

Workers' co-operative networks

As more workers' co-operatives succeeded, the popularity of the movement grew. In **1984** there were around **700 workers' co-operatives** in the UK. Key to this development were networks created to share ideas and learning.



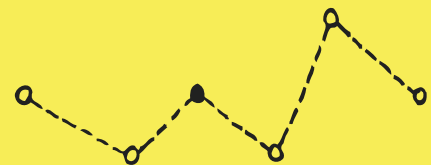
Local networks:

Often informal, local networks of workers' co-operatives were set up. A common practice within these was to swap members for short periods of time in order to develop ideas and skills from other co-operatives.



National networks:

Alongside these, wider national networks were set up between workers' co-operatives. Trade links often provided the ties for these networks, with workers' co-operatives from industries such as bookselling and whole foods, banding together to share suppliers and advice.



Alongside these networks there were also a number of wider, formal networks set up to support workers' co-operatives across all industries.



Co-operative Development Agencies

A **National Co-operative Development Agency** was set up in 1978. Alongside this around 100 **regional Co-operative Development Agencies** were set up during this period, mostly by local authorities.

These supported the creation and development of new co-operatives.

ICOM

Supported by the **Industrial Common Ownership Act, 1976**, representation and advice was offered through the **Industrial Common Ownership Movement**.

ICOF

The Industrial Common Ownership Act also provided £250 000 to establish a loan fund for the **Industrial Common Ownership Finance**. Loans were then provided through this body to workers' co-operatives in need.

“In the 1970s, employee ownership, common ownership, worker co-ops... was, becoming a little bit more known, but was still very much on the fringe and, we felt, we needed to support each other, so we needed an organisation...so we started ICOM”

Roger Sawtell, one of ICOM's founders



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