

Cooperative Il Sole e la Terra (The Sun and the Earth)

(<https://www.ilsoleelaterra.it/cms/index.php>)

Il Sole e la Terra is a cooperative founded in 1979 as an evolution of some experiences of buying groups active in the 70s in Bergamo. Since then, it has grown while remaining tied to its founding values: participation, mutualism, solidarity, equity, defence of health and purchasing power, sustainability, promoting a critical and responsible consumption.

The statute, history and spirit of the cooperative privilege belonging, participation and being members over being customers. The membership card is the charter of the cooperative's values: shopping in the cooperative means sharing a project of critical and conscious consumption, of participation, of well-defined choices.

The cooperative is made up of members, the administrators and members of the quality commission operate free of charge, there is no profit-seeking activity but only the search for a fair price, a compromise between the needs of those who sell, those who work and those who buy.

It has always been oriented towards the organic, seen not only as a method of production and consumption more respectful of the environment, but also interpreted as an alternative system of relations between those who produce and those who consume. It gives priority to the direct relationship with the farmer, small local businesses, artisan producers, the circuit of fair trade, social cooperatives. Even today, it aims at an organic approach linked to the choices of the producer and of the consumer member, to sustainability, to seasonality and not to commercial and consumer logic.

Alongside the research and selection of producers, we have always aimed at good practices of reuse and recycling and a sober consumption, the reduction of packaging, the enhancement of unpacked and the use of recyclable and compostable materials.

Next to the shop there is a member space/workshop that is a meeting place: at lunch it is the Bistrot with a formula of price per weight to avoid food waste and at other times it is a place of training and information on food, health, consumption and environmental and social sustainability with opportunities for direct knowledge of suppliers.

Today, with more than 11,800 members, a large commercial area, 23 employees and 140 suppliers, it is necessary to be attentive to the need for economic sustainability, which is fundamental to guarantee safety not only for workers, but also for the many small production companies for which Il Sole e la Terra has always been a certainty.