



January 2013

Dear Tostan Friends and Supporters,

I wanted to let you know about the great strides that have been made in the past weeks towards an FGC-Free Senegal. 427 communities gathered in the region of Ziguinchor in southern Senegal on January 20 to reinforce their commitment to respecting human rights at the [first regional public declaration](#) for the abandonment of [female genital cutting](#) (FGC) and [child/forced marriage](#)!



Participants at the regional declaration for FGC abandonment in Ziguinchor, Senegal

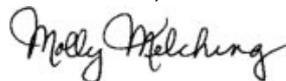
The regional declaration had been planned for months and was a result of [social mobilization and awareness-raising activities](#) about human rights and the sharing of the teachings of Tostan's [Community Empowerment Program](#) (CEP) by communities who had implemented the program in the region.

One of the highlights of the event was the inspiring speech from the Governor of the Region of Ziguinchor, Cheikh Tidiane Dien, who said: "Today we are lucky to be witnesses of history. This is vital for future generations and has given us a basis for new behaviors to protect children and women and their physical and moral integrity. All the administrative and religious authorities and the media need to work and follow up what has happened today. Thank you also to the Gambian delegation for their attendance today, because we need a global, cross-border approach to ending FGC and child/forced marriage."

View [beautiful photos](#) and [a short video](#) from the event, and [learn more about the partnerships that made this regional declaration possible](#).

I feel this regional declaration has truly set the pace for the FGC abandonment movement in Senegal. It represents tremendous progress for human rights, and I hope will usher in many more opportunities for community-led, positive social change.

Warm wishes,



Molly Melching

Executive Director

P.S. [Read a firsthand account of the generational impact of Tostan's CEP from one of our former interns, Farba M'Bow, on the blog](#). Years after his mother participated in the CEP, Farba was inspired by her story, leading him to rediscover Tostan and his passion for international development and women's rights.

West African communities use film and the 'power of storytelling' to share stories of social change

In January, Tostan staff and local filmmakers participated in a two week innovative



Tostan listed as one of the Top 100 NGOs in *The Global Journal*

Tostan is ranked number 42 in *The Global Journal's* second edition of the [Top 100 NGOs](#) released on January 23. In this one-of-a-kind international ranking looking



week innovative filmmaking training led by [Venice Arts](#).

Trained on participant-led media techniques and filmmaking, the individuals became equipped with the skills to creatively share stories of positive social change that are the most meaningful to them. This training was made possible through funding from [Sida](#) and a grant awarded to Tostan by [Stories of Change](#), a project of the [Sundance Institute](#) Documentary Film Program and Fund (DFP), supported by the [Skoll Foundation](#).



[Learn more about this participant-led filmmaking training](#), and [view photos from the training](#).

Social Mobilization Agents play a key role in the movement for FGC abandonment in Kolda, Senegal

In partnership with Tostan and [Orchid Project](#), [social mobilization agents](#) from the Kolda community in southern Senegal are leading awareness-raising efforts to promote human rights and the abandonment of female genital cutting (FGC) in their region. Their work ensures that entire networks of communities are informed and included in any decision to promote positive social change in their area.



[Read how each agent brings their own unique background and experience to the social mobilization efforts](#). Also, check out [Orchid Project's blog](#) for more information on how social mobilization activities are crucial to ending FGC in Senegal.

at overall impact, innovation, and sustainability, *The Global Journal* selected the best NGOs worldwide after a rigorous evaluation process out of a pool of approximately 450 NGOs. We are excited to be recognized for the second consecutive year!



[Learn more about The Global Journal's Top 100 NGOs 2013 Edition](#).

Molly Melching discusses sustainable economic development in the *Huffington Post*

Tostan's Founder Molly Melching shared how sustainable change and economic empowerment is first rooted in an understanding of human rights on [Johnson & Johnson's Global Motherhood blog on the *Huffington Post*](#). The blog article, published on January 23, discussed how [CEP participants](#), especially women, are empowered through their human rights knowledge and practical skills learned through the CEP.



[Read the full article](#), and [support Community Development Grants on our Catapult page](#). Your donation will be matched by Johnson & Johnson!

DONATE NOW



Click on the icons above to donate and stay connected with Tostan.

To find out more about upcoming events and ongoing projects, please visit our [website](#). Tostan is a US 501(c)(3) nongovernmental organization based in Senegal, West Africa.

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