

The Community Land Trust model

In communities and regions of countries where land values are escalating beyond what is affordable for a growing part of the population, the central conundrum is how to reclaim land as a common good resource. How to capture some of the unearned income and wealth that land is generating for the benefit of many? Alternatively, there are distressed communities where endemic poverty and decay, vacant land, and pressures for redevelopment leave residents fearing gentrification and eviction. Either way the question is whether it remains possible to rebalance the relationship between individual and collective good.

The community land trust (CLT) innovation evolved over the last 50 years in the United States and migrated to the United Kingdom, some European countries, Canada, and a few other parts of the world. The classic CLT model includes a multi-stakeholder non-profit organization designed to take land out of the private market and transform its use for community benefit.

2.6 Watch “Holding Ground, Part 2.” (11:24)



Holding Ground Productions. “Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street,” video, 11:24, 2006, posted by foucaultspendulum to YouTube on December 9, 2010.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TElaNRPBXP0> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TElaNRPBXP0>)

2.7 Read “Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiatives: Development without Displacement.” (~4)

Urban Media Lab. Monica Bernardi. “Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiatives: Development without Displacement.”, accessed on 7 January 2019. <https://labgov.city/thecommonspost/community-land-trust-dudley-street-neighborhood-initiatives-development-without-displacement/> (<https://labgov.city/thecommonspost/community-land-trust-dudley-street-neighborhood-initiatives-development-without-displacement/>)

Threatened with gentrification by developers who liked their district because of its location near downtown, the Dudley Street initiative grew out of one of Boston’s poorest neighborhoods. The confrontation between developers and community is inspiring and instructive. Watch this video to

recognize the desolation of the community and identify how people organized neighborhood power to transform their context. Note how racial, gender, and social inequity shapes the issues and the collaboration.

The Community Land Trust (CLT) model that the Dudley Street Initiative formed as the legal vehicle for acquiring and controlling land is robust. Note the full range of benefits that CLT tenure enables, far beyond just affordable housing.

What might be the emotional, moral, and cultural features of involvement in the CLT? How important are these affective components of change in our work?

2.8 Watch “Champlain Housing Trust, Community Land Trust.” (9:59)

<p>Champlain Housing Trust, Community Land Trust</p> 
<p>World Habitat. “Champlain Housing Trust Community Land Trust Innovation USA,” video, 9:59, posted by the creator to YouTube on August 12, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFZFCxdry9g . (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFZFCxdry9g)</p>

In contrast to the Dudley Street community, in the late 1970’s, the thriving Burlington, Vermont community experienced pressure from out of state people with deep pockets buying housing as investments and second homes. Prices and rents were going through the roof. Local people were priced out of their own community, a common pattern in many cities. Mayor Bernie Sanders led the effort to establish a municipal grant and a line of credit to help launch a Community Land Trust and an affordable housing model. It is now the largest in the U.S. with about 2400 residences in a county of 100,000 people. This film, made in 2009, depicts this particular CLT and perhaps explains why it won a UN World Habitat Award. Note how the Burlington group went on to form a national network.

2.9 Read “Priced out no More: How a London Group Defied Gentrification.” (~7 minutes)

Perrone, Allesio. “Priced out no More: How a London Group Defied Gentrification,” New Internationalist, January 23, 2018, <https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2018/01/23/camley-street-housing-clt>
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In this 2018 example from England, residents, workers, and businesses collaborated in a CLT to push

back developers in favour of an affordable and environmentally sustainable future. Reflect on the effort, organization, and time involved in protecting and advancing the commons and the challenges of getting the local government on board.

2.10 Read “A Speculation Free-Zone.” (~8 minutes)

Bula, Francis. “A Speculation-free Zone.” *The Globe and Mail*, February 16, 2017 (updated November 2017). <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/real-estate/vancouver/how-community-land-trusts-could-help-build-affordable-vancouverhousing/article34026679/> (<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/real-estate/vancouver/how-community-land-trusts-could-help-build-affordable-vancouverhousing/article34026679/>)

2.11 Read “City Farms on CLTs: How Community Land Trusts are Supporting Urban Agriculture.” (~10 minutes)

Yuen, Jeffrey. “City Farms on CLTs: How Community Land Trusts are Supporting Urban Agriculture.” *Land Lines*, April 2014: 2-9. https://www.lincolninst.edu/sites/default/files/pubfiles/2376_1716_city_farms_on_clts_0414ll.pdf (https://www.lincolninst.edu/sites/default/files/pubfiles/2376_1716_city_farms_on_clts_0414ll.pdf)

In Vancouver, one of the world’s most expensive housing markets, a novel CLT model recently evolved. In what might be described as a public-social partnership, city land is being leased at a deep discount to a CLT that is very different than the traditional model. Bringing together the city, co-op and non-profit housing organizations, a large member-owned credit union, the province, and various social venture capital providers in a \$111 million dollar-financing partnership, the Land Trust foundation established over 358 new housing units. The case study report is available in the supplementary reading list.

Community land trusts can also be adapted to a range of basic needs sectors including food. Some urban CLT’s, for example, are playing a modest but engaged role in urban agriculture, a strategic role with potential given the larger climate change pressures on society. Read “City Farms on CLTs” to learn more about The Lincoln Land Institute. Notice how they access land and the challenges they face in sustainably financing their work.