

# Supporting Co-operatives in Malawi

- Project started in 2012 and will run up to 2015
- Covers all of Malawi
- Objective of Project is to:
  - ✓ provide capacity building training
  - ✓ provide tailor-made support, mentorship and advice to start-up and established co-operatives
  - ✓ Assist selected co-operatives to identify markets
  - ✓ Support in the establishment of a national Cooperative body

# Project partners

- UK Co-operative College
- Scottish government
- Co-operative Group (UK consumer co-operative)
- Other Scottish co-ops eg SAOS (Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society, Edinburgh Bicycle Co-op.
- Research team from the College and the Open University
- COMSIP and Mzuzu Coffee Union are local partners

# Project Achievements

- Provided training to 300 groups in:
  - Cooperative formation
  - Record keeping and Financial Management
  - Marketing and Sales Promotion
- Target was 2,700 learners. So far, 6,031 of which 4,108 women
- Provided financial support for 10 groups' participation in international trade fairs.
- Facilitating establishment of national cooperative body

# Financial co-operative members having received training in records keeping and financial management





# A handicrafts co-operative



# A dairy co-operative





# Project challenges

1. Demand for training outstrips supply: *6,000 have been trained, 20,000 waiting*
2. Remote location and poor infrastructure
3. Need to embed a cooperative education tradition
4. Policy and strategy weakness at the national level
5. Sustaining funding going forward

# Going forward

- Project services are in great demand in Malawi as communities view co-operatives as key to helping tackle poverty and as well as helping them to gain a voice
- Co-operative partnerships from the UK together with local co-operators provides the foundations for this project