

MEN AND BOYS ARE PARTNERS TO STOP CHILD MARRIAGE



SERAC-Bangladesh
(A youth led law and development organization)

BACKGROUND



UNICEF reports* high rates of child marriage in Bangladesh: 66% of girls are being married off before reaching the age of 18. In the area of Mymensingh where the project takes place, SERAC is active, numerous cases of child marriage are being recorded while many additional unrecorded cases are happening as well.

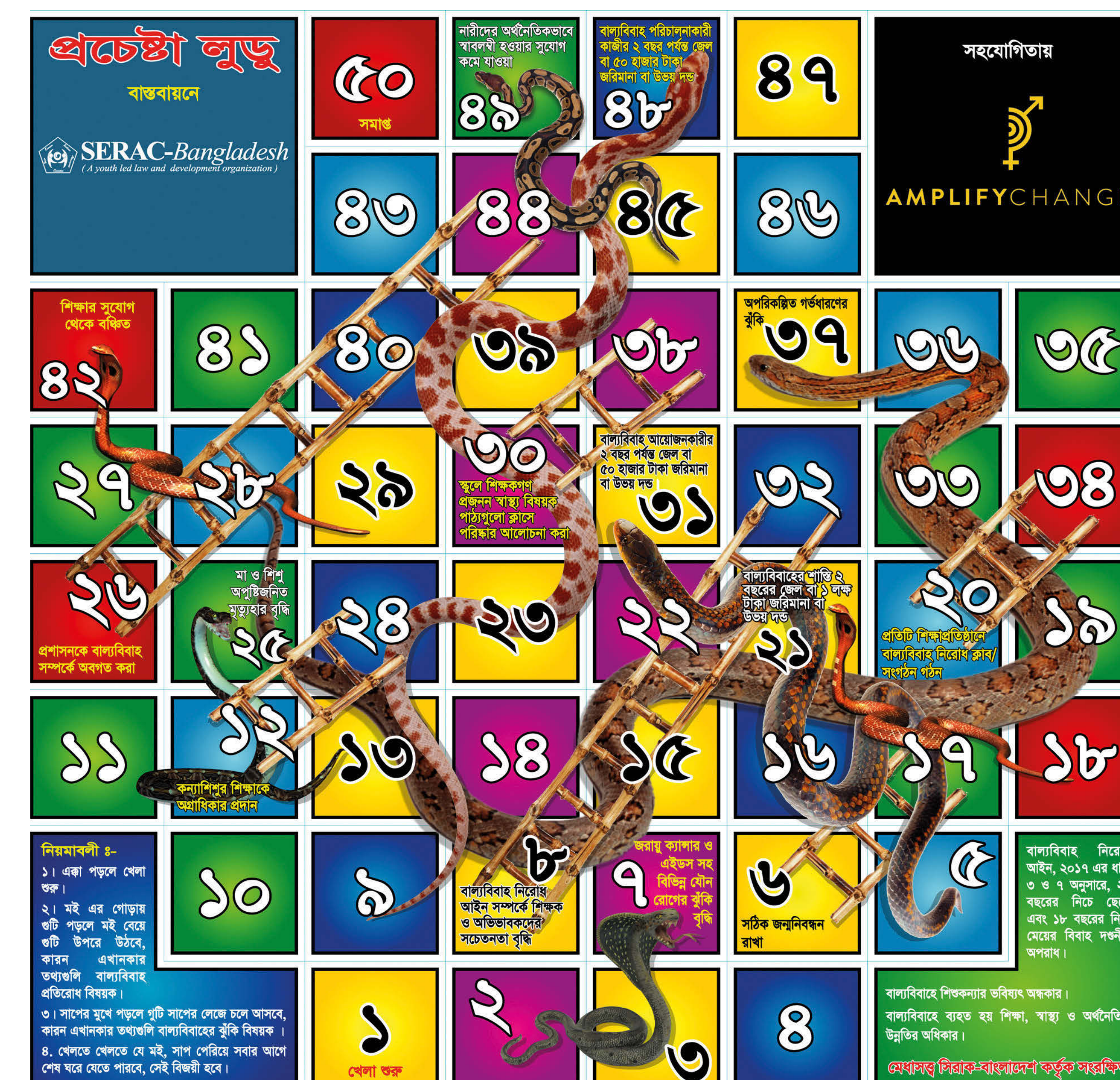
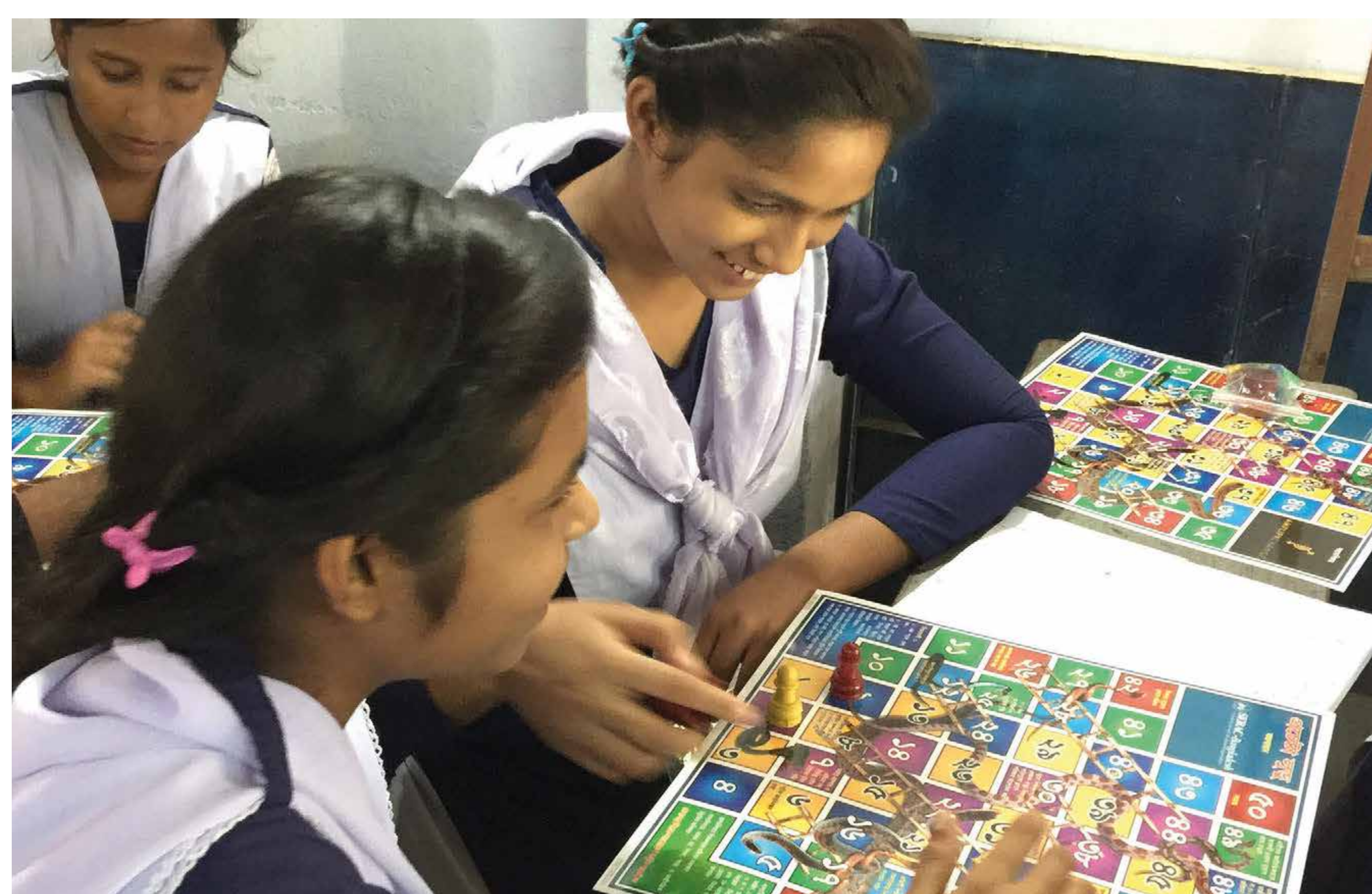
* https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/children_4866.html

APPROACH

- The Prochestha project reached 500 adolescents age 13-15 attending 20 secondary level schools and madrasahs (92.8% female and 7.2% male)
- Educating male students on friendly behavior and team work with a focus on sharing leadership with girls
- Empowering male students with information and tools to combat child marriage (see snakes and ladders below)

RESULTS

Case studies from this project show that three cases of child marriage were successfully prevented by the male students involved. No sign of uncomfortable behavior was reported by the male students since the project has been initiated. 99.4% of the participants reported the information received useful and were able to encourage their peers to take action on child marriage.



PROBLEM

In Bangladeshi context, multiple factors influence child marriage, including:

- ♀ Seeking a girl's consent for marriage is not common
- ❓ Lack of recognition of men's positive participation in combating child marriage
- ❓ Lack of knowledge around sexual and reproductive health
- ♂ Harmful concepts of masculinity
- 📖 Absence of comprehensive sexuality education
- ⚖️ Hesitation to seek legal support

LESSONS LEARNED

- ➡ If empowered and recognized, men and boys can play a vital role in combating child and forced marriage through engaging peers and taking concrete action
- ➡ To allow progress of sexual and reproductive health of girls and women, collective programs improving perceptions among men and about men must be introduced
- ➡ Innovation in learning attracts youth

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- 👤 Development of integrated clubs for adolescents on comprehensive sexuality education
- 👤 Integration of school-based innovative and attractive programs to promote sexual reproductive health among adolescents
- ♂ Planned engagement of more boys through action lab training and events to share learnings