

Co-operative Principles

1. **Voluntary and Open Membership**: Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, 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.
2. **Democratic Member Control**: Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members. Members who actively participate in setting their policies and make decisions. Men and women serve as elected representatives and are accountable to its membership. Members have equal voting rights (one member one vote)!
3. **Member Economic Participation**: Members contribute equally to and democratically control the capital of their co-operative. Members can allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes; development of co-op, setting up or adding to capital reserve fund, and supporting other activities by the membership.
4. **Autonomy and Independence**: Co-operatives are autonomous, self help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations including governments or raise capital from outside sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.
5. **Education, Training and Information**: Co-operatives provide education and training for its members, elected representatives, managers and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operative. They also inform the general public and membership 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 their communities through policies accepted by their members.