Co-operative Definition

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

*International Co-operative Alliance*

Co-operative Principles

1. Voluntary & Open Membership
2. Democratic Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy & Independence
5. Education, Training & Information
6. Co-operating with Other Co-operatives
7. Concern for the Community

Co-operative values

**Self-help** – ‘we help people to help themselves’.  
  
**Self-responsibility** – ‘we take responsibility for, and answer to our actions’.  
  
**Democracy** – ‘we give our members a say in the way we run our businesses’.  
  
**Equality** – ‘no matter how much money a member invests, they still have one vote’.  
  
**Equity** – ‘we carry out our business in a way that is fair and unbiased’.  
  
**Solidarity** – ‘we share interests and common purposes with our members and other co-operatives’.