

# Generational Change in Three Years

An Ambitious Campaign to Empower Millions in West Africa

# Tostan

Dignity for All



In recent years Tostan has seen historic momentum building across West Africa, most notably in the abandonment of harmful practices, the empowerment of girls and women, and the promotion of human rights.

The next few years present a rare opportunity to build on that momentum to bring about large-scale change that can transform the region.

## The Opportunity: Creating a Generation of 'Firsts'

Today, in villages across West Africa, thousands of 'firsts' are happening.

A 13 year-old girl in southeastern Senegal is standing up for the very first time to speak in front of her elders about human rights, her right to be free from violence and her right to marry the man of her choice.

A middle-aged woman in The Gambia who didn't have the chance to go to formal school is writing her very first sentence on a blackboard. On her cell phone, she is sending her first text message to her brother in the city.

A young mother and her son are taking to market the food they prepared and canned last fall using a loan she received from her community's micro-credit fund - it is her first day in business.

And thousands of people from dozens of communities are gathering to discuss for the very first time the potential to end female genital cutting and child marriage in their entire district. A decision that will create another first: the first generation of girls - tens of thousands of them - that will be spared these practices entirely.

These and countless other firsts in the lives of African girls, women, families, and communities are

happening because of the Community Empowerment Program, a powerful nonformal education model developed over the past two decades.



# Generational Change In Three Years

**The Plan: Partner with 1,000 Communities to reach more than 1.6 million people in West Africa and Deliver Generational Change in Three Years**

This is an ambitious, and unique opportunity, for thousands to join the movement to change the lives of millions forever.

The **Generational Change in Three Years** campaign will create a foundation for community-led development and have the following impacts:

- Ending Female Genital Cutting in Senegal and growing the movement for abandonment in West Africa
- Reducing violence against Women and Girls by ending child/forced marriage and domestic violence
- Helping children stay in school and perform better through strengthened parental education practices.



The specific scaling model will empower 1.6 million people as we help drive a mass movement for positive social change across West Africa over three years.

By coordinating our work in 1,000 communities at once, we will be able to not only deliver key results but do so more efficiently, by reducing administrative costs, streamlining reporting protocols, and ensuring secure cash-flow - in short enabling Tostan to focus on what we do best - empower communities to create



transformational change from the inside out.

The **Generational Change in Three Years** campaign will also facilitate advanced monitoring and evaluation efforts across many impact areas, an effort which would be difficult to coordinate through traditional, single-project funding commitments.

## **The Methodology: Tostan's Community Empowerment Program - A Proven Platform for Community-Led Change**

At the heart of the Generational Change effort is Tostan's internationally-recognized nonformal education program.

The three-year Community Empowerment Program (CEP) engages participants using familiar methods of communication such as dialogue and exchange, theater, poetry, and song, while addressing topics of high interest.

It begins with a year of discussion and action on democracy and human rights, problem-solving, and hygiene and health. It then moves on to numeracy, management, budgeting, and small project implementation, and literacy through SMS text messaging.

The CEP promotes the development and use of critical thinking skills

leading to decision-making processes that involve all community members. Classroom dialogue, followed by sharing with other community members and nearby villages through 'organized diffusion', creates agreement on, and long-term commitment to, development objectives and social norm change.

Tostan's program has been cited as a best practice by multiple international organizations and publications, including the International Center for Research on Women, the Center for Global Development and UNICEF.

## **Sustainability**

As part of the CEP, Community Management Committees (CMCs), 17 member democratically-selected bodies, are trained in the management skills necessary to implement long term development projects. The CMCs embody our vision for sustainable development: democratic, community-based organizations working with partners to meet community needs and improve the wellbeing of all community members.

Over time, many CMCs register as official community-based organizations (CBOs) in their respective countries. This helps ensure that funds, projects, and campaigns are managed in a transparent and professional manner.

800 people avg. per community x (1,000 communities + 1,000 adopted communities through organized diffusion) = **1.6m people impacted**



**Tostan** is an international nonprofit headquartered in Dakar, Senegal. We are currently implementing our Community Empowerment Program in eight countries in West and East Africa and have spent over 20 years developing a way to put communities in charge of their own futures.

### Working in Partnership

Tostan works with local government, civil society, NGOs and international partners to implement our Community Empowerment Program in eight countries in Africa. Moreover, we have set up our Empowered Communities Network (ECN) to assist communities to partner with other organizations. Through the ECN, we connect trained CMCs with NGO partners, micro-finance institutions, businesses, government authorities, and other service providers so they can access resources and funding to continue their community-led development projects.

The results of our community-led model speak for themselves:

- More than 200,000 people directly and over two million indirectly impacted
- Female genital cutting and child/forced marriage publicly abandoned by over 6,500 communities
- Significant increases in women's participation and community leadership
- Increased protection of children's rights
- Reduced violence against women and girls
- Increased enrollment of girls in school.

### Tostan: Deeply Rooted in Africa and with Over 20 Years' Experience

Tostan is an international nonprofit headquartered in Dakar, Senegal. We are currently implementing our Community Empowerment Program in eight countries in West and East Africa, and we have spent 20 years developing a way to put communities in charge of their own futures. We are dedicated to being headquartered in Africa and always putting communities first. Over 95 percent of our staff are African, and the hiring and training of African staff is a priority.

We have been recognized for our work by the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize, the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize, the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship (SASE), the Anna Lindh Award for Human Rights, and others.

Our approach to FGC abandonment has been integrated into national and international strategies including the Donor's Working Group on FGM/C and ten UN agencies. In Senegal, the Government has adopted a National Action Plan that calls for using the human rights approach pioneered by Tostan to end FGC by 2015.

### Get Involved

This is an ambitious effort to raise the funds needed to change the lives of millions of people, and we need your help.

For every \$4 raised we can support people across six countries to realize a brighter, safer, more productive future.

- Donate at: [www.tostan.org/generationalchange](http://www.tostan.org/generationalchange)
- Learn more about our story by reading *However Long the Night: Molly Melching's Journey to Help Millions of African Women and Girls Triumph* on sale April 30th
- Contact us to talk about getting involved on a deeper level through your organization, foundation or workplace giving program.

#### Jen Hedrick

Chief Operating Officer  
[jenhedrick@tostan.org](mailto:jenhedrick@tostan.org)

#### Gannon Gillespie

Director of Strategic Development  
[gannongillespie@tostan.org](mailto:gannongillespie@tostan.org)

We look forward to you joining us!



[www.tostan.org](http://www.tostan.org)  
[info@tostan.org](mailto:info@tostan.org)

