

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2022

ALLIANCE FOR A GREEN REVOLUTION IN AFRICA STILL FAILING AFRICA'S FARMERS*Donor-funded evaluation shows "AGRA did not meet its headline goal" to reduce hunger*

Cambridge, Mass.—A new donor-commissioned evaluation of the controversial Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) reveals serious shortcomings in the 15-year-old initiative's efforts to "[catalyze a farming revolution in Africa](#)." Today, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) published [an analysis of the evaluation](#).

As the headline coverage in development media outlet Devex stated, "[AGRA has failed to improve Africa's food security, report finds](#)." While noting the range of "mixed results" reported in the evaluation, the article highlighted the key finding of importance to all who want to understand the impacts of this billion-dollar initiative on Africa's small-scale farmers: "AGRA did not meet its headline goal of increased incomes and food security for 9 million smallholders."

The new evaluation confirms many of these findings of IATP Senior Advisor Timothy A. Wise's previous assessment of [AGRA in 2020](#), which found that the initiative was "failing on its own terms," falling far short of its early goals to double yields and incomes for 30 million small-scale farming families while halving food insecurity.

Among the findings that should raise concerns for private and bilateral donors to AGRA's Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA), quoting from the evaluation:

- **"PIATA improved maize yields in Ethiopia, Ghana, and Nigeria, but not in Tanzania, Burkina Faso, or Kenya."** Maize is AGRA's most heavily supported crop, so the failure to achieve yield growth in half the countries studied is alarming.
- **"PIATA's farmer-facing interventions had modest impacts on farmers' adoption of improved inputs."** Despite heavy promotion and generous government subsidies, farmers are not finding the Green Revolution package of commercial seeds and fertilizers a risk worth taking.
- **"Across these six countries, only farmers in Burkina Faso experienced improved maize sales as a result of PIATA."** As Wise points out, this raises serious questions about the Green Revolution "theory of change." Even when yields rose, they failed to translate into rising incomes for farmers.
- **"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."** As Wise notes, "This finding directly contradicts the stated goals of USAID and other bilateral donors to ensure that their assistance programs benefit and empower women."
- **"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."** In fact, Wise's study showed that even before the pandemic the number of severely hungry people had *increased* by 31% in AGRA's focus countries and jumped by 50% in Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole since AGRA was founded in 2006.
- **"AGRA's next strategy could formally recognize that agricultural technologies and practices—such as fertilizer use and rice cultivation—can negatively impact environmental conditions and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions."** Evaluators fault AGRA on a wide range of environmentally damaging impacts, including a lack of attention to helping farmers adapt to climate change.
- **"AGRA surveys are currently not suited for rigorous impact analysis."** Evaluators offer many criticisms of the initiative's poor monitoring and evaluation methods.

- **“PIATA was successful in developing key policy reforms, mobilizing flagships and partnerships, and reaching farmers with extension and seeds,” and helped “incentivize private sector engagement in the production and delivery of improved seeds’ in some countries.”** But as Wise points out, these are intermediate objectives to further the goals of improving farmers’ productivity, incomes and food security. If they are failing to produce those results, they may be part of the Green Revolution model, which is failing to “catalyze a farming revolution in Africa.”

Carried out by consulting firm Mathematica, the evaluation was funded by AGRA’s primary sponsor, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, on behalf of other lead donors in AGRA’s Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA): the U.K. Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office; the Rockefeller Foundation; the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. It includes a summary of findings, a statistical appendix and AGRA’s formal responses to the findings, [all available publicly](#).

AGRA’s donors should heed calls by [African civil society](#) and [faith leaders](#) to reconsider their support for such an unsuccessful and unaccountable initiative. These grassroots leaders are asking donors to shift their funding to agroecology and other low-cost, low-input systems. Such approaches have shown far better results, raising yields across a range of food crops, increasing productivity over time as soil fertility improves, increasing incomes and reducing risk for farmers by cutting input costs, and improving food security and nutrition from a diverse array of crops.

###

Based in Minneapolis with offices in Washington, D.C., and Berlin, Germany, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. To learn more, visit: www.iatp.org.