

THE 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES



1. VOLUNTARY & OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership. Anyone can join a cooperative—they don't discriminate based on gender, social, racial, political or religious factors.

2. DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Members control their business by deciding how it's run and who leads it. Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, both men and women, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions where cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives of other levels are organized in a democratic manner where one cooperative, one vote is observed.

3. MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

All cooperative members invest in their cooperative. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative which means that people, not shareholders, benefit from a cooperative's profit.

4. AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE

When making business deals or raising money, co-ops never compromise their autonomy or democratic member control. Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Cooperatives provide education, training and information so their members, elected representatives or officials and other officers, managers, employees can contribute effectively to the success and development of their cooperatives.

6. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives believe working together is the best strategy to empower their members and build a stronger cooperative economy. Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Cooperatives are community-minded. They contribute to the sustainable development of their communities by sourcing and investing locally through policies approved by their members.

