# International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Principles in Practice Training Course

Professional Development Training Course Outline

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| **Category** | Cooperative Societies | **Duration** | 10 Days |
| **Base Fee** | $3,000 USD | **Delivery Mode** | Online / On-site Hybrid |

## Course Introduction

### Introduction

This foundational training course on International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Principles in Practice is meticulously designed to immerse cooperative leaders, board members, and aspiring professionals in the core values and guiding principles that define the global cooperative movement. Participants will gain a deep understanding of the seven internationally recognized ICA Principles – from Voluntary and Open Membership to Concern for Community – and explore how these principles translate from philosophical ideals into tangible, day-to-day operational practices that distinguish cooperatives from other business models. Training Course on International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Principles in Practice emphasizes the practical application of these principles to foster member-centricity, democratic governance, economic participation, and sustainable development, strengthening the cooperative identity and ensuring its continued relevance.

In an increasingly complex global economy, upholding the ICA Cooperative Principles is not just a matter of tradition, but a strategic imperative for building resilient, ethical, and purpose-driven organizations. This course empowers attendees to critically analyze their cooperative's current practices against these benchmarks, identifying opportunities for enhanced transparency, accountability, and member empowerment. Through a combination of interactive discussions, real-world cooperative case studies, and practical exercises, participants will learn how to embed the principles into strategic decision-making, operational processes, and stakeholder engagement. This comprehensive understanding and practical application will enable cooperative leaders to truly live their values, reinforce their competitive advantage, and contribute meaningfully to community well-being and a more equitable economy.

## Programme Curriculum

### International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Principles in Practice Training Course

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**Course duration**

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## Course Objectives

1. Master the Seven ICA Cooperative Principles: Comprehend the definition and practical implications of each of the seven core principles.
2. Translate Principles into Operational Practice: Develop methods for integrating ICA principles into daily cooperative operations and decision-making.
3. Enhance Democratic Member Control: Implement strategies to ensure genuine member participation and effective governance.
4. Optimize Member Economic Participation: Design models that fairly allocate surplus and empower members economically, emphasizing equitable distribution.
5. Uphold Autonomy and Independence: Safeguard the cooperative's self-help nature while engaging with external partners and capital.
6. Champion Education, Training, and Information: Develop programs that educate members, elected representatives, and employees on cooperative identity and benefits.
7. Foster Cooperation Among Cooperatives: Identify and cultivate opportunities for inter-cooperative collaboration for mutual strength and impact.
8. Drive Concern for Community Initiatives: Lead projects that contribute to the sustainable development of local communities, aligning with member values.
9. Strengthen Cooperative Identity and Values: Reinforce the cooperative's distinct ethical and social values (self-help, solidarity, honesty, social responsibility).
10. Assess Principle Adherence: Utilize tools to evaluate the cooperative's alignment with the ICA Principles.

11. Navigate Challenges in Principle Application: Address common difficulties and find innovative solutions for integrating principles in diverse contexts.
12. Communicate Cooperative Identity Effectively: Articulate the unique value proposition of the cooperative model to members, public, and policymakers.
13. Contribute to the Global Cooperative Movement: Understand the role of individual cooperatives in strengthening the broader cooperative ecosystem.

## Organizational Benefits

1. Reinforced Cooperative Identity: Clearly distinguishes the cooperative from other business forms.
2. Increased Member Trust and Loyalty: Living the principles builds confidence and commitment.
3. Enhanced Ethical Governance: Principles guide sound, responsible decision-making.
4. Improved Strategic Alignment: Operations and goals are aligned with cooperative values.
5. Stronger Community Relationships: Demonstrating "Concern for Community" fosters local support.
6. Greater Resilience and Sustainability: Principles promote long-term viability and adaptability.
7. Attraction of Purpose-Driven Talent: Employees seeking meaningful work are drawn to principled organizations.
8. Facilitated Inter-Cooperative Collaboration: Shared principles enable easier partnerships.
9. Reduced Risk and Enhanced Compliance: Principles often align with best practices in governance and ethics.
10. Global Recognition and Credibility: Adherence to ICA principles confers international standing.

## Target Participants

- Board members
- Directors
- Senior executives
- CEOs
- Corporate secretaries
- Governance professionals
- Internal auditors
- Legal advisors of cooperative enterprises

## Course Outline

### Module 1: The Cooperative Identity and its Genesis

- The Definition of a Cooperative: Autonomous association, common needs, joint ownership, democratic control.
- Cooperative Values: Self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility, caring for others.
- Historical Roots: The Rochdale Pioneers: The origins of modern cooperative principles.

- The ICA Statement on Cooperative Identity: The global standard and its evolution.
- Case Study: Analyzing the Founding Principles of a Successful Long-Standing Cooperative.

**Module 2: Principle 1: Voluntary and Open Membership**

- Voluntary Nature: No coercion, freedom to join and leave.
- Openness: Non-discrimination (gender, social, racial, political, religious).
- Accepting Responsibilities: Understanding membership duties beyond benefits.
- Practical Application in Recruitment: Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.
- Case Study: A Cooperative Revising its Membership Criteria to Enhance Openness.

**Module 3: Principle 2: Democratic Member Control**

- One Member, One Vote: The cornerstone of cooperative democracy.
- Active Participation in Policy and Decision-Making: Beyond just voting.
- Accountability of Elected Representatives: Board members and officials serving the membership.
- Democratic Practices in Secondary and Tertiary Cooperatives: Adapting democracy at different levels.
- Case Study: Improving Member Attendance and Engagement at Annual General Meetings.

**Module 4: Principle 3: Member Economic Participation**

- Equitable Contribution to Capital: Members contributing fairly.
- Democratic Control of Capital: Members deciding how capital is used.
- Allocation of Surpluses: Reinvestment, member benefits, community support.
- Limited Compensation on Capital: Prioritizing service over profit on investment.
- Case Study: A Cooperative's Fair Distribution of Patronage Refunds to Members.

**Module 5: Principle 4: Autonomy and Independence**

- Self-Help Organizations: Cooperatives are primarily driven by their members.
- Controlled by Members: Maintaining internal decision-making authority.
- Agreements with External Organizations: Ensuring democratic control is maintained.
- Raising Capital from External Sources: Terms that protect autonomy.
- Case Study: A Cooperative Negotiating a Partnership with a Government Agency While Retaining Control.

**Module 6: Principle 5: Education, Training, and Information**

- Education for Members: Rights, responsibilities, cooperative business model.
- Training for Elected Representatives and Managers: Effective governance and operations.
- Informing Employees: Understanding the cooperative difference.
- Informing the General Public: Raising awareness about the benefits of cooperation.
- Case Study: Launching a Comprehensive Member Education Program on Cooperative Governance.

**Module 7: Principle 6: Cooperation Among Cooperatives**

- Strengthening the Cooperative Movement: Collective action and solidarity.
- Local, National, Regional, and International Structures: Working together across levels.
- Joint Ventures and Partnerships: Collaborating for mutual benefit.
- Shared Services and Best Practices: Leveraging collective resources.
- Case Study: Two Agricultural Cooperatives Forming a Joint Marketing Venture.

**Module 8: Principle 7: Concern for Community**

- Sustainable Development of Communities: Beyond member needs to broader societal impact.
- Policies and Programs Approved by Members: Community initiatives driven by member values.
- Environmental Stewardship: Cooperatives contributing to ecological well-being.
- Social Responsibility Initiatives: Addressing local needs, promoting equity.
- Case Study: A Consumer Cooperative Investing its Surplus in Local Community Development Projects.

**Module 9: The ICA Guidance Notes on the Cooperative Principles**

- Deep Dive into the Guidance Notes: Practical interpretation and application.
- Addressing Modern Challenges: How principles apply in complex environments.
- Flexibility vs. Fidelity to Principles: Balancing adaptation with core values.
- Applying Principles in Diverse Cooperative Sectors: Agriculture, finance, housing, etc.
- Case Study: Using the Guidance Notes to Resolve an Internal Debate on a Specific Principle Application.

**Module 10: Measuring Adherence to Principles**

- Developing Indicators for Each Principle: Quantifying principle application.
- Self-Assessment Tools for Boards: Evaluating current practices against principles.
- Member Surveys on Principle Perception: Gauging member understanding and satisfaction.
- Reporting on Principle Adherence: Communicating the cooperative's commitment.
- Case Study: A Cooperative Conducting an Annual Self-Assessment of its Adherence to ICA Principles.

**Module 11: Challenges and Dilemmas in Principle Application**

- Balancing Member Needs with Community Needs: Navigating potential trade-offs.
- Attracting Capital While Maintaining Autonomy: External investment challenges.
- Ensuring Meaningful Participation in Large Cooperatives: Scaling democratic control.
- Competitive Pressures vs. Cooperative Values: Maintaining identity in a market-driven world.
- Case Study: A Cooperative Grappling with How to Engage Young Members Effectively.

**Module 12: Leadership Role in Championing Principles**

- Board's Role as Stewards of the Identity: Protecting and promoting cooperative values.
- Management's Role in Operationalizing Principles: Integrating into daily work.
- Ethical Leadership and Principle-Based Decision-Making: Guiding choices.
- Fostering a Culture of Principles: Embedding values into organizational DNA.
- Case Study: A Board Setting Strategic Goals Directly Derived from the ICA Principles.

**Module 13: Promoting the Cooperative Model**

- Advocacy for the Cooperative Business Model: Engaging with policymakers and opinion leaders.
- Telling the Cooperative Story: Communicating unique benefits to the public.
- Engaging Youth and Future Generations: Inspiring new cooperators.
- Building a Stronger Cooperative Ecosystem: Supporting local and global movements.
- Case Study: A Cooperative Participating in National Advocacy Efforts for Cooperative Legislation.

**Module 14: Technology and the ICA Principles**

- Digital Tools for Democratic Control: E-voting, online forums, virtual meetings.
- Information Sharing in the Digital Age: Enhancing transparency and education.
- Platform Cooperatives and New Models of Cooperation: Applying principles to emerging forms.
- Challenges of Digital Transformation: Data privacy, digital divide, cybersecurity risks.
- Case Study: A Cooperative Utilizing a New Digital Platform to Facilitate Member Participation.

**Module 15: The Future of Cooperatives and the ICA Principles**

- Responding to Global Challenges (Climate Change, Inequality): Principles as a compass.
- Intergenerational Equity: Long-term sustainability and future members.
- The Cooperative Advantage in a Purpose-Driven Economy: Attracting conscious consumers and talent.
- Continuous Evolution of the Principles: Adapting to changing contexts while retaining core.
- Case Study: Discussing how ICA Principles can Guide a Cooperative's Response to Climate Change.

### Training Methodology

This course employs a participatory and hands-on approach to ensure practical learning, including:

- Interactive lectures and presentations.
- Group discussions and brainstorming sessions.
- Hands-on exercises using real-world datasets.

## Upcoming Scheduled Sessions

| Start Date | End Date | Location | Price |
|---|---|---|---|
| **23 Nov 2026** | 04 Dec 2026 | Online | $2,000 |
| **23 Nov 2026** | 04 Dec 2026 | Physical | $3,000 |
| **23 Nov 2026** | 04 Dec 2026 | Physical | $6,000 |
| **23 Nov 2026** | 04 Dec 2026 | Physical | $6,000 |
| **23 Nov 2026** | 04 Dec 2026 | Physical | $12,000 |
| **23 Nov 2026** | 04 Dec 2026 | Physical | $9,000 |
| **23 Nov 2026** | 04 Dec 2026 | Physical | $12,000 |

| Start Date | End Date | Location | Price |
|---|---|---|---|
| **23 Nov 2026** | 04 Dec 2026 | Physical | $12,000 |

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