

## Co-operatives nationally and internationally

Co-operative enterprise is a major force for sustainable economic and social development not just in London, but across the UK, and throughout the world.

Nationally, Co-operatives<sup>UK</sup> has verifiable data confirming turnover of £28 billion, and estimates the UK sector as a whole is turning over in excess of £30 billion. There are 4,370 co-operatives, employing some 203,000 people and with a total of 11 million members (as at 2007).

At the global level, the International Co-operative Alliance estimates that over 800 million people are members of co-operatives, which together employ over 100 million people.

A 2007 survey of co-operative and mutual enterprises worldwide ([www.global300.coop](http://www.global300.coop)) found that the top 300 such businesses alone were together equivalent in scale to the world's tenth largest economy, with a collective turnover nearing 1 trillion US dollars.

### The diversity of co-operative enterprise

The co-operative model is successfully applied in many different ways.

We are all familiar with the consumer co-operatives on our shopping streets. Employee owned co-operatives have grown in popularity over the last twenty-five years or so, and are becoming ever more well known.

Housing co-operatives provide an increasingly important element of the UK's social housing market, while business co-operatives (wherein each member is a business in its own right) offer great potential for economic development.

Other novel approaches continue to be developed, including community ownership, multi-stakeholder co-operatives, and a co-operative Community Interest Company.

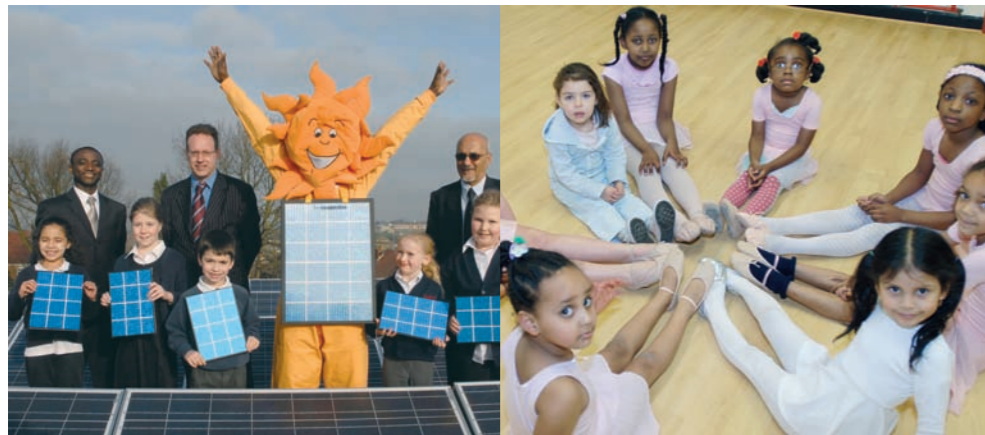
Co-operatives operate in all areas of our society and economy, delivering sustainable, profitable goods and services to diverse markets.

*... co-operative enterprises provide the organisational means whereby a significant proportion of humanity is able to take into its own hands the task of creating productive employment, overcoming poverty and achieving social integration ...*

*Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary-General*

### Co-operative development

We encourage the development and support of new co-operatives across London through the provision of a range of targeted services designed to complement the mainstream business support available in London and meet the unique needs of co-operative enterprise.



Church Hill Primary School in North London was one of the 100 schools to receive free solar panels through the Co-operative Group's Green Energy for Schools initiative

The Baytree Centre in South London is one of the many worthy community groups to receive funding through the Co-operative Group's Community Fund scheme

Hackney Co-operative Developments  
[www.hced.co.uk](http://www.hced.co.uk)  
020 7254 4829

Tower Hamlets Co-operative Development Agency  
[www.co-operation.coop](http://www.co-operation.coop)  
020 7247 1056

Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency  
[www.gcda.org.uk](http://www.gcda.org.uk)  
020 8269 4880

Co-operative Assistance Network  
[www.can.coop](http://www.can.coop)  
0845 373 3616



Co-operatives<sup>UK</sup> represents the spectrum of co-operative enterprise throughout the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Our purpose is to develop and extend the co-operative sector.

Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60 0AS

[www.cooperatives-uk.coop](http://www.cooperatives-uk.coop)



ICA is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide. Founded in 1895, ICA has 224 member organisations from 87 countries active in all sectors of the economy. Together these co-operatives represent more than 800 million individuals worldwide.

[www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop)



For further information about the co-operative economy in London, and the work of Co-operatives London:

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Design: [www.wave.coop](http://www.wave.coop) Printed: [www.calverts.coop](http://www.calverts.coop) March 2008

# the co-operative economy in London





## Co-operatives in London

Co-operatives London provides a voice for the co-operative sector in the region, bringing together consumer retail & worker co-operatives, co-operative support bodies and other organisations sharing co-operative values and principles.

Co-operatives London is always keen to contribute to future development and delivery of strategies to benefit the region. By working together, we can make our voice heard and ensure that opinion formers consider the role that co-operative, mutual and social enterprises have in contributing to the economy of the region.

## More than profit

Co-operatives and mutuals are different from other businesses. They are organised to meet the needs of their member-owners. Co-operative enterprises measure success not just in terms of financial performance, but also by the benefits they bring to their members, their employees and to the communities they serve.

## Sustainable business

It's becoming increasingly recognised that businesses need to look for opportunities to improve their profitability and market share without compromising opportunities and resources for future generations. Yet co-operatives have always held this belief: their existence is underpinned by the need to conserve environmental and social integrity as well as maintaining financial stability. By pooling knowledge and resources co-operatives can trade competitively whilst retaining individuality and control – an excellent model for sustainable growth.

London's co-operative enterprises are engaged in a wide range of business areas, from consumer retail co-operatives and credit unions to worker co-operatives providing a range of consultancy and other services to high-profile commercial, public and third sector clients.

### A co-operative is...

... an autonomous association of people or businesses united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

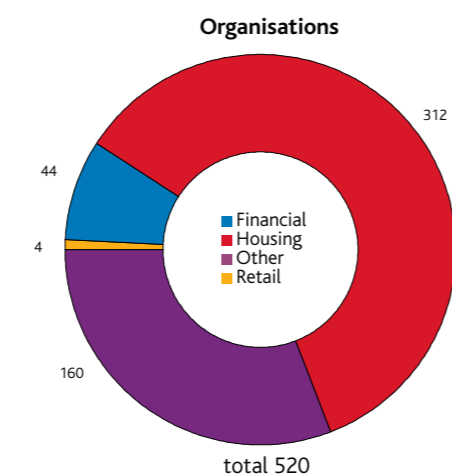
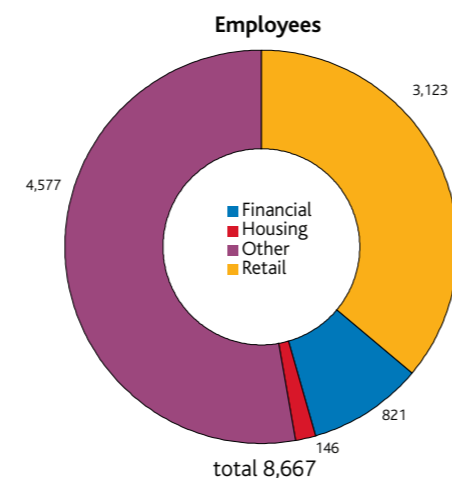
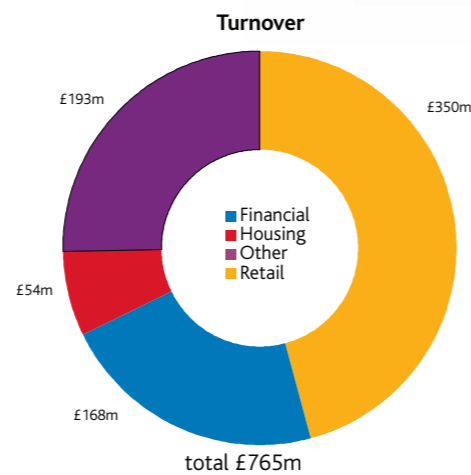
Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

Co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

The high cost of housing in the capital means that a housing co-operatives flourish in a variety of forms, while football fans safeguard their interests through London's many Supporters' Trusts.



A range of The Co-operative's Fairtrade products - Fairtrade is one of the many ethical issues in which The Co-operative has led the way



## Case studies

**The Co-operative Group** is the largest consumer co-operative in the UK, and is owned and controlled by over 2 million customer members. The Group operates a wide range of customer-facing retail businesses, including food stores, pharmacies, travel agencies and funeral homes, all of which are represented in the South East. In addition, its subsidiaries provide a full range of banking and insurance services.

The Group is renowned for combining successful business with a commitment to co-operative values, from its championing of Fairtrade to the Co-operative Bank's pioneering ethical investment policy. This commitment has earned the Group numerous plaudits, most recently the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise for Group-wide commitment to sustainable development.

2006 saw the launch of a new brand to be shared across the consumer Co-operative Movement, and of a revitalised membership scheme that enables members to receive a share in the Group's profits that reflects their trade with any of the Group's businesses.

[www.co-operative.coop](http://www.co-operative.coop)

**Tower Hamlets Community Credit Union** was the first in the UK to be approved operating across an entire London Borough. To meet the diverse local needs in Tower Hamlets we provide a very wide range of financial and insurance services for the local community.

For example, alongside our saver, instant access and junior saver accounts we offer Islamic loans, secured and unsecured loans, Christmas planner saving schemes, education plans, a holiday club, and a broad range of insurance products. The credit union will soon be introducing full banking services including debit cards. We are also improving ways to offer assistance to local people especially those in need of affordable loans and bank accounts.

We are run by and for the local community with many playing an active role in our Board of Directors, Credit and Supervisory Committees. In Tower Hamlets we are a thriving example of a Community Credit Union working together with the local community to meet their huge range of financial service needs.

[www.thccu.co.uk](http://www.thccu.co.uk)



**Calverts** is a communications design and printing company, based in Bethnal Green. Founded in 1977, it is a worker co-operative with 16 members. The firm's assets are owned in common by the workforce, who are paid equally. All members participate in strategic management, and profits are reinvested in the co-operative or used for community aims.

Calverts specialises in branding, publications and sustainable print. It produces high quality literature for corporate, community, government and arts organisations such as the GLA, Unilever, Shell, Stanhope, Arup, 3i, and the British Council. Calverts holds the GreenMark and Inner City 100 awards, and in 2008 will gain the ISO 14001 environmental accreditation. Calverts was one of the first companies in the UK to be awarded the SEE - social, environmental and ethical - stamp. Along with another London-based worker co-operative, Paperback, the co-operative pioneered green printing on recycled and FSC papers, using Bio inks and clean energy. Siôn Whellens, Client Services Director, says: "Calverts didn't jump on the last green bus. The co-op was developing environmental design and print technologies twenty years ago. But there is growing interest from corporate clients in this aspect of our business".

[www.calverts.coop](http://www.calverts.coop)

**CDS Co-operatives** (full business name, The Co-operative Development Society Ltd) is the largest special co-operative housing association in London and the South of England, and is dedicated to promoting, developing, and servicing housing co-operatives controlled by the people who live in them. It is a registered as a co-operative society under The Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 and is governed by an elected Board of Management, 2/3rds of which are representatives of the client co-operatives it serves. It is also a registered social landlord with the Housing Corporation and, as such, is eligible for social housing grants to develop new homes and is subject to Housing Corporation regulation.

Formed in 1975, CDS Co-operatives employs 43 staff at its office at 3 Marshalsea Road, London SE1. It manages a total of 2742 homes, 1937 of which are owned by the 46 independent rented and shared ownership co-operatives controlled by residents who buy management, financial, maintenance and governance support services CDS provides. Most of these independent co-operatives were promoted and developed by CDS using social housing grant from the Housing Corporation and, after 1988, part funded with commercial mortgage loans.

CDS Co-operatives is also pioneering the development of community land trusts and mutual home ownership, an innovative form of intermediate market tenure that is designed to be affordable in perpetuity.

[www.cds.coop](http://www.cds.coop)

