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EDITORIAL

We need to use the words ...

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Sometimes it's important to simply say the words … as it is in *the beginning of wisdom that is the definition of terms.* When historians look at the world of project management, what will they say that we have said about climate change? Certainly more general—but absolutely legitimate—terms such as 'sustainability' have been used, but in a basic term search in the 3 oldest project management journals, I was surprised to see only a few dozen uses of 'climate change' as a specific term. The conversation started a long time ago using those words, and PMRP would like to encourage more with this commentary on one of the central topics of this journal … climate change.

Declarations have been made of the importance and necessity of the project management community to turn its attention toward climate change. The first was more than 25 years ago, when Laszlo (1991) indicated 'the dangers of atmospheric warming and climate change ... as threats that face all societies, in every part of the world.' He was commenting on the 'unique role and great responsibility' that project managers have to help organizations meet global problems. Morris has since made multiple entreaties in our journals as he raises our awareness to the scales and complexities of the 21st century (2012). He challenges us to move beyond scope, budget and timeliness and focus on the impact of our work as humankind faces the inevitable threat of climate change (Morris, 2013; Morris, 2016).

Specific tools and methodologies have been carefully investigated in various regions and industries (T. Wang, Wang, Zhang, Huang, & Li, 2016; Y. Wang, Han, de Vries, & Zuo, 2016; Wong, Ng, & Shahidi, 2013). An emphasis has emerged on risk assessment and management with Loosemore (2010) describing, for example, multimedia technology used to engage stakeholders in risk management processes. It is positioned for possible application in a climate change strategy. Zhang (2007), in one of the earliest mentions of climate change in a project management journal, also addresses risk management and notes that the 'influence of systems on risk consequences has been comprehensively assessed in climate change studies.' Wang et al. propose an infrastructure assessment framework, and apply it on a cross-sea route project in the South China Sea.

Disasters such as floods, drought, and heat waves (among others) associated with climate change are increasingly the focus of the project management community. Researchers

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(Kim & Choi, 2013; Steinfort, 2016) are advocating the use of new program management methodology specifically for use by communities recovering from such catastrophes. Notably, Steinfort makes the point that there must first be the 'realisation' of climate change as a threat – something done by Klagegg & Haavaldsen (2011) when discussing the necessity for clarity in definitions and principles both in governance and project management. Staadt (2012) further explains the 'vital role' public organizations can play in realizing societal projects.

New calls for expanded practitioner competencies have been made in the face of natural disasters and increasing challenges associated with climate change. First among these was Saynisch (RW.ERROR - Unable to find reference:4079) who focused on the ICCPM standard. He characterized it as an 'emerging natural extension of traditional project management to create a specialist profession' that can focus on the large projects such as climate change, international aid and others.'

In discussing the need to focus on the professionalism of project management, Konstantinou (2015) explains that 'time critical problems' such as climate change require 'situated project knowledge.' A more 'meaningful' relationship to researchers is needed to do this. Adhazie et al. (Ahadzie, Proverbs, & Sarkodie-Poku, 2014) highlight the competencies of project managers 'at the design phase of mass building projects.' They do this, in part, by referencing Malmquits and Glauman (2009) who argue that, as the building sector contributes to the challenge of climate change, a more 'holistic approach' for communicating design-related information to actors is needed.

Central to supporting project management 'actors' is the work of professional associations but as Morris observes 'project management [has been] almost silent on how to address' challenges such as climate change (2013). The few references found for this commentary unfortunately seem to confirm this amongst the research community. Voices have been heard, on the other hand, by leading project management practitioner groups. The first articulation of the roles and responsibilities of a project manager in addressing the challenges associated with climate change occurred in the *GPM P5 Standard for Sustainability in Project Management* (GPM, 2014). A modest development occurred later with the latest version of the IPMA *Individual Competency Baseline for Project, Programme and Portfolio Management* (Version 4) that recognizes the critical role of sustainability practices in the competence of a project manager (IPMA, 2015). These efforts reflect the growing understanding that 'doing good projects, good in projects, and good through projects must be heralded as overarching principles for shaping, managing, as well as researching projects' (Geraldi & Söderlund, 2016). Project management researchers, if this brief review is any indication, are less vocal. And it is through submissions to PMRP that the words can be shared to further document our understanding and empower project managers to meet the challenges associated with climate change.

To encourage submissions on this topic, PMRP would like researchers and practitioners to consider the following questions:

- What competences are valuable in managing projects related to climate change?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for project teams in dealing with climate change?
- Does the project management community have a role to play in shaping public policy concerned with the environment?
- What methodological strategies can serve project management researchers in their associated investigations in matters related to environment issues?

This commentary represents the first of a series dedicated to exploring the attention paid by project management researchers on the '17 Sustainable Development Goals' identified in September, 2015 by the United Nations. Each will serve to introduce PMRP's commitment to each specific topic and encourage ongoing submissions.

About the Editor

Dr. Beverly Pasian is an avid educator, researcher, author and association leader committed to the development of project management as a tool to address critical public priorities. Her research collaborations have spanned the globe to examine project management from various industry, sector and topical perspectives (including project management maturity, e-Learning, construction consulting services, and 'human factors' such as trust, motivation and creativity). Multiple books are amongst her publication credits including Designs, Methods & Practices for Research of Project Management (Gower Publishing) and 'Plan to Learn: Case studies in eLearning project management (CeLEA). Her immediate publications include A book for practitioners will be her next project, with an interpretative focus on award-winning research specifically written for project managers.

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