



A Tostan participant learns about reproductive health

## Mobile Phone = Pedagogical Tool + Social Mobilization Catalyzer + Economic Resource

With mobile phone networks rapidly expanding to cover the vast majority of African citizens, and with mobile phones already commonplace in even the most remote villages, mobile technology is a promising platform for more empowering and inclusive systems of communication.

The increasing accessibility of mobile technology and the cost-efficiency of SMS texting relative to placing a call present a new motivation for literacy while providing an ideal training tool.

Mobile phones can also be used in complement to traditional communication methods in order to increase the scope of community-led events and more efficiently diffuse innovations and collective decisions, while amplifying the voice of traditionally marginalized individuals.

Furthermore, mobile technology is a powerful economic tool that has a variety of innovative potentialities for income-generating activities in rural communities.

Tostan and the Jokko Initiative are proud to collaborate with:



## What Tostan Does

Tostan means "breakthrough" in the West African language of Wolof.

Tostan's mission is to empower African communities to bring about sustainable development and positive social transformation based on respect for human rights.

Since 1991, Tostan has brought its holistic, human rights-based, 30-month non-formal education program - the Community Empowerment Program (CEP) - to thousands of communities in ten African countries: Burkina Faso, Djibouti, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, and Sudan.

The goal of the CEP is to provide its participants – 80% of whom are women and girls - with the skills and knowledge to improve their lives in a sustainable way. Developed methodically over the past 20 years through an ongoing process of community consultation and careful revision, the CEP has become one of the most unique and effective community development programs in Africa.



The "Mango Tree activity" teaches participants to navigate the main menu of a mobile phone

## The Jokko Initiative: Empowering the BoP with Mobile Technology

Jokko (or Jokoo) means “communication” or “dialogue” in Wolof, a national language in Senegal, West Africa.

With the launch of the Jokko Initiative, Tostan and UNICEF have formed a partnership that positions them at the forefront of SMS-based innovation and focuses on empowering hundreds of rural African communities to use accessible mobile technology to improve their lives and those of their children. This partnership links UNICEF’s reach, resources and technical expertise with Tostan’s ground-level experience and understanding of local realities.



Under the Jokko Initiative, Tostan added a new component to its CEP to teach the practical uses of standard mobile phone functions and SMS texting. The "Jokko" module uses mobile phones as (1) pedagogical tools to teach and reinforce literacy, organization and management skills and as (2) social mobilization tools that help to build consensus around local development initiatives by providing a platform for exchanging information, broadcasting ideas and organizing advocacy efforts, while amplifying the voice and influence of women and girls in community decision-making processes.

The Center of Evaluation for Global Action at the University of Berkeley conducted an independent evaluation of the pilot phase. The Jokko team is currently expanding its activities to additional villages and identifying new mobile phone applications and mobile technology-based income-generating and social mobilization activities that serve the needs of rural communities.



### Innovative RapidSMS Applications for Community-Led Development

Developed using UNICEF’s RapidSMS platform, the “Community Forum” is a practical, SMS-based application that allows a community member to disseminate information to a virtual network of her peers by sending a single text message to the Tostan server. The Community Forum has been vital in publicizing community activities and events such as vaccination campaigns and literacy group meetings and in spreading news about positive social change in a village to its neighbors.

In 2010, Tostan will be launching two new projects using RapidSMS: (1) “Jokkondiral!”, an innovative website that will allow Tostan’s rural participants to communicate via SMS texting with their relatives in the diaspora and (2) a real-time monitoring system that will allow Community Management Committees- community-based organizations that are trained by Tostan during the CEP to lead local development initiatives- to report on their activities

### Community Tele-centers for Income-Generating and Social Mobilization Activities

Tostan is currently piloting community tele-centers in rural, off-grid communities that will provide much-needed mobile technology services, such as the sale of credit, calling, and phone charging through the use of solar energy. The income generated from these activities will, in turn, provide funds for community social mobilization activities, including the provision of free SMS texting for women and girls in order to increase their (currently disproportionate) access to mobile technology, amplify their voices, and allow them to practice their literacy skills.



**Read more about the Jokko Initiative at [www.jokkoinitiative.org](http://www.jokkoinitiative.org)**