

MOLLY MELCHING



Molly Melching has lived and worked in Senegal since 1974 and founded the international NGO, Tostan, in 1991.

Tostan, meaning “breakthrough” in Wolof, developed a unique and holistic, three-year empowering education program that has engaged over 3,000 rural African communities in themes of democracy, human rights, peace and security, health, early childhood development, literacy, and project management skills. The program has led to over 20,000 rural women taking on leadership posts and over 9,300 communities in eight African countries publicly declaring their commitment to abandon harmful traditional practices.

Molly and Tostan have received international recognition for their successful work, from, among others: the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize, the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, the Thomas J. Dodd Prize in International Justice and Human Rights, the Anna Lindh Human Rights Award and UNESCO’s King Sejong Literacy Prize. A New York Times best-selling book by Aimee Molloy, *However Long the Night*, vividly relates Molly and Tostan’s story. They are also prominently featured in Melinda Gates’s book, *Moment of Lift* and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton’s: *The Book of Gutsy Women*. Molly also received the *Ordre national du Lion du Sénégal* (National Order of the Lion), the highest distinction awarded by the Government of Senegal.