

**Longitudinal study on the persistence of  
Community Empowerment Program (CEP)  
results**

**Terms of Reference  
and  
Call for Proposals**



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Tostan International  
March 2019

## Summary

Tostan seeks to implement a longitudinal study of the persistence results of Tostan's flagship Community Empowerment Program (CEP). It is especially interested in the sustainability over time of the wellbeing results of the CEP for women, children and entire communities (in terms of health, education, environment and economic empowerment lives) and of the social dynamics (women's empowerment, citizen engagement, social norms) that lead to systemic change and result in dignity and wellbeing.

We are seeking: a University or other type of research institution or specialized firm to conduct the longitudinal study.

We envisage: a study whose results will serve to generate evidence of key CEP achievements and challenges to inform decision making processes for donors and Tostan's senior management relating to the CEP, post-CEP training activities and strategic program decisions relating to scaling of wellbeing and dignity results.

By sharing this Call for Proposals Tostan invites your Organization to bid for the longitudinal study of the persistence of Community Empowerment Program (CEP) results.

Tostan encourages you to respond before 30 April 2019 by sending your proposals to Mr. Mady CISSE at [madycisse@tostan.org](mailto:madycisse@tostan.org).

Tostan currently hopes to finalize the selection by mid-June 2019. The selection process could include interviews to clarify questions.

## Introduction and background

In its most synthetic form, Tostan's vision is 'Dignity for All'. To contribute to this vision, it defines its mission as follows: "Tostan empowers communities to develop and achieve their vision for the future and inspires large-scale movements leading to dignity for all".

Tostan's approach promotes women, men, girls and boys as powerful change agents in favor of enhanced dignity and wellbeing for the entire community. Since 1991, Tostan's human rights-based, empowering education flagship program – the Community Empowerment Program (CEP) - has supported some 2,500 African communities to elaborate their own visions of dignity and wellbeing and drive their local development agendas. Thanks to its experience on the ground and a learning agenda pursued also with academic partners, Tostan has gained in-depth understanding and experience on social norm change. This understanding informs all Tostan's programs and is an important element for their sustainability. It has been critical in Tostan's support to communities in their efforts to end harmful practices and create norms that promote wellbeing. Through support from Tostan, close to 9,000 rural communities in Africa have declared their intention to abandon female genital cutting (FGC) and child marriage.

Clarity of theoretical understanding as well as experimenting, learning and improving through experience are fundamental to the way Tostan operates. Far from being static, the CEP has significantly developed over the decades. A significant part of the learning has come from internal and external evaluations. The proposed longitudinal study is being undertaken to add important information on the sustainability of the CEP and inform strategic and programmatic decisions.

External evaluations have validated many aspects of Tostan's approach, and specifically of the CEP, which is a model for community-led development. The program has been recognized for bringing about social change within the communities, stimulating more deliberate adherence to human rights and improving community wellbeing. The program has become known internationally also for reducing support for and practice of FGC and child marriage. Findings have confirmed that through values deliberations with discussions surrounding human rights, Tostan's CEP has led to individual and collective empowerment in communities. The values deliberations together with a pedagogy based on human rights and problem-solving set in motion social dynamics that contribute to a larger process that results in improvements in dignity and wellbeing, measured by indicators in the areas of governance, education, health, economic empowerment of women and environmental hygiene. There is specific focus on child protection and gender equality. Participants, particularly women, enhance their individual and collective capacities to play public roles and foster community action. They gain self-confidence and the ability to speak in public, new competencies that are evident to the rest of their community and have resulted in an increasing number of women being voted into elected office positions. As part of a deliberate strategy of organized diffusion participants who take part in the Tostan classes share their learning and discovery with other members of their community and communities engage others in their social network. This is deemed essential to expand the positive effects of community-based interventions and to achieve self-sustainable norm shifts.

In addition to carrying out training activities directly within communities, Tostan conducts training activities for religious leaders, NGOs, government officials and other partners through the Tostan Training Centre in Thies, Senegal. Tostan also participates actively in global fora on sustainable development.

As part of its regular monitoring and evaluation activities, Tostan has conducted a number of qualitative and quantitative studies and it has a significant body of data. Outside researchers have conducted qualitative studies. Tostan's current interest is to realize a rigorous study of the persistence of CEP results. The longitudinal study will use the existing data and generate new data to analyze the effects of the CEP approximately 3 years after its completion. Its findings will be of strategic importance for Tostan, its donors, governments and other stakeholders and partners.

## **Purpose of the study and intended use**

While the study will provide insights on the relevance (including program design), effectiveness and efficiency of the CEP, the main focus will be on the sustainability, after some years, of the results of the CEP that have already been proven by various CEP evaluations. It is envisaged that the new data collection to be done by the study will take place approximately 3 years after the completion of the CEP.

Tostan is interested in the degree to which the results recorded at endline are still present several years out and in identifying lessons and capturing good practices in the communities studied that seem to ensure sustainability. We are interested in examining three broad categories of results:

- a) *social dynamics that lead to or sustain dignity and wellbeing* – these include women's empowerment and the establishment of norms that are supportive of gender equity (abandonment of FGC, marrying girls at later age, prolonged schooling of girls, voice/participation of women in household and community decisions...), as well as the persistence of new norms in other areas of wellbeing that appeared to have been established by the end of the CEP (cleanliness of households and of community, registration of children at birth);
- b) *functioning of governance structures* – namely the Community Management Committees (CMCs), established at the outset of the CEP, how the CMCs operate in terms of deciding and implementing local development projects and the role of women within them.
- c) *direct wellbeing results* – measured in terms of self-reports regarding health, education, environment, and economic activity;

Effects to be explored will need to include both intended and unintended results, such as increase in migration correlated with greater empowerment and not sufficiently counteracted by greater local opportunities. To address these questions, we may need to systematically know what happened to all community members who took part in the CEP training. The 3 following outcomes could be considered: died, lives in community, lives elsewhere.

In addition, Tostan is interested in the relationship between the sustainability of effects as defined in a) to c) above and the proportion of participants of CEP classes with respect to total population of a village.

To assess the long-term effects of organized diffusion, the study will need to explore the effects over time in communities that held the CEP classes as well as those that were reached indirectly by individuals that took part in the CEP. In the communities reached by organized diffusion, the study will focus especially on the social dynamics and governance aspects.

The study results will serve to generate evidence of key achievements and challenges to inform decision making processes for donors and Tostan's senior management. It will inform all major program activities, namely:

1. *The implementation of new rounds of CEP* - The study will provide a deeper understanding of how the CEP delivery mechanism works best, under which circumstances, and how this can be improved in the future to ensure greatest sustainability of positive effects.
2. *The implementation of post-CEP training activities* - These complements follow or reinforce the CEP. They include the further training programs conducted locally on reinforcing parental practices, on peace and security and for the Community Management Committees, as well as training activities that may be conducted through the Tostan Training Center.
3. *The further development and design of post-program support to communities* – these may include support to Federations of CMCs, linkages to opportunities for improved livelihoods provided by government, NGOs or other institutions, and other activities that promote the sustainability of positive effects after the completion of training activities.
4. *The further development and implementation of the new program area on Citizen Engagement for Sustainable Development* – this will activities at district and department levels and requires the sustainability of community-led dynamics to stimulate better use of district resources for community wellbeing.

In addition, findings from the longitudinal study will inform the dialogue with global actors/partners interested in community-led development programs and in sustainable development.

## **Scope of work and methodology**

The externally-run study will be in the Generational Change in Three Years (GC3Y) communities in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Mauritania. The CEPs that were part of this initiative all used the same M&E methodology and thus have comparable data. There are qualitative and quantitative data for about 50 indicators on Governance, Education, Health, Environment and Economic empowerment (referred to as GESEE which takes the first letter of the categories in French). The externally-run study will also include communities in Senegal, however these will need to be treated somewhat differently because the existing data for Senegal are of different quality and not fully comparable to the data for the GC3Y countries. Joint assessment by Tostan and the study team selected will determine whether Senegal can

be included or whether the longitudinal study of the Senegal communities is best conducted in parallel by Tostan.

The study team will need to investigate in detail the expected pathways of change spelled out in the Theory of Change that is part of the revised CEP framework developed for the Generational Change in Three Years (GC3Y) initiative, including the assumptions that underpin the causal chains and linkages between elements of the results chain.

For the purposes of the study, impact will be understood as the long-term effects of the CEP in the GESEE areas on individuals (disaggregated by gender, age groups and participation in Tostan class), communities and services. The impact can be direct or indirect, intended or unintended, positive or negative.

Because of the 'organized diffusion' strategy promoted in CEP intervention, neither the 'matching design' method nor the RCT method are suited to measure Tostan's impact. These special surveys use control areas/populations. 'Organized diffusion' which is at the core of Tostan's strategy challenges directly their basic requirement of absence of contamination between case and control. Furthermore, they are too expensive. A combination of 'before/after' and longitudinal study may have less challenges.

Methodology for data collection will include:

- *Desk review* - The study team will examine project documents, project data (analysis of baseline, midline and endline data), CEP curriculum, guides and training documents and any other relevant documents. As part of the desk review, the full list of current CEP indicators will be made available and will be the basis for the selection of the key indicators. The main purpose of this desk review is to build a good understanding of the available information on CEP within the wider context of community development before conducting an in-depth study of this intervention, and to formulate hypothesis to test regarding situation some years after the end of the CEP. The review will serve to understand the original scope of the program, geographical coverage, and target populations and the long-term trends in terms of program implementation and outputs since its inception. It is expected to lead to the design of the study methodology including the hypotheses to be tested and key questions to be answered, the selection of key indicators, the sampling frame, the sampling methodology; and analyzing the risks posed by various contextual realities.
- *Field visits* - The study team will study CEP long-term effects in 30 communities of GC3Y project and will interview beneficiaries who agree to share information, survey target population, and conduct focus groups among randomly-selected beneficiaries. Selected field visit to the CEP targets will be critical for both collecting data and to build good understanding of CEP target beneficiaries, geographical coverage disparities and risks related to project implementation in an authentic setting.
- *Interviews with stakeholders* - The study team will pay particular attention to the interviewing of stakeholders, namely Tostan national and international staff, beneficiaries targeted, CMC members and others as relevant. The main purpose for employing this methodology is to understand the impact the CEP both from the perspective of those involved and how they have benefited or affected by this intervention.

- *Community-level focus group discussions* - These qualitative data will be collected and analyzed, as a way to cross check the survey results.

Analysis methodology will include:

- a) *Descriptive analysis* - to identify and understand the contexts in which the CEP was implemented, and to describe the types of interventions and other characteristics of the program.
- b) *Content analysis* - to analyze quantitative and qualitative data from documents, interviews, group discussions and focus groups notes to identify emerging common trends, themes and patterns for each key question, at all levels of analyses. Content analysis can be used to highlight diverging views and opposing trends. The emerging issues and trends provide the basis for preliminary observations and study findings.
- c) *Comparative analysis* - to examine findings on specific themes or issues across different countries. It can be used to identify good practices and lessons learned.
- d) *Quantitative analysis* - to interpret quantitative data, in particular those emerging from the data collection on the indicators considered by the study.
- e) *Contribution analysis* - to assess the extent to which CEP contributed to expected results. The team will be encouraged to gather evidence to confirm the validity of the theory of change in different contexts, and to identify any logical and information gaps that it contained; examine whether and what types of alternative explanations/reasons exist for noted changes; test assumptions, examine influencing factors, and identify alternative assumptions for each pathway of change.

*Case studies* - Use of case studies provides the opportunity to probe further the in-depth experiences of specific target beneficiaries or a subset of beneficiaries of CEP, hence avoiding losses in the breath that comes from generalization. More specifically, this will allow for greater latitude in exploring the program processes in greater depth, how they interact with each other and how they contribute to the effects of the program. The study team may need to pick a limited number of beneficiaries who successfully completed the Tostan class as case studies to study in further depth to assess the effects of the CEP on individual beneficiaries. The team may also consider selecting a few local leaders who are direct beneficiaries of CEP building efforts to study in further detail the effects of the CEP on individual capacity improvement. In addition, case studies of Community Management Committee (CMC) can also be undertaken to explore the CEP's effects on institutional and organizational capacities.

## **Phases of the study**

The expected phases of the study are as following:

- *Inception phase* - as deliverable, Tostan will expect an inception report that contains process logic of the study (based on desk review), a study plan that includes the methodology, and a list of reviewed documents;
- *Data collection phase* - a detailed data collection plan that contains proposed data collection methods and data sources to be used for addressing each study question/dimension will be the first deliverable of this phase. Tostan will highly recommend to use a matrix which will connect questions to data collection methods/sources);

- *Reporting* - at the end of the field research, the study team will hold a workshop to discuss preliminary findings and conclusions of the study. The Steering Committee will review and provide comments to the study team. The final report will be submitted by the Study Team Leader, with Tostan's and partners' comments addressed as appropriate.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The overall coordination including monitoring progress and administration will be undertaken by a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will be established and will include members from Tostan's Resource Development Team, Tostan M&E Unit and Donor representatives. The main function of this Steering Committee will be to:

- Monitor the recruitment of external institution and approve the selection;
- Review and comment on inception report
- Review and comment on preliminary findings and recommendations (draft reports);
- Approve the final report; and,
- Establish a dissemination and utilization strategy.

There will also be an internal technical team that will accompany the external study team throughout the various steps of the longitudinal study.

## **Study ethics and considerations**

The study will be guided by the following ethical rules/considerations:

- *Openness* - of information given, to the highest degree to all involved parties.
- *Publicity/public access* - to results when there are not special considerations against this.
- *Broad participation* – the interested parties should be involved where relevant and possible.
- *Reliability and independence* – the assessment should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy.

## **Qualifications of the Study team**

The study team can be a University or another type of research or specialized firm.

### *Essential Skills*

- Must have at least 10 years professional work experience in the areas of program evaluation, especially in non-formal education and institutional/community capacity building and strengthening;
- Extensive conceptual and methodological skills and experience in applying qualitative and quantitative research evaluation methods;
- Prior impact assessment experience;
- Excellent communication skills necessary for building rapport with stakeholders, facilitating participation and effective presentation of results to diverse audiences.

### *Desirable qualifications*

- Understanding of social norms and experience in measurement of social norms change;
- Experience in organizational management, structures and systems, operations, capacity development, reporting, and monitoring;
- Work experience in countries covered by the study or similar;
- Detailed knowledge of Tostan and its programming;
- Knowledge of the local languages.
- Active in influential development forums or networks that focus on community-led development or on sustainable development.

## **Submission materials**

In addition to the technical content stemming from the terms of reference of the longitudinal study, proposals should include:

- *A profile of the consultant* (max 1 page) - explaining why they are the most suitable for the work.
- *Details of approach and method to be used* - a technical narrative no longer than 5 pages describing how they will accomplish the tasks described above (description of the proposed methodology and organization of work).
- *Evidence of relevant previous research work and experience* - brief summaries of 3-4 examples of similar work conducted with the past two (2) years that include description of the effort, the scale of data collection, the methods and tools used for data collection, data management approach, quality control systems, etc. and a full copy of at least one previous relevant study undertaken recently.
- *Qualifications/experience of the team members who will be involved in this project* (CVs of key personnel who will be engaged in the work). Firms/organizations must also submit an institutional capacity statement.
- *Project plan* showing utilization of suggested team members.
- *Detailed costing* of each of the research items.
- *Detailed timescale*.
- *3 references* that can be contacted regarding the quality of the organization's work.

## **Selection process and criteria**

A selection committee will assess the submitted proposals based on the criteria set out below.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weight in %</b>
<b>Quality:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Clarity of the overall concept</li><li>▪ Justification/appropriateness of the proposed methodology</li><li>▪ Justification/appropriateness of the approach</li><li>▪ Selection and scope of the information to be considered (including basic information, institutions and actors in the field, studies and analyses, background information)</li><li>▪ Schedule (soundness and appropriateness)</li></ul>	<b>45%</b>

<p><b>Qualifications and experience of the institution and team members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relevance and quality of past work</li> <li>▪ Resumes, qualifications and subject matter expertise</li> <li>▪ Composition of the team</li> <li>▪ Team collaboration and plausibility of the task allocation</li> </ul>	<b>30%</b>
<p><b>Financial offer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Correspondence between planned activities and budget lines</li> <li>▪ Relationship between proposed budget and known market rates</li> </ul>	<b>25%</b>

## Deadline

Interested parties should send their proposals to Tostan no later than 30 April 2019 at 17:00 (Dakar time) by email in pdf format to [madcisse@tostan.org](mailto:madcisse@tostan.org).

If you have any questions concerning this call, please send them by email to [madcisse@tostan.org](mailto:madcisse@tostan.org) by 22 April 2019. Telephone enquiries will not be answered.