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Soft and Hard Factors Influencing the Sustainability of the Private Survey Sector in Georgia: A study about the sustainability of large-scale professional training

The old saying goes that “experience is often the best teacher”. After a major event, many organizations seem to stumble on in ways that miss the lessons of the past. Mistakes get repeated, while smart decisions do not. Most importantly and frequently the old ways of thinking which led to past mistakes are never talked about.

Although an increasing number of organizations have embraced the idea of sustainability, why do some initiatives fail, leading to wasted resources, frustration and collapse, while others successfully adopted more sustainable policies or practices?

The research was set up to track and discover reasons why the concept of Georgian “Cadastre and Land Register” Project and its change initiatives (establishment of a viable and independent professional survey sector) after initial success despite the interest, demand and resources availability has failed.

The case study on Georgia was based upon an extensive theoretical framework in which various relevant aspects had been identified and discussed. A qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews with key persons, observations and questionnaires has been followed for the case study. For an in-depth exploring of soft and hard factors influencing the sustainability of the private survey sector in Georgia a “learning history” approach was chosen, as a new form of organizational assessment. This approach may help an organization/project to listen to what “it is trying to tell itself” about its own experience and change efforts. The contents of the document comes from interviews with the people who initiated, implemented and participated in the development efforts. The value of this document depends upon the conversation it generates: how can the project’s experience provide a useful example for other projects and organizations? A learning history should not be completed just to be distributed wholesale through the project and read, or, more often,

shelved, by individuals. Instead, it could advisably be used as the basis for group discussions for those involved and those who might learn from it.

Key words: Project management, sustainable development, escalation of commitment to a failing course of action, decision making, management failures, learning history, Tbilisi, Georgia.