

The UTZ Theory of Change

Influencing factors and unintended results

Influencing factors

The UTZ M&E framework focuses on the interventions of UTZ, and does not specify the external factors that may influence the outcomes of the program. Influencing factors are those that influence the effectiveness of our program, but are out of our direct control. Evidence from impact evaluations suggests that among the influencing factors in local contexts, are the following:

- Literacy levels of farmers: has negative influence on the adoption levels of record keeping and the functioning of internal control systems.
- Previous certifications obtained, previous trainings received: has positive influence on the outcomes of UTZ trainings (knowledge and practice).
- Existing level of organization of farmers: has positive influence on the adoption of good agricultural practices, record keeping and internal control systems.
- Availability and affordability of agricultural inputs: influences the adoption rate by farmers of GAPs promoted through trainings. In some cases farmers learn what they are supposed to do, have the will to do so, but have no means to do so. (planned for monitoring on level 2)
- The level of price premiums being paid to producers provides an important signal and incentive to producers.
- Climatological conditions in specific areas (rainfall) have impact on harvests (production and productivity), Climatological conditions also affect the incidence of pest and diseases, with influence on yields, production costs and productivity
- Price levels in the markets of coffee, tea, cocoa, hazelnuts.
- Supply and demand trends in specific commodities and markets
- Availability of schools in the community, which influences the number of children attending school.

Unintended effects

Wageningen University made an inventory for UTZ of unintended effects of certification programs, based on a literature review. The report provides useful pointers for indicators of unintended results. In 2013 UTZ conducted a stakeholder consultation to identify the most important influencing factors, as well as the positive and negative unintended effects of the UTZ program. In the stakeholder consultation we approached 50 of our key stakeholders in Latin America, Africa and Asia while ensuring a good sectorial representation (private sector, research industry, producer representatives and NGOs). Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback regarding what they in their experience perceive as the unintended positive and/or negative effects of the UTZ program. In the same process we asked their feedback regarding the possible influencing factors that affects the UTZ program's ability to achieve its expected outcomes. The responses provided valuable feedback on several aspects of the UTZ program. Possible unintended effects brought up by stakeholders were:

- The farming area available for growing food is reduced (negative)
- Child labour is displaced to other crops, sometimes with more dangerous tasks (negative)
- Reinforcement of women's groups (positive)
- Investments are made in infrastructure (positive)
- Increased transparency; reduced corruption (positive)
- Because of better working conditions and higher production (=better income in case of piece rate), temporary workers return to the same employer, leading to reduced training costs and a more secure workforce (positive)
- Increased interaction, knowledge sharing and improved relations (solidarity) in farmer communities (positive)
- Expectations about premium leads to disappointed and demotivated farmers (negative)
- Investments do not always outweigh the benefits (negative)