



Tostan
Dignity for All

Resilience Beyond COVID-19
March–September 2020 Report

Primary Action Taken

In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tostan made the difficult decision to suspend all field activities in its five focus countries (The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal) for the duration of the emergency. All field staff had to leave the partner communities where they were living and return home. Tostan rapidly implemented a COVID-19 response contingency plan aimed at providing community members with life-saving information on the virus, delivered in the local languages and in a culturally appropriate manner. The ultimate goal of the contingency plan was to curb the virus spread and to protect lives through the measures outlined below:

1. Developed and distributed COVID-19 informational brochures in 13 languages

Tostan developed two brochures with key COVID-19 prevention messages. Illustrations depicted local housing, practices, and dress and advice was tailored to address any social norms that may be affected by the virus. One brochure offers culturally relevant information and illustrations about the virus transmission and prevention; and one discussing an Islamic perspective on the virus. Both versions of the brochures have been widely distributed to partner communities and are also available free to download from Tostan's website.

2. Broadcasted radio programs to inform Tostan partner communities

In addition to providing basic information on coronavirus transmission and prevention, Tostan radio programs covered topics such as community-government collaboration during the pandemic, religious texts that reinforce public health measures, and education in the time of COVID.

3. Collected data to inform programming

Working with IDinsight, a global analytics organization, Tostan gathered data to better understand the knowledge, attitudes, and practices around COVID in the areas where Tostan is working. This information will inform future work and also help in better understanding what makes communities resilient.

4. Pivoted the entire Tostan organization to working remotely

COVID-19 is reshaping the way the world works. Although field operations were paused, Tostan staff continued to work effectively using digital tools. We were able to keep all of our staff fully employed.

5. Continued to convene thought leaders on timely topics

Tostan actively engaged new audiences and strengthened the organization's position as a key thought leader in prominent online speaking events such as the World Skoll Forum, WISE Up Series, World Humanitarian Forum Hybrid Summit, and African Philanthropy Forum. Tostan's CEO, Elena Bonometti, also hosted a three part webinar series featuring systems change in the face of COVID, including the strategies Tostan implemented in the field.



Outreach by Country (April–August 2020)

THE GAMBIA

Delivered **86** radio programs in three languages

Distributed **9,200** brochures in four languages

Provided **4,800** masks along with other health and hygiene supplies

GUINEA

Delivered **76** radio programs in seven languages

Distributed **4,715** brochures in two languages

Provided **90** health and hygiene kits for communities

GUINEA-BISSAU

Delivered **62** radio programs

Distributed **10,243** brochures in four languages

Provided **722** masks and hundreds of health and hygiene supplies

MALI

Delivered **106** radio broadcasts on **10** stations

Distributed **12,347** brochures distributed in two languages

Provided **hundreds** of health and hygiene supplies

SENEGAL

Delivered **72** radio programs in four languages

Distributed **35,470** brochures in five languages

Provided **1,200** masks along with health and hygiene supplies to **333** communities, **9** prisons, and **102** daaras



Testimonials from the Field

We've received many messages of thanks from partners in the field using the COVID-19 materials. Here are just a few examples:

"We are planning to start a series of seminars to target groups and community influencers/mobilizers within the next week and these booklets will make an excellent addition to the training kit. We have found the content expertly written, easily adaptable and transferable to our audience in Mombasa."

– Project Manager | Mombasa, Kenya

"You brought us books here that will help us and we are happy because we can read and share with everyone in the village. We are studying what coronavirus is, how it is transmitted and how we can prevent the illness which is so important. Everyone is reading the booklets."

– Marieme B. | Community Management Committee, Village of Soudiane, Senegal

"One of my national partners who helps run women's savings groups in the villages is also a teacher in the school system—and he has used this to teach the teachers at his school as well as his class. He is so proud that his students (ages 7-8) are able now to understand and speak about COVID-19 fluently: symptoms, how to avoid transmission, and how to wash hands! This has been an excellent resource and those with whom I work love the photos and the information—well done!"

– Program Staff | Niamey, Niger

Already **59,500** printed brochures have been distributed in five countries and an additional **11,500** will be printed and distributed with support from the Mastercard Foundation.

*As Tostan resumes in the face of the pandemic, we are eternally grateful and appreciative of our many partners whose proud support enables us to achieve our mission to empower communities to achieve their vision for the future and to inspire movements leading to **Dignity for All**.*

To learn more please visit www.tostan.org and follow us on social media.





Tostan

Dignity for All

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