ENHANCING CONFIDENCE IN CONTRIBUTION CLAIMS BY LOBBY AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

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Abstract
Evaluators, implementers, and financial partners are increasingly concerned about their confidence that contribution claims made by Lobby and Advocacy (L&A) programs are being confirmed. This paper draws lessons learnt from the evaluations of both international and national L&A efforts for which a Theory Based Evaluation (TBE) methodology was developed, inspired by Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis.

Glossary

BtB	Behind the Brands
CBFM	Community Based Forest Management
CDI	Centre for Development Innovation
CECOEDECON	Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (
CRI	Combine Resource Institute
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWM	Centre for Workers Management
ELSAM	Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy
FBC	Food and Beverage Company
GB	Great Brittan
GMS	Genetically Modified Seeds
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IP	Indigenous People
KKI-WARSI	Indonesian Conservation Community WARSI
L&A	Lobby and Advocacy
LSLA	Large Scale Land Acquisition
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNET	Network of Northeast Tribes
NTFP-EP	Non Timber Forest Products – Exchange Program Indonesia
MoH	Ministry of Health
OEPT	Outcome Explaining Process Tracing
REDS	Rural & Environment Development Society
TBE	Theory Based Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change

Setting the stage

Between 2011 and 2015, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs financed 20 Dutch NGO alliances with €1.9 billion to strengthen civil society in overseas countries and to reduce structural poverty. Most alliances jointly organised their mandatory external evaluation. This consisted of assessing impacts in eight countries with regards to: 1) Millennium Development Goals, 2) capacity development of their overseas partners, and 3) civil society (CS) strengthening by these partners using the CIVICUS framework[1], as well as a separate impact assessment of eight L&A programs. All evaluations included a base line study in 2012 and an end line assessment in 2014[2].

The Centre for Development Innovation (CDI) of Wageningen University and Research centre[3], together with evaluation partners in India and Indonesia assessed the CS component, including Lobby and Advocacy (L&A) contributions and two international campaigns implemented by Oxfam Novib. A theory-based evaluation (TBE) methodology was developed for this purpose.

This paper draws lessons with regards to this methodology that attempted to increase the confidence with which contribution claims can be confirmed or rejected. This first section presents the evaluation background, followed by a presentation of the evaluation methodology. The third draws lessons with regards to the methodology, followed by a discussion in the fourth section and conclusions in the last section.

Lobby and advocacy defined

L&A consists of a wide range of activities conducted to influence decision-makers or lobby targets in addressing structural causes of poverty and injustice. It challenges social, political, policy and power structures (Morariu and Brennan in: Barret et al, 2016). Important strategies often used are 'outsider strategies' (advocacy) that aim to mobilise the general public, that can be combined with 'insider strategies' (lobby) that search to engage directly with the decision-maker (Sloot and Gaanderse, 2010). L&A outcomes are formulated in terms of observable changes in the policies, practices, behaviours, relationships, actions, or mind-sets of an individual, group, community, organisation or institution (Wilson-Grau and Britt, 2012; Barret et al, 2016). The call for the international L&A evaluation specified three outcome categories: Those related to 1) setting the agenda of decision-makers; 2) policy changes and; 3) changing the practices of decision-makers.

Features of L&A projects

Ten overseas partners engaged in L&A efforts in India and Indonesia and two international campaigns. Annex 1 gives more background information on each project or campaign, and

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[1] The CIVICUS framework assesses the space for civil society to thrive in five dimensions; (inclusive) civic engagement; level of the organisational strength of civil society at large; practice of values; civil society impact, amongst which influencing public and private sector policies and practices and; the environmental context in which civil society operates (Mati J.M., Silva F. and Anderson T. April 2010).

[2] All evaluation reports can be found at https://partos.nl/joint-MFSII-evaluations

[3] CDI conducted capacity development assessments in India, Indonesia, Ethiopia and Liberia; civil society strengthening assessments in India, Indonesia and Ethiopia (29 programs) and the assessment of four international lobby and advocacy programs on economic justice. Given the political situation in Ethiopia, civil society organisations supported by foreign NGOs are not allowed to engage in L&A, explaining why potential L&A efforts were not assessed.

summarises the conclusions with regards to their contribution. The projects cover a wide range of issues, which are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Overview of the overseas partners and their attempts to achieve outcomes

Overseas partner/campaign	Outcomes
Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON)	Stop field trials with genetically modified seeds (GMO) Obtain minimum support prices for agricultural commodities
Rural & Environment Development Society (REDS)	More land titles and acreage for indigenous people (IP)
Centre for Workers Management (CWM)	Increase minimum wages in the garment sector
Network of Northeast Tribes (NNET)	Increase access to public schemes for IP
Combine Resource Institute (CRI)	Increase access to public health insurance scheme
Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM)	Amendment by National Parliament of the 2006 Indonesian Law on Witnesses and Victim Protection
Non Timber Forest Products – Exchange Program Indonesia (NTFP-EP)	Obtain forest concession rights and permits for IP
Indonesian Conservation Community WARSI (KKI-WARSI)	Obtain forest concession rights and permits for IP Mainstream Community Based Forest Management into provincial forestry policy
Oxfam Confederation	Reduce land grabbing irresponsible large scale land acquisitions (LSLA), by amongst others the International Finance Corporation Behind the Brands (BtB) campaign. Engage the ten biggest Food and Beverage Companies (FBC) in a 'race to the top' to mainstream gender in their value chains and stop land grabbing.

Evaluation results

Annex 1 also concludes that most L&A efforts are part of a causal package, in which they played a substantial role. In three projects there was no sufficient evidence of L&A activities explaining an outcome. The evaluation also yielded the following conclusions with regards to contribution.

In the first place, strong organisations are more successful: They are knowledgeable on the themes they address, they use appropriate L&A strategies and they avail of the legitimacy from their constituencies and lobby targets to act.

In the second place, changes in public and private sector agendas, policies and practices are often the result of L&A implemented before the period under evaluation. Likewise, interventions undertaken in the 2011-2015 period may not yet yield results before 2015, but after it.

In the third place, decision-makers themselves are occasionally part of the causal package because the agendas of both the project and its targets are already aligned to some extent. In these cases the distinction between cause and effect seems blurred, with special features of the effect (lobby target) also being part of the causal factor.

In the fourth place, L&A outcomes often are the result of nonlinear changes, requiring systemic approaches that involve many actors, and may depend upon triggering factors and context factors.

> **Oxfam's land grab campaign:**
> A trigger that helped this campaign to achieve outcomes with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) consisted of many CSOs and NGOs reaching out to the global media with a message that linked the IFC as an investor to an international corporation in Honduras, involved in human rights atrocities and land grabbing.

Evaluation methodology

The methodology was inspired by the evaluation questions in the calls for proposal and a literature review on TBEs, contribution analysis and process tracing. This section presents the evaluation questions and then continues with a contextual literature review, drawing upon it develop to the appropriate evaluation methodology.

Evaluation questions

In each call for proposals, the first two evaluation questions provided clarity on how to assess the effectiveness of CS and L&A efforts. Both calls formulated the first evaluation question in terms of:

'What are the changes achieved in ...... in the 2012-2014 period'

This question typically required the inventory of outcomes achieved with regards to CS strengthening for the in-country assessments and with regards to agenda setting, policy changes and changing practices for the international L&A programs.

Both calls differed however with regards to the second question, meant to address the effectiveness of the program:

- *'To what degree are the changes identified in CS attributable to the overseas partners, financed through the Dutch grant framework?'*
- *Do the international L&A efforts financed by the Dutch grant framework contribute to the identified changes?'*

Measuring 'attribution' for the CS component caused a debate in the Dutch evaluation community in early 2012. Both the interpretation of 'attribution' and the international debate on the 'gold standard' for impact evaluations prompted the evaluators to search for a counterfactual evaluation designs. This proved however impossible for CS, given the complex nature of changes in CS, as well as the absence of control groups: A TBE design was finally developed (Stern et al, 2012), assessing contributions.

In consequence, for both evaluations the central questions with regards to effectiveness can be subsumed in the following three interconnected evaluation questions:

- *'What were the outcomes achieved?'*
- *Did the L&A efforts financed by the Dutch grant framework contribute to these outcomes?*
- *How did these efforts make a difference?*

Literature review

The literature review in 2013 looked in particular at contribution analysis and process tracing as examples of TBE. Four issues were identified: the ultimate aim of TBEs; the selection of outcomes, and suggestions to increase the internal validity or confidence with which cause-effect relations can be confirmed or rejected.

The first issue highlights the aim of a TBE; to understand what works and what doesn't under what conditions and why (Beach & Pedersen, 2013; Collier, 2011; Mayne, 2012). Beach & Pederson (2013) distinguish three purposes for which process-tracing can be useful: 1) testing theories, 2) building theories and 3) explaining outcomes, which is a combination of theory-testing and building. This last Outcome-Explaining Process Tracing (OEPT) purpose seeks to identify a minimally sufficient explanation of a particular outcome in a particular case and it was aligned with the two evaluation questions above.

The second point is particularly relevant for outcome explaining evaluations and consists of warning evaluators against the bias of selecting only positive outcomes: Time, a deeper understanding of the context, and available resources often force evaluators to select some outcomes, hence potentially causing a bias (Stern et al., 2012; Patton, 2012; Oxfam GB, 2013; Wilson-Grau & Britt, 2012).

The third issue is about the Theory of Change (ToC). Mayne (2012, p. 27), Oxfam GB (2013), and White and Phillips (2012, p. 30) re-construct the ex-ante ToC, whereas OEPT constructs an ex-post causal mechanism for outcomes achieved (Beach & Pedersen, 2013)[4]. Both approaches though, be they ex-ante or ex-post, aim at identifying explanatory causes for the outcomes achieved.

The fourth issue addresses how the confidence level in contribution claims can be raised, which happens to be a major concern for qualitative impact evaluations. Stern et al. (2012) suggest in the first place that data should be rigorous, traceable, and credible, before they can be admitted as a piece of evidence. The following suggestions further increase the validity of contribution claims:

- *Identifying causal inference beyond statistical correlations:* Stern et al (2012) conclude that most development interventions are part of a causal package that includes other actors and factors that together are minimally sufficient to explain an effect. Within that causal package the role of the intervention needs to be further specified. Stern et al (2012), Mayne (2012)[5], Beach and Pederson (2013) all differentiate cause-effect relations in terms of causes being necessary and/or sufficient for the explanation of an effect[6].

- *Bayesian theorem and process-tracing tests*: Process-tracing explicitly makes use of Bayesian logic and works with tests that help to orient data collection towards those that have a strong potential to confirm or reject contribution claims: It is not the quantity of evidence collected that is important, but its quality (Bennet, 2008). Bayesian logic expresses the confidence evaluators have in the collected evidence to explain or reject a causal claim in a percentage: If confidence is higher after data collection than before, the probability that the causal claim exists has increased (Beach and Pederson, 2013, page 83). Also the tests orient data-collection on beforehand and help to assess the strength of pieces of evidence found afterwards (Collier, 2011; van Evera, in Beach and Pederson, 2013, page 103).

> **Process-tracing tests**
> **Doubly-decisive test:** If evidence has been found it confirms the causal relation *and* eliminates alternative explanations. If it has not been found the relation is being rejected.
> **Hoop test**: If evidence has been found, the causal relation still needs to be taken into consideration, but it has not been confirmed. If evidence is missing the causal relation is rejected.
> **Smoking gun test:** If evidence is found it confirms the causal relation, but if it is not found than the causal relation is not confirmed, nor rejected.
> **Straw-in-the-wind test**: If evidence is found, it does not confirm the causal relation; if it is not found this does not reject the causal relation.

- *Typology of data to be collected*: Beach and Pedersen (2013) emphasize that pattern, sequence, trace and account evidence in particular help to assess causal inference.

This review informed the design of the methodology, which combined both elements of contribution analysis and OEPT. In line with OEPT and the first evaluation question, an inventory was made of all

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[4] For practical reasons we understand causal mechanism as a part of relations in a wider ToC
[5] Not yet elaborated in Mayne in 2008
[6] The concept of necessary and sufficient causes has been developed since the late 70[ties], and recently gained the further interest of qualitative researchers

outcomes achieved, an ex-post ToC was constructed for selected outcomes, and an explicit step was built in to first reflect on data needed to confirm or reject causal claims. After data collection the analysis however did not use the process tracing tests, but looked at causes being necessary and/or sufficient for the explanation of an outcome which is more akin to contribution analysis. The following section presents the evaluation methodology used.

Evaluation methodology used
The following describes the methodology that guided the evaluations.

Step 1: Select outcome (cluster) for contribution analysis. All evaluations started with the inventory of outcomes achieved between 2011 and 2014, including a precise description and evidence. For the country evaluations, selection criteria were developed on beforehand to prevent a bias towards positive outcomes[7]. For the global campaigns, the relevance of the outcome in the ToC was an important criteria for the land grab campaign. The BtB in-depth assessment included all outcomes achieved, including non-expected outcomes, with the FBCs.

Step 2: Construct the Theory of Change: An ex-post ToC was constructed to explain the outcome (cluster), including the causal pathway of the project and alternative pathways.

Step 3: Identify data needed to confirm or reject causal pathways. The evaluators were asked to behave as detectives, urging them to identify those data needed to confirm or reject causal relations, including pattern, sequence, trace or account evidence.

Based upon project documents, also an analysis was made of major outputs realised and outcomes achieved for the CS projects.

Step 4: Collect data. Interviews, workshops with the overseas partners and project documentation provided the first data sets. External resource persons provided the second set of data. In principle no interviews were organised with lobby targets, because the risk of obtaining biased information was considered high (Wilson-Grau and Britt, 2012) and because an evaluator might harm existing relations and processes between the campaigners and their targets. Internet searches provided the third data sets, helping to understand the context and identify other actors engaged in the change.

Step 5: Organise data and assess their quality. All data were compiled in a table listing all possible causal pathways and then classifying them in terms of confirming or rejecting these pathways. Data were also classified in terms of providing rigorous, traceable and credible information, according to a traffic light system (Inspired by Delahais and Toulemonde, 2012)**.**

Table 2
Organisation of information collected per causal pathway

Causal pathway (project and alternatives)	Information that confirms (parts of) this pathway		Information that rejects (parts of) this pathway	
Pathway 1	**Information 1**	Source of information	**Information 1**	Source of information
Pathway 2	**Information 1**	Source of information	**Information 1**	Source of information

[7] Due to resource only 50 % of the overseas partners underwent an in-depth impact assessment, for the others the outcome harvesting method (Wilson-Grau, 2012) was used. For those included in the assessment, a maximum of two outcomes were selected, of which at least one was the result of L&A in India and Indonesia. Finally the selected outcome also had to be relevant with regards to Dutch funding and the organisation's ToC.

Pathway 3	**Information 1**	Source of information	**Information 1**	Source of information

Source: Inspired by Oxfam GB, 2013

Step 6: Explaining the outcome(s) achieved. This step assessed the causal relations between different parts in the ToC in terms of being necessary or unnecessary causes, and/or being a sufficient or insufficient cause. One additional relation was added, that of causes being unnecessary and insufficient.

Step 7: Assess the contribution and role of the project and Dutch funding. With the outcome having been explained in the previous step, here the role of the overseas partner in that explanation was answered in terms of being sufficient, necessary or part of a causal package, followed by the specification of its role in the package. The last step consisted of assessing the contribution of Dutch funding had to be assessed, given financial contributions by other partners.

With this seven-step methodology we started the contribution analysis. The following section presents our experiences and lessons learned.

Increasing confidence in contribution claims
The aforementioned methodology helped to increase the confidence with which contribution claims were accepted or rejected, but also faced several challenges. This section first explains what worked, what challenges were encountered with regards to the methodology and with regards to the nature of L&A.

What worked to increase confidence in contribution claims
Three elements enhanced our confidence in the contribution claims:

Clustering outcomes to compare contributions made (step 1): Some projects listed many outcomes achieved. Examples of these are KKI-WARSI (18 outcomes), Oxfam's land grab (20 outcomes[8]) and BtB campaign (25 outcomes). Clustering of outcomes that would be the result of the same pathway helped to compare differences in the cause-effect relations. KKI-WARSI for example succeeded to obtain district permits for forest dependent communities to manage their own natural resources in 9 of the 16 villages within the 2011-2014 period: Delays in the other 7 villages were explained by a different political will of the districts involved. This comparison confirmed KKI-WARSI's contribution provided that districts have a political will in line with the project.

First explain the outcome then assess the role of the project (step 6 and 7): First explaining outcomes and then assessing the role of the project helped to reject contributions for two projects. CRI claimed to have increased the number of people becoming eligible for the insurance scheme of the Ministry of Health through its support to an online media platform for citizen journalism and advocacy. The outcome was however explained by the collaborative efforts of many different actors, but not by CRI's platform. REDS claimed to have increased the number of land titles for IP, but the data collected highlighted that IP themselves and a more conducive environment by the government explained the outcome.

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[8] The exact number of outcomes is unknown, because we were unable to track all outcomes related to this campaign in the 90 offices that the Oxfam Confederation has.

Taking a critical stance towards causal claims: The country teams were trained on the methodology after they had only collected insider information and constructed an ex-post ToC. At that moment in time, their confidence in the project explaining the outcome was already at 70 % according to the Bayesian theorem, leaving little room to increase it after data collection. The critical stance of the evaluation team were enhanced by the introduction of a practical rule of thumb: the more confidence the evaluators had in the project explaining the outcomes, the harder they had to concentrate on finding evidence to prove the contrary.

Over time, teams developed their skills to behave as detectives: Becoming more acquainted with the context and the issue under evaluation enhanced their ability to identify alternative explanations. Also the identification of data needed (step 3) became more helpful. Teamwork was critical to develop this critical stance. Looking another time to the evidence generated we may conclude that increasingly data collection was oriented to those that could pass or fail a smoking gun test or a hoop test. Table 2 helped to organise the evidence available and to draw conclusions.

> **Bibhu Prasad Mohapatra:**
> '*In this process the greatest learning for the evaluator is to get out of the counterfactual/ correlational definition of what is scientifically proximate to the quantitative/statistical methods of impact outcome. The TBE opens up a variety of paths and combinations to explain adequately contribution analysis with sufficient robustness*'

Methodological challenges

Enhancing the confidence in contribution claims is challenged by the identification of alternative pathways, by data collection and by establishing the relation between the contribution made for a particular outcome and the project's effectiveness.

Alternative pathways: For some projects, evaluation teams could identify many alternative pathways and asked themselves where to stop. For some projects it was difficult to identify alternative pathways and the only alternative explanation consisted of the contribution claim being rejected or being part of a causal package with other actors and factors.

Data collection: Both insider and outsider information are indispensable for increasing confidence in contribution claims as well is the iterative character of the evaluation process.
The collection of insider information in India and Indonesia was partially hampered by the overseas partners having hardly been involved in the commissioning of the entire evaluation program[9], limiting their sense of ownership to the evaluation. Project documents and reports did not always contain relevant information for the evaluators, such as reflections on the effectiveness of L&A strategies practiced. The information provided about the BtB campaign is an exception to this observation, because interview minutes with lobby targets were made available, as well as internal assessments of past L&A efforts, and social media data to monitor its outreach to consumers.
The collection of *outsider information* from in particular other CSOs was relatively easy but often biased in favour of the overseas partner. Occasionally it was difficult to obtain information from CSOs that took a critical but informed stance. The consultation of government officials however proved to be difficult in India and Indonesia, because of the strict public sector protocols they have to follow and because overseas partners tend to not maintain relations with those officials once the project

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[9] In particular that of the CIVICUS framework which became mandatory only after the Dutch NGOs and their partners overseas had already successfully applied for the Dutch grant framework.

has ended. Contacting public sector officials in European countries for the Oxfam campaigns was less difficult, but that of resource persons close to lobby targets was problematic.

The internet proved a valuable source of information for in particular the international campaigns and to a lesser extent for the Indian and Indonesian projects.

Assessing contribution in practice is not a linear but an iterative approach: Additional data requirements may pop up after a first round of data collection. In India and Indonesia, traveling distances to the project locations were often long and time consuming, and online communication with the projects was occasionally challenging. This hampered the iterative collection of data and their analysis.

From contribution to effectiveness: The criteria set to select outcomes for contribution analysis as well as clustering outcomes helped to prevent biases occurring in some projects and hence also helped to draw conclusions with regards to their effectiveness, as requested in the call for proposals. However, occasionally there was a discrepancy between contribution findings and the project's effectiveness. For example CWM successfully supported one trade union in the garment sector to lobby the government to increase the minimum wages in the sector. It supports however some 40 other trade unions for which no outcomes were reported.

Challenges in evaluating L&A

The complex nature of cause-effect relations in L&A projects also highlighted three methodological challenges.

Lobby targets are black boxes what do they contribute? The first section already mentioned that occasionally lobby targets themselves are part of the causal package, hence making cause-effect relations blurred. The methodology did not foresee interviews with lobby targets, assuming a bias in answers given and the possible interference of the evaluator in project – lobby target relations: Little information has become available about these targets themselves, turning them into a black box. On one occasion such inside information became available after the evaluation, nuancing the findings of the project's contribution.

Insider strategies, difficult to assess: Many L&A projects use both insider and outsider strategies to influence their lobby targets. Except for Oxfam's BtB campaign, it was difficult to obtain insider information that helped to assess the extent to which lobbying was successful. Progress reports usually present outputs and occasionally outcomes achieved, but do not report on lessons learned with regards to insider strategies. Oxfam's meeting minutes and internal assessments by lobbyists themselves provided the information necessary.

Suitability of outcomes for contribution analysis: Most outcomes identified consisted of policy changes and changes in their implementation by the lobby target. The most obvious reason for this is the emphasis on clearly defined outcomes achieved, together with the existence of evidence. Therefore more subtle changes, such as those in agenda-setting, may have been overlooked.

Another category of outcomes that might not be suitable for the methodology used, unless major financial resources are available, consists of those global L&A processes that engage many actors, as was the case with the first draft version of the new safeguards of the World Bank that Oxfam tried to influence.

Discussion

This section positions our methodological experiences with more recent publications related to TBE and to the evaluation of L&A efforts.

Process tracing and contribution analysis

The past few years have seen an increased emphasis on enhancing the confidence in contribution claims through configurational and generative evaluation approaches, introducing a shift from assessing impact to confidence (Befani and Mayne, 2014; Befani and Stedman-Bryce, 2016). Punton and Welle (2015) published a process tracing evaluation protocol and Befani and Stedman-Bryce (2016) merged contribution analysis with process tracing, with 'contribution tracing' being coined as a new methodology.

Our methodology could have gained in rigor by assessing the plausibility of the ToC prior to data collection (Befani and Mayne, 2014) and by further specifying the identification of data needed to confirm or reject pathways (step 3). Befani and Stedman-Bryce (2016) clearly make a distinction into data needs that confirm what one would expect-to-see (Hoop test) and those that one would love-to-see (Smoking gun test). Whereas the first type of data would confirm an explanation but not rule out others, the second type would confirm an explanation and decrease the confidence in others.

Some of our pending questions also appear in recent literature: We first made an inventory of outcomes realised. Most researchers however first identify the contribution claim, take this as the default pathway and only later address alternative explanations (Mayne, 2012; Befani and Mayne, 2014; Befani and Stedman-Bryce, 2016). This would be in line with theory-testing process tracing instead of OEPT, and it would further strengthen the relation between the impact assessment and the program effectiveness according to Punton and Welle (2015b). Their examples however do not support this: they are in line with our methodology of first identifying outcomes realised and treating alternative explanations on equal footing with that of the intervention, not excluding their rejection as an explanation of the outcome. According to them process tracing is not possible if no outcomes are achieved, qualifying process tracing as an ex-post evaluation method.

Evaluating L&A

This section reflects upon the three challenges encountered with regards to the nature of L&A projects: Lobby targets remaining a black box; insider strategies difficult to assess and; not all outcomes being suitable for an impact assessment based upon our methodology

Lobby targets are black boxes. Tsui, Hearn, and Young (2014) mention two methods that could possibly increase access to information on lobby targets. These are a story telling method developed by Action Aid, which looks similar to Outcome Harvesting (Wilson-Grau & Britt, 2012) and the Bellwether method (Blair; in Tsui, Hearn, and Young, 2014). Both seek to interview experts or those close to the lobby target. Similar efforts were made by the evaluation teams, but frequently public sector officials and those in multi-lateral institutions were not eager to provide inside information. Getting more insight into lobby targets remains a challenge.

Insider strategies difficult to assess. Jones (2011) confirms our challenges encountered with systematic data collection through lobbyists themselves. The most helpful information to track consists of lobbyists recording meetings, tracking people, interviewing key informants and probing influence. These data usually do not appear in regular progress reports of L&A projects.

Developmental Evaluation (Patton, 2012) and Outcome Mapping (Earl, Carden and Smutylo, 2001) could support the evaluation of insider strategies, provided that lobbyists engage in a regular critical reflection on what worked and what not (Tsui and Lucas B, 2013).

Suitability of outcomes for impact assessment though our methodology. Our evaluation methodology possibly has overlooked more subtle outcomes related to agenda-setting. Outcome mapping steps, in particular setting behavioural markers could have complemented the first step of our methodology; the identification of outcomes (Earl, Carden and Smutylo, 2001; Jones, 2011).
Outcomes of global influencing processes such as the publication of the first draft of the new safeguards by the World Bank would benefit from an additional social network analysis (Tsui and Lucas, 2013); a major challenge however consists of conducting a baseline and end line analysis (Tsui, Hearn and Young, 2014), because actors step in and out the influencing process at different times.

Future directions for evaluating L&A impact
Our experiences with the evaluation methodology that combined process tracing and contribution analysis elements made us realise that we could enhance our confidence in contribution claims by clustering outcomes that were the result of one pathway and by taking a critical stance towards the claim before data gathering.
Clustering outcomes enabled us to assess under what conditions cause-effect relations exist and when not. When these relations are at the centre of the project, they help to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the L&A programs; but we also highlighted the possible discrepancies based upon our methodology of explaining outcomes and that of concluding about effectiveness.
The critical stance was most reflected during the formulation of the ToC (step 2), immediately including alternative explanations, in explicitly including step 3 to first reflect upon data needed that are strong enough to confirm or reject a pathway and in the analysis done in step 5. These steps could have gained in quality if we would have assessed the plausibility in the ToC prior to data collection and if we would have elaborated further guidance for step 3 to identify data that would pass the Hoop or Smoking Gun test.
We also encountered challenges with regards to data collection and concluded that it is in particular difficult to obtain information from lobby targets and about insider L&A strategies.

The confidence in contribution claims by future L&A projects could be increased through the following:
- Where possible a baseline study would already include a plausibility assessment of the ex-ante ToC and identify other actors and factors that are attempting to influence the same lobby targets on similar issues. For more subtle outcomes, progress markers could be developed in line with Outcome Mapping.
- Monitoring systems should preferably be able to take stock of (intermediate) outcomes achieved and of L&A strategies: They should in particular document insider strategies, and track changes with regards to other actors and factors that influence decision makers. Where necessary a developmental evaluator could support such critical reflections.
- The ex-post evaluation, taking into account ~~our~~ lessons learned and incorporating new insights, would be built upon the information already mobilised through the baseline and monitoring system, and would assess these against information obtained from critical friends, experts and those close to the lobby targets.

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Annex 1: Description of the L&A projects and results

Organisations evaluated

India

CECOEDECON organised farmers in 500 village committees and federating structures at district and state level in Rajasthan. The evaluation focussed on two L&A outcomes: one consisting of genetically modified seed (GMS) trials being stopped by the state, and the other being the establishment of three procurement centres at district level that purchase local agricultural produce against minimum support prices fixed by the government.

REDS in Tumkur district of Karnataka state supports the creation of an indigenous people (IP) movement with the establishment of 1,000 IP village councils and similar structures at higher administrative levels including an IP parliament at state level. The evaluation team focused on the land titles obtained by the movement.

CWM supports 41 trade unions of people mainly working in the informal sector, such as the garment, domestic and plantation sector. The evaluation concentrated on CWM's support to a trade union defending the interests of mainly women working in the garment sector in Karnataka state.

NNET is a collaboration between several religious organisations that defends the rights of tribal communities in three states of India since 2007. Its contribution to increase tribal communities' access to government schemes and programs was assessed.

Indonesia
CRI promotes citizen journalism and advocacy through the formation of community forums, followed by community radios and their integration in an online media platform. The online forum's contribution to increasing the number of people becoming eligible for the insurance schemes of the Ministry of Health was assessed.

ELSAM is a human rights organisation that positions itself as a resource and information centre. Its contribution to the amendment by National Parliament in October 2014 of the 2006 Indonesian Law on Witnesses and Victim Protection was assessed.

NTFP-EP promotes forest conservation through the empowerment of forest dependent communities. The evaluators assessed its contribution to the endorsement by districts of natural resource maps and development plans made by local communities in four villages.

Indonesian Conservation Community WARSI (KKI-WARSI) promotes Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) as a strategy to grant indigenous people forest concession rights. The assessment concentrated on KKI-WARSI having been able to mainstream CBFM into West Sumatra Province's forestry policy, as well having been able to support indigenous people in 9 out of the targeted 16 villages in obtaining village forest concession permits from three districts.

Global
The Oxfam Confederation's global land grab campaign aimed to reduce irresponsible large scale land acquisitions (LSLA) by, amongst others, companies and investors. Oxfam's contribution to the International Finance Corporation (IFC) changing its lending policies and regulations with regards LSLA was assessed.

Its second campaign was the Behind the Brands (BtB) campaign, which engages the world's ten biggest Food and Beverage Companies (FBC) in a 'race to the top' to improve their policies and practices with regards to gender, land acquisitions and other themes. The evaluation assessed Oxfam's contribution with regards to gender mainstreaming and to stopping land grabbing in the value chains of these FBCs.

Evaluation findings

Table 3
Results of the impact assessment

Organisation involved in L&A	Nature of the outcome	Pathways of the organisation/alternative pathways	Contribution explained by:	Explaining factors of contribution
CECOEDECON	• Improved access public services • GMS trails stopped by State Government	1. CECOEDECON 2. The movement it supports 3. Other actors and factors	Causal package of 1 and 2	1. Charismatic leadership CECOEDECON 2. 30 years of movement building
REDS	More land titles for IPs given by district government	1. L&A by REDS with IP movement and others 2. IP movement itself 3. Conducive environment by	Causal package of 2 and 3 and not by REDS	1. 30 years of movement support. 2. REDS less effective

		state itself.		because changed its orientation.
CWM	State Government increases minimum wages in garment sector	1. Non-traditional trade unions + CWM 2. International pressure[10] 3. Government itself	Causal package of 1 and other actors	1. Most significant support by CWM dates from 2008. 2. Trade unions are very powerful
NNET	Improved access to public services	1. Para Legal Personnel trained by NNET 2. Other organisations 3. Government and village councils 4. Better roads and communications	1 provides sufficient but not necessary relation	1. Only performing PLP make contributions 2. NNET's organisational performance is still weak
CRI	More people have access to public health insurance scheme of Ministry of Health (MoH)	1. Public pressure built up by CRI's online platform of community radios 2. Insider L&A strategy by CRI with others 3. MoH itself	2 is a causal package of mainly other actors:	1. Doubts about outcome being achieved: 2. CRI's role through the platform is rejected
ELSAM	Revised Law on Witnesses and Victim Protection approved	1. ELSAM providing information a draft law to an NGO-CSO coalition 2. Human right victims taking the initiative with the coalition without ELSAM 3. Government led Human Rights commission lobbying parliament	Causal package of 1. ELSAM as a member of the NGO-CSO coalition	1. ELSAM has legitimacy of both the Government and civil society 2. Law adopted just before election time
NTFP-EP	4 CBFM plans endorsed by districts			Outcomes not realised
KKI-WARSI	9/16 village forest concession permits delivered by three districts	1. KKI-Warsi's support to village communities 2. Other NGOs 3. Districts perceives net benefits of village concessions vis-à-vis private sector concessions	Causal package of 1 and 3 And previous L&A activities by KKI-WARSI for legal village concessions	1. Village communities do heavily rely upon external support 2. KKI-WARSI has the technical knowledge and legitimacy
Oxfam's land grab	IFC changes its regulations with regards to investments provided to corporation for large scale land acquisitions directly or through financial intermediary organisations.	1. NGO's including Oxfam use public pressure and directly engage 2. Internal accountability systems within IFC redress the situation 3. Oxfam's original land freeze	Causal package between 1, 2 and 3. And an external triggering factor	1. Oxfam is respected by many actors including the World Bank. 2. Association of the IFC with human rights atrocities around land in Honduras was a trigger.
Oxfam's Behind the Brands campaign	1. 3 FBCs commit and act to integrate gender in the cocoa value chain 2. 4 FBCs commit and act to zero-land grabbing	1. A combination of interventions by Oxfam 2. Other actors and factors	1, in combination +Feasibility of Oxfam's requests + FBC being known by consumers (branding)	BtB themes addressed and BtB approach were rather unique

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[10] In 2013, an 8 store garment factory collapsed in Bangladesh, causing an international upheaval.