

KISSA कहानी किस्सा कहानी

A TRANSMEDIA APPROACH TO
EMPOWERING INDIAN ADOLESCENTS



CONTEXT

India: current sexual and reproductive health challenges for adolescents ages 10-14

More than **125 million** Indian adolescents are between ages **10-14**, representing nearly 13% of the country's population.

Indian adolescents face multiple health risks as they:

- Are forbidden from having conversations about sexual and reproductive health with anyone.
- Lack access to medically accurate information, menstrual supplies, and health services.
- Often seek information on sexual and reproductive health from informal sources that can be inaccurate.



India numbers among countries with the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy

- Half of young Indian women are sexually active by age **18**, and almost one in five are sexually active by age **15**.
- Adolescence is also a time of major social changes in India with the introduction of gender norms at home, in schools, and in the community.
- Family members can force girls to drop out of school to get married.
Nearly 17% of Indian girls drop out of high school.

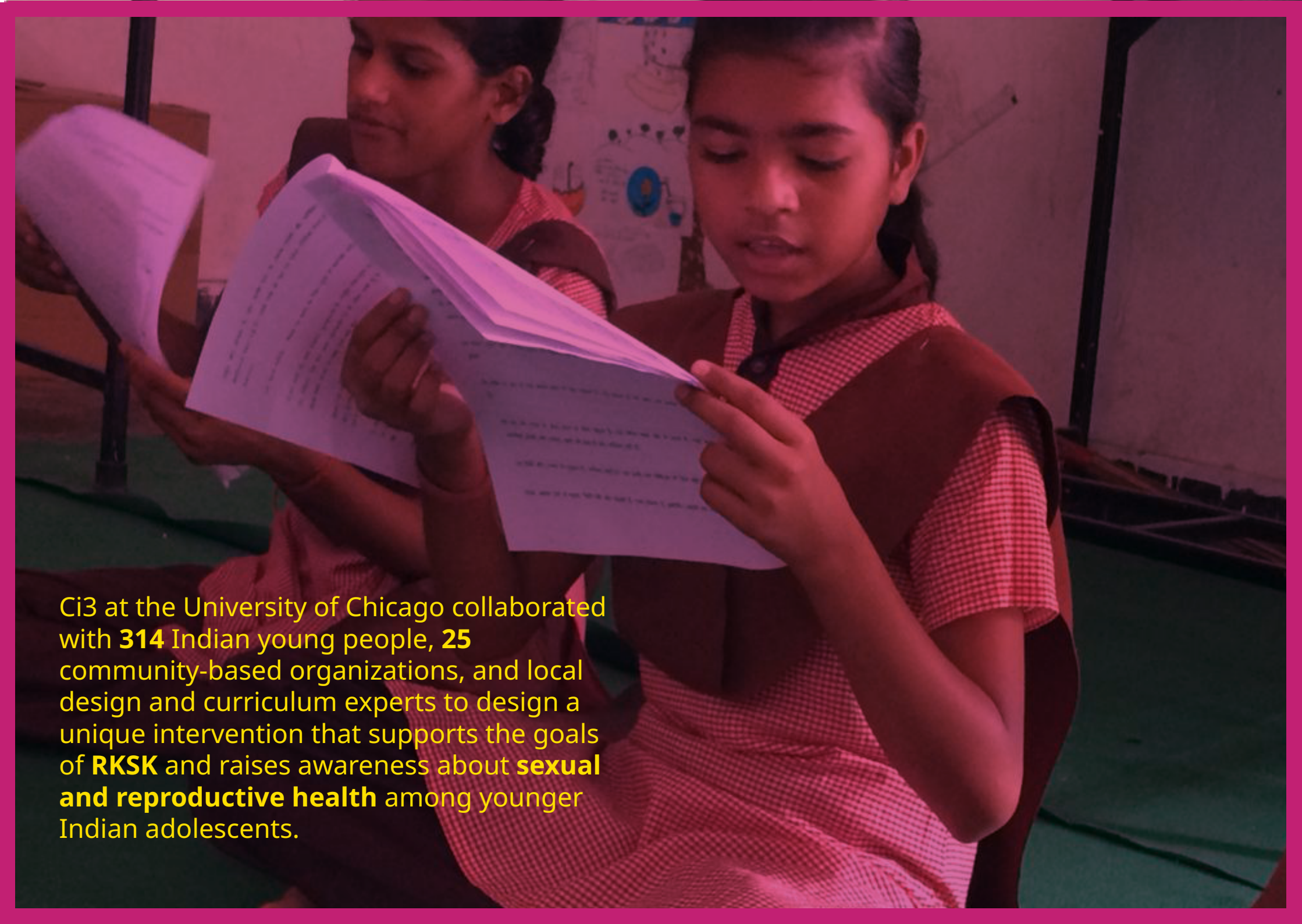




There is a lack of evidence-based sexual and reproductive health programs in India for the 10-14 age group.

In 2014, the Indian government launched **Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK)**, a health policy designed to help adolescents achieve their fullest potential.

RKSK provides sexual and reproductive health information and services to younger adolescents in schools.

A photograph of two Indian adolescents, a girl and a boy, sitting and reading a document together. They are wearing school uniforms consisting of a red and white checkered shirt and a dark brown vest. The girl is in the foreground, holding the document open, while the boy is behind her, also looking at the document. The background is slightly blurred, showing a wall with some posters and a green surface. The entire image has a pinkish-red tint.

Ci3 at the University of Chicago collaborated with **314** Indian young people, **25** community-based organizations, and local design and curriculum experts to design a unique intervention that supports the goals of **RKSK** and raises awareness about **sexual and reproductive health** among younger Indian adolescents.

FORMATIVE

RESEARCH



In 2016, Ci3 conducted formative research with young people in India using **creative, narrative-based methods**:


- Digital storytelling
- Story circles
- Body mapping
- Storytelling game
- Human-centered design

Ci3 also conducted life course interviews and a baseline health survey.

Ci3 researchers triangulated data from formative research gathered over **two** years. Main insights revealed that:

- Girls struggle with having correct information about menstruation and with menstrual hygiene management at home and at school
- Girls face sexual harassment that impedes their mobility
- Girls and boys desire having medically accurate knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and family planning





Participants experiences shared
during formative research:

“My mother told me that during
periods you are not clean and you
cannot offer prayer and cannot
sit in the area where prayers are
offered.”

*Young woman, age 17, life course
interview participant*

“When we go out then boys stare
at us and they molest us and they
speak rubbish things. It happens
with all the girls.”

*Young woman, age 16, body
mapping workshop participant*



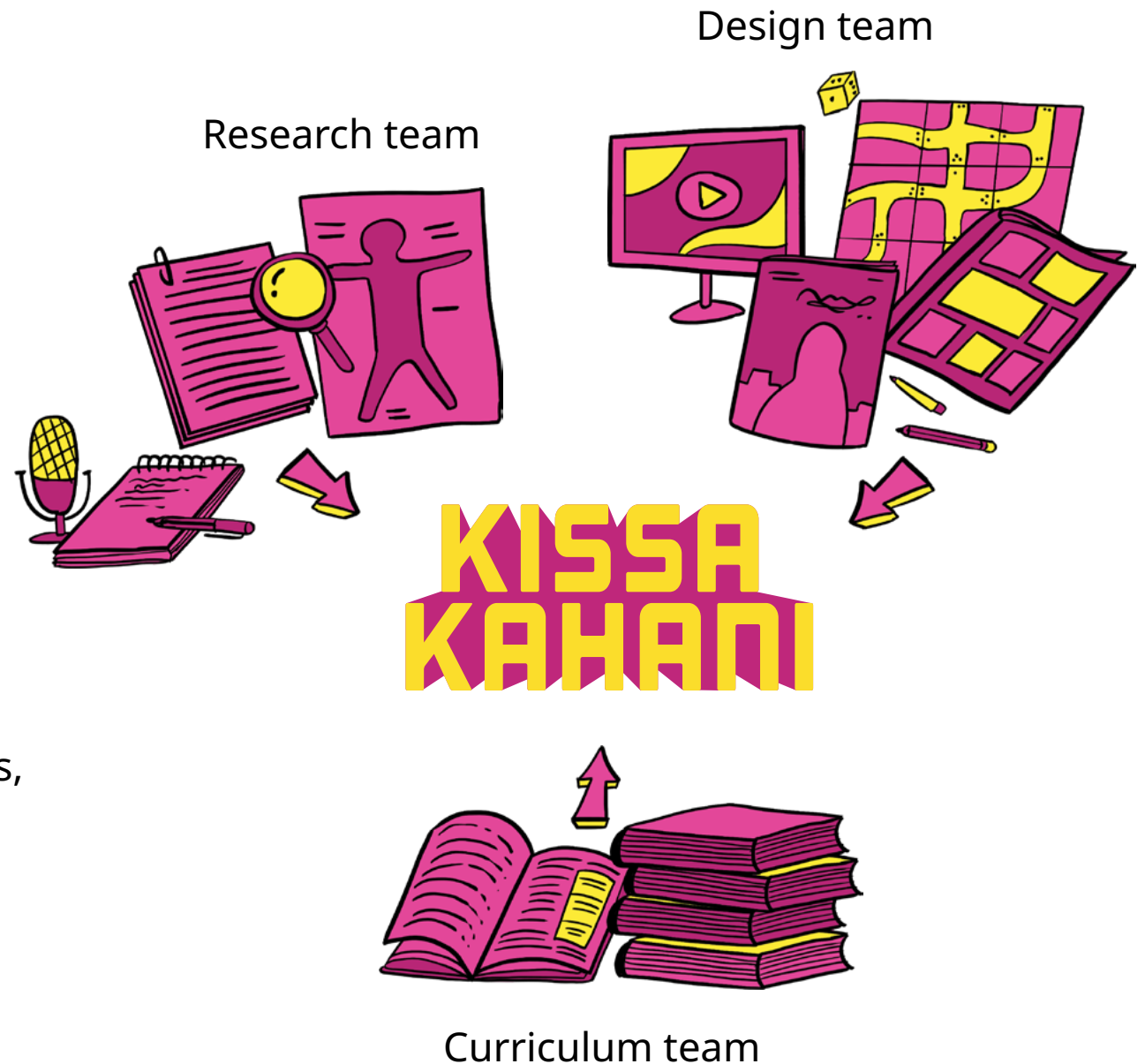
Research with young people using creative, narrative-based methods

INTERVENTION

DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, Ci3 collaborated with local Indian curriculum and design experts to respond to **three themes** young people had indicated were most important, including:

- **Menstruation** and menstrual hygiene practices,
- Increasing **public safety** of girls,
- Knowledge about **sexual and reproductive health** and family planning.





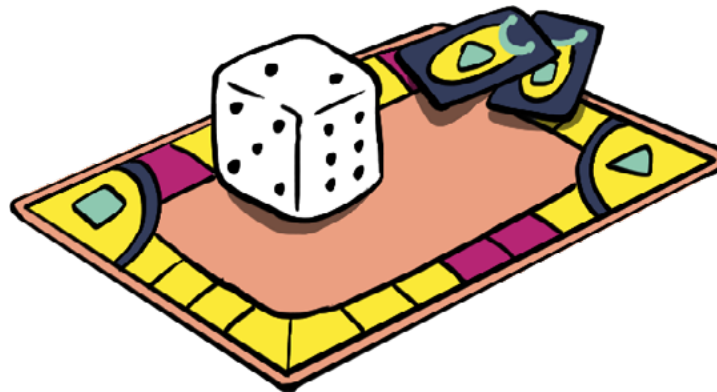
Kissa Kahani Design Principles

Combining insights from the formative research with behavior change theories, the project team determined that Kissa Kahani must:

1. Educate younger adolescents in new, dynamic ways;
2. Provide clear, relatable, age-appropriate content;
3. Address issues young people face as individuals, at school, in the community, and through policies affecting their lives.

The project team adopted a transmedia approach to satisfy the design principles, such that:

- An overarching story weaves through different media — **digital animated stories, games, and graphic novels** — creating an immersive world inviting young people to step in.
- Each media component plays a unique, targeted role delivering tailored messages.

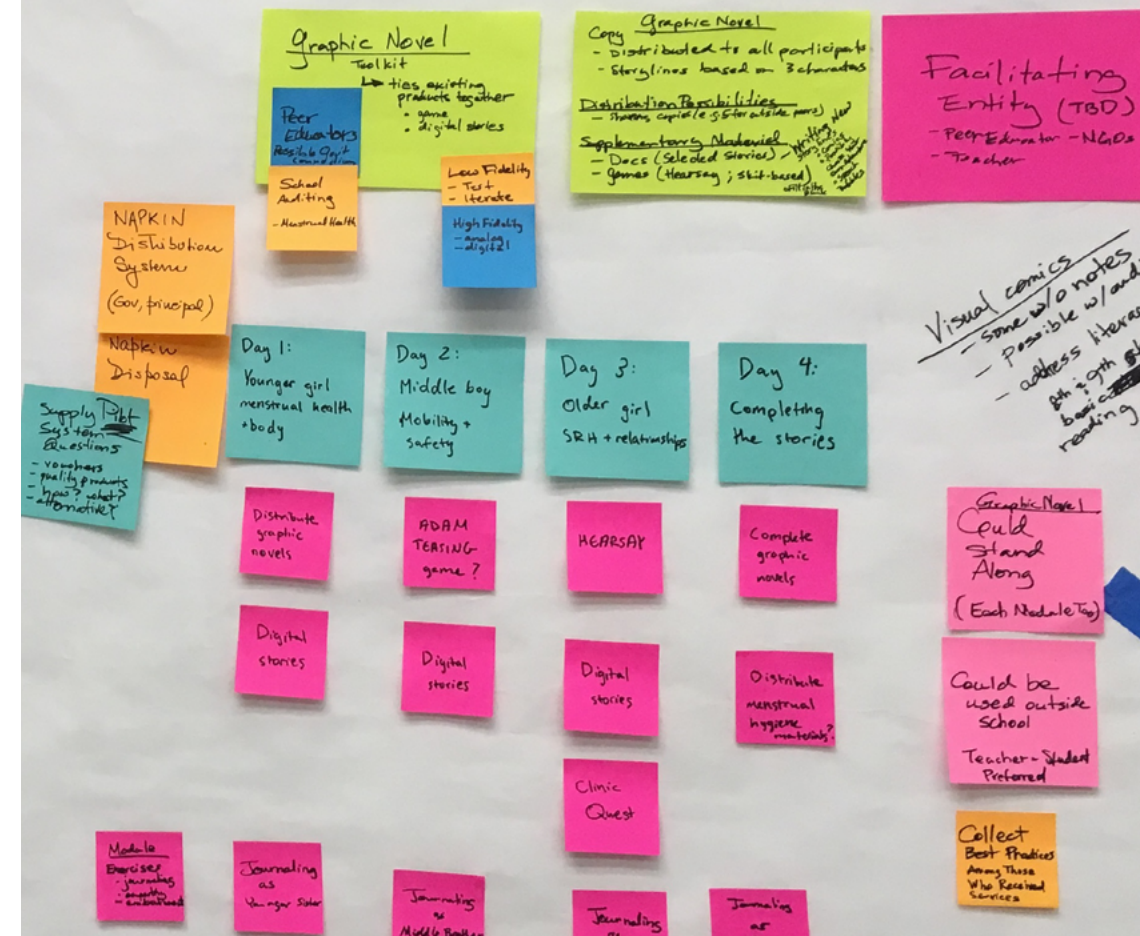


- The Kissa Kahani world features characters familiar to younger audiences.

The Kissa Kahani curriculum contains **age-appropriate** sexual and reproductive health information that is delivered using a facilitator-led approach to support comprehension.

Each intervention theme—menstruation, public safety, and sexual and reproductive health and family planning, has a separate module with its own digital animated story, games, and a graphic novel.

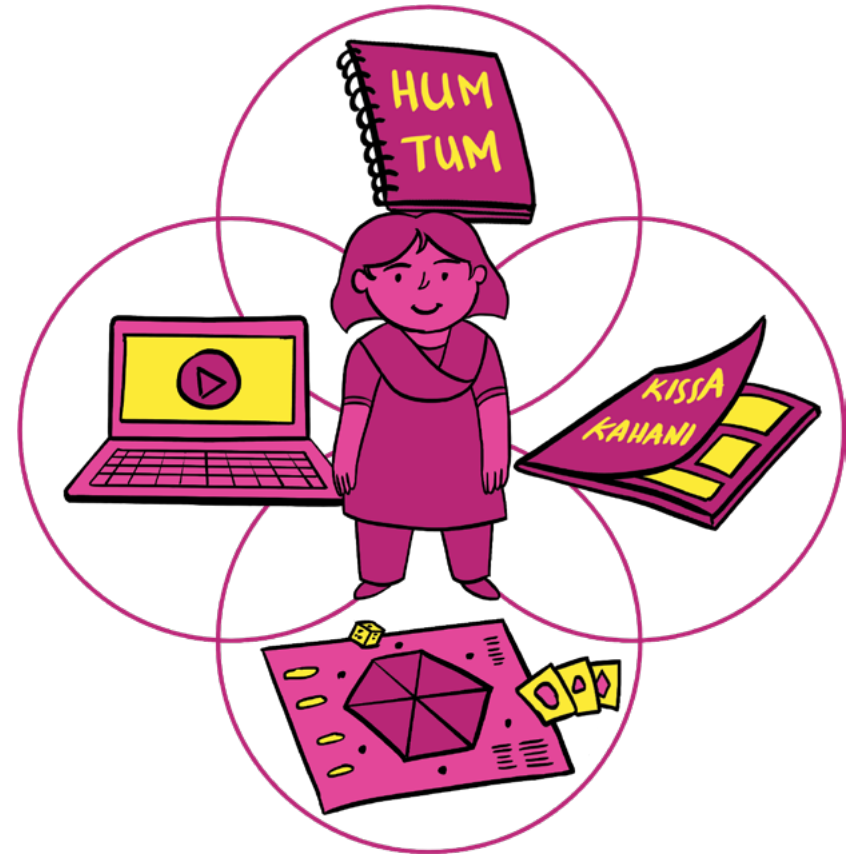
- ## Considerations
- Lean towards analog w/ a digital component
 - Twine (choose your own adventure ^{narrative game} ~~game~~)
 - ↳ could pair digital stories
 - Collective things
 - ↳ analog games like Hearsay
 - Build in competition?
 - Games for: information and ^{interactive} storytelling





Ci3 and Indian curriculum and design experts collaborate on intervention development at the University of Chicago Center in Delhi

BUILDING THE TRANSMEDIA WORLD



Creating an **immersive transmedia experience** relied on developing a compelling visual atmosphere for characters and contexts within the stories.

Creating the Kissa Kahani characters

Drawing on the interviews conducted with young people, we created characters who are **relatable** to younger adolescents.

Young Kissa Kahani characters attend a familiar school, wear recognizable uniforms, and face similar challenges in their homes and communities.

They face issues of gender discrimination, societal pressures, and lack of parental support, but they move with confidence, seeking out help and information, advocating for themselves, and identifying solutions to problems.





Developing characters for the transmedia Kissa Kahani world

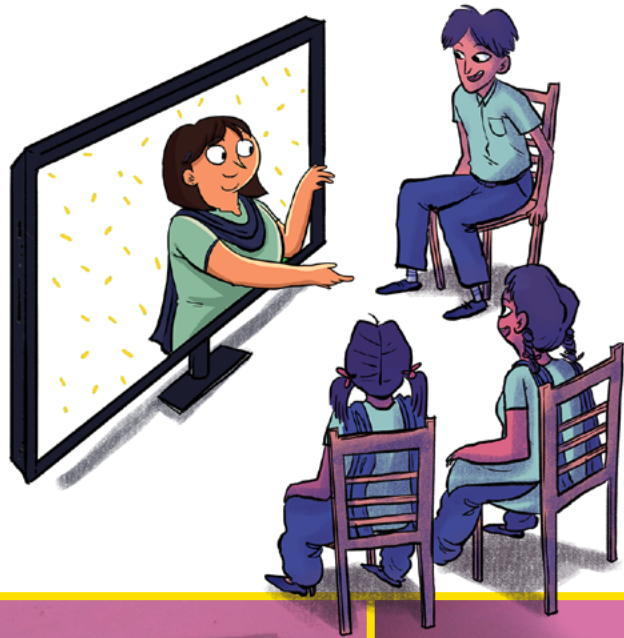


Kissa Kahani characters appear in different roles, connecting to core intervention themes — **menstruation**; menstrual hygiene practices; increasing **public safety** of girls; and knowledge about **sexual and reproductive health** and family planning.

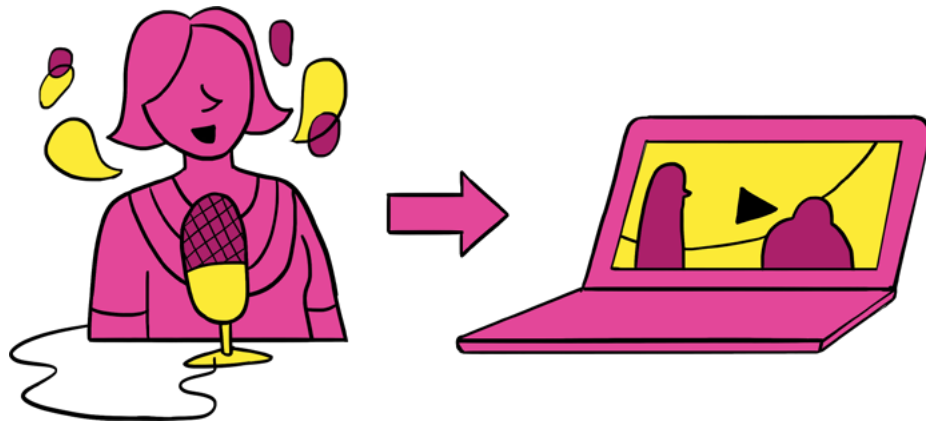


ANIMATED DIGITAL

STORIES



Designed using real-life stories, the animated digital stories invoke empathy that accentuate willingness to adopt healthy behaviors.



GAMES



Kissa Kahani games give young people a break from textbooks, allowing them to apply and practice what they learn from traditional educational methods in a playful, relaxed setting.



GRAPHIC

NOVELS



The graphic novels follow a cast of characters who face everyday problems and navigate solving them.

After gathering information from trusted adults, characters display positive attitudes and aspirational behaviors, inspiring young adolescents to do the same.

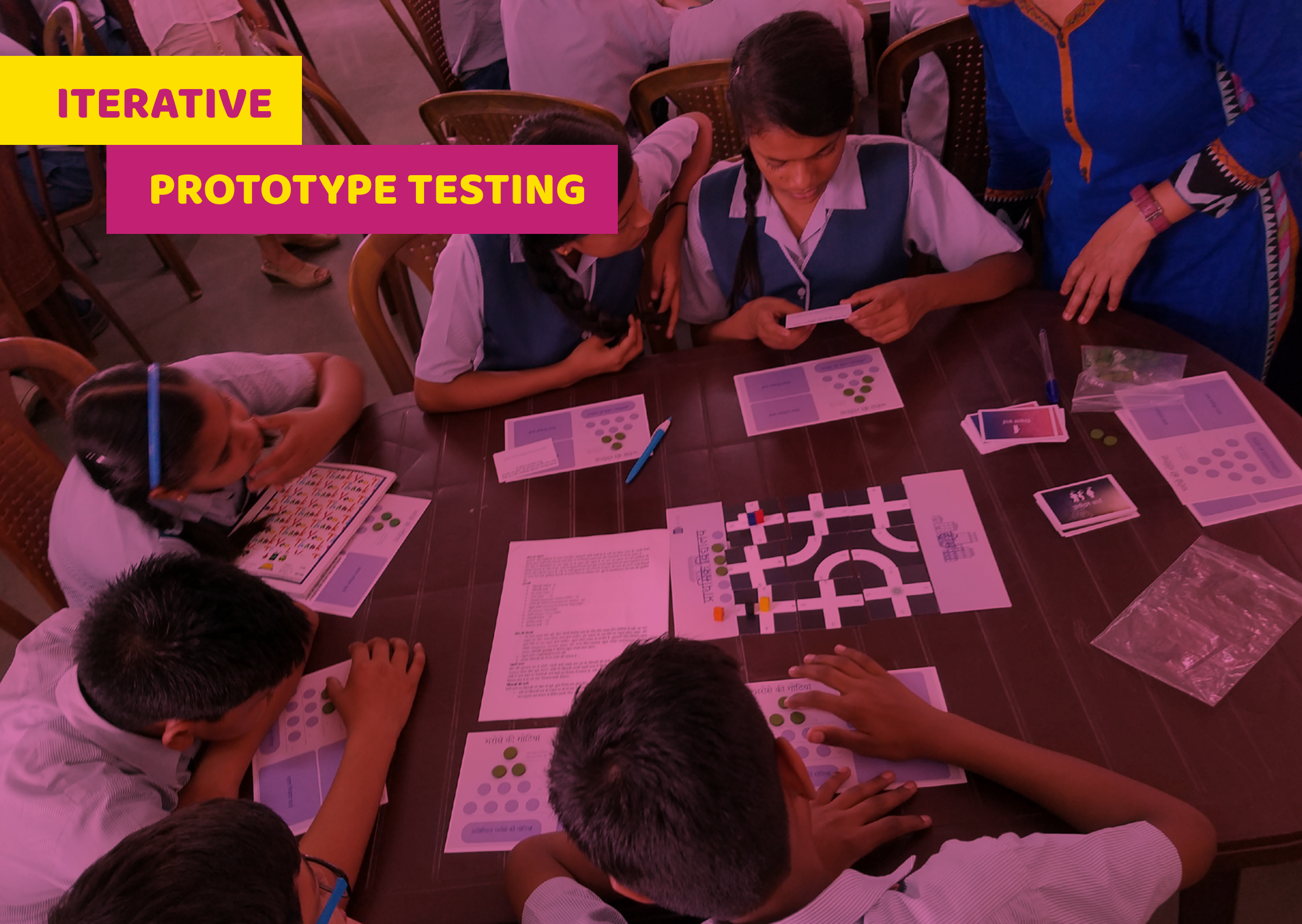




Recognizing the lack of Indian adolescents' familiarity with graphic novels, the stories were created to layer information and be not too simple, or too complex, ensuring a level of understanding for every reader.

ITERATIVE

PROTOTYPE TESTING



The project team conducted five rounds of prototype testing with adolescents and educators in Indian government schools to evaluate:

- curriculum flow and structure;
- adolescents' comprehension of content;
- youth's overall comfort with using new media.

Testing results showed that adolescents related to all intervention components, especially the games and graphic novels.

"Playing the menstruation game was fun. I am so happy to learn new information about my body. No one has ever told us about this."

Participant, 14 years old





Building on testing results, the project team redesigned two games with simpler gameplay and content and developed a module to educate teachers about gender norms.

Final results showed that young people were fully engaged in the intervention and understood all parts of it.



Training educators on Kissa Kahani games

TESTING AND

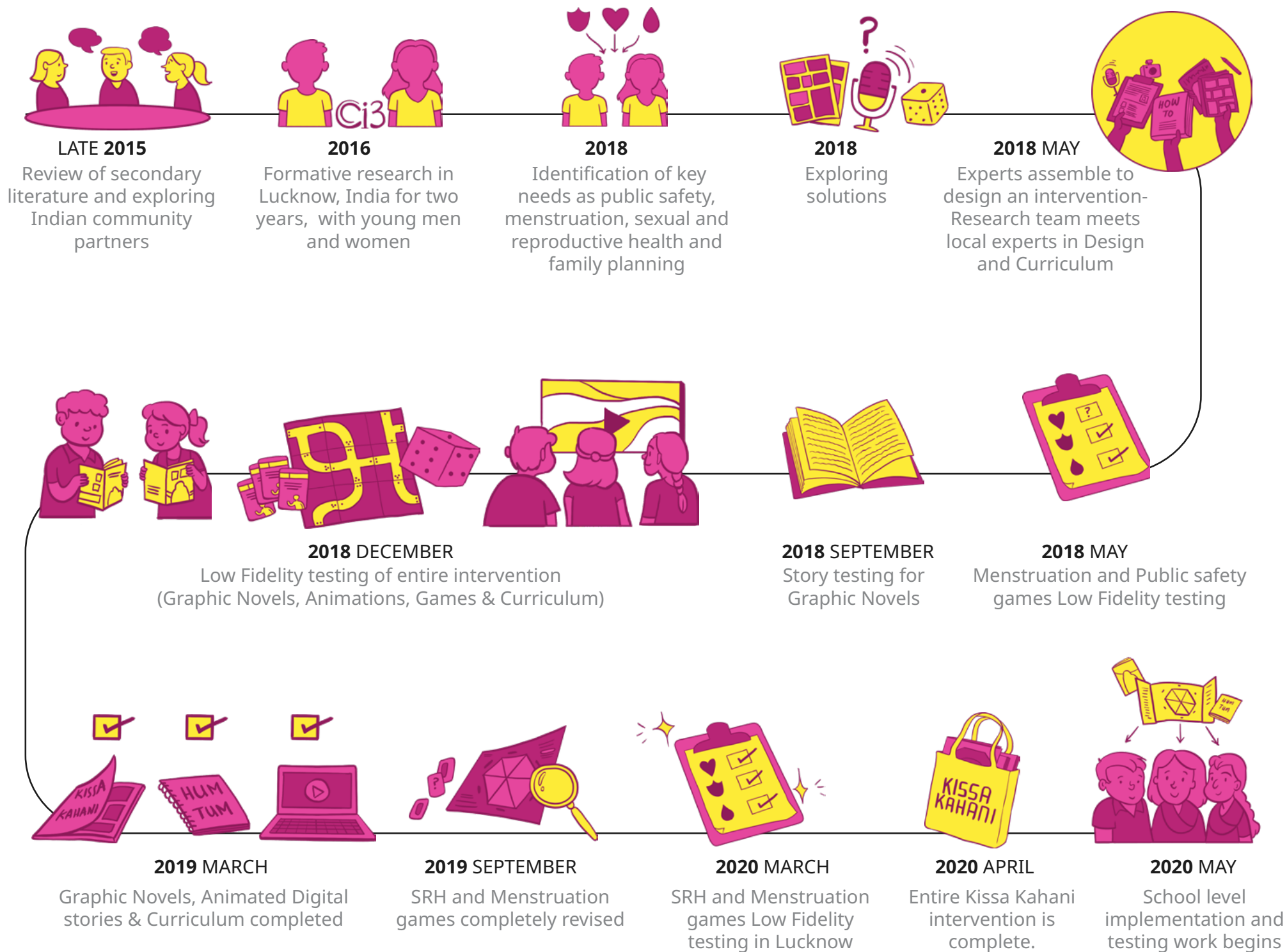
SCALING



Over the next **12** months, Kissa Kahani will be implemented in nearly **100** government schools in India, educating more than **3,000** adolescents.

Using a randomized control trial method, Ci3 researchers will evaluate the intervention's effects on young people's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors pertaining to sexual and reproductive health topics and gender norms.

Future plans include disseminating Kissa Kahani to all young people enrolled in government schools with support from the Indian government.



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was created by



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DESIGN

