Responsible Project Management to face urgent world crisis and regional conflicts

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Abstract

Climate change and global warming are some of the problems that will negatively affect the majority of the world's population in the coming years. Climate change and global warming will create new crisis and conflicts. Those two problems have been and are being generated by human action, and especially by the population living in developed countries. If there are no changes in the short term, the impacts will be catastrophic for humanity.

Responsible Project Management [1] is the concept of directing projects with a conscious attention to the intentional and unintentional impacts of the project and its results, both in the short and long term. The Guide to Responsible Project Management proposes eight principles: Purpose, Awareness, Curiosity, Uncertainty, Anticipation, Creativity, Stewardship, and Balance.

The article assesses the potential of Responsible Project Management to help the practitioner in conflict zones. Positive results have been found, but some areas of improvement have been also detected, as for example, the inclusion of new principles: Transparency and Participation.

Introduction

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And projects are the essential vehicle for introducing change. Project Management is a discipline widely recognized as a tool to manage the changes that crisis and conflicts need.

Responsible Project Management [1] is the concept of directing projects with a conscious attention to the intentional and unintentional impacts of the project and its results, both in the short and long term. The Guide to Responsible Project Management proposes eight principles: Purpose, Awareness, Curiosity, Uncertainty, Anticipation, Creativity, Stewardship, and Balance.

Responsible Project Management goes one step beyond the concept of Sustainable Project Management, which has been researched by an important group of experts [2] [3] The latter contemplates the three aspects on which projects have an impact: economic, environmental and social. However, it seems to be especially oriented towards seeking a balance between the three types of impact; the improvement on one of the impacts will very probably imply the worsening of one or the other two. The Responsible Project Management proposal seeks to understand how improvements in any of the three aspects improve the impact on the system as a whole and on the other two aspects.

In this article we will discuss if RPM may be a tool to help solve Crises and conflicts. We will compare RPM with standard Project Management Competences environment. Then we will assess how one case where a conflict situation has been solved using PM

competences, and will try to understand if RPM principles were used in the process of solving.

As a result we will be able to assess if a new model for Responsible Project Management is needed or if it is enough with the existing guidelines and methodologies.

Comparison with scientific literature. The map of terms of the Responsible Project Management

The Responsible Project Management is evaluated and analysed using bibliometric techniques. Bibliometrics can be defined as a set of methods and tools for evaluating and analysing academic publication in order to explore its impact on a specific field and how it contributes to the progress of science in the main areas of research.

In this respect, the publications related to Responsible Project Management have been collected, analysed and arranged in the following science map.

The following science map shows the relative relevance of the terms appearing in the articles found in literature when you look for the terms Sustainable development project; Responsible project management; Responsible project. It represents the frequency of appearance of the terms – the bigger the dot the largest the number of appearances -, and the relationship between terms – the thicker the line the more frequent appearance of the terms in the same sentence – [4]. After the graph there is a listing of the terms which correspond to each of the coloured clusters.
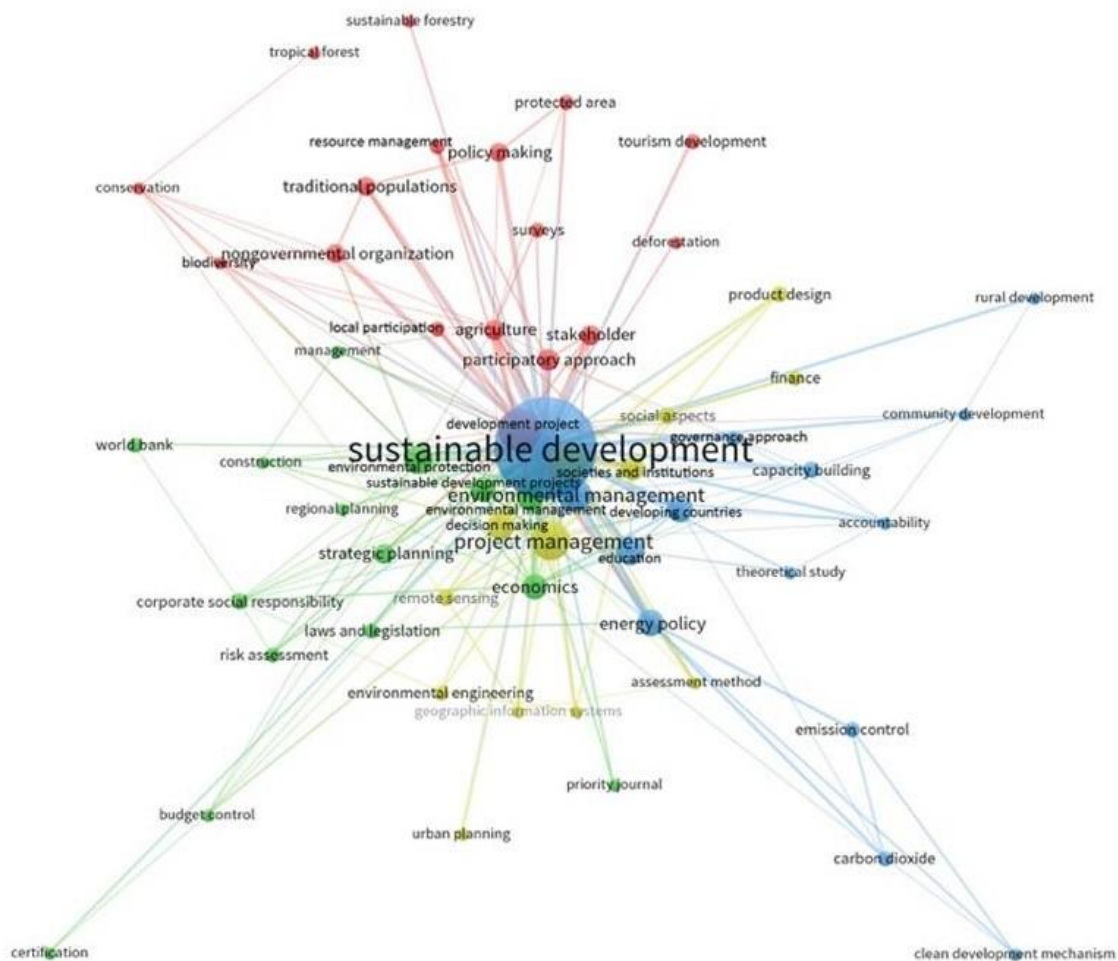
Graph 1. Map of terms in the Guide to Responsible Project Management

Cluster (color | total themes)	Total ocurrences (Total link strengh)	Themes
Sustainable Development (blue | 13)	200	accountability (3 | 11), capacity building (5 | 13), carbon dioxide (4 | 8), clean development mechanism (3 | 5), community development (3 | 8), developing countries (11 | 31), education (13 | 29), energy policy (11 | 35), environmental management (17 | 52), governance approach (4 | 19), rural development (3 | 5), sustainable development (120 | 275), theoretical study (3 | 11)
Environmental Protection (Green | 15)	86	budget control (3 | 7), certification (3 | 3), construction (3 | 9), corporate social responsibility (5 | 11), economics (10 | 34), environmental impact (11 | 42), environmental protection (13 | 40), laws and legislation (4 | 15), management (3 | 13), priority journal (3 | 8), regional planning (3 | 12), risk assessment (4 | 10), strategic planning (7 | 20), sustainable development projects (10 | 37), world bank (4 | 7)
Development Project (red | 17)	101	agriculture (7 | 27), biodiversity (3 | 11), conservation (3 | 8), deforestation (3 | 10), development project (26 | 95), local participation (4 | 17), nongovernmental organization (6 | 17), participatory approach (8 | 25), policy making (6 | 18), protected area (4 | 12), resource management (4 | 14), stakeholder (7 | 25), surveys (4 | 12), sustainable forestry (3 | 9), tourism development (4 | 9), traditional populations (6 | 15), tropical forest (3 | 9)
Project Management (yellow | 14)	104	assessment method (3 | 10), decision making (12 | 43), emission control (4 | 13), environmental engineering (4 | 18), finance (4 | 11), geographic information systems (3 | 16), planning (22 | 69), problem solving (3 | 15), product design (5 | 9), project management (22 | 76), remote sensing (5 | 19), social aspects (5 | 21), societies and institutions (9 | 39), urban planning (3 | 9)

None of the principles defined in The Guide to Responsible Project Management appear in the graph: Purpose, Awareness, Curiosity, Uncertainty, Anticipation, Creativity, Stewardship, and Balance. Although some of them could be embedded in some of those appearing.

Comparison with the practitioner environment. Competences of Project Managers
What are the competencies that a Responsible Project Manager should master? There are 29 competences identified by the Individual Competence Baseline (ICB) [5] for Project, Programme and Portfolio Management of IPMA, grouped into three areas: People, Practice and Perspective.

Table 2. List of Competences identified in the Individual Competence Guidelines ICB 4, by IPMA

Perspective
Strategy
Governance, structures and processes

Practice
Design
Requirements, objectives and benefits

Compliance, standards and regulations
Power and interests
Strategy
Culture and value

People
Self-reflection and self-management
Personal integrity and reliability
Personal communication
Relations and engagement
Leadership
Teamwork
Conflict and crisis
Resourcefulness
Negotiation
Result Orientation

Scope
Time
Organisation and information
Quality
Finance
Resources
Procurement and partnership
Plan and control
Risk and opportunities
Stakeholders
Change and transformation
Select and balance

In table 3 we map the eight principles (Purpose, Awareness, Curiosity, Uncertainty, Anticipation, Creativity, Stewardship, Balance) of Responsible Project Management with the 29 IPMA described competencies.

Table 3. Map of ICB 4 competences and GRPM principles. Source: The authors

	Purpose	Awareness	Curiosity	Uncertainty	Anticipation	Creativity	Stewardship	Balance
Strategy	X		X	X			X	X
Governance, structures and processes							X	X
Compliance, standards and regulations		X					X	X
Power and interests	X			X	X		X	X
Culture and value			X				X	X
Self-reflection and self-management						X		
Personal integrity and reliability	X							X
Personal communication			X					
Relations and engagement			X					X
Leadership		X				X		X
Teamwork		X						X
Conflict and crisis		X				X	X	
Resourcefulness	X							
Negotiation	X						X	
Result Orientation	X				X			
Design				X		X		
Requirements, objectives and benefits	X	X						X
Scope	X			X				
Time				X				
Organisation and information			X	X				X
Quality	X							
Finance		X			X			
Resources		X			X		X	
Procurement and partnership		X			X		X	
Plan and control				X	X			X
Risk and opportunities		X	X	X	X	X		
Stakeholders		X			X		X	
Change and transformation	X	X						
Select and balance	X				X			X

The table shows that most of the IPMA competences may be mapped to at least one of the RPM principles. As it might be expected some of the principles may be linked to various competences, and this is more so for those under the Perspective domain.

It is to be expected that the evolution towards Responsible Management will require the mastery of new competencies. In the RPM Guide, they identify the following ten competences that the Project Manager will need:

Table 4. Competences that the Responsible Project Managers will need. (Thompson & Williams, 2018)

Knowledge of sustainability	Recognising uncertainty
Ability to embrace and lead change	Assess project against the 17 SDGs*
Awareness of values & beliefs	Map decisions against the 17 SDGs*
Facilitators	Ability to work in an ambiguous environment
Reflectiveness	Willingness to understand other cultures & beliefs

**United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals*

These competences show more definition than IPMA ones, but they might be considered as subsets of these.

Comparison with real projects. Extracts from case studies in scientific literature
Another way to understand the importance of a new Guide is to explore if the terms included in the guide have been or are being used by practitioners and researchers.
To do this we have looked for published cases related to Project Management where Crisis and conflicts exist. The search in scientific databases have produced several articles, out of which the following has been selected. The reasons for selecting it have been:
- Relatively modern case
- Appearing in a scientific journal
- Including Project Management methodologies as basis for research
- Happening in a geographical area in conflict
- Potentially usable for discussion in the Conference

The Case Study: Substituting illicit crops in a rural area in Colombia
This case study was published in the article "*Illicit crops substitution and rural prosperity in armed conflict areas: A conceptual proposal based on the Working With People model in Colombia*" [6]. The following presentation is extracted from the article:

The armed conflict in Colombia (1960 – nowadays) has accompanied the illicit production of drugs, cocaine mainly cocaine. Traditionally, intents to solve the drug problem have been developed top down, without consultation to peasants' organisations or local communities. This case study focuses on the region of La Macarena. Between the Andean region and Orinoco-Amazonia, it is a large jungle with more than 14,000 square kilometers and approximately 100.000 inhabitants. The social base of the study consists of 2503 families affected by the historic conflict involving armed groups (FARC). This means that the coverage and quality of services such as education, health and security is well below the national average. The average rate of Unsatisfied Basic Needs (NBI) in La Macarena region is 73.77%, compared with a national average of 36.6%.

The Working with People model
The methodological framework applied is based on the Working with People (WWP) model (Cazorla et al., 2013), which is the result of 25 years of experience in projects aimed at improving the prosperity of rural zones in the European context and in emerging countries. It also incorporates new trends and values linked to prosperity. The model

incorporates social learning processes in order to analyze and develop rural prosperity in vulnerable and socially complex rural zones, shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 Rural prosperity dimensions based on WWP model
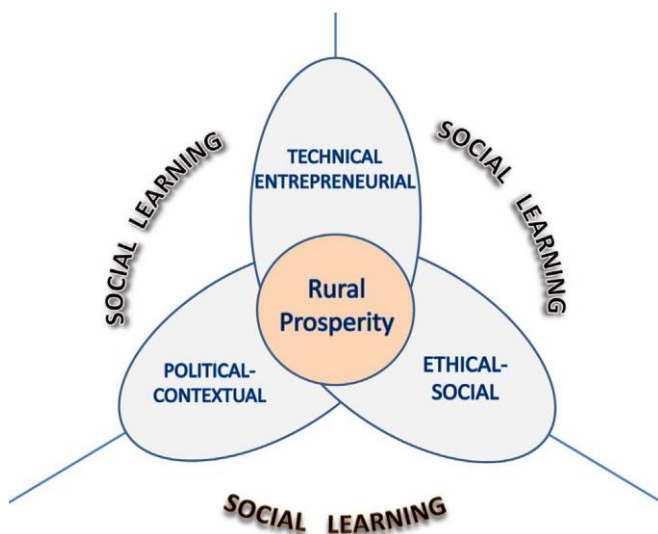
Working With People model is the result of the experience gained in the development of projects in rural areas of Europe, with the goal to improve the prosperity of their inhabitants. The model shows four dimensions:

- ✓ Technical entrepreneurial: differentiating quality products and services. It is conformed by companies that generate goods and services.
- ✓ Political-Contextual: communities prioritize the projects in their context. It is conformed by political organisations and public administration.
- ✓ Ethical-Social: behaviours, attitudes and values of the involved persons who form the civil society and NGOs.
- ✓ Social Learning: the dimension that integrates the other three

The three first dimensions are directly related to the three competence domains of the Individual Competence Guidelines of IPMA: Practice, Perspective and People.

Phases of the project

The first phase involved territorial delimitation of the illicit crop eradication zone, identifying the rural district groups (Núcleos veredales) as a joint agreement with the population, municipal and military authorities.

During the second phase, the Transition Plan was created. The Plan's strategic points included aspects relating to food security for families, production projects, technical and social support, improving social infrastructure and support for young people and women. During this phase, agreements were made through the numerous district meetings in local communities as well as workshops, in order to identify, prioritize and co-create projects.

The third phase involved the presentation, negotiation and signing of the Transition Plan. In order to do this, representatives from the rural district groups (Núcleos veredales), along with the technical team, presented the Transition Plan and its projects to the inhabitants and municipal governments. During this negotiation phase, the main purpose was to create public-private associations in order to implement alternative development projects, thus marking the beginning of a new collaborative relationship based on mutual trust (Naoum, 2003)."… we have to join forces and create alliances in order to finance government projects" (Community leader).

In the last phase, the government team's work was limited to technical consultation with the promoters. They removed themselves from the decision making process in order to ensure proper ownership of projects among the inhabitants and families. This bottom-up approach avoids a dependency on the government, enabling the families and rural population to take ownership for decisions.

Some of the projects implemented in the project under analysis were:

Table 5. Examples of projects developed in the region

Economic Development Projects
Access to commercialization channels for milk
Microcredit for production organizations
Business plans for entrepreneurship

Infrastructure & Connectivity
Bridge construction projects
Electrical connection in the rural areas

Social Development
Improve long-term infrastructure and education centers
Improve infrastructure in 6 Health Centers

Good Governance
Implementation of the Victims Law
Legal defense for municipalities

Land Governance
Unit for returning land in Meta

In the conclusive part of the article, the authors presented the research questions to be considered. These have been compared to the eight principles of RPM in the following table: Research questions have been literally copied from the article, and the corresponding Principle has been identified in a dedicated workshop by two local experts. In those cases where there has not been a direct relationship additional terms (potential new Principles) have been identified.

Table 6 Relationship between research questions identified in the Case Study and the GRPM. Political-contextual dimension

Related to the political-contextual dimension of the alternative development programs.	Principle for Responsible Project Management
The creation of prosperity in the affected communities is only possible if the alternative development programs include a baseline aimed at restoring security and rule of law, as a cornerstone of governance and sustainable development.	Purpose
Unfortunately, most national and international development agencies assume that there is one approach (their existing policy) which is the best and they miss the essential first stage, not asking the question: what type of intervention approach is best suited to this type of issue in this context?	Curiosity
The territorial-based approach of the models involves recognition and consideration of the economic, cultural and social needs, characteristics and peculiarities of territories and communities, thereby guaranteeing socio-environmental sustainability.	Awareness
Furthermore, it involves the active participation of all citizens and sectors of society for implementing the various projects comprehensively and in a coordinated way.	Stewardship

Under this conceptual framework, rural prosperity is understood to be a concept, which includes multiple social, environmental and economic dimensions.	Balance
models must include efficient mechanisms for conciliation and conflict resolution concerning land use and possession, aimed at guaranteeing effective protection of rural property rights; resolving conflicts concerning rights of land possession and use; and, in general, promoting the legalisation of rural property, including traditional mechanisms and participative intervention by communities in conflict resolution.	Balance
consultation and participation are essential to contribute to responsible governance of tenure of land, taking into consideration existing power imbalances between different parties.	Purpose
decades of conflict have led to deep mistrust within society, especially in the territories most affected by the conflicts.	Awareness

Table 7. Relationship between research questions identified in the Case Study and the GRPM. Ethical-social dimension

Related to the ethical-social dimension,	**Principle for Responsible Project Management**
These changes lay the foundations for the producers and families being able to work together with public leaders in order to move a step closer to substituting illicit crops and achieving prosperity in the communities.	Purpose
The change in behavior and creation of values based on trust is a complex and lengthy process which requires long-term actions coupled with strategies aimed at breaking up illegal and violent organizations throughout the drug trafficking chain.	Uncertainty
Through working with people, the participation of and dialogue between the various sectors of society will contribute to building a climate of trust and promoting a culture of tolerance, respect and peaceful coexistence in general.	Participation
Is not an easy task but requires the perseverance and credibility of political actors, from this ethical dimension. This trust between people contributes to greater social inclusion, territorial integration and to strengthening prosperity and democracy, ensuring that social conflicts can be resolved through working with people.	Stewardship
Participation by society in the peacebuilding process is essential and in particular, its involvement in the planning, execution and monitoring of territorial-based plans and programs – which is also a guarantee of transparency.	==Transparency==

Table 8. Relationship between research questions identified in the Case Study and the GRPM. Technical-enterpreneurial dimension

Related to the technical-entrepreneurial dimension.	Principle for Responsible Project Management
how to implemented alternative projects that generate economic development, responding in an effective, opportune and timely manner in order to form strong associations (producer organizations).	Creativity
Alternative production initiatives (instead of illicit crops) should provide a source of income for families, creating employment opportunities for farmers and the rural population.	Purpose
From WWP process approach is conceiving innovation as a process of social learning that includes an open and interactive process with an important social dimension, which means a constant adaptation of the forms of knowledge and learning to the market and technological conditions constantly changing.	Adaptation
Innovation is seen not just in terms of technology and efficiency, but also, in new products, new business models as well as in social, organizational, institutional innovation, and how farmers are actively exploring alternatives in production methods and resource uses in order to maintain their livelihoods.	Creativity
the government's local resources and international support could be require to jointly co-finance the projects, with bottom-up approach and seeking a balance between the different dimensions of rural prosperity.	Balance
Finally, the alternative development models and substituting illicit crops in conflict areas must continually search provide the planning process with an integrating element which guarantees social learning spaces amongst different sub-systems, which means they can learn from the real drivers of change: the population affected by the legal economy linked to the production of illegal crops.	Curiosity
Peace building and consolidation, within the context of the solution of the conflicts, require the extension of democracy to incorporate new social actors on the political scene, thereby enriching debate and thus consolidating pluralism and the representation of society's diverse visions and interests.	<mark>Participation</mark>
These participatory and democratic processes improve people's skills and competences, incorporating ethics and values as fundamental elements for being able to work in teams, creating conditions of well-being and quality of life for the rural population, contribute to the eradication of poverty, promote equality and ensure full enjoyment of the rights of citizenship.	<mark>Participation</mark>

It seems that "Transparency" and "Participation" are concepts repeated in several research questions and which do not have a mirror principle in the GRPM.

Conclusions

In the next future it is to expect the growth of transregional conflicts, motivated by the climate change and its impacts: migrations, hunger,..

In this research project we have analyzed how new proposals for Sustainable or Responsible Project Management may be of use to the practitioner in zones under conflict.

Project Managers need tools to improve their sensibility for complex projects where stakeholders with conflicting interests abound.

The newly appearing guides are helpful, but a more comprehensive set is needed. The Guide for responsible Project Management is an interesting dissemination instrument which may be further developed to enhance the performance of Project Managers. Among other things, introduction of "transparency" and "participation" as principles is recommended.

References

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