

CIRCLES

PROJECT REPORT

FEB 2ND – APRIL 31ST 2021

I am Worth more than you see!



FOREWARD

From
Ferdinant M. Sonyuy
CEO, RADA



RADA welcomed 12 volunteers under the Pilot Circles Program including the 6 old volunteers who had been with RADA before this time. As such, a total of 18 volunteers took part in the Pilot Circles Program, selected from over 189 applications. The Pilot Circles Program is designed to empower and support young people to become productive whether employed or self-employed. We want vision, hope, focus and productivity. The training has been designed to offer them an opportunity to practice what they learned. The program provides young people with productivity tools, mindset, and strategies to drive positive change across their aim domains of interest and to live meaningfully. Different key topics were treated during the program to enable the volunteers build good life skills including Needs Assessments, Grants Writing, Project Development and Implementation, Life planning, Emotional intelligence, Social intelligence, Ethical leadership, Self-care/resiliency, Book keeping, Team work, Use of social media and email commutation, Impact report writing, Advocacy, Time management, Monitoring and evaluation, Partnerships and collaboration. We were extremely privileged to have some of the training from MIT Boston by Dr. Jam Alma, who is also one of RADA's advisors and an advisor for the program. This project will also be a source of staffing for RADA as we will have the opportunity to train even in our values.

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RADA'S STORY

RADA is the acronym for Reconciliation and Development Association. Born in 2017, our vision is to become a key driver of sustainable solutions to community development in Africa. We do this by improving the capacity of the people to drive meaningful change through trainings and community development projects in the domains of Peace, Health, Education, Agriculture and Technology.

RADA was conceived in 2009 in response to the recognition that several challenges plaque our society and that with an appropriate mindset, positioning, passion and positivity, young people could become the solutions to these challenges, including those that affect them as an age group. This is why programs like the circles project have been developed.



THE PILOT CIRCLES PROJECT



The Circles Project is designed using a combination of the concepts of Communities of Practice (CoP), adult learning, and practical learning to power productivity and other values, skills and knowledge among youths. The project seeks to provide young people with the tools, mindset, and strategies to drive positive change across their aim domains of interest. The concept of Circles creates a nexus of sustainable, creative and dependable leadership around the domains chosen.

The advent of COVID-19, deepened the need for the youths to receive capacity building to navigate current and future challenges. The pilot project provided an opportunity for 18 volunteers who were selected via a competitive process to go through the training program. This pilot has been evaluated and efforts are underway to commence the 1st cohort. Different key topics shall be treated during the program including Needs Assessments,

Grants Writing, Project Development and Implementation, Life planning, Emotional intelligence, Social intelligence, Ethical leadership, Self-care/resiliency, Book keeping, Team work, Use of social media and email commutation, Impact report writing, Advocacy, Time management, Monitoring and evaluation, Partnerships and collaboration etc



TARGET AUDIENCE AND SELECTION

The volunteering opportunity was launched in January 2021 and participants selected from a total of 189 applicants via an interview process. The process focused on screening the prospects based on their desire to volunteer with RADA. A criterion was set, two interview panels composed and interviews conducted. 12 candidates were selected to add to the 6 that were already volunteering with RADA. Successful candidates were contacted and the program started with an orientation on the February 2nd, 2021.

ORIENTATION DAY

On February 2nd, 2021, RADA welcomed the first cohort of volunteers under the pilot phase of the circles project. These 12 young people were selected from over a hundred applicants among whom 36 were selected for interviews and 12 were selected for the project based on their performance and proof of commitment and determination to learn and serve the community.

During the orientation session which took place at RADA's head office in Bamenda, the CEO of RADA, Mr. Ferdinand M. Sonyuy, implored the volunteers to be community leaders and to provide sustainable solutions to their communities using their different skills. He also gave them a brief introduction into what the Circles Project is all about and the aim of which is to empower youths with skills that cuts across Leadership, Grant Writing, Life Planning, Communication, Book Keeping, just to name a few. Thereafter, the volunteers were grouped under different domains like Health, Agriculture, Peace, Technology and Fund raising of their interest and educational background.

At the end of the program, the volunteers were expected to come out with a detailed five to ten years life plan of what they hope to accomplish using skills that can solve some pressing community needs, realize and utilize their potentials and add value to themselves.



Participants for the Circles Project during the orientation day

PICNIC DAY

At the Reconciliation and Development Association RADA, we believe that a good working relationship with our team is vital and essential to achieving greater productivity and efficiency. It is on this basis that on February 20, 2021, RADA organized an outdoor picnic with it's volunteers with the aim of getting some time of relaxation out of the work environment.

It was an amazing and fun filled picnic with the team. A time to play, laugh, bond and learn in the most exciting way ever. We played games like Do or Dare, English games, Bra de Fait, just to name a few. We also had a singing and dancing competition and a time to bond and getting to know each other. The picnic ended up with a light refreshment and a word of appreciation from the CEO. It was an amazing experience.



Out door picnic



TRAININGS & ACTIVITIES

1. Needs Assessments Workshop:

This workshop provided the participants with knowledge and skill on how to prepare and conduct a needs assessment. Starting with identifying the area of interest, defining the problem and scope of assessment, participants learned to understand how to use a needs assessment to analyze a problem prior to elaboration of the most appropriate solutions. Particularly, they learned the place of literature review, sources as well as gap analysis, landscape and context analysis. They also practiced these skills.

2. Grants Writing Workshop:

There are no schools to teach Grants writing despite the importance of this skill. The CEO took out time to drill the volunteers on basic skills and techniques on grant writing. This workshop helped the participants to learn how to search for, prepare and write grants that can provide support for their work. Particularly, they created donor analysis templates, used them on grants they searched, and worked in teams to write grants.

3. Project Development and Implementation:

This workshop was focused on developing projects, including the projects development cycle which helped the participants to understand the full nature of a sustainable project. It provided an insight into the components of a written project, including transforming the idea into a full project with its components. It was in side by side with grant writing.

4. Life Planning:

This was one of the most critical aspects of the Training Program. It gave an insight into a life of contemplation, immersion, vision, focus and purposefulness. It took the dimension of a series of practical workshops that caused participants to reflect on key aspects such as what one wants, what one has, philosophy of life, and translating this into a 10-year plan of life. It covered goal setting in its simplest form, and probed participants to set life goals that direct their career choices, decisions and prepares them to face the same with courage, caution and continuous reflection. We expect participants to set personal goals including educational, career, spiritual, social and wrap related elements of their skills, talents and potentials into a life vision. Each ended up with at least 3 corrected versions of their personal life plans ready to use to face the next phase of their lap of their life after the program. They were encouraged to focus on a life of meaning, rather than a life of money.

5. Emotional Intelligence:

this is a skill needed to survive through the daily challenges of life and the life of a leader whom all are. This session drilled the participants to understand what EI is, how to use it and why to use it. In this way, participants are more likely to support themselves into remaining healthy, productive and also maintaining meaningful relationships as they achieve their personal, professional and organizational goals.

6. Social Intelligence:

This is similar to the concept of EI but greatly different in that it supports people to mirror the emotions of their environment so that they can better fit and play their own role. This session helped the participants to be able to relate meaningfully in their environment and be the social beings that they need to be to achieve their goals and support others.

7. Ethical Leadership:

Basic ethic is critical to better relationships, reputation and strategic networking. This session was aimed at revealing the importance of personal values, organizational core values and the importance of sticking to these. At the end of the session, participants created their personal core values as well as acknowledge RADA's core values.

8. Self-Care/Resiliency:

Many work and get tired. Many work and lose sight of the fact that they can crash. Setting goals can make one unable to see health obstacles related to their actions. Also, environments play a key role on our ability to both survive and live to accomplish our goals. The session on Self-Care helped the participants to become more resilient as they do their work through the hazzle and huzzle of life. Taking care of one's self can be difficult but with a proper plan of how to ensure one's self care, this becomes significantly easier to handle. Tips and techniques for this purpose was provided including knowing one's self and what actions one can best take in certain circumstances.

9. Book Keeping:

Some of our participants plan to run small businesses or start organizations. This lesson provided them with an insight into the need for accountability. Supporting participants with how to track their income and expenses as well as reporting on finance. This supported both employees and employers with a solid foundation to proper accountability and transparency in financial dealings as they achieve their purpose. This training was also essential to ensure financial integrity as this is one of the areas that crumble down several visions.

10. Team Work:

An essential skill, this session showed the participants the different types of leadership, personalities and the importance of team work or growing the pie. Members of a team as an essential component of achievement in life as well as provide an opportunity for the participants to work in teams with practical activities in RADA and report back on their experience and learning.

Continuation of Training and Activities

11. Use of Social Media and Email Communication:

Social media has become a phenomenal way to communicate as individuals but also as organizations. This includes official communications on social media and the world wide web as a whole. This session provided the participants with an insight into the different social media platforms, official communications on social media versus individual communications and also treats communication with traditional media and email communication as essential elements of successful communication as a team member.

12. Report Writing:

This is an essential skill in success and progress. In organizational and personal life, the ability to write reports gives one an opportunity of leadership. This included minutes writing, report of events, projects and programs as well as other work reports. Participants were therefore trained on impact report writing and how to use this skill as valuable members of any team they belong to. Templates were also provided for this.

13. Advocacy:

This is one of the most important skills that can ever be gotten by people who are interested in community development. It entails supporting development efforts by pushing for the creation, change or effective implementation of policies in a given context.

14. Time Management:

Getting things done require consciousness that time is business trading commodity and must be managed in the most diligent ways as possible. Self-Management and time management go together. In order to get things done, the value of time must be emphasized. The lessons held allowed participants to better support their goals using time, and self-management as key tools at their disposal.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation:

An introduction to M&E was also a part of the trainings under the circles program. This was coupled with emphasis on the use of M&E for planning and learning. This aspect of the training allowed the participants to understand that regardless of their domain of interest, projects, programs, events must be planned, monitored in implementation, and reported using M&E tools. Techniques to support capacity for team participation and further training on M&E were provided so that each participant can be a productive member of a team, understanding the role of and need to comply with M&E in programs and projects.

16. Partnerships and Collaboration:

It is important for all participants to understand the role of partnerships and how to respect partnerships. This is a critical area of organizational operations whereby most organizations form partnerships and collaborations but to preserve them, they need to be well formed, respects and collaboration ensured to be professional and focused on achieving specific goals. This lesson was aimed to teach each team member to be a productive member who supports or leads right partnerships and ensures professional collaboration. This lesson also taught non-strategic networking, its importance and finally delivers the concept of shared Value in three workshop sessions.

SERIOUS SESSIONS

After every workshop, the volunteers had two hours to work on their personal life plans. Furthermore, the serious sessions were designed with the aim of training the volunteers to work independently without necessarily being assigned a task by their immediate supervisors. During these serious sessions, the volunteers were charged to work independently on their individual weekly work plans and departmental work plans.



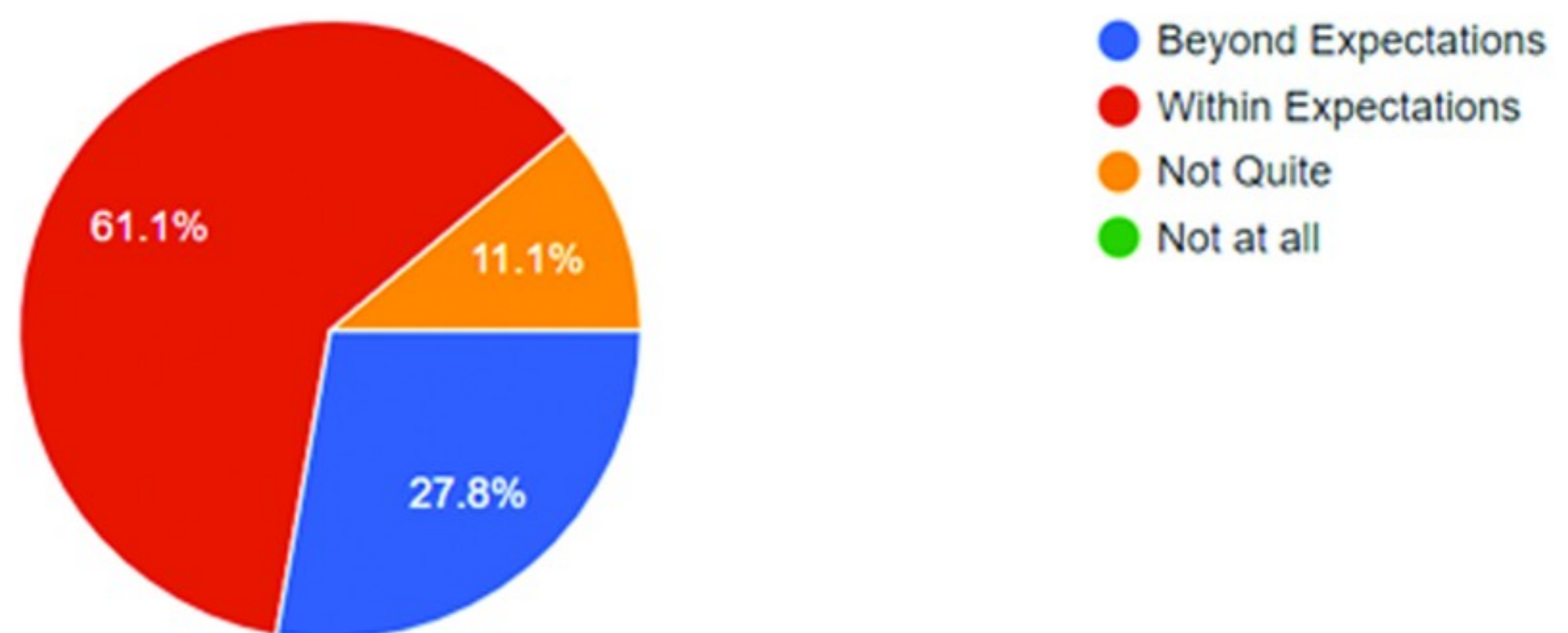
Participants
actively
engaged in
their serious
sessions

THE IMPACT OF THE TRAININGS ON THE VOLUNTEERS

CIRCLES PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

Has your volunteering objectives been met?

18 responses



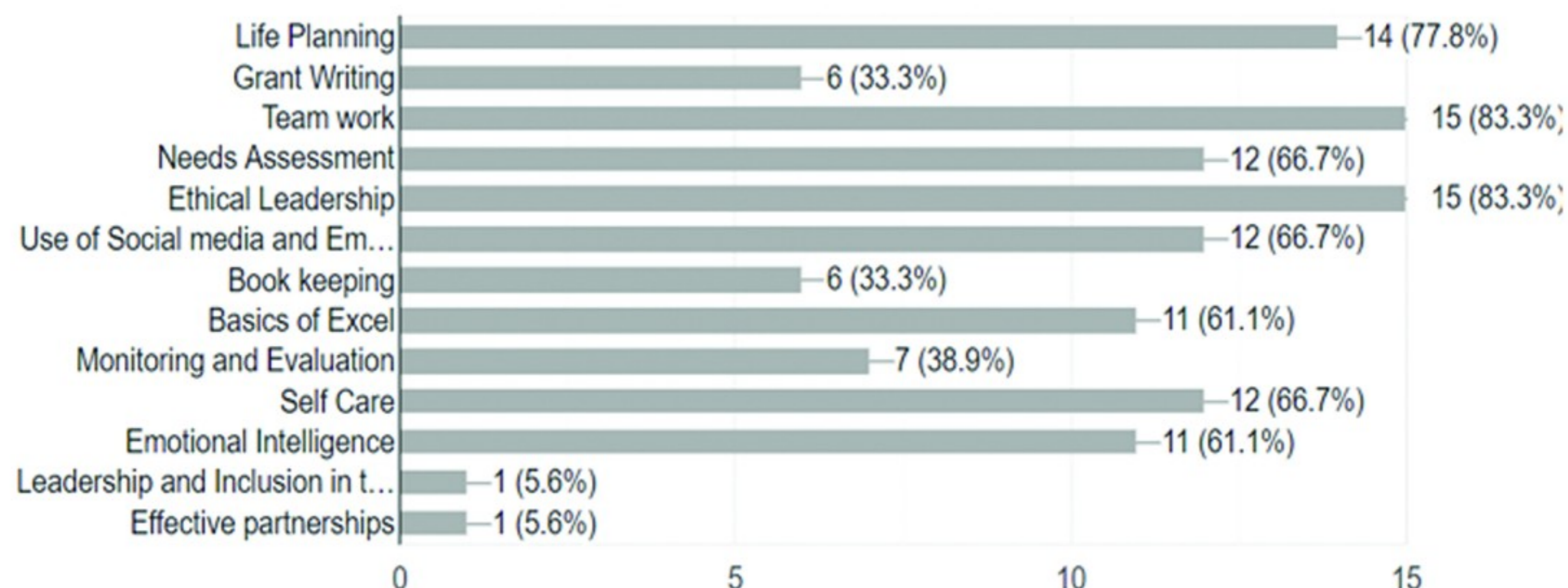
27.8% of participants indicated that their objectives were met beyond expectation, 61.1% had their objectives within expectations, 11.1% saw that their objectives were not quite met and there was no one whose objectives were absolutely not met. This is milestone for this Circle Pilot Project. It was able to meet the objectives of her participants.

94.4% indicated that poor internet availability was a key challenge, 16.7% saw water shortages to be a challenging factor, limited computers as a challenge for the project was voted to 44.4%, the size of the office space was a challenge too to the participants as 11.1% of them talked about it, personal livelihood was also seen by 33.3% to be a challenge and no other person saw any other challenge except these. To assist the next set of cohorts to be successful and impactful, internet connections, computers and some means for livelihood for the participants are a die need for this project. We believe that if these challenges as stipulated by the Circles participants are tackled and solved not ignored, vehemently there will be an inevitable success in this project.

Most understood lessons thought



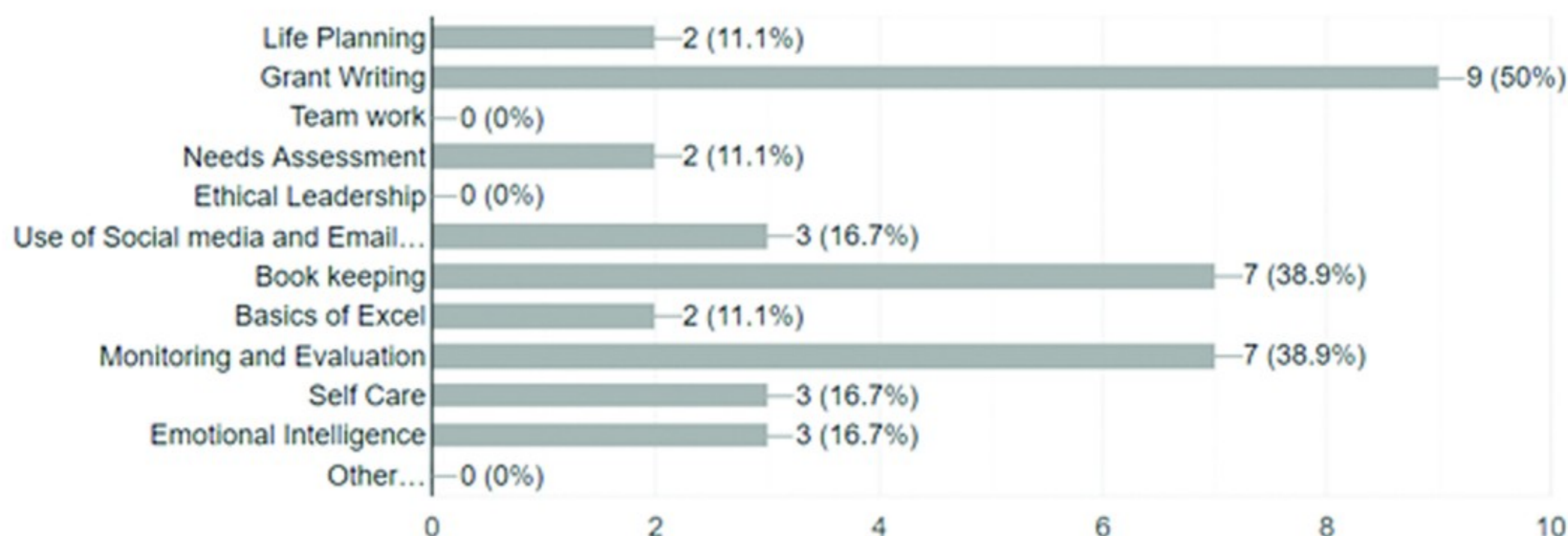
18 responses



Training workshops and their lessons were also analyzed to which to which we sought to know which lessons were well understood by the participants so that as they leave or remain, we can know their worth and this question also had several responses. 77.8% understood Life Planning, 33.3% Grant Writing, 83.3% understood Team work, Need Assessment had 66.7%, 83.3% understood Ethical Leadership, 66.7% understood the Use of Social media communication, 33.3% understood Book Keeping, 61.1% understood Basics of Excel, 38.9% on Monitoring and Evaluation, 66.7% on Self Care, 61.1% on Emotional Intelligence, 5.6% on Leadership and inclusion and 5.6% on Effective partnerships. These participants are telling us that as they go out into the community know what community development entails, they will be able to work in teams, they can lead effectively, they can plan for their lives and so on.

Least understood lesson

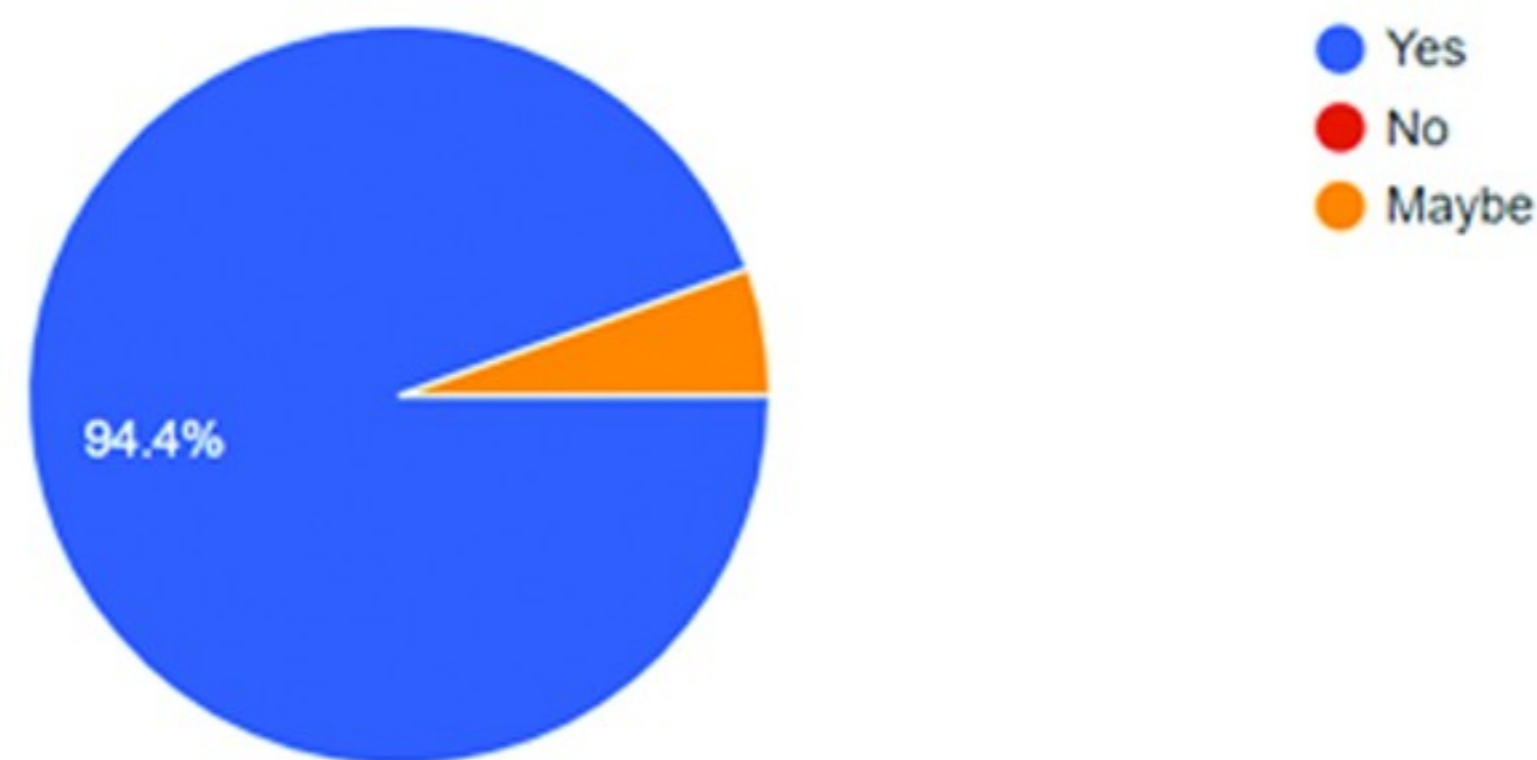
18 responses



Least understood lessons looked at so as to better prepare for the next cohort of the Circles Project and it was also multiple responses. The most lesson that was least understood was Grant Writing with a 50% response, Book Keeping with 38.9%, 38.9% for Monitoring and Evaluation, 16.7% for Use of Social Media Communications, Self-care and Emotional intelligence, 11.1% had least understanding for Needs assessment and Basics of Excel and there was no one with least understanding for Team work and Ethical leadership. In customizing these training modules, attention will be given to these least understood lessons so that they can be well understood by the subsequent Circles cohorts.

Can you recommend this program to somebody?

18 responses



Concerning the willingness of the participants to recommend this Circles project to others, 94.4% are willing to recommend to others while 5.6% are on the fence but there is no one with absolute certainty of not recommending this program to any youth. This is an encouragement to RADA and the stakeholders to uphold this project because these participants have seen, tasted and they don't want to keep to it to themselves. These participants are going to act as our ambassadors in their respective placements.

Some of their personal comments can be seen below.

1. The program should increase time for the session on personal development.
2. Not actually a comment but I to say RADA is the best place to be and the sky is your limit, because the best is yet to come on RADA. Long life RADA and the people of this great association, God bless you all.
3. A definite Cycle's plan of activities for the whole program should be scheduled, shared to all facilitators and strictly respected.
4. Also, the stipend range should be defined from the beginning of the program.
5. The future of this project is sure to create more impact
6. The circles program is a life transforming program for young men and women with a vision. I will therefore encourage others to register and take part in the next cohort. Thanks to RADA and its team my life has been transformed.
7. The implementation of outdoor working sessions
8. Take few volunteers at a time in order to best manage them.

Graduation Day



The CEO gives a welcome Speech



The CEO and RADA's Technical Advisers



CEO receives an appreciation poem from one of the volunteer's



Handing over volunteer certificate



Handing over volunteer certificates



Handing over volunteer certificates



Participants joyfully celebrate their graduation



Training Team



Ferdinant M. Sonyuy

Ferdinant M. Sonyuy is the CEO of RADA and the facilitator of most of the trainings in the Circles Project.



Yofenyui Clinton Kings
Finance Department,, RADA



Iwu Grace Andin
Human Resource, RADA



Moses N. Kangong
IT/Communication,, RADA



Akwi Lipsia Favour
M/E, RADA



Ntam Damaris
Communication Department,, RADA

Foreign Facilitators



Dr. Jam Alma
Facilitator

Dr. Jam Alma is one of RADA's advisers and an advisor for the Circles Project.

Dr. Jam Alma demonstrated passion for the circle project during her training sessions and financial contributions to ensure the completion of the Pilot Phase of the Project.



Dr. Alma during one of her training sessions via Zoom



Dr. Pafait Toure
Facilitator

Dr. Pafait Toure is an Adviser for the Circles project.

Dr. Pafait Toure was so supportive with the circle project and demonstrated a strong connection with the participants during the orientation day and graduation day.



Dr. Pafait discussing life challenging questions with the participants during the orientation day of the project

WAY FORWARD

1. DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD CURRICULUM

Following the topics that were treated, the RADA team will develop a curriculum following modules across different skills and knowledge areas and validate both content and style of delivery to standardize the topic based training workshop.

2. TRAINING OF TRAINERS

In order to maintain a pool of RADA trainers who can deliver the high standard program, we will train up to 10 trainers who will deliver the courses in each cohort or when called up to empower any future team using any module from the program.

3. THE 1st PILOT COHORT

This will be opened to the target population so as to start a two-year cycle of 3-4 cohorts with a target to train 45-70 youths.

4. EQUIPMENT, TOOLS AND METHODS

We will set up the training program venue and tools including equipment to support the training of cohorts. Our method includes 2 workshops a day of the week for two months (except on public holidays and weekends), alongside work in different departments and projects of RADA to practice the skills being taught through actual tasks in ongoing and actual projects or initiatives.

5. STIPENDS

We have recognized how important it is to provide a livelihood stipend for participants. This is because most of them are young graduates who were not effectively prepared for the job market and now require complementary trainings through volunteering in programs, organizations or initiatives like this one. So they mostly do not have anything. This program requires that on a daily basis they show up for learning and work. It is important to support their basic needs.

The next phase is planned for September 1st 2021 - November 30, 2021.



The
End

