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PUBLICATION LAUNCH! Changing the Story: Our Third Year

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Creative responses to COVID-19, new regional consolidating learning research projects, and our first international film festival – find out what Changing the Story got up to in our third year!

Following the scoping, development and capacity strengthening of our first year and the launch of our funding structure and Small Grants call in [year 2](#), in year 3, Changing the Story (CTS) has continued to support the delivery and implementation of its 17 phase two [projects](#) in 12 countries. We have also started to critically reflect on, and bring together the outcomes of the project, by commissioning five [Consolidating Learning](#) projects, one in each of the project regions and one overarching Consolidating Learning project. The annual report of year 3 highlights four areas of importance which emerged throughout the year:

Creative responses to Covid-19: When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the network had to work quickly and creatively. General ways of working and events transitioned to digital formats, which brought challenges. The pandemic highlighted the profound digital divide that is reflective of wider social inequalities at work. Project delivery was delayed. International travel stopped. However, COVID-19 also presented new opportunities to share learning and to reflect on the research as the impact of the pandemic evolved. In Kerala, India, the Large Grant [Tribal Education Methodology](#) project team worked on emergency mitigation measures to reduce the effect of lockdown on tribal youth and their families at the pedagogical, socioeconomic and mental wellbeing levels. The team received funding from the Government in Kerala to fund their COVID-19 mitigation plan, which included the distribution of food and mobile technology.



Young co-researchers from the Cuál es la verdad? project, Quibdo, Colombia. 2021.

Capacity strengthening: CTS and [PRAXIS](#) continued to provide opportunities for cross-pollination of learning across the CTS and GCRF network throughout year 3, leading to network members engaging with other disciplines and research methodologies in their work, and numerous promotions amongst the CTS cohort.

In year 3, CTS projects reported how arts and humanities methodologies and activities positively influenced CSO practice by creating more time for critical reflection and space to explore alternative approaches. In the Large Grant [Cuál es la verdad?](#) (Colombia) project for example, such opportunities afforded invaluable learning for artists and facilitators in terms of project management, design and use of participatory arts-based methodologies.

Impact and engagement: CTS and [PRAXIS](#) continued to work towards influencing positive social change with decision makers at the local, national and international levels in Year 3. One example of this is the [Youth, Voice and Development](#) (YVD) project, a collaboration between CTS and the British Council. The YVD project aims to support the effective integration of youth concerns and voices into development research and interventions to achieve the SDGs. Research findings from the report, located [here](#), show the power of youth-centred participatory approaches and the use of creative tools to help young people navigate and make sense of the complex environments in which they live in.

In year 3, CTS continues to place a spotlight on formal and informal education and the integration of arts-based methodologies within national curriculum frameworks to support young people to strengthen their capacity as active agents of change. In the ECR project [The Making of the Museum of Education](#) (Kosovo), the project team have formed a cross-sector working group and have shared their research findings with the Municipality of Pristina. The team are now working with the municipality to establish a Foundation for the School House Museum to help support its long-term sustainability.

Amplifying youth voices: New insights around how participatory action research is amplifying youth voice and leadership have emerged in our third year, including the arts as a new way of seeing and reimagining narratives. In several of our commissioned projects, including [Imagining Otherwise](#) (South Africa), [Cuál es la verdad?](#) (Colombia), [Pensamiento y libertad](#) (Venezuela) and [Contemporary Arts Making and Creative Expression Among young Cambodians](#), music, theatre, film, dance, and performance has supported young people to be critical co-constructors of their community history, their present, and to visualise alternative futures.

A Changing the Story [International Film Festival](#) provided an opportunity for young filmmakers across CTS to share their films with an international audience and to interview each other about their experiences, ideas and creative process. The development of a research placement programme at the University of Leeds and the recruitment of a Laidlaw Scholar in our third year sought to challenge the traditional student-research relationship by creating new spaces for young people to shape the narratives both within our projects and beyond.

Read the report in full [here](#). For more information about Changing the Story and PRAXIS, contact changingthestory@leeds.ac.uk



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