



# THE GCERF CAROL BELLAMY LEADERSHIP AWARD 2023

## AWARDEE REPORT: **GNELENI TON**

### AT A GLANCE: GNELENI TON DE SIDO

For some time, regions in southern Mali has been the object of attacks by armed groups. As a result, in particular, women who are disadvantaged and sometimes victims of stereotypes do not have access to credit from banks or micro-credit institutions to house their savings. At times, they are not even able to benefit from a credit fund for funds because of the rise in interest rates. This situation forces them to draw on the little they have saved to meet the expenses of their cooperatives and domestic expenses. Gneleni Ton (GT) has worked to empower women in the region by tackling these issues.



**GTD has operated  
in Mali since 2022**

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Gneleni Ton was awarded the CBLA for their Women's Cooperative Investment Savings Initiative (WCII) or "Mara tonon" project. The Mara tonon project was designed to encourage women from cooperatives in the area to set up shared savings system. This savings system would allow women to invest or reinvest in their choice economic projects and, therefore, strengthen their autonomy and agency.

The saving system would be designed as a capital fund, and would be fed by the savings generated through women's various cooperative activities. Women would have access to money from the fund as individuals or groups. Procedures would be designed to be simple and accessible, and loans would be granted without interest rates.

Two women's cooperatives would be selected for the project on the basis that they had already previously benefited from subsidies before the advent of armed group attacks in their localities had forced them to slow or halt their activities.





## CREATION OF A FUND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

By general consensus, three women in the community were appointed to head the fund management committee. They would be officially responsible for the smooth running of the newly created fund.

After the formation of the committee, the women leaders met to collaboratively discuss, plan, and agree upon the details of the design and running of the newly created fund. In so doing, they also sought to usefully anticipate any implementation difficulties.



## ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT TRAINING

GT also organised training for women to be able to develop their understanding of and practical economic management skills. Positive testimonials demonstrate the impact of how this training.

the training, in conjunction with the creation of the new fund, was deeply appreciated by beneficiaries:

For example, one beneficiary testified that *"with this fund, I'll be able to restart my cereal sales business. You're pulling the thorns out of our sides."*



## FUTURE STEPS

Women look forward to funding new projects for themselves in the future, including:

- Training on how to manage organic market garden produce, so that their goods are increasingly sought after and competitive on the market.
- Creating a phone-line or a website to attract potential wholesale or individual sellers for their organic produce.

