

**Transcript of the Interview with Jerry Maldonado of the Ford  
Foundation and David Ireland of World Habitat,  
hosted by María E. Hernández Torrales  
October 15, 2020**

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Good morning, Jerry.

**Jerry Maldonado:** Buenos días.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** And good morning (although I think, good afternoon), David.

**David Ireland:** It's good afternoon from the UK, but good morning, Maria.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Welcome, both of you. It's great to have you both and to have this opportunity to have this interview, that is more a conversation.

As a co-editor of *On Common Ground*, I should start out by thanking the two of you for contributing such insightful and thought-provoking Forewords for our book. Also, thank you for making the time for this conversation.

For the audience that eventually will have access to this conversation, I would like to point out that your different backgrounds, Jerry and David, have exposed you to an array of experiences that are reflected in your respective Forewords. Jerry calls our attention to the uniqueness of the CLT movement. And he says that it's more than housing and embraces community self-determination. And I must emphasize community self-determination. David, on his part, poses a philosophical question about what makes good housing. He then focuses on the CLT and describes it as one of the most important ideas of the last century in the sense that it not only changes the way the land is owned and housing develops, but it protects the community. I emphasize here protection of the community. We have community self-determination and we have protection of the community.

With that being said, I will start with my first question. You have both spent years championing the work of community land trusts. What was your *first* exposure to an organization that was structured and operated as a community land trust. And what was it about this CLT that caught your attention and piqued your interest in this unusual form of tenure?

**David Ireland:** I'd known of community land trusts for many, many years. It's a term which sounds good. All three words sound good.

I think the first one I visited was in a previous job I did, which was about getting empty homes back into use. Getting homes back into use isn't actually that difficult if you don't mind what they used for. But what we were trying to do was to get them into use for affordable use for people in housing need. And that's harder.

There's a fantastic organization called Canopy [Housing] in Leeds in the UK. They train up homeless people to renovate empty properties. And then they let them as a form of social housing. They aren't actually a community land trust, [but] they're pushing the absolute limits of it. They're stretching the definition. They had found a way of using it to make those homes that were being brought back into use permanently affordable and create a community amongst the people who lived in them. And I just think it's fantastic idea and I then learned and explored much more about it.

But it came full circle. You remember, Maria, when the Caño Martín Peña CLT won the World Habitat Award? The other winner at the time was Canopy from Leeds. It was nice to be able to recognize them all those years later.

**Jerry Maldonado:** From my end, Ford's been a long-time supporter of CLTs, long before my tenure at Ford. But my first personal experience with CLTs was actually in 2008. And 2008 was an important year, right? That was the year of the foreclosure crisis here in the States. I remember at that point many of the neighborhoods that I was intimately familiar with just being devastated by this wave of foreclosures that were hitting Black and Brown communities especially hard. I knew lots of families who were impacted directly and were losing their places.

And in that context, I remember visiting the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. This was during the National Community Land Trust Network conference in 2008 in Boston. What I saw was a study in contrast. I was seeing all this devastation right around me with the foreclosure crisis, [but] I was seeing hope in *this* community. While I was seeing Black and Brown families being evicted from their homes, I was seeing Black and Brown solidarity in a community. They were not just kind of hoping, but building . . . and building out a solidarity.

What I saw was just moving and fundamentally inspiring. It was to me this beautiful moment where I felt organizing meet planning, meet policy and politics, meet like in a structure and a container.

That just kind of inspired the work that I then took it forward. That was really kind of my opening space. I started asking these broader questions around development, land, power. Who decides? Who benefits. That was the moment for me. That was the spark.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** That you for your answers. Jerry, in your Foreword you assert that CLTs not only function as tools for preventing displacement and preserving long-term affordability, but also as vehicles for collective deliberation, action, and accountability that help to “bend the arc of the development toward justice.” I love those words. Would you please expand on that?

**Jerry Maldonado:** I will start with my own personal lived experience, as a son of Puerto Rican migrants who were displaced from Puerto Rico during Operation Bootstrap. My own kind of lived history is part of a broader history of cycles of migration, displacements. I think reflecting on my own lived experience and the experience of the many communities that I work in, we all know that public policy plays a critical role in shaping market behavior and

driving development in a way that can either drive us closer towards equity or perpetuate structural racism, exclusion, and inequality.

Unfortunately, the reality of land use and development policy in the US and in Puerto Rico the past century has been of one of development and land and housing policy being used to perpetuate racial segregation, inequality; from the kind of discriminatory housing and land use homeownership policies that locked Black and Brown families out of homeownership in the US, to red lining and urban renewal; to the most recent wave of white flight and white return; displacement. And right now, with climate change and COVID, what we see are these perpetual cycles of displacement of bodies, of communities.

So, for me, what's really important is to recognize that these are conscious decisions. We often talk about the market as if the market were this kind of abstract thing that is invisible. But the invisible hand of the market is actually very visible and it's shaped by policies and politics and powerful forces that benefit certain interests over other interests. Right?

So when I think about community land trusts, they are, at their very best, not *just* vehicles for producing housing. I think, David, this goes back to your earlier point. Building units of housing is something that we know how to do. There's no magic in the engineering of building that. But what this movement aspires to is not just to build housing; but it's really articulating a different vision of development.

So, at their very best for me, CLTs are vehicles for organizing, for visioning, for planning, for reconciling competing interests between community, public interests and private interests; public sector, government, and community; residents and other stakeholders. They create a vehicle and container for negotiating those interests. But also a container for ensuring that a vision of community can be articulated and then protected and preserved for the long haul. It challenges certain things that we think are normal about development. And it makes more visible some of those underlying drivers of inequality.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Excellent. It gets us to the community self-determination. Thank you so much.

David, you represented the community as the one who can protect people's homes and you characterize the CLT as a democratic and powerful response based on the principle that people are stronger when they work together and when they collectively control the land on which their houses are built. How, from this perspective, does the CLT address those three factors that you mentioned that jeopardize access to housing: the weakening of legal rights, which, I may say, is also access to justice; the hostility of private markets; and climate change emergencies?

**David Ireland:** It's just become, it's a dangerous world, isn't it? And it seems to become more dangerous. And that's why I think community land trusts and the wider community-led housing movement is so important because it is a way of offering some protection from some of these threats, in which people can live a normal life and run a community in the way that they want to, rather than have these constant threats to them.

And I agree with what Jerry said. I've been in housing quite a long time. Over that time, housing has become a very different thing. At the beginning of my career, housing was generally just somewhere where people lived. But it's become a vehicle for investment that this century has accelerated more and more. People used to invest in stocks and shares and things like that. If they were investing in other things, it was fine art or vintage wine or things that didn't really have any effect on normal people. It didn't really matter if those things went up hugely in value.

Over this century, investors have gone into the [real estate] market more and more – and they now dictate the price. They dictate the terms. And in order to make the market work for them, they have gone to government and got protections on people's housing eroded so they can make it easier to trade.

Where can you go if you're not wealthy yourself? Where can you go to be protected from these forces? There aren't many options. I mean, it would be lovely if there was a great long menu of all sorts of different options that people could have. I don't think there are very many.

I think a community land trust . . . I said I thought it was one of the most important ideas of the last century. And I think *that's* why it is because there are very few others. There are very few other ways in which a community can insulate itself from these forces and people can run a normal life that they want.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Thank you. Thank you. Very thoughtful answer.

Jerry, in the Foreword, you call our attention to the boom-and-bust cycle of predatory real estate investment and development that marginalizes many communities. You also spoke of the damage being done to communities through the world by what you called a “toxic mix” of structural racism, segregation, and market fundamentalism.

Weighed against enormous problems like these, CLTs look rather tiny and insignificant. In your view, can CLTs actually make a difference? Do you envision the CLT organization as a just way that is possible?

**Jerry Maldonado:** I think I'll build on a lot of what David said. I think it's about these trends toward the commodification of what should be a basic human right. We need to start there. Maria, you called it, the challenges are enormous. But I always feel like in these moments of great challenge, what is called for is a great and radical re-imagination. And in the US we are in this moment, another moment of racial reckoning, with the Black Lives Matter movement really kind of shining a light on these cycles of legitimized neglect. This was a term that was actually used in the book by the author writing around the favelas; this legitimized neglect of communities that are inhabited by Black and Brown bodies. This is a global phenomenon. And, again, this replicates and reinforces existing, structural, racist inequality, where we have communities that are underserved, segregated, over-policed, marginalized, and used and extracted for their labor. Then kind of discarded and displaced when other interests, whether it's a speculative real estate interest or another development.

So we have these cycles. And in the U.S. we have this moment where we're asking fundamental questions around what we need to divest *from* and what we need to invest *in*. And I think the divest/invest movement can be thought of more broadly. It's not just about policing and public safety. But fundamentally rethinking the kinds of communities, the kind of society. These are big questions of what we're trying to build.

Rethinking what kinds of communities, what kind of society we aspire to be forces us to ask really hard questions about development. And this is where it gets really hard, right? Because development is about money. It is about the extraction of wealth. It is about identity.

And, in the U.S. at this moment, we're forced to rethink our entire social safety net. What we've seen in this post-COVID moment, with this potential next wave of evictions and foreclosures, is that our safety net *does not function* in housing, in education, in healthcare. Right? We need to move to a frame that is less based on maximum extraction of profits and competition and individual – to one that actually moves us towards an economy of solidarity, of community. That creates a safety net that is like resilient and doesn't collapse in these moments of crisis, moments that I think are just going to get more and more frequent as we think about it. David, you mentioned climate change. These crises are only going to get more and more intense, right?

So the big question is: we have these huge challenges, so where does the CLT kind of movement fit in all this? I always like to reflect on one of my favorite quotes from Helen Keller: "Today's heresy is tomorrow's orthodoxy." In that context, I've always joked that the CLT movement is like today's heretics of housing. It is like **the** heretical movement. It is small, still growing, but it is challenging some of those firmly entrenched ideas about housing and land as an individual private right. And really challenging us to think about it as a *community* asset. It's challenging us to think about the public good, of housing as an individual asset versus housing as a community asset. It challenges us to think about how we finance it, what's the structure, what are the legal mechanisms to ensure these things.

It's also challenging us to be bolder about the *time horizon*. When we think about development, we usually think about these developments short-term. Affordability, in the U.S. context, is 15 to 30 years is affordable housing. But what we've seen is 15 to 30 years is just enough time to gentrify a community and to trigger another wave of displacement.

So I would say that, while the movement is still burgeoning and growing and experimenting – and, in the U.S. is still relatively small compared to the traditional kind of housing sector – it is punching above its weight in the ideas. It's experimenting in creative ways.

I think that ultimately takes us right towards a different kind of path – if we can generate the political will that needs to be generated in order to move ideas into policy and practice.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** David, you described the modern housing system as "dysfunctional," one that has left those who cannot afford the private market-priced home to defend themselves and even to face homelessness. Would you expand? Why do you envision the CLT organization as a powerful response to protect homes?

**David Ireland:** Sure. What I mean by “dysfunctional” is when the average person can't afford the average home something's gone wrong. And it's gone wrong everywhere. It's not just, you know, the UK and the United States. It's every country you go to. The same issues are at play.

And it's for the same reasons as many years ago, when there was a wave. There's always been people who have been poor and they've been unable to afford a decent home. But what has changed is that the average person is now competing against forces of investment and speculation. It's not just the poor people who can't afford a decent home anymore. The average person can't afford a decent home anymore. When you get to that state, you have to conclude that the system is not working. Something's gone badly wrong.

And the effect of it is that poor people get pushed into more and more marginalized land and more and more precarious existence. And they become more vulnerable to all of the shocks that we've been talking about earlier. And you can't have a system which keeps doing that. You have to actually question the fundamentals of the system.

I think that's why the community land trust is such a powerful idea, because it answers that, it has a different set of democratic values, which are not based on how much money you can extract from property or from land. It's not dictated by how much people can afford. It's dictated by a sort of democratic system which people have agreed on. And which people can afford a decent home and have a decent life.

It might be a small niche at the moment, but it's a powerful idea. At moments like this, people are looking for powerful ideas. I think there's a huge potential to propose this an answer to many of society's ills and a way of building a better future, post-COVID.

**Jerry Maldonado:** Maria, could I ask David a question? I'm curious, David, we're facing very similar challenges in the U.S. and in the U.K. on so many fronts – including our leadership. I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about what you see as the major obstacles in the U.K. towards really mainstreaming this model. What do you see? What would it take for it to move from this small, powerful idea to more of the mainstream?

**David Ireland:** I think there's two things. The U.K., like most of Western Europe, has got a reasonably strong welfare system and social housing system. It's weakened and it's not what it was, but it's still there. Unlike some other parts of the world, the poorest people don't all end up on the street. They don't have to build their own houses. There is a system. So it doesn't feel like an emergency at the moment.

The other problem, talking to people in policy, talking to people in housing, is that lots of people like the idea of a community land trust, but it sounds too complicated. And all of their experience is that, when they've seen community land trusts, they take ages. They take years and years and years to build. I think the problem is because they are still a niche, every community has to sort of invent its rules itself. There's no rule book. You have to write your own one every time.

And that's why it takes so long. You kind of have to have a scale, which then begins to create a virtuous circle. And you have to get government and local governments to buy into the

idea and, fundamentally, make the land available for these sorts of approaches at a reasonable price.

I don't think that's unachievable. It's just, at the moment you've got to reach a tipping point at which it becomes "Yeah, that's the thing to do. That's the way to solve this problem." We're not quite there yet.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** My next question is related to this. In both your countries, that are hundreds of NGOs and social housing providers. What is the special niche that is occupied by community land trusts in this dense organizational landscape? What do CLTs bring to the crowded field of affordable housing and community development that is different and noteworthy? Probably, we should start with Jerry.

**Jerry Maldonado:** Sure. For me, I think the CLT movement really brings us back to the origins, in many ways, of the CDC [Community Development Corporation] movement. It's reconciling a kind of housing and land with a broader civil rights kind of racial justice, economic justice set of struggles. And these three components, right? It centers community people, land, and then trust – both the structure and the kind of solidarity. I think of "trust" both in terms of structure and the kind of solidarity that this unit is trying to build; really trying to help us reconcile and recapture the origins of the housing movement in the U.S. that has increasingly become just very professionalized.

Professionalization is very good and it's really important to standardize, right? *And* simultaneously, going back to your point of the challenge of scale that, in the U.S., we've not yet mobilized the political will or leadership at the scale necessary to move the kinds of public sector resources that we need to scale this.

So, oftentimes we talk about the model itself as very boutique and particular. I feel like *all* development is boutique and particular. The question is, how do you incentivize it? How is the public sector subsidizing or not subsidizing? And how is the public sector actually subsidizing competing streams of development that actually undermine and run counter.

I think, for me, the CLT movement is unique in a couple of factors. One, it's a governance model really tries to create a vehicle for democratic deliberation, which is messy; which does take some time. But at the end of the day, if it's done well, it creates a container for reconciling competing interests in a place: competing land use interests; competing economic interests; competing planning interests.

[Second], it's fairly unique in its vision and its time horizon, it's conceptualization of stewardship. That's not just about production and preservation. It's actually about building broader community and protecting it as a community asset over the long haul. That is really unique.

I think the third thing that it brings – and this is the piece that we've yet to fully realize – the model itself challenges public policy and the way that we finance housing in this country, which is so reliant oftentimes on private capital, speculative capital, and on tax breaks that subsidize a certain kind of development.

This is for me one of the major challenges toward moving this from a smaller niche boutique kind of model to the mainstream. Moving it as an ideological challenge. Moving from housing as a commodity to human right, where housing for all is a basic human right. Then there's a basic public policy and finance challenge and that's fundamentally to me a political challenge.

Going back again to my Dudley Street origins or what I see when I think of the Fideicomiso or the G-8 [the group of eight communities adjacent to the Martín Peña channel] is that ultimately these movements were all a people movement. So that's the origin, where shifts in housing, shifts in policy, shifts in politics start – with that deep organizing. We can't short-change that. Because if we short-change it, we can create an *empty* vehicle and a container that can produce widgets. You can have a victory, but then the question is how sustainable, how resilient is that victory? Can we protect those wins in the long haul?

We often see here in the progressive community lots of wins. There are campaigns that you support and it wins. But you haven't built a base for it that actually protects those wins when the political winds change. Right?

And in Puerto Rico with the many fights and struggles that the land trust has undergone, the reason it is where it is is because of all the community building work that was done up front and the way that continues to be centered as part of the development model.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** David?

**David Ireland:** You asked what was special about community land trusts in a European context. And I think the thing that I've seen is every community land trust I've visited – in fact, every community-led housing development I've visited – people are happy. People *like* living in those communities. It makes life a better thing. You can't argue with that.

There's an awful lot of what's good about social housing in Europe. And there's some fantastic social housing, some fantastic people involved. But I don't think you can say *that* about it.

You know, I've worked in social housing for much of my life. And a lot of it is done *to* people. People are placed in social housing; they aren't given much choice; they don't have a say; they don't have a voice in what happens. At the *least* successful end, it can be not a great place to live.

So I think that the thing that is so important about community land trusts is that it is shaped by the community into what works for them. It's their community. It's people who've got a say and an ownership, literal and metaphorical, in it. Which I think makes it so important.

Where we are at the moment, certainly in the U.K. and lot of European countries, is that the only people who have got the time and the space and the resources to be involved in community land trusts are people who aren't in huge housing need. So it's people who wants this for their lifestyle, and they can devote a lot of time to it. They can work through all the obstacles to make a community land trust work.

There's lots of other communities which are in need and which would be happier people if they had a community land trust. But they need the support that government, local government, a large housing association, a social housing provider could provide.

I think there's some room there in which people are still in control and people still have the say, but actually there's some resources and some backing to enable people to develop the community that they want.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** World Habitat and the Ford Foundation have been major funders of the trade associations representing and promoting community land trusts in your respective countries – the National CLT Network in Great Britain and the Grounded Solutions Network in the United States. What is the value of having a functioning association of CLTs at the national level?

**Jerry Maldonado:** I'll start. I think it's really critical for creating a peer network of dreamers, of doers, of collaborators, of co-conspirators. You know, the vehicle is tough. It's been for me a real honor to see the movement continue to evolve over the last decade from the National Community Land Trust Network to Grounded Solutions and to see the way in which the Network itself has created a space to support experimentation across different geographies. To share those learnings and those best practices.

David, back to your point, how do we support those communities who need these tools the most? Because these are not easy, necessarily. They're kind of particular legal structures, nonprofit structures, policies and practices. So having infrastructure that can support both the technical assistance and the best practices can extract the best lessons and begin to articulate a policy agenda at a city, a state, and hopefully increasingly at a federal level is really, really important.

That, to me, has been the major plus, that it's an umbrella for bottom-up experimentation, sharing, and an ultimate dream of scaling this and making it a more permanent part of our housing infrastructure.

**David Ireland:** We funded a number of organizations like that: the mobile housing network in Eastern Europe. We fund them. The CoHabitat Network, which is international.

I agree with what Jerry says. Absolutely. I think the reason is so many of these problems the communities face have already been solved by other people. Creating a network in which people can share ideas and share experiences helps.

I was up at a CoHabitat Network event in Nairobi last year. They were celebrating achievements from Nigeria, from Kenya, from Zimbabwe, from all sorts of places. I didn't even know community land trusts existed in these countries. There's so many fantastic things going on around the world that are below the radar. And if somebody puts people together, it's like you're in a big wide movement here, an international movement. There are lots of people around the world doing the same as you. It helps encourage and motivate people when it can be a sort of practical solution as well. So yeah, we're pleased to support them.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Thank you. Now I want to bring this conversation to San Juan Puerto Rico. You both have paid personnel visits to the Fideicomiso de la Tierra del Caño Martín Peña; you both distinguished this particular community land trust in your respective Forewords; and you both have helped to support our efforts here. I think you both would agree that the Caño CLT has had a local impact in avoiding involuntary displacement and securing land and saving homes for hundreds of families living in informal settlements -- seven distressed, very distressed, poor communities in Puerto Rico that started as informal settlements. Today, we have two other community land trusts in Puerto Rico that are working toward developing another badly distressed area here in San Juan – Río Piedras. And we have another community land trust working towards securing land for sustainable agriculture.

But do you see a larger impact or influence of our work *beyond* Puerto Rico, specifically as an instrument to help regularize informal settlements?

**David Ireland:** I have this hugely privileged job and I get to see all these amazing, fantastic things. When I came to Puerto Rico, which led to us awarding the World Habitat Award to the Caño Martín Peña CLT, I think it really is one of the most remarkable visits I've had.

I say that, knowing we have two Puerto Ricans here, but I genuinely think it's one of the most meaningful, because what you'd done, like Canopy, which I first saw as a community land trust, you pushed the boundaries of it to solve a different problem. And the potential of what has been done in Puerto Rico is just so enormous. I mean, there are over 1 billion people on the planet who live in informal settlements. It's a bit of a housing world which is growing by far the fastest; most new homes are informal. And the people who live in informal settlements are there at the whim of the landowners or the government who can end their tenure there in a moment with no consultation, no compensation. So, to be able to use a community land trust to provide an answer, the response to that, a protection for those billions of people around the world who find themselves in similar situations, the potential is just enormous. It just is absolutely huge.

We're working with a community in Rio de Janeiro who you both know as well, who have directly taken their inspiration from what happened in Puerto Rico. And if you could get a community land trust established in the favelas in Rio, the potential of replicating that around Rio, around Latin America, around the Global South is just absolutely huge.

I'd love to be back here in 20 years' time and just sort of think, well, what does the community land trust movement look like now. I just wonder, actually, if it could be that: if what most community land trusts in which most people are living is in informal settlements, which got regularized and got improved and became established as a result of the community land trust.

**Jerry Maldonado:** David, I agree a hundred percent. I'm always so inspired when I go to visit the Fideicomiso. They often describe it as *proyecto de país* – or a national development model – because what they're doing here is not just about the neighborhoods; it is about demonstrating a model of development, a model that has **national** implications for the Island and has **international** implications.

And I absolutely see it that way, Maria. I mean, that's what really has always intrigued me. The unique things that the Fideicomiso has set up – the trust, the G-8, and lots from the public – those three pieces are so incredibly unique. They solve for different pieces of a development puzzle that are really, really critical. And I think for me that structure, including the trust, is a real model that will play out in different ways. But that helps us answer this question of how do we bring in the public sector? How do we ensure that community is centered? How do we create kind of the container, the legal mechanisms? I think for those reasons it's incredibly, incredibly unique.

The other thing that is really important globally is that, again, it forces us to ask basic questions around property rights and land security and tenure. Because I think that the “standard wisdom” is you improve someone's security by giving them an individual land title, a property deed. And what we know is that that's actually not true; that we're solving for the *wrong* thing if what we're trying to solve for is land security, land use, and not just for the individual footprint but for community. The favelas are Black communities. The communities around the Caño Martín Peña are all poor communities, Black, Brown, working class communities. If we're trying to solve for a challenge at a community level, we need community-level solutions. For that reason, I think it's incredibly replicable and really important precedent setting.

And I'm inspired by what I see happening in Rio. (Thanks to the support, David, that you guys are providing them.) I was also really inspired by – I think it was in 2019, Maria, last year; it just feels like ages ago – the convening that was held right in Puerto Rico. We brought together a number of our grantees. (Ford has offices around the globe.) It was just powerful to see partners from Brazil to South Africa to South Asia to Indonesia learning about the model together and really seeing its direct applicability to the work that they're doing. So, yeah, it's definitely part of a broader global movement.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Thank you. I'm very proud of being part of the Caño Martín Peña CLT.

And now I want to bring attention to our book. Your organizations, under your leadership, helped to make it financially possible for John Davis, Line Algoed, and me to produce *On Common Ground* and to offer it to community groups and NGOs for a heavily discounted price because of our interest that this book goes to them. World Habitat provided seed money to get started. The Ford foundation funded the translation of our book into Spanish. I'd like to ask each of you, *why* you backed our publication.

Let's start with David. World Habitat doesn't normally put money into publishing adventures like ours. Why this one? What made you believe that a new book about community land shows would be worthwhile and further the objectives of World Habitat?

**David Ireland:** Well, we're not really a funder. We invest in activities which we think are going to help improve housing for people in housing need. I think the idea of this book was just so timely. We spoke earlier today of the importance of this moment and how a growing movement has got the potential to grow a lot more and help a lot more people. That's not going to happen unless people know about it and see the potential.

So I think a book's a great idea. There was a long time since there was a previous edition. There's a whole new generation of people. And the movement has changed so much. It's an international movement in a way that it wasn't when the first edition came out, all those years ago. So, we were delighted in our small way to help a little bit at the beginning to launch it. We're delighted and really proud to be involved. Well done to everybody who's written and who's helped and who's facilitated in putting this book together because I just think it's really important.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Thank you. We're very grateful. Jerry, I'll ask a similar question to you. Why did you believe that a Spanish edition of the book we had planned would be a timely and useful tool?

**Jerry Maldonado:** I joined philanthropy at Ford after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Having lived through that devastation and having seen how the recovery process really laid bare all of this history of inequality, centered again on this issue of land and development. And with massive vacancy across the Island.

What we've seen after that, we've seen many, many other natural disasters since that moment. [Hurricane] Sandy, right? We've seen the hurricanes in Texas. Simultaneous to the disasters is a model of disaster capitalism that has seized on those moments of disaster where systems are crumbling to perpetuate a certain model of development, a neo-liberal model of development that is even more extractive that centers the privatization of all goods: housing, land, education, and health care.

So I'm living with that context, coming into when, a few years ago, [Hurricane] Maria hit the island. The exact same forces of disaster capitalism seizing that moment. The mass migration of Puerto Ricans from the island to the mainland. I sat with those conflicted feelings. It was kind of *deja vu*. I felt like a little bit of post-traumatic stress, when you see the same movie play itself over and over again.

With Puerto Rico, with the Caño, with the history of land trusts, there's this model that is kind of right for the moment to scale up. But in this moment, where the model of development on the Island is in question, we can either pursue a model that centers opportunity zones and tax breaks for the wealthiest and displaces communities in Loíza, along the coast, in the mountains. Or we can center a different model of development and a different model of land tenure.

So for me, Maria, when you and John reached out to me, I said this is like a no-brainer. This is an opportunity for us to center the voices of the folks and experiences of folks who have been developing this model that I think is absolutely replicable. That is scalable. And at this moment, there's an audience for it across the Island.

So my initial entry was to say, how do we use it as a vehicle to spread this idea across the islands, to continue to nationalize this debate, this discourse, and to support a fledgling movement? And to bridge from there to the rest of Latin America is a hop, skip, and a jump, right? Because these communities are all facing very similar long-term development

challenges, informal settlements, and upgrading -- alongside the new challenge of climate change and resilience.

So, to me, it was important to be able to center this in the language of the communities who need it and who are articulating their own vision. I think that's another kind of challenge we have in the housing movement and the broader movement: how do we decolonize language; decolonize experiences – to be able to center folks so they are able to dream in their own language?

So I was honored to be able to contribute in that very small role.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Thank you so much for this contribution. I have to tell you that it's almost done, [translating] all the chapters into Spanish.

As our final question, I'd ask you to step back and to reflect on the global growth of community land trusts. What is the greatest *satisfaction* when looking at the movement that you helped to nurture? What is your greatest *disappointment* . . . and what is needed in the coming years for this international CLT movement to fulfill its potential?

**David Ireland:** If you look back over the last few years, I've seen a really interesting growth of an idea and how it has been adapted throughout the world in different ways to meet the challenges of different communities. It's exciting when you see that happening. It's fantastic.

The things that is, not a frustration, but a reflection is that the scale of the need is so at a completely different level. And what we've seen this year has just made that all the more stark. Jerry has referred to the Black Lives Matter movement. The things that we've seen this year have just made it so clear how some communities are treated so much more poorly than others. And the effects of coronavirus, I think we've only just begun to see them. I'm not talking about so much the health impacts as the economic impact, the level of poverty that is going to be created by losses of people's jobs and the foreclosures of properties, and people being evicted is quite frightening to look into the future as to what is coming towards us.

And so anything that is available at the moment which can provide an answer to a better world, we've gotta be talking about, shouting about as something which we want to see. We have a different vision for a world in the future.

You look back to what happened after the Second World War in my country and others. There was a big re-thinking about how society should be run. In this country, we set up the National Health Service. We set up a whole social housing system. We provided a whole load of the infrastructure to make sure we've got a safety net so that people didn't fall through and end up in destitution.

We need something again. We need something again for the world which we're entering. And I think the community land trust fits into that narrative perfectly. It's a provision about communities who are not left to the market forces and not left to whatever prejudices are out there, but are given the power to shape their own decisions and shape their own lines.

I think it's much more than a housing question. It's a society question. I think a community land trust as an idea is coming. It's one that we need to be talking about very, very vigorously and really putting aim at sort of a vision for what sort of society we want in the future.

**Jerry Maldonado:** I totally agree, David. I think the moment for big ideas is *now*. Because the challenges are huge. For me, going back to my first experience with CLTs in 2008 to now, there are a couple of things that really rise to the top.

One, it's been really gratifying for me to see the CLT movement in the U.S. come to grips more directly with issues of race and class within the movement. I do think something, David, that you hinted at: that there had been a feeling that living in a CLT home or community was kind of a luxury. But that wasn't the origin of the movement.

So there were hard conversations that were really had and continue to be had within the movement as we think about the kinds of markets where CLTs are applicable. And what I've seen is this great expansion of the conceptualization. My first experience in Boston was the CLT in a weak market; it wasn't a hot market. It was actually a weak market. You can't El Caño is a hot market. The area around it is hot, but it was kind of a poor, depressed community.

So reconciling this issue of race, empowerment, self-determination within the model has been something that's evolved. And I've seen the model kind of take off in the popular imagination and communities from like Fruit Best [CLT] in Buffalo or Oakland. Led by communities of color, the folks who need it the most taking on this model. That's amazing and incredibly gratifying. It's been gratifying for me to see the way in which all these different CLTs have experimented. It's beautiful actually. They've created all sorts of kinds of housing. It's not just homeownership. It's rental, commercial, farming, agriculture. That is beautiful. Because, again, it's thinking about how a tool can be used not just to create a certain kind of tenure, but a kind of community. What's the community that we want to build together? That to me has been really gratifying to see all that experimentation.

On the disappointment or the challenging side, I think this goes back to something you said, David: how do we continue to mainstream this model? How do we actually give it the scale of resources it needs?

So for me, two things. One, I think what we need to be careful of is not to replicate the mistakes of the past, even within the CDC movement and the CLT movement. Because the CDC movement, there are many beautiful things about it and also many challenging things that we've learned about scale, about prioritizing the technical over the organizing, the community piece. So we've got to be able to balance those things: be able to think about how we produce housing and build community at the scale that we need to in a way that also continues to center the voices of the most marginalized.

I think the biggest challenge for me continues to be one of public policy. Here I feel that the next step of this movement needs to move *beyond* exchanging lessons around tools and best practices. Really, it's a question of what is the political constituency that needs to be

built in order for us to move the scale of resources that we need in order to really mainstream.

Scale to me will never be brought about by philanthropy, absolutely not. It won't be bought by private financing where you're at the whims of the market. It's going to require a much deeper investment by the public sector. And that requires an organized, political constituency. For me, that's the next challenge: to continue to embed this within a broader movement for healthcare for all, education for all, tax justice. This needs to be another pillar of that agenda.

**María E. Hernández Torrales:** Thank you, Jerry. I think it's great to feel that we are part of the creation of a whole new system.

As my final comment, I should say that I enjoyed reading both Forewords and that, even though you were writing on two separate continents, these Forewords seemed to follow a connective yarn.

Jerry sent us a call to reimagine the relationship among people, communities, and land in a way that's centers dignity, shared prosperity, and the long-term stewardship of our natural assets. And David focused on the happiness of ordinary people. And these two thoughts bring us back to where we started: community self-determination and protection of the community.

This brings our interview to a close. Many thanks to Jerry and to David and thanks to the Center for CLT Innovation for sponsoring and recording this conversation. I should say, too, please, please pick up a copy of our book. I'm sure you'll like it.

*Para quienes prefieran obtener el libro en español, les comunicamos que estamos trabajando para poder tener esta versión muy pronto. Ya los capítulos están traducidos y estamos identificando los recursos para la publicación. Gracias nuevamente a Jerry y a David. Hasta pronto.*