



World Council

International Operating Principles

Cooperative Structure

Member Owned
Member Controlled
Democratic Control

Service to Members

Financial Inclusion
Financial Sustainability
Maximizing Member Economic Benefit

Social Responsibility

Financial Literacy
Network Cooperation
Community Responsibility
Global Vision

Cooperative Structure

Member Owned

Credit unions and other cooperative financial institutions are owned by the consumers who use their services. All members are owners of the cooperative financial institution.

The credit union is an autonomous private enterprise, within the framework of law and regulation, recognizing the credit union as a cooperative, serving and controlled by its members.

Member Controlled

Credit unions and other financial cooperatives are democratic organizations which are controlled by their members who actively participate in electing their board representatives and participating in the governance of the institutions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

Democratic Control

Credit union members enjoy equal rights to vote (one member, one vote) and participate in decisions affecting the credit union, without regard to the amount of savings or deposits or the volume of business. The one member one vote principle is designed to ensure that the cooperative institution responds to the demands of its wider membership.

Voting in credit union support organizations or associations may be proportional or representational, in keeping with democratic principles.

Service to Members

Financial Inclusion

Membership in a credit union is voluntary and open to all within the accepted common bond of association and to those who are willing to accept the corresponding responsibilities. Credit unions and other cooperative financial institutions are non-discriminatory, on all grounds, including but not limited to race, nationality, sex, religion, and politics. Credit union services provide access to affordable financial services to all including the underserved.



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Financial Sustainability

A prime concern of the credit union is to build its financial strength, including adequate reserves and internal controls that will ensure continued service to membership. The surplus arising out of the operations of the credit union after paying all operating and provision costs, providing a fair rate of interest on savings and deposits and after payment of fair dividends on members shares or equity capital, should ensure appropriate reserve levels.

Maximizing Member Economic Benefit

To encourage thrift through savings and thus to fund loans and other services, a fair rate of interest is paid on savings and deposits. While meeting the conditions of financial sustainability of the credit union, the provision and pricing of services seek to improve the economic and social well-being of all members.

Social Responsibility

Financial Literacy

Credit unions provide relevant education to their members, officers, and employees for their economic, social, democratic and professional development. Training and education in financial literacy supports members' informed choices in thrift, debt, wise use of credit and financial planning and budgeting. Providing skill sets and knowledge that allow members to make informed and effective decisions with all their financial resources is essential in serving member needs. Credit unions also provide education to their members in the rights and responsibilities of members.

Network Cooperation

In keeping with their cooperative philosophy and to benefit from the economic and efficiency advantages of pooling resources and expertise, credit unions and other cooperative financial institutions cooperate with other credit unions, cooperatives and their associations at local, national, and international levels to best serve the interests of their members and their communities.

Community Responsibility

The cooperative ethos supports the ideals of self-help, mutual assistance and economic empowerment. The vision of economic empowerment extends both to the individual members and to the larger community in which they work and reside. Credit unions support the growth of a broader just, healthy and prosperous community within which the credit union and its members reside.

Global Vision

The vision embodies building, championing, defending and growing a global community to improve lives through cooperative financial institutions.