

Mandela Foods Cooperative (MFC) Discussion Questions

1. What are five ways that the author argues Mandela Foods Cooperative benefits West Oakland?
2. The article says that *“Ten years ago, many saw Mandela Foods Cooperative as the store that was a risk, and saw 99 Cents Only Store as a sure thing.”* Why do you think this was?
 - a. What do you think their arguments for the 99 Cents Only Store were?
 - b. What do you think their concerns about Mandela Foods were?
 - c. Do you think the arguments against MFC are still relevant?
3. Mandela Foods Cooperative has been successful in turning a profit since it opened. Why do you think people choose to shop there? Do you think everyone shops there for the same reasons?
4. *“Through its purchases of locally sourced goods and produce, Mandela Foods Cooperative has created more than \$200,000 in new income for marginalized farmers and has helped more than 42 businesses secure retail space for locally produced products.”* What does this mean? Can you give an example? How do you think this is happening? What impacts does it have?
5. In the article, the author says that Mandela Foods Cooperative provides *“healthy food purchase incentives to residents of Mandela Gateway and families using food stamps.”* The purchase incentives she mentions are:
 - 50% off all fresh and frozen produce and bulk nuts and fruits for those who qualify for food stamps (50% discount does not apply for foods containing added sugar, salt, or oil)
 - 15% off groceries for Mandela Gateway residents
 - 10% discounts for items bought in bulk
 - b. Why would a marketplace offer this type of program? What is their goal?
 - c. Why do you think they exclude foods containing sugar, salt, and oil from the 50% discount? Do you think this is fair?
6. MFC also partners with other stores in the area, specifically corner stores and liquor stores, by delivering fresh produce to them that they can sell. Why would they partner with other stores in the neighborhood? Wouldn't they see them as competition?

7. The motto of Mandela Foods Cooperative is “Food plus people equals power.” What does this mean?

Glossary of Terms

1. **Big Box** (adj.) A big-box store is a large store, usually part of a chain, that sells vast quantities of a large variety of things at relatively low prices (ex. Walmart, Target etc.).
2. **Community-owned** (adj.) A business owned by the employees. Some use collaborative structures in which employees make decisions about how to run the business.
3. **Conversely** (adv.) A word used to introduce a statement or idea that reverses or says the opposite of what has just been said.
4. **Cooperative** (n.) A farm, business, or organization that is owned, controlled, and run collaboratively by a group of people, with profits or losses shared among them.
5. **Credit Union** (n.) Like a bank, but instead of being owned by a large investor, a credit union is owned by the people that use its services. This means that it is not run for profit, and if you have a savings account, checking account, or take out a loan from a credit union, you have a say in how the credit union gets run.
6. **Entrepreneur** (n.) A person who organizes, operates and runs a business.
7. **Full-service grocery** (n.) Full-service grocery stores sell items from at least six of the following categories: fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh and uncooked meats, poultry and seafood, dairy products, canned foods, frozen foods, dry groceries and baked goods, non-alcoholic beverages. *Source: D.C. Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration*
8. **Gentrification** (n.) A general term for the arrival of wealthier people in an existing urban district, a related increase in rents and property values, and changes in the district’s character and culture. The term is often used negatively, suggesting the displacement of poor communities by rich outsiders. The effects of gentrification are complex and contradictory, and its real impact varies. *Source: P.B.S.*
9. **Incarcerated** (adj.) In jail or prison.
10. **Locally-sourced** (adj.) Food that is locally produced, not moved long distances to market. A common definition of "local" food is food grown within 100 miles of where it is bought or consumed. *Adapted from Wikipedia*
11. **Marginalized** (adj.) Socially excluded or denied power within a group, community or society. Marginalized groups are denied access to or involvement in mainstream economic, political, cultural and social activities. Marginalization tends to be directed at groups who are seen to differ from perceived norms. *Adapted from Reference.com*
12. **Purchasing-incentive** (n.) Used to encourage consumers to buy a specific product by offering an extra benefit to those that do (ex. Customers that buy two or more apples get a free cookie as well).
13. **Recession** (n.) A period of temporary economic decline, often accompanied by increased unemployment.
14. **Retail-test** (v.) Test out a new product by making it available to consumers and seeing how popular it is.
15. **Revenue** (n.) The total dollar amount of sales made by a business.

16. **Soul Food** (n.) African American cuisine developed primarily by African-American communities in the American South from the time of slavery until modern-day.
17. **Stable income** (n.) Someone has a stable income if they get paid the same amount of money on a consistent basis.