



Seven Co-operative Principles

1. Voluntary and open membership

A co-operative is a voluntary organisation, open to all persons able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic member control

A co-operative is a democratic organisation controlled by its members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Members serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In co-operatives other than co-operative groups members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote). Co-operative groups are organised in a democratic manner.

3. Member economic participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. Usually, at least part of that capital is the common property of the co-operative. Usually, members receive limited compensation, if any, for capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members of a co-operative allocate surplus to be used for any or all of the purposes of -

- (a) developing the co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, at least part of which are divisible; and
- (b) benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and
- (c) supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4. Autonomy and independence

A co-operative is an autonomous, self-help organisation controlled by its members. If a co-operative enters into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raises capital from external sources, it does so on terms that ensure democratic control by its members and maintain its autonomy.

5. Education, training and information

A co-operative provides education and training for its members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of the co-operative. A co-operative informs the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of co-operatives.

6. Co-operation among co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for the community

Co-operatives, while focusing on member needs, work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

In pursuit of excellence