

Sandra F. Joireman, Ph.D.

Senior Advisor

Post-Conflict Recovery • Housing, Land and Property • Forced Displacement • Durable Solutions

Evidence-informed advisory services for governments and international organizations working in fragile and conflict-affected settings.



Executive Profile

Dr. Sandra F. Joireman helps governments and international organizations design evidence-informed legal, policy, and institutional responses to the challenges of post-conflict recovery. Her work focuses on housing, land and property (HLP), forced displacement, durable solutions, urban recovery, and the institutional reforms needed to support stable, inclusive, and equitable societies after conflict.

Recovery from violent conflict depends not only on rebuilding infrastructure but also on creating institutions that enable people to reclaim housing, land, and property; resolve competing claims peacefully; support displaced populations in pursuing durable solutions; strengthen social cohesion; and restore confidence in public institutions. Decisions made during this period shape whether recovery contributes to long-term stability or reinforces existing inequalities and grievances

For more than three decades, Dr. Joireman has worked at the intersection of research, policy, and practice to help governments and development partners navigate these challenges. She integrates comparative institutional analysis, legal and policy expertise, qualitative and quantitative research, and spatial analysis to develop practical recommendations that are grounded in evidence and responsive to local political and social realities. By connecting rigorous scholarship with operational decision-making, she helps

organizations translate research into policies and programs that are both analytically sound and practically implementable.

Dr. Joireman has advised organizations including the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), USAID, and national governments on issues ranging from women's property rights and customary land governance to urban forced displacement, return migration, and post-conflict institutional reform. She has led multidisciplinary consulting teams, facilitated consultations among international and national stakeholders, and developed policy guidance that bridges humanitarian response and long-term recovery.

Advisory Practice

Organizations engaged in post-conflict recovery increasingly face interconnected legal, institutional, and governance challenges that cannot be addressed through sector-specific solutions alone. Questions surrounding housing, land, and property often intersect with urban development, social protection, local governance, gender equality, displacement, and economic recovery. Dr. Joireman's advisory practice is built around helping clients address these complex policy challenges through evidence-informed analysis and practical institutional solutions.

Organizations seek Dr. Joireman's advice when they need to answer questions such as:

- How can housing, land, and property systems support durable solutions following conflict and displacement?
- How should governments address competing property claims while strengthening social cohesion and public confidence?
- What policy responses to urban displaced populations both address immediate needs and promote long-term social cohesion?
- How can legal and institutional reforms strengthen recovery in both urban and rural settings?
- What factors shape return migration, and how should those findings inform policy and operational programming?
- How can comparative research, mixed methods, and spatial analysis improve decision-making in fragile and conflict-affected environments?

Drawing on experience across Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East, Dr. Joireman works with multidisciplinary teams to translate comparative evidence into operational guidance, policy recommendations, and institutional strategies. Her approach combines legal and institutional analysis with empirical research, stakeholder engagement, and an understanding

of the political realities that shape implementation. She develops context-specific recommendations that reflect local governance structures, patterns of displacement, and the institutional capacities of governments and development partners.

Selected Advisory Engagements

1. World Bank, Urban Forced Displacement: Developing Operational Guidance for Inclusive Recovery

The Challenge

As forced displacement increasingly becomes an urban phenomenon, governments and development organizations must address far more than immediate humanitarian needs. Housing, land and property systems, municipal governance, access to services, livelihoods, and social cohesion all influence whether displaced populations are able to rebuild their lives and whether cities remain resilient under the pressures of displacement. The World Bank sought comparative evidence that could help operational teams design programs addressing these interconnected challenges as they pertain to women and girls across diverse urban contexts.

Dr. Joireman's Contribution

Dr. Joireman directed a multidisciplinary team of international consultants conducting comparative research in **five cities** across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Rather than producing five independent case studies, she designed an analytical framework that allowed findings to be synthesized across very different institutional and political environments. Working closely with World Bank staff throughout the project, she translated research findings into operational recommendations that addressed issues including housing, land and property rights, municipal governance, gender inclusion, service delivery, and social cohesion.

Results

The project produced a comparative analytical reports and separate operational guidance that informed the World Bank's work on urban forced displacement and inclusive recovery.

2. USAID Kosovo Property Rights Program, Building Property Institutions in a Post-Conflict State

The Challenge

Following independence, Kosovo faced the complex task of modernizing its property institutions while addressing the legacy of conflict, displacement, and unequal access to

property. Strengthening women's property rights formed one important component of broader efforts to improve legal certainty, modernize property administration, and support democratic governance consistent with Kosovo's aspirations for closer European integration.

Dr. Joireman's Contribution

Over multiple engagements spanning several years, Dr. Joireman advised the USAID Kosovo Property Rights Program on legal and institutional reforms related to property governance. Her work combined comparative legal analysis with extensive consultation involving government ministries, legal professionals, civil society organizations, and international development partners. Rather than approaching women's property rights as an isolated legal issue, she examined how inheritance systems, administrative procedures, dispute resolution mechanisms, and property registration collectively influenced women's ability to exercise their legal rights. This institutional perspective helped identify reforms capable of strengthening both gender equity and the effectiveness of Kosovo's broader property governance system.

Results

Her recommendations informed Kosovo's National Property Rights Strategy and contributed to reforms designed to strengthen women's inheritance rights, improved legal protections for widows and orphaned children, and modernize property governance institutions supporting long-term democratic development.

3. World Bank, Strengthening Land Governance through Customary Tenure Reform

The Challenge

Across much of sub-Saharan Africa, customary land tenure governs access to land for hundreds of millions of people. Yet governments and development organizations continue to struggle with how to strengthen land governance while recognizing customary institutions, expanding tenure security, promoting women's land rights, and supporting economic development. The World Bank sought comparative analysis that could inform operational approaches to customary tenure within broader land governance reforms.

Dr. Joireman's Contribution

Drawing on decades of comparative research on customary land tenure, legal pluralism, and property rights in Africa, Dr. Joireman advised the World Bank on the institutional challenges associated with customary land governance. She examined the conditions under which customary institutions could contribute to more secure, equitable, and effective land

governance. Her analysis synthesized comparative evidence from multiple African countries, identifying institutional arrangements that strengthened tenure security while recognizing local governance structures. Throughout the assignment, she worked closely with World Bank staff to ensure that comparative research was translated into operationally relevant recommendations.

Results

The project informed World Bank thinking on customary land governance by connecting decades of comparative scholarship with practical institutional reform. The resulting guidance emphasized the importance of context-specific approaches that recognize legal pluralism, strengthen local governance, and improve tenure security while supporting broader development objectives.

4. Syria, Building the Evidence Base for Post-Conflict Recovery

The Challenge

The political transition in Syria has renewed international attention to one of the most complex recovery environments in the world. Decisions concerning refugee return, housing, land and property restitution, urban recovery, and local governance will shape the country's long-term stability. Yet policymakers continue to face significant evidence gaps regarding the conditions that influence return migration and the institutional reforms needed to support durable recovery.

Dr. Joireman's Contribution

Dr. Joireman is engaged in an integrated research program examining the institutional determinants of post-conflict recovery. Her work combines spatial analysis, conflict-event data, satellite imagery, and large language model applications to investigate how housing, land and property systems, security conditions, legal context, territorial control, and patterns of violence influence refugee return. Rather than viewing return migration solely as a humanitarian issue, her research examines how legal institutions, governance arrangements, and local political conditions interact to shape recovery trajectories across different regions of Syria. This work also advances new methodological approaches for conflict analysis, integrating artificial intelligence in computational methods with comparative institutional analysis to produce evidence that is both academically rigorous and operationally relevant.

Results

The research is generating new evidence on the relationship between property institutions, conflict dynamics, and return migration while developing innovative methods for analyzing conflict-event data at scale. The resulting findings are intended to inform future policy

discussions concerning property restitution, durable solutions, and recovery planning in Syria and other post-conflict settings.

ADVISORY PHILOSOPHY

Evidence Before Assumptions. Every advisory engagement begins with understanding the institutional problem rather than assuming a predetermined solution. Dr. Joireman's approach combines legal analysis, political science, qualitative research, quantitative methods, spatial analysis, and comparative institutional research. This interdisciplinary perspective enables organizations to understand complex recovery challenges from multiple perspectives rather than through a single technical lens.

Comparative Research Supports Better Decisions. Comparative evidence provides insight into how institutions perform under different political, legal, and social conditions. Whether advising the World Bank on urban forced displacement or FAO on implementing the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus, Dr. Joireman has helped organizations move from broad policy objectives to practical operational recommendations that can be adapted across diverse country contexts.

Institutions Matter. Whether the issue is property restitution, return migration, urban recovery, or customary tenure, durable recovery depends upon institutions that are legitimate, effective, and accessible. Dr. Joireman's work consistently focuses on improving the institutions that shape recovery after conflict, including municipal governance, land administration, customary tenure, and mechanisms supporting durable solutions for displaced populations.

Building Collaborative Processes. Many of Dr. Joireman's assignments have involved coordinating multidisciplinary teams, facilitating stakeholder consultations, and bringing together government officials, international organizations, researchers, and civil society representatives to develop shared approaches to difficult policy challenges.

CURRENT AREAS OF ADVISORY PRACTICE

Forced Displacement and Durable Solutions

Examining the institutional conditions that influence return migration, local integration, and sustainable recovery.

Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

Designing property institutions that support recovery, tenure security, restitution, and equitable access to land and housing following conflict.

Legal and Institutional Reform

Supporting governments as they strengthen property governance, customary tenure systems, and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Urban Recovery and Social Cohesion

Helping organizations understand how municipal institutions, property systems, and governance influence recovery in cities affected by displacement.

Comparative Research and Evidence Synthesis

Integrating qualitative, quantitative, legal, and institutional evidence into practical policy guidance.

Spatial Analysis and Emerging Methods

Applying GIS, conflict-event analysis, and computational approaches to strengthen evidence for operational decision-making.

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMING PRACTICE

Research and advisory work are mutually reinforcing. Comparative scholarship identifies institutional patterns across countries and regions. Advisory engagements test those insights against operational realities. Together they provide a foundation for evidence-informed policy development.

Selected Publications

Peace, Preference, and Property: Return Migration after Violent Conflict (University of Michigan Press)

"Post-conflict Restitution of Customary Land: Guidelines and Trajectories of Change." *World Development*.

"The Mystery of Capital Formation in Sub-Saharan Africa." *World Development*.

"Ethnic Violence, Local Security and Return Migration." *International Migration*.

Selected policy publications and applied research for the World Bank and FAO.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Current Appointment

Weinstein Chair of Global Studies and Professor of Political Science
University of Richmond

Affiliate Member, Indian Ocean World Centre (IOWC), McGill University

Geographic Experience

Africa | Balkans | Middle East | South Asia | Southeast Asia | Latin America

Languages: English (Native); French (Intermediate)

CONTACT

Sandra F. Joireman, Ph.D.

Email: joireman@gmail.com

Website: sandrajoireman.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sandra-joireman-7b5a593/>

Altura Strategic Advisory, LLC