



Tostan
Community-led Development



The Path Forward

Tostan Strategic Plan

2010 – 2015

Final Board-Approved Version

Tostan:

A Unique & Proven Grassroots Organization

- US 501(c)(3) organization, incorporated in 1991
- Based in Senegal, operating in eight African countries
- Innovative “brain gain” staffing model: 99% African staff of more than 1,000 including local community facilitators
- Recognized by many awards including the 2010 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, the 2007 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize, the 2007 UNESCO King Sejong Prize for Literacy and Sweden’s 2005 Anna Lindh Prize for Human Rights
- Strategies and approaches recommended by 10 UN Agencies, many international groups and the Government of Senegal

The Community Empowerment Program:

A Powerful Model for Development

Tostan’s three-year **Community Empowerment Program (CEP)** is a proven model for bringing about sustainable social change and community-led development. The carefully designed curriculum works in local languages and engages communities in democracy and human rights, problem solving, hygiene and health, literacy, numeracy, technology, and financial and project management skills.

Our Key Innovations:

Development Done Differently

- Use human rights as a central framework for community development
- Work respectfully and in a way that honors the culture and knowledge systems of the community

- Follow communities' lead to work on their priority issues
- Engage variety of community members, not just certain groups
- Work through social networks for exponential change

Our Impact:

Large-Scale Reach, Historic Change

- **Impact:** Over 4,800 communities comprising some 4 million people have publicly declared their abandonment of female genital cutting. To date, an estimated 660,000 girls have been spared the practice of FGC as a result of Tostan's work.
- **Impact:** Over 4,000 communities have publicly abandoned child/forced marriage, sparing many girls from this practice and attendant health risks, allowing them to continue their education.
- **Reach:** To-date, Tostan community facilitators have trained over 250,000 classroom participants and CMC members. Tostan's model of organized diffusion has helped to reach millions indirectly.
- **Sustainability:** Tostan has helped form thousands of community management committees (CMCs), 80% of which are managed by women. Many are now fully-functioning organizations registered with the local government. Hundreds of CMCs have joined together to create regional federations.
- **Efficiency:** In 2009, Tostan worked with over 57,000 program participants and reached hundreds of thousands indirectly on a budget of \$7M.
- **Potential:** Tostan's model has been recognized for its innovative approach and impacts in many other areas:
 - *Women's and girls' empowerment*
 - *Community health*
 - *Democracy and governance*
 - *Environmental protection and sustainability*
 - *Peace and security*

Our Opportunity:

Scaling Up FGC Abandonment & Much More

Donors, local and international partners and, most importantly, Tostan communities themselves have asked Tostan to rapidly scale up its programs. Tostan's results in mobilizing FGC abandonment account for much of this demand. However, Tostan's work encompasses much more than FGC: our model empowers communities to be the driving force in their own development by using a human rights framework to provide a socially acceptable way of discussing difficult subjects, setting new visions for the future and coordinating collective action. Tostan has found a way to enable communities to discover, discuss and change social norms. The significant parallels between FGC, child/forced marriage and other harmful social norms and practices illuminate a long-term opportunity to apply our model to many other critical issues.

Humankind's ability to meet the great challenges of the coming century—environmental destruction, long-term peace and security, the empowerment of women, to name a few—will be greatly defined by our understanding of collective human behavior and our ability to unite and redefine what is normal, expected and "good" on a massive scale. The abandonment of FGC itself can become a demonstration of united action worldwide, a massive first step that can launch more effective work through social networks to address the challenges we will face in the coming decades.

In addition to propelling FGC abandonment across Africa, Tostan's scale-up efforts provide a historic opportunity to bring about community-led development and social transformation in many other vital areas.

Our Goal:

Empower 3,000 Communities by 2015

Background: Our Strategic Work To-Date

Strategic Plan 2006 - 2011

In 2005, Tostan began a process of strategic planning that led to the development of the *Tostan Strategic Plan 2006-2011*. A 2008-2009 mid-term assessment of this plan's progress found that while Tostan was on pace to meet the strategic goals set in 2005, the plan no longer represented the major challenges and opportunities facing Tostan in 2009. A central conclusion of this assessment was the recommendation to begin creating a new Strategic Plan to guide the organization from 2010-2015.

The Path Forward:

Three Strategic Directions for Success

Tostan and its internal and external stakeholders have engaged in an ongoing process of strategic analysis to prepare for scaling. The main goal is to reach 3,000 communities by 2015, while honoring Tostan's history as a learning organization.

1. Build Organizational Capacity (Pages 8-12)

- A. Prepare human resources capacity for scale
- B. Build long-term financial sustainability
- C. Improve communications to tell Tostan's stories
- D. Build Tostan's training capacities
- E. Reinforce infrastructure & resources

2. Further Strengthen Programs (Pages 13-16)

- A. Demonstrate CEP impact in other areas
- B. Support innovative additions to the CEP
- C. Strengthen the Empowered Communities Network

3. Expand in Efficient and Effective ways (Pages 17-19)

- A. Follow momentum and key strategies in movement to abandon FGC & child/forced marriage
- B. Follow momentum in newly-demonstrated impact areas
- C. Prioritize existing-presence countries
- D. Expand to new countries when conditions are ideal

Strategic Direction 1:

Build Organizational Capacity

A. Prepare Human Resource Capacity for Scale

BACKGROUND

Tostan is very proud of its organizational culture: 99% of staff is African, and Tostan not only empowers rural communities but is also reversing brain-drain by offering engaging careers to passionate, often-overlooked African professionals, building much needed human capacity in Africa. Programs, finance, information technology, communications, and monitoring and evaluation departments are all based in Africa. Yet years of mission-driven focus on programs with little overhead support have left the organization too lean; without preparation, scaling could drain talent pools and overextend management. Tostan is addressing these deficits by carefully hiring select high-level managers who share the organization's values and can build necessary systems while training from within to increase capacity.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Hire highly-qualified staff to train and mentor existing staff for growth and promotion in key areas, including an International Human Resources Manager and International Controller.
2. Invest in HR systems to better evaluate, support and train staff, while ensuring Tostan maintains its organizational culture of putting communities first throughout the growth phase.
3. Continue to grow and develop Tostan's Africa Volunteer Program. Volunteers are invaluable for helping staff with training and support.

B. Long-term Financial Sustainability

BACKGROUND

Since its founding in 1991 Tostan has steadily built a base of committed support. Rapid growth over the past seven years has occurred primarily through direct support for project implementation. The project-by-project model, however, does not position the organization well for growth for several reasons:

- Many of these partners have been unable to consistently deliver grant funding on time, forcing Tostan to pre-finance entire projects for months at a time, tying up core funds that are vital to the innovation and flexibility inherent in Tostan's model.
- Project partners typically allocate funds annually, while Tostan's CEP is a three-year effort.
- Many projects also place restrictions on certain necessary costs (for example, funding for motorcycles for certain field-level staff).
- Most funders only pay for project expenses and not for administrative or overhead expenses. This has led Tostan to support such expenses on a project-by-project basis, directly billing them to individual project budgets from willing funders. Currently, only three funders cover all administrative expenses. Should any one of these funders withdraw support, it could paralyze the organization.

In summary, sustainable scaling of Tostan's model will require the organization to shift to more flexible funding streams. Tostan sees major opportunities to build upon its base of support and improve its financial sustainability by engaging in six key activities.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Transition from direct to indirect costing.
2. Build innovative retail and major-donor fundraising systems.
3. Reinforce grant-seeking systems.

4. Explore options that can unite institutional donors around a common plan, through a pooled funding model.
5. Explore options that allow Tostan to partner with other organizations to deliver the CEP and best-in-class solutions through a single project.
6. Leverage impacts in other areas, in addition to FGC and child/forced marriage, for new funding streams.

C. Improve Communications to Tell Tostan's Stories

BACKGROUND

Even with repeated recognition through prestigious awards and public support from well-known individuals, awareness of Tostan among the general public and potentially supportive audiences (such as the International Development community) remains relatively low. The cause of this is no mystery: Tostan has not dedicated the institutional resources to deliver the level of communications that is common at many organizations. Looking ahead, developing Tostan's communications systems will be a central component of the organization's strategic success. Tostan must create a global brand that is appealing to all stakeholders, from communities to staff to donors.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Create an innovative Tostan branding strategy to drive fundraising, marketing and general outreach.
2. Build a world-class internal and external communications system to tell Tostan's stories.
3. Continue advocacy for Tostan's approach within the international development community.

D. Reinforce Infrastructure and Resources

BACKGROUND

Tostan has made great progress in the past three years in ensuring that its staff has the equipment and resources they need to do their work. Tostan's scale-up efforts, however, will require the continued reinforcement of key resources related to all areas of the organization's work. Notably, our efforts in human resources, communications, fundraising and monitoring and evaluation all require strengthened IT systems and will rely heavily on reliable internet connections and up-to-date computers. Tostan must also replace aging infrastructure, especially vehicles that are long overdue for replacement. Finally, Tostan needs to produce its pedagogical and training materials for scale-up.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Build IT infrastructure and training for all departments.
2. Replace ailing infrastructure including vehicles and computers.
3. Prepare and publish the CEP Package for scaled distribution.

E. Develop Appropriate Training Systems

BACKGROUND

Tostan's program model is in high demand, yet the organization has found that simply giving away documents or doing one-week trainings is insufficient for others to successfully replicate Tostan's work. This is because Tostan's deep, respectful model is equal parts approach and content. Tostan is planning direct implementation of its model as the main mechanism for its scaling, while at the same time, the organization would like to share its model with the large number of groups requesting training. Tostan plans to leverage its substantial internal training talents to design its own training system, one that ensures trainees develop a deep, practical understanding of Tostan's work. The organization envisions offering a range of training services to those interested.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Creation of internal Tostan training system development team.
2. Identification of training audiences and priorities.
3. Research of other successful NGO training models worldwide.
4. Development and testing of new training pedagogy.

Strategic Direction 2:

Further Strengthen Programs

A. Demonstrate CEP Impact in New Areas

BACKGROUND

In addition to bringing about large-scale abandonment of harmful traditional practices, Tostan believes that its Community Empowerment Program has the potential to become a general model for community-led development and social norm shift. Indeed, Tostan has seen promising indications of the model's success in a wide range of areas including democracy and good governance; peace, security and conflict resolution; child protection; women and girls' empowerment; community-based economic empowerment; environmental protection; and many other areas. Tostan's recent experience in working with UNICEF to successfully prove impact in FGC abandonment is an experience Tostan wishes to replicate in these other areas.

Since 2006, Tostan has been actively developing its Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) Department while also building strategic partnerships with specialized research organizations. Tostan will continue to strengthen internal management systems for participatory project-level M&E: tracking outputs and results, strengthening internal evaluation and data management for organizational and community learning. At the same time, Tostan will engage with partners to conduct impact evaluations that will help Tostan further improve its programming. Demonstrating impact and connecting that impact to recognized standards such as the Millennium Development Goals is critical to creating new funding streams for Tostan, thus increasing organizational sustainability and reach.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Further strengthen the Tostan MERL department's internal capacity to monitor and evaluate the CEP through better training and

supervision of field staff and reinforcement of project and data management processes.

2. Maintain strategic partnerships with leading research and evaluation organizations.
3. Conduct specialized evaluations to establish evidence base in a wide range of impact areas.
4. Create partnerships with development organizations that specialize in areas that the Community Management Communities are identifying as priorities such as: health, clean water, microfinance, solar technology, etc.
5. Creation of MDG/Human Rights “Dashboard” to guide all of Tostan’s work.

B. Support Innovative Additions to the CEP

BACKGROUND

Tostan's success to date has been driven by its ability to constantly improve its program. Key to this perpetual process of improvement has been Tostan's openness and will to adapt to community needs as expressed by the communities themselves. Thus, even as Tostan has generally finalized its CEP model to prepare for growth in recent years, it has continued to develop new components and approaches for addressing community needs; these will continue to be combined with and integrated into the CEP over time. Supporting current and future additions is essential to ensuring that Tostan can continue to meet community needs even as it grows.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Creation of programs and program innovations management structures within Tostan's Programs team.
2. Invest in promising innovations, especially the Solar Power! Project, the Diaspora Project, the Jokko Initiative and the Sustainable Recycling and Compost Project.
3. Creation of an Innovation Fund to provide seed funding for current and future program additions.

C. Reinforce the ECN

BACKGROUND

As a part of Community Empowerment Program, Tostan trains Community Management Committees (CMCs) to oversee development projects and related activities. CMCs are 17-member, self-sustaining elected bodies designed to strengthen the long-term sustainability of Tostan's model. In 2006, Tostan created the Empowered Communities Network (ECN), a Tostan-managed effort to support community-led development activities in Tostan-trained communities after the completion of the CEP. Based on an initial inventory and assessment of thousands of CMCs, their capacities, and interests, Tostan has identified and explored four potential mechanisms to support communities after the completion of the CEP, each of which has distinct advantages as well as challenges. Tostan will explore these and other options and continue to invest in the capacity of the ECN team. This will allow the organization to support graduated communities seeking partnerships to undertake new community-led projects.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Host Development Marketplace event in Senegal to support CMCs and federations of CMCs seeking immediate partners.
2. Set up a partnership facilitation system with NGOs, government agencies and other social entrepreneurs willing to collaborate with ECN communities.
3. Reinforce federations of CMCs to develop projects and solicit funding from partners and donors.
4. Explore Small MicroEnterprise Funds (SMEFs) in order to provide CMCs and federations of CMCs with seed funding for social enterprises whose profits will support community development projects.

Strategic Direction 3:

Expand in Efficient and Effective ways

A. Follow the abandonment of FGC & child/forced marriage

BACKGROUND:

Tostan's experience has led to a deep organizational understanding of both the micro and macro social forces at play in the abandonment of FGC and other harmful social norms. The way in which this abandonment is now spreading across West Africa is clear: it follows networks based on family, ethnic group and locality/nationality; it follows those networks across borders into neighboring countries and the diaspora; and it is spreading and accelerating rapidly where governments, organizations, and donors come together to support and facilitate community-led change.

MAIN STRATEGIES:

- Utilize existing, proven strategies for large-scale impact
- Promote abandonment at department, region and country levels
- Promote abandonment within ethnic and sub-ethnic groups
- Follow abandonment across borders
- Engage diaspora for change
- Continue to partner with key organizations and governments; share and advocate for Tostan's proven approach

INITIAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Establish a team to manage international FGC abandonment.
2. Develop diaspora networks and strategies.

B. Follow communities' lead into new impact areas

BACKGROUND

In its efforts detailed above, Tostan will demonstrate the impact of the CEP in new areas. Tostan anticipates this will create a small but steadily increasing opportunity for further growth, and that similar strategies of working across borders through social networks will be critical in these areas as well.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

- Please see activities listed under:

Strategic Direction 2: Demonstrating Impact in New Areas

Also:

Strategic Direction 2: Support Innovative Additions to the CEP

Strategic Direction 1: Financial Sustainability

C. Prioritize existing-presence countries

BACKGROUND

Tostan has made a significant investment in creating a presence in eight African countries to date, and in many of these countries, Tostan has received requests to further scale up its work. Tostan plans to maximize its impact by first prioritizing and increasing its footprint in existing-presence countries.

ACTIVITIES

1. Scale up implementation of the CEP in eight current countries.

D. Expand to new countries when conditions are ideal

BACKGROUND

Even with an emphasis on countries where it currently operates, Tostan must remain flexible enough to move into new countries when necessary. This is especially critical in light of Tostan's cross-border work in West Africa, which may necessitate consideration of expansion into new countries in order to follow social networks and ensure sustainable abandonment of harmful traditional practices.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Monitor potential countries for expansion in the next two years.
2. Evaluate political, social and economic realities of potential expansion countries.
3. Continue exchanges with prospective governments and agency contacts from interested African countries.

In Conclusion:

Major Impacts Within Reach

Tostan's desire to extend its model is not simply growth for growth's sake. The needs of African women, families and communities are real and urgent. We take seriously our opportunity to sustainably transform millions of lives across many different sectors.

We also stand firm in our commitment to the internal values that have guided us so far; through local hiring and promotion from within we can do our part to develop African leaders at all levels and to keep future African leaders in Africa.

The plan above is ambitious but also strategic and thoughtful. We recognize that we must balance our passion to scale up with a renewed commitment to ensure our growth is sustainable by building the systems necessary to reach communities for decades to come.

Right now, even as stark headlines tell of the problems facing African communities, positive social change is underway: in rural areas of Senegal where hospitals are many miles away, in villages in war-torn Somalia where violence is a daily event, in the highlands of Guinea Bissau where formal school seems like an impossible dream; and in hundreds of other communities in five other countries, Tostan is helping people come together to lead sustainable change. Community Management Committees are meeting to discuss future goals. Local African facilitators are giving class participants vital information about their health and human rights and in turn listening to their stories and empowering them to take action. Communities are reaching out to their neighbors, their families and extended social networks, finding allies and building consensus for change. Families are enrolling their girls in school, and women are taking leadership roles and speaking out in public for the first time. Of their own volition, communities are making choices for a healthy future, building latrines and health centers.

This community-led work is powerful and contains the seeds of a new future: if Africa is to surmount the significant challenges of the 21st century, communities must be empowered to take their rightful place as the leaders of their own development.

The world of international development has for too long ignored the voices and visions of those it is seeking to help. And so, even as we at Tostan plan to grow and to extend our own capacities, our focus will remain where it has always been: on the communities we serve, who, with limited resources and dynamic spirits, are charging forward with hope into a future they are shaping for themselves.

ANNEX SECTION ONE:

ANTICIPATED DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

2010-2015

General Timeline:

- From 2010 to 2012 launch program in 1,500 new communities, including 2 new countries by 2012, provided conditions are favorable.
- By December 31, 2013 launch an additional 1,500 communities, including 2 new countries (in addition to previous 2 for a total of 4), provided conditions are favorable.

Djibouti

Cycle One: 50 villages

Cycle Two: 100 villages

Total: 150 villages

Guinea

Cycle One: 100 villages

Cycle Two: 200 villages

Total: 300 villages

The Gambia

Cycle One: 100 villages

Cycle Two: 150 villages

Total: 250 villages

Guinea Bissau

Cycle One: 50 villages

Cycle Two: 100 villages

Total: 150 villages

Mali

Cycle One: 100 villages

Cycle Two: 200 villages

Total: 300 villages

Mauritania

Cycle One: 100 villages

Cycle Two: 200 villages

Total: 300 communities

Senegal

Cycle One: 450 villages

Cycle Two: 450 villages

Total: 900 villages

Somalia

Cycle One: 50 villages

Cycle Two: 100 villages

Total: 150 villages

Additional Country A

Cycle One: 50 communities

Cycle Two: 100 communities

Total: 150 communities

Additional Country B

Cycle One: 50 communities

Cycle Two: 100 communities

Total: 150 communities

Additional Country C

Cycle Two (starting 2012): *100 communities*

Additional Country D

Cycle Two (starting 2012): *100 communities*

Total: 3,000 communities completing or commencing the CEP in 12 countries by 2015.