

Project Management is Important if We Want to Make the World a Better Place

Interview with Dr Vladimir Obradovic¹

Author, Editor, Professor, Leader
Vice President for Finance and Operations
International Project Management Association



Interviewed by Yasmina Khelifi

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Introduction to the interviewee

Vladimir Obradović, PhD is a full professor and Head of the Department for Interdisciplinary Research in Management at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Belgrade. As a visiting professor, he has been engaged at several other universities.

With over 20 years of experience, he is a leading global expert in project management and a regional expert in the public sector.

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Vladimir Obradović is Vice President for Finance and Operations at International Project Management Association – IPMA, which has members from 70 countries, and President of the Serbian Project Management Association – IPMA Serbia. He is also the editor-in-chief of the European Project Management Journal and a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Project Management, the top-ranked journal in the field, as well as Project Leadership and Society and Information Technologies and Learning Tools Journal, both of which are renowned international publications.

In his teaching and scientific endeavors, he achieved noteworthy results. Publication of over two hundred scientific and professional papers, as well as student evaluations of teaching and mentorship, participation in committees, and support of student organization projects, have validated the scientific results.

He participated in over eighty professional and scientific research projects.

He is fluent in English, is familiar with German, and is presently learning Spanish.

He is married and the father of three children.

Interview

Q1: First, thank you for accepting an interview request from PMWJ. You are Vice President of IPMA. Could you highlight your main duties, please?

Dr Vladimir Obradovic (Obradovic): Thank you so much for letting me share my thoughts with the readers of your esteemed Journal. This is an especially important year for us because IPMA is marking 60 years of existence. As the oldest project management association in the world, IPMA has a large ecosystem whose main goal is to help the project management profession grow around the world. Within IPMA, we tend to work together as a team, with collaborative effort and synergy that span different areas.

In order to help with that collaboration, I'm focussing on helping IPMA with its operations and finances. Our operations team, which is led by our COO, is like the heart of our organisation. They basically bring all the great project ideas from the world's project minds to life and help professionals, organisations and societies. We work together to make the IPMA Awards and Recognitions, Events, Certification, and other important areas the best in the world.

Q2: What are your thoughts about education in project management?

Obradovic: Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.". These days, projects are the main way to make the world a better place. Being good at project management is important if we want to

change things in the best and most efficient way. Because of this, getting a good education in PM is essential for a society to be successful these days. Since IPMA puts a lot of emphasis on professional development, we've had an international registration (IPMA Reg) system in place for decades that helps education and training providers improve the quality of their work and get recognised for it around the world.

It is still our goal to improve the growth of project profession through fresh initiatives. We are about to release new learning and teaching tools about sustainable project management that will help projects all over the world use ESG standards more. Along with that, we are adding new awards for distinguished professors who have made important contributions to project management education.

Q3: Is the situation the same in all countries/ regions of IPMA?

Obradovic: The fact that IPMA is comprised of project management communities from all over the world is one of its greatest strengths. To that end, we have members from regions and countries that are at different stages of growth. Not only do countries have different economies, but they also have different levels of project management experience. So, IPMA could be seen as a place where best practices and success stories can be shared and where we can all work together to find ways to make our field better. Even though each country is different, PM profession will eventually come together.

IPMA also works with a number of Global partners, which are companies that do business all over the world. These groups use IPMA standards for all of their projects in various countries. That way, IPMA and its partners can effectively spread the best project practises all over the world.

Q4: There was the IPMA congress in November and the theme was hope. What are your takeaways from this congress?

Obradovic: IPMA also works with a number of Global partners, which are companies that do business

For the 33rd time, IPMA has put together a World Congress. One of our most important events gets together professionals and academics to talk about the future of the project field. We tend to think about the big picture when we choose a place for the event, and therefore we have flagship events in various locations around the world. This is why Cape Town was chosen, among other reasons, to improve the project management field in Africa.

It was the congress's main idea, "Hope," to give people hope by presenting the newest ways for PMs to work to help the societies grow. Sustainability in project management—how to manage projects in a sustainable manner and how to facilitate more sustainable project outcomes—is the theme that undoubtedly influenced the

conference takeaways. A new reference book for sustainable project management was released by IPMA during the event and based on the feedback from the world's and industry's leading experts, we will continue to help organisations improve in this area.

IPMA will be celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2025. All of its events will try to look back at the modern era of project management and also look ahead to the future of the field.

Q5: How can project management bring hope to careers and lives of people?

Obradovic: It's really hard to find a job these days where you can be confident you won't ever have to work on a project of any kind in any capacity. Thus, it would be fair to say that project management is an important asset for our future lives and jobs.

Tools and techniques, charts, matrices, budgets, reports, and so on are not the only things that project management is about. In fact, it's a lot more than that. It is a philosophy of doing things. Project management trains us how to get along with others, work together for the common good, and squeeze more out of the same amount of resources.

If everyone, in their personal and professional life, followed the best practices and ethical standards for project management that we promote at IPMA, the world would be a much better and happier place to live.

Q6: Do you have a last message to PWJ readers, please?

Obradovic: We have no idea what the world will be like tomorrow, much less in a few months or years. However, we can be certain that project management will be a key component of any future society. Project management is essential whether we are discussing post-conflict reconstruction, creating new medications or vaccines, or planning a birthday or wedding celebration. We raise our chances of living in a better world by improving ourselves in this area.

About the Interviewer



Yasmina Khelifi

Paris, France



Yasmina Khelifi, PMP, PMI- ACP, PMI-PBA is an experienced project manager in the telecom industry. Along with her 20-year career at [Orange SA](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with significant manufacturers and SIM makers. Yasmina strives for building collaborative bridges between people to make international projects successful. She relies on three pillars: project management skills, the languages she speaks, and a passion for sharing knowledge.

She is a PMP certification holder since 2013, a PMI- ACP and PMI-PBA certification holder since 2020. She is an active volunteer member at PMI France and PMI UAE, and a member of PMI Germany Chapter. French-native, she can speak German, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and she is learning Arabic. Yasmina loves sharing her knowledge and experiences at work, in her volunteers' activities at PMI, and in [projectmanagement.com](#) as a regular blogger. She is also the host and co-founder of the podcast [Global Leaders Talk with Yasmina Khelifi](#) to help people in becoming better international leaders.

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