Generational Change in Three Years
An ambitious project to Empower Millions in West Africa


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FOREWORD

As Tostan entered 2012, the organization was at a turning point. We saw that if we continued to grow as we had been growing from 2006-2011 by simply adding single, stand-alone projects—we would not be able to achieve our biggest potential and make the case for comprehensive, empowering education and development.

Instead, we were going to slowly but surely end up with a fragmented reality so many NGOs face. Fragmented finances and operations aligned not to programs but to administration. Fragmented monitoring and evaluation that couldn’t capture broad impact, and, worst of all for me, a fragmented program itself that only brought pieces and parts to our community partners when we could offer so much more.

To change this, we proposed an entirely new approach: to design a system of proposing, financing, managing, and measuring projects that could match the potential of the program we had spent so long building. It wasn’t easy, but our efforts bore fruit in 2013 when the Leadership Circle for Generation Change in Three Years (GC3Y) was formed as a collective funding group committed to making this happen, and in early 2014 we launched the 3-year GC3Y program in 150 communities in four countries.

Now, three years later, if there is one thing that is clear at the end of this innovative initiative, it is this: GC3Y was even more than we hoped for.

Against a backdrop of constant funding gaps that previously defined Tostan, we ran this entire project with no shortfalls experienced. To the contrary, we were able to adjust and adapt when needed, always putting communities first.

Against a backdrop of single-issue results frameworks, we were able to track dozens of indicators and incorporate our work with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s support of our monitoring and evaluation efforts to yield the report you find here. This three-year comprehensive report is a foundation for us to build on in the years to come, as we explore the many exciting, intriguing, and challenging results we found.

Most importantly, GC3Y lived up to our hopes, programmatically speaking. It is breathtaking for me to think about the change brought about by all who made this project possible. 358 communities ending FGC; so many more making positive changes for the health and wellbeing of women and children. So many others who created small income streams for their families, who were candidates for public office for the first time, advocating for transparency and human rights. Success is contagious, and something this successful cannot help but be replicated. This is why we have doubled down on this approach—we are now looking to how we can do collaborative projects in every instance.

The Breakthrough Generation Phase II launched in 2017 is a great example of this.

On behalf of the tens of thousands of people affected by this project, thank you to our donors for your vision, your trust, you wisdom, and your support.

Molly Melching
Founder and CEO
The campaign will create a foundation for community-led development and will have the following impacts:

- Ending Female Genital Cutting (FGC) in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania and growing the movement for abandonment in West Africa;
- Reducing violence against women and girls, including child/forced marriage and domestic violence;

To reinforce sustainable community-led development that will contribute to the abandonment of harmful practices, the empowerment of girls and women and the promotion of human rights

1. Participants review current social practices, roles and relations and possess technical knowledge to improve the wellbeing of their communities
2. New knowledge and attitudes are spread from class to the community and later from community to other communities leading to the adoption of new social norms
3. Community members take action to improve governance, education, health, environment and economic conditions.

150 communities in 4 countries in West Africa (Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania). A total of 9,647 direct beneficiaries, of whom 81% are women and girls.

October 2013 – December 2016
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2013, Tostan launched Generational Change in Three Years (GC3Y), which aimed to significantly accelerate the abandonment of FGC and other harmful traditional practices and to further the empowerment of girls and women and the promotion of human rights. The campaign, implemented through the Community Empowerment Program (CEP), is creating a foundation of community-led development, reducing violence against women and girls, and contributing to the growing movement for the abandonment of Female Genital Cutting (FGC) in West Africa.

The Community Empowerment Program (CEP) consists of non-formal education classes designed to provide participants with comprehensive information on areas of key importance. Tostan’s CEP provides community members with essential learning and skills that enable them to take direct control of their own community’s development. The program uses a strategy of “organized diffusion”, which encourages participants and communities to share new information and ideas with their friends, families, neighbors, and social network.

From October 2013 to December 2016, 150 communities located in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania, implemented the Kobi and Aawde modules and 9,647 community members gained knowledge on Human Rights, problem solving, Governance, Hygiene, Health, literacy, numeracy, use of the mobile phone and project management.

At an individual level, Tostan empowered community members to be agents of change for their own lives. At the community level, Tostan acknowledged communities as experts in their own development and provided them with practical skills training to capitalize on their pre-existing assets and to promote positive community-level change.

After three years of capacity building and awareness-raising, the percentage of participants who know their civil and political and social, economic, and cultural rights increased significantly between the baseline study and the final evaluation in all countries. This rate was 75% in Guinea, 66% in Guinea Bissau, 55% in Mali and 83% in Mauritania, while the average was only 12% before the project implementation. Women who have participated in the CEP (81% of class participants) emerged as community leaders, human rights activists, and role models, showing young girls and boys alike that they can succeed in leadership roles and work with men as equals. Demonstrating the drastic change, at the end of the three years of capacity building, the majority of women say they are now confident to speak in public. 90% of the women in Guinea feel confident speaking in public, 81% in Guinea Bissau, 75% in Mauritania and 70% in Mali; while at the beginning of the CEP, the average was 55%.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of for the dynamic for community-led development, 2,550 Community Management Committees (CMCs) members (among whom 70% are female) were trained in all 150 communities to continue activities after the end of the CEP.

Once capacitated, CMCs decide to focus their activities on areas particularly relevant for the development of their community. In general, health is one the main area of actions, and CMCs work to promote good practices such as: following the vaccination schedule, pre- and postnatal consultation and the prevention of illnesses such as diarrhea, malaria, cholera, and Ebola. In the four countries, the proportion of women who practiced birth spacing and who discussed family planning with their husband increased. During the baseline study, the rate was 8% in Guinea Bissau, 11% in Mauritania, 23% in Mali and 38% in Guinea. After three years of implementation of the CEP, surveys of the entire community (not only class members) reported that birth spacing is now practiced by 42% of women in Mauritania, 43% in Mali, 47% in Guinea Bissau and 73% in Guinea.

A key result after the three-years of learning and organized diffusion activities (adopt-a-learner, community sharing events, inter-village meetings, sharing seminars, regular radio programs, and other social mobilization activities) was the six declarations for abandonment of FGC and child marriage by all 150 participating communities and 208 sensitized communities reached through organized diffusion activities.

This report highlights key achievements and outcomes of this three-year program achieved by the 150 communities in four West African countries where Tostan implemented the Community Empowerment Program.
PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

In October 2013 Tostan launched the Generational Change in Three Years (GC3Y) Project in order to build a historic, large-scale movement for the abandonment of harmful practices, the empowerment of girls and women, and the promotion of human rights across West Africa. This campaign aimed to create a foundation of community-led development, reduce violence against women and girls, and contribute to the growing movement for the abandonment of Female Genital Cutting (FGC) in West Africa.

The GC3Y resulted in the implementation of the Community Empowerment Program (CEP) in 150 West African communities in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania. 9,647 direct participants gained essential learning and skills that enabled them to take direct control of their own community’s development. This three-year project led to 358 communities to abandon harmful practices such as FGC and child marriage, and promote human rights.

This final report aims at highlighting key results and impact areas that were identified by Tostan as part of its new evaluation system. This report, also describes the journey of those communities that participated in the CEP for three years and who devoted their time and energy to sharing the knowledge gained within and beyond their villages. There were challenges, but also many successes and lessons learned. The project allowed Tostan to accelerate the movement for the abandonment of harmful practices, and to make further improvements in our model and bring it to scale.

A) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Tostan developed and evolved its holistic program over a period of more than twenty-six years. This non-formal education model is founded in human rights and responsibilities and aims to provide African communities with the knowledge and skills required to bring about sustainable development and positive social transformation. Since Tostan’s establishment in 1991, more than 200,000 people have directly participated in the program, and Tostan’s strategy of ‘organized diffusion’ has reached millions more, spreading information from class participants to their friends, family, and neighboring communities.

Tostan’s approach relies upon the support of the community members and local authorities, including government representatives, religious and traditional leaders. Before entering a community, Tostan thoroughly explains its CEP to community members and religious and traditional leaders, local authorities, elected councilors and government representatives. Tostan’s inclusive approach to programming is the basis for this outreach.

In preparation for GC3Y project implementation, Tostan conducted a site and baseline study in the four countries to select the 150 communities who participated in the project. During the site study Tostan staff met with local leaders and assessed the situation in targeted communities in terms of population size and service availability, such as the presence of a school or health post. After identifying communities ready to partner with Tostan based on specific criteria, a baseline study documented the knowledge, attitudes and skills of class participants before the start of the Community Empowerment Program. Throughout program implementation, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system helped the Pedagogical Team to improve the program on a regular basis. The system was designed to capture changes at the classroom level among class participants and at the community level through organized diffusion between participants, the CMC, and other community members. Tostan’s M&E strategy is two-pronged: 1) Performance monitoring of inputs, activities, and outputs; and 2) Result evaluation of outputs, outcomes, and impact.
Tostan new Monitoring and Evaluation system
Tostan has been in a partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to improve its monitoring and evaluation systems since 2014. Based on a revision of its Theory of Change, Tostan updated the results platform for the CEP. The results framework measures indicators in five major areas – Governance, Education, Health, Environment and Economic Empowerment, paying special attention to harmful practices and the role of women and girls in the community. Tostan’s new M&E system includes data collection and analysis at four levels: (1) The monitoring of classroom-based activities to ensure high-quality facilitation and learning; (2) The monitoring of Community Management Committee action to assess the quantity, quality, and breadth of community initiatives; (3) The evaluation of participant and adoptee attitude and behavior change; and 4) The evaluation of community-level attitude and behavior change.

From 2014 to 2016, through over 800 educational sessions (200 sessions per country) in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania, Tostan’s CEP provided a well-structured non formal education program for women, men, girls and boys who have had little or no access to formal education.

Over a three-year period, 9,647 adults and youth participated in classes during the two phases of the CEP:

- **KOBI** (“to prepare the field for planting” in Mandinka): The Kobi modules engaged communities in dialogue on visioning their goals for the future, democracy, human rights, collective problem solving, hygiene and health;
- **AAWDE** (“to plant the seed” in Fulani) The Aawde module focused on literacy, numeracy, and project management skills.

The teaching of Kobi and Aawde modules in the 150 communities required the recruitment and training of 15 supervisors and 150 village facilitators. Before program roll-out, the supervisors received training on Tostan’s history, mission, vision, participatory methodology, human rights approach and organized diffusion strategy. They also received training on how to facilitate the sessions of each module, allowing them to in turn train the 150 program facilitators who taught classes in each community’s local language. Each of the 150 communities hosted two classes – one for adults and one for youth – each of which met three times a week for 2 to 3 hours over the course of the program. Holding separate classes for the two groups ensured that both youth and adults can comfortably participate and contribute in the classroom while gaining the tools and confidence to apply what they learn in their community. In all four countries, women and girls constituted the majority of participants – 81% – as in general women tend to remain in their community while men often move outside the community during the dry season to look for work.

During the first year of the CEP, Tostan established a Community Management Committee (CMC) in each of the 150 communities in order to promote long-term sustainability of community-led development. Each CMC was made up of 17 members, 9 of whom must be women. In total, 2,550 community members were democratically selected of whom 1,785 were female (70%). They were trained on their roles and responsibilities and on the management skills necessary to implement development projects such as microcredit and other income generating activities, and to partner with other NGOs and governmental agencies. Through the CMCs, community members also significantly contributed to achieving positive change in Tostan’s major impact areas of Governance, Education, Health, the Environment and Economic Growth. Tostan’s strategy of organized diffusion reinforced existing social relationships and enabled participants to take on new roles as social mobilization agents and community leaders. Thanks to this strategy, the program contributed to releasing the potential of community members and to supporting them in becoming change agents for their own goals for well-being. CMCs and community members, including youth, organized social mobilization activities that reached their neighboring communities, thus increasing the scope of social change in their social network for greater impact and sustainability.

A key result after the three-years of learning and organized diffusion activities (adopt-a-learner, community sharing events, inter-village meetings, sharing seminars, regular radio programs, and other social mobilization activities) was the six declarations for abandonment of FGC and child marriage by all 150 participating communities and 208 sensitized communities reached through organized diffusion activities. During the Kobi module, participants learned about the immediate and long-term harmful consequences of FGC and discussed ways to prevent these health problems in the future.
The facilitators encouraged dialogue on the practices that community members felt prevented achieving their vision for their community’s development. Throughout the program, participants, Community Management Committee (CMC) members, and social mobilization teams spoke with friends and family and traveled to other communities to raise awareness about Human Rights, sexual and reproductive health, birth registration and other themes. In December 2016, 358 communities – Guinea (106), Guinea Bissau (102), Mali (73) and Mauritania (77) – organized to publicly declare the abandonment of the deeply entrenched practices of female genital cutting (FGC) and child/forced marriage.

Community representatives of women, men, youth, traditional and religious leaders, as well as local elected officials often sent letters to announce their historic decision to Tostan and government authorities. The thumbprints beside all signatures are a visible and moving sign of the commitment of the entire community to ending these practices forever.

Letter of commitment of the entire community to end the FGC and Child Marriage (in Local langage-Bamanankan)
IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW OF TOSTAN’S COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM OCTOBER 2013 TO DECEMBER 2016

**Preparation:** Baseline study, recruitment, CMC establishment

**Kobi 1**
Democracy, Human Rights, problem solving

**Kobi 2**
Hygiene and health
Child protection

**Aawde**
Litteracy and numeracy learning

**Public Declaration for Abandonment of FGC and Child/Forced Marriage**

**Classes**
- To promote positive traditions while encouraging discussion of how new ideas and practices can help build a healthier community
- To foster discussion and establish an open, inviting, and comfortable class dynamic

**Method:** Facilitators draw on local oral traditions such as song, poetry, and theater to spark debate and dialogue about issues affecting the community’s well-being.

**Community Management Committees (CMCs)** are established during Kobi 1 and are responsible for implementing development projects designed by the community. 17 democratically-selected members with at least nine women.

**Organized diffusion**
To spread information through connected communities, or social networks. The social mobilization process increases the impact of our programs, spreading new ideas organically from person to person and community to community.

**Methods:** Adopt-a-Learner; Awareness raising events; Inter-village meetings; Radio programs; Public Declarations

**Impact:** Roughly ten individuals for every one direct participant in our program

**Community Development Grants**
The grants provide a way for community members to participate in income-generating activities, allowing them to provide for their families and invest in their communities.

**How:** Tostan provides CMCs with a small grant - usually $800. CMCs often create a rotating microcredit fund.
IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW OF TOSTAN’S COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM OCTOBER 2013 TO DECEMBER 2016

Tostan is taking action to address issues in rural communities in Africa within the SDGs framework, in particular to directly tackle Goal 3 on health, Goal 4 on education, Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 16 on just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Tostan programs’ long term impacts also contribute to other goals in particular Goal 1 to end poverty by building the resilience of communities in Africa to reduce their vulnerability to economic, social and environment shocks and disasters. In addition, Tostan employs and trains men and women from rural West Africa providing them with what is often a first employment opportunity.

According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the overwhelming majority of people living on less than $1.25 a day belong to Sub-Saharan Africa. In West Africa, life expectancy at birth is only 46 years; Secondary school enrollment is at 20 percent; Forty-two percent of adults are illiterate; and malnutrition affects 29 percent of children under the age of five. In all of the four countries and different contexts, results below highlight key progresses made in various areas covered by the CEP.

GUINEA

Although Guinea passed a law against Female Genital Cutting (FGC) in 2006, it remains deeply rooted in traditional practices. Each region continues to practice FGC, regardless of the level of socio-economic development. According to the United Nations report on FGC in Guinea published in 2013, 97% of girls and women aged 15-49 had undergone FGC. Although Guinea has made significant progress in education, the literacy rate remains low at 23% for women and 38% for men (GGGR 2015). The GC3Y project was implemented in the Upper Guinea region in 40 communities located in Faranah, Dabola and Kissidougou. 2,024 participants, including 1,312 women and girls (65%) and 712 men and boys (35%), completed the CEP in December 2016.

Throughout the program implementation, reproductive health was a key theme of interest in communities. Women especially realized the importance of pre- and post-natal consultations. Before the CEP, it was customary for women in communities to give birth at home, sometimes without medical assistance, which resulted in a high number of maternal, perinatal and neonatal deaths. As they learned about the human right to health and basic health and hygiene, community members took the lead in organizing social mobilization activities dedicated to health and hygiene. Awareness-raising sessions on issues such as FGC, child/forced marriage, hygiene and sanitation prevented

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A person can give you a lot of money, but one day it will end, offer lots of rice and oil but it will also end up. On the other hand, a person who gives you knowledge can never take it back, nor can it finish. That’s why we really thank Tostan.

Mrs Sumai Baldé coordinator of the CMC of the village of Copa, Guinea Bissau
248 girls aged between 12 and 18 from being cut and 285 girls aged between 12 and 18 from being married. A total of 106 communities decided to publicly declare abandonment of harmful practices at the end of the program (40 directly participating communities and 66 additional communities). One of the CMC’s flagship activities was awareness-raising on birth registration. According to the civil status situational assessment report published by UNICEF in March 2014, 25% of children in Guinea did not have a birth certificate. The CEP session on the human right to a name, a family and a nationality together with the CMCS’ awareness-raising activities encouraged the registration of children in the civil registry. Thanks to the actions of the 40 CMCs, 1,226 children aged 0-6 months received their birth certificates and 792 children over 6 months of age received validating certificates. These children will now have access to education and be able to later obtain a National Identity Card.

GUINEA BISSAU

Although Guinea Bissau passed a law banning FGC in 2011, the tradition is still widely practiced. The 2014 UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) reported that 50% of girls and women aged 15-49 and 30% of girls aged 10-15 underwent FGC in Guinea Bissau. According to the UNDP’s 2014 Human Development Report, up to 58% of women aged 15-49 are illiterate. In rural areas, this rate can reach up to 84% among young women (aged 15-24 years).

From October 2013 to December 2016, 40 communities located in the regions of Bafata and Gabu participated in the GC3Y project. 3,214 participants among which 2,521 were women and girls, and 693 were men and boys, completed the three years of classes.

In Guinea Bissau, the CEP classes were over capacity and Tostan decided to open ten more centers within the 40 villages in order to meet the high demand for education in communities. Indeed, Guinea-Bissau’s chronic political turmoil is depriving children of quality education. Access to education remains low, learning is often disrupted by teachers’ strikes and the country spends the lowest portion of its budget on education of all countries in West Africa. Adults are eager to learn the subjects Tostan covers, especially in their local language, hence the high demand for attending Tostan’s classes.

Women have become leaders in their communities and actively participate in the debate on community development issues. During the three years, the CMCS played an important role in disseminating knowledge on various thematic such as the importance of education. Awareness raising campaigns led by the CMCS encouraged parents to enroll their children in school. As a result, 916 children were enrolled in school. The CMCS also funded the care of some members of the community who had financial difficulties accessing health services.

“Women have gained self-confidence and are given more consideration in the community. Now in our village, there is not one thing happening without the women being involved from the beginning ... we now have the right to participate and give our views on all matters affecting family and community life.”

Mrs Sumai Baldé coordinator of the CMC of the village of Copa, at the Public declaration of abandonment of harmful practices, December 2016.
**MALI**

In Mali, despite recurrent discussion at national level by the government, there is still has not been a law past against FGC practice. GC3Y was implemented in the municipality of Sirakorola, located in the region of Koulikoro (60km from Bamako). This area is distinguished by its strong traditional anchorage where harmful practices such as FGC (national prevalence rate of 91.4%) are practiced.

In December 2016, 2,510 community members, including 2,510 women and girls and 315 men and boys, completed the CEP classes in 40 centers.

Activities carried out throughout the CEP have achieved significant results in all impact areas, particularly in governance, education and the environment. In terms of governance, the program has enabled to establish an open and cooperative relationship between the CMCs and the municipality through the sharing of the action plans of the CMCs, support for the registration of civil status documents (birth, marriage, and death), and support for legal recognition of CMCs. Thanks to the actions of the CMCs, 2,000 children were enrolled in schools in the municipalities of Sirakorola. In the field of sanitation, communities have now adopted improved cook stoves and, through a major reforestation campaign, 2,000 tree seedlings have been purchased and will be used to reforest the commune. Tostan also supported the government to promote the abandonment of harmful practices. Government was involved in all Tostan activities, and although there is currently no law prohibiting the practice of FGC, the government has opted for awareness-raising to reduce this practice. At the end of the program, 73 communities abandoned FGC and child marriage.

**MAURITANIA**

Tostan implemented the CEP in the region of Brakhna, which similarly to the other three countries is characterized by strong traditional practices, such as a high prevalence of FGC (72%) and an illiteracy rate of 43%. 30 communities in the Brakhna region participated in the CEP. In December 2016, 1,899 community members, including 1,754 women and girls and 145 men and boys, completed the program. Tostan’s intervention in the Brakna region has led to positive behavior change both within the participating communities and the surrounding communities that were reached by CEP participants through organized diffusion activities (radio programs, inter village meetings, caravans, sharing seminars, etc.).

There has been a clear improvement in the involvement of women in decision-making in areas such as family planning, child education, and child marriage. Important decisions for the couple and the lives of children who were under the sole jurisdiction of men are now taken by the husband and spouse as showed by the results of the final evaluation (see graphic below on Who makes the decisions). Women now hold positions of responsibility and lead associations or represent their communities in general assemblies, meetings and official ceremonies. The impact of the program is also visible at the community level as many village chiefs have changed their unilateral way of leading and increasingly engage members of their community. Karama village chief explained that he is now consulting with his community before taking any important decisions, which was not the case before. Significant changes in health include the establishment of committees to monitor the vaccination schedule of children in almost all communities. CMCs play their full part in education and equipped some schools in materials and constructed classrooms, as they did in the villages of Limbagda and Ndiawaldi Bouli.
The Generational Change Campaign was developed to allow Tostan to implement the CEP on a large scale in communities in interconnected social networks in four West African countries. The campaign had results on both the abandonment of harmful practices and on impact areas related to Governance, Education, Health, Environment and Economic Empowerment that will support community-led development in West Africa.

In January 2017, Tostan conducted the final evaluation of this phase of the project in the four countries, based on its improved M&E system. It was the first time Tostan conducted an evaluation at this scale. Evaluating the CEP in four countries at once highlighted the results across the four countries, thus showing the consistency of impact areas of the CEP in various contexts. Tostan compared the results from the baseline, mid-term and final evaluations with so called ‘controlled’ communities (non-participants in the same areas) to provide evidence that the difference between the beginning and the end were due to the CEP and not to external factors. A total of 3,562 people were surveyed.

Tostan’s strategy of organized diffusion means that a change in attitude and behavior should take place, not only among class participants, but also among members of the entire community. Thus, in our new Monitoring and Evaluation system, the entire community was surveyed to measure any changes that had taken place over the three year period. The following graphs show the comparative results of the baseline study, the mid-term evaluation and the final evaluation carried out in the same sample of communities in all four countries.

In interpreting these results, it is important to note that only variations of plus or minus 10% are considered to be significant enough to lead to further study of disparities in results in order to find an explanation and implement corrective measures for the future. The infographics presented below are an excerpt of the final evaluation results, based only on quantitative results. Implementation teams at both the national and international levels are currently analyzing all the results obtained (both quantitative and qualitative) and comparing the results noted between the various stages of the program (baseline study, mid-term evaluation and evaluation final). A final evaluation report which will include the qualitative results will be released during the second semester of 2017.

**GOVERNANCE**

In terms of governance, Tostan expects to see improvements in Human Rights awareness and an increase in the participation of women in the decision making processes in communities. In all four countries, communities participating in the CEP experienced significant improvements in human rights awareness between the start and the end of the CEP. (B = Baseline; M = Midline and F = Final)

**Knowledge of Human Rights (Survey of all Community Members)**

![Graphs showing improvements in knowledge of human rights.](image-url)
After three years of capacity building and awareness-raising, the percentage of participants who know their civil and political and social, economic, and cultural rights increased significantly between the baseline study (B) and the final evaluation (F) in all countries. The decrease observed between the mid-term evaluation and the final evaluation is due to the fact that the last year of implementation is devoted to the Aawde 2 which focuses on reading, writing, SMS texting, and Project management. The concept of human rights is addressed during the first year of implementation which explains a shift in knowledge of human rights between the baseline study and the mid-term evaluation in all four countries. The analysis of the results of the final evaluation will provide an opportunity to implement a strategy to maintain this level of knowledge throughout the Community Empowerment Program (CEP).

The final evaluation also pointed out that women became more confident in raising their voices and actively participating in decision making (related to education, family planning, child marriage, female genital cutting, etc.). In all countries, the average number of decisions taken by the husband and the wife together increased. Women also reported that they have more space for discussion and take more decisions alone. These results are very significant in a region where societies are patriarchal, and where usually women speak less than men in public assemblies. Sometimes women may not have the right to express themselves in public, or they may lack the confidence to express their ideas when the opportunity arises. Giving women a greater voice both in public and at home is central to achieve social change.

**Speaking in Public: Levels of Confidence (Survey of all Community Members)**

During the CEP women constituted 81% of the class participants, 70% of CMCs members and overall in the four countries 61% of 150 participating communities elected a woman to lead the CMC. Thus, women have been able to express their views freely in the classroom, hold positions of responsibility and carry out social mobilization and awareness-raising activities within their community and outside their community. Throughout the CEP, women are massively involved in organized diffusion activities, taking on the role of leader and becoming accustomed to public speaking and sharing of their opinions in a mixed assembly comprised of men and women. The final evaluation showed that the level of women’s confidence in speaking in public increased in all four countries.
Who makes the decisions at home? (Survey of all community members)

We observed an evolution on decision making in the four countries. Husband and wife take more decisions together regarding their children’s education, family planning, and marriage.

In Guinea and Mauritania, women are more involved in decision-making related to the education of children. In Mali and Guinea Bissau, women are the ones who decide to send children to school. The decision to work outside the home is taken by both spouse and husband in all countries.

During the baseline survey in 2013, in Guinea and Guinea Bissau the decision whether or not to practice family planning was exclusively the responsibility of the husband. In Mali and Mauritania, women were usually involved in this important decision-making. After the CEP, in Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania the decision to practice family planning is now taken by both the husband and wife. In Guinea, unlike other countries, women decide alone whether or not to practice family planning.

The decision about giving children away for marriage used to be taken by the husband in all four countries. The awareness-raising throughout the program on the importance of involving women in decision-making has enabled a change in social norms where women now have the right to express their opinion and to participate fully in decisions that involve their own lives and those of their children.
Traditionally in most African communities, men have the sole responsibility of managing community and family affairs, and women and young adults are rarely if ever involved. Beliefs and traditions encourage women to be confined to domestic positions or even absolute obedience towards men. Women often have less access to education, health, and economy as well as less opportunity to voice their opinions and take an active role in decision-making processes. Therefore, one of the objectives of the CEP is to foster individual and collective decision making within communities and encourage women to aspire to have the same rights and responsibilities in community management as men. By learning and sharing information in classrooms, communities become aware of the rights of women.

In the CEP, 81% of class participants were women and girls. They developed leadership skills, and engaged in dialogue in the classrooms and progressively outside. They demonstrated their ability to make important decisions for themselves and their families, showing how important women and girls are to their community’s development. Women who have participated in the CEP emerged as community leaders, human rights activists, and role models, showing young girls and boys alike that they can succeed in leadership roles and work with men as equals.

Demonstrating the drastic change, at the end of the three years of capacity building, the majority of women say they are now confident to speak in public. 90% of the women in Guinea feel confident speaking in public, 81% in Guinea Bissau, 75% in Mauritania and 70% in Mali; while at the beginning of the CEP, the average was only 55%.

Women were empowered to make important decisions about health, hygiene, education, and finances for themselves and their families. Some results of the final evaluation show that women became actively engaged in fostering positive social change. For example, they ran small businesses to earn money for their families and they organized campaigns to increase access to maternal and child healthcare. Among the 150 communities, the average proportion of women practicing an income generating activity increased from 50% in 2013 to 62% in 2017. Within the CMCs women took up leadership positions in the communities. The majority of CMC members are women, and over 61% of participating communities elected a woman to lead their CMC. Furthermore, in Guinea Bissau all 40 CMC coordinators were female. With this leadership experience, women were able to take on new roles in local councils and regional federations/associations and emerge as leaders in protecting human rights.
EDUCATION

Not all participating communities have access to the formal school system, and previous to Tostan, many people believed it was acceptable to withdraw their children from school. However, as shown in the graphic below, there was an increase in all four countries of the number of people who think there is “no age” at which it is acceptable to withdraw a child from school.

Guinea Bissau presented the highest evolution. During the baseline study, 19% of those surveyed thought that there was “no age” at which it was acceptable to withdraw a girl from school, and 37% had the same attitude for boys. The final evaluation highlighted a drastic change in attitude. 74% of people surveyed thought that there was “no age” at which it was acceptable to withdraw a boy from school and 62% of people surveyed held the same belief for girls.
LITERACY IN FOCUS IN GUINEA BISSAU

In Guinea Bissau, the literacy rate is around 55% and only 45% for women (UNICEF). These indicators are usually much lower in rural areas where Tostan is working, which explains the enthusiasm of participants when starting literacy classes. Reaching 100 participants per class in some areas, Tostan decided to increase the number of facilitators to ensure that participants are adequately supported in this particularly challenging learning process. Classes usually start with a review of a human right learned during the Kobi 1. Participants are then asked to come up with a short sentence that would describe the importance of one of that human right. The facilitator then deconstructs the sentence identifying words, then syllables and finally letters. One or two letters are learned and participants write the letters on their black boards, then words. The class ends with the participants recreating a new text. Navigating the cell phone and SMS text messaging are also taught during the literacy classes which increases participant motivation to learn to read and write.

Mariama Seydi, head of the Health Commission (CMC of Massaba)

Tostan implements its program in communities where orality is the traditional medium for communication. Participants, who often haven’t attended school, were very keen to learn basic literacy skills this semester. Although attaining full literacy would require more time and more reading materials, most of the participants learned how to write basic information, and crucially, how to read and sign essential documents. These abilities allow them, for example, to register their new born children providing them with an official identity and the attendant rights.

HEALTH

During the CEP, CMCs and community members became active in the domain of health. Awareness raising events led by CMCs focused on the importance of prevention: following the vaccination schedule, pre- and postnatal consultation and the prevention of illnesses such as diarrhea, malaria, cholera, and Ebola. These activities led to an increased number of people changing negative behavioral practices which lead to germ transmission and illness. For example, regular community clean ups, the elimination of stagnant water in homes and public places, and compliance with best hygienic practices (i.e. hand washing with soap before eating and after going to the bathroom).

In the four countries, there was also an increase in the proportion of women who practiced birth spacing and who discussed family planning with their husband.

Photo: In Guinea Bissau Mariama Seydi is head of the Health Commission within the CMC of Massaba. She learned to write her name and her country’s name on the black board during a session from the Aawde module. Mariama began learning to read and write only in December 2015.

Women who practice Birth Spacing (SURVEY OF ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS)

In all countries, birth spacing was not a widespread practice. During the baseline study, the rate was 8% in Guinea Bissau, 11% in Mauritania, 23% in Mali and 38% in Guinea. After three years of implementation of the CEP, surveys of the entire community (not just class members) reported that birth spacing is now practiced by 42% of women in Mauritania, 43% in Mali, 47% in Guinea Bissau and 73% in Guinea.
FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING (FGC)

Expectations regarding practicing FGC shifted towards disapproval within all 150 participating communities in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania:

- In Guinea, 92% of community members disagreed with the practice of FGC and 52% from this group of community members would intervene to try and prevent a case of FGC;
- In Guinea Bissau, 94% of community members disagreed with the practice of FGC and 55% from this group of community members would intervene to prevent a case of FGC;
- In Mali, 77% of community members disagreed with the practice of FGC and 21% from this group of community members would intervene to prevent a case of FGC;
- In Mauritania, 99% of community members disagreed with the practice of FGC practice and 43% from this group of community members would intervene to prevent a case of FGC.

These changes in attitude were particularly remarkable because, at the beginning of the implementation, in all countries except for Mauritania, only a small proportion of the community members disapproved of the practice of FGC. The rates of disapproval were only 7% in Guinea, 15% in Guinea Bissau and Mali and 47% in Mauritania. Furthermore, in the four countries only about 1% said they would intervene to try to stop someone from practicing FGC.
In December 2016, 358 communities (150 participating communities and 208 sensitized or adopted communities) publicly declared the abandonment of harmful practices such as FGC and early / forced marriages (73 in Mali, 106 in Guinea, 77 in Mauritania and 102 in Guinea Bissau).

CHILD MARRIAGE
Child marriage is one of the traditional practices harmful to the health and life of young children. The marriage of children limits their prospects for the future because married girls often are forced to drop out of school. These adolescents often face a risk of complications during pregnancy or childbirth, which can result in their death.

In all countries, the majority of respondents believe that their families will now disapprove of child marriage (from age 12 years old). These rates are 98% in Mali, 96% in Guinea, 97% in Mali and 98% in Mauritania. These results reflect a change in attitude towards this traditional practice. During the baseline survey, the level of disapproval was 37% in Guinea Bissau, 57% in Guinea, and 50% in Mali. Mauritania was the exception, with a rate of disapproval of 81%.

Beyond disapproval, the final evaluation also revealed that an important part of this group would intervene to prevent child marriage in their community:

- **Guinea**: 44% compared to 1% during the baseline study in 2013
- **Guinea Bissau**: 60% compared to 0% during the baseline study in 2013
- **Mali**: 26% compared to 2% during the baseline study in 2013
- **Mauritania**: 46% compared to 17% during the baseline study in 2013

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT TO DISCIPLINE CHILD
Hitting children is often seen as a necessary means of discipline in many West African communities, as people believe this is the only way to properly educate children. Parents are severely judged by others if children misbehave, particularly women. Teachers are also expected to hit children if they do not perform to standard and this a practice that is generally accepted by parents.

During the CEP, participants learn the harm created by violent means of discipline and discuss alternatives to educating their children. Thus, the expectations around hitting or spanking a child as a means of discipline have significantly evolved towards a broader disapproval of this practice in the participating communities in all four countries. More respondents believe that other community members disapprove and would intervene against corporal punishment of a child as a means of discipline.
ENVIRONMENT

Many CMCs chose to organize regular community clean-ups, inviting all members of the community to participate. After learning about health and hygiene, communities organized regular household cleanings, eliminated stagnant water from homes and public places, and complied with standard hygiene practices such as hand washing with soap before eating.

The CEP promotes basic sanitation methods such as building and using latrines in the home, which is a major factor in reducing the spread of germs and disease. Communities understood its importance and almost all people surveyed during the baseline study, mid-term evaluation and final evaluation have and use latrines at home.

SURVEY OF ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Percentage of community members who have latrines at home

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<th>Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>83%</td>
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**Percentage of family members who disapprove and would intervene in a case of corporal punishment (Survey of all community members)**

- Guinea: 94%
- Guinea-Bissau: 70%
- Mali: 64%
- Mauritania: 43%

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<th>Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
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<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
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<td>Mali</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td>Mauritania</td>
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THE RIGHT TO WATER

For the past 14 years, the wells in Kajoun, Mali were not functional, preventing people from having direct access to water. In December 2015, CMC members initiated outreach activities in the community to promote the right to water and to repair at least one of the two wells. As a result of this initiative, all community members decided to personally contribute to the existing sum of 55,000 FCFA (USD 110) already available from their community savings through Tostan. The leadership of the CMC ensured the repair of one of the wells, providing potable drinking water in the village in more than a decade. In the spirit of this renewed confidence in their ability to overcome challenges, the community is now repairing the second well to ensure drinking water is available for all. The Mayor and rural councilors are supporting their efforts.

“We understand that good quality water is a right. If the water is not clean it contains microbes and this is a source of many diseases. The repair of this well will not only help improve the health of our community but neighboring villages will also be supplied with drinking water for their needs.”

Mrs Coulibaly Siba, CMC member

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

All communities have taken action to improve their economic conditions. In total, $120,000 was donated to the 150 communities in the form of community development funds (800$/community). During the Aawde Phase, the training on project management and community fund management began with conversations on the human right to work and to receive micro-credit loans, discussing how each community member has the right to benefit from the funds and create his or her own income-generating projects.

These discussions grounded activities in the human rights framework, which is essential to all Tostan programs. All participants learned how to manage various types of income-generating activities, how to conduct a feasibility study, how to manage financial and human resources, and microcredit principles for managing the fund. These skills were put into practice by each CMC, who received grants for the community at the beginning of the Aawde Phase in November 2015.
Access to economic opportunities for women in these 150 communities has been enhanced through development funds, which offer opportunities to carry out IGAs that can meet the needs of the family. The baseline study in 2013 showed that income generating activities (IGA) were already practiced by women and continued to increase after the completion of the CEP. 90% of the women who participated in Tostan’s classes were practicing an IGA by the end of the program in Guinea, 66% in Guinea Bissau, 91% in Mali and 52% in Mauritania.

THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS, A DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT

After starting a savings fund during the first of the program, each CMC received $800 to supplement their savings and create a micro-loan fund, a revolving credit fund, or a community project, based on each community’s self-identified needs. CMCs established their own decision making procedures, and Tostan does not determine the aim of the fund, organize the elections, nor determine the rotation schedule etc. Rather, based on a participatory approach, community members were responsible for identifying their needs and managing their funds in a way that suited their realities. The treasurer and other CMC members were responsible for managing funds, setting penalties for defaults and late payments, and setting rates of contribution to adhere (as Islam forbids charging interest). Tostan trained CMCs and community members on the skills necessary to efficiently manage these funds.

In Mali, the CMCs advocated to set up a banking structure. Before Tostan’s program there was no banking structure in the rural district where the CEP was implemented. Therefore, to secure funds distributed by Tostan and to support the promotion of economic activities in their community, the members of the CMCs and federations requested the institution of microfinance “NIESIGISO” to open an agency in their municipality. The agency was opened in January, 2016 and now all 40 CMCs and the 2 federations have accounts in this agency. The agency also benefits other people living in this area because 10% of the revenue generated through the 40 CMC accounts goes back to the community to help implement their vision of development for the future.
In Guinea Bissau, 715 community members (582 women and 143 men) were able to finance their development projects (extraction and sale of palm oil, traditional soap), agriculture (sesame, peanuts, corn...), horticulture and small business pursuits.

In Mauritania, communities developed ten community projects and 733 individual projects. Community grocery shops, small gardens, animal fattening initiatives and tie dying projects are being implemented. These projects generated benefits that allowed participants to solve many financial difficulties within the community, such as their children’s schooling expenses, family medical expenses, food supply, etc. In Guinea, 1,284 people carried out income-generating activities that met the food, health and education needs of 5,060 children, including 3,036 girls. At the community level, the CDF allowed health posts and centers to stock essential medicines, repair boreholes, renovate schools and school tables, and support the schooling of pupils from deprived families.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Due to the taboo and sensitive nature of some topics discussed during the CEP, especially FGC, rumors can sometimes create temporary confusion in the communities at the outset of a project. During the launch of the GC3Y project, religious leaders in some communities in Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau showed resistance to the program based on rumors that Tostan imposes abandonment of FGC. To overcome this, Tostan held seminars inviting religious leaders to discuss the subject of FGC and Tostan’s general program. The issue was also discussed during inter-village meetings. Similarly, in Mali, when some community members heard about the marriage certificate campaign (launched to ensure that women obtain the legal benefits associated with marriage) many believed that if they married they would no longer be allowed to cut their daughters. In such cases, social mobilization supervisors visited the communities to explain Tostan’s respectful, non-confrontational approach to this and other topics. They stressed that Tostan’s approach ensures that participants and their social networks understand the right of every human being to be free from all forms of violence and clearly explained the harmful consequences of FGC. This ultimately empowered communities to collectively make their own decision on whether or not they were ready to abandon the practice.

In most communities, activities clarifying Tostan’s approach led to an improved understanding and acceptance of the program by religious and traditional leaders. However, in spite of mediation attempts, a center in Mauritania was closed early on in the program. The village chief of Sava requested that Tostan leave since the women in his village became too vocal, having learned about their human right to participate in community decision making. After many efforts, Tostan replaced Sava with the community of El Arghoub, one of the many communities that requested the program. Additionally, in the village of Mpiabougou, Mali, opposition to the program came from village authorities, who were unwilling to allow discussion of FGC in the community. Despite Tostan holding four meetings with the village chief and other key people in the community, members of the CMC and the Mayor of Sirakorola – a firm supporter of Tostan’s work – an agreement was not made and Tostan was required to leave the village in November 2014. In contrast, in the nearby village of Sanamani a village leader originally rejected the program at the time of the site study, however, the community later accepted to be adopted by the village of Kakoun, and then opened a center as a replacement for Mpiabougou. They surprisingly became leaders in the movement to end FGC in the area.

STORY OF CHANGE: OVERCOMING RESISTANCE IN THE FGC CONVERSATION IN GUINEA BISSAU

The National Coordinator of Tostan in Guinea-Bissau, Mr Alassane Diedhiou, tells the story of how he was able to overcome resistance to discussion about FGC, and included community and religious leaders in the dialogue.

Click here to watch the video.
LESSONS LEARNED

The inclusion of local and administrative authorities and religious leaders from the beginning of the program reduced risks of misunderstanding, and allowed for the sustainability of the centers through community ownership. For example, participation of key influencers in regular community meetings impacted positively on the progress of the program as it provided local and religious leaders with a place to share their opinions and learn from each other. The implication of non-participating communities in program activities, as a part of organized diffusion, facilitated the wide sharing of key messages in particular during awareness campaigns.

Addressing health issues with health professionals helped to improve communication with communities. Involvement of health workers in awareness-raising activities also facilitated exchanges in reluctant communities, to make clear the consequences of harmful practices like FGC, which are often ignored. CMCs training on roles and responsibilities to further support social mobilization

In Mauritania, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Mali, CMC training on roles and responsibilities was for the first time implemented in a class session rather than a separate training for CMC members. While this presented advantages in allowing for turnover within the CMCs, some staff members expressed concerns during feedback sessions about the level of understanding of this relatively complicated training in a setting with more people. To make sure CMC members are properly prepared for their task, supervisors have conducted extra follow-up activities to ensure CMCs have the necessary support. Tostan has then decided to train CMC members separately from classes as it was in the past.

Extension of the timeline of the program in 150 communities

In order to ensure that the literacy, numeracy and project management modules be accompanied by enough social mobilization activities to promote social change in the 150 communities, Tostan had to extend the period of the project to December 2016 instead of September 2016. This extension of the project period was carefully discussed and decided in agreement with other key partners of Tostan.

SUSTAINABILITY AND PERSPECTIVE

Through a well-planned and intentional exit strategy to withdraw organizational, financial and human resources at the end of this project cycle in a responsible and efficient way, Tostan ensured the sustainability of program outcomes and its impact. Tostan prepared for exit from the beginning of the program using an initial approach to implementation, which continued throughout the duration of this program. While working with Tostan, communities moved from receiving services to independently analyzing community development issues and spearheading change initiatives. Over the three years of the program, the CEP built community capacity in Governance, Education, Health, Environment and Economic Growth. At an individual level, Tostan empowered community members to be agents of change for their own lives. At the community level, Tostan acknowledged communities as experts in their own development and provided them with practical skills training to capitalize on their pre-existing assets and to promote positive community-level change.

The CMCs established in every participating community at the start of the CEP are now dynamic and will continue the movement for community-led development. Many CMCs registered as Community Based Organizations, creating an often-missing, sustainable element of local-level civil society capable of engaging and coordinating with a wide range of actors. Some CMCs are forming federations at the regional level, which helps create additional capacity to finance and coordinate activities and do advocacy with government to improve services.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Tostan initiated a pool-funding model at large scale to change the paradigm of a project-based, donor-driven, single-issue development model and rather create a more effective and efficient funding model by having donors invest in a holistic three-year program leading to significant results in many areas. This investment of strategic and values driven philanthropists has enabled Tostan to successfully shift from a funder-driven, inefficient and costly approach to funding, to one that brings forth the greatest value for all stakeholders and participants. The Generational Change in Three Years Campaign was designed to deliberately shift Tostan’s organizational structures, including how it raises funds, reports on larger projects, monitors and evaluates its work, and coordinates initiatives at a larger scale across West Africa. This new approach is now in place and is becoming increasingly successful. The overall campaign goal of providing long-term, multi-country support and the ability to streamline monitoring and reporting through a collaborative funding model, has been a success. Tostan’s path towards sustainable, more flexible funding for projects across the region has significantly improved. The Phase One project proved that the pooled funding approach does deliver better for communities, Tostan, and donors alike. The 150 communities in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania participating in the CEP under the Generational Change in Three Years Project have all benefited from the same program, following a same timeline with the same resources. The countries’ Action Plans were carefully followed in all four countries and there has been no overspending throughout the project implementation.
Several donors contributed to the above mentioned results through their financial contribution and their trust. These donors come from the private sector (Foundations, philanthropy), government institutions and the United Nations system. From 2013 to 2016 Tostan received $7,547,653 as contribution to GC3Y Campaign in 150 communities in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania and also to support shortfalls of the CEP in 100 communities in Senegal and 30 communities in The Gambia funded by Unicef. Part of this contribution was also spent on crucial support costs for these projects in the six countries where Tostan implemented these projects. Regarding the GC3Y project implemented in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauritania, a total of 6,632,761 USD has been used for activities related to the CEP only implementation, including preparatory activities (site and baseline studies, training of supervisors and facilitators), implementation of Kobi and Aawde modules and organized diffusion activities (Inter-village meetings, radio programs, sharing seminars awareness raising activities, exchange visit, Public Declaration).

**Contribution per activity:** 74% of funds received were used for program implementation and 26% as support costs
CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVE

Overall, each of the 150 communities that participated in the CEP under the GC3Y Project, have benefited from the same program following the same timeline in four countries. The holistic program enabled community-led social change for the abandonment of FGC and other harmful practices in addition to improvements in a wide range of other sectors such as Governance, Education, Health, Environment, and Economic Growth. Communities are equipped with the tools and skills to lead their collective action towards their own development.

For the first time, Tostan worked with several donors through collaborative funding, enabling the organization to design a cost-effective project that aim to deliver maximum impact for communities. This model also supported ongoing improvement of Tostan’s organizational systems, coordinating efforts across regions, standardizing monitoring and evaluation, and supplement and plan ahead more effectively.

In 2016, Tostan set a new and clear vision to take its community-led approach to new levels of depth, quality, and scale. This Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP) is Tostan’s strategic roadmap, designed to guide the organization in making concrete, mission-focused progress over the next seven years. The SEP is carefully built upon Tostan’s organizational Framework, which includes Tostan’s mission, vision, beliefs, values and norms. After the success of the GC3Y-Phase I, Tostan launched a Phase II in January 2017, which will allow Tostan to: (1) Scale-up the CEP to 150 new communities in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, and The Gambia; and (2) Implement The Peace and Security (P&S) Model for the first time at a larger scale in at least 120 communities in Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Mali. The P&S project, which launched in January 2017 is particularly relevant considering the current instability of the West Africa region. The P&S Module builds on the premises of community-led development, and focuses on the types of security conditions and peaceful relations that enable sustainable development. Another component of Phase II will be Tostan’s flagship program, the CEP, which will roll-out in October 2017 and continue for three years in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali and The Gambia. The goal of this Phase II will be to strengthen the capacities of another 150 West African communities in human rights and the empowerment of women and girls to promote the abandonment of harmful practices.
THANK YOU

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Dignity for All

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