Research Design

March 2014

Content

Abbreviations

BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DC	Development Cooperation
EFA	Education for All
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
refie	Research for Inclusive Education in International Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1 Goals of the Research Project

The Education for All (EFA) – Fast Track Initiative (FTI) (now: Global Partnership for Education GPE) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 and 3 call for free, compulsory, and quality elementary education for all children and young people. However, according to the last UNESCO World Education Report (2013/14), 57 million children and young people worldwide still do not go to school and some 774 million adults cannot read nor write. The international community unanimously stated that inclusive education is a key strategy for bringing education to everyone (UNESCO, 1994, 2009). Within a global context, inclusion in education is seen as a process which looks at the different educational needs of children, young people, and adults. Successful inclusive education ensures joint and participatory learning by all population groups within an integrated educational system, and at the same time takes into account disadvantaged groups which are either still excluded from education or are not supported to the necessary extent in the existing system. Seen from the perspective of inclusion, this means that it is not the child that poses the problem, but the educational system which must adapt to all individuals.

Preliminary work on inclusive education has already been done in development cooperation (DC), by UNESCO amongst others. Even so, various parts of the population are still without access to education, or students drop out prematurely from the formal educational system. Despite the fact that we know about the causes of disadvantage, no applied research has taken place to pinpoint the mechanisms that determine the success or failure of inclusion in educational systems in developing countries. This makes it difficult to identify concrete countermeasures at the level of educational planning.

This project aims to advance our understanding about the development of inclusive educational systems in developing countries in order to improve inclusive policy and practice in technical cooperation. The combination of academic research and DC practice in applied research has the potential for generating evidence-based knowledge on the successes and failures of the implementation of inclusive education. The scientific findings can be used to recommend direct action and measurements. Evidence-based results and recommendations for actions can also be suitable to strengthen the international prioritisation of inclusion in development policy, and help achieve the goals of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in a growing number of countries.

This project is designed as an applied research study. This research approach implies that new knowledge is generated in order to improve the practice of inclusive education and the current challenges it faces. It is the aim to show if, where and how things can be changed to increase the probability of the successful implementation of inclusive education in Malawi and Guatemala. "What qualitative research can offer the policy maker is a theory of social action grounded on the experiences – the world view – of those likely to be affected by a policy decision or thought to be part of the problem." (Walker, 1985) The initial aim of the research is a detailed, dense and multi-perspective description of the views of the involved participants, including their subjective and social constructions. According to Ritchie & Spencer (2002, p. 307) four perspectives form the focus of applied research:

- Contextual: identifying the form and nature of what exist
- Diagnostic: examining the reasons for, or causes of, what exists
- Evaluative: appraising the effectiveness of what exists
- Strategic: identifying new theories, policies, plans or actions

This particular research project evolves around the first two perspectives. Firstly, specific forms of Inclusion and Exclusion in the unique educational systems of both countries are identified. This implies, on the one hand, the investigation of views and attitudes of involved persons/stakeholders, and on the other hand, ideas, wishes and perceived options and/or barriers for actions. Furthermore differences and consistencies of involved actors within, across and between different system levels are identified.

Secondly, the underlying patterns of arguments for specific attitudes, views and options or barriers of actions are investigated. This includes the analysis of why specific measures or decisions are taken or not taken and which reasons for certain views and attitudes are mentioned.

Both perspectives therefore aim for a deep understanding of views, attitudes and perspectives of actions of involved groups of persons (experts/politicians, headteachers, teachers, parents, children). Based on this understanding, recommendations for the development of inclusive education can be drawn.

The fundamental distinction between scientific research and actual application still exists. The expectation that the results of applied research can directly lead to changes in praxis would be naive. The use of the results through politics and praxis is autonomous and happens – according to system theory – due to the internal logic of the political or educational system.

The objective of the global programme is: BMZ uses context-related and evidence-based research results and instruments which are relevant to educational policy to successfully promote inclusive educational systems in partner countries.
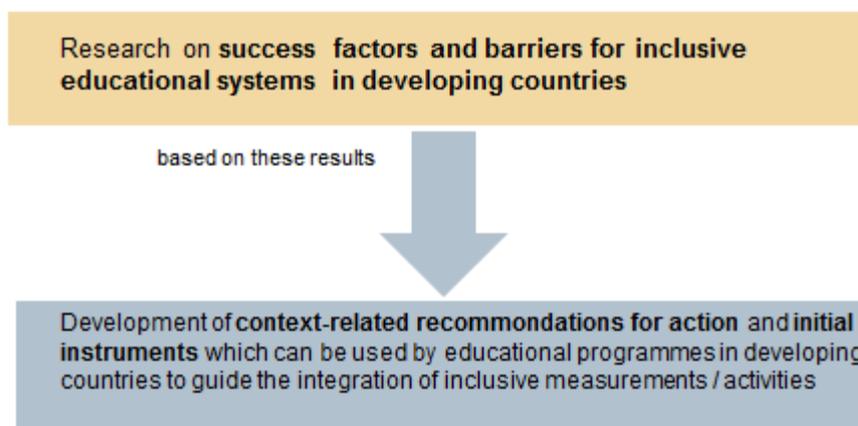
Goals of the Research Project

2 Research Questions

The overall guiding research questions are: How is the concept of Inclusive Education constructed on the different levels (Macro, meso, micro) from various perspectives in Guatemala and Malawi? Which success factors of and barriers to inclusive educational systems can be identified in order to draw conclusions for the further development of cooperation measures?

The specific research questions are structured and based on the four dimensions of inclusive education as identified by various researchers (e.g. Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, & Shaw, 2000; Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2005 as cited in Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn, & Christensen, 2006, p. 67), namely Access, Acceptance, Participation and Learning Achievement. This research project focuses on the first three of the four dimensions. The scientific investigation of learning achievement needs different methods and it is therefore not possible to implement due to the short duration of the project.

In the following the research questions concerning access, acceptance and participation will be defined more precisely:

Access:
- Who has access to the educational system?
- Who is targeted in inclusive education initiatives?
- Who has limited / restrained / no access?
- Who leaves the educational system early?
- Which reasons are given by involved actors?
- Which reasons for exclusion are mentioned?
- Which measures are implemented by whom (agencies, informal groups, donors)?

Acceptance (both on interpersonal and institutional level):
- Are there disadvantaged or discriminated groups in school? / Do groups exist who have privileges?
- Which practices affect student opportunity to learn?
- Which policies affect student opportunity to learn?

Participation:
- Are there groups of students being separated in school / in class?
- Do groups exist which do not or are unwilling to interact with each other?
- How are supportive learning opportunities created for all students?
- How are the learning and teaching processes organized in diverse classrooms?

3 Research Design

3.1 Data Collection

The research is designed in a qualitative and multi-perspective manner. It intends to combine macro (political/national), meso- (district) and micro (school/community) levels. Based on the assumptions of a constructivist methodology, it is not only the theoretical definition of the object what can be observed and how the research design is developed (Graue & Hawkins, 2005, p. 45), but at the same time the object is constituted in a reciprocal process (see Flick, 2000). In the context of this research project this results in the decision to put the focus within this complex interweaved structure of subjective theories and reflective knowledge of processes of action, interaction and communication as well as directly relevant political and organisational conditions on the constructions and interpretations of inclusive and exclusive processes of involved groups of persons on the respective system levels.

In the context of this research project this leads to the decision to put the focus on multiple socially constructed realities (e.g., Mertens, 2005). This implies the following: within this complex interweaved structure of subjective theories and reflective knowledge of processes of action, interaction and communication as well as directly relevant political and organisational conditions the emphasis falls on the constructions and interpretations of inclusive and exclusive processes of involved groups of persons on the relevant system levels.

Such a multiperspective approach means that this research project needs to take into account different system levels (macro, meso and micro) and various perspectives of the actors involved in the educational system (political decision makers, principals, teachers, students, parents and community members).

The research process is structured in several phases. In a first step (macro level) experts are interviewed through focus group discussions (Lamnek, 1998) and problem-centred interviews (Witzel, 1998; Witzel & Reiter, 2012). Additionally relevant documents (policy papers, practice papers and existing research results) are analysed. Access to the experts is given through the stakeholder workshop / expert meeting in both countries. Relevant persons from different areas are invited, namely ministry officials, parent organisations, disability organisations, universities and institutes of teacher training as well as bi- and multi-lateral donors. The workshops are used to introduce the research questions and the research design. Initially the participants have the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback. Subsequently, partly-standardized and guideline-based focus group discussions are conducted. "Focus groups act not only as a source of information to be interpreted elsewhere but also as a space for transformative understanding to emerge. Data from focus groups are socially constructed in the enactment of the focus group. Pooled understandings of concepts, events, and ideas give rise to meanings and interpretations within the process of the focus group that might not have occurred in individual, separate interviews" (Kozleski, in preparation). The composition of the groups will vary according to professional field (e.g. disability, gender, poverty) and educational sector (e.g. primary education, secondary education, teacher training). The following areas are covered during the focus group discussions:

- What are current positive developments in your area of work?
- What are the main challenges in your area of work?
- What questions would you like to have answered through this research?

In a second step, deepening interviews with about five experts in each country are conducted. These experts will be identified during the stakeholder workshops. Experts are persons who participate in decision making processes and/or persons with specific knowledge, skills or experiences in (inclusive) education. The expert interviews are conducted according to a problem-centered interview approach (Witzel, 2000, Witzel & Reiter, 2012). This form of interview combines orientation to a guideline with open forms of questioning. The strategies used in a problem-centered interview include a comprehensive questionnaire relating to relevant demographic data of the person interviewed, the interview guideline and a postscript with comments on the interview situation, specific topics the interviewed person formulated and thoughts of the interviewer. The interview guideline contains the research aspects and serves as an orientation and memory aid. It furthermore supports comparability of the interviews. Through expert interviews in-depth knowledge of a specific problem area of inclusive education is collected through various perspectives, in order to gain a deep understanding of the problem area from the perspective of the experts.

Alongside these steps, an analysis of central documents will take place concerning inclusive education in both countries. Wolff describes official documents as institutionalised traces through which conclusions on activities, intentions and considerations of the institution can be drawn (Wolff, 2008, p. 503).

The document analysis includes three different kinds of documents:
1. Existing research results (country specific)
2. Policy papers (laws, white papers, sector strategies etc.)
3. Practice papers (Situation analysis by NGOs, donors etc.)

An overview of existing research results is generated according to the following categories: research question, research methods, sample and main research results. Policy and practice papers are analysed according to thematic and open coding.

On the level of districts / departments problem-centred interviews with district education managers and representatives of relevant organisations are conducted. A specific focus of this study is on conducting instrumental case studies (Stake, 2005, p. 445) at four selected schools per country. Instrumental case studies provide insight into an issue (in this instance inclusion and exclusion of students) and improve our understanding of challenges in this regard (e.g. Merriam, 2009). Schools are selected where specific questions regarding inclusion and exclusion of students appear relevant.

In Malawi school are selected according to the following criteria:
• Two schools from a rural area, two schools from an urban area
• Schools with specific resources regarding the support of children with SEN are considered
• Schools with other aspects than disability regarding inclusion (poverty, gender) are considered

This results in the following selection:
• One rural school with support of a SEN teacher (visiting one to two times per month)
• One rural school in a remote area in the North of the country
• One urban school in a socially disadvantaged area
• One urban school with a "resource centre"

In Guatemala the additional category ethnicity applies, through which it became necessary to select five schools:
- One urban with mostly Ladino student population
- One urban with mostly indigenous student population
- One rural with mostly Ladino student population
- One rural with mostly indigenous student population
- One school that meets one of the above four profiles + inclusive designation

At all schools, perspectives on inclusive education are collected – considering the approach of triangulation of perspectives (Flick, 2004) – one focus group will be conducted with teachers, parents, students and a problem centred interview with the principal. Furthermore problem-centred interviews with persons from the community (e.g. chief, major) are conducted. Participatory observation of lessons and the surroundings of the school are conducted on the basis of an observation guideline.

In participatory observations, the researcher takes part in the social situation and is in an interacting relationship with the observed persons. Through participation in the living situation it is expected to be closer to the subject of investigation (Lamnek, 2005; Beck & Scholz, 2000). Equipped with an observation guideline, the national researchers will live for a period of about a week in each community in order to conduct interviews, focus group discussions and observations. Participatory observation in this research project is relevant to identify structures which support or display processes of inclusion / exclusion which might not be conscious to interview partners and focus group participants.

Table 1: Overview of system levels, data collection method and data analysis method

System level	Data collection method	Data analysis method
macro	- Document analysis (existing research results, political and practice papers) - Focus group discussion with experts (Stakeholder Workshop) - Problem-centred interviews with experts	Thematic coding Open coding
meso – 4 districts /departamentos (those disctrics / deparamentos are selected in which the case study schools are located)	Problem-centred interviews with leaders: - District Social Welfare Officer - HIV and AIDS Coordinator - The Coordinating Primary Education Advisor - District Special Needs Coordinator - Any NGOs working in (inclusive) education	Thematic coding Open coding
micro	Case studies at four selected schools per country: - Focus group discussion with teachers - Focus group discussion with parents - Focus group discussion with students grade 3/4 - Focus group discussion with students grade 6/8	Thematic encoding Open encoding

	• Problem-centred interview with principal • Problem-centred interview with adults from the community • Participatory observation	

3.2 Data Analysis

As shown in the time and work plan, the phase of data collection is usually directly followed by data analysis. In the implementation of this research project, a large amount of data as well as different kind of data (input material: documents, interview and focus group discussion transcripts, observation notes) will be collected. In order to consolidate these data and to keep the process of analysis transparent, comprehensible and controllable, consolidated analysis papers (according to scientific source texts, see Apel, Engler, Friebertshäuser, Fuhs & Zinnecker, 1995; Friebertshäuser, 1992, p. 101-106; Laging, 2008) will be developed.

Consolidated analysis papers will be developed on the macro level for document analysis, focus group discussions and interviews with experts. One concentrated report will be developed for each multiperspective case study including the interviews on meso level. In a multi-level analysis such a paper merges different sources and is a scientific source itself for further analysis. The following figure shows the analyses to be developed in each country. Both country analyses will furthermore be consolidated, as well as a cross-case analysis of all eight case studies is intended.

Figure 1: Consolidated Analyses Reports
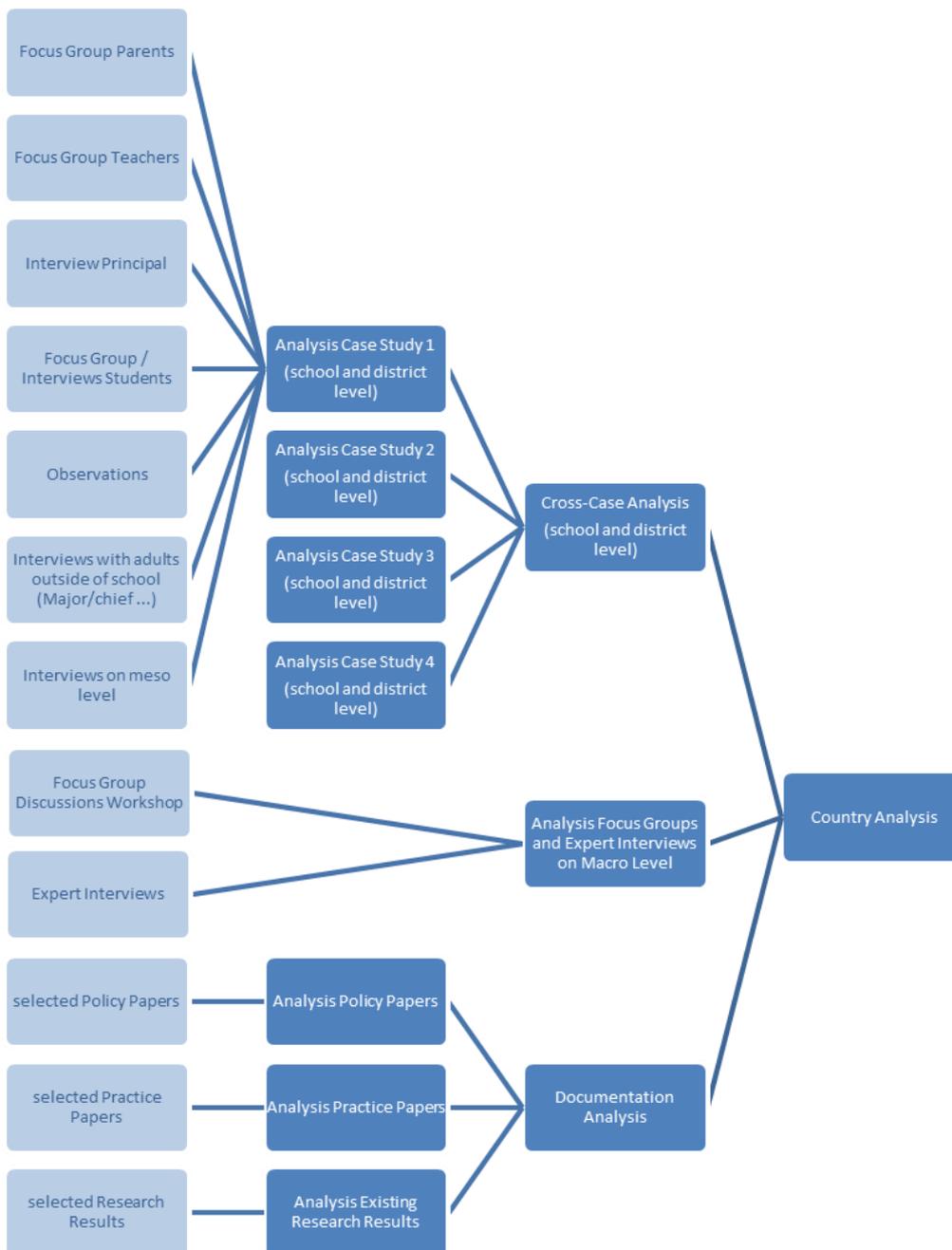
Analysis of group discussions, interviews and observation notes contribute to these reports. Transcribed interviews and focus group discussions as well as observations and field notes will be analysed with QDA-Software according to thematic coding based on Flick (1996, 2004a, p. 271ff) and open coding based on Strauss (vgl. 1994, S. 95ff; Strauss & Corbin 1996). The thematic coding is prestructured through a code tree. Nevertheless it is necessary to reveal relevant moments of construction and thematic dimensions which were not known beforehand through open coding. Through this process of coding, central constructions of processes of inclusion and exclusion can be revealed. On this integration level, differences in the perspectives of different persons will be described.

First of all, specific conditions regarding inclusive education through the multiple perspectives of involved persons are analysed for each case (case-by-case analysis). Subsequently, it will be investigated through a comparison of the case studies at the country-level if patterns and phenomena with regard to including or excluding processes can be identified. A central objective is the elaboration of an in-depth understanding of overarching aspects for inclusive education in each country.

Depending on the time frame, all eight case studies from both countries will be compared on a case-by-case basis. In this step, the analysis is aimed at possible transnational patterns of social construction of inclusive or exclusive educational processes in developing countries at the level of schools.

3.3 Extended Investigation

In the context of this research project, a dissertation thesis will be conducted by Ms. Myriam Hummel with a specific focus on inclusion in the early childhood education sector. This research will be under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Rolf Werning.

4. Specifics of the Research Project

This research project aims to address substantial gaps in the inclusion literature. In general evidence-based knowledge about inclusive education in low-income countries is still limited. This research is broadening the focus of inclusive education from children with disabilities to a more comprehensive understanding of marginalized groups in education. The research project utilizes a multi-perspective approach and focuses on the macro, meso and micro level and tries to cover the whole range from national level to local contexts, and therefore promises in-depth knowledge and comprehensive understanding of success factor and barriers for inclusive educational systems.

In conclusion, the project aims to identify institutional patterns of behavior in order to support inclusive educational processes and minimize barriers.

5 Time and Work Plan

No.	Activities	RW	MyH	PE, AA	UE	CBT	Nat. Team Leaders	Nat. Team Members	Phase 1 (2013/2014) / Phase 2 (2014) / Phase 3 (2014/2015)	Milestones
1	**Preparation of research**									
1.1	Develop and finalise for each country the research design and methodology	X	X	X						Research Design for Malawi and Guatemala approved by GIZ Coordination office
1.2	Setting-up of the national research infrastructure and sub-contracting the national team leaders including the plan for recruiting and training of research team members		X				X			**Country offices set up and national research team members contracted**
1.3	Operational plan for coordination and communication, including plan for public relations	X	X			X				**PR and communication plan approved by GIZ**
1.4	Concept and design of web portal to document and communicate about the research	X				X				**Web portal design approved by GIZ**
1.5	Suggestions for at least 1 presentation held at an international conference during the project period	X								
1.6	Identify capacity development needs of the personnel of the national research team and address these with the development of a training programme				X					
1.7	Clarify research design and activities/schedule with the GIZ education programmes in Guatemala and Malawi	X	X			X				
1.8	Develop a glossary English/German/Spanish		X							
2	**Implementation of research**									
2.1	Secure and conduct training programme for the national teams				X		X			**National research teams trained**
2.2	Develop and finalize research instruments	X	X	X		X				
2.3	Translation of research instruments into local (indigenous) languages							X		
2.4	Conduct the desktop research			X		X				
2.5	Data collection, entry					X	X			
2.6	Second part of Capacity Development for national research teams in both countries				X					
2.7	Closely communicate and discuss the implementation of the research with the GIZ coordinator	X	X							
2.8	Launch web portal to document and communicate about the research at the beginning of the second phase. Regularly update website and offer social media functions and a newsletter					X				**Newsletters published**
2.9	Closely monitor the activities and communication with the GIZ coordination office and the country stakeholders as well as at the German scientific advisory board	X	X							
2.10	Inform the general public through the web portal and other means (two BMZ meetings)	X	X			X				**Present ongoing research at BMZ meetings**
2.11	Conduct two country stakeholder workshops in each country. A preparatory report before each stakeholder workshop, including information on progress of data collection and analysis on preliminary results, open questions on-going discussions with partner, etc., is needed	X	X	X			X			
2.12	Document country stakeholder workshops						X			
2.13	Report quarterly to GIZ / BMZ	X	X							
2.14	Participate in the meeting of the scientific advispory board	X								**Advisory Board meetings**
2.15	Prepare first suggestions for the development of initial instruments and discuss with all relevant stakeholders (country stakeholders, scientific board, GIZ coordination office)	X	X		X					
2.16	International Coordination Meeting in Germany	X	X	X	X		X			
3	**Analyse research results and elaborate initial instruments**									
3.1	Data analysis on national levels			X			X	X		
3.2	Data analysis on international level	X	X	X						
3.3	Discuss and summarise the evidence from the two contry research studies, conduct stakeholder workshop in each country, individual reports per country (English/Spanish as well as publish the consolidated report (English/German)	X	X	X			X			**Research results available in a consolidated report**
3.4	Document country stakeholder workshops						X			
3.5	Develop recommendations - applicable by policy makers and development practitioners regarding the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of inclusion in educational sectors /educational technical development programmes	X	X	X	X		X			
3.6	Present results of the study at one international conference and one BMZ event in December 2014 or January 2015	X	X	X						**Presentation of results at an international conference**
3.7	Publish at least one paper about the study results in an international journal	X		X						**Research results published in an internatinoal journal**
3.8	Powerpoint presentation containing summary of results and recommendations		X							
3.9	Develop and publish initial instruments considering the needs and demands of GIZ education programmes on how to integrate inclusive policy/activities in the relevant programmes. The design of the instruments will be discussed and agreed on during the second phase of the project	X			X					**Initial Instruments developed and published**

Key:
- Activity
- Permanent Process
- Country Stakeholder Workshop
- Report
- Milestone

Mandated by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Financed by: german cooperation DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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