

AGRA Funders

25 March, 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: A Letter to Funders of AGRA, Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa

Greetings from the Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute, SAFCEI. On 18 May 2021, SAFCEI sent an Open Letter, from 500 faith leaders in Africa, to the Gates Foundation about our concerns about the activities of AGRA. To date we have had no response. Independent research by Timothy A Wise (July 2020 Failing Africa's Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa) and the latest evaluation report of AGRA, that was commissioned by AGRA donors and done by Mathematica, on the Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (February 28, 2022) have both largely concluded that AGRA has failed in its remit. In summary, large amounts of resources by donors are being invested into a process that has not been shown to benefit the small holder farmers nor the environment.

Timothy A. Wise found that "these data suggest that AGRA and other Green Revolution programs have thus far failed to deliver the promised productivity boom in AGRA countries." Similarly, the AGRA / Mathematica evaluation concludes "These findings suggest that AGRA did not meet its headline goal of increased incomes and food security for 9 million smallholders, despite reaching over 10 million smallholders through its systems development work."

SAFCEI consulted with farmers and researchers, and listened to recommendations they have given on farming methodologies, and their findings on the impact of AGRA and shared this with our African faith leader networks. As a result, we feel compelled to write to you who have funded AGRA in the past, and currently, for the good of our people and the environment. We send the open letter attached to extend our call to your organization to pay heed to voices of leadership from the continent and reconsider your support for AGRA, which is not enhancing sustainable livelihoods in its current form. This issue is even more urgent as we in the global South face impacts of climate change in large part brought about by the historic and current actions of industrialization by the North.

Women subsistence farmers form the backbone of agricultural practice, nutritional diversity and the health of their communities in Africa. Appropriate support for these farmers should be a key objective of any agricultural inputs in this region. As the Mathematica evaluation pointed out, "Farmers who adopted improved inputs and experienced yield increases were typically younger, male, and relatively wealthier.... productivity and income gains were also concentrated among these



relatively high-resource farmers." This finding directly contradicts the stated goals of AGRA and its donors to ensure that their assistance programs benefit and empower women.

We would appreciate an engagement with you and your team to discuss our findings, and to explore how development and aid agencies could demonstrate a commitment to incorporating wisdom from other knowledge systems, including those located in small scale farmer networks, faith communities and civil society. We will engage with elected officials in countries whose governments support AGRA to seek a shift in such funding to more effective and sustainable practices.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "fdegasparis", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Francesca de Gasparis

Executive Director