

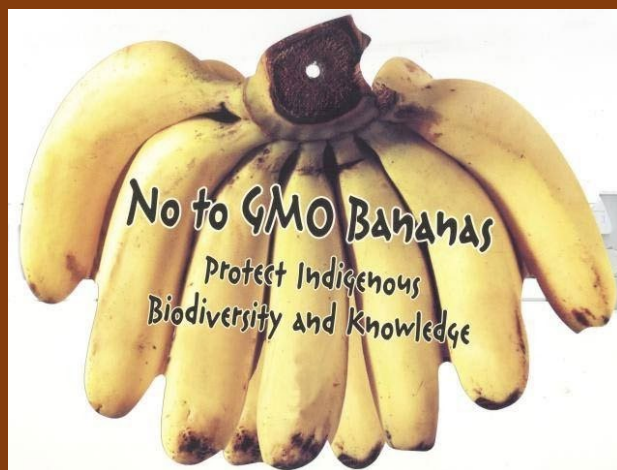
CAMPAIGN - 'NO GMO BANANA'

Navdanya International - Seed Freedom Global Campaign

The No GMO Banana international campaign was launched by Navdanya and partners Mantasa, to stop the controversial project of Dr. James Dale of Queensland University of Technology, Australia, beneficiary of 15 million dollars in investment from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. A petition was sent to the Prime Minister of India urging the cancelation of the project and agreement between the Department of Biotechnology and the University of Queensland in Australia, and to instead use the money to support a national movement of community and kitchen gardens in women's hands¹.

After a meeting with farmers in Kediri, Indonesia² who highlighted their yellow and red bananas, Navdanya and the Indonesian activists decided to form a joint project to research Vit A rich indigenous bananas and explore from where the developers of GMO bananas got the vit A traits, leading to the GMO Banana Biopiracy research and campaign. They found that the beta-carotene rich traits had been pirated from an indigenous Micronesian banana. This led to the international Stop Banana Biopiracy campaign³ and to an Open Letter to Dr James Dale at QUT, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Convention on Biological Diversity⁴.

News also spread of banana feeding trials using students from Iowa State University (ISU) as guinea pigs, also funded by the Gates Foundation. In addition to the



ethical violations involved in Biopiracy of Banana, these unapproved human trials also were clearly another serious ethical violation, prompting graduate students at Iowa State to stage a silent protest in October 2014⁵, though the University refused to engage publicly or respond to issues raised by the students. The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), Dr. Wendy White from Iowa State University and the Human

¹ Navdanya. "GMO Banana Petition – Letter to Prime Minister of India." *Seed Freedom*, October 5, 2014. <https://seedfreedom.info/gmo-banana-petition-letter-to-prime-minister-of-india/>

² Mantasa. "OUR SEEDS, OUR FUTURE: Strengthening Indonesia's Food Sovereignty." *Seed Freedom*, August 14, 2014. <https://seedfreedom.info/events/our-seeds-our-future-strengthening-indonesias-food-sovereignty/>

³ "No Gmo Banana Campaign." *Seed Freedom*. Last modified October 2, 2014. <https://seedfreedom.info/campaign/no-gmo-banana-campaign/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Fralely Lecture Opposition – Iowa, USA." *Seed Freedom*, November 11, 2014. <https://seedfreedom.info/fraley-lecture-opposition-iowa-usa/>

Institutional Review Board of Iowa State University subsequently submitted an open letter and petition to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation expressing fierce opposition to the trials ISU⁶ while ISU graduate students dispatched a petition with 57,309 signatures⁶ to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences with AGRA Watch members delivering the same petition to the headquarters of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, Washington. In April 2016, the petition was delivered to Dr Dale⁷ at QUT in Australia, by Dr Vandana Shiva⁷, along with the above-mentioned Open Letter by the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa. The Indian campaign

In addition to succeeding in stopping the Gates GMO banana from being imposed on India, these international campaigns against GMO Bananas⁸ served to connect the issues of GMOs, Biopiracy, and the ethical violations of human trials by connecting movements in Asia, Africa, Australia and the US. It helped expose the colonialist mindset behind the project and the multiple human rights issues connected with it. The campaign also showed the absurdity of GMO bananas when there are so many more effective solutions to issues of nutritional and iron deficiencies



No GMO Banana Campaign – Navdanya / Seed Freedom, 2014

⁶ Galvis, Ana. "Over 57,000 Express Concern with Human Feeding Trials of GMO Bananas." *Food First*. Last modified November 2, 2016. <https://foodfirst.org/over-57000-express-concern-with-human-feeding-trials-of-gmo-bananas/>

⁷ Breasely, Adam, April 24, 2016, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10156904386995046&set=a.10150258487220046&type=1&theat>

⁸ Tag: Gmobanana, Seed Freedom, <https://seedfreedom.info/tag/gmobanana/>