


**Tostan**  
Dignity for All

**Tostan Presentation**  
Seminar on Combating Early Forced Marriage  
Accra, Ghana

**The root causes of child/forced marriage**



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**Root causes of child/forced marriage**

**Belief that child marriage:**

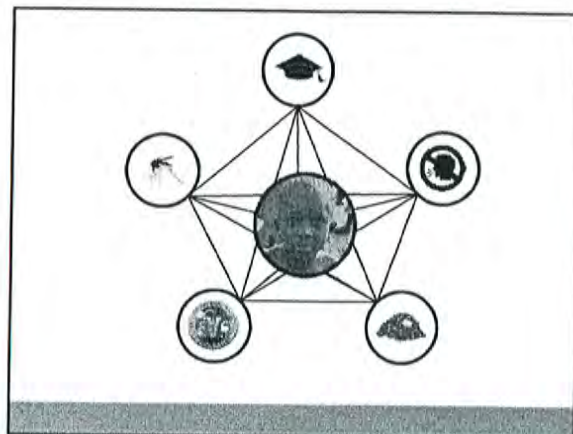
- Prevents sexual intercourse before marriage
- Helps to avoid the shame of early pregnancy
- Reinforces family ties (often is viewed as paying a debt of gratitude)
- Provides protection for young girls by placing them under the responsibility of an often older man
- Ensures that women will see their grandchildren (life expectancy was previously 49 years)



**Root causes.....**

**It is also the result of :**

- The reference group finding the practice normal
- Poverty
- Lack of quality education in many communities that leads to girls not succeeding in school
- Silence around the taboo of speaking about marriage and sexuality
- Absence of a safe space to have a genuine dialogue about issues surrounding marriage and sexuality
- Absence of dialogue about the dangers of the practice
- Lack of knowledge about Human Rights/Child Rights
- Lack of medical information about the risks of early pregnancy



### Tostan's Program is PARTICIPATORY

Facilitators are specially trained to ensure that people from all backgrounds have a voice and can freely participate in the program. Methods used encourage both self-confidence in sharing one's opinions and the respect of others rights to express their own views.



### Diffusion: From Community to Community

Participants organize other specific meetings (involving religious and traditional leaders, youth, women, representatives from other communities, parliamentarians, influential personalities, etc.) to share new information, gain support and consensus, and make decisions.



### Diffusion: From Class to Community

Participants share with others through the "Adopt a Learner" Strategy (friend, relative, co-wife, husband, village leader). Sessions allow time for participants to assimilate new information, share, and discuss—both in and out of class.



Social practice that changes through public declaration

Over 7,000 communities in 8 African countries



### Diffusion: From Class to Community



**Community Outreach**  
Participants share information with others in the village through use of theater, role play, song, illustrations, games, poetry, and flip charts.

