

A GUIDE TO CO-OPS



**FORMED IN
ROCHDALE**

**FOUND IN
RWANDA**

Congratulations, you've joined a co-operative!

Did you know there are 3 million co-operatives around the world with 1.2 billion members?* In the UK alone, there are more than 7,000 co-operatives which contribute in excess of £40bn to the economy every year! You've joined a global movement as well as an organisation.

World economy**

**3 MILLION
CO-OPS**

**1.2 BILLION
MEMBERS**

**£1.6 TRILLION
TURNOVER****

UK economy***

**7,000
CO-OPS**

**14 MILLION
MEMBERS**

**£40 BILLION
TURNOVER**

* Global figures from the 2018 ILO report

** Global turnover of the top 300 based on the 2019 World Cooperative Monitor

*** UK figures from the Co-operative and Mutual Economy Report 2023, Co-operatives UK

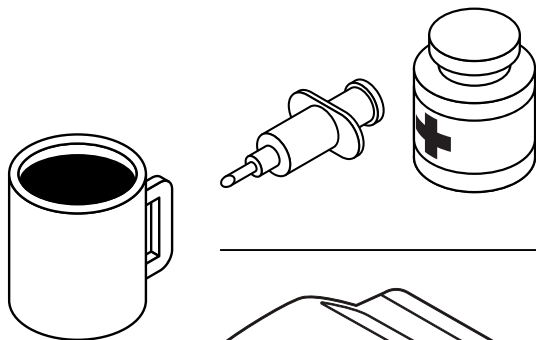
**MUCH
MORE
THAN A
SHOP**

What is a co-op?

Spoiler alert! It's not just a chain of high street convenience stores – although they are probably the co-op that most people have heard of.

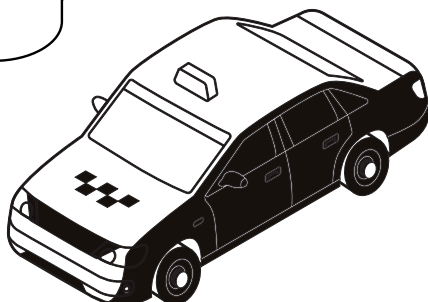
A co-op is a business that is *owned* and *controlled* by its *members*. The members can be its customers, employees, residents or suppliers. Profits are shared between people who have a stake and a say in how the co-op is run, not distant investors or shareholders looking to make a quick buck.

You can find co-operatives in pretty much every industry – you name it and there's probably a co-op for it! From healthcare to housing, renewable energy to retail, sports to social care. And they are every shape and size from multi-billion pound businesses to small community enterprises.



HEALTHCARE

COFFEE



TAXI SERVICE

**WHAT
MAKES A
CO-OP**

DIFFERENT?

The principles

From the outside, a co-operative might look like any other business – it's what happens inside that makes them different. All co-ops share a core set of values and principles.

- ONE** A co-op is *owned and controlled* by its *members*. Co-ops exist for the benefit of their membership who may be customers, workers or the wider community.
 - TWO** Co-ops are *democratic* – every member has a vote and has an equal say in how it is run.
 - THREE** Every *member contributes* in some way –from buying products, working, volunteering or investing in it – and has a say in how resources are used and profits are distributed.
 - FOUR** A co-operative is an *independent* business, owned and controlled by its members.
 - FIVE** It provides *education and training* to everyone involved, so they can develop the co-op and promote the benefits of co-operation
 - SIX** It *co-operates* and works in solidarity with other co-ops to support the wider co-operative sector.
 - SEVEN** It works to support and sustain the *communities* it works and engages with.
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CO-OPERATIVE STORIES

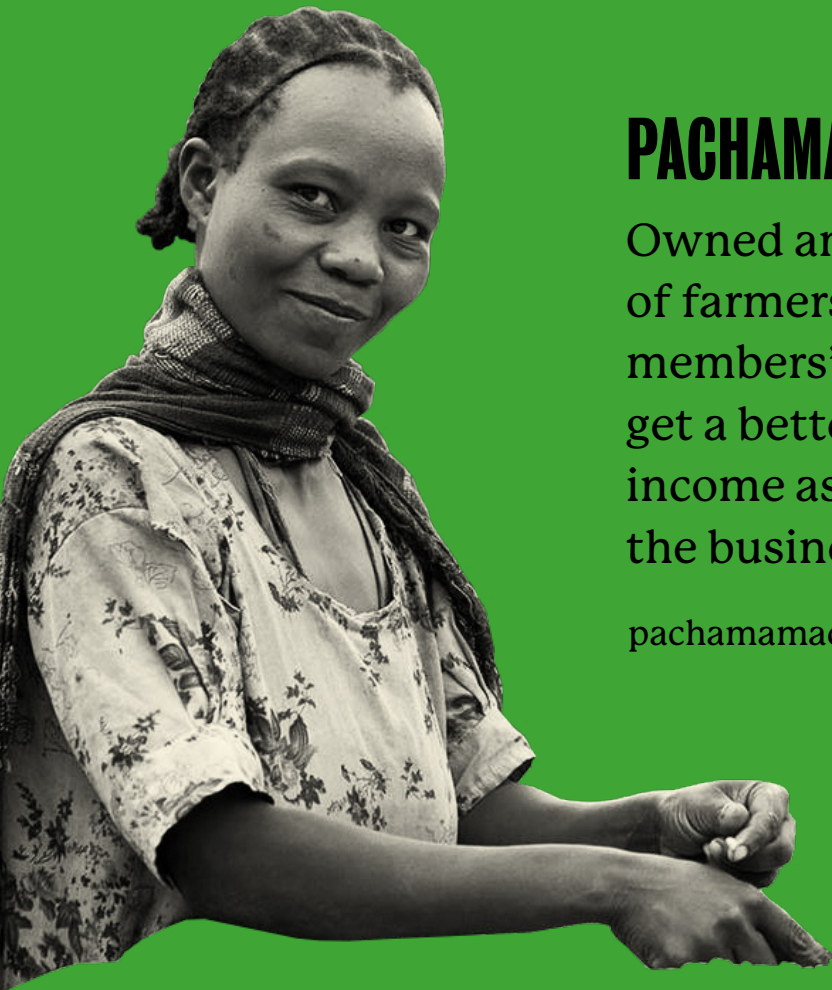
Co-ops are often created to solve a problem and they provide a benefit to their members. Here are some great examples from around the world...

THE GLOBE

Founded in Newcastle in 2014 as the UK's first co-op-owned music venue and jazz education centre – today it has expanded to support the rehearsal, performance, promotion and development of jazz, poetry, dance and related arts.

theglobenewcastle.bar





PACHAMAMA COFFEE CO-OP

Owned and governed by thousands of farmers around the world. By pooling members' coffee and resources, farmers get a better price and a more stable income as well as a direct say in the business.

pachamamacoffee.com

THE SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (SEWA)

This Co-operative Federation in India works with 106 women's co-ops, enabling them to provide a sustainable livelihood to informal female workers.

sewa.org



28
MEMBERS

BECOMES
1.2 BILLION

175 years of co-operation

In 1844, a group of 28 working class men from Rochdale got together to form the world's first successful co-op. Living conditions were tough in the industrial towns of northern England and they were fed up of spending the majority of their income on poor quality staple products, such as flour, sugar, butter and oats.

Some of those men are in the photo below. They worked hard to raise the funds to set up a co-operative shop, which was founded on the co-operative principles that we still recognise today and provided a quality product for a fair price to the community.

The Rochdale Pioneers, as they are now commonly known, spurred on a movement which has been successfully replicated around the world and continues to thrive today.



FIND OUT MORE

UK.COOP

For information on co-ops in the UK – and how to set one up

THENEWS.COOP

For news, stories and features on co-ops in the UK and around the world

CO-OP.AC.UK

For co-operative education and training

CO-OPERATIVEHERITAGE.COOP

For information on history, heritage and the Rochdale Pioneers Museum (where modern co-operation began)

MORETHANASHOP.COOP

A radical new podcast discussing co-operative solutions to society's big issues



CO-OPERATIVES UK



co-operative
college

