



Good food is a
win-win-win solution



POLAND
WARSAWA



BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Dobrze is a co-operative selling healthy food. It is based on a win-win-win business model: it provides a stable and profitable income for farmers, better jobs for employees and healthy affordable food for customers.

It was founded in 2013, as a response to the bad quality of generally available groceries and the high prices charged for imported wholefoods. It followed

the gradual growth of around 50 closed food buying groups.

It opened its first shop in 2014 and its second in 2016, and employs 14 people: 6 cashiers, 7 co-ordinators and one evaluator/manager.

Its annual turnover is €600,000.



GOVERNANCE MODEL

Dobrze is incorporated as an association, not as a co-operative. This allows it access to affordable premises rented by the city to non-profit organisations, and also allows it to sidestep the strict rules that apply to co-operatives.

There are two classes of members:

- 300 real members, who pay a monthly subscription of 30 złotych (€7), must volunteer for 3 hours' work per month, and can buy at members' prices (20% discount). They receive a monthly update on the co-operative's situation and may vote at the general assembly, which meets 3 or 4 times a year;
- 100 supporting members: each real member can nominate one member of their household as a supporting member, who also has to do 3 hours' voluntary work per month and may buy at members' prices, but pays no subscription and has no vote.

Workers may also buy at members' prices but have no vote. They are included in the decision-making process only when the issue is directly connected with their job. They are informed about the business situation, but less often and in less detail than the members.

Major proposals such as a new shop opening are considered by a task group consisting only of volunteers, which prepares a proposal for the general assembly.

Day-to-day management is in the hands of the board, which consists of five elected real members. There is no single leader of the board – all members are treated equally. The board handles financial and human resources issues, the latter with the help of the paid evaluator/manager. The board also arranges training workshops for the staff and members, and promotes co-operatives and healthy eating.

The 6 co-ordinators act as a team to manage the volunteers and logistics, and keep track of hours worked.

The stakeholders are:

- real members
- their relatives and partners supporting members)
- employees
- regular customers
- farmers (suppliers)
- Warsaw city council

There is a financial incentive to join the co-operative. Because of the discount they receive, members will save if they spend over 120 złotych (€28) a month, which is below than the average monthly spend on fruit and vegetables.



START DATE:
2013



LEGAL FORM:
Association



N° EMPLOYEES:
14



SOCIAL IMPACT

Dobrze employs 14 staff, who are paid equal wages and have better working conditions than the industry norm.

The involvement of members as part-time volunteers works not only reduces costs and enables the co-operative to cope more easily with fluctuations in workload, but also builds a support community around it.

The co-operative offers a discount to pensioners. It also acts as a community centre by hosting educational and community-building events.



STRENGTHS

- Pioneering a new and replicable model of co-operation in Poland
- Win-win-win business model: a stable and profitable income for farmers, better jobs for employees and healthy affordable food for customers.
- Provides 14 high-quality jobs with equal wages
- The members exercise real democratic control, and there is no authoritarian management



WEAKNESSES

- Replicability depends on the presence of activist founder members
- The business model depends on the provision of low-rent premises to NGOs by the city council
- Only 10-15% of members play an active part in the general assemblies
- There is likely to be a size ceiling of around 600 members, above which the general assembly would become unwieldy

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