

Principles of “Co-operatives of Associated Work”

(Adopted, June 2015)

Declaration

We have discovered the world of “associated work” in which people work together as individuals in cooperation and solidarity, without being employed by others.

It is a new way of working to create enterprises in which each person could be a master of his or her own life. It is a new way of linking the needs of human life, local communities, and their difficulties, such that everybody jointly contributes to building capital, managing businesses democratically, and sharing responsibilities.

We know now that as we create jobs that are in demand, and as we discuss this in greater depth, and as labor becomes a freer and more creative activity, so we, human beings, can grow and develop like human beings.

We are confronted by a status quo that entails the limitless destruction of human beings, labor, local communities and nature.

So we hope to create a society in which there is neither poverty, nor discrimination, nor social exclusion: the “full employment society” in which everybody can work comfortably. This is a new understanding of the welfare society, in which everybody can more open with each other, more peaceful, wealthier, and can have dreams and hopes.

We declare that we take over our predecessors’ pledge of “the abolition of unemployment, poverty and war” as well as the spirit of international cooperative movements such as “mutual aid”, “autonomy and solidarity” and “equity and justice”. Towards this end, we develop new social solidarity movements on the basis of “associated work” and, here and now, we work together towards a new age of independence and cooperation, in which we ourselves, citizens, can be free subjects persons involved in local communities.

Principles

Co-operatives of associated work aim at a way of working in cooperation and solidarity, through which we, citizens, create jobs necessary for people and local communities. As free subjects of local communities, we do “good (decent) work” to build a society in which we live and work together. Co-operatives of associated work place the greatest value on the dignity of human life, decent work and livelihood.

1. Co-operatives of associated work create jobs, and develop “good (decent) work”.

- (1) We focus on the needs of human life and local communities, their difficulties and problems, to create jobs useful to human beings and local communities.
- (2) We develop “good (decent) work” that promote the growth of workers, and nurture rich relationships between people.
- (3) We work to grow a sense of fellowship between workers with the goal of achieving a wealthy life for workers who can enjoy their happiness.

2. Co-operatives of associated work spread a culture of independence, cooperation and solidarity among workplaces and local communities.

- (1) We develop workplaces and local communities that carefully nurture the individuality of each person.
- (2) All of us exert our full powers by talking with each other in a constructive atmosphere, by learning with each other, and by strengthening a sense of solidarity.
- (3) We emphasize mutual respect by developing relationships through which we can affirm our life and livelihood together.
- (4) We spread a culture of “independence, cooperation and compassion” through workplaces and local communities, in sympathy with human beings and their communities.

3. Co-operatives of associated work enhance the autonomy of workplaces and local communities, and develop “social solidarity management”.

(1) We promote the democratic “management of, by and for all members”.

① Basically, all workers contribute to creating capital, thereby becoming members, and participating in management decisions based on a principle of “one person, one vote”, regardless of the amount of capital at stake.

② Members treat “discussion” and “information sharing” as important matters, create business plans together, and expand their businesses.

③ Members elect fellow workers as their officers and leaders, and cooperate with each other.

(2) We develop “social solidarity management”.

① Members, clients and local residents create jobs while strengthening a sense of solidarity as active participants in a project of community development.

② We keep the local community as a whole firmly in mind, and grow the network of community development by connecting all generations.

③ We establish a cooperative relationship with local governments, aiming at an affluent public in which all people and citizens involved are active stakeholders.

4. Co-operatives of associated work develop sustainable management.

(1) To ensure the continuity of our businesses and to create new jobs, we do not run deficits but rather seek to make a profit.

(2) We work together to decide and maintain the guiding principles and objectives of our businesses.

(3) A certain percentage of the turnover is reserved for the development of our business and movements (reserve fund).

(4) The surplus at the end of each fiscal year is distributed as followings:

① A fund for job creation, training, education, and mutual aide.

② Distribution to members in proportion to the amount of their work.

③ Distribution to members in proportion to the amount of capital subscription (not exceeding a limited proportion).

(5) Reserved funds are not distributed to members but remain as common property (indivisible reserve). These funds are used for developing associated work and job creation in future generations.

5. Co-operatives of associated work develop rich local economies in which human beings can live in harmony with nature.

(1) We utilize the resources of local communities, to create a society in which foods, energy and the care that constitute the foundation of human life are self-sufficient, and recycled, together with local residents.

(2) We create the places where everybody can gather without anxiety while having a distinct role, thereby developing them into “comprehensive welfare hubs”.

6. Co-operatives of associated work strengthen a nation-wide sense of solidarity, and expand a network of “cooperation and solidarity”.

(1) We strengthen a nation-wide sense of solidarity between co-operatives of associated work, and learn from each other by exchanging experiences with movements and businesses.

(2) We strengthen alliances work to create jobs together with various other co-operatives in a shared project of community development.

(3) We strengthen cooperation with other civic organizations, business enterprises, labor organizations, universities and research institutes, specialists, etc., while working to protect and develop human life, peace and livelihood, decent work, fundamental human rights, and democracy.

(4) We work to improve systems and policies concerning labor and human welfare.

7. Co-operatives of associated work strengthen a sense of solidarity between people around the world, and aim at creating a society of “coexistence and cooperation”.

(1) We participate in international co-operative movements, such as the International Co-operative Alliance, and work together to develop these movements.

(2) We develop co-operatives of associated work and their movements throughout the world, particularly in East Asia.

(3) We face up to contemporary crises such as wars, environmental destruction, with the aim of strengthening “global friendship and solidarity between people” against mass unemployment and human exclusion due to the globalization of capital.



JAPAN WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVE UNION

