



The RITU program & study: Breaking down menstrual barriers in Bangladesh

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Introduction

Partnership between Simavi & universities:

Address the current gap in MH evidence base by applying Evidence Based Programming (EBP)

- Ritu MH program
- Ritu RCT study

What is the impact and cost-effectiveness of the RITU MH intervention in Bangladesh?

Partners and roles



Lead



Embassy of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands

Funding

Academic
partners



Maastricht
University

Impact
Centre
Erasmus

Implement.
partners



The Ritu Program: 2016-2019

School –level intervention



MHM-friendly WASH Facilities



MHM-module in school curriculum



School campaign raising awareness



Household intervention

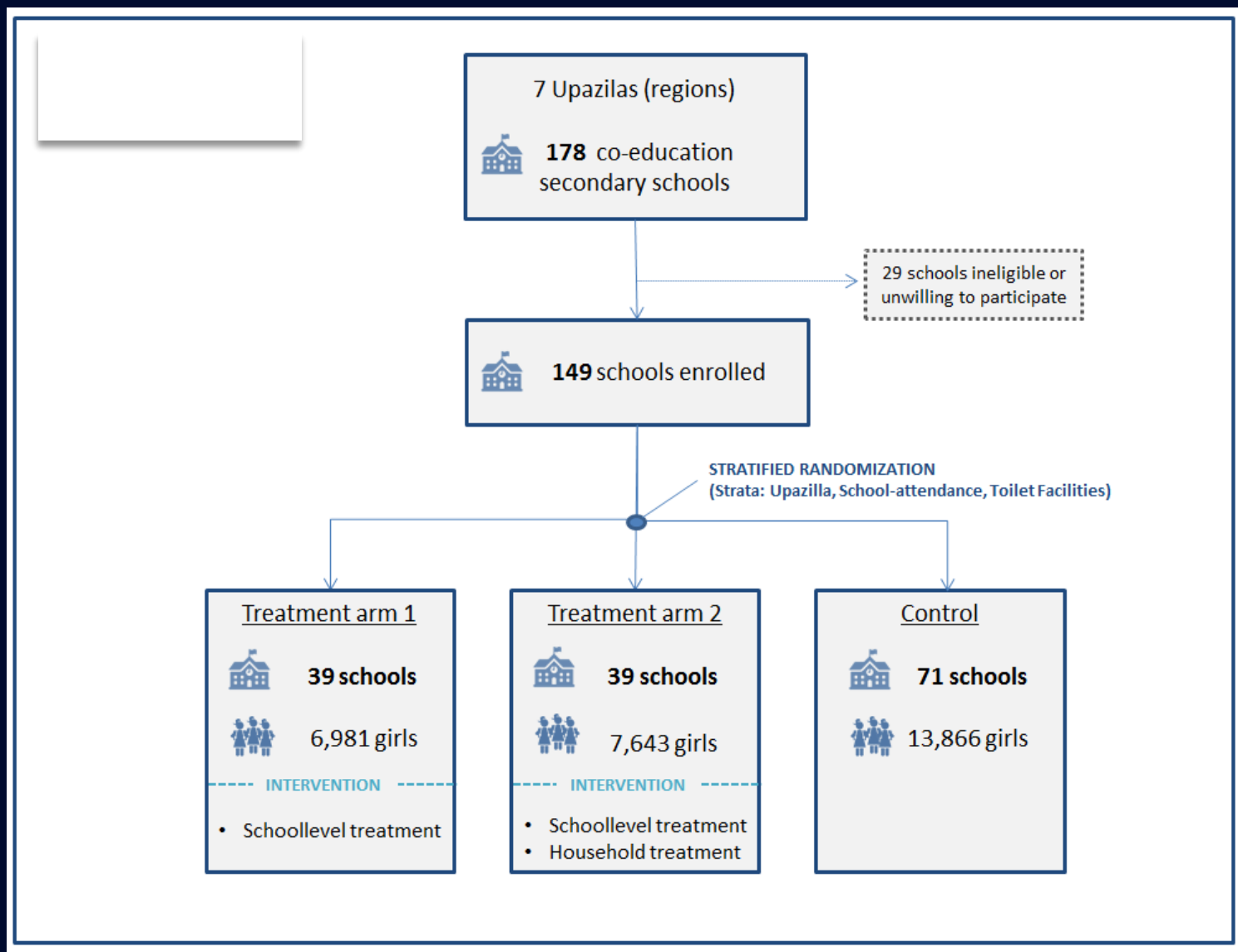


Parent sessions: education & support

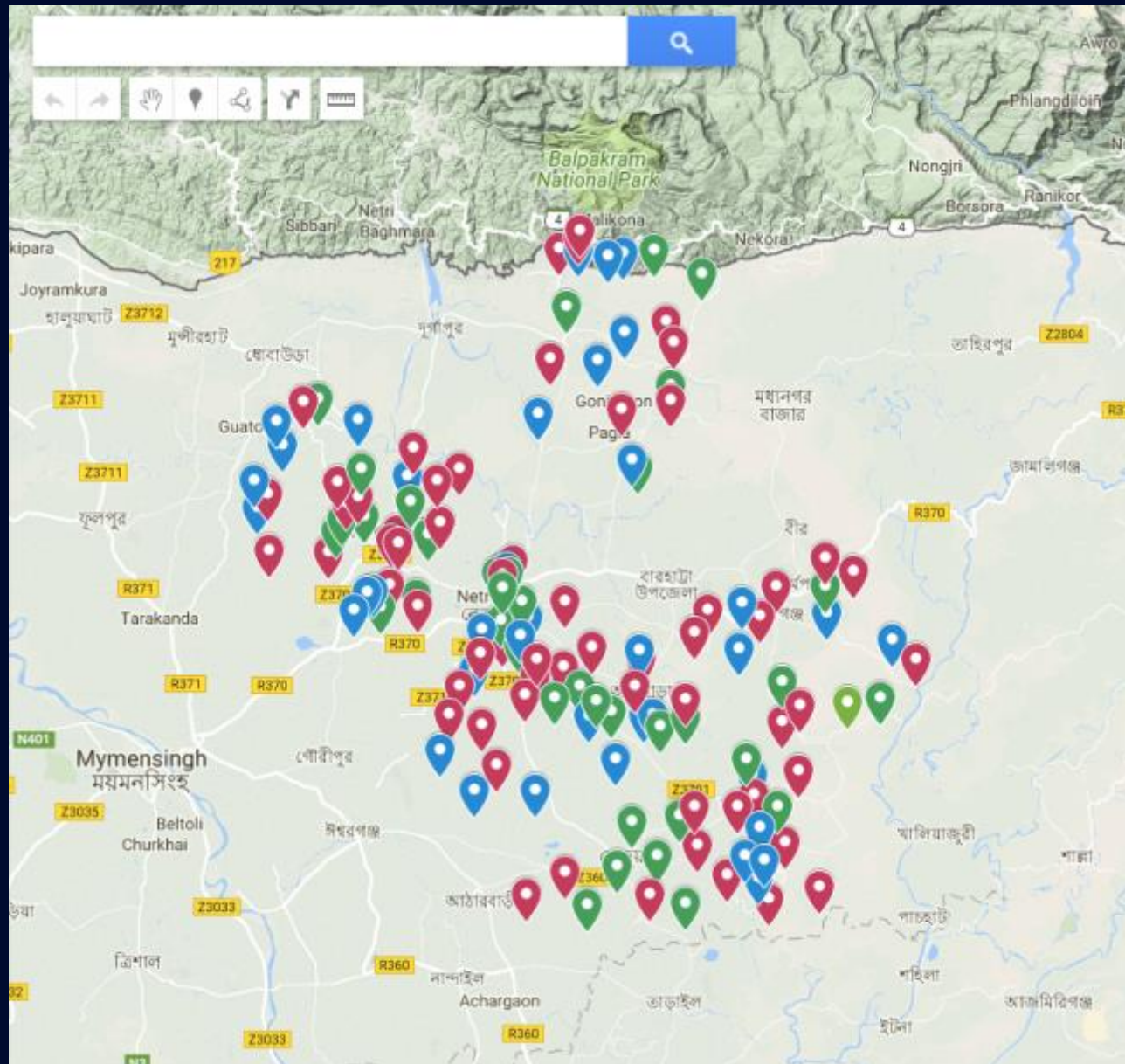


Graphic take-home module for entire family

The Ritu Study design



The Study design



Different data sources



Survey data

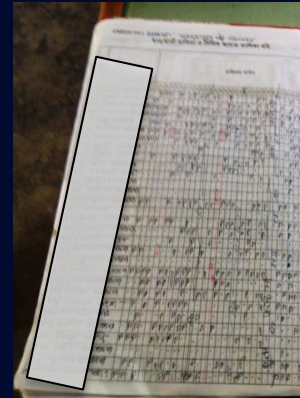
4100 girls

Baseline 2017 – midline 2019 –endline 2022

Eg. MHM practices, knowledge, social wellbeing

Schooldata

- a) Administrative attendance data
- b) Fielddata: headcount attendance
- c) Performance national exams



Cost data

Exact costs per
intervention component

Attitude data

Data from attitude-experiment
with parents and children

Practicalities of running a program & study at the same time

- ◉ The Evidence Based Programming approach has a significant positive impact on the program quality and the expected impact of the program
 - ◉ knowledge base of students is strengthened (WASH before SRHR, more teachers training)
 - ◉ Learning from Needs Assessment (cultural barrier> Father, mother and teachers role and undertaken strategy to create synergy)
 - ◉ More focus on WASH/SRHR integration
- Based on the learning we designed the Ritu program

Challenges along the way

- ◉ Requires partners to be reflective and flexible: to be open to change ideas based on evidence
- ◉ Up front: The Randomized Controlled Trial requires extra time-investment, commitment and adaptation of implementing partners
- ◉ Once randomized and implemented: many synergies, extra help and M&E smoother
- ◉ There is less space for 'mistakes' and 'errors' which will positively affect the impact of the program, but requires a lot of discipline and additional monitoring
- ◉ Simavi is providing partners additional support and training to manage these challenges

Impact of Ritu program & Study

Uncovering the causal pathways through which this MH program affects the lives of adolescent girls

Primary outcomes:

- Social wellbeing girls
- MH knowledge, attitudes and practices girls
- MH attitudes parents
- School attendance and performance

Our aim is:

- Provide rigorous MH evidence
- Draw general lessons from the RITU program, important for future implementers and policymakers