

BILL GATES' BIG MONEY ATTEMPTS TO RULE AFRICAN AGRICULTURE

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) has become a major player in international aid for agriculture. In 2015 alone, the Foundation distributed over [\\$450 million](#) in grants for agricultural development globally. The BMGF is best known for using its money to push for an agricultural “Green Revolution” in Africa, based on the use of synthetic fertilizers and patented seeds. This agenda largely benefits the agribusiness corporations that dominate [input markets](#) and global agricultural value chains. The Gates Foundation’s trust [invests](#) in the same companies it serves through its development programs, including Monsanto, BASF, Coca Cola, PepsiCo, Unilever, and many others.

Between 2006 and 2015, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation allocated over [\\$424 million](#) to the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). Based on the model of the 1970s Green Revolution in South Asia and Mexico, AGRA aims to increase agricultural productivity through promoting the use of hybrid seeds and synthetic fertilizers.

BILL & MELINDA
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→ **AGRA promotes the corporate takeover of African agriculture.** AGRA was created in 2006 through a partnership between the BMGF and the Rockefeller Foundation. Its flagship [Program for Africa’s Seed Systems](#), which supports the production and adoption of so-called “improved” varieties of seeds, received \$168 million from the BMGF, while the [Soil Health Program](#), focused on fertilizers, was allocated \$164.5 million. AGRA also seeks to [influence the revision of seed laws](#) in Africa and manages some of the BMGF grants to [African seed trade associations](#) championing the interests of private seed companies. AGRA’s push to introduce plant variety and intellectual property rights laws may criminalize the traditional saving, use, and exchange of seed varieties that many African farmers rely on for the supply and breeding of adapted varieties, while making farmers dependent on commercial seeds.

→ **Research projects on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) target the African market.** The BMGF has provided at least \$85 million to the Water Efficient Maize for Africa project, a research collaboration with Monsanto that undertook field trials in Kenya and seeks to [facilitate the acceptance of GM crops](#) in Africa. The BMGF also granted over [\\$100 million](#) to the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), which coordinates research on biotechnology and is a powerful advocate of GMOs on the continent. Several BMGF [grants](#) are specifically geared towards the AATF’s advocacy in favor of agricultural biotechnology.

→ **Leveraging “expertise conditionality” in agriculture.** At a World Bank [panel discussion](#) in spring 2016, Bill Gates blamed developing countries’ regulatory systems for deterring investment and advocated for “expertise conditionality” to drive their development choices. This vision is the basis for the BMGF’s support to the World Bank’s [Enabling the Business of Agriculture](#), a project launched in 2013 to benchmark countries according to how they facilitate doing business in agriculture. In 2015, [over 12 percent](#) of the BMGF’s agriculture-related grants (\$56 million) went to policy and advocacy programs, indicating the Foundation’s intent to influence the narrative around food and agriculture development. With a personal wealth [surpassing most African countries’ GDP](#), Bill Gates’ pro-business aid is likely to suppress the voices of farmers in African agriculture strategies.

For more information, read the Oakland Institute’s report: [The Unholy Alliance, Five Western Donors Shape a Pro-Corporate Agenda For African Agriculture](#).