

# A Breakthrough in Equality

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## Abstract

Tostan, a non-governmental organization, operates in the countries of West Africa with the goal of improving equality through education. Women still feel the constraints of social norms and in turn, are apprehensive to take leadership roles. We propose a malleable daycare plan, so women are less restricted and can take on more leadership roles.

## Project Goals

- Develop a plan between the women and the Community Management Committees (CMCs) to allow the women to leave their villages and become supervisors.
- Prepare women to challenge the social structure within their communities.
- Enable more women to become supervisors to promote the spread of education.



Figure 2: Prospective woman supervisors in class.<sup>3</sup>

## Background

In the countries of West Africa, there has been a lack of quality education. Over the past 25 years, Tostan has implemented a successful education system in Western Africa based around civil rights and literacy. In order to support local classes and connect them to the national office, supervisors are necessary. Women are resistant to become supervisors because it is not common in the region for women to travel. In their culture, it is the woman's job to take care of their homes and children while the men are away at work.<sup>1</sup>

## Process

1. Persuade Tostan to reach out to CMCs and encourage them to work with the women supervisors of the villages to solve the problems they are facing.
2. Each CMC develops a plan specific to their village to solve these issues.
3. Community specific plan is implemented, so that women can become supervisors more easily.
  - a. Our example of a Community Specific Plan: A rotating child care system.

## Conclusions

By implementing a system between the CMCs and the prospective supervisors, a comprehensive plan for child care can be created. This is a flexible solution that can be adjusted to fit the context of any village.

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## Outcomes

With the implementation of a community specific daycare plan, more women can become supervisors. On top of this, other women in the community may utilize the childcare system, which would allow them to further their educations or maintain leadership positions. "If women in the family become educated and take on new roles, it has a cascading effect on the younger generation." - Diane Gillespie (Tostan)

## References

1. Mission & History. (n.d.). Retrieved December 7, 2015, from <http://www.tostan.org/about-us/mission-history>
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  3. Melching, M. (n.d.). Opinion: To change society, first change minds - CNN.com. Retrieved December 7, 2015, from <http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/31/opinion/melching-africa-social-change/>
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### KEY METRICS

**42k+**

People, mostly women, have improved their reading skills thanks to our innovative training on mobile phones

**2,768**

Children enrolled in school in Senegal in 2013 thanks to CMC activities

**447+**

CMC-led awareness-raising activities held in Guinea-Bissau to promote education

**110k+**

People have learned about democracy and how to make decision-making equitable

Figure 1: Tostan's Key Metrics. Some statistics that measure the work they have done in Western Africa.<sup>2</sup>