



COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Cooperatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1995. Here you will find the seven cooperative principles which today are still guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

You may join, and you may leave the co-op at any time and no one can discriminate you.

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

Your voice will be heard.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

You control the capital.



4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter to agreements with other organisations, 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.

Together, you are autonomous.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

You can develop yourself into the consumer you want to be.

6th Principle: Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

You are more successful when you cooperate with others who know how to cooperate.

7th Principle: Concern for the Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

You can do something for the community even as you keep succeeding.

Source: <http://www.cecop.coop/Values-and-Principles>