

A Structured Foundation for Teaching and Training Land Actors in Responsible Land Administration

**Jean DU PLESSIS, Kenya, Uchendu Eugene CHIGBU, Germany, David MITCHELL,
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Keywords: Responsible land administration; education; blended learning; pro-poor land administration; fit-for-purpose land administration.

SUMMARY

Although there are considerable information and knowledge available on land administration, and the innovative land tools, approaches and practices that can be used for meeting the myriad of pressing land challenges facing many countries (and in doing so achieving the relevant SDGs), much of this information is unknown, and/or fragmented among university teachers, or it is hidden within broader land-related curricula. To help redress this situation, partners within the Global Land Tool Network's (GLTN) International Research and Training Institutions Cluster have produced a Responsible Land Administration Teaching Essentials structured knowledge base. The main aim of this resource is to provide a structured knowledge base to support the design and teaching of responsible land administration curricula at universities and training institutions. The GLTN partners involved in this work included the University of Twente, RMIT University, University of East London, University of Florida, University of West Indies, Aalborg University, Adhi University, the Technical University of Munich (TUM), and the Network of Excellence in Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) and UN-Habitat.

The structured knowledge base consists of six online modules, covering 1. Core values and principles of responsible land administration; 2. Land tenure security; 3. Participatory land use planning and management; 4. Responsible land administration and information in practice; 5. Land-based finance; and 6. Land policy and regulatory frameworks. The intention is for this resource to be flexibly utilised in a range of education, training and research activities at many levels. For specific use in academic teaching, each module is structured to support approximately 50 hours of study load (2 ECTS) at the 3rd-year university level, divided into 4 or 5 lessons, with each comprising approximately 3 hours of classroom teaching and approximately 7 hours of teacher-directed self- study.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the recently completed structured knowledge base. It describes the background, rationale and process of the project, and demonstrate how it can be used to help meet the massive land-related challenges facing many countries in both the developing and the developed world today – especially those captured in Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 11 and 15.

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INTRODUCTION

There are several options for learning land administration. However, they all depend on the content of the learning resources being used by teachers to impart knowledge on their students. Despite this, educational challenges (including capacity development) are common in the global land sector. It reduces the quality of land-related knowledge transfer and learning. It also affects the implementation of land administration and land management programmes, projects, and interventions. This also include the ability to sustain them or to build livelihoods. Chigbu et al. (2017) linked the problem to the fact that higher education curricula, especially in most developing countries, are not adequately responding to their countries' capacity development needs in land. Different scholars have described this problem in different ways. Wheelahan (2010) bluntly referred to it as the “crisis of curriculum” in the land education sector. Irrespective of how the problem is described, one that is obvious is that it calls for enhancing learning resources in the global land sector (Duran et al., 2019). The challenge of finding innovative solutions to provide land administration solutions has many learning implications. First, it implies an understanding of the basics and principles of land administration. Second, it calls for grasping all critical aspects of land administration. Third, it requires knowledge about how to apply what has been learned from principles. All of these are necessary for tackling the “continuing need to raise the next generation of professionals that is not only educated and competent but also agile and able to respond responsibly to the growing demands from humanity” (Teo and Frank, 2011). The failure to adequately do this has led to gaps between education and practise in land administration matters in many countries. “This gap can be better addressed when the educators and the practitioners within the profession turn to each other for input and guidance particularly over things such as curriculum” (Teo and Frank, 2011). This is what this paper is all about – that is, to introduce a recently completed structured knowledge base that can be used to curtail the massive land-related challenges facing many countries in the world.

JUSTIFICATION FOR RESPONSIBLE LAND ADMINISTRATION TEACHING ESSENTIALS

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An often-quoted estimate indicates that more than 70% of the world's people-land relationships are not documented and fall outside of any formal land administration domain. Meanwhile, populations and cities grow and the pressure on land and natural resources continues to increase significantly. In the scramble for land, it is often the poor who suffer most through evictions, dispossession, disputes, and distrust. Increased tenure security for all, in an environment of responsible, effective land administration, can help countries to overcome land, housing and livelihood inequalities; promote food security, entrepreneurship and development; facilitate provision of essential facilities, services and quality of life; reduce physical insecurity and conflict; counter forced evictions, corruption, conflict and 'land grabbing'; help overcome wide-spread discrimination against women and create options for youth in development (see Augustinus, 2015).

However, there are considerable information and knowledge available on land administration and the innovative land tools, approaches and practices that can be used for meeting the myriad of pressing land challenges facing many countries - much of this information is unknown and/or fragmented among university teachers, or it is hidden within broader land-related curricula and training programmes. There is, therefore, an urgent need for teaching and training to create knowledge, skills and capacity in the area of responsible land administration. To get a detailed understanding of what "responsible" means in responsible land administration (or land management), see de Vries et al. (2016), de Vries and Chigbu (2017), Ameyaw et al. (2018) and Bendzko et al. (2019).

Although there is a wealth of knowledge on land-related issues and innovative land tools, most of this knowledge is not well known and/or fragmented among university teachers, or it is hidden within broader land or geomatics related curricula. To redress this, there is a need to consolidate this knowledge into a university-level "knowledge base" on 'Responsible Land Administration.' This is supported by multi-lateral agencies who wish to establish twinning arrangements between North-South and South-South academic institutions. The structured knowledge base is aimed explicitly at fitting within accredited academic learning approaches of undergraduate programs in land-related topics.

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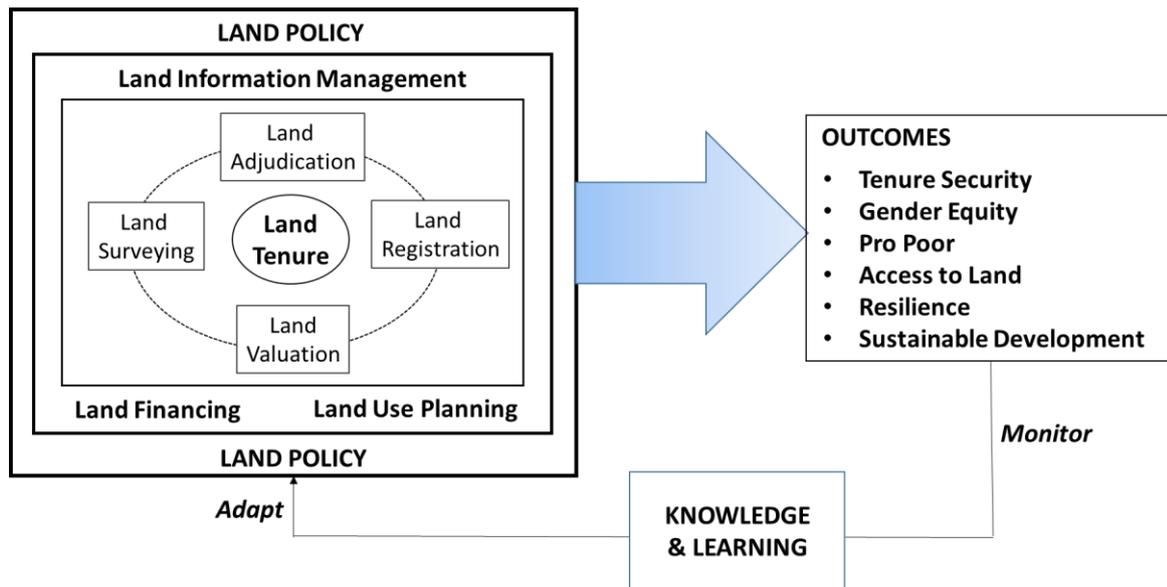


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Responsible Land Administration (Source: Grenville Barnes)

In this way, the knowledge base makes a valuable contribution to tenure security, gender equity, pro-poor land administration, improved access to land, resilience, and sustainable development, as illustrated in Figure 1. To help address this situation, partners within the Global Land Tool Network’s International Research and Training Institutions Cluster have produced a Teaching Essentials Structured Knowledge Base, aimed at supporting the design and teaching of responsible land administration curricula at universities and training institutions.

A ROAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING ESSENTIALS

The GLTN partners involved in this work included RMIT University, University of East London, University of Florida, University of West Indies, University of Twente, Aalborg University, Ardhi University, Technical University of Munich, NELGA (the Network of Excellence in Land Governance in Africa) and UN-Habitat.

The initial, feasibility phase was executed from June to December 2015. The main inputs during this phase were mainly from ITC, the Technical University of Munich (TUM), GLTN secretariat UN-Habitat, EALAN Chair Institute of Land Administration (ILA) curriculum from Ethiopia, the East African Land Administration Network (EALAN) and UN-Habitat. Guided by the project’s general objective, a framework with an overall approach was developed. A vital product of this process was the GLTN curriculum document titled “Teaching Essentials for Responsible Land Administration” with a course title “Responsible Land Administration 101”, which was finalised in the first quarter of 2016.

Phase 1 of the project commenced in 2015, when GLTN Secretariat, based in UN-Habitat, Nairobi, in 2015 engaged one of its partners, the University of Twente – ITC, to explore the feasibility of the design and development of an undergraduate introductory module and a set of

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post-graduate modules in areas relevant to the work of GLTN. The general objective was to strengthen the capacity of higher education and other relevant networks or institutions globally, including in developing countries, to provide quality undergraduate and post-graduate courses on the theme of pro-poor, gender-responsive land tools for tenure security along the continuum of land rights (Mitchell et al., 2017). The methods used for the data collection were a literature review (realised from July 2015 to September 2015), a survey (conducted from the 27th of July 2015 to 18th of September 2015) and an expert consultation (held from the 1st to the 4th of December in Enschede, Netherlands). During this phase, a framework and overall concept of Teaching Essentials for Responsible Land Administration was developed, with a course title “Responsible Land Administration 101”. This was distributed among GLTN partners and other teaching and training institutions for review and comment. Next step was to explore the feasibility and architecture of such a curriculum by making an inventory of existing elements, assessing current needs, and defining objectives and strategies concerning four key aspects: students, the content of teaching, teaching approaches and teachers/institutions. The key outputs were an agreed concept and a draft curriculum framework, with recommendations for the next steps of the development process.

The objective of Phase 2 was to develop learning materials to support the implementation of this curriculum at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, or in training. Phase 2 of the project was jointly coordinated by RMIT University and the University of East London, as a project of the GLTN International Research and Training Institutions Cluster. The first objective of this phase was to develop and validate with stakeholders a draft curriculum outline for a Responsible Land Administration Curriculum, which was met with a two-day Expert Group Meeting held in October/November 2016.

At a two-day expert group meeting held on October 31st and November 1st 2016, it was agreed that this project focuses on developing a "Knowledge base" to support the development of a responsible land administration across a variety of contexts. We see this knowledge base as supporting a continuum of needs from a self-learner (with instructions on how to use the material) at one end, to an academic who customises the knowledge base to fit into part of an existing undergraduate or postgraduate program (with instructions to designers on how to use the material) at the other end. The ultimate aim is to strengthen the capacity of higher education, and the quality of undergraduate and post-graduate learning on the theme of responsible land administration and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGTs), and is primarily about awareness-raising (Mitchell et al., 2017).

On this basis, each module was developed and peer-reviewed and is now available for use by interested academics, teachers, and trainers in the design and teaching of Responsible Land Administration programmes, courses, mini-courses, lectures, or training. The modules are in PDF version for easy viewing and downloading. They can be accessed free of any charge for teaching, training or learning purposes, provided this is per a specified Creative Commons

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Licence. Each is submitted as a living document, with feedback, suggestions and submission of complementary materials encouraged.

CONTENT OF THE RESPONSIBLE LAND ADMINISTRATION TEACHING ESSENTIALS

Overarching goals of the structured knowledge base

Each Module comprises of “minimum learning objects” that can (if needed) stand alone as a learning exercise. It is based on the following goals:

- Expose students and teachers to the core values and tools making up responsible land administration (see definition)
- Involve local case studies in lessons where possible
- Adaptive, flexible and responsive to diverse and changing needs - fit-for-purpose (FFP)
- prepare a range of learners with the knowledge of responsible land administration and the ability to positively contribute to a range of roles within the broad land sector
- Empower people to act as change agents and be champions and implementers of any needed reforms.

A challenge is to balance the fundamentals of responsible land administration with a country-specific aspect of land administration. The knowledge base is also developed on the awareness that the challenges facing the land sector are significant and complex, and the assumption that the implementation of responsible land administration principles requires excellent care. “There are no quick solutions, and that the effect and impact of land administration depend on many contextual issues in different cases. Effective solutions involve going deeper into the actual tenure forms in existence, with solutions building on what is already there and in response to particular historical, cultural, legal etc. context” (Mitchell et al., 2017). The knowledge base stresses the danger of blueprint solutions such as mass land titling, and analyse the shortcomings of conventional in-good-faith responses.

Fundamental principles such as found in the VGGTs, and the continuum of land rights and fit-for-purpose land administration are central to the knowledge base, as are the principles of pro-poor land recordation and gender-responsive land administration.

Learning materials are designed to include knowledge of international conventions and guidelines, as well as excellent local and regional case studies that illustrate the success or failure of specific land administration responses.

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Knowledge base structure and the GLTN e-learning platform

The structured knowledge base is also hosted by the GLTN in an open-source platform to give global open-source access (to everyone around the world) to courses and learning resources, including the Responsible Land Administration Teaching Essentials structured knowledge base, together with other GLTN land tools. The e-learning portal contains a collection of dynamic learning instruments using captivating and straightforward visuals, combined with audio narrations in some courses, to improve participants' learning experience.

In general, the platform is device friendly. This means that participants can access the courses anytime and on any tablet or smartphone device, while their progress is synced using the course's tracking features. The courses have been divided into modules to make it easier for participants to absorb the information. Interactive tests and illustrative case studies are also part of the learning process to help them track their progress. The learning resources include instructive videos, lectures, structured knowledge instruments and other reference materials. This is an ongoing project, and so more courses and resources will be added, over time.¹ The other learning resources available on the website include the tenure responsive land use planning and other learning resources. For details about tenure responsive land use planning, see Antonio et al. (2016), Chigbu et al. (2016), Fomete et al. (2018), and Chigbu et al. (2019).

Precisely, the structured knowledge base consists of six online modules, covering:

1. Core values and principles of responsible land administration;
2. Land tenure security;
3. Participatory land use planning and management;
4. Responsible land administration and information in practice;
5. Land-based finance; and
6. Land policy and regulatory frameworks.

The intention is for this resource to be flexibly utilised in a range of education, training and research activities at many levels.

The entire knowledge base comprises approximately 300 hours of study load - (12 ECTS²), which represents between 15% and 25% of one year of many undergraduate programs.

¹ The information presented in this paragraph have been culled verbatim from the e-learning portal to provide accurate description of the portal.

² The course load system used in Europe, but also for example in Ethiopia, where 1 ECTS = 28 hours of study load (lectures, exercises and self-studies). For more information about the international standard ECTS for the credit transfer and accumulation system: http://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/ects_en.htm

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For specific use in academic teaching, each module is structured to support approximately 50 hours of study load (2 ECTS) at the 3rd-year university level, divided into 4 or 5 lessons, with each comprising approximately 3 hours of classroom teaching and approximately 7 hours of teacher-directed self-study. A typical study load is generally divided into 15 hours of teacher-directed learning, and 35 hours of learner-directed learning (self-study). However, this can vary for each lesson. Each lesson is then designed to support approximately 3 hours of teacher-directed tuition within the classroom or training session.

The modules are designed to be nested such that the learning can explore Module 1 on its own, or Module 1 in combination with any or all of the other modules. Similarly, a teacher or trainer can use individual modules to support their classes, or all the modules if they are relevant. Teachers and trainers using these materials are encouraged to add case studies, class discussion and/or class exercises to complement the material, depending on need and context. The material is well suited for adaptation using an ‘active learning’ approach.

The modules start from global, then regional, and move to local, and then students bring context. Since the knowledge base comprises overarching guidelines and general principles. A second layer of references is provided to allow the learner to explore the topics more deeply.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper has introduced the recently completed structured knowledge base on responsible land administration teaching essentials and described the background, rationale and process of the project. Also discussed are how it can be used to help meet the massive land-related challenges facing many countries in both the developing and the developed world today – especially those captured in Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 11 and 15.

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The structured knowledge base on responsible land administration is available on the GLTN e-learning platform. All stakeholders are encouraged to access the resources and test (by using) them in their teaching and learning environment. The feedback from all those who use the materials would help in improving the resources to ensure it meets the changing needs for land-related learning resources in land administration.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Jean du Plessis is a land and capacity development expert in the Global Land Tool Network Secretariat, based at UN-Habitat, Nairobi. He draws on more than 25 years of experience in the areas of land, housing, human rights forced evictions and development. He has previously held positions in local, national and international NGOs, the South African government's land restitution programme, and the UN Land and Property Unit in Timor Leste. He has country experience in South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Rwanda, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Egypt, Palestine, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Haiti, Nepal and Iran. He has published on land, housing, human rights, urban finance and development issues. He has been with UN-Habitat since 2011, leading on the continuum of land rights, land-based finance, land readjustment and capacity development.

Uchendu Eugene Chigbu is a lecturer and researcher in land management. He coordinates the doctoral research in Land Management at the Technical University of Munich (TUM), Germany. He is also the Co-Chair of the International Training and Research Cluster of the Global Land Tool Network (UN-Habitat). He is an active member of the Commissions 2 and 7 of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG).

David Mitchell is an Associate Professor at RMIT. He has a PhD in land administration. David is co-chair of the GLTN Research and Training Cluster, and member of the GLTN International Advisory Board. At RMIT University he teaches cadastral surveying and land development and undertakes research focusing on the development of effective land policy and land administration tools to support tenure security, improved access to land and pro-poor rural development. He also has a strong research focus on land tenure, climate change and natural disasters

Siraj Sait is a Professor, and the Director of Research and Director of the Centre for Islamic Finance, Law and Communities (CIFLAC) at the Royal Docks School of Business and Law, University of East London. A graduate of Universities of Madras, Harvard and London, he is a well-known development expert and lawyer with experience of working with the UN, governments and business. Recent appointments include chair of Somalia Benadir laws drafting committee, head of UN Iraq evaluation commission and Member of the UN High Level Advisory Group on Gender Issues (AGGI). Sait's research was highly ranked for impact in the UK Research Excellence Framework 2014.

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