Liberating work

workers.coop

› **workers.coop is a new kind of member-driven organisation that unites worker co-ops, individual workers and supporters.**

› **Our network shares knowledge and collaborates to grow and strengthen worker co-ops, while spreading the word to new generations and sectors of workers.**

› **Our goal is to liberate work, bringing the production of goods and services under worker control – so that everyone gets what they need.**

What does 'member-driven' mean?

workers.coop combines the organising models of a federation and a movement.

Traditional business associations such as the Federation of Small Businesses serve their members by employing a professional team, answerable to a board. Traditional grass roots campaigning organisations, for example Don't Pay, rely almost entirely on contributions of money and effort from volunteers.

We need regular income and paid workers, but our ambition is bigger than we could resource that way alone. We therefore draw on a larger, organised circle of individual cooperators and supporters. Although worker co-op enterprises are the main subscribing members, our workers and individual organisers have a lot of influence on the culture of the organisation, as well as day-to-day policymaking and decision making power.

What is the world we want to see?

One where everyone has access to rewarding, meaningful and sustainable work, and where:

- workers aren't exploited

- wealth is spread fairly

- we work on a basis of equality and solidarity

- people have personal and collective control over their working lives

- the production of goods and services is integrated with democratic community development

- capital serves workers, not the other way round

How will we get there?

By organising worker cooperators and supporters, by defending and advancing the shared interest of worker co-ops. We are:

- the voice and network for worker cooperation

- providing access to specialist advice, support and shared services for worker co-ops

- strengthening worker cooperative culture by mobilising cooperators and supporters through industry and peer networks, co-learning, events and collaborations

- making the system of worker control and collective ownership accessible and relevant to new groups and generations of workers

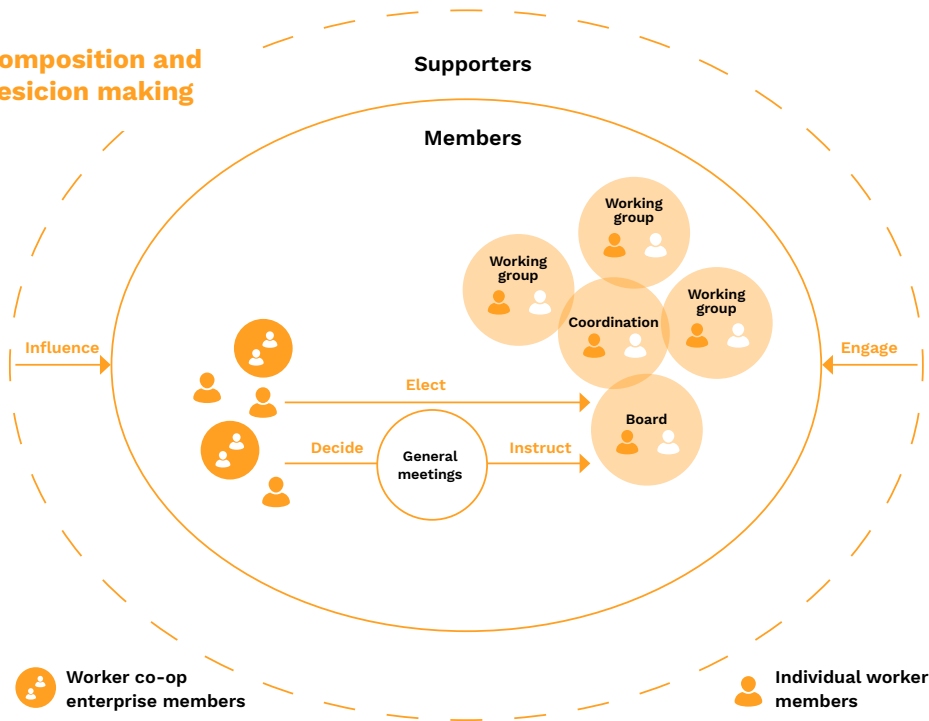- working though international workers' and worker co-op organisations, and strengthen international worker solidarity

How are we structured?

workers.coop is a democratic, member-led organisation with two types of member: worker co-op enterprises, and individuals who contribute their labour through one of our working groups, plus a wider circle of supporters.

We are incorporated by law as a Co-operative Society. Our members make the highest level decisions – such as changes to our rules – in general meetings. They elect a board, which is the legally responsible group. Traditional one-member-one vote democracy is used to govern these aspects.

The board looks after 'the mission', and delegates most of its powers to working groups. These working groups decide their own composition, manage their own budgets and determine their own work, within agreed strategy and policies. On this operational side, we use the principles of sociocratic democracy, featuring consent-based decision making, feedback and formal links between the different groups.

Composition and desicion making

Supporters

Members

Working group

Working group

Working group

Coordination

Influence

Elect

Engage

Decide

General meetings

Instruct

Board

Worker co-op enterprise members

Individual worker members

How are we funded?

workers.coop's basic funding comes from the subscriptions of worker co-op enterprise members. The subscription amount for a co-op is 1/1,000th (0.1%) of its total labour costs for the previous year, so that it reflects as much as possible the strength of the co-op. In 2023, this added up to about £40,000.

On top of the member subscriptions, workers.coop raises money – either without strings, or tied to projects and work streams – from foundations, individual supporters and sponsors. For instance, DotCooperation sponsored our Autumn Assembly, and Civic Power are supporting us to grow our organising capacity.

It's important for workers.coop to raise as much as we can from our members and supporters, so that we don't become reliant on the type of external funding and partnerships that drag us away from our mission.

How to get involved

Worker co-ops join and get involved as enterprises. Individuals can get involved as workers and supporters. You don't have to come from a member co-op – you can even become a full member in your own right, if you're a regular participant in a working group.

Our working and peer network groups are designed and animated by the members. You can take part in a one-off project, or contribute your skills on a more permanent basis. There are opportunities to donate your time and skills, or be paid for tasks and roles.

The board is a special working group, because it holds workers.coop's legal responsibilities and powers. The seven members of the board are elected. To be a candidate, you need to be nominated by one of our worker co-op enterprises.

Join the conversation

workers.coop's forum is an important crossroads, discussion and organising space for members and supporters. To participate and set up a free account, click on the forum tab at the foot of our home page. have a look around, introduce yourself, and dive in when you're ready.

Look out for **workers.coop** campaigning, learning and organising events. Most are open, others are for members and supporters. Some are in person, others online. Some are local, others national and international.

Stay in touch

To get updates about workers.coop events and news, go to the signup at the bottom of our home page.

Had enough yet?