

Economic Democracy Learning Center
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Economic Democracy Schools Fellowship

November 10 2021

Today's Flow

1. Who are We / Who Is Here Today
2. What Does it Mean to Educate for Economic Democracy?
3. The Economic Democracy Schools Fellowship
4. Next Steps
5. Questions/Reflections

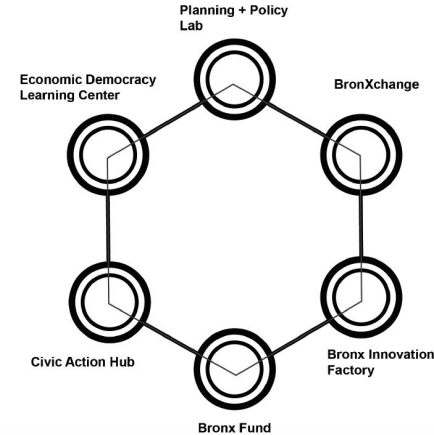
Who We Are



WHO WE ARE

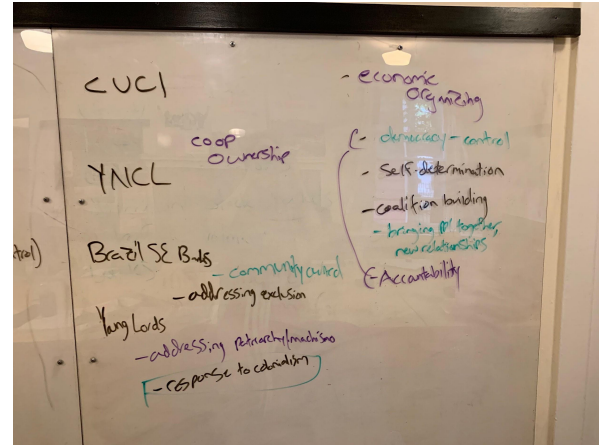
The **Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative (BCDI)** is a community-led planning and economic development organization. We are a network of community and labor organizations, anchor institutions, and small businesses advancing economic democracy for shared wealth and ownership in the Bronx.

Grounded in a movement building approach to economic transformation, and a community enterprise network model, we create people-centered planning and development processes; generate community solutions through innovation and digital fabrication technology; develop, grow, and connect local Bronx businesses to new opportunities; and train leaders from across sectors to advance a more democratic Bronx economy.



What Does a Bronx Economic Democracy Learning Center Look Like?

1. Political education, guest speakers, community space, study groups, books/media library
2. Cohort trainings and workshops for Bronx residents and community members to develop shared analysis of economic democracy and take action to foster its development
3. **Pedagogy and curriculum development with educational institutions**



Core CBO Partners

BCDI was founded by, and has a long-term commitment to deep collaboration and coordination with:

- *Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition*
- *Sistas and Brothas United*
- *The Point CDC / ACTION*
- *Mothers on the Move*

Grounded in shared principles of movement building, leadership development, racial justice and economic democracy



Who Is Here? What Brings You Here Today?

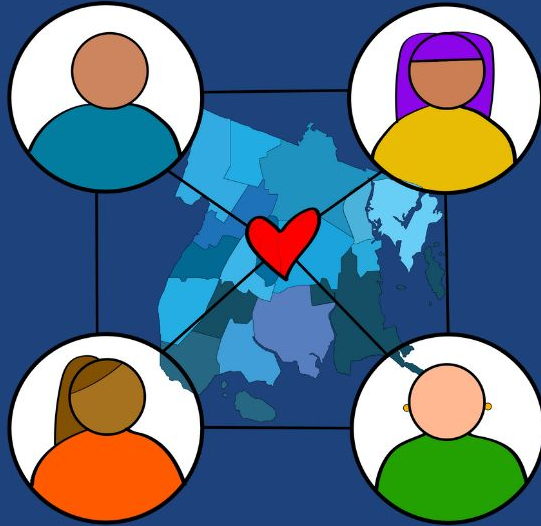
- Pair Shares:
 - Who you are / where you teach?
 - What brought you here today?
 - What excites you about economic democracy, cooperative economics, and solidarity economies?
 - What do you want to learn more about them?
 - What kind of support would you need to integrate these concepts into your classrooms or extracurricular programs and activities?



What is Economic Democracy
Education?

What is Economic Democracy?

We can create an economy where we work together, own together, innovate together, share decision-making and control cooperatively and democratically. We can own and control our homes, our workplaces, our food system, our energy, our schools. An economy where we share the responsibility, the benefits, and the power cooperatively. An economy and society that is more like our community than a pyramid. We call this economic democracy.



Economic democracy is a framework for shifting our economy from one of private and unequal wealth to one where **we share in co-owning and governing the major assets in our community.** From relations of domination to shared authority:

- Landlord/tenant -> co-owners
- Boss/worker -> worker-owners
- leader/follower -> co-governance

Examples of Economic Democracy and Solidarity Economies

From an economy where one dollar = one vote → one person, one vote.

Economic practices or organizations/institutions that embody principles of cooperation, democracy, and mutualism, **sharing of ownership and control, ownership for stewardship not for speculation or extraction.**

- Cooperative enterprises (housing, money, work, food)
- Participatory budgeting and planning processes
- Shared ownership developments (Market Creek Plaza)
- Emergency or non-emergency mutual aid, organized labor actions
- Public options for basic needs: healthcare, housing, internet, financial services



Educating for Economic and Civic Life

- *Schools may teach ***about*** democracy but rarely practice it -*

- Need for **economic literacy+competency**. Not just learning about concepts but practicing engaged economic action.
- Need for education that contextualizes power, inequality, and the economy.
- Need for **democratic literacy and competency**. Not just learning about democracy, but actually practicing it too.



“We are not educated to be democratic in schools...we’re really not educated to be fully participatory, fully engaged in our economic life from childhood. Right? When we go to school, we’re trained to be an owner, you want to either be a worker or the owner... Well, imagine if we’ve taught our young people to both be entrepreneurial - think of great ideas - but work collectively...how about if we could win collectively?”

– Stacey Sutton PhD



Who will develop these new paradigms and a new economic ideology? Who will mentor students to become paradigm changers and scholar activists? How will they learn about and understand the attempts in the past, the past models of success, and the lessons of the failures? We are not training our youth to think creatively or to think out of the traditional economic” (p 760)

– Jessica Gordon Nembhard



Source: Gordon Nembhard, J. (2008). Alternative Economics - A Missing Component in the African American Studies Curriculum: Teaching Public Policy and Democratic Community Economics to Black Undergraduate Students. *Journal of Black Studies*, 38(5), 758–782.

Meeting the Need: Education for Cooperation and Economic Democracy

It has been said that cooperativism is an economic movement that is also educational. We might say the reverse as well: that cooperativism is an educational movement that utilizes economic action.

— Fr. Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta, founder of the Mondragón cooperatives



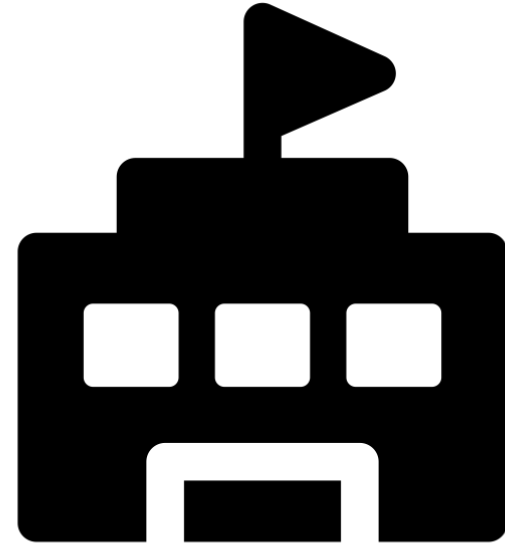
Economic Democracy Joins What Has Been Separated

- Training for cooperation and economic democracy brings together real world knowledge and skills that joins economics and civics together.
- The Bronx is well positioned to develop this theory and practice.
- Bronx has a long history of community organizing, community-led planning, building cooperative institutions. **High schools are not fully utilizing these assets and opportunities.**



Why Is Economic Democracy a Powerful Framework for Schools?

1. **It's an approach to developing student-centered, culturally-relevant pedagogy and curriculum**
2. **Real world stakes in real world environments**
3. **Enhances student voice and co-governance**
4. **It can foster post-secondary skills and learning opportunities through partnerships and leadership opportunities:**
 - a. Creative/Innovative/Entrepreneurial skills
 - b. Planning/Research/Analytic skills
 - c. Community/Coalition Building, Organizing skills



What We Heard in the Spring Focus Groups From Teachers

Community-School Partnerships

our students are taught that the Bronx isn't something to be proud of but they know it is a place with power and community so working locally with the orgs like yours and other CBOs helps us do that

-Asst. Principal, Bronx HS

Enhancing Project-Based Learning

we have a teacher who developed a unit on environmental racism and captured the students attention on the South Bronx in particular. Learning about environmental racism through the Bronx and then connecting it to these kinds of concepts as solutions would be great

-Asst Principal, Bronx HS

Teacher Training and CRSE Support

In our school we are working on level 4 of CRSE, the social action approach. We need to train the teachers! It's a huge task, have to help them think about how to build social connection to the neighborhoods.

-Principal, Bronx HS

Pause and Reflect / Digest - Pair Share

Questions:

- what resonated with you or excited you?
- What confused you?
- What questions did you have?



Economic Democracy Schools Fellowship

Proposal for Schools Fellowship

Jan/Feb '22 - Grounding in Economic Democracy +

Discussions, workshop series on cooperatives, participatory democracy, co-governance, and economic democracy and equitable development.



Winter/Spring '22 - Listening and Sensing

Fellows begin meeting with practitioners, inventory of current practices and spaces that embody values of democracy and cooperation



Summer '22

Toolkit development, feedback on educator PBL units



September/October 2022

Presentations from fellows and educators on their work, joint reflection and next steps conversation

Fellowship in Four Parts

1. Introduction and grounding

- A workshop series intensive to ground participants in principles and practices of economic democracy.

2. Listening and Processing

- Guest speakers and site visits to cooperative and democratic enterprises and organizations

3. Synthesis

- Fellows reflect on connections between democratic enterprises and society and democratic schools. How can high schools prepare for, and support, economic democracy and a more cooperative society? (Educators receive PD on project-based learning units)

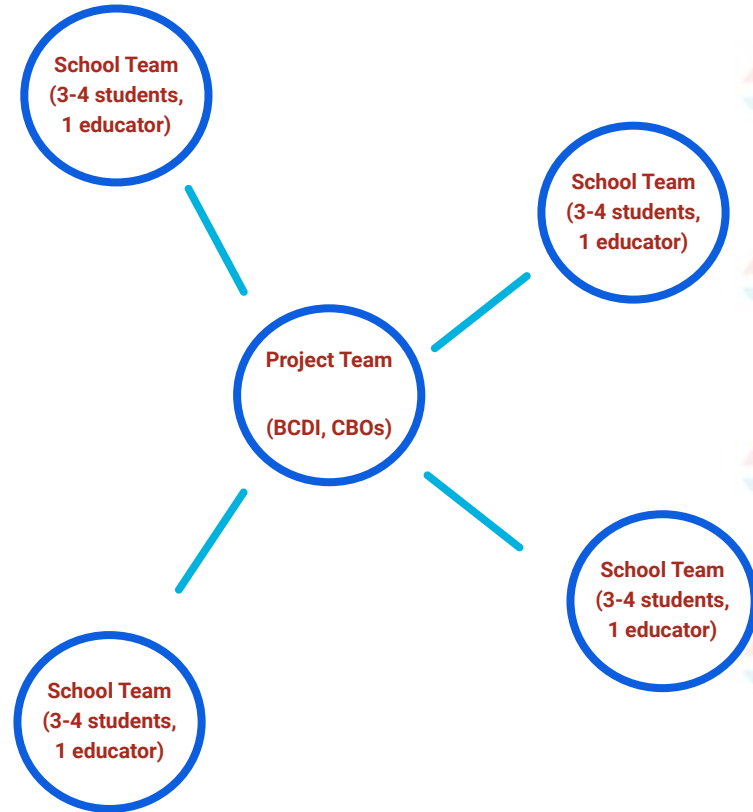
4. Synthesis and Report Back

- Creation of “toolkit” or guide for implementing economic democracy in high schools (curricula, culture, connections)



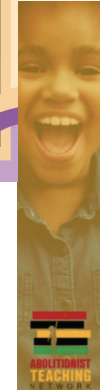
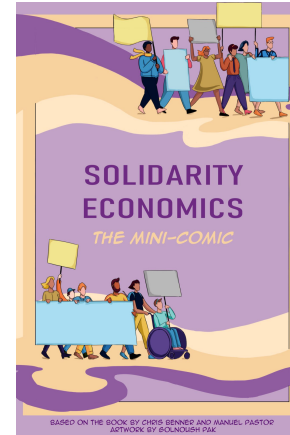
Structure of Fellowship - A “School Team” Approach

- *The fellowship will consist of up to 12 youth fellows in 10th-11th grades, who will be recruited in teams of 3-4, representing 3-4 high schools. Each youth fellow will receive a \$1400 stipend for the 10 month fellowship, which will cover a total of 70 hours.*
- Each “school team” will have **1 educator fellow**, who will periodically check in with the fellows to see how things are going, and will have the opportunity for a summer Project-Based Learning curriculum professional development course as part of their involvement. This is a powerful PD opportunity for educators to create or revise a project-based curricular unit that builds on concepts of cooperation and economic democracy grounded in real world realities of the Bronx. Costs of the summer intensive will be paid by BCDI.



What Will Come Out of the Fellowship?

1. A reflective practice statement in the form of a video, written article, or podcast that each fellow will create to document their own learning and reflections on the experience of the fellowship;
2. A “handbook” of recommendations and sample activities that can be undertaken by youth, families, educators, schools, philanthropy, and government to support high schools embedding values and practices of economic democracy.
3. Up to 4 Project-Based Learning units (based on number of teachers participating) created by educators in consultation with youth fellows and CBO partners to integrate economic democracy history, practice, and concepts into classroom learning.
4. *Next steps towards an economic democracy education pathways collaborative*



Abolitionist Teaching
Network Presents
**Guide for
Racial Justice &
Abolitionist Social
and Emotional
Learning**
August 2020

Example products

Fellowship Rationale: Students

The ideal student fellow is in 10th or 11th grade and is looking to develop their capacity for college-level work, as well as to develop their capacity for team and project based work. They will have an interest in one or more of the main fellowship inquiry areas: civics and democracy, social enterprise, community and economic development, and justice and transformation.

1. Paid stipend for 10 months (\$1,400)
2. College-level skills and analysis development including research and public presentation
3. Exploration of real world challenges of running community-serving, democratic enterprises
4. Opportunity to learn from Bronx leaders in community organizing, social/cooperative enterprise, and



Fellowship Rationale: Teachers

The ideal educator fellow is a junior teacher with a connection and commitment to the Bronx and to developing their craft and toolbox of curricular materials.

- Build connection and community with CBOs, educators, and youth from across the Bronx;
- Deepen understanding of cooperative community development, equitable economic development;
- Receive free professional development to design your own PBL unit
- Receive 5 free hours of personal coaching from an experienced coach
 - (total monetary value \$1200)



Fellowship Rationale: School Leaders

The ideal school and school leader has existing connections with community partners and/or is looking to develop them, has a commitment to cultivating student voice and practices of democracy in their school, curriculum, culture, and community partnership. The fellowship offers

- Leadership development opportunities for students
- Professional development for earlier-stage teachers
- Community partnerships: additional opportunities to connect to civic engagement and community organizing activities in the Bronx led by organizations from across the borough.



What's the Time Commitment?

70 hours over 10 months for youth, 40 hours for teachers.

This will be distributed in varying ways throughout the course of the fellowship. Some meetings will be on weekday afternoons and evenings, and some will be on Saturdays.

In the early stages of the fellowship meetings will be remote, but will transition to in person with greater frequency with the hope of an improving and stabilizing COVID outlook in the months ahead.



Next Steps for Fellowship

Week of November 29th, 2021: School submits short application / letter of interest

Week of Dec 13th, 2021: Up to 4 schools will be notified

2022(!)

Week of Jan 3rd: Share student application process with teachers and date for info sessions

Jan 3rd-Jan 17th: Teachers identify students and students schedule 1-1 meeting with BCDI



Next Steps for Fellowship - Student Nominations

January 25th: Interested students complete applications that they receive at 1-1 meeting

Jan 31st: Teachers select students based on application + other factors

By Feb 4th: Students & Teachers receive acceptance and fellowship handbook

Feb 7th: Fellows onboarded into fellowship



Pause and Reflect / Digest - 1/2/4

Instructions: Solo journal for 1 minute, pair share for 2 minutes, group of 4 for 4 minutes.

Questions:

- What excited you about this fellowship?
- Any confusions, questions, concerns?
- Do you think you / someone at your school would be a good fit for this opportunity?



Next Steps / What Now?

Next Steps in Our Work Together

We are just getting started. Invite your peers!

Stay tuned for a sign up form for any educator who wants to be kept in the loop going forward after these sessions. Starting in 2022 we will share opportunities for professional development and collaboration **in addition to the fellowship:**

- Workshops on theory and practice of economic democracy
- Opportunities to co-create classroom activities that bring these concepts and examples into the classroom



End

