

Sometimes, particularly in not-for-profits or NGOs, the new ideas come as a kind of program. Not as a particular product, but as a program that they've devised to try to assist either in service delivery or in support for a particular groups whom their mandate demands that they address.

An interesting one that we've come across is called Tostan, which was an innovation as a program and a design. It was created by an American woman who went to Africa to try to intervene, particularly in Somalia and Senegal, around creating a different kind of dialogue at community levels.

First of all, they went in just feeling that they wanted to talk about women's right. They were very concerned around women's rights and they met an obstacle as they started to convene this discussion groups in villages. That was that the men objected to being brought around just to talk about women's rights. At that point they said, "*Well, really, we should move to human rights.*"

The UN Declaration of Human Rights was pretty unknown at the village level, and so they started to work to explain and animate what these human rights were, and this triggered a real spark. There was a real reaction sparked in villagers who began to

get quite excited about this notion that there were human rights; and quite emergent—quite unexpectedly—one of the themes that came out, from the villagers themselves, was the notion of female genital cutting. These are largely in Muslim villages, but also they'd practiced for many years female genital cutting, which has huge implications for both health and for the rights of women; and they began to discuss this and they began to discuss it as a human right.

The analysis was good enough so that, as they discussed it, they recognized that, while their individual mothers and parents were prepared to give this up, the problem was that it was a larger system issue. Because they didn't marry within their own villages: their daughters marry people from *other* villages, and if, in fact, they hadn't engaged in female genital cutting, this would mean that the bride was non-desirable.

They could see, working across scales up to the next scale that, in fact, if they wanted to change this, they couldn't change it locally. They were going to have to change it at a village level. This was particularly taken on in Senegal.

The religious leaders at that point—the Imams—said that they were prepared to go

around to these various villages and try to get a whole network of inter-marrying villages to change at the same time, and to take a stand against female genital cutting. In doing this, they were taking advantage of a particular opportunity that had been created by legislation in Senegal saying that it was forbidden to do female genital cutting. This had been on the books for a while, and nobody really had paid any attention to it at all; but it was sitting there.

They were able to secure political support at the highest scales of the government of Senegal, and take advantage of a lot of international pressure they had created. It was an opportunity where the politicians were willing to support this kind of activity. You see again, there was a program, and the innovative part of it was highly emergent. But, there was an opportunity created to work across scales, across villages, but also at the highest levels of Senegal to take something which was just a good, interesting program and start to turn it into something which really was changing the system all together.

That's innovation as program design.