

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of East London (UEL)		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 18 Law		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Sowing seeds; Transforming land rights for women and other disadvantaged groups		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2004 – 2020 (ongoing)		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Siraj Sait	Professor	1999 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2013 – 2020 (ongoing)		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		

**1. Summary of the impact** (indicative maximum 100 words)

Professor Sait's research on land, gender, human rights and finance has impacted three areas:

1. By informing UN Habitat strategic planning in the area of access to land to improve socio-economic development, human rights, peace and prosperity.
2. In delivering land tools and practical solutions to land administration and management and strengthening land rights of over 200,000 households through the co-creation of Global Land Tool Network's (GLTN) - a worldwide network of 80 partners.
3. By providing training for policy-makers, professionals, civil society, universities and communities, reaching 2,400 participants in dozens of countries including Indonesia, Liberia and Saudi Arabia through masterclasses, sponsored by UN, World Bank, African Union, Arab League and governments.

**2. Underpinning research** (indicative maximum 500 words)

Until the turn of the century, access to land was predominantly through formal ownership of legal titles or registration, which benefitted mostly privileged elites and men. Despite the significance of land ownership for the alleviation of poverty and empowerment, most women, minorities and other disadvantaged groups were excluded as their claims to land were mostly based on customary, informal and faith-based practices. In 2005, UN-Habitat's mandate on land, housing and cities, commissioned Sait and Lim to develop strategic but practical responses to address gaps in understanding religious, customary, and informal land practices.

Sait and Lim's *Land, law and Islam (R1)* focused novel discourse on diverse land and property practices in Muslim communities, highlighting the links between law, land tenure, gender, human rights, inheritance, finance and endowments. The methodology of 'web of land tenures' or 'continuum of land rights' was deployed more broadly by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) which Sait helped create as part of a three-member UN team in 2006.

The pluralist methodology was applied in looking at women's access to land and human rights, development and peace perspective in the context of conflict and disaster (R2). Sait's research involved global collaborative partnerships with three dozen practitioners, supported by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) (G1, G2), UN-Habitat, Arab Union of Surveyors and the Egyptian Urban Training Institute, and funded by the Swiss, Norwegian and Dutch development agencies. Since 2014, Sait's focus of research has evolved geographically, thematically and

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strategically, extended to other disadvantaged groups, beyond the Muslim world and contributions to GLTN/UN-Habitat gender strategies.

His research on links between Islamic finance, land-based finance and women's rights in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank resulted in a significant contribution to a key UN publication intended as a guide for city leaders (R3). Sait developed a model for anti-poverty gender-responsive land governance based on his 'Land Based Finance' curriculum module (R4).

While land tenure is vital, access to land can only be improved through financial, developmental, governance and human rights frameworks. Sait provided an applied analysis of key issues in land finance in relation to responsible land administration in African city-regions (R5). A practice-oriented change of innovative policy guidelines was demonstrated in a case-study in Liberia that focused on the relocation of slum-dwellers in post-conflict, post-disaster, climate change context (R6).

**3. References to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)

**R1.** Sait, S., and Lim, H. 2006. *Land, law and Islam: property and human rights in the Muslim world*. Zed. Arabic translation, 2011.

**R2.** Tempra, O., Sait, S. and Khouri, R. 2018. *Women and land in the Muslim world: pathways to increase access to land for the realization of development, peace and human rights*, UN Habitat. Also published in Arabic. <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/Women%20and%20Land%20in%20the%20Muslim%20World.pdf>

**R3.** Sait, S. and Abdelkafi, R., 2017. Islamic municipal finance in Kayima, M, et al (eds), *Finance for city leaders handbook*, 166-190. UN Habitat, 2nd edition. [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/01/fcl\\_2017\\_2nd\\_ed\\_lowres\\_2.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/01/fcl_2017_2nd_ed_lowres_2.pdf)

**R4.** Mitchell, D., Mwasumbi, A., Du Plessis, J., Sait, S., Barnes, G. and Todorovski, D. 2017. Towards a curriculum on responsible land administration, in *Responsible land governance: towards an evidence based approach, proceedings of the annual World Bank conference on land and poverty, 20-24 March 2017, Washington DC, United States*. The World Bank. [http://www.193.188.65.47www.fig.net/resources/proceedings/fig\\_proceedings/fig2017/papers/fig07g/FIG07G\\_mitchell\\_sait\\_et\\_al\\_8876.pdf](http://www.193.188.65.47www.fig.net/resources/proceedings/fig_proceedings/fig2017/papers/fig07g/FIG07G_mitchell_sait_et_al_8876.pdf)

**R5.** Sait, S. 2020. Land based finance for sustainable urban development in Africa: challenges and prospect. *African Journal on Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences* 3 (3), 96-113. <https://doi.org/10.48346/IMIST.PRSM/ajlp-gs.v3i3.23884>

**R6.** Sait, S. 2020. Should Monrovia communities agree to voluntary slum relocations: land, gender and urban governance in Home R. (ed.) *Land Issues for urban governance in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Springer. 339-354. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52504-0\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52504-0_21)

**G1.** Siraj Sait, Global Land Tool Network Phase II Projects, UN Habitat, 21 January 2013-31 December 2014, USD29,000.

**G2.** Siraj Sait, Global Land Tool Network Phase III Projects, UN Habitat, 7 January 2020-31 December 2020, USD135,000.

**G3.** Siraj Sait, Women's land rights, GCRF Internal Competitive Grant, 1 July 2018-1 July 2019, GBP5,000.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Sait's research has focused on deploying innovative tools to enhance access to land for women and disadvantaged groups, he has affected that change through advocacy in partnership with governments, practitioners and civil society.

**Policy/Strategy of actors including UN Habitat, World Bank and GLTN:**

*“We celebrate the UN for embracing this Note, thank GLTN Partners including UN-Habitat for their contribution to the Note ... This will benefit millions of people directly affected by conflict every day.” (S6b)*

As co-chair of UN Habitat’s Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) since 2019, Sait has contributed to the agency’s strategic plans, for example as one of three presenters before the UN Habitat Executive Board, addressing governments (S5). Sait chaired the Global Stakeholder Forum, where 200 delegates adopted the pioneering ‘UN Stakeholder Compact’ for UN Habitat implementation strategy, which Sait presented at the UN Habitat Assembly (Nairobi May 2019) (S4). At the World Urban Forum 2020, Sait was member of the Advisory Group that drafted the declaration accepted by governments for implementation, and read the declaration at the plenary, telecast live by UN television (S6a). As member of UN Habitat’s Advisory Group on Gender Issues (AGGI), Sait helped draft the Assembly Resolution on gender equality and sustainable cities adopted by states, May 2019 (S3).

**Setting the Global Land Agenda:**

As GLTN chair, founder and steering committee member, Sait’s research on gender, land and finance has been utilised by many of its 83 partner organizations, including World Bank, UN agencies, professionals and civil society and launched by the President of Lebanon and the UN Assistant Secretary General, António Guterres. An independent evaluation (2018) found GLTN tools, including the Gender Evaluation Criteria tool co-developed by Sait, piloted in 40 countries, significantly contributed to improved land rights for 200,000 households’ globally, especially women and disadvantaged groups (S10). Sait’s research influenced GLTN’s strategy and gender policy, launched at the Africa Land Policy Initiative meeting (S10).

During 2014, Sait joined GLTN lobbying of African states, which contributed to introduction of land in five SDGs for the first time (S10). Sait has chaired sessions, such as on indicators for SDG target 1.4.2 on land rights data for the UN/World Bank in New York. (S1). Sait hosted a side-event with UN and civil society at the bi-decennial UN World Conference on Sustainable Urbanisation (Habitat III), attended by over 30,000 delegates (Quito, October 2016) with research contributing to the UN New Urban Agenda integrating gender/inclusion, finance and legal pluralism (S2). UN Habitat Executive Director Sharif tweeted R2 as “guidance on achieving social and economic development through improving women’s access to land” (S3) and her forward commended (R3) as “tools to build and sustain urban prosperity”.

**Project Implementation:**

Sait co-led the Responsible Land Administration (RLA) curriculum initiated at a UN Expert Group Meeting at UEL (December 2016), creating open access structured knowledge base for land professionals (R4) (S10), and applied in the context of Africa (R5). Validated by International Federation of Surveyors (Hanoi, March 2019) and the World Bank meetings (March 2017, 2018), it has been used by stakeholders in Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia through African Union’s NELGA project (Rabat, October 2019) and German-funded Arab Land Initiative (Cairo, December 2019) (S10). Sait’s World Bank paper (2018) led to gender-responsive voluntary slum relocation guidelines, adopted by Liberian Government, Habitat for Humanity and Cities Alliance in Monrovia, benefiting 16,000 slum dwellers, especially women and disadvantaged (April 2019) (R6) (S7). Sait’s GCRF project trained over hundred women leaders in India, Malaysia and Morocco (August 2019) (S9) and was invited by LSE for GCRF planning on gender and land (New York, February 2019).

**Impact case study (REF3)****Capacity Development:**

Sait delivered training on human-rights based approaches (HRBA) to 26 senior UN officials (Nairobi, August 2017); 40 delegates from 23 countries at the World Urban Forum (Kuala Lumpur, February 2018); 33 participants at the World Bank (Washington DC, March 2018) and a paper for 65 participants at a UN High Commission for Human Rights meeting (April 2020) (**S10**). At the UN-Habitat Assembly (May 2020), with 3,000 delegates, Sait organised a side-event on HRBA with UN and civil society (**S10**). On land-based finance (**R3, R5**), Sait provided training for 36 Saudi officials (Riyadh, October 2017), 30 GCC experts at Qatar Foundation (Doha, January 2018) and contributed to City Prosperity Index dialogue (Geneva, July 2017). Sait was funded by UK and Indonesian governments to train 45 officials and bankers on Islamic finance (Jakarta, April 2016) (**S9**). Sait led UN evaluation of the Future Saudi Cities Programme in 2019, also participating in land strategy meetings organised by Overseas Development Institute, UK (July 2019), and governments including Sweden (February 2019) and Norway (February 2020) (**S10**).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

**S1.** Sait chaired session on developing indicators for SDG 1.4.2, UN Expert Group Meeting, New York, August 2017. See page 15. <https://glt.n.net/download/egm-report-securing-womens-land-rights-in-the-sdgs-monitoring-framework/?wpdmdl=11524&ind=0>

**S2.** Sait's research contributed to the drafting of *New Urban Agenda*, explained in a side event at Habitat III World Conference on Sustainable Urbanisation, October 2016. <http://habitat3.org/the-conference/programme/all/innovative-financing-for-urban-and-land-development-with-gender-equality-and-youth-rights-in-the-muslim-world/>

**S3a.** Letter from UN Under Secretary General Maimunah Sharif and tweet linking the book to the implementation of the *New Urban Agenda*. <https://twitter.com/maimunahsharif/status/983616620936364033>

**S3b.** Tweet from UN-Habitat <https://twitter.com/unhabitat/status/1227556024896364544>

**S4.** Sait on high level policy dialogue, outlining the new stakeholder engagement contract, 29 April 2019 with EU and government representatives (UN Habitat Assembly). Others on panel Wallis Goelen, European Commission; Irene Gómez, Minister of Housing and Human Settlement, Costa Rica; Fatimetou Malick, President, Nouakchott Regional Council; and Elin Olsson, State Secretary to the Minister for Financial Markets and Housing, Sweden. <https://enb.iisd.org/events/1st-session-un-human-settlements-programme-un-habitat-assembly/highlights-and-images-main-1>

**S5.** Sait presentation at the UN-Habitat Executive Board in July 2020 attended by over 150 governments, only one of three experts. <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/09/hsp-eb-2020-18-report-of-the-2020-first-session-of-the-executive-board-advance.pdf> (para 47)

**S6a.** Sait, as member of World Urban Forum advisory committee, reads the 'Declaration Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation' Abu Dhabi 13 February 2020. Also in the photo: Abeer Sajwani, Abu Dhabi Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport; Martha Delgado Peralta, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly and Christine Knudsen, Director UN-Habitat. <https://enb.iisd.org/wuf/10/13feb.html>

**S6b.** Article from The Netherlands Land Academy <https://www.landgovernance.org/the-guidance-note-of-the-secretary-general-the-united-nations-and-land-and-conflict/>

**S7.** Sait's policy guidelines in Liberia, April 2019, news report. <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/habitat-for-humanity-intl-nha-support-gols-voluntary-gender-responsive-relocation-policy-guidelines/>

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**S8.** Example of training on finance in Indonesia, funded by DfID, April 2016.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mM5XXrdgg3E>

**S9.** GCRF funded training on women's leadership and human rights through the World Association on Sustainable Development, London

2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yu463JZsCo>

**S10a.** Letter detailing contribution including to the Africa Land Policy Initiative meeting, Addis Ababa, November 2019 from former GLTN head, Oumar Sylla.

**S10b.** Video produced by GLTN from the evaluation describing implementation in Uganda.

<https://gltn.net/2020/04/21/securing-land-tenure-for-improved-food-security-in-select-areas-in-uganda/>