

PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP

A SELF-MANAGED SUPERMARKET IN NEW YORK CITY

Created in 1973 in the heart of the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York (United States) by a small group of committed neighbors, the [Park Slope Food Coop](#) is a member-owned and operated food store, representing an alternative to commercial profit-oriented business.

With its 17.000 members who perform today 75% of the supermarket management work and thanks to the great results achieved, Park Slope Food Coop has become famous in the world and similar self-managed supermarkets are being implemented in United States, France and Belgium.



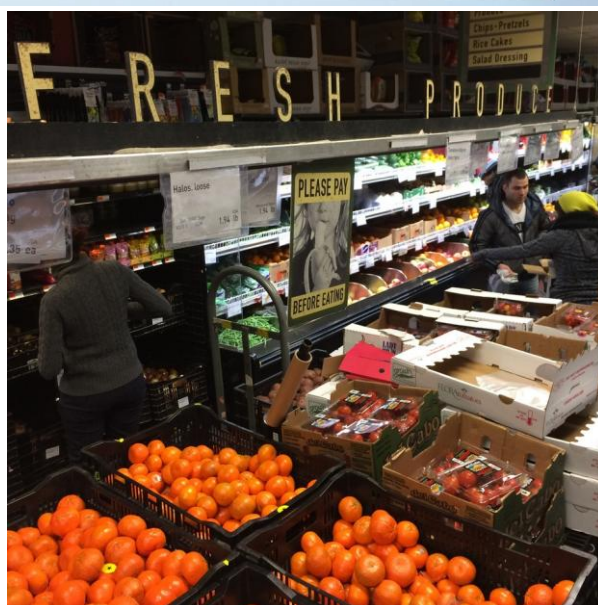
In many countries where the Cooperative Movement is highly developed, there are countless experiences of managing large-scale food distribution by cooperatives. The innovation that characterizes the Park Slope Food Coop is the management system of the supermarket implemented by the members of the Cooperative.

In the Park Slope Food Coop (PSFC), in fact, the shareholders participate not only through the assemblies in which the operational choices are defined (principles, products, prices, service modes), but also making their direct work in the supermarket, for at least 2 hours and 45 minutes of work every four weeks.

The large amount of the cooperative members allows everyone to make a time investment compatible with work commitments. Members contribute to manage various functions of the supermarket, such as the reception and placing of goods in the exhibition spaces, the cleaning, the packaging, depending on their respective abilities, limiting the hiring of salaried personnel to ensure the most complex management and administration functions.

This management method, besides other advantages, makes it possible to sell products at prices that are on average 20 to 40% lower than those applied by normal distribution chains, without reducing the profits of the suppliers of the products. Only members may shop at the PSFC, and membership is open to all. The registration fee for the Cooperative is accessible for each interested citizen and the supermarket reinvests the profits in the activity and in supporting the birth of similar supermarkets in other cities.

The success of the supermarket is also ensured by organizational choices that make it an efficient service for



the needs of citizens, at least as much as traditional shops and in many aspects more qualified. The PSFC carries over 15,000 products, including a large selection of standard supermarket items, making it a one-stop shopping destination. Sales are brisk at the PSFC and the inventory is replenished more than once every week, ensuring that the products they sell are as fresh as possible. It is open every day of the week and its timetable, from 6 or 8 am to 8 or 10 pm depending on the days, also allows workers to shop during the free time. A small childcare space is available for the children of members who are working and shopping.

The Park Slope Food Coop is part of the National Cooperative Movement and is inspired by its principles. Members have a voice in the decision-making process and can participate in planning and the discussions of the organization's future.

Also thanks to this active participation of the members the Cooperative has adopted an [environmental policy](#) to support the best products and practices having regard to health, safety, preservation of humans, animals, and the overall biosphere. PSFC offers a diversity of products with an emphasis on organic, minimally processed and healthful foods, supporting non-toxic, sustainable agriculture. The Cooperative also adopts a [purchasing policy by local producers](#) in order to allow members to buy fresh products and also to support local quality agricultural economies. PSFC also try to sustain family-owned farms and farming cooperatives throughout the region. With this policy PSFC is able to identify the geographical origins of approximately 225 items.

In the Park Slope Food Coop website all the criteria adopted by the members to ensure the high ethical and environmental level of this supermarket are presented.

Non-members are welcome to visit the store. The Park Slope Food Coop over the years has received countless delegations of organizations and citizens, journalists and other actors interested in knowing and replicating this innovative and highly effective experience of self-managed food distribution. Not only makes it possible to reduce costs of food and household products, but it also allows consumption to be directed towards organic and high-quality food products, by supporting the farmers who produce them.

In France, [La Louve Cooperative](#) opened in Paris the first cooperative supermarket, non-profit-making and managed by its members. The supermarket, which has 3,000 members, has been a great success and is already reproducing in other cities of France. An interesting video on the experience of the Park Slope Food Coop is presented on the Cooperative's La Louve website, which helps to make this innovative way of managing food distribution known.

[BEES Coop, the first participative supermarket in Belgium](#) has been launched in Brussels by citizens wishing to create an alternative to mass food distribution, by offering quality products at affordable prices and promoting cooperation between consumers and producers. BEES coop is a social,



not-for-profit co-operative, which is managed by and for its members.

To know more

[Park Slope Food website](#)

[Park Slope Food Coop in Twitter](#)

[Park Slope Food Coop in Youtube](#)

[Park Slope Food Coop in Wikipedia](#)

[Article in nytimes.com](#)

[Cooperative La Louve - Paris](#)

[Cooperative La Louve in Facebook](#)

[Article in wedemain.fr website](#)

[Bee-coop supermarket - Brussels](#)

[Cooperative Bees in Facebook](#)

[Video in repubblica.it](#)

[Video in mymovies.it](#)

[Article in repubblica.it](#)

