



Uplifting Local Economies through Community Ownership

Mandela Partners' community development initiatives represent the nexus between economic opportunity and food access. Mandela Partners recognized early on that while traditional job placement and workforce development programs support employment opportunities, the field was missing pathways for new and emerging entrepreneurs to build community-owned businesses from the ground up. At the same time, good jobs with pathways for advancement were limited for under-resourced residents in the places where they have historic roots and long-standing neighborhood connections.

Through our innovative place-based business development work, we braid together three major strands of work: business incubation, access to community capital, tailored support for launching and growing local food enterprises, and workforce development. Our programs ensure that new entrepreneurs and small businesses have start-up support to grow and plan for long-term sustainability, which provides a promising pathway into wealth building.

Capacity Building for
Under-Resourced
Entrepreneurs and
Small Businesses

Long-Term Small
Business Support

Creating a Workforce
Development Pipeline



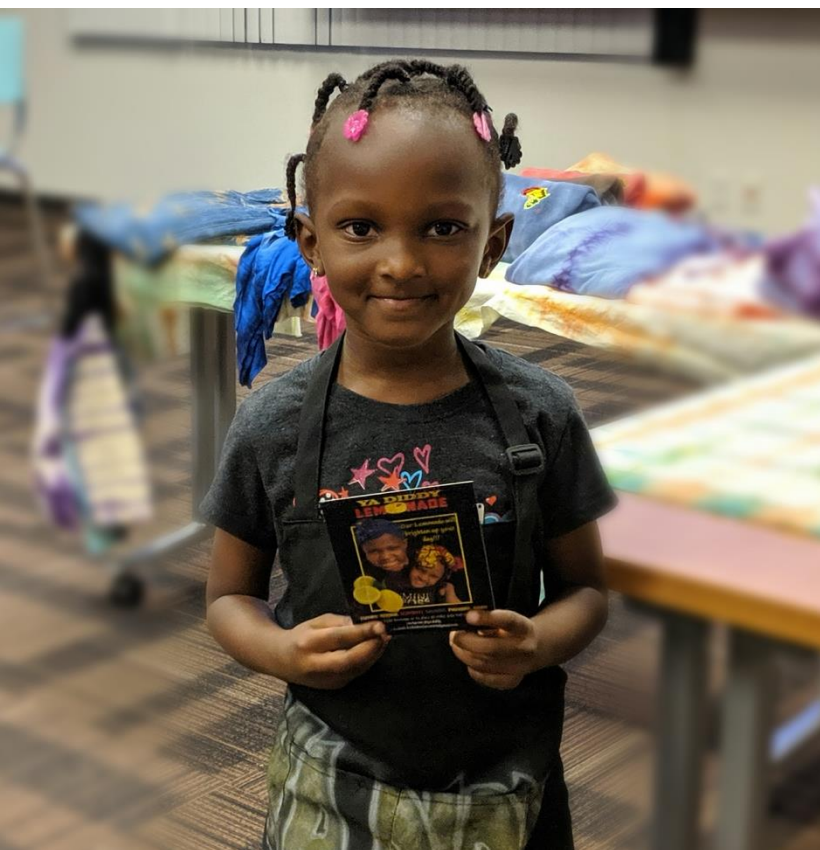
Capacity Building for Under-Resourced Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

Through the Mandela Entrepreneurs Program, we support the launch and growth of community-based businesses by providing foundational business development support services that are culturally relevant and entrepreneur driven. The Program is divided into three core components:

Workshop Series

This series serves as the first rung in the ladder to entrepreneurship cultivation. The workshop series prioritizes underserved entrepreneurs looking for ways to start, grow, or expand their businesses, and is provided in partnership with local community groups to ensure place-based connection, support, and accessibility. Participants receive seed funding at the outset of the workshop made available through a 'buy-in' model --allowing participants to 'buy-in' with sliding scale participation payment in lieu of program fees -- to support market testing and business growth. If minimum requirements are met, participants receive their buy-in plus a 1:1 match to use as seed funding for their business venture.

Over the course of eight weeks, participants develop their business concept and document a basic business plan, analyze product pricing, explore low-cost marketing tools, understand how businesses get funded, and gain access to legal resources. We integrate and administer small business marketing, which supports entrepreneurs in the development of a successful digital presence.



BEING ABLE TO STAND IN FRONT OF PEERS TO PITCH OUR BUSINESS PLAN HELPED US DISCOVER WHAT WE NEED TO WORK ON AND HOW TO BUILD A BETTER BUSINESS PLAN.

– Workshop participant

One-on-One Advising

Mandela Partners' one-on-one advising program provides tailored support for participants launching or growing their food business. Our advisors serve as a sounding board, accountability support, and long-term partner. Entrepreneurs who are accepted into Mandela's advising program gain access to bi-monthly advising sessions focused on diving deeper into finalizing a business plan, developing financials, and planned growth projections. The intention of advising is to ready participants to take part in vetted sector specific business development or acceleration programs, and / or access to capital through Mandela's Community Capital programs.

100%

of participants self-identified as business owners by the end of the workshop series in 2019



7

community businesses were created or expanded that Mandela Partners' supported in 2019

Market Testing

We have an active and growing pipeline of vending opportunities through which program participants are able to market-test products in culturally relevant venues that seek to elevate local, community entrepreneurs. Program participants who have met regulatory requirements are eligible to sell products and services in current Mandela sponsored venues including, but not limited to Jack London Square Farmers Market (weekly) and the Crucible Showcase (quarterly), with additional venues made available as they are identified.

“
THIS PROCESS
ALLOWED FOR US TO
PUT ‘PEN TO PAPER’
AND ACTUALLY GO
FROM JUST HUSTLING,
TO HAVING THE
CONFIDENCE TO SAY
‘I OWN A BUSINESS.’

-- LaShawn Raybon

Owner of I AM Cafe and participant in
The Mandela Entrepreneurs Program



Long-Term Small Business Support

Mandela Partners' Business Incubation support is rooted in deep investment. Many of the small businesses we work with are graduates of our Entrepreneurs Program, and represent the corner stores and small grocery owners who are part of our Healthy Retail Network. We offer a range of technical assistance and services including: planning, project management, alternative business modeling, capital acquisition, training, and business network development. Businesses we are currently incubating are I AM Cafe, Thank Que Grill, and AndreaMarie Cakes that are part of the food hall we launched in unincorporated Alameda County--Ashland Market & Cafe--in 2019. Other local incubated businesses we currently are supporting are Zella's Soulful Kitchen, Oak Harvest Kitchen, and Mandela Produce Distribution.

Additionally, we provide tailored technical support to 10 corner stores and small grocers to encourage consumption of healthier food options, which include: store environment improvements, business planning, marketing, nutrition education, and sourcing and procurement assistance.

Access to Capital

Because of the historical lack of access to financing for entrepreneurs of in underserved urban and rural communities, especially entrepreneurs of color, Mandela Partners provides access to low and no-cost financial tools coupled with our small business support services. Mandela Partners' underwriting process utilizes both traditional financial auditing mechanisms, and uplifts borrower character and community collateral. Making affordable capital available to under resourced entrepreneurs not only supports the growth of local businesses, but also contributes to development of intergenerational wealth and vibrant communities.



\$417,000

in loan funds dispersed to food
retailers, local growers and distributors
with

100% repayment rate





Creating a Workforce Development Pipeline

In addition to creating opportunities for entrepreneurship and small business growth, Mandela Partners recognized that a workforce development pipeline for connecting job seekers to community businesses was missing. In 2019, Mandela Partners launched the Re-Generate Opportunity Program to address barriers to employment among justice involved individuals and low-income residents in Alameda County in collaboration with Mandela's Business Incubation Network. In partnership with Oak Harvest Kitchen -- a produce-centered restaurant and kitchen incubator in downtown Oakland owned currently being incubated by Mandela Partners -- the Re-Generate Opportunity Program provides food-based job training to build a broad range of skills in the high-demand food and hospitality sector, with a specific focus on Prep Cooks, Line Cooks, and Kitchen Management positions. The program operates by providing:

Real-time stipended training and mentorship at Oak Harvest Kitchen, covering food safety, kitchen skills, customer service and hospitality, and essential technologies used in food-service and the workplace^[1]_{SEP}.

Stipended internships inside live kitchens at Mandela's network of partnering food businesses to further build kitchen and food service skills experience, strengthen connections with local food businesses, and add essential experience to their resumes.

Program graduates are able to gain access to a broader workforce network to secure employment.



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IT'S A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO EXPLORE SOMETHING THEY ORIGINALLY THOUGHT WOULDN'T BE FOR THEM.

– Program participant



50%

of participants who completed the Re-Generate Opportunity Program secured employment at local restaurants and/or food businesses in 2019-2020