

THE SUCCESS OF PARTICIPATIVE SUPERMARKETS IMPLEMENTED BY COOPERATIVES IN FRANCE

In France, the innovative idea of creating participative supermarkets has been so successful within the world of cooperatives and consumers that they are already operating in many cities throughout the country. [A map published by InterFoodCoop](#) shows the distribution of these supermarkets and gives access to the website of each structure, to learn about their experience and impact results.



With characteristics adapted to the local context, these innovative practices are inspired by the results of the first participative supermarket, the [Park Slope Food Coop](#), implemented in the 1970s in New York (United States) by a cooperative that has managed to involve 17,000 members. The first participative supermarket implemented in France is [La Louve Cooperative](#), opened in the 18th Arrondissement of Paris in 2017, after a long phase of information and experimentation that involved actors from all over the country, facilitating the spread of this practice at national level.



These supermarkets are all managed by Cooperatives and the main innovative aspect is that the members are at the same time clients, owners and managers. The members contribute their work, on average for three consecutive hours per month, to ensure the functions that allow a regular operation of the supermarket depending on their abilities: management of boxes, purchases, storage of products, administration, cleaning, etc. Thanks to the work of the members that limits the hiring of salaried personnel, the Cooperative manages to sell its products at lower prices than ordinary supermarkets. A high number of members of the Cooperative makes possible that everyone can ensure an investment of its time, compatible with work commitments.



Among the participative supermarkets implemented in France, some sell only food products (fruits and vegetables, milk and beverages, bread, pasta, rice, cereals, dairy products, eggs and meat, processed products, wines), while others offer a wider range of products to meet the demand for all basic household purchases, including hygiene and cosmetic products (personal hygiene, creams and personal care) and cleaning products (for washing machine, home and bathroom) besides food products. Some supermarkets limit purchases to members of the Cooperative, while others are accessible to all interested citizens.



All participative supermarkets, with specific features due to the demand of their local context, have the following aspects in common:

- The ambition to be a sustainable alternative to large distribution of basic goods. Their objective is to implement a new consumption model where food consumers and producers can bet on higher quality, healthier, local, ecological and seasonal products, offering

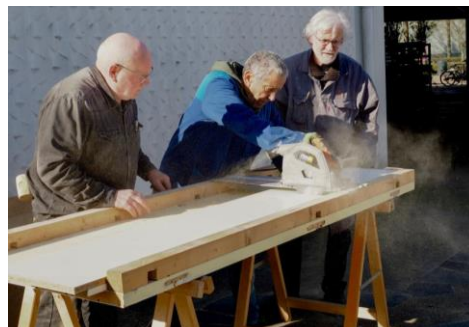


fair prices to consumers and producers. Inspired by experiences of direct relationship between producers and consumers and in organic markets, they are permanent stores, open during business hours to facilitate purchases for all those interested.

- The choice to be managed by Cooperatives being inspired by their founding democratic principles: members have a voice in the decision-making process and participate in the planning of all aspects related to their functioning. The registration fee in the Cooperative is accessible to each citizen and the supermarket reinvests the profits in initiatives of common interest of the members.
- The adoption of an advanced environmental policy, favoring ecological products and adopting measures so that the management of their activities is sustainable. They aim to reduce food, energy and wasted water, to limit the use of packaging and plastic, favoring the sale of bulk products.
- The selection of food products taking into account shared criteria such as quality, biological production methods, local and seasonal origin, affordable prices and fair remuneration for producers. The products are presented with seals of quality and labels that show their origin and the method of production.
- The adoption of a policy of direct purchasing from local producers so that consumers can have access to fresh products, while managing to reduce the impact on the environment and to support quality local agricultural economies, strengthening small producers and agricultural cooperatives.
- The ambition to represent important spaces for citizen participation and action for change. With their campaigns and projects in the territory they contribute to the spreading of a new ecological culture for sustainable development.



The innovative idea of implementing participative supermarkets has also raised interest in other countries and the [interfoodcoop map](#) gives access to the practices in progress in Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, England, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Spain and Portugal, allowing to learn about their experience and their achievements.



The participative supermarkets being implemented in France and in other countries show the great potential of this innovative way of managing the distribution of food and basic goods. In particular, by favoring short commercial chains in alliance with local producers, these supermarkets represent a relevant solution to strengthen territorial development processes and reduce the exodus from rural and mountain areas.



Furthermore, the continuous increase of members recorded among cooperatives in all current practices demonstrates the great interest of consumers in taking an active role in an important aspect such as the distribution of basic goods. The increase in members in turn represents a key aspect to achieve the objective of reducing prices, thanks to the work they ensure in the operation of the supermarket.



The success recorded in France by this innovative way of managing the distribution of food and products of common use for families, has national diffusion and also lies in the important development of the cooperative movement in this country. The management system adopted by participative supermarkets can be replicated in all countries where the cooperative movement is already developed and where cooperatives have access to funds and loans for the initial investments of their implementation projects.

To know more

[Map Supermarchés coopératifs in interfoodcoop.github.io](https://interfoodcoop.github.io)

[Park Slope Food Coop – New York](#)

[Video Food Coop](#)

[Cooperative La Louve - Paris](#)

[BREIZHICOOP, supermarché coopératif et participatif - Rennes](#)

[Supermarchés coopératifs & participatifs Map en framacarte.org](#)

[Article in tdc-enabel.be/fr](https://tdc-enabel.be/fr)

[Somalimentacio.com - Supermercado participativo - Valencia](#)

[FoodCoop - Barcelona](#)

[AlterCoop – Le supermarché coopératif - Luxembourg](#)

[Cooperative participative supermarkets in ICA website](#)

