

The Seven Co-operative Principles

The Seven Co-operative Principles were adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995 and serve as guiding values: www.2012.coop

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all people 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

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the co-operative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the co-operative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the co-operative rather than on the capital invested.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organisations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the co-operative's autonomy.

5. Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operative. Members also inform the general public 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 Community

While focusing on member needs, co-operatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.