

# FINALIST SHOWDOWN BEST INNOVATORS AND RESEARCHERS

National  
Conference 2023

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE  
HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN  
BANGLADESH

SHOWCASING RESEARCH THROUGH  
IDEAS, INGENUITY AND INNOVATIONS

**Feasibility trial of a model menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) intervention to create an enabling environment at scale in the health systems in Bangladesh**

**Farhana Sultana**

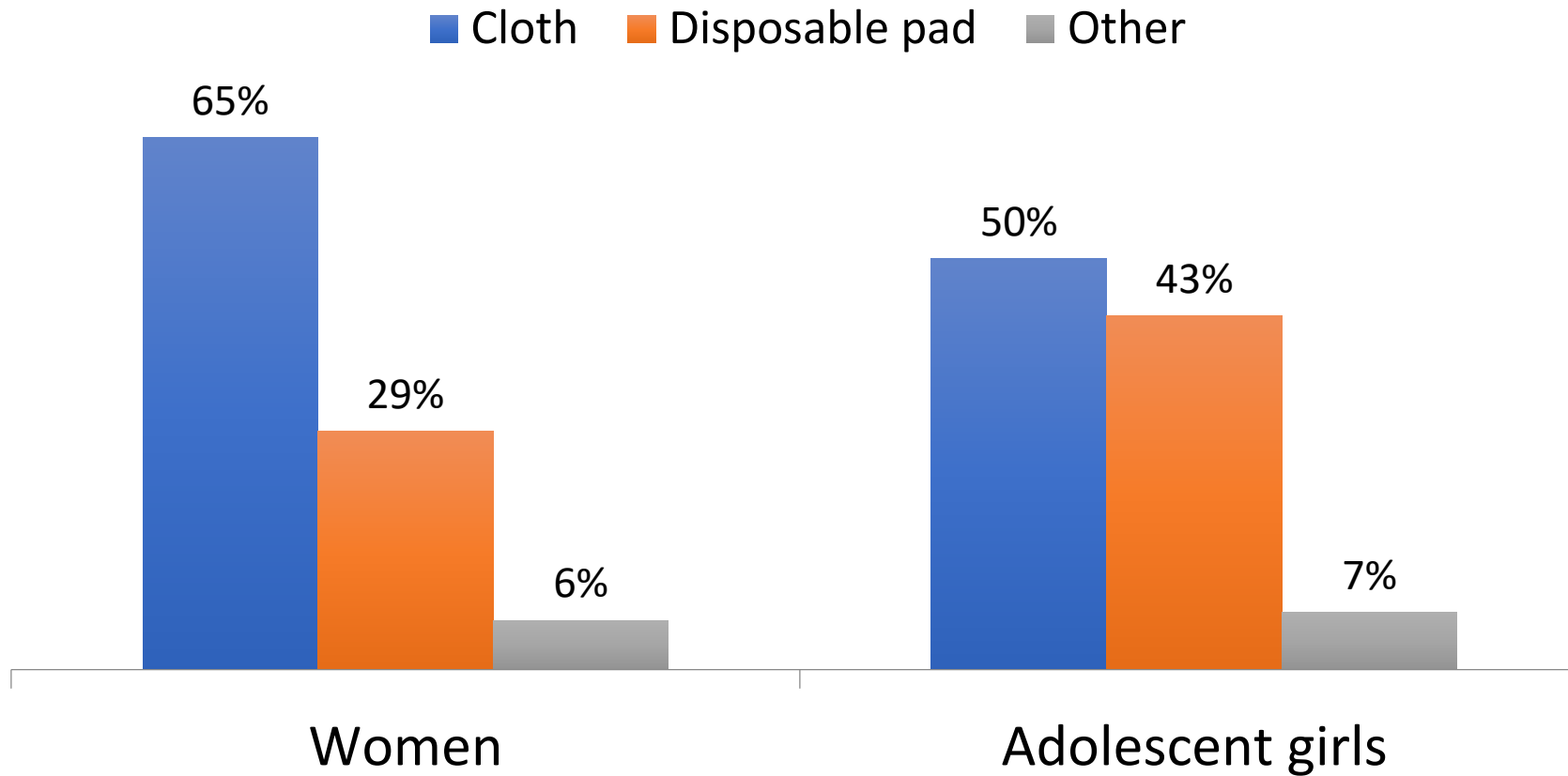
Associate Scientist

Environmental Interventions Unit

icddr,b



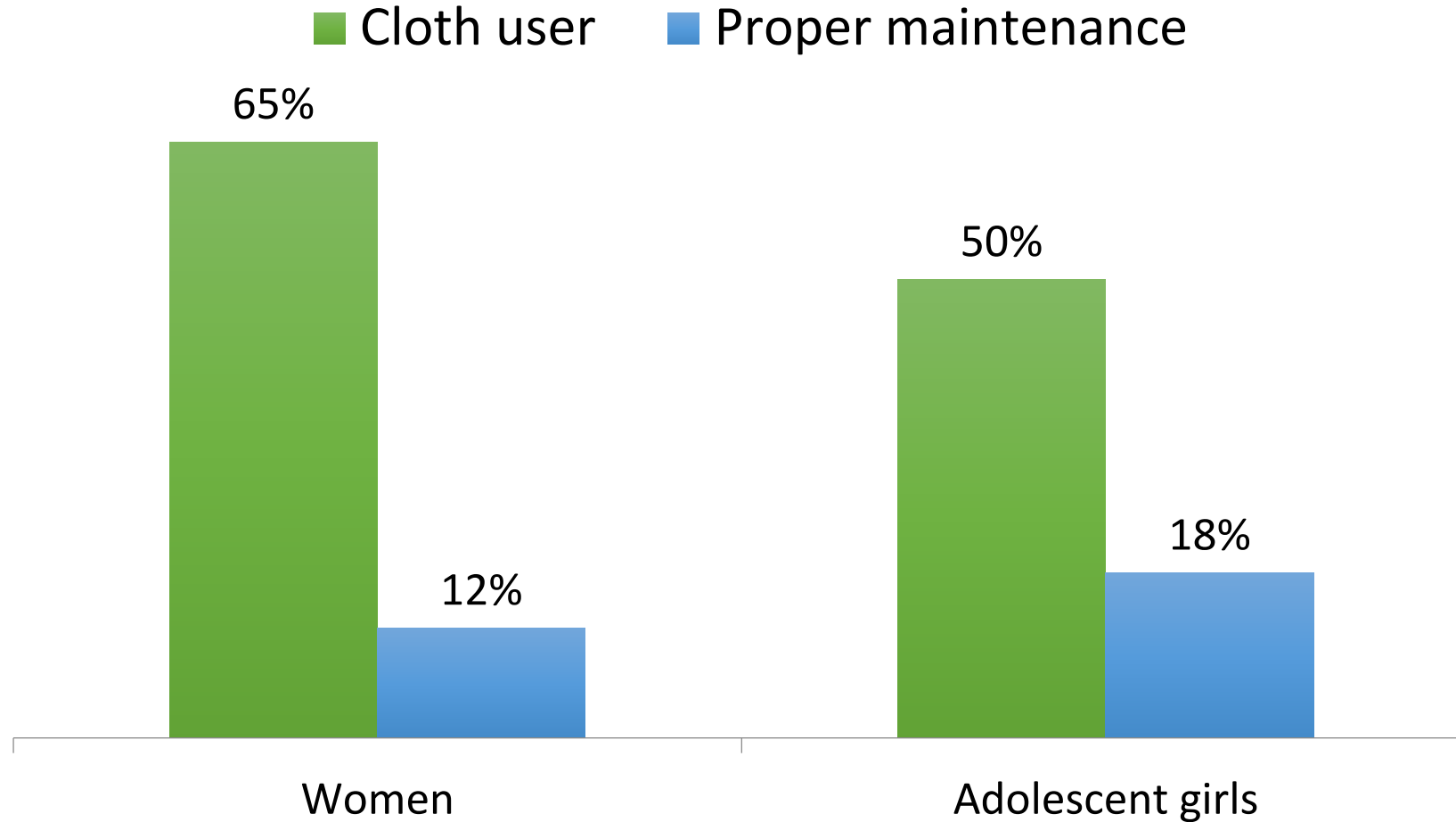
# Background



Significant proportion of population uses cloth absorbents

*Reference: Bangladesh National Hygiene Survey 2018.*

# Background



*Reference: Bangladesh National Hygiene Survey 2018.*

# MHH barriers

- High-cost of disposable pads.
- Negative impact on the environment.
- Lack of proper waste management system.
- No biodegradable or alternative options.
- No information before menarche.
- Improved cloth pad and technology for hygienic maintenance with puberty education can improve MHH.



Common washing areas in urban slums



Lack of supportive school environment



Inadequate waste management



Common drying space with inadequate sunlight in slums



# Intervention package

## MHM products

- Sultana icddr,b Reusable Cloth Pad

## Maintenance

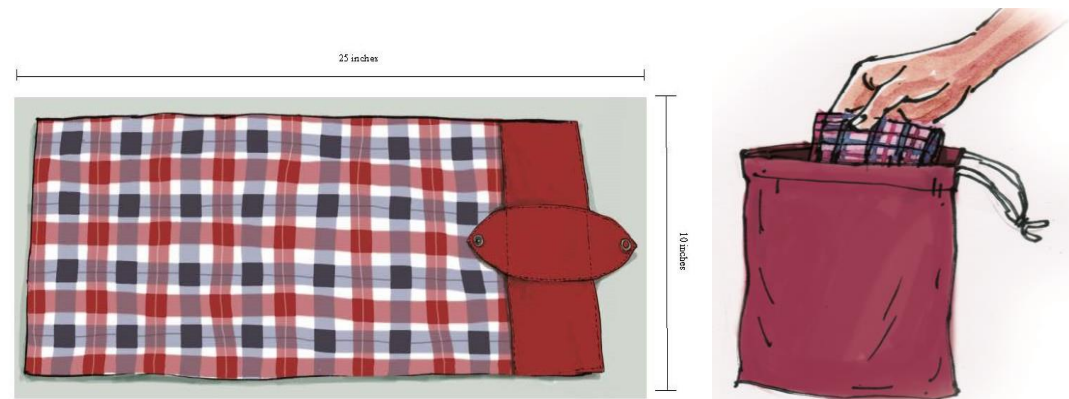
- Storage bag
- Sultana washer and dryer bags

## Education

- Pictorial flipcharts and cue cards
- Training of trainers to deliver puberty sessions

## MHH Working Group

- Meetings for policy implementations/improvements



নিজেকে জানি  
বয়ঃসন্ধিকালীন ও মাসিক ব্যবস্থাপনা শিক্ষা  
প্রশিক্ষক ম্যানুয়াল



### EIU forms MHM Working Group



As a partner of the Menstrual Hygiene Management study, Environmental Interventions Unit of IDD, has formed a group that involves stakeholders from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Family

Welfare, Department of Public Health Engineering, BSMU, Shomokishore Network Foundation, and NGOs working on menstrual hygiene issues. The group aims at developing a combination of interventions and targeted menstrual hygiene education to have a positive impact on girls' school attendance, academic performance, and to motivate educators and policy makers in Bangladesh to implement a nationwide menstrual health management strategy.

# Hypothesis

The combination of our participatory BCC materials addressing social marginalization, MHH, and reproductive health, provision of cloth pads and washer and dryer bags, and MHH Working Group meetings will create a more supportive environment for menstruating women and girls in Bangladesh

## The idea

- Collaboration with Health and Family Welfare, and Education Ministry to conduct a feasibility trial.
- Evaluation of the effect of proposed interventions in routine,
  - a) School and adolescent health programmes
  - b) Generation breakthrough programme
  - c) Adolescent-friendly health corners (AFHCs)
  - d) Community clinics in terms of target practices

# Methods

**Study design:** Quasi-experimental.

**Study site:** Two Upazlias (one as intervention and one as control arm) in Gazipur, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Study population:** Menstruating women in HH and girls in the schools.

**Study period:** 18 months.





# Methods

- **Consultative meeting** of prior “MHH Working Group” to scale out the MHH interventions in the health systems.
- **Training of relevant facilitators** to deliver monthly sessions on puberty, MHH, and SRHR.
- **Baseline survey** of current MHH knowledge, practices, attitudes, self-efficacy, stigma, and school attendance.
- **Roll out the interventions** through the existing programs, AFHCs, and community clinics.
- **Monthly fidelity assessments** to explore the uptake, use, acceptability, willingness to pay, and any modifications. We will also identify local tailors and train them to make the cloth pads to create a local entrepreneurship model to ease sustainability.
- **Endline survey** of improved MHH knowledge, practices, attitudes, intervention uptake, and reduced stigma at the end of the study.
- **Catalyze findings** to incorporate the intervention products in the Bangladesh Government’s procurement and supply chain and policies/strategies, and development of a business model to scale out across the country

## Outcome measures

- Uptake (at least 70%) of Sultana icddr,b Reusable Cloth Pad.
- Uptake ((at least 70%) of Sultana Washer and Dryer Bags.
- Improved knowledge on menstrual health and hygiene management (MHH).
- Improved hygienic MHH practices in terms of washing, drying, storage and disposal.
- Improved school attendance for menstruation.
- Improved academic performance.
- Improved MHH-related Self-Efficacy.
- Reduced MHH-related stigma.
- Increased acceptability, feasibility, and willingness o pay for intervention products.

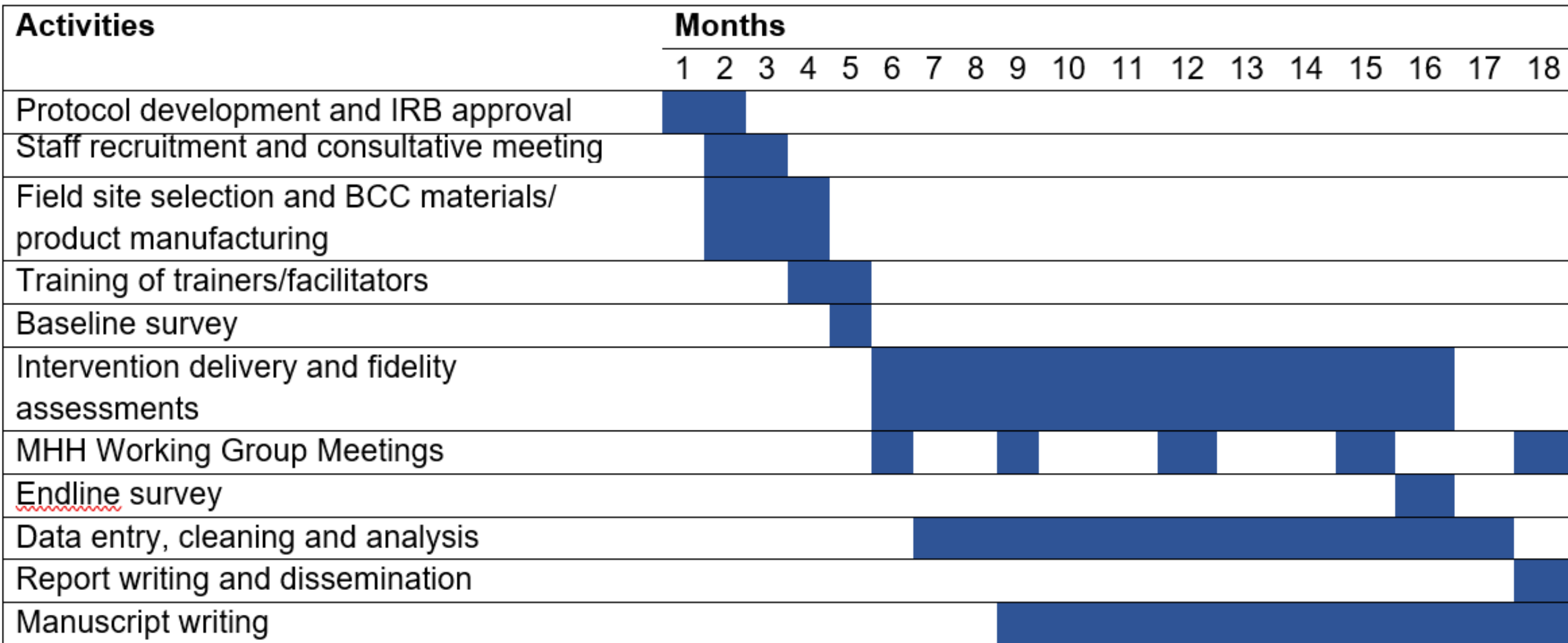
# Implications

- $\geq$  54 million menstruating women and girls, and  $> 50\%$  of them are cloth users, thus a large potential market for intervention products.
- Improving the menstruation-friendly environment for women and girls as well as broader community destigmatization.
- Development of an MHH-friendly policy by advocating for an MHH stipend for schoolgirls, which is currently being considered and could be subsidized as such a purchase for girls' households.
- Achieving Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10, if implemented at scale.

# Budget

<b>Cost Categories</b>	<b>Total Budget (US\$)</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	21,000
<b>Equipment, Material and Supplies</b>	13,000
<b>Travel and Transportation</b>	10,000
<b>Printing &amp; Publication</b>	8,500
<b>Others (meetings, disseminations, etc)</b>	11,000
<b>Indirect costs (10%)</b>	6,350
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>69,850</b>

# Timeline





This project has been funded



Grand Challenges Canada®  
Grands Défis Canada

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*



**HSBC**

---

icddr,b thanks its core donors for their on-going support



Government of the People's  
Republic of Bangladesh

Canada

