidate project manager development program” at October 2015.

Another program that aims to increase the member count and retention rate is “Corporate membership development”. With that program, we are offering some values/discounts /opportunities to corporates, so they are willing to pay their employees’ membership costs of PMI TR chapter. What we offer are, as example, free advertisement in our web page, in our magazine, speaker opportunities in monthly and yearly events, discounted rates, free seminars targeted to increase their project managers’ knowledge, etc.

What we know is if we increase our member count and retention rate, and if we pass 1000-member line, PMI TR chapter will be in the first league in PMI.

- ***With the first quarter of the year gone, what has the PMI TR accomplished so far in 2016?***

As a new board, with three months passed, we have completed planning for regular

events that we normally do in a year.

We have completed the orientation of the new members in our team.

2016 is the first year of Ankara Branch officially; we have completed the branch formation.

In our first board meeting, President elect is selected. So 2017's PMI TR chapter president will be Mr. Mustafa HAFIZOGLU, he is one of the LIMC graduate and one of the founder of PMI TR Chapter.

We have completed the planning of the two major programs that I have mentioned before.

We have done our yearly membership meeting.

The dates and places of two yearly Project Management summits have been fixed. For Ankara: 12 May 2016, with theme shaping the future, at Cer Modern Convention Center.

For Istanbul 14-15 October 2016, with theme, Projects in digital world, at Istanbul Technical University Suleyman Demirel Culture Center.

That is all I guess.

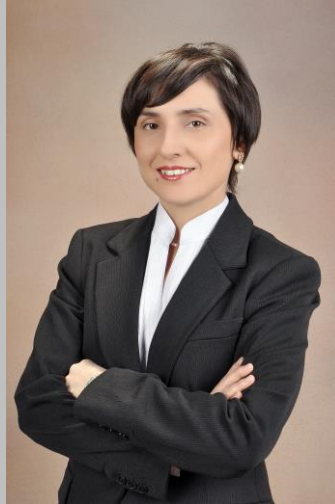
- ***Anything else?***

Yes, I would like to announce that for PMI TR members' resident in other countries other than Turkey, we offer free attendance to all of our events including our flagged PM Summit Istanbul and Ankara.

We thank you PMWorld Journal magazine for giving us this chance to present PMI TR chapter and activities to PM World.

## INTERVIEW WITH IPYD PRESIDENT

### BEHICE TORUN



- ***Welcome to Ms. Torun. As a new president of IPYD, could you introduce yourself for PMWorld Journal readers please?***

After receiving my BSc. And MSc. Degrees in Industrial Engineering, Bosphorus University, İstanbul, I got involved with software development projects and mainly analysis profession in the leading GSM Operator in Turkey at the start of my career. After working few years as an analyst, I realized my passion for Project Management and everything about it. As a result I received my PMP certification in year 2000. For over 18 years now, I have been working at different positions as an analyst, a tester, a Project member, a Project and Program manager and a unit head mainly related with CRM, Business Intelligence, Pricing and Billing, Campaign and Value Added GSM Services in telecom industry. I feel very lucky about my career and how it is related to managing projects each of which is really a different story where one can never get bored.

- ***How did you get involved with IPYD?***

I am a keen follower of İPYD and its activities since its foundation in 1997. I participated in the annual international project management congress of İPYD “DİNAMİKLER” every year since it started in 1999. I liked to hear about the profession, about the best practices and every different kind of projects coming from different sectors, about how they were being handled and what kind of difficulties they had to

overcome. It was also very exciting to meet new professionals in these networking events and learn from them. Finally in 2012 I decided to plan my own time and schedule to be a proud member of İPYD and since then I am also participating in the creation of those lively events and taking part in the very center of each professional activity.

- ***What is the main features of the İPYD strategy in 2016 and how does it differ from the previous year?***

As İPYD our main mission includes to pursue our vision and founding goals of enabling project management to be accepted as a career across all disciplines and advance and expand project management theory and application in solving any kind of problem in any area. That will always stay year after year. It is the underlying idea. However in 2016 we want to focus more on the power of our volunteers who are the true source of energy and prosperity of our association. İPYD is an NGO. Being that we have very limited financial resources. Actually we do not have any commercial identity or license to act in any commercial activity which is defined by law. However apart from any financial means, we have a very precious asset which we name as “our volunteers”. Every activity, every achievement by İPYD is the result of a very invaluable altruistic time and effort devoted by these volunteers. Knowing this, we want to get in touch with more and more of our members and try to find amongst them who are ready to provide their personal time and effort to join us to achieve more and more of our networking and professional activities. Together with volunteers we believe we can do more.

- ***What initiatives and projects are you planning to implement as İPYD president?***

My responsibilities are coming close to an end soon. I will proudly handle the post to a new excited member of our society in two months' time now. For the rest of my days as the president, I want to achieve a clear and complete transition to my follower, handle all the important knowledge I have collected and assist him or her in the new post so that İPYD will do better in the coming new years.



- ***With the first quarter of the year gone, what has the IPYD accomplished so far in 2016?***

With the first quarter of the year 2016 we were very busy getting ready for Dinamikler 2016. Every year in April we organize our branding event, DİNAMİKLER International Project Management Congress. This year is no different. We are very close to the event which will be held on the 14th and 15th of April 2016 in HILTON Hotel, Kozyatağı, İstanbul. We are now almost holding our breath before we meet with our members again and every visitor honoring us in the event. We are very excited to be part of the networking activities and hearing all the valuable presentation to be made by the speakers.



## INTERVIEW WITH UPYE FOUNDER & BOARD MEMBER

### LEVENT SUMER



- ***As a board member of UPYE, could you introduce yourself for PMWorld Journal readers please?***

I am a civil engineer with a master degree in construction management from Illinois Institute of Technology. I work for one of the largest electromechanical company in Turkey and Gulf Region as a deputy general manager responsible for strategy, business development and contracts. I am a PMP certificate holder since 2012 and member and assessor of Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. I am a PhD Candidate at Bogazici University writing thesis on real estate project financing and lecturing Project Development and Investment Management course at Yildiz Technical University as a visiting professor. I am one of the co-founders and board members of UPYE – International Project Management Institute.

- ***How did you get involved with UPYE?***

It was 2009, when Dr. Mehmet Culfik, our chairman, Burak Pilavci, our board member and I were discussing about how to improve project management knowledge and its applications in Turkey, especially in construction and real estate industry. Then, we decided to establish UPYE, by involving other project management voluntaries from different sectors such as energy, telecommunications, real estate, marketing and academicians, and in 2010 we founded UPYE as a non-profit organization to extend the project management knowledge all around Turkey.

- ***What is the main features of the UPYE strategy in 2016 and how does it differ from the previous year?***

Since its establishment, UPYE made a good progress by making strategic partnership with universities, especially with Boğaziçi University. We completed many successful seminars, conferences, panels all related to project management. In 2016, we plan to give some trainings and increase the reputation of UPYE among professionals. We plan to establish executive committees to be more active in 2016.

- ***What initiatives and projects are you planning to implement as UPYE board member?***

Project management trainings, strategic partnership with local and international project management organizations, increasing the awareness of UPYE among governmental departments are some of the plans that we plan to initiate for the next 9 months.

- ***With the first quarter of the year gone, what has the UPYE accomplished so far in 2016?***

UPYE supported YIM – Building Innovation Center- seminars and trainings. YIM completed a seminar on BIM, Building Information Modelling systems in March 12, 2016 and UPYE was one of the main supporter of the event. Again, YIM gave training on Construction Contracts Management. I, as UPYE board member was the person who was the trainer. We plan to continue such partnerships as well as keeping making our own seminars and conferences.

## About the Author



### **İpek Sahra Özgüler**

Istanbul, Turkey



**İpek Sahra Özgüler** graduated from the Istanbul University with the Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014. She works as international correspondent at PMWJ. Before joining PMWJ, she worked for global multinational companies and leading local companies such as Coca Cola, Deloitte, Turkcell Superonline, Havelsan and TAV IT. Over the years, she has gained extensive experience in managing various medium and large scale projects, programs and portfolios.

Her article named “When I Decided to Develop Multi Processing Project Manager’s System” was published in the book “*A Day in the Life of a Project Manager*”. She has published several articles in the *PM World Journal* and one in PMI’s *PM Network* magazine. İpek is actively involved in sailing, writing and discovering new cultures. She can be contacted at [ipeksahra@gmail.com](mailto:ipeksahra@gmail.com).