

Building Economic Democracy in Our Communities



Many grocery stores and delivery jobs are low wage, many do not offer union benefits. Located in Oakland California, Mandela Grocery Cooperative is owned by the workers and works to support local farmers and help them obtain ownership in their food enterprises.

What if our Bronx grocery stores were owned by us in the community, provided good jobs, and met our needs? This will be our future in the Bronx, working together for economic democracy.



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Homeland foods in Oklahoma is a unionized and 100% employee-owned company, bought by the workers and the union together. Since 2011 this chain of 76 grocery stores, with over 15,000 employees, has expanded to 80 unionized stores.

What if our grocery store workers in the Bronx were also the owners of the stores, and benefited when the company did well? What else is possible when we share ownership and make decisions together for the benefit of our Bronx communities?



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What if we shared the ownership and wealth of our local shopping districts together?

In San Diego, a community came together to organize to co-own a shopping mall that was in need of repair and revitalization. Planning for the Plaza began with 800 neighborhood surveys that assessed what the community needed. At the top of the list was a major chain grocery store, followed by restaurants, entertainment, living wage jobs, and more.

The Plaza fulfills many of these needs.

Resident ownership is a significant portion of Market Creek Plaza. The groundbreaking approach transferred 20% ownership to these residents who together invested a total of \$500,000. Another 20% of the Plaza is owned by the resident-led Neighborhood Unity Foundation for their \$500,000 investment.



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Located in Cincinnati Ohio, Cooperation Cincinnati supports family-sustaining jobs, provides business ownership opportunities for Black, Latinx, and immigrant communities and is accountable to the communities that drive it. In its first few years,

Coop Cincy has created 10 new worker owned enterprises and is working with retiring business owners to create more local businesses owned by the workers. Their work has grown into a statewide collaboration across several other cities. **Here in the Bronx, we can be the leaders and creators of these new businesses where workers and communities own together! This is the future that economic democracy can bring us.**



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What if our food service jobs could support our formerly incarcerated neighbors, and also provide shared ownership of their work? ChiFresh Kitchen in Chicago is showing that economic democracy means more and better opportunities to contribute and share in the wealth that our work generates. **In the Bronx, we could have dozens of businesses like this in our communities that create shared wealth and community power together.**



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What if our food not only nourished us but created long-term stability for Black farmers in our region? The Black Farmer fund is a democratic community investment fund to support farmers and food-based entrepreneurs across the state so that they can feed their families as they feed ours here in the Bronx. **We can create investment funds that we control together and that build shared wealth and power here in the Bronx!**



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In Bed-Stuy Brooklyn, community leaders have worked for years to launch a community-owned food cooperative that will also serve as a hub for incubating more worker-owned food businesses in Brooklyn, and will source from Black and cooperatively owned farmers. **We can create community-owned enterprises here in our Bronx to build economies of solidarity with our Brooklyn neighbors. In doing this, we can also build community power to shape the economic and political future of our Bronx together.**



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What if our Bronx small businesses formed a larger cooperative conglomerate that they owned and controlled together? The Obran Cooperative in Baltimore is an example of how workers and entrepreneurs in small businesses that care about their communities can work together to share wealth and risk to stabilize themselves against big businesses that undercut them on wages and local community benefits.



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Arizmendi is a chain of bakeries in California that is owned and operated by the workers. It provides good jobs and shares in profits for workers. It is an example of how workers can be leaders and expand businesses that support and invest in people and communities, and serve as strong neighborhood pillars. **Economic democracy for the Bronx means strong local businesses that invest in people and our communities together!**



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Before his death, Nipsey Hussle was working on a community investment fund called “Our Opportunity” to invest in a shared ownership future where Black lives mattered. He was trying to create investment vehicles for communities to pool their resources together to resist gentrification and create local and cooperative economic opportunities in Los Angeles. **We can create these community-controlled funds here to shape the future of our Bronx communities!**



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Many of our neighbors, friends, and family work hard as drivers for companies like Uber and Lyft, but make low wages, because these companies put profits over people. The Driver's Cooperative is a rideshare platform where the drivers own the company, and receive better pay and working conditions. The result is better for the rider, the driver, and the community as a whole. **This is an example of how economic democracy is a reality on the ground already, making lives better here and now. It should be a key part of the future of a more equitable and democratic Bronx.**



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Many in our community in the Bronx are caregivers, or receive care from a home health aide.

But these jobs can be very difficult with not much support or control for workers.

Cooperative Home Care Associates is a home care business that is owned and controlled by the workers, so they receive better pay and have better benefits and working conditions.

Through cooperation, home care is better for the worker and the client. This should be the future of care for all in our Bronx!



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Mi Oh My Farms is a worker-owned business that grows microgreens and mushrooms for the retail market, farmers markets, and restaurants and institutions. All produce is grown indoors and is very efficient in use of space. It is an example of the entrepreneurial talent and creativity that exists in our borough, and **proof that we can and already are creating cooperative enterprises here that we should be investing in for development in our communities!**



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The Bronx is already a hub of fashion and culture. What if the wealth of the fashion industry and economy stayed here in our community? Entrepreneur David Lee is bringing his innovative fabric manufacturing business KDKnit to Hunts Point to create a shared-ownership enterprise and jumpstart a fashion industry in the Bronx grounded in equity and economic democracy.



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Many of our community members in the Bronx work in cleaning and building services. These jobs often can be very hard, with difficult schedules and conditions. Bio Classic is a Bronx-based cooperative of women who own their cleaning business together.

They are one of a growing number of cooperative cleaning businesses because owning together means better conditions, better pay, and more flexibility for working people.



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Co-Op City is world-famous for being the largest housing cooperative in the world. It has over 15,000 homes that are permanently affordable over time, so that thousands of Bronx residents can benefit from the ability build wealth while keeping the Bronx affordable for the next generation. **What if we had thousands more of these affordable cooperative homes throughout the Bronx, so more of our communities could benefit from affordability and stability that comes from cooperative housing?**



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