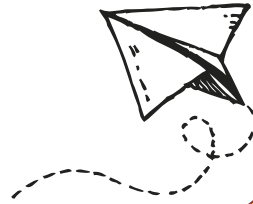


How workers' co-operatives operated



Although spanning different industries, workers' co-operatives of the 1970s-1990s often shared common elements in how they operated.



Voting

Decisions were often reached through a vote. Many co-operatives accepted majority votes. However some co-operatives required consensus to be reached before a decision was passed.

Democratic decision making

Organisational decisions were made fairly with all members' voices heard. This was often at regular weekly or monthly meetings attended by all members of the co-operative.

In some larger workers' co-operatives, management committees were democratically elected to make decisions on behalf of different areas of the workers co-operative. These were often not permanent positions again ensuring democratic decision making.



“We were pretty good at collective management”

Jane Watts,
member of York
Community
Books

“Job rotation...was a fantastic learning experience for me”

Martin Meteyard, member of Greencity Whole foods, Glasgow



Job Rotation

Many workers co-operatives practiced job rotation to ensure members were involved in all aspects of the business. This helped develop democratic decision making.

It also helped create a more feminist work environment, with women and men sharing roles that in other businesses would often have been gendered.



Fair pay

Workers' co-operatives offered fair pay. This usually meant all members were paid the same wage. This was made easier by the practice of job rotation.

In some co-operatives equal pay was not a possibility. This was often the case in co-operatives that required specialist technical skills.

However within these wages still remained fair, and pay differentials were minimal.



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