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On International Women’s Day, Ci3’s Transmedia Story Lab Unveils Digital Stories Highlighting the Life of Young Girls in India

(Seattle, WA) Today, the [Transmedia Story Lab](#) (TSL) presented digital stories from the Kissa Kahani project as part of the International Women’s Day celebration at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. TSL is part of the University of Chicago’s Center for Interdisciplinary Inquiry and Innovation in Sexual and Reproductive Health (Ci3).



Kissa Kahani is a research project that uses narrative as a primary research methodology to explore gender and adolescent reproductive health in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. “Traditional research methodologies are, and always will be, an important means of collecting data,” said Dr. Melissa Gilliam, founder of Ci3 and principal investigator for Kissa Kahani. “But for this project, we also used novel methodologies through art, storytelling, and games that provided new information about young people’s lives.”

The project began by engaging young people and community partners in making short, first-person documentaries set to music. The 28 resulting narratives describe a range of youth experiences. Major themes in the narratives include: lack of comprehensive sexual education, lack of mobility within their community, limited educational opportunities, and daily harassment and violence.

Additionally, the Kissa Kahani project uses the digital stories to display the cultural, emotional, and social experiences of Lucknow youth in order to better understand the social determinants of adolescent reproductive health and well-being. “These stories embody rich adolescent experiences that provide visually stimulating context for research,” said Marquez Rhyne, director of TSL. “One cannot help but to be moved by the aspirations of these girls as well as the potential for engagement of young men in the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women.”

Over the next year, the Kissa Kahani team will analyze data, disseminate research findings, and continue to screen stories both nationally and internationally. Last November, twelve of the digital stories were entered into the 10th International Ching Kids Film Festival. As the films toured schools, the digital stories were viewed by many children throughout India as part of a jury screening process. Four TSL stories were selected by the jury as finalists, with one receiving an award at the film festival.

Click [here](#) to watch the [Kissa Kahani digital stories](#).

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Founded in 2012, Ci3 is an award-winning research center at the University of Chicago. Ci3 envisions a world in which all youth emerge into adulthood with agency over their bodies and futures. As such, we are committed to empowering young people, conducting innovative research, and uncovering opportunities for policy and systemic change. Ci3 houses three labs: the Game Changer Chicago Design Lab, the Transmedia Story Lab, and the Design Thinking Lab. Through these labs, Ci3's interdisciplinary team of medical providers, public health scholars, policy researchers, designers, and artists create games, digital narratives, and interventions with and for youth. Developed with an eye towards scaling, each of our interventions can be implemented in settings across the Chicagoland area and beyond.

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