



Three Valleys Learning Partnership

(a mutual schools co-operative membership trust)

Members of the Existing Trust:

Bishops Tawton Primary School
 Bratton Fleming Community Primary School
 Pilton Infants' School
 Sticklepath Community School
 Yeo Valley Primary School

In association with their partner schools:

Ashleigh C of E Primary School
 Holywell C of E Primary School
 Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Consulting School – Proposing to become a member:

Forches Cross Community Primary School

Public Consultation: Booklet 1

‘Changing from Community School to Foundation School
 Category and Joining a Charitable Trust’

The Reason for the Consultation

The Governing Body of Forches Cross Community Primary School are proposing to change their legal school category from community to foundation, and at the same time join an existing charitable trust known as Three Valleys Learning Partnership.

What we would like you to do

We would like to know what you think of our proposals, so we invite you to take part in our public consultation. You can do this by:

- reading this booklet (you may also wish to read Booklet 2, which provides answers to a number of commonly asked questions). Copies of this will be available at Forches Cross as well as electronically
- completing the Public Consultation Response Form you have been sent and returning it to your school
- attending one of the **consultation meetings** being held at **Forches Cross Community Primary School on Wednesday 27 January 2016** at the following times:

1.00pm: Meeting for Trade Union and Professional Association Representatives

1.30pm: Meeting for School Council

2.30pm: Parents' Consultation meeting

4.00pm: Staff meeting

5.00pm: Public meeting

Copies of the booklet and public consultation response forms can be obtained from Forches Cross School Office or downloaded from Forches Cross' website: www.forchescross.org

They are also available on the individual websites of the Three Valleys Learning Partnership schools:

www.bishopstawtonprimary.devon.sch.uk

www.bratton-fleming-primary.devon.sch.uk

www.pilton-inf.devon.sch.uk

www.sticklepath-primary.devon.sch.uk

www.yeo-valley-primary.devon.sch.uk

www.ashleighdevon.co.uk

www.holywell.devon.sch.uk

www.ourladys.devon.sch.uk

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Proposal

The Governing Body of Forches Cross Community Primary School is proposing a change of school category – from community to foundation – and at the same time to join an existing charitable trust known as Three Valleys Learning Partnership. The proposed date of implementation is 11 April 2016. The Trust is a mutual co-operative membership trust.

1.2 What is a Trust School?

This is a type of school that, whilst still being part of the Devon local authority family of schools, has the opportunity to be supported by a Charitable Trust set up to help the drive for improved standards in our schools, in particular through engaging with the wider community. The Trust will act as the legal foundation for Forches Cross Community Primary School if they decide to become a foundation school.

1.3 What is a Co-operative Trust School?

The Co-operative School Trust model enables schools to set themselves up as co-operatives, following co-operative values and principles. This model enables those who are directly involved in the schools; parents, carers, children and staff; to become engaged in its long term strategic direction through membership of the Trust. It will also allow those more indirectly involved such as other members of children's families – and indeed the wider local community - to become involved too.

1.4 Why are we considering it?

The Partnership works together focusing on high quality learning experiences for all our children. We work closely with our communities to raise aspirations, create opportunities and contribute fully to the life of the community.

The creation of the Partnership is providing a strong and well-tested legal entity through which to collaborate with our partners for the benefit of all our children.

1.5 Trust Partnerships

In addition to the Co-operative Movement, our partner is Petroc. We expect to include further partners as the Trust develops. We believe that collaborating with each other, building on the good relationships developed to date, will further improve the quality of learning experiences for children in our communities. Our headteachers and governors believe strongly that by working together we can achieve significantly more for our schools than we can by working alone.

1.6 New Powers and Responsibilities

The governing body of Forches Cross Community Primary School will gain new powers and responsibilities. It will become the legal employer for all staff, although existing pay and conditions will not be affected by this legal change as the schools will remain in the maintained sector and still be subject to national and local pay and condition arrangements.

Forches Cross governing body will also become responsible for pupil admissions but will work jointly with the local authority to administer the provision of pupil places within the requirements of the National Schools Admissions Code.

The Trust will also hold the land and capital assets of Forches Cross Community Primary School in trust, although the governing body will retain day to day responsibility for managing these assets in the same way it does now.

1.7 Consultation Process

You will have the opportunity to comment on these proposals throughout the consultation period which runs from noon on Tuesday 5 January 2016 until noon on Friday 26 February

2016. We would emphasise that no decision has yet been made and we would welcome suggestions that might help us to improve our proposals, as well as challenging them.

In parallel with this consultation, the Forches Cross Community Primary School governing body will publish statutory proposals on changing category and joining a charitable trust. When both this statutory notice and the consultation period are over, the governing body will consider the outcome of the consultation independently and decide whether it wishes to proceed to join the Three Valleys Learning Partnership.

The governing body may decide not to proceed to implementation.

In order to make the change, Forches Cross Community Primary School governing body is legally proposing to change category from a Community School to a Foundation School, and at the same time, join an existing charitable trust.

2.1 Our values and vision for the Partnership

Through our Partnership we:

- Share common aims, values and principles across our schools whilst retaining the unique identities of individual schools
- Ensure teaching, learning and development are central to all that we do by creating an environment of mutual support, raising aspirations to aid in delivering consistently high standards of education and care
- Actively engage parents and the wider community together with our schools to shape the future of education within our local area whilst remaining part of the Devon LA family of schools
- Consolidate and improve the relationships our schools already have to develop further trust, capacity and expertise to ensure all children access excellent provision and opportunities
- Promote resilience, ambition and aspiration amongst our community
- Cultivate pride in our diverse local environment, whilst widening children's experience and horizons for their futures both in Barnstaple and the wider world
- Create opportunities for a sustainable model of co-operation and collaboration so that the budgets and resources available are used to best effect to sustain further school improvement and enhance outcomes for all our children

2.2 Co-operative Values and Principles

The partnership plays a key part in the next phase of development of education in our schools.

The ethos of the participating schools aligns very well with the co-operative values and principles of the Co-operative Movement (see Appendix C).

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in their ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Co-operative principles will underpin the work of the partnership and we believe will contribute significantly to strengthening our schools – and our links with the local community. We have chosen to become a co-operative trust because these are the values and principles which we feel underpin our work with each other and with our children.

3 What does the Partnership do?

3.1 The partnership's particular priorities are to:

- ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is central to all that we do for the benefit of all our children e.g. by using teacher expertise across the Partnership

- create an environment of mutual support that builds capacity to enable us to achieve more co-operatively than we could as individual schools e.g. teachers across the Partnership coaching and mentoring each other
- develop a formalised and sustainable framework for collaboration across our schools so that we are able to widen the experiences provided by individual schools using the diverse opportunities across the partnership e.g. through shared training
- work with our partners, such as Petroc, to help break down barriers to learning and support life-long learning e.g. through visits to and projects organised with Petroc
- develop the membership of our co-operative trust over time to increase the active engagement of parents and the wider community in learning

3.2 What difference would it make for Forches Cross be a co-operative school? What benefits would it bring?

- We would highlight our commitment to our shared values and those of the Co-operative Movement
- We would join a fast growing network of like-minded schools across the county and country which will improve our capacity for school improvement
- Children would benefit as a result of staff having opportunities to work together more frequently
- Whilst retaining our own individuality, we would have a strong formal collaboration at a time when partnership and school to school support is essential
- Parental and community involvement would be enhanced through our stakeholder forum and membership
- Focussing collective attention and resources on our joint priorities

3.3 How would Forches Cross benefit from Trust Partners?

- The character and values of our school would be reinforced through partnerships and association with the Co-operative College as well as becoming a member of the national Schools Co-operative Society (SCS)
- Partners will share experience and expertise with schools and learn from each other
- Partners will bring their local, national and international network contacts for the benefit of pupils and staff within our schools

3.4 What will each Partner bring to the trust?

The Co-operative Movement has extensive experience in supporting educational establishments to develop and embed a co-operative 'values driven ethos' across the schools, and across the curriculum. It will also help bring a global dimension to school and community perceptions, through national and international links with other co-operative educational institutions and organisations. Currently, it is represented by The Co-operative College.

Being a co-operative trust school will also allow us to become a member of the Schools Co-operative Society (SCS). SCS is a network of schools across England and is itself a co-operative of co-operative schools. Being part of a national co-operative schools' organisation will be of great assistance as we try to navigate our school through the rapidly changing educational landscape facing all mainstream schools. We will also be able to participate in a strong international network of co-operative schools.

Petroc is an active partner in the Three Valleys Learning Partnership. The College has formalised and strengthened links with the co-operative partnership.

The College works with schools to raise aspiration and participation in lifelong learning. We do this by using the facilities, resources and expertise that they have, to provide new and diverse opportunities for children and their families.

The College is a founder member of the Three Valleys Learning Partnership and have representation on the Trust Board.

The governing body of Forches Cross Community Primary School will also be represented on the Trust with two nominated trustees, including the Headteacher and Chair of Governors (or nominee).

4 How does the Partnership work?

4.1 The Trust is a charitable, not for profit organisation, meeting the legal and other requirements as set out by the Department for Education (DfE). It carries out its duties in relation to the schools as set out by the DfE, specifically by appointing a minority (probably two) governors to the governing body of each member school and by holding the land and assets in trust for the school community.

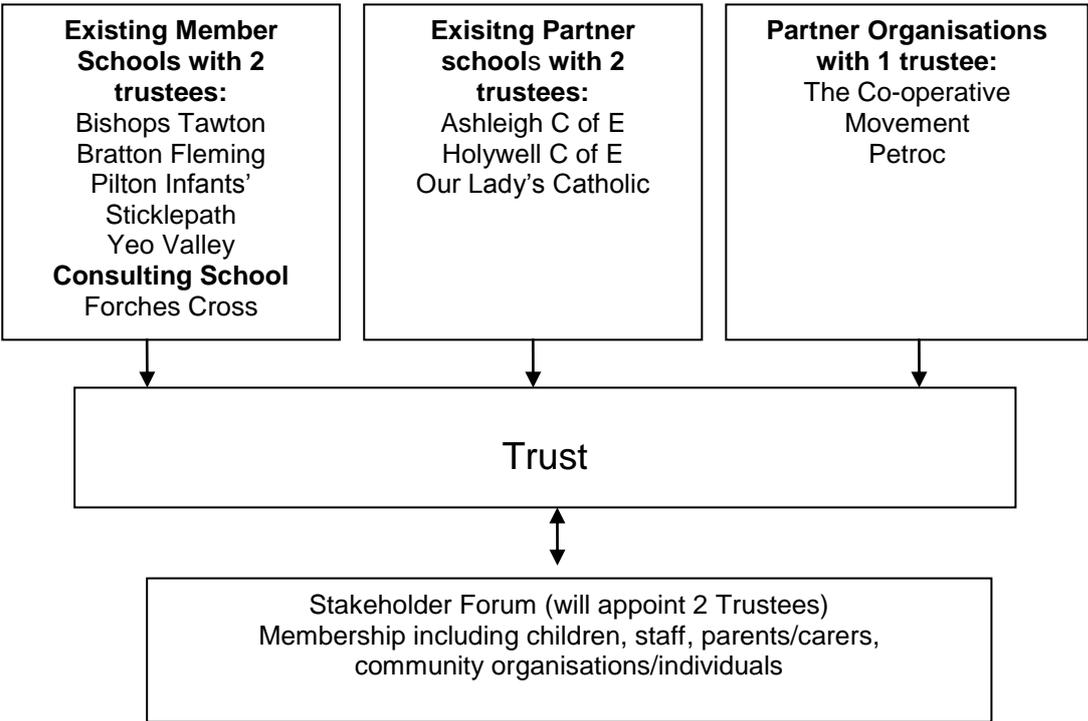
4.2 The Trust is legally established and regulated (as with all charities) by the Charities Commission and registered as a company limited by guarantee with Companies House.

4.3 Trustees are not be able to derive an income from the Trust, but the Trust may become an employer as it develops its work. Any income generated by the Trust must only be used to support its charitable aims. The Trust does not seek to alter the individual characteristics of the schools and it does not seek to change the character (religious or otherwise) of the schools.

4.4 The Trustees meet a minimum of three times per year (co-ordinated with school governance as required).

4.5 The Trust works with other people and organisations, as appropriate, in order to carry out its work. As the Trust develops, it may be appropriate to consider additional partners. There will be a process involving existing trustees to ensure that any future partner will comply fully with the vision, values and aims of the Trust.

4.6 The Trust is made up of representatives from schools, partner institutions and the membership – via a representative Forum that will be established. This is generally known as the Stakeholder Forum as shown in the diagram:



4.7 The Trust has an ethos of co-operation and democracy consistent with co-operative values. It seeks to empower children and their community. The Trust helps children prepare for these challenges and their future as global citizens.

5 Foundation Category

5.1 To join the Trust, Forches Cross Community Primary School are required to change their current category and become a foundation school. In acquiring foundation category, the governing body and not the Trust, will assume new responsibilities, including responsibility for the employment of staff and admission of children to the school. The governing body will retain day to day responsibility for managing the assets, as is the case in the present situation.

5.2 The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 provide full rights, powers, duties and liabilities to transfer existing staff from the local authority to the governing body.

5.3 Existing and new teaching staff will continue to work under the terms of the 'School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document' (STPCD). The governing body will set out the terms and conditions for new support staff, which will be no less favourable than those applying to existing staff. All staff will, therefore, always enjoy as a minimum the same terms and conditions of employment as in any maintained school.

5.4 The school will continue to teach the National Curriculum and will be inspected by Ofsted at appropriate times.

5.5 The governing body will continue, as is the case at present, to have day-to-day control of their school's land and assets (although the Trust will hold them mutually 'on trust' for the school for which it acts as the legal foundation).

5.6 The Trust works in collaboration with the local authority in ensuring strict adherence to the School Admissions Code whilst reserving the legal right to review admission arrangements if deemed appropriate.

6 What does this mean for parents/carers and children?

6.1 Admissions

The school remains part of the local authority's family of schools. The school will continue to have a fair admissions policy and not introduce selection by ability. Parents will apply for places at any Trust school as part of the local authority process. The school will continue to work in partnership with the local authority to ensure that pupil places are given fairly in line with the published admissions criteria. However, a Trust school governing body reserves the right to review admissions arrangements as deemed appropriate.

6.2 Composition of Governing Bodies

The current situation of electing parent and staff governors will be maintained, as will the appointing of local authority governors, and the co-opting of co-opted governors. However, Forches Cross governing body will have a minority of governors (probably the legal minimum of two) appointed by the Trust. This will help to ensure that there is a strong link between the Trust and the school's governing body.

As the school is joining the trust after 1 September 2012, the regulations – the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 will need to be adhered to. These regulations state that the governing body of every maintained school must be constituted in accordance with this regulation.

The governing body will undergo some changes in order to comply with the appropriate legislation but we are proposing that changes should be as minimal as possible (See Appendix B).

6.3 Membership of the Partnership

All parents, carers and children currently attending a school within the partnership may become full members of the partnership. This is also true of staff employed by schools and members of a range of community organisations supporting the work of the partnership – as well as individuals living or working locally, who identify with what the partnership is trying to achieve.

We are planning to establish a stakeholder forum with elected members including parents/carers, staff, children and community representatives both individually and from organisations. Its purpose will be to hold the trust to account, to help shape policies and to elect a minority of trustees (normally two or three)

6.4 Ethos and principles

The school's ethos, including objectives relating to behaviour and performance and the school's vision and values will be strengthened by working within the framework of co-operative values. It is envisaged that the new partnership arrangements will contribute significantly to a further improvement in schools' performance and a better educational experience and outcome for every child and their family.

7 What does this mean for employees?

7.1 The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 provide for all rights, powers, duties and liabilities to transfer existing staff from the local authority to the governing body of Forches Cross Community Primary School. Employees will be employed by the school's governing body instead of the local authority and we will continue to recognise the same unions. The existing rights of teachers will be fully protected if schools acquire a trust. We will still be bound by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

7.2 Forches Cross governing body will set terms and conditions for its own support staff. However, terms and conditions will be safeguarded as per the prescribed regulations for existing staff and they will maintain the same employment rights as local authority employees. Employees will continue to be represented on the governing body, as elected by their colleagues, as well as there being representatives from parents, the community and the local authority as is the case now, plus the additional foundation governors nominated by the partnership.

8 The Consultation Process

8.1 Please let us know what you think about the proposal by doing one or more of the following:

- a) complete and return the Public Consultation Response Form
- b) send in your comments to the School Office
- c) if you are a parent/carers, member of staff or a member of the public, come to the appropriate meeting to discuss the proposal being held at **Forches Cross Community Primary School on Wednesday 27 January 2016** at the following times:

1.00pm: Meeting for Trade Union and Professional Association Representatives
1.30pm: Meeting for School Council

- 2.30pm: Parents' Consultation meeting
- 4.00pm: Staff meeting
- 5.00pm: Public meeting

You can comment at any time from noon on Tuesday 5 January 2016 to noon on Friday 26 February 2016.

8.2 After the consultation is closed, all comments will be considered and a report will be prepared for Forches Cross governing body. This report will be made available on school websites. Individual responses will not be published on the website but will be made available to the governing body and will be available for inspection by the public on request. The governing body will hold a meeting to review the report and all the comments before reaching an informed decision.

8.3 Forches Cross school's governing body may decide to:

- a) agree a change from Community to foundation category and to join the Trust
- b) modify the proposal in the light of suggestions made during consultation and, if the changes are significant, re-consult on the changes
- c) decide to remain as a Community school without change
- d) pause the process to allow further time for debate and consideration

8.4 The proposed implementation date for the partnership is 11 April 2016.

8.5 Copies of all the consultation documents can be obtained from school websites or from Forches Cross

8.6 If you have any queries about anything you have read here and would like further clarification, please contact Forches Cross School Office

9 Appendices

Appendix A: List of Consultees

As part of the consultation process, the school is consulting with the following:

- Pupils currently at the school
- Parents/carers of children currently at the school
- Staff currently employed at the school, both teaching and support staff
- Local Teacher Associations and Trade Unions representing our support staff
- Devon Local Authority
- Other neighbouring schools which may be affected by the proposal inc the LLC
- Serving local MPs and local Councillors
- Local community and voluntary groups including nurseries, pre-schools, child care providers, sports and leisure providers

A complete list will be published on the school website. If you feel that there are other stakeholders who should be consulted, please contact school.

Appendix B: Governing body structure

B.1 The current situation of electing parent and staff governors will be maintained, as will the appointing of local authority governors, and the co-opting of co-opted governors. However the governing body of the consulting school will now have a minority of governors appointed by the Trust, (foundation governors).

B.2 As the date that this trust was legally be formed was after 1 September 2012, the regulations – the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 and the

School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 will need to be adhered to. These regulations state that the governing body of every maintained school must be constituted in accordance with these regulations.

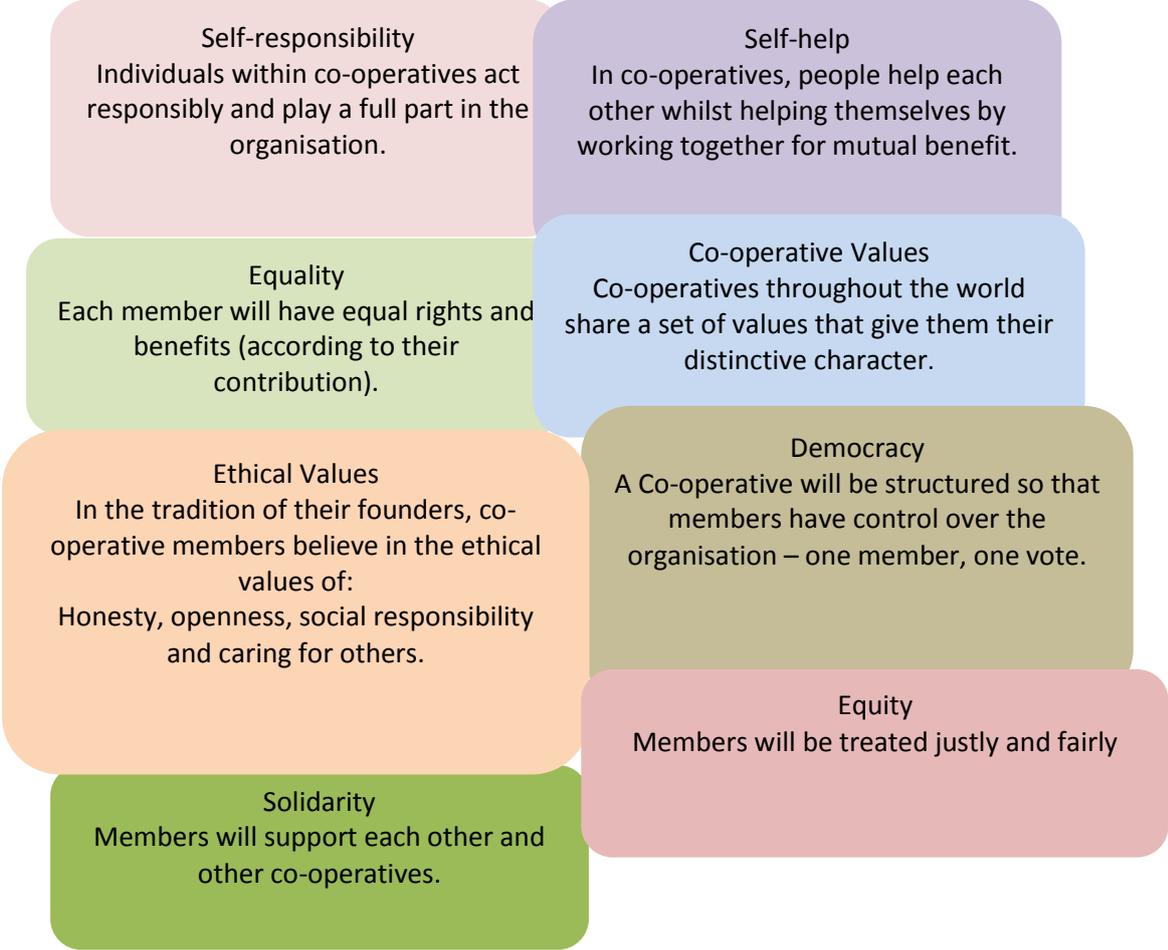
B.3 The total membership of the governing body of a maintained school must be no fewer than seven governors. For Forches Cross, the governing body of a maintained school must include the following:

- a) at least two parent governors
- b) the headteacher unless they resign the office of governor
- c) one staff governor; and
- d) one local authority governor
- e) at least two foundation governors, but no more than 45% of the total, appointed by the named Trust. We are proposing the legal minimum of two.
- f) As many co-opted governors as the governing body considers necessary. The total number of co-opted governors who are also eligible to be elected as staff governors must not exceed one third of the total membership of the governing body. The headteacher must be included in this figure.

B.4 The governing body will undergo some changes in order to comply with the appropriate legislation.

Appendix C – Co-operative Values and Principles

The Values and Principles embraced by today’s worldwide Co-operative Movement have evolved from the ideas of the early co-operators of the 18th and 19th centuries. They are embodied in the statement of Co-operative Identity published by the **International Co-operative Alliance** (<http://www.ica.coop/al-ica>)



The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

1 st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership	Co-operatives are voluntary organisations; open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.
2 nd Principle: Democratic Member Control	Co-operatives 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 co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.
3 rd Principle: Member Economic Participation	Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any of the following purposes: Developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.
4 th Principle: Autonomy and Independence	Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisation controlled by their members. If they enter into 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 co-operative autonomy.
5 th Principle: Education, Training and Information	Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national, region and international structures.
6 th Principle: Co-operation among Co- operatives	Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national and international structures.
7 th Principle: Concern for Community	Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.