

Why co-ops?

Co-ops are a different way of providing for our needs such as housing, work, services and the exchange of goods.

Normal businesses provide profits to shareholders and capitalists, but co-ops are part of creating a different type of society based on community links, self-help and mutual aid. They enable people to follow the principles of co-operation and fairness even in a society based on competition and exploitation.



We want to take control over all aspects of our lives.

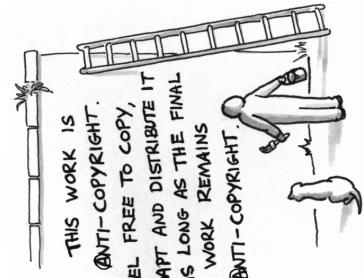
We want to see a world based upon equality and co-operation, where people give according to their ability and receive according to their needs. Where work is fulfilling and where creativity is encouraged, where decision-making is open to everyone with no hierarchies and where the environment is valued and respected in its own right rather than exploited.

From the aims and principles of Radical Routes, a network of small co-ops in the UK

Find out more

- ★ **Seeds for Change:** offer workshops and advice on working together, including facilitation and consensus. Lots of written resources on co-operative working skills; seedsforchange.org.uk
- ★ **Radical Routes:** mutual aid network of radical co-ops. Publish handbooks on setting up Workers' Co-ops, Housing Co-ops and Social Centres; radicalroutes.org.uk
- ★ **Co-operatives UK:** the national umbrella and campaigning organisation for co-ops, publish the excellent Simply series, including *Simply Legal*, *Simply Governance*, *Simply Finance* and *From Conflict to Co-operation*; uk.coop
- ★ **International Co-operative Alliance:** represents co-operatives worldwide; ica.org

For more briefings and training workshops see: www.seedsforchange.org.uk



Nowadays there are many different types of co-ops, here are just a few:

- ★ **Housing co-ops:** a group of people who collectively control and manage their own housing.
- ★ **Workers' co-ops:** businesses owned and controlled by the people who work there. Only employees can be members of the co-op, and there's no shareholders taking away the surplus.
- ★ **Social Centres:** meeting and socialising space for the community.
- ★ **Consumer co-ops:** people get together to get food and consumer goods cheaply by bulk buying.
- ★ **Marketing co-ops:** small producers get together to market their products collectively for a better deal.
- ★ There are even co-operatively run village shops and pubs.

Co-operation: Limited only by your imagination!



A co-operative is a group of people that gets together to organise collectively for mutual benefit. *Work, housing, services, pubs and social centres can all be co-operatively owned and managed.*

Co-operatives are based on the **VALUES** of *democracy, self-help, self-responsibility, equality, equity and solidarity*.

In the tradition of the Rochdale Pioneers, co-op members believe in the **ETHICAL VALUES** of *honesty, social responsibility, openness and care for others*.



Bees - a traditional symbol of industry and co-operation

THE PRINCIPLES

1. Co-op membership is open and voluntary.
2. Co-ops are controlled only by their members, who each have equal control.
3. All members have a fair stake in the co-op. Investment does not give control and only gives a small return.
4. Co-ops are autonomous and independent self-help organisations.
5. We educate and train members so they can contribute to the co-op. We also inform the public about the benefits of co-operation.
6. Co-operation among co-ops benefits members and the wider co-op movement.
7. We act with concern for the wider community.

For more information about co-ops contact Radical Routes – a network of radical housing co-ops, workers' co-ops and social centres committed to positive social change:



www.radicalroutes.org.uk

