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IAFS Final Research Paper

Philanthrocapitalism in Africa: Green Revolution for Africa or a Money-making Scheme in an Untapped Market?

Philanthropy in the 21st century has been an extremely effective tool to bolster the ultra-wealthy's reputation, but most think it can at least do some good otherwise. Many in the media sing the praises of generous billionaires like Bill Gates for their philanthropic activities saying they donate a large portion of their wealth or create organizations aimed at alleviating poverty or fostering development. Gates and the foundation are famous for using monies for global health, education, and more recently, agriculture.[1] The particular style of this philanthropy, though, is unique and relatively recent[2]. The ethos is to use charitable funds as if it were capitalistic investment. In theory, this may be a remedy for the infamous dependency trap that outright aid can land developing countries since it can more accurately be called investment.[3] But, open questions remain, to what is the Gates Foundation accountable as a private, charitable entity with considerable resources? What are they doing with those resources?

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[1] McGoey, Linsey. 2016. *No Such Thing as a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy.* London: Verso.

[2] McGoey, Linsey, *No Such Thing as a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy.*

[3] Moyo, Dambisa. 2009. *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa or AGRA was formed jointly by the Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.[4] The two organizations jointly contributed to create AGRA. By 2008 the budget was $180 million.[5] Fittingly, the Rockefeller Foundation is following in its original footsteps as it was a major funding mechanism of biotechnology.[6] However, in this case the Gates Foundation invests more in this particular effort.[7] They partner with other agencies and companies with the goal of increasing the productivity and efficiency of Africa's agriculture to reduce hunger and poverty.[8] AGRA wants to connect Africa's smallest farmers to world commercial markets.[9] However well-intentioned their cause, the implementation has shown to be flawed and have negative externalities that ultimately call their noble cause into question. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and its parent the Gates Foundation has failed to meet its purported goals and represents neocolonial imposition

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[4] Toenniessen, Gary, Akinwumi Adesina, and Joseph DeVries. 2008. "Building an Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1136: 233-242.

[5] Mkindi, Abdallah, Anne Maina, Jan Urhahn, Josephine Koch, Lena Bassermann, Mamadou Goita, Mutinta Nketai, et al. July 2020. "False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa" Luxemburg Stiftung Southern Africa, Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity. https://www.rosalux.de/en/publication/id/42635., p. 4

[6] McGoey, Linsey, *No Such Thing as a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy,* P.4-5

[7] Wise, Timothy A. 2020. "Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa." Working Paper No. 20-01, Global Development and Environment Institute. https://sites.tufts.edu/gdae/files/2020/07/20-01_Wise_FailureToYield.pdf

[8] Toenniessen, Gary, Akinwumi Adesina, and Joseph DeVries. "Building an Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa."

[9] Ibid.

onto Africa to create markets more favorable for its investments and partners instead of, as it claims, to reduce hunger and poverty.

Part 1: AGRA Speaks for Itself

AGRA contends that the heart of Africa's food insecurity problem is the poor productivity of its various farms, and they intend to increase that productivity[10]. The population demand for food and calories is outpacing the agricultural output and the continent is increasingly reliant upon food imports[11]. According to the organization, the Green Revolution of the twentieth century "skipped" Africa.[12] The increase in agricultural production from the spreading of biotechnology through Asia and Latin America might have led to reduced hunger and poverty, but widespread adoption of agribusiness technology has not occurred in Africa.[13] This is what AGRA is attempting to solve, hence the name.

They want to increase agricultural yields with better soil productivity and farming technology, instill the use of resilient and more productive crop varieties, and create "input and output" markets on the seed side and the selling crop side.[14] Coupled with this are some ambitious goals like halving food insecurity in 20 countries by 2020 and doubling the household income of 20 million households in Arica.[15]

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[10] Toenniessen, Gary, Akinwumi Adesina, and Joseph DeVries. "Building an Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa."
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid, p. 234
[13] Toenniessen, Gary, Akinwumi Adesina, and Joseph DeVries. "Building an Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa."
[14] Ibid.
[15] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa"

It intends to accomplish this in a number of ways. They offer grants for education, up to $40,000 for master's programs and $200,000 for PhD programs.[16] These are geared towards biotechnology and seed breeding to encourage the creation and procurement of resilient and high-yield versions of crops.[17] AGRA works with governments and funnels its funding through other organizations, like many other larger projects. They are investing in Africa based owned seed companies and wants to create new, stable markets for crops after harvesting.[18]

Just like the Green Revolution it is based on, AGRA incentivizes synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified seeds for yield. During the Green Revolution in the 1960s, cereal crops doubled with only a 30% increase in land usage.[19] However, some literature has called the revolutionary success into question. Some studies contend that the main driver of the increased agricultural production was irrigation technology over the GMOs and synthetic fertilizers.[20] Poverty and hunger were reduced, but it must be acknowledged that the pesticides and fertilizers impacted the health of farmers and those near farm areas and affected local ecologies.[21]

Part 2: AGRA's failures

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[16] Toenniessen, Gary, Akinwumi Adesina, and Joseph DeVries. "Building an Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa."
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

[19] John Daisy A., Babu Giridhara R. 2021. "Lessons From the Aftermaths of Green Revolution on Food System and Health." *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* 5: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsufs.2021.644559 .

[20] Wise, Timothy A."Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa."
[21] John Daisy A., Babu Giridhara R. 2021. "Lessons From the Aftermaths of Green Revolution on Food System and Health."

One of AGRA's goals was to increase production and yield without increasing land usage. However, Table 1 makes it clear that even one of the main target crops, maize's yield increases come with a 45% increase in land usage.[22] Even though growth has increased, in most areas the yield gains are because of land use increase which makes the yields nowhere near AGRA's specified goals and indicates that AGRA is not following its own principles. Mali shows significant growth in yield; however, the land use increase is also great. Mali is a unique case because it had large swaths of uncultivated land at the beginning[23]. Zambia quite nearly doubled its land usage for a comparably measly 27% increase in yields, far below the goal of doubling.[24]

Table 1 Source: Wise 2020

Maize Growth Under AGRA

Change in production, area, yield 2004/6 - 2016/18

	Production (MT/year)		Area	Yield
	2016/18 Avg	%	%	%
AGRA Total		87	45	29
Nigeria	10,707,669	72	64	7
Ethiopia	7,774,721	115	24	71
Tanzania	5,947,674	59	38	15
Kenya	3,512,926	26	31	-4
Mali	3,082,573	414	213	63
Zambia	2,958,169	153	99	27
Uganda	2,882,421	142	48	64
Malawi	2,843,864	57	6	51
Ghana	1,997,765	70	35	26
Mozambique	1,615,084	42	9	27
Burkina Faso	1,612,028	125	128	0
Rwanda	380,988	305	146	66
Niger	35,301	341	234	53

Source: Authors calculations using data from FAOSTAT, http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QC, downloaded January 2020

Notes: 2004-2006 3 year average; 2016-2018 3 year average. Percent change between 2004-6 and 2016-18 3-year averages. Countries are listed in order of total Maize production.

[22] Wise, Timothy A."Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.",

[23] Wise, Timothy A."Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.", p. 14

[24] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa"

Another problem is because maize was heavily incentivized, it replaced, at least in part, some of the other crops endemic to the area. Subsidies for a crop usually have the effect of incentivizing planting for that crop.[25] This is not a phenomenon unique to African agriculture. The Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation do not need to look further than the US to see that subsidizing a crop, like corn and soybeans, incentivizes its overproduction.[26] AGRA could have looked to the Green Revolution of the 1960s that it is based on for this as well. It is touted as the reason why developing countries in South Asia were able to produce enough food for its populations, but there were negative effects that AGRA seems to have ignored. Focusing on commercial cash crops like maize with heavy incentives to produce it can have the effect of replacing more nutritious, traditional crops like sorghum.[27] This happened in the original Green Revolution and is one of the criticisms of its implementation.[28] Roots and tubers like sweet potatoes and cassava saw a decline as high as 7%.[29] Groundnuts, a vital source of protein especially during difficult climates, saw a reduction of at least 23%[30]. Millet fell

[25] Ibid.

[26] Aubrey, Allison. 2016. *Does Subsidizing Crops We're Told to Eat Less of Fatten Us Up?* Jul 18. Accessed Dec 12, 2022.

[27] John Daisy A., Babu Giridhara R. "Lessons From the Aftermaths of Green Revolution on Food System and Health."

[28] John Daisy A., Babu Giridhara R. "Lessons From the Aftermaths of Green Revolution on Food System and Health."

[29] Wise, Timothy A."Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.", p. 16

[30] Ibid.

by at least 24%[31]. This is an alarming trend and runs the risk of following in the first Green Revolution where hunger was reduced at a large cost of malnutrition[32].

An evaluation by the German Institute for Development pointed out that poorer farmers need “risk-reducing” techniques which often excludes expensive loans and high upfront costs[33]. They generally do not participate in commercial supply chains, at least not to the degree that AGRA would like. The report rightly points out that only small portion of these small-scale farmers are likely to rise above that label.[34] It follows the same bottleneck hierarchy that is intrinsic to unfettered capitalism.

So, it would follow that most of who benefitted from these programs have been middle to higher scale farms because they are who can afford the upfront costs or the loans.[35] For smaller farms, the synthetic fertilizers are broadly out of reach without heavy subsidies. For example, in Tanzania AGRA aims to connect small farmers to agrobusinesses that will sell fertilizers on credit.[36] Unfortunately, many farmers could not pay back the loan after harvesting due to the low price of maize coupled with the increased production costs of AGRA’s other requirements for the program like prohibition of mixed cropping.[37] In Kenya, many farmers cannot afford the soil testing

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[31] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al.“False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa”

[32] John Daisy A., Babu Giridhara R. "Lessons From the Aftermaths of Green Revolution on Food System and Health."

[33] Marcus Kaplan, S. Bettighofer, S. Brüntrup-Seidemann and M. No- ltze (2016), “Landwirtschaftliche Wertschöpfungsketten”, available at https://www.deval.org/files/content/Dateien/Evaluierung/Berichte/2016_DEval_WSK-Bericht%20(barrierefrei).pdf.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al.“False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa”

[36] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al.“False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa”, p. 13

[37] Ibid.

required to choose the correct fertilizer resulting in reduced soil fertility from inappropriate enhancements.[38] Additionally, under AGRA and its partnerships, farmers do not choose the kind of maize or fertilizers they use anyway and thus assumed that agro-dealers would make the best choices for them leaving the farmers more vulnerable to exploitation.[39]

AGRA's annual reports contend out that millions of farmers gained training and knowledge in Integrated Soil Fertility Management techniques or almost 2 million farmers implementing ISFM techniques.[40] However, there is little explanation on what this means. What we do know is that the adoption of these ISFM technologies by small farmers has been lacking in places especially concerning small farmers.[41] AGRA's annual report from 2021 shows increased adoption of fertilizers and harvesting technology and claims that this is helping spur private investment in Africa's agriculture.[42] It is possible AGRA is attempting to fix some of the aforementioned problems, but it remains to be seen if this will increase yield or if it will raise households out of poverty.

AGRA wanted, quite ambitiously, to drastically reduce hunger and poverty in Africa, however metrics are not in AGRA's favor.[43] In fact, the share of undernourishment (meaning substantial food deprivation) has actually increased 30%

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[38] Ibid, p. 14
[39] Ibid.
[40] Wise, Timothy A."Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.", p. 12
[41] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa",
[42] AGRA, 2022. AGRA ANNUAL REPORT 2021 Nurturing Change Across African Agriculture. Oct 2022. Accessed Dec 13, 2022. https://agra.org/annual-report-2021/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/AGRA-Annual-Report-2021.pdf

[43] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa"

from the pre-AGRA period until 2018.[44] Data from Table 2, it is clear that in most of the AGRA target countries, the problem of food insecurity has been exacerbated and not alleviated by the agricultural programs touted by this Green Revolution. Reductions in poverty are similarly bleak. Some countries, Ethiopia and Ghana, have cut their rates of extreme poverty, but in similar rates to the pre-AGRA intervention time period (wp). Most other target countries have seen their poverty rates broadly stagnant or rise (wp).

Table 2 Source: Wise 2020

Rising Hunger in AGRA Years
Undernourishment 2004-06 to 2016-18

	Number Undernourished (Millions)			Prevalence of Undernourishment (%)			Moderate and Severe Food Insecurity 2016-18	
	2004-06	2016-18	Change (% points)	2004-06	2016-18	Change (% points)	Millions	Prevalence (%)
Burkina Faso	3.3	3.8	0.5	24.9	20.0	-4.9	*7.4	*40.7
Ethiopia	30.5	21.6	-8.9	39.7	20.6	-19.1	-	-
Ghana	2.0	1.6	-0.4	9.3	5.5	-3.8	14.3	49.6
Kenya	10.2	14.6	4.4	28.2	29.4	1.2	28.1	56.5
Malawi	3.4	3.3	-0.1	26.1	17.5	-8.6	15.3	81.9
Mali	1.4	1.2	-0.2	11.1	6.3	-4.8	-	-
Mozambique	7.8	8.3	0.5	37.0	27.9	-9.1	20.4	68.6
Niger	2.1	3.6	1.5	15.1	16.5	1.4	**17.8	**83
Nigeria	9.1	25.6	16.5	6.5	13.4	6.9	-	-
Rwanda	4.0	4.5	0.5	44.5	36.8	-7.7	-	-
Tanzania	13.6	17.6	4.0	34.4	30.7	-3.7	39.7	69.3
Uganda	6.9	17.6	10.7	24.1	41.0	16.9	-	-
Zambia	6.2	8.0	1.8	51.1	46.7	-4.4	-	-
Total	**100.5**	**131.3**	**30.8**					
SSA	177.3	229.9	52.6	24.3	22.5	-1.8	595.3[+]	58.2

Source: FAOSTAT Food Security Indicators, http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS, updated October 2019
*2014-2016 average **2015-2017 average
[+]This is an increase from 494.3 in 2014
- Indidates no data

Part 3: AGRA's Philanthrocapitalism: the Neo-Neocolonialism?

It is necessary to start with a clear definition of philanthrocapitalism in our globalized, economically connected, and unequal world. Philanthrocapitalism is

[44] Wise, Timothy A."Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.", p. 22

(obviously) a portmanteau of philanthropy and capitalism. In a book by Bishop and Green, they propose a definition.[45] It is doing philanthropy as if you are simply investing in a for-profit business sense in the hopes it will drive innovation and competition for the benefit of most[46]. In other words, philanthrocapitalism occurs when a philanthropic organization uses free-market techniques to invest in a realm to drive development. "Charitable 'giving' becomes another form of investment."[47] They want a return on that investment.

Criticisms of AGRA thus far focus on its failures in terms of its goals, but the issues run deeper. Specifically, AGRA is attempting to extract and privatize Africa's agricultural and natural wealth. At the core, AGRA is running under the neocolonialist assumption that Africa's seeds and seed system is inferior. From AGRA's own 2012 report:

> Africa is facing a shortage of quality seeds. Poor seed combined with climate change will exacerbate the already critical food shortage situation in sub-Saharan Africa.... Most farmers plant varieties that were released more than 30 years ago or land races (farmer collection seeds). [48]

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[45] Bishop, Matthew, and Michael Green. 2008. *Philanthrocapitalism: How the Rich Can Save the World.* London: Bloomsbury.

[46] Bishop and Green. *Philanthrocapitalism: How the Rich Can Save the World*.

[47] Thompson, Carol B. 2014. "Philanthrocapitalism: appropriation of Africa's genetic wealth." *Review of African Political Economy* 389-405., p. 394

[48] AGRA: Growing Africa's Agriculture. 2012. *Providing higher-yielding seed farmers need.* Accessed Dec 12, 2022. https://web.archive.org/web/20120809044132/http://www.agra-alliance.org:80/what-we-do/seed/.

This assumption is exactly in line with the colonial and white settler assumptions of Africa's past Inherent to colonialism was the idea that the colonial power's knowledge should supersede any African knowledge.

Seed systems in Sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the Global South are generally informal. This means that farmers are using and trading seeds amongst themselves in a way disconnected from a formal, global market and about 90% of sub-Saharan African seeds are exchanged this way.[49] This is generally done out of convenience, and it keeps indigenous seeds indigenous and can have the effect of fostering climate-resilience.[50] There is international schema conducive to and encouraging this seed sharing.[51] The Consultative Group International Agriculture Research or CGIAR has 16 public international seed banks under it.[52] The principle of access and benefit sharing (ABS) was codified under the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1993.[53] AGRA purports to encourage seed policy that enables investment and ultimately convert informal seed sharing to formal trading.[54] It is doing this by bringing African countries and companies under the Union for Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPROV) but this can have a "dispossessing" effect where only

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[49] Dycke, Lodewijk Van. 2021. "Accumulation by dispossession and African seeds: colonial institutions trump seed business law." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2021.1955677.

[50] Dycke, Lodewijk Van. "Accumulation by dispossession and African seeds: colonial institutions trump seed business law."

[51] Thompson, Carol B."Philanthrocapitalism: appropriation of Africa's genetic wealth."

[52] Thompson, Carol B."Philanthrocapitalism: appropriation of Africa's genetic wealth."

[53] Thompson, Carol B."Philanthrocapitalism: appropriation of Africa's genetic wealth."

[54] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa" p. 10

multinational, powerful companies can afford to patent new varieties and then control their use and distribution since small farmers often cannot meet those criterion.[55] [56]Seeds need to meet certain standards to fall under that paradigm and if they do not, then the seeds cannot be formally traded.[57]

AGRA sends people to teach even remote farmers about the value of high yield and resilient crop varieties.[58] By their own admission, this education is broadly lacking information about integrating local crops, environmental and land conservation, and climate change resiliency.[59] Education is often thought of as a good thing and it generally is, however when you have outsiders imposing what they think is best onto a population without much engagement with that population what you actually have is neocolonialism. It might not be the same thing or as egregious, but in Belgian Congo, white Europeans not only extracted resources, but they also attempted to systematically change cultural practices through coercive education programs mostly concerning breast feeding and birth spacing.[60] AGRA's approach rings similar enough to be

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[55] Dycke, Lodewijk Van. "Accumulation by dispossession and African seeds: colonial institutions trump seed business law."

[56] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa"

[57] Ibid.

[58] AGRA. 2022. *RFP: Co-develop farming-system specific, extension content for enhancing climate change adaptation and resilient food systems in three representative farming systems of Africa .* Jun 6. Accessed Dec 13, 2022. https://agra.org/rfp-co-develop-farming-system-specific-extension-content-for-enhancing-climate-change-adaptation-and-resilient-food-systems-in-three-representative-farming-systems-of-africa/.

[59] AGRA. *RFP: Co-develop farming-system specific, extension content for enhancing climate adaptation and resilient food systems in three representative farming systems of Africa*

[60] Hunt, Nancy Rose. 1988. "Le Bébé en Brousse: European Women, African Birth Spacing, and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21: 401-432.

uncomfortable. The Gates Foundation and AGRA do not have much data on how much community integration and engagement they have with these farmers, but it is clear it is not as much as is needed.

It feels relevant to point out the Gates Foundations' close ties to Monsanto. Monsanto is infamous among farmers in the US for trapping them in a dependency cycle because they own their patented seed varieties and farmers are prohibited from cost-saving techniques like saving seeds for the next season.[61] AGRA has been applying principles of intellectual property restrictions on seed varieties in Africa with the goal of incentivizing creation of resilient crop varieties and protecting crop breeders following its pattern of ignoring clearly documented problems.[62] The Gates Foundation invested upwards of $23 million in Monsanto four years after establishing AGRA.[63] They have since sold these shares, but the ties remain close through a program called, Water Efficient Maize for Africa or WEMA intended to provide sub-Saharan Africa with royalty-free modified seeds.[64] The Foundation also has ties with Cargill, Bayer (now apparently merged with Monsanto), and other multinationals that stand to benefit from AGRA's

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[61] Harris, Paul. 2013. *Monsanto sued small famers to protect seed patents, report says.* Feb 12. Accessed Dec 11, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/feb/12/monsanto-sues-farmers-seed-patents.

[62] Thompson, Carol B."Philanthrocapitalism: appropriation of Africa's genetic wealth."

[63] McGoey, Linsey, *No Such Thing as a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy*, ch. 7

[64] McGoey, Linsey, *No Such Thing as a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy,* ch. 7

activities.[65] Critics fear it is a way to gain a foothold in an otherwise infant market.[66] With its insistence on investment-based seed policy and its own involvement with biotechnology multinationals, AGRA feels more like a way to make commercial market conditions more favorable to agribusiness than to improve hunger outlooks for Africans.

Part 4: The Mali Exception and a Better Way Forward:

Mali's prospects have appeared to be more positive than her cohorts while AGRA has had considerably less commercial and governmental involvement within. Poverty and hunger have both reduced during AGRA's period of intervention.[67] A few conditions that make Mali unique show us why this is the case and may also indicate one of the ways African countries can stand to similarly benefit. Small farmers have a relatively powerful position in Mali.[68] In 2007, Mali's farmers launched a campaign aimed at reducing AGRA's influence in Africa called, "Agroecological alternatives to AGRA."[69] Furthermore, Mali has large swarths of uncultivated land and therefore did not face the problem of crop displacement even though maize was favored in the programs AGRA was able to support in the country.[70]

We may be able to attribute Mali's success to her rejection of AGRA rather than its adoption of the scheme. In 2010 Mali passed a law protecting farmer's seed sovereignty.[71] Importantly, Mali seemed to recognize women's outsized contribution to

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[65] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa"

[66] McGoey, Linsey, *No Such Thing as a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy,* ch. 7

[67] Wise, Timothy A."Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.",

[68] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa"

[69] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al."False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa"

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

agriculture with their Agricultural Orientation Law which was meant to forge farmers at the center of agricultural development in the country.[72] The AOL has a provision specifically targeting women and vulnerable groups by affirming their rights to land ownership and equal access to agricultural resources.[73] This is particularly important in Mali as women make up the majority of economic activity in the agribusiness sector.[74] Mali recognized the importance of farmer sovereignty, women's involvement in the agricultural sector, and only ceding limited land to monoculture cereal crops. Incorporating women into the scheme of development is well known to have positive results.

Another scheme to pay attention to is the potential of agroecology or agroforestry. Agroecology is the practice of integrating agriculture into the existing ecology of the area.[75] It is the antithesis to high input and chemically intensive agricultural practices with a focus on natural methods.[76] For example, biologically based pest control, using compost and manure instead of commercial fertilizers, and the practice of planting multiple different crops in a similar area.[77] These practices can

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[72] Diallo, Asmao. 2022. "Land Ownership, and Women in the Agribusiness Sector in Mali: The Agricultural Orientation Law and its Implications for Women." *Journal of Liberal Arts and Humanities* (Doshisha University) 1 (3): 16-24.

[73] Diallo, Asmao. Land Ownership, and Women in the Agribusiness Sector in Mali: The Agricultural Orientation Law and its Implications for Women."

[74] Diallo, Asmao. Land Ownership, and Women in the Agribusiness Sector in Mali: The Agricultural Orientation Law and its Implications for Women."

[75] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2022. *Agroecology Knowledge Hub.* Accessed Dec 11, 2022. https://www.fao.org/agroecology/overview/en/.

[76] Mkindi, Abdallah, et al.“False Promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa”

[77] Wise, Timothy A."Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa."

preserve soil integrity and reduce the costs involved with otherwise input-intensive techniques purported by AGRA.

In the ever-reddening face of climate change, countries, especially in Africa need to focus on resiliency and innovative ways to survive an increasingly unpredictable world. In Kenya, agroforestry has shown to increase crop resiliency in the face of drought and other ecological challenges like flooding.[78] In terms of benefits in facing drought and flooding, respondents in areas of Kenya using agroforestry said they were still able to get food and income from the fruit of the trees.[79] From one farmer in Burat, as "[by] planting trees in a line, it prevents the soil from being swept away by water."[80] Agroforestry can have indirect impacts on resiliency like providing alternative food sources for cattle during drought or providing timber for building or to sell.[81] This increases the household capital in circumstances that would otherwise reduce it. Furthermore, it could alter people's perception of their resiliency in the face of ecological or climate challenges. People were more likely to *feel* more adaptive and thus be more likely to continue that practice as people behave in accordance with their perceptions.[82]

An angle that AGRA seemed to consistently miss in its goals is irrigation especially for small-scale stakeholders. For whatever reason, strengthening irrigation systems is not at the forefront of AGRA's efforts. Cooperative irrigation schemes play an

[78] Quandt, Amy, Neufeldt, Henry, and J. Terrence McCabe. 2017. "The role of agroforestry in building livelihood resilience to floods and drought in semiarid Kenya." *Ecology & Society* 22 (3): https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol22/iss3/art10

[79] Quandt, Amy, et al. "The role of agroforestry in building livelihood resilience to floods and drought in semiarid Kenya."

[80] Ibid, p. 10

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

outsized role in small-scale farmers in Tanzania.[83] Most of these small farmers did not use their own capital, but instead used the cooperative.[84] As demonstrated earlier, smaller farmers may struggle with upfront costs, and this will be especially true for intensive irrigation systems. Cooperative irrigation schemes simply mean irrigation systems that are run by cooperative potentially with limited state regulation.[85] Farmers would join these cooperatives for the irrigation, but also for upstart capital and even advice. Farmers a part of these schemes increased their production and subsequently increased their income and, perhaps more importantly, the community as a whole benefitted due to the increase in social services.[86] Of course, water is a scarce resource in Tanzania and so the farmers and cooperative leaders did face challenges, but overall, it increased community power and that can continue if more attention is paid.[87] If AGRA wanted to decrease poverty and specifically target small scale farmers, they should be investing in cooperative-run irrigation systems in rural Africa instead of attempting to connect Africa's farmers to a globalized market they cannot compete in.

What the examples in this section have in common is the grassroots aspect: that there is use within the community and the local ecology. The fact that AGRA is ignoring these alternatives leads us to believe that their goals are more commercial than philanthropic. Even if well-intentioned, the development goals have been shown to be too ambitious and the organizational ties to companies with missions antithetical to the

[83] Chuan-hong, Wandella Amos Benjamin, and Miao Wang. 2021. "The contribution of cooperative irrigation scheme to poverty reduction in Tanzania." *Journal of Integrative Agriculture* 20 (4): 953-963.
[84] Chuan-hong, et. al. "The contribution of cooperative irrigation scheme to poverty reduction in Tanzania."
[85] Chuan-hong, et. al. "The contribution of cooperative irrigation scheme to poverty reduction in Tanzania."
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

interests of small-scale farmer they purport to want to help are alarming. It is reminiscent of the imposing presence of Bretton Woods organizations who legislate their will onto poorer countries with strings attached to their loans and aid while following the interests of wealthy states. A foundation with the amount of power and resources at the disposal of the Gates Foundation does not have much to be accountable for, and thus, it has imposed its will onto African countries effectively. There are ways forward for African people to reject the outsized influence in favor of policies that work for smaller farmers and to build resiliency in the wake of climate change. There is a way forward, but it may not involve the Gates Foundation. If it does, it needs the same constraints we assign to states to avoid violating sovereignty of other states, and, importantly, it must involve the farmers and stakeholders they intend to help at every step.

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