



THE FIFTH COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE: FOSTERING GROWTH THROUGH EDUCATION

HERMES G. VERGARA
BOD, VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Education, training, and information form the backbone of the fifth cooperative principle, playing a pivotal role in a cooperative's success and sustainability. By equipping members, employees, and officers with essential knowledge and skills, cooperatives cultivate a sense of responsibility, community, and awareness that drives growth and progress.

Education has always been central to the cooperative movement. Early cooperators understood that education was not just a privilege but a catalyst for collective transformation—a path to enlightenment, social progress, and the fulfillment of cooperative ideals. This belief, deeply rooted in the Rochdale principles, remains vital today, reaffirmed by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA).

For Oro Integrated Cooperative (OIC), member education is more than a mandate—it is a cornerstone of development. An informed membership actively contributes to decision-making, upholds cooperative values and principles and maximizes the benefits of cooperative services. To this end, OIC prioritizes continuous learning through various platforms.

In addition to the annual General Assembly, OIC's Education Committee hosts bi-annual Ownership Meetings across branches to update members on programs, projects, and initiatives. The OIC newsletter complements these efforts by sharing timely and relevant information and keeping members engaged and informed about the cooperative's progress.

Being a member-owner means understanding the cooperative's purpose, policies, and services. This awareness empowers members to participate meaningfully in OIC's activities, reinforcing the principle of collective ownership and responsibility.

Education is an investment in the cooperative's future. As Nelson Mandela aptly stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." At OIC, this belief is exemplified by its unwavering commitment to member, officer, and employee education, fostering a community that thrives through shared knowledge and collective growth.

As the festive season approaches, OIC extends its heartfelt wishes for peace, joy, and prosperity to all our beloved members and their families. May this Christmas inspire us to strengthen our bond as a cooperative community and renew our commitment to shared growth and progress. Together, let us look forward to a new year filled with hope, opportunities, and continued success.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

