

A day without school

Tostan has changed a lot in the villages, and the adults now know how important it is for both girls and boys to be able to go to school. But there are still families who can't afford to send their children to school. Lots of progress has been made, but there is still a long way to go.

"I live with my aunt because my mother is dead and my stepmother lives in Banjul. My aunt doesn't let me go to school any more. I have to stay at home and do house-work. I think about school every day, but there is a lot of work to be done here," says Nuima, 14.

"Still, my life would have been different without Tostan here in the village. They have taught us lots about health, and now nobody forces us girls to get married before we are eighteen. So I don't have to get married until I am an adult and my body is ready to bear children."

Nuima was cut as a baby, and every month when she has her period she has to lie down for five days.

"It's incredibly painful. I know it will also cause problems when I'm a grown-up and I give birth. But thanks to Tostan, nobody here cuts girls any more."



Nuima, 14

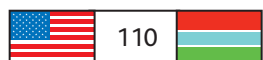
Likes: Praying

Favourite thing in the day: Cooking

Grateful: That she doesn't have to get married until she is an adult, thanks to Tostan.

Wishes: That she could go to school.

Last time she was really happy: When she got new clothes.



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07:00

Nuima wakes up in the room she shares with her sisters.

07:15

It's important to wash before morning prayers.



Before Nuima prays she puts on her veil. Time to bring out the prayer mat. Nuima turns towards Mecca and kneels down.



07:40

"Ma an mujamdi," says Nuima to her family after praying. That means 'wake in peace'.



08:00 Fetching water from the well.



09:00

Nuima has a bath in the bathroom, behind a screen.



09:15

Before breakfast, Nuima pounds grain in a mortar. When she is finished, she sieves it to remove the husks, before using the grain to make porridge.



10:00

Finally, time for breakfast!



11:00

Washing the family's clothes.



12:00

Shelling peanuts. Peanuts are an important part of their diet, and are also sold at the market.



13:00

Nuima makes lunch in a smoky kitchen, but she enjoys cooking.



15:00

Time to sweep up.

15:30

Nuima is embroidering a piece of fabric that will hang in front of her door when she is married.



16:00

Nuima gets help to tidy up her plaits.



19:00

The family eat dinner.



20:00

Nuima watches TV with her cousins. At the same time some of the children who go to the village school during the day are in the neighbouring village, attending Koran school by the light of a large fire.



22:00

Nuima goes to bed after a long working day. As usual, before she falls asleep she thinks about what her day would have been like if she could have gone to school instead.

