

Tostan at a glance

Tostan

Dignity for All



Tostan, which means ‘breakthrough’ in the Wolof language, is an international nonprofit organization headquartered in Dakar, Senegal and working in six countries in West Africa. We are dedicated to empowering African communities to bring about sustainable development and positive social transformation based on respect for human rights.

Our Vision: Dignity for All

At Tostan, we believe that development is most effective and sustainable when brought about by communities themselves. In this community-led approach to social change, we see our role as a facilitator - to share resources, skills, and knowledge that will empower communities to set their own goals and create change on their own terms.

Through our holistic, human rights-based education program, the Community Empowerment Program (CEP), and other projects, we ignite community dialogue on a wide range of topics including democracy, human rights, hygiene and health, and problem solving, as well as provide training in literacy, numeracy, and project management skills.

Our program is currently offered in 22 languages in six African countries: , Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and The Gambia.

CEP participants represent the community at large, including women and men, girls and boys, elders and youth, and various ethnic groups and social strata. Most have never been to formal school, or dropped out at an early age.

Since Tostan’s founding in 1991, more than 200,000 individuals have participated in our Community Empowerment Program (CEP), affecting the lives of over three million people indirectly through our unique community outreach approach called **organized diffusion.**

Working with communities, our holistic approach has brought about outcomes in many different areas, including:

- Over 7,300 communities from eight countries publicly declaring abandonment of FGC and child/ forced marriage
- In Senegal, 5,935 communities have publicly declared to abandon FGC and child/forced marriage since 1997.
- Promotion of grassroots democracy
- Enhancement of economic opportunities at a local level
- Emergence of female leadership in the community
- Improvement of literacy and math skills
- Environmental sustainability
- Increased vaccination rates
- Increased enrollment of girls in formal school
- Protection of maternal and child health
- Protection of children’s rights.



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