



# GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

## Health and Human Rights in Action: April 20 – Global Watch Spotlight Series

115 William H. Gates Hall, 4:00-6:00pm: Reception, followed by Presentation at 4:30pm

All are welcome. No RSVP needed.

### ***“Unlocking the Power of Social Norms for Large Scale Impact: Abandoning Female Genital Cutting in West Africa”***

**Speaker: Molly Melching, Director and Founder of the African-Based NGO Tostan\***

\*Featured in *Half the Sky* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunnal; also won the Skoll Foundation Award for Social Entrepreneurship in 2010



Molly Melching will speak about the organization’s experiences in East and West African communities over the last 20 years, including: How do change agents succeed in making important cultural shifts for positive impact when deeply entrenched social norms seem destined to keep the status quo locked in? She will share her experience with human rights education and discuss the insights we can gain from the growing movement to abandon female genital cutting in Africa.

Having lived and worked in Senegal since 1974, Molly Melching has received international recognition for her groundbreaking educational programs that have led communities to affect life transforming changes including the abandonment of female genital cutting and child/forced marriage. More than 4,500 communities in Senegal, Guinea, The Gambia, Somalia and Burkina Faso have made public declarations for abandonment of harmful traditional practices following a human rights-based education program implemented by Tostan, the NGO founded by Molly in 1991. Other breakthroughs include - reduction in infant and maternal mortality, wide-spread school and birth registration, and the emergence of female leadership. Molly received the Humanitarian Alumni Award from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1999, the Sargent Shriver Distinguished Award for Humanitarian Service in 2002 and Sweden’s Anna Lindh Award for Tostan’s work in human rights in 2005. In 2007, Tostan won the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize, the largest and most prestigious in the humanitarian field.

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

Tostan means "breakthrough" in the West African language of Wolof. Since 1991, Tostan has brought its holistic 30-month education program to thousands of communities in ten African countries: Burkina Faso, Djibouti, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, and Sudan.

**Hosted by the Global Health and Justice (GHJ) Project, the Center for Law in Science and Global Health, and the Gates Public Service Law Program**

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