



International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

Does engaging citizens in the governance of public services lead to improved delivery and quality of life?

Findings from a systematic review

Hugh Sharma Waddington

Senior Evaluation Specialist, 3ie

Ada Sonnenfeld

Evaluation Specialist, 3ie

3ie – LIDC Seminar Series

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London

25 September 2019



Who we are & what we do

3ie is a member-based international NGO promoting evidence-informed development policies and programmes.

- **Grant maker and standard setter** for policy-relevant impact evaluations, systematic reviews, evidence gap maps, evidence syntheses and replication studies focussed on low- and middle-income countries
- **Convener** of forums to build a culture of evaluation, capacity to undertake impact evaluations and reviews and commitment to evidence-informed decision-making
- **Producer** of knowledge products for policymakers, programme managers, researchers, civil society, the media and donors

Acknowledgements

Co-authors

Jen Stevenson



Juliette Finetti



Marie Gaarder



Expert advisory group

Laura Adams, USAID

Annette Brown, FHI360

Andrew Greer, USAID

Guy Grossman, University of Pennsylvania

Morgan Holmes, USAID

Courtney Tolmie, Results for Development

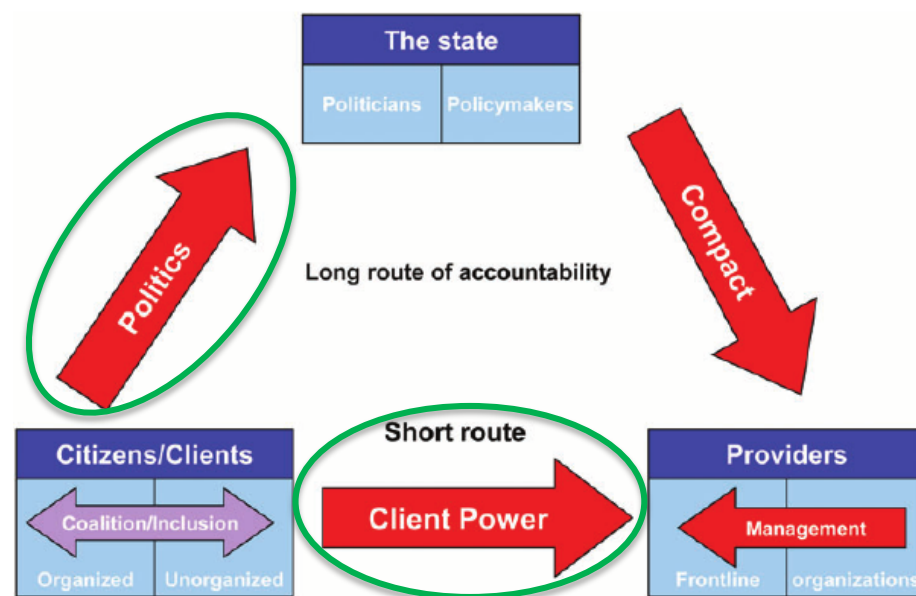
Joanne Trotter, Aga Khan Foundation

Erik Wibbels, Duke University



Advisory group helped define the scope of this complex review

Review scope:
Studies evaluating interventions that *influence citizens' capacities, opportunities and practices for civic engagement in service delivery*



Source: Devarajan et al. 2013

Primary focus on “short route” through direct citizen engagement in the planning, oversight and performance measurement of service delivery

Also included “long route” of pressure on political actors, who in turn pressure service providers



Review scope: interventions promoting civic engagement in service delivery in L&MICs

Interventions to encourage or mandate **citizen participation**

- **Participatory planning**, including inclusive planning and participatory priority setting
- **Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) committees**

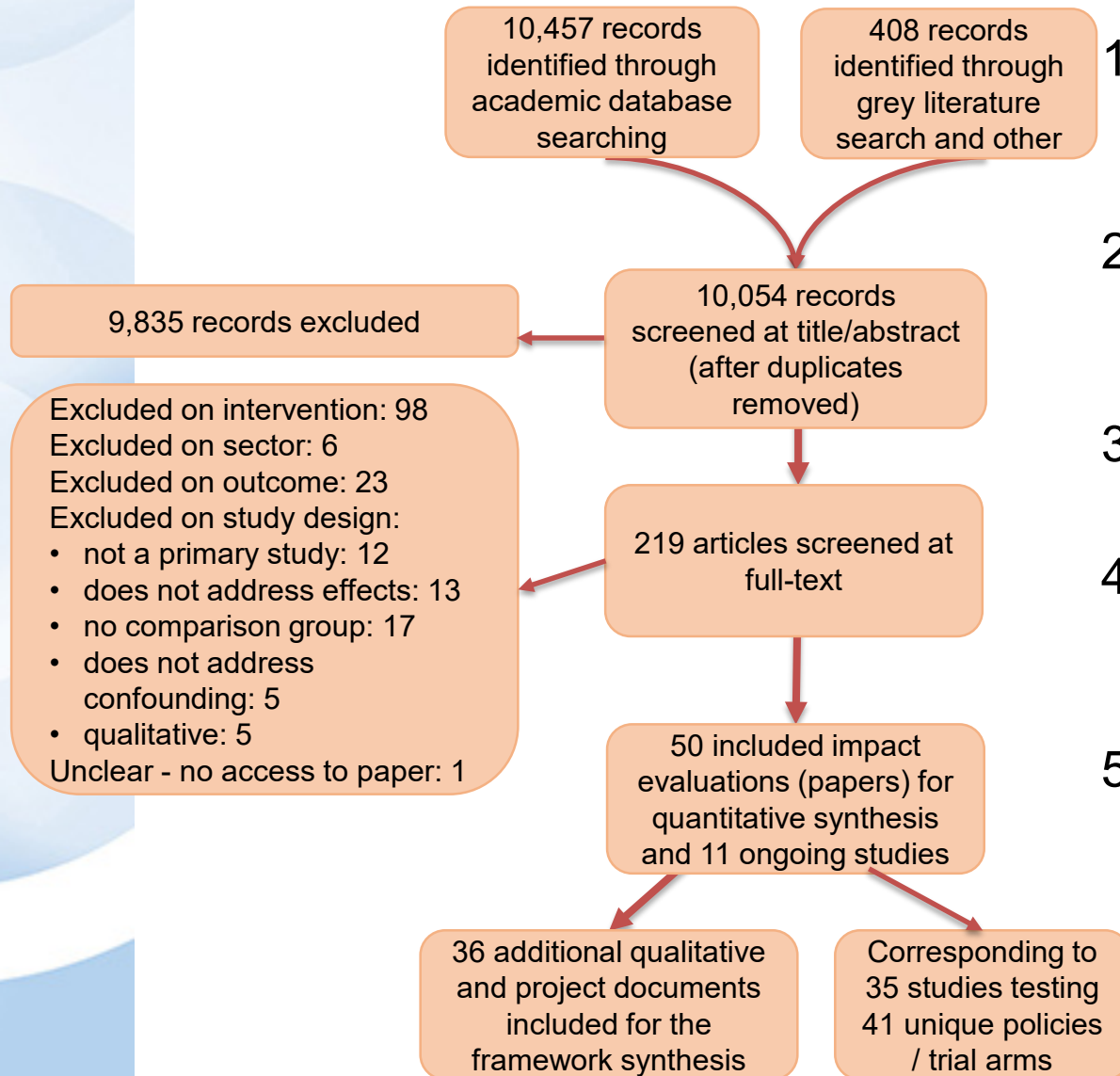
Interventions to improve **accountability**

- **Citizen feedback and monitoring**
- **Rights information** provision to citizens
- **Performance information** provision to citizens

Short routes

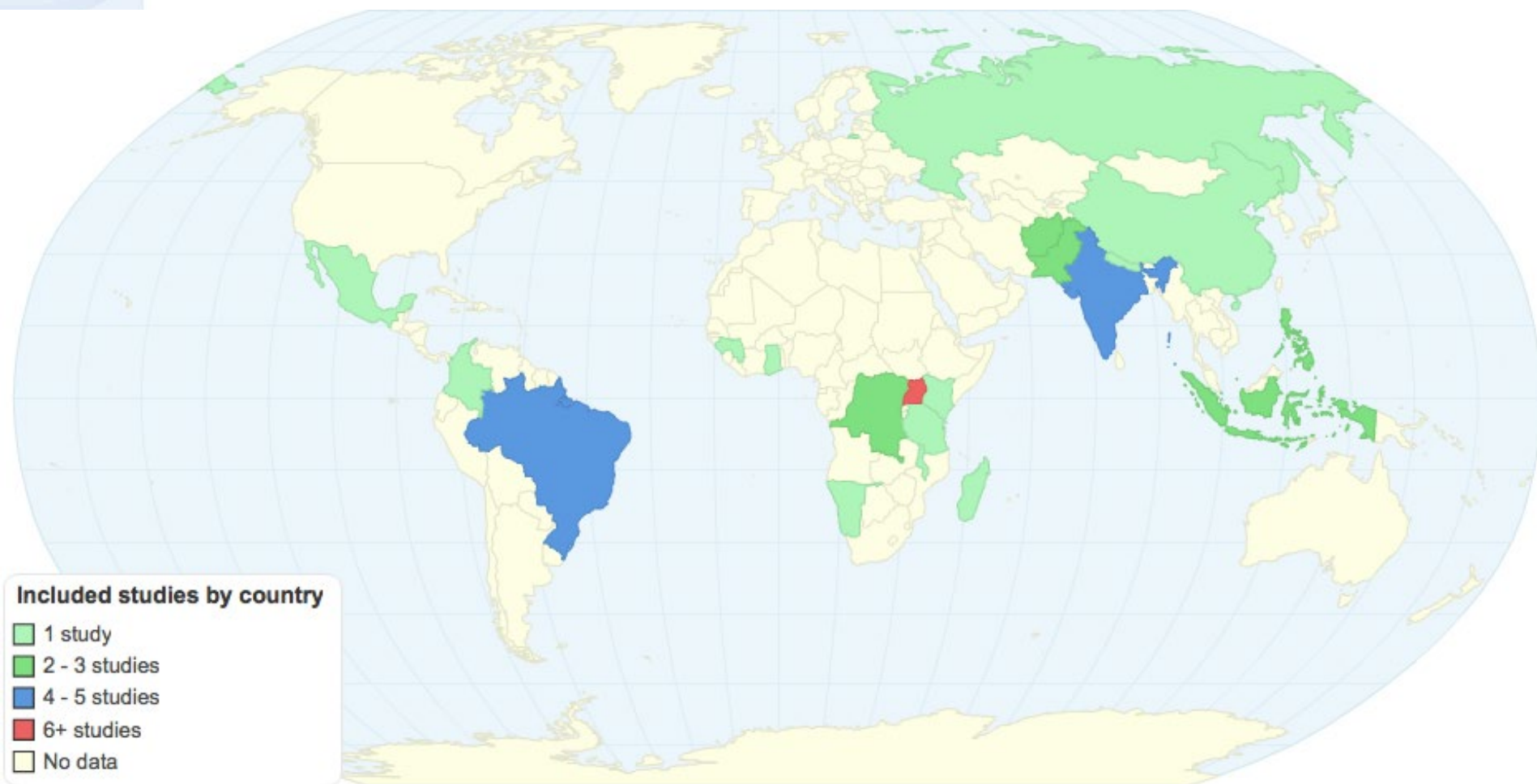
Long route

Systematic review process

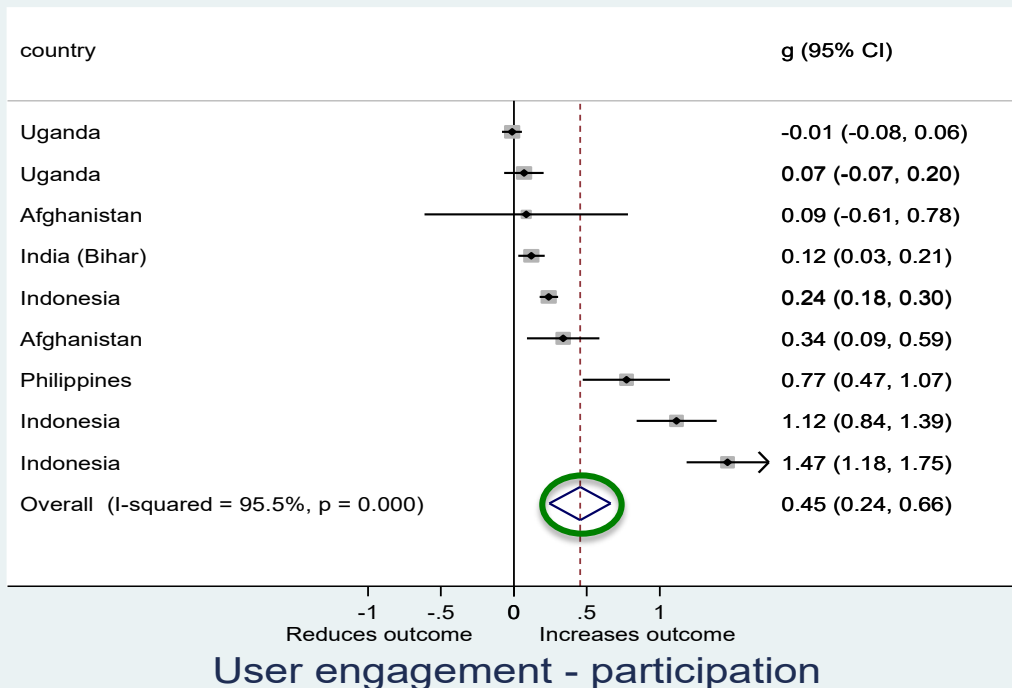
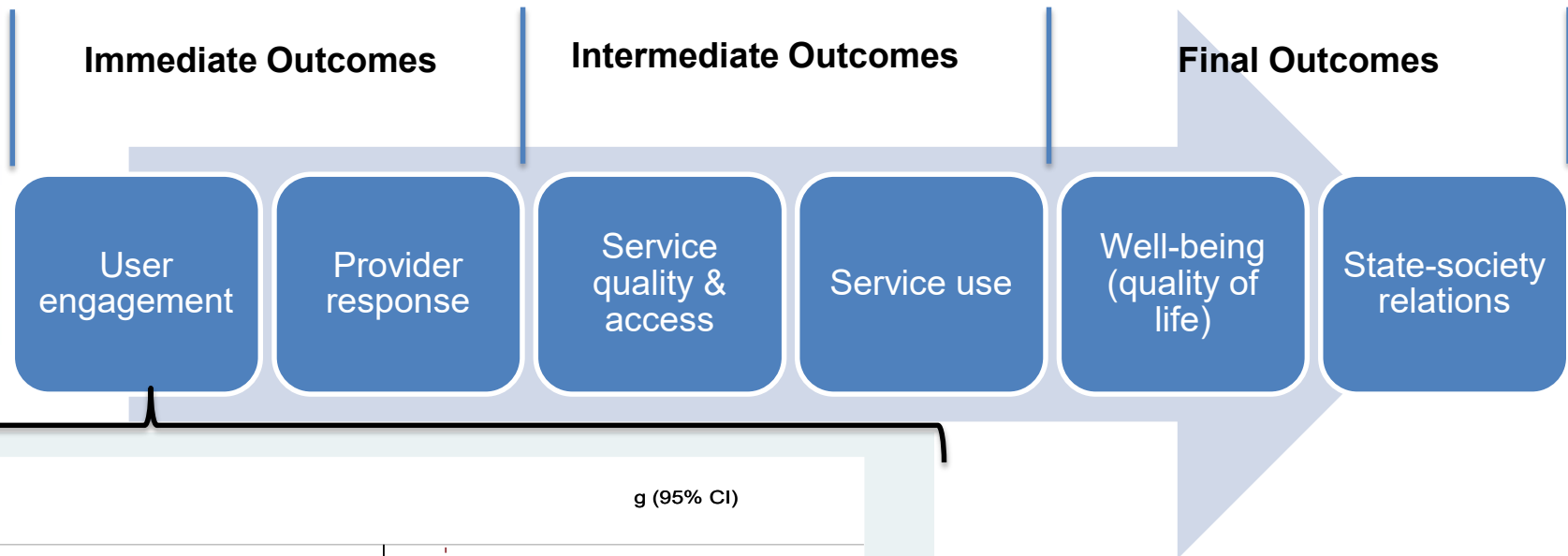


1. Determine scope consultatively in study protocol
2. Collect all relevant studies on a particular topic
3. Assess biases in eligible studies
4. Synthesis of evidence on programme impacts using meta-analysis
5. Synthesis of evidence on mechanisms using programme theory

Geographic coverage of included studies



Outcomes organised along results chain



Underlying each set of findings is a meta-analysis of outcomes measuring a similar construct across studies



User engagement

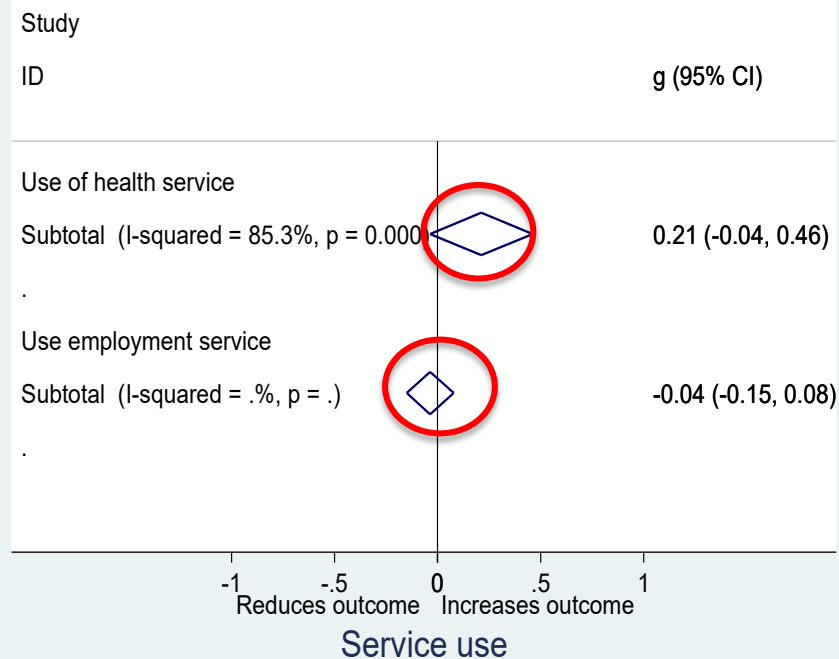
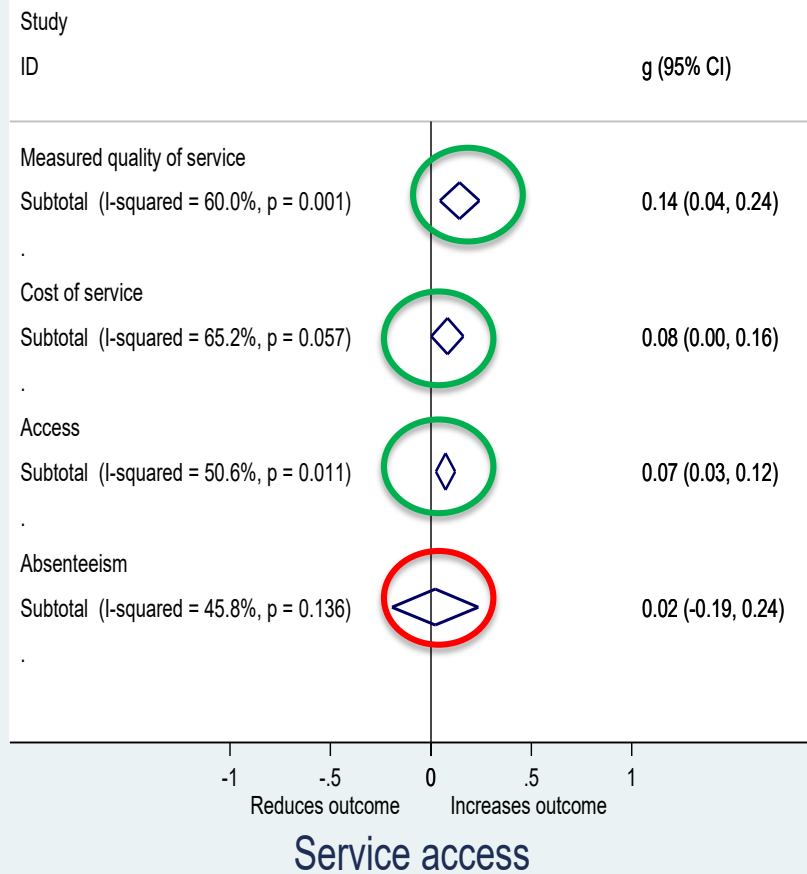
Provider response

Service quality & access

Service use

Well-being (quality of life)

State-society relations



Intermediate Outcomes



User
engagement

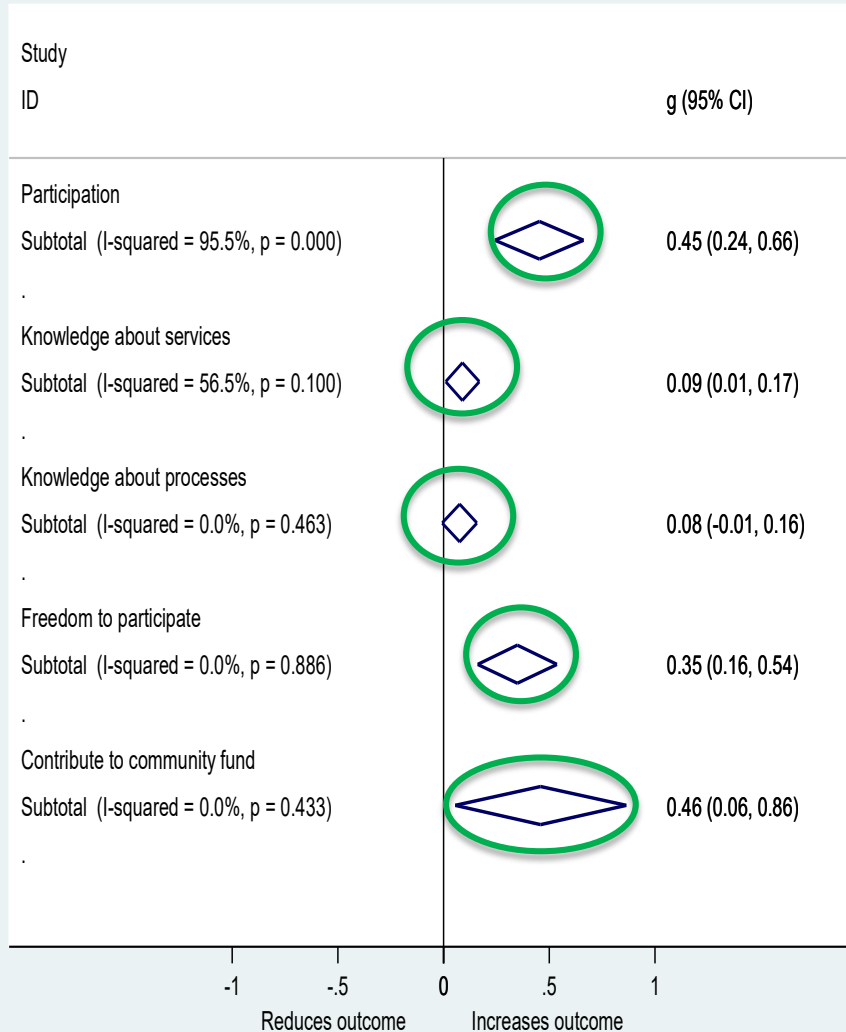
Provider
response

Service
quality &
access

Service use

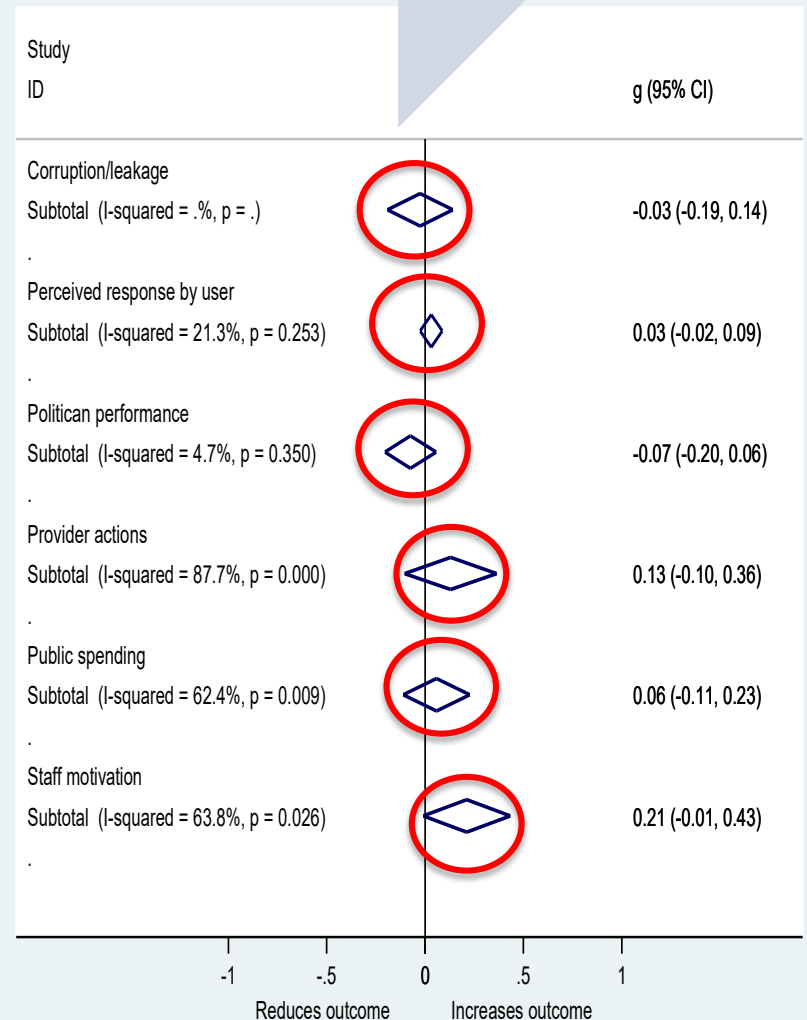
Well-being
(quality of
life)

State-society
relations



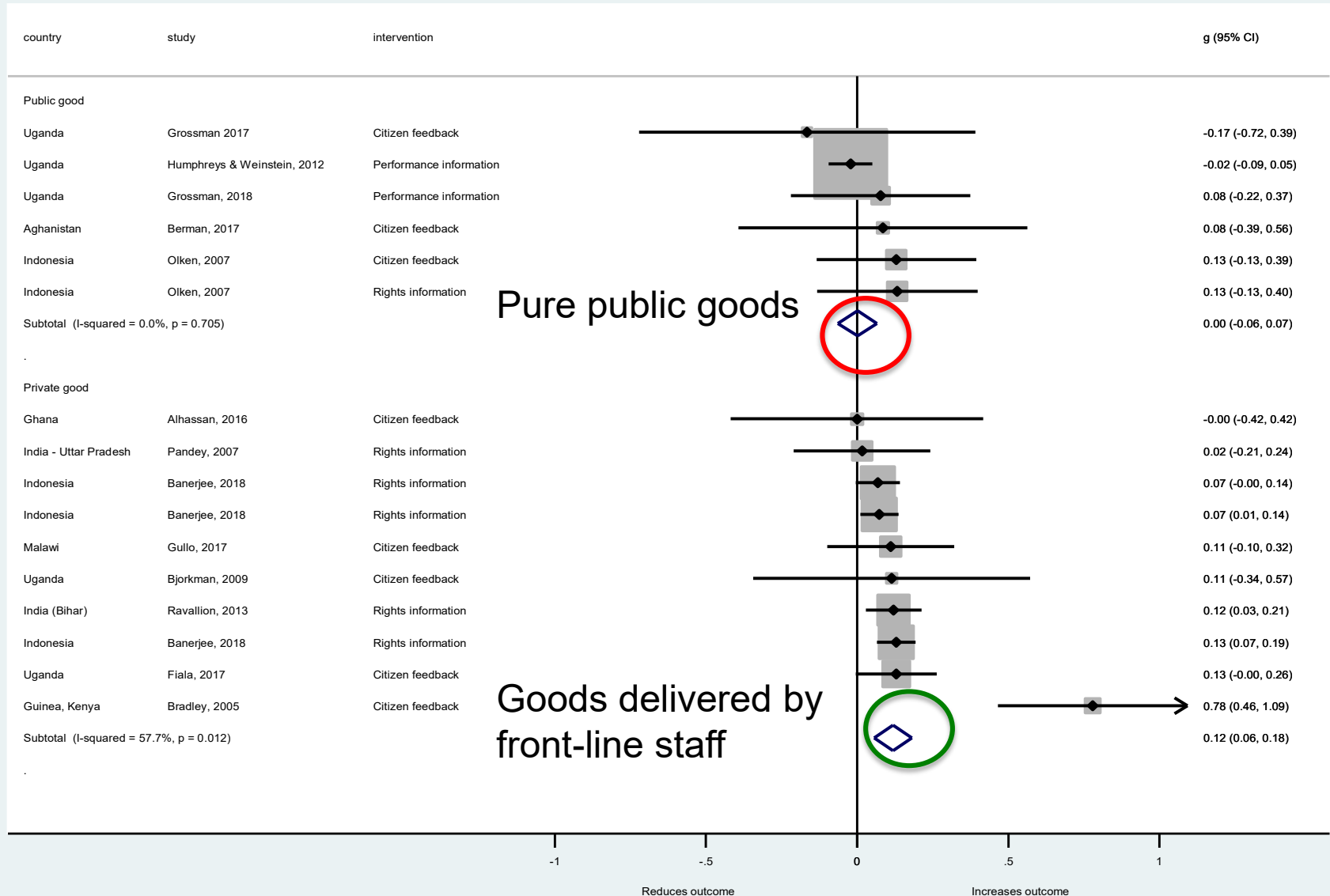
User engagement

Immediate Outcomes



Provider response

Integrated synthesis





User engagement

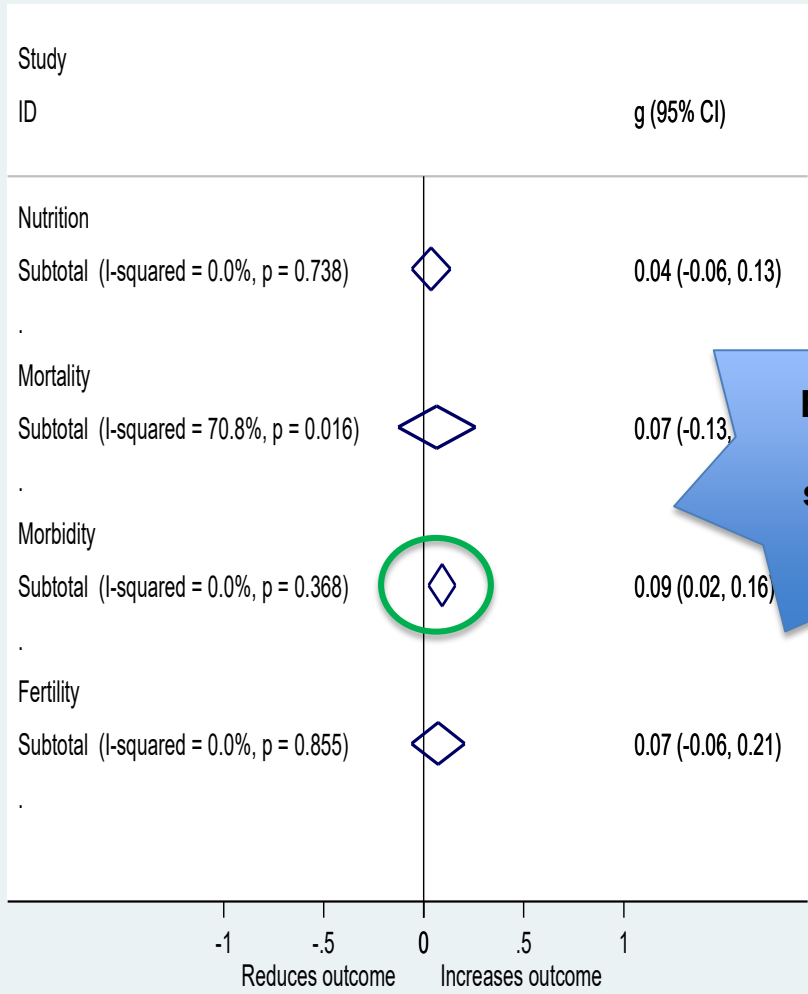
Provider response

Service quality & access

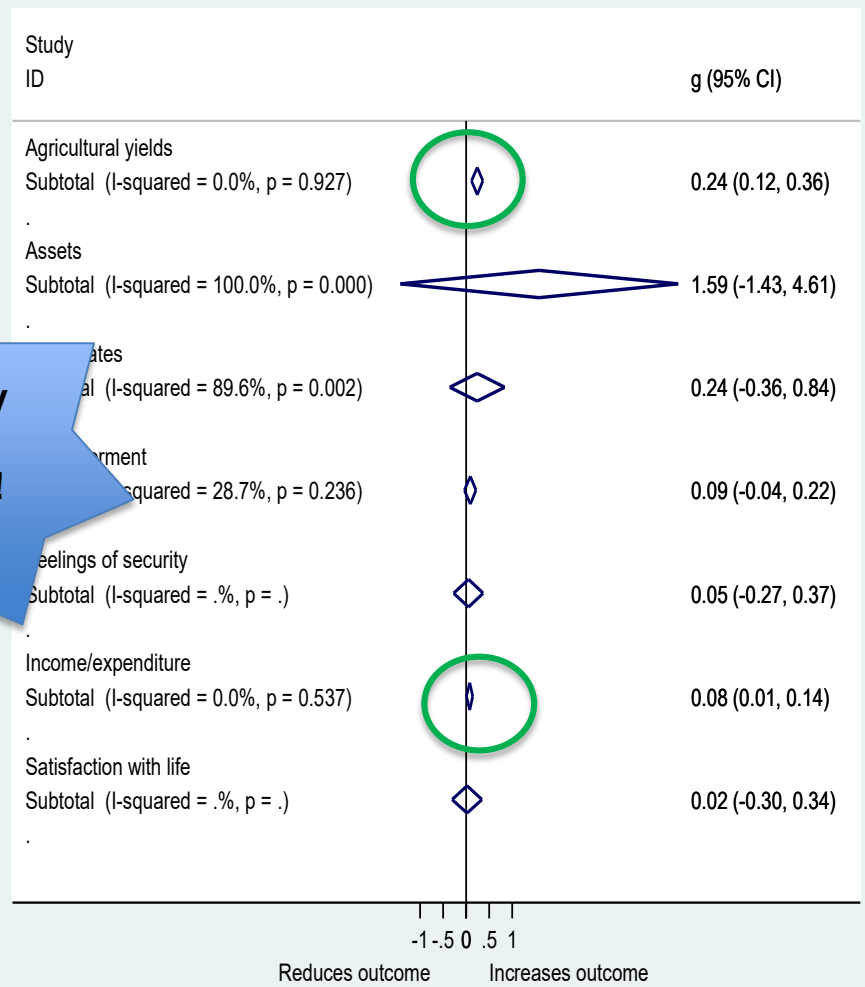
Service use

Well-being (quality of life)

State-society relations



But very few studies!



Health outcomes

Final Outcomes

Other outcomes

Performance information interventions

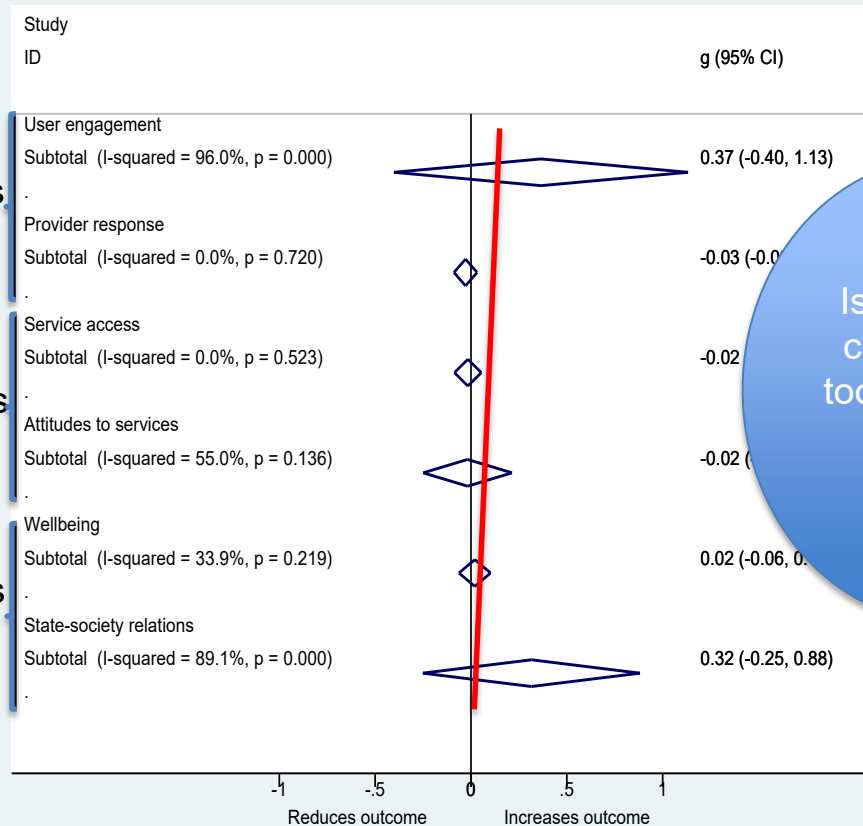
Provision of citizens with information about performance of politicians or public service providers (6 studies – Uganda, Brazil, Philippines, India)

Results chain

Immediate outcomes

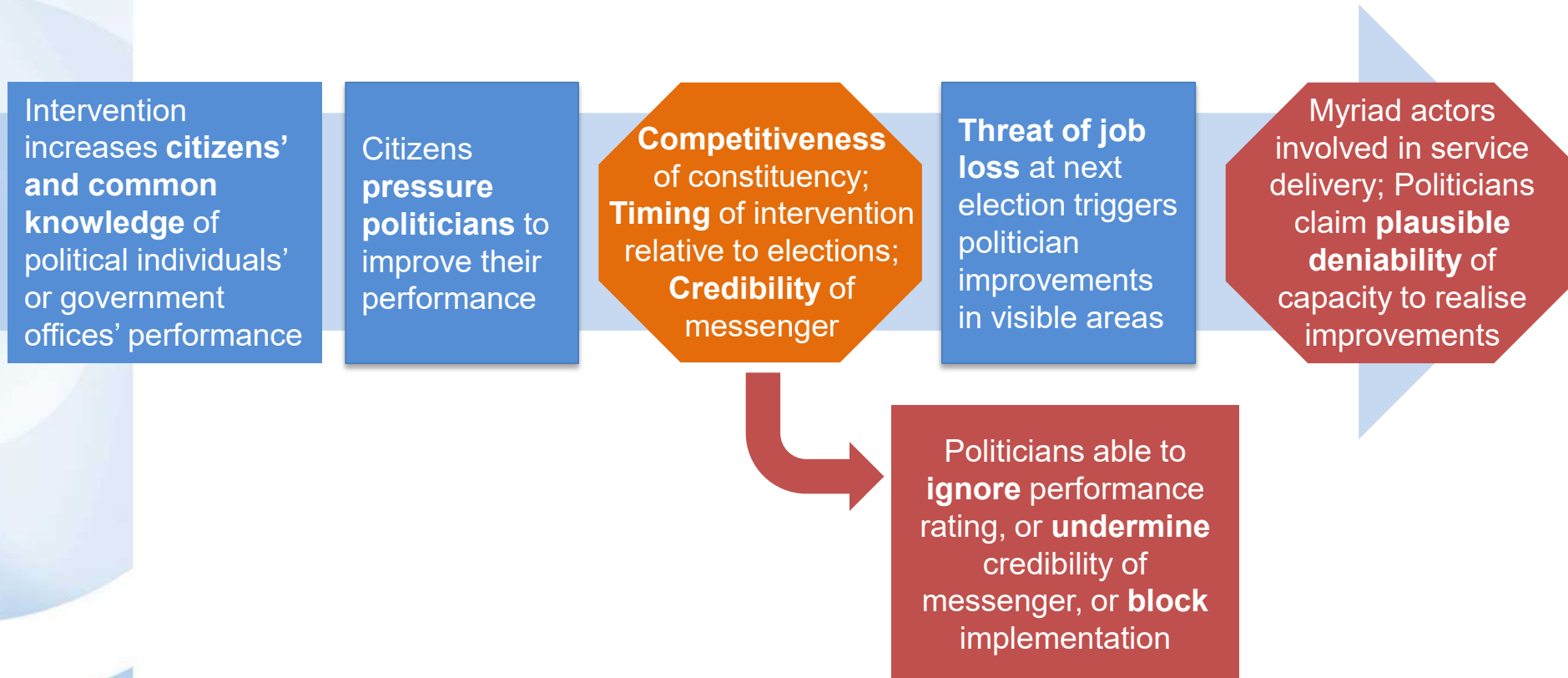
Intermediate outcomes

Final outcomes



Is the results chain simply too long to see effects on services?

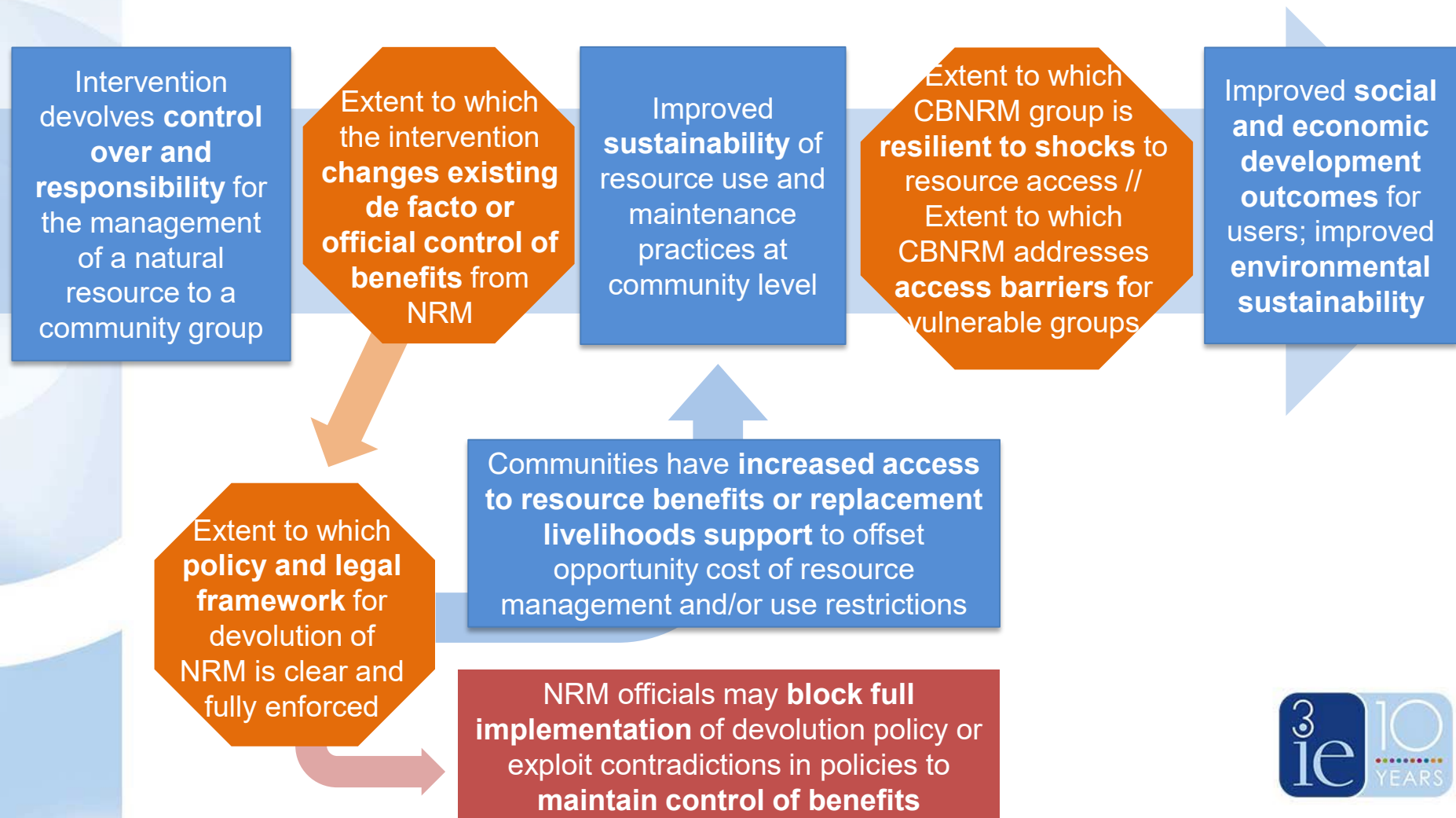
Performance information: simplified results chain



Citizen feedback and monitoring: simplified results chain



Community-based natural resource management: simplified results chain



Summary findings

1. Interventions promoting **citizen engagement** in public service delivery are often **effective at stimulating active citizenship and improving access to and quality of public services**.
2. However, implemented alone, these interventions **may not improve key well-being or “quality of life” outcomes** for target populations.
3. Interventions that aim to influence public service quality via pressure on politicians to improve performance are **only able to effect change in particular circumstances and not on service delivery**.
4. The **nature of the service targeted** is a key moderating factor:
 - A. Where services are **delivered by front-line staff**, citizen engagement tends to be **more effective** at sparking positive actions from service providers, and thus can effect impacts further down the causal chain.
 - B. Where services are **pure public goods** (e.g. roads infrastructure) that citizens access independently of service providers, it may be necessary to draw on **local social capital** and capacity for collective action.
 - C. Where the intervention involves devolution of **management of scarce resources** (land, water, forests) to community groups, there is a risk that management burdens are transferred to communities but **benefits of control are retained by public service officials**.



Implications for policy

Citizen engagement interventions usually effective in stimulating active citizenship and improving access to and quality of public services

The further along the causal chain, the smaller the impacts:

- Increasing well-being outcomes for target populations likely **requires more than citizen engagement interventions**, to overcome bottlenecks in public service supply chains and service use
- Similar finding to other programmes targeting citizens (e.g. CCTs)

Citizen engagement interventions were **less** successful where:

- They attempted to influence service delivery through the “**long route**” of increasing citizen pressures on politicians to improve public services
- They targeted the provision of a “**pure public good**” such as infrastructure



Implications for practice

Undertaking a **diagnostic during programme design** may help ensure that the targeted barrier to public service use and quality is accurately identified

Implementers should seek **buy-in for the intervention from service providers** at the point of service delivery

Working in partnership with **local civil society organisations** may strengthen citizens' voices, institutionalise practices and build local social capital through coalition-building

Without specific measures to facilitate **inclusion of vulnerable groups**, interventions may not realise equitable outcomes

Measures must be culturally appropriate



Implications for research

- Persistent problems in primary research
- More consistent consideration of **equity** (interventions and outcomes)
- Better reporting of what was actually **implemented**
- More transparent reporting of **planned analyses and problems in trial implementation**
- **Cost-effectiveness analysis** only reported in one (very early) study!
- Studies needed examining **longer-term effects**
- Synthesis research - 2 main types of SRs:
 - SRs oriented to answer questions about **specific interventions** (more useful for practice)
 - SRs oriented to answer questions about **broader mechanisms** (more useful for strategy)

Thank you



 3ieimpact.org

 [@3ieNews](https://twitter.com/3ieNews)

 [/3ieimpact](https://www.facebook.com/3ieimpact)

 [/3ievideos](https://www.youtube.com/3ievideos)

 [international-initiative-for-impact-evaluation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-initiative-for-impact-evaluation)

New Delhi

London

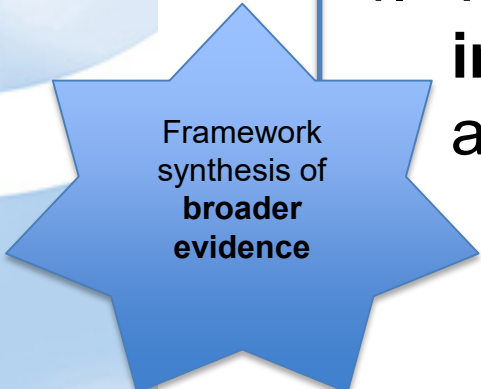
Washington, DC

Review questions



Statistical
meta-analysis
of rigorous
impact
evaluations

1. What are the effects of interventions that aim to strengthen participation and accountability mechanisms on participatory, inclusive, transparent or accountable **processes**?
2. What are the effects of PITA interventions on social and economic **wellbeing**?
3. How do effects vary by **population and location**?



Framework
synthesis of
**broader
evidence**

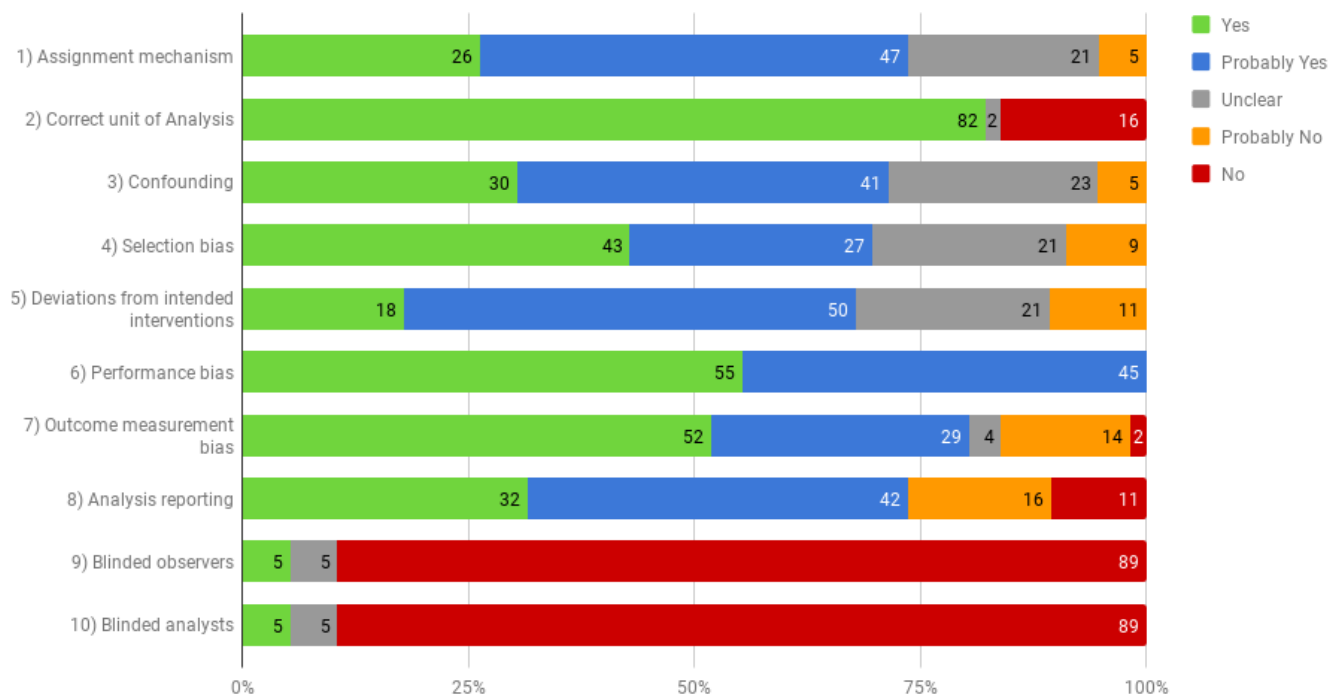
4. What factors relating to **programme design, implementation, context and mechanism** are associated with better outcomes?

Review inclusion criteria: summary

- **POPULATION:** public service users in low- and middle-income countries
- **INTERVENTION:** interventions promoting citizen participation and accountability in public services
- **COMPARISON:** standard access/ 'business as usual' public service provision
- **OUTCOME:** service access and use; wellbeing; state-society relations + user and provider engagement with governance intervention
- **STUDY DESIGNS:** rigorous impact evaluations (RCTs and quasi-experiments) + background literature on included programmes

Critical appraisal of included studies

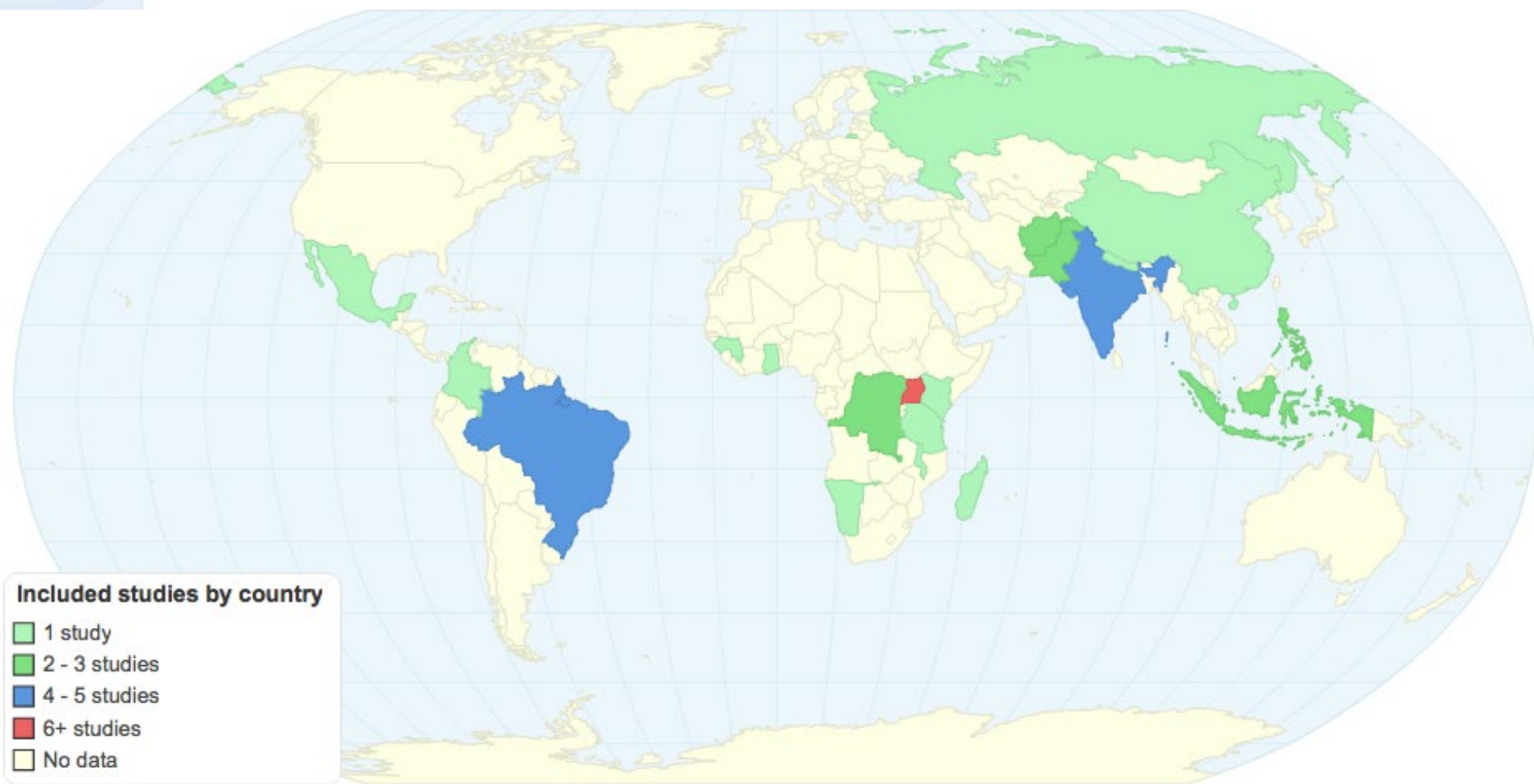
Risk of bias in **randomized studies (RCTs)**



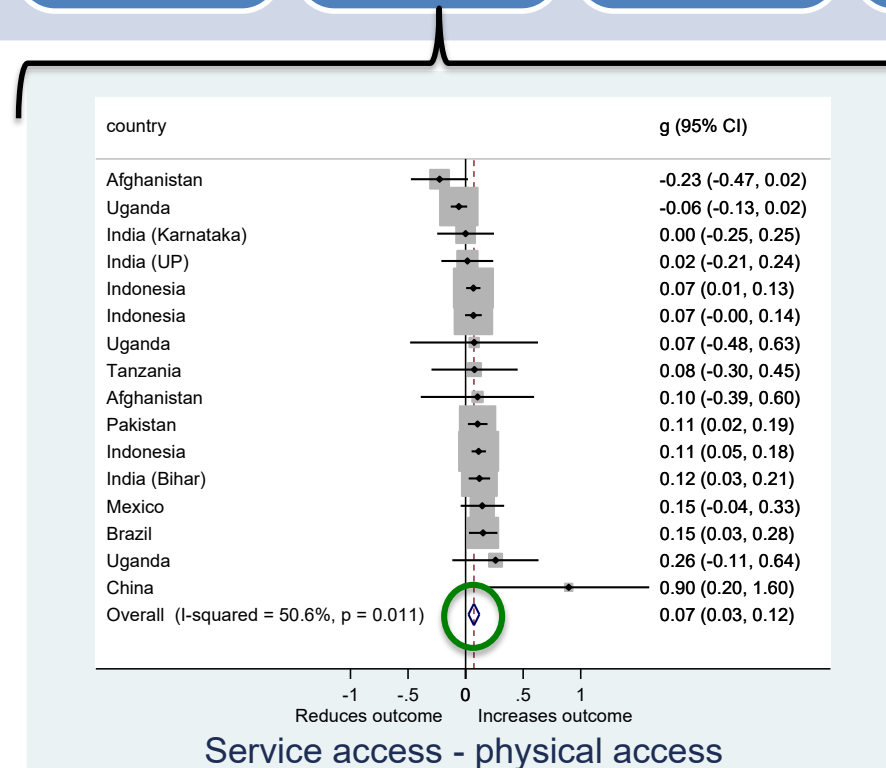
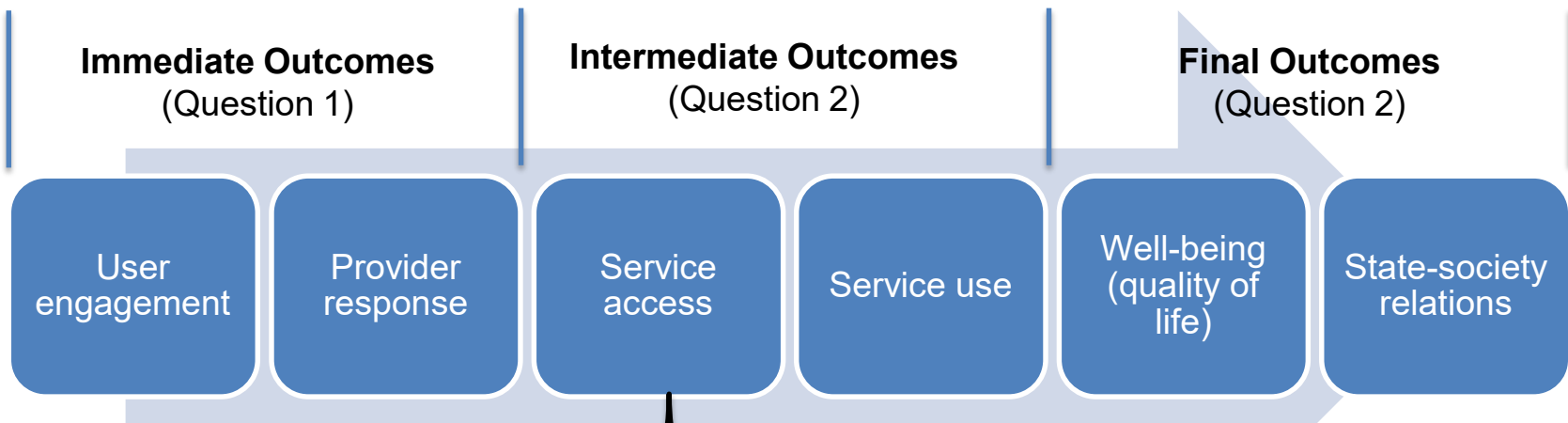
Risk of bias in **non-randomized studies**:

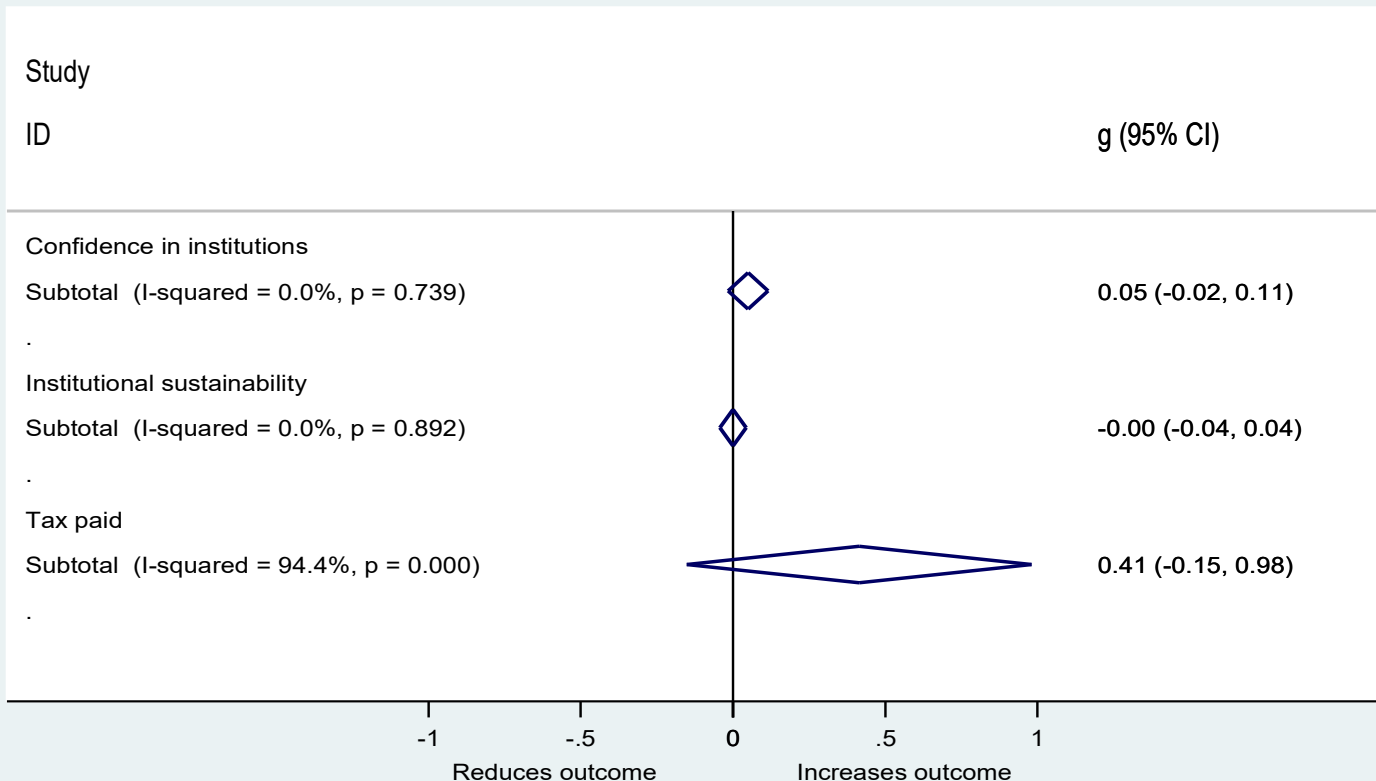
- Main issue is self-selection into the program or unclear selection process
- Most common methods to overcome confounding: panel data sets or difference-in-difference combined with statistical matching.
- But few 'natural experiments' with lower risk of bias

Geographic coverage of included studies



Access to services and wellbeing

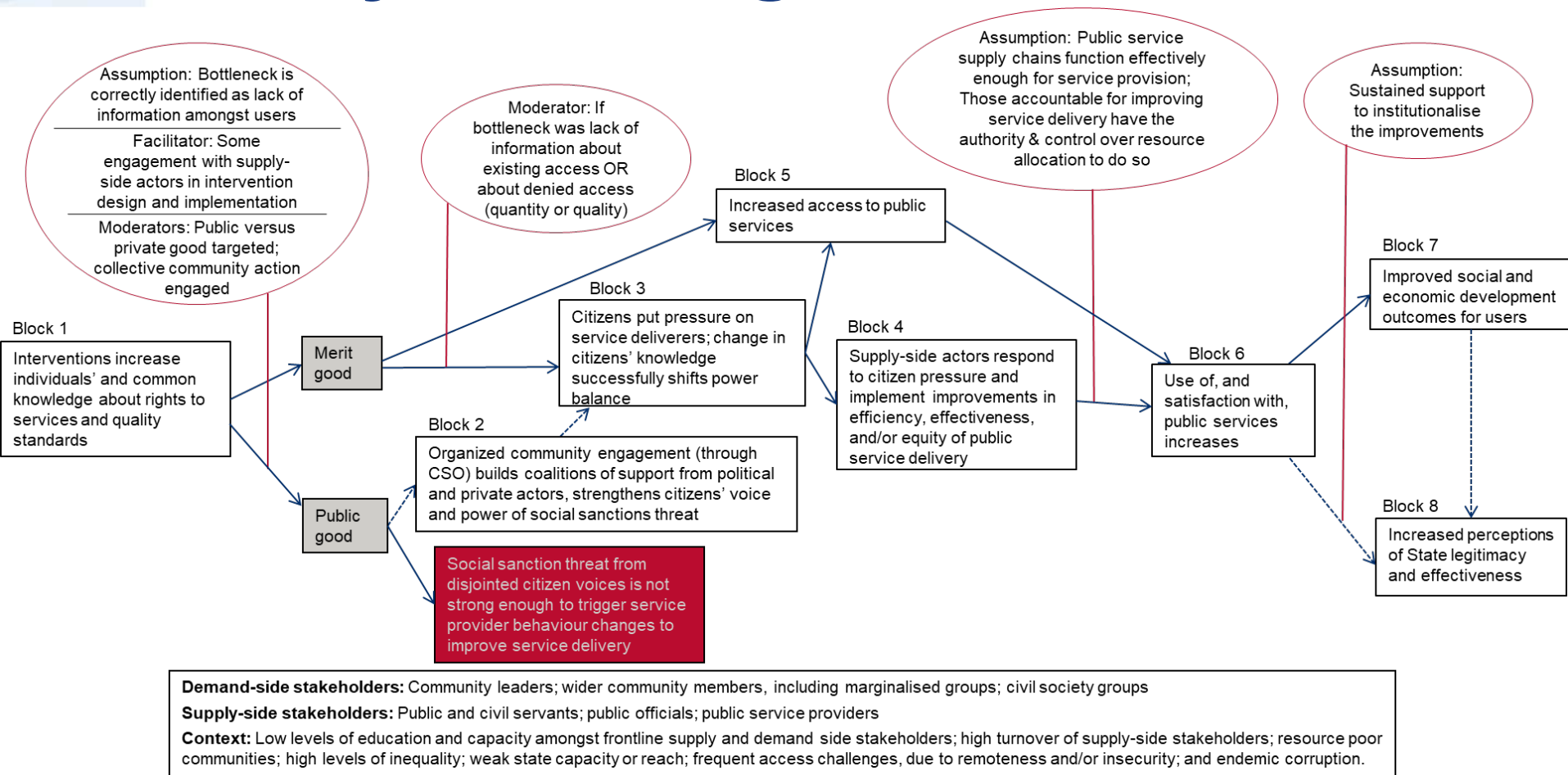




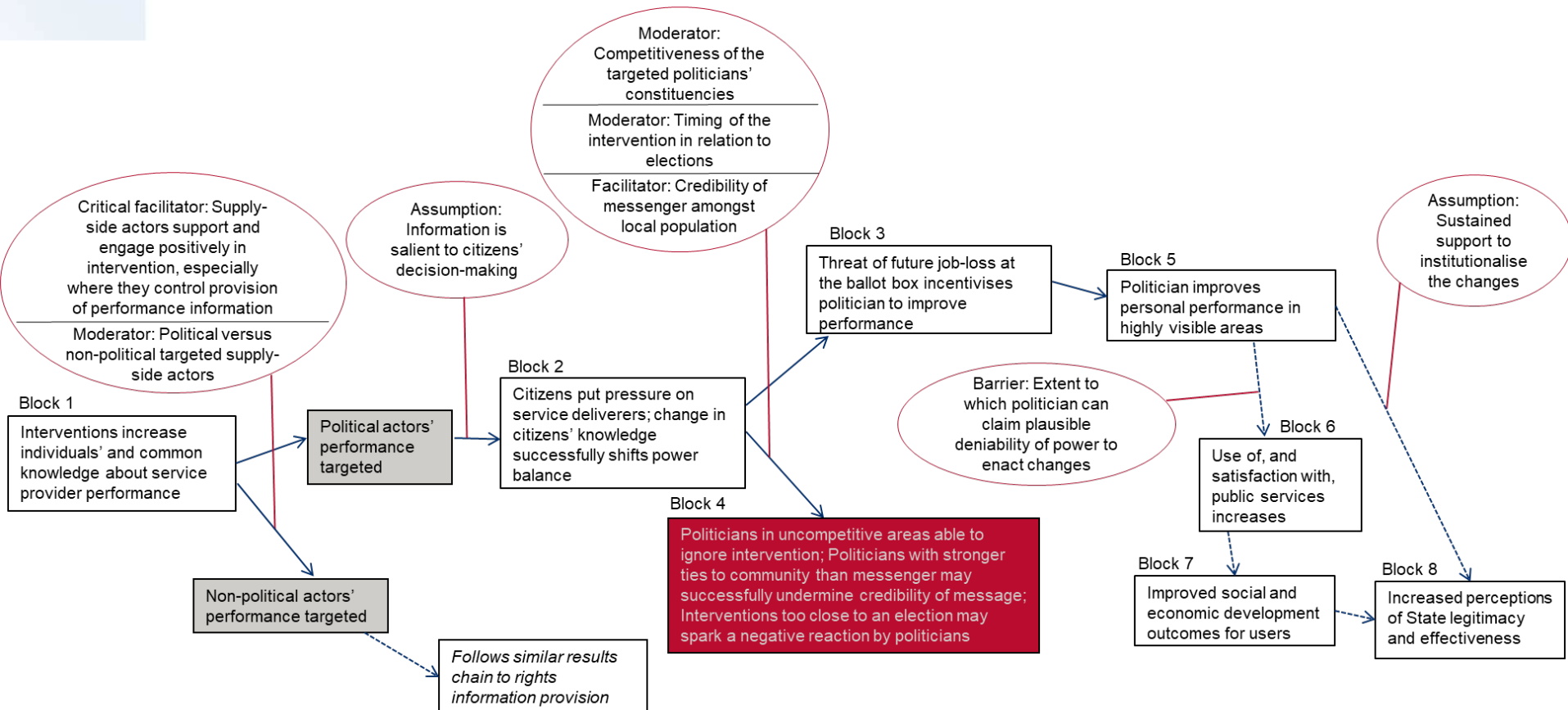
State society relations

Final Outcomes

Rights information provision: theory of change



Performance information provision: theory of change

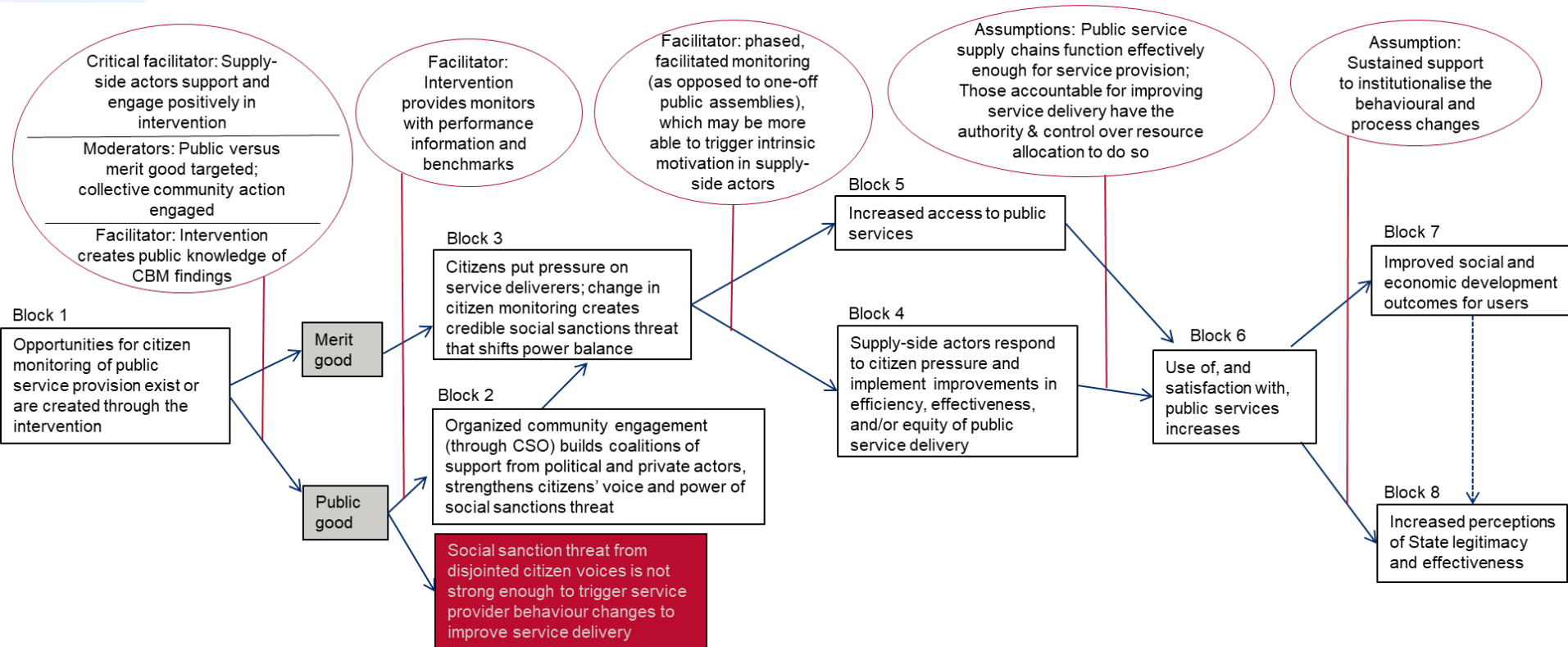


Demand-side stakeholders: Community leaders; wider community members, including marginalised groups; civil society groups

Supply-side stakeholders: Public and civil servants; public officials; public service providers

Context: Low levels of education and capacity amongst frontline supply and demand side stakeholders; high turnover of supply-side stakeholders; resource poor communities; high levels of inequality; weak state capacity or reach; frequent access challenges, due to remoteness and/or insecurity; and endemic corruption.

Citizen feedback and monitoring: theory of change

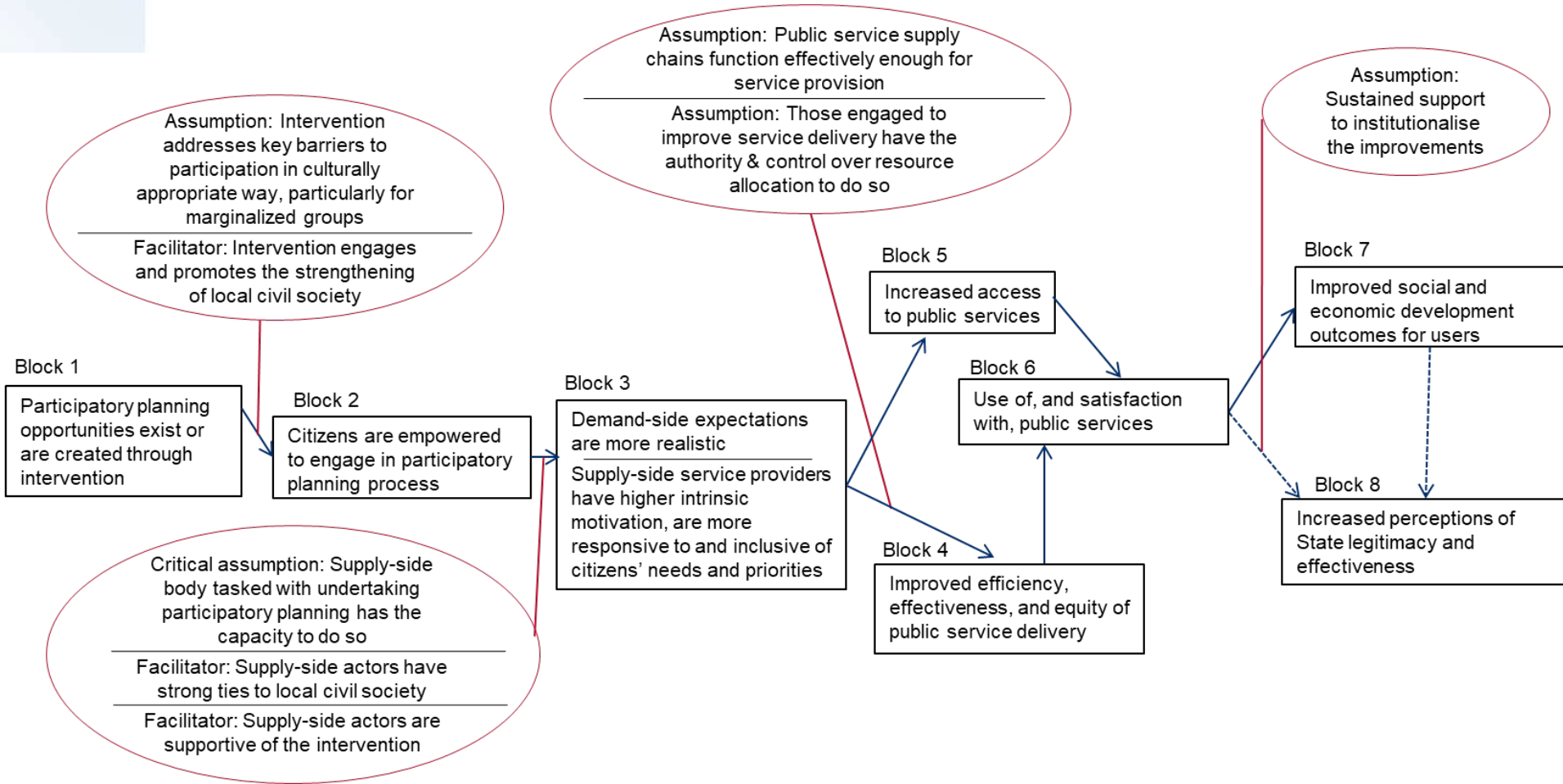


Demand-side stakeholders: Community leaders; wider community members, including marginalised groups; civil society groups

Supply-side stakeholders: Public and civil servants; public officials; public service providers

Context: Low levels of education and capacity amongst frontline supply and demand side stakeholders; high turnover of supply-side stakeholders; resource poor communities; high levels of inequality; weak state capacity or reach; frequent access challenges, due to remoteness and/or insecurity; and endemic corruption.

Participatory and inclusive planning: theory of change

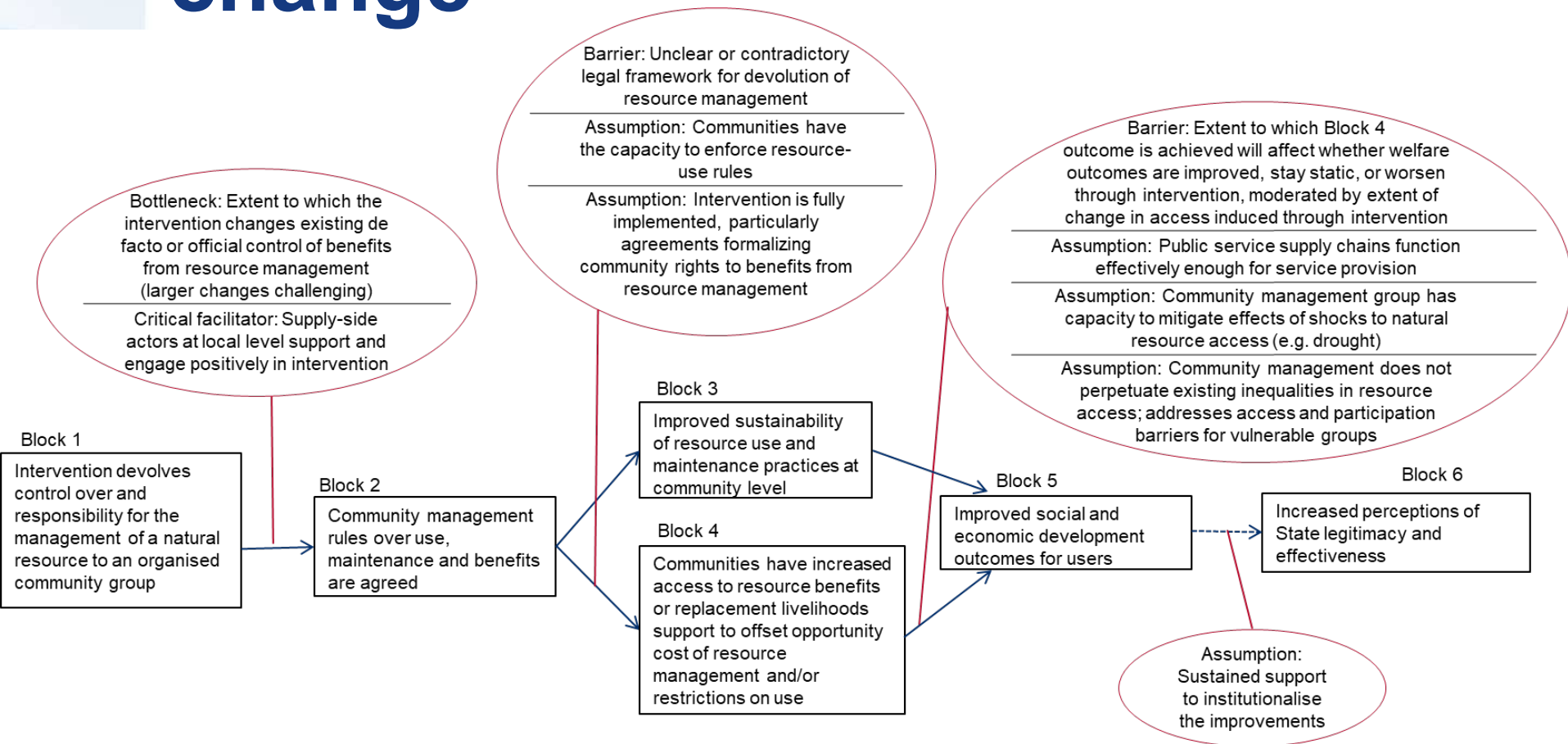


Demand-side stakeholders: Community leaders; wider community members, including marginalised groups; civil society groups

Supply-side stakeholders: Public and civil servants; public officials; public service providers

Context: Low levels of education and capacity amongst frontline supply and demand side stakeholders; high turnover of supply-side stakeholders; resource poor communities; high levels of inequality; weak state capacity or reach; frequent access challenges, due to remoteness and/or insecurity; and endemic corruption.

Community-based natural resource management: theory of change



Demand-side stakeholders: Community leaders; wider community members, including marginalised groups; civil society groups

Supply-side stakeholders: Public and civil servants; public officials; public service providers

Context: Low levels of education and capacity amongst frontline supply and demand side stakeholders; high turnover of supply-side stakeholders; resource poor communities; high levels of inequality; weak state capacity or reach; frequent access challenges, due to remoteness and/or insecurity; and endemic corruption.



Variation by population (question 3)

- 6 interventions incorporated mechanisms to include disadvantaged groups:
- All were implemented in vulnerable contexts (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uttar Pradesh, DRC, Malawi)
- These interventions had smaller impacts on citizen engagement and access to services on average, but sample size is v small to draw strong conclusion
- **Equity analysis:**
- Only 9 studies presented results for sub-groups of participants (men/women, poor/nonpoor)
- 1 study incorporated equity-oriented causal chain analysis to measure differential impacts
- **Geographical analysis:**
- Intervention focus by global region (EAP mainly rights and feedback; LAC mainly planning; SA largely planning and rights information; SSA largely performance info and feedback) (CBNRM in EAP and SSA)
- No systematic differences in effects across regions