

Enhancing the Role of Surveyors: Bridging the Gap Between Demand for and Supply of Professional Education

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SUMMARY

A land surveyor is often recognized as a professional primarily responsible for mapping boundaries and topographies of land parcels, locating and positioning objects and improvements on land parcels. This usually includes collecting the data used to designate land boundaries. With changes in land-man relationship, the surveyor's responsibilities have changed over a period of time. Furthermore, due to advancement in technology and new surveying equipment and techniques, the role of a surveyor is changing rapidly. In addition to emerging global challenges (i.e. lack of adequate land titling and record systems, tenure insecurity, urban growth, climate change, natural disaster), the role of surveyor is rising more than ever before. Presently, surveyors no longer only simply take land measurements or acquire databases for natural resource management. Surveyors are involved in activities including collecting, merging, linking, improving, visualizing, and interpreting diverse land information. Nowadays, surveyors have to work transdisciplinary with other professionals involved in land and natural resources management. This change from 'a traditional role' to 'a pragmatic role' has brought a paradigm shift in the land profession in general, and surveying in particular.

Though professional education is inevitable in response to the changing role of a surveyor, there is a big gap between demand for and supply of professional education in terms of quality and quantity. In a global context, skills and learning requirement of a surveyor vary from country to country. Though development of surveying courses in many developing countries was supported by leading European universities, in many cases, still the approach to acquiring these skills is very traditional. This is what is widening the gap between demand for and supply of quality education to enhance capacities of land professional/surveyor. Similarly, limited opportunity of professional education is creating a gap in terms of quantity. This paper suggests that fundamental objectives should be broadening the scope of professional education by focusing educational curricular on general

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surveying and associated practical knowledge. This implies focusing on enhancing professional capacities of surveyors and other land professionals in managing and governing land instead of mere administration, mapping and measurement of land. In conclusion, this paper defines a set of competencies a surveyor/land professional should have through professional education in order to meet the challenges posed by the emerging changes in the land profession.

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