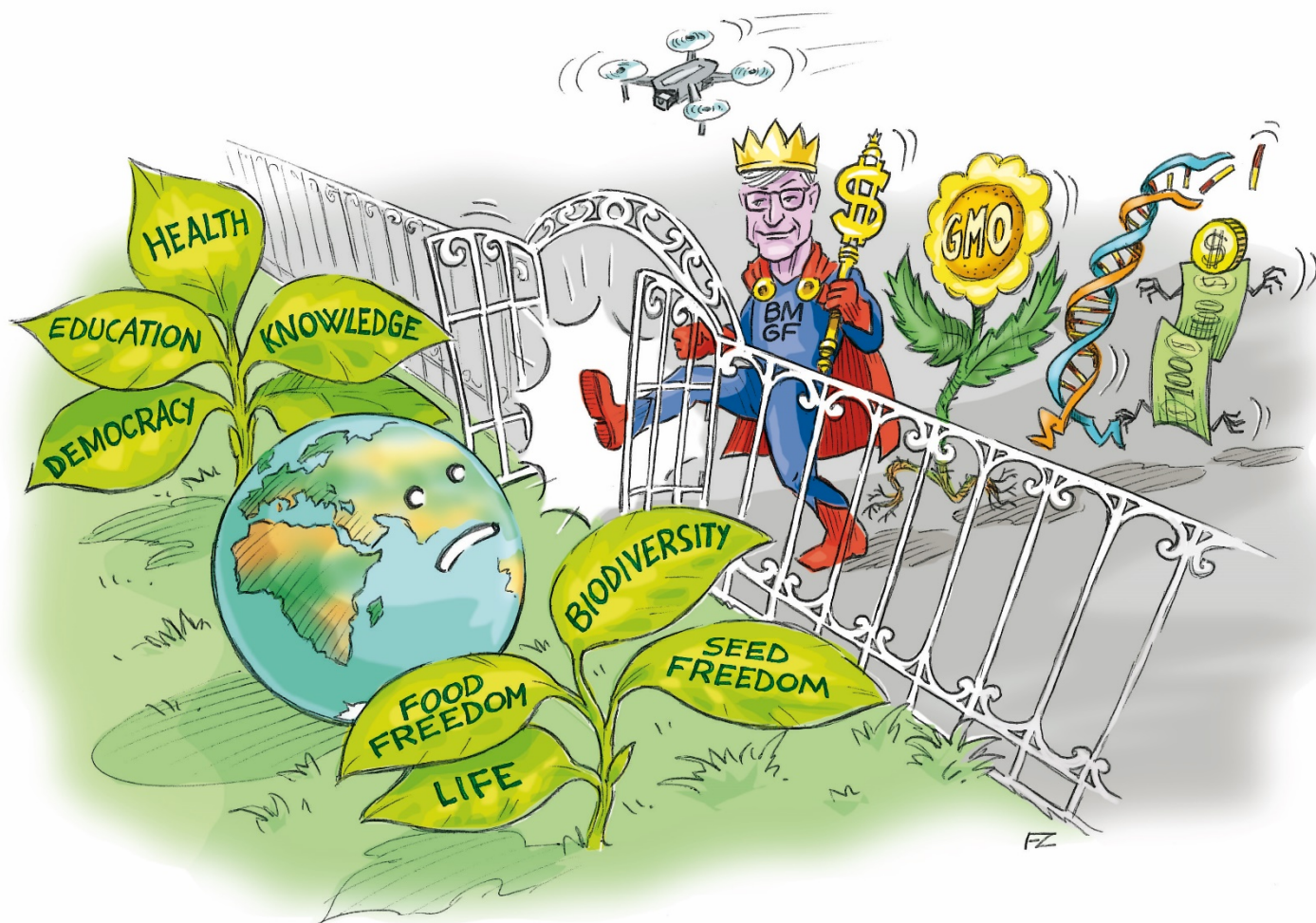


# Gates to a Global Empire



**OVER SEED, FOOD, HEALTH, KNOWLEDGE  
...AND THE EARTH**

A GLOBAL CITIZENS' REPORT

## Report Synthesis

Coordinated by



## **Gates to a Global Empire**

### **...over Seed, Food, Health, Knowledge and The Earth**

A Global Citizens' Report

#### **Report Synthesis**

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Bill Gates, as one of the two wealthiest people on the planet with a net worth of nearly 117 billion dollars, has now become the most powerful philanthropist in modern history. Gates first became well known for making technology available on a massive scale through his popularization of the at-home PC through his company Microsoft. Recently, after taking a step back from Microsoft, Gates has taken to reinventing himself as a benevolent philanthropist who uses his technologic influence and private market savvy to solve the world's most pressing problems through his and his wife's foundation: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He is now seen as a coy, generous 'impatient optimist' looking to put his money to use helping the world's poor. But before his full PR makeover and after multiple antitrust lawsuits, Gates held the reputation of a ruthless tech giant, out to strongarm collaborators, wholly squash competitors, and clear the way from the monopolistic Microsoft empire. A strategy now being exported to influence the global development agenda into alignment with his very specific interests.

Arising from the neoliberal context of both post-structural adjustment policies which left the states of the Global South atrophied, and the steadily decreasing funds to international institutions after the end of the Cold War in the Global North, the door was left wide open for Gates to reinvigorate the international arena as the generous provider of much needed capital. But this capital is anything but pure. Once one pierces through the thick PR fog, a pattern starts to emerge of ruthless consolidation of the development agenda and programme. A development strategy reliant on an aggressively imposed consensus through direct influence over all actors of the global development juggernaut- including international institutions, university and international science and research centers, private corporations, and states- and the mentality that any problem can (and should only) be solved through technology, innovation, engineering, and the rules of the private market. This applies for all areas touched on by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, from areas such as food and agriculture, to health, climate change, education, and the media.

The pattern usually goes something like this: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, through their funded media partners, raise an issue of their interest to the global agenda with a proposed technology solution. Once that issue has gained enough traction, they begin to provide seed funding in the form of grants to start-up companies, research institutions and research departments of private companies in order to develop the technology that is intended to solve the problem raised. Sometimes (most of the time) this comes alongside government

grants in the countries where the initiatives are launched. All the while, Gates' initiatives separate from the foundation, or those they fund in international institutions, begin lobbying and lubricating the regulation process for ease of implementation of this technology and its accompanying strategy. Then, once those two steps are done, commercialization and implementation of the product or technology begins to take place, taken over by private companies who also invested in the start-up or research center. In this way the Gates' foundation directly shapes public discourse, steers the imagination toward only his proposed solution, and opens up remote markets for private companies with state subsidies. This is all thinly veiled behind the rhetoric of a humanitarian, development cause, such as increasing income for small farmers, or providing solutions to climate change, providing moral justification to his monopolization of global development for personal technological development. But as this report details, this consolidation of global development has huge implications. As we shall see, chained to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's million-dollar grants are private corporations and private market interests, the negative feedback loops of a technological solutionism, and the further rotting of legitimacy for international institutions.

This work strategy effectively accelerates the technology research to product pipeline which benefits only the largest private corporations who hold patents on those technologies or have the ability to market them. As we shall see, this notion of blind technological acceleration as the only solutions to the world's problems holds a complete blind-spot for past failures, or completely unsafe, or untested solutions. It is a mentality of technological determinism or die. The fact which is completely ignored is that these tech solutions almost always create feedback loops that worsen the original problem.

Thanks to the Coronavirus crisis, the rot that existed in our current world structures came further into evidence. Compounded with an already ongoing climate and ecological crisis, and inequalities, we found ourselves at the boiling point of multiple pre-existing world problems. This makes it extremely tempting to look for immediate solutions to these crises frantically, and blindly. But this technological solutionist mentality that technology will be able to single handedly solve complex social problems to create a utopian future, relies on a heavy denial and forgetting of how technology has created and shaped these problems to begin with. The rhetoric of constant 'progress' and 'innovation' requires the war-like mentality of single targets, and superficial reactionary responses which render past mistakes invisible and past failures irrelevant. This leads to the accumulation

of negative feedback loops of endlessly trying to solve the problem that technological and industrial solutions created in the first place, leaving these unsolved structural problems like a ghost who keeps haunting, just this time with a vengeance.

Throughout this entire report, we see these patterns repeating over and over again, and how this technocratic solutionism, powered by an unholy (or blind) alliance between the science and technology institutions, states, and big capital, are embodied by the Gates' Foundation and dangerously put into accelerated action through a philanthropic development. Each piece of the puzzle being revealed in international collaboration of this citizen's report.

Nowhere is this denial more evident than in Gates' agriculture and gene editing initiatives. Something only possible through his eroding of legitimacy of international agreements such as the Convention of Biological Diversity and the Nagoya protocol, as well as his increased funding and consolidation of CGIAR. All done to have access to the genetic information of the world's seeds; something irreplaceably necessary for his GMO and gene drive horizons. The report begins by establishing the mechanisms for this control over seed, allowing us to also peer into the future vision of food and agriculture for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

### **Control over Seed**

The "key trigger of agricultural transformation is a conducive policy environment" states the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation website. One way the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation secures this "conductive policy environment" is through their direct influence over international research institutions. Such is the case with the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Central to the Gates Foundation's agricultural strategy is the increasing of funding the CGIAR as a whole, as currently the foundation provides more than any other funder at about 105 million dollars a year. This plan also includes the merging of the various, currently independent CGIAR centers into one, directed by a single board. Our next section titled **One Empire Over Seeds, Biodiversity and Knowledge**, starts with Vandana Shiva's article, **One Empire Over Seed: Control Over the World's Seed Banks**, which denounces the implications of the Gates foundation's intentions to both centralize and increase funds to the CGIAR system, as a move to further consolidate the Gates Foundation's power over agricultural research. But why is Gates looking to consolidate the 15 largest seed collections in the world? Dr. Shiva also shows us how, through funding global initiatives such as

one called Diversity Seek (DivSeek), they are looking to copy all the genetic information of the seeds in storage. Effectively, this allows them to take out patents on the genetic information collected, resulting in biopiracy through seed patents. A move as old as giant agribusiness.

Where this gets put into operation is in each individual CGIAR center, such as the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines. With their funding, and hence directing of research, they influence and co-opt the National Agricultural Research and Extension systems of governments in the IRRI network. Chito Medina, Masipag Scientist and former Masipag Coordinator, Philippines, goes into these details of how the Gates' foundation now provides up to 15% of the total annual budget for IRRI, as well as being the second largest donor to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system, of which IRRI is a part in his article **BMG Foundation and IRRI - Corporate Hijack of Rice Science**. To name a few their grants have included the funding of: genetically modified Golden Rice; the 'Realizing Increased Photosynthetic Efficiency' project of trying to increase the photosynthesis capability of crops; the Stress Tolerant Rice for Africa and South Asia (STRASA) project focusing on development of seed systems tolerant to drought, submergence, salinity, cold, and biotic stress; Swarna-Sub1 Rice which is meant to survive water submergence and salinity; and the Accelerated Genetic Gain in Rice in South Asia and Africa (AGGRi) Alliance, and so on. This follows in line with IRRI's history, since its founding by the Rockefeller Foundation, of promoting the Green Revolution through genetic modification of rice, the collection of native rice varieties, all done for the interests of private corporations through their 'commissioned' research. In the end, causing an erosion of crop diversity, and privatization of farmers' seeds.

### **Biopiracy – The Plunder of Biodiversity and Knowledge**

In the article **A Treaty to Protect Our Agricultural Biodiversity** by José Esquinas-Alcazar, former Secretary of the FAO's Intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, covers the complications found with Digital Sequence Information (DSI) and benefit sharing, especially around seed resources in light of the International Treaty for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. A treaty which protects farmers rights, regulated genetic resources and biodiversity. Upon a follow up meeting, DSI and its benefit sharing has become a new area of contention as DSI is a biotechnology which can effectively scan the genetic information of a genome, allowing for plants' genetic material to be uploaded into a digital database, allowing access of plant genetic information



without the physical plant. Esquinas-Alcazar describes the need for international biodiversity resource sharing and the potential blocks to such inter-country interdependence due to private company interests.

This can only be possible with the degradation of previously established international conventions on protection of biodiversity and farmers rights. In the next piece by Aidé Jiménez-Martínez, MA in Sciences, Director of Regulations of Biosafety, Biodiversity and Genetic Resources, SEMARNAT; and Adelita San Vicente Tello, Doctor in Agroecology, Director General of the Primary Sector and Natural Resources, SEMARNAT, Mexico, titled, ***Beyond Green Gold: Megadiverse Countries as Providers of Genetic Resources and Digital Sequence Information***, we see how over the last five years, business sector interests have increasingly grown in the areas of biodiversity for the purposes of developing biotechnology further. This was marked by their increased presence in a series of COP conferences in Cancun in 2016, on the Convention of Biological Diversity, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosecurity of Biotechnology and the Nagoya Protocol. Here the shift of the mercantile use of nature and her genetic diversity is of concern especially for the topic of unrestricted access to Digital Sequence Information (DSI), This type of unrestricted access to DSI, where anyone would be able to download the material, and the lack of benefit sharing with the megadiverse countries from which such genetic material comes from, is of special concern as millions of DSIs already exist, are available for patenting and have no need for the physical source of the genetic information. A treat which is fundamentally in violation of, or at least jeopardizing the Convention of Biological Diversity, and the Nagoya Protocol.

### **One Empire over Agriculture**

We begin to see the history of how the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation got involved in the food and agriculture arena through Journalist and director of the global health program of Society for International Development (SID), Nicoletta Dentico's piece ***Bill & Melinda Gates: the dystopia of the green revolution in Africa***. In 2007, starting with money from the real estate speculation bubble, Warren Buffet was able to shelter his bloated millions into a new initiative launched by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, alongside the Rockefeller Foundation: the Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa or AGRA. Dentico shows us how, in using the argument of Africa being developmentally 'behind' due to not enough access to technology, poor country infrastructure, and soil depletion, Gates, alongside private companies, has worked to completely redesign all levels of the African food system in favor of chemical, agribusiness monopolies of GMOs and



digital agriculture. Veiled by a rhetoric of decreasing malnutrition, chronic hunger, and poverty, Gates sees the only solution to this 'production deficit' to be the market ideologies of the Green Revolution, regardless of past devastation caused by these chemical methods. As shown in great detail by Dentico, this is all done through a two-fold strategy of financial lubrication of bare-bones public institutions with conditional grants as well as through a series of Gates' Foundation affiliated organizations who actively give policy recommendations to the African countries in question. Such organizations as, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) who promotes food fortification in the form of GMOs; The African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) who instigates University Research into GMOs while negotiating holding for patents for multinationals promoting food fortification and digitalization of Agriculture. These organizations, along with all of their projects and subsidiaries act as a multipronged manipulation of regional and country policy by providing political suggestions from the 'data' collected. All very much contrary to local resistance and local agroecology practices, which Dentico also shows are completely disregarded in favor of a top-down expertise, with little to no indigenous participation.

A model which Timothy Wise, Senior Advisor at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), shows has completely failed African countries, in his piece **Gates Foundation's Green Revolution Fails Africa's Farmers**. Acting as a general evaluation, which was never done by AGRA, of its proposed 2020 goals of doubling productivity and income for small farmers in 13 African countries, Timothy Wise shows once again how this lack of accountability hides the repeated failure of the Green Revolution. As a whole Wise's research shows how the objectives set out by AGRA in its founding have neither been met or have worsened the situation in some countries. For example, after almost 15 years there is no evidence of significant productivity increases and in terms of people suffering from extreme hunger, there has been a 30% increase in AGRA countries. Poverty levels have also either hovered over the same level or increased since the 2007 creation of the organization. Something very problematic when AGRA has both consumed so many resources and worked to reshape African agriculture to be dependent on costly technology-driven, external inputs. But this comes as no surprise, as we have seen how the original Green Revolution has both failed and caused more negative consequences in Asia, Latin America, the US and now Africa.

This amnesia and denial of these failures becomes evident with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's new initiative AgOne. Launched in January 2020 as part of Gate's climate change initiatives group, the Gates Global Commission on

Adaptation's year of climate action, AgOne gives a new technological makeover to the same strategies employed in other Gates' agriculture initiatives. This means a new technologic upgrade of data mining farmers through sensor technology, CRISPR-Cas9 gene drive technology for seeds and living plants, new GMOs, artificial intelligence predictive models and so on. In this chapter, **Gates AgOne and the Recolonization of Agriculture** written by the Navdanya Team, shows how Gates' alliances with companies like Bayer, Monsanto, Syngenta, Corteva are working on a new phase of digitization of agriculture, building on Green Revolution methods. This critique of AgOne goes to show how the rhetoric used to justify the creation of the initiative is completely out of touch with any true experience of the first Green Revolution's detrimental impacts. Contrary to what Bill Gates might think, agroecological food systems are overall more productive, more resilient to climate change, and provide greater livelihood security.

Fernando Cabaleiro, Attorney at Law, of the Argentine organization Naturaleza de Derechos, shows us in **Gates AgOne in Argentina** a more close-up look at how this same AgOne initiative is attempting to ingress into Latin America via Argentina. There taken by the name of 'AgTech', Cabaleiro covers how this Gate's driven initiative is a convergence of big agribusiness players and the Inter-American Institute of Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). An initiative that has been setting the stage for the digitalization of agriculture for the last two years through a IICA and Microsoft alliance using the internet of things, artificial intelligence, data mining. Fernando takes us through how these schemes have nothing to do with bettering agriculture for a changing climate or an increasing population, and have everything to do with accumulation of capital, economic concentration, and appropriation of genetic resources and how they plan to achieve this. A process that in the end further dehumanizes food, agriculture at the expense of already suffering farmers, public health and country regulation. A theme that repeats itself with almost all of Bill Gates' 'development' interventions.

### **Promoting Failed GMOs**

In Vandana Shiva's **The Golden Rice Hoax** she shows the history of the push for Golden Rice, a GMO rice, turned golden from biofortified beta-carotene, funded through IRRI by the Gates Foundation. The rice has been promoted since 2000 as a possible solution to child blindness. Vandana Shiva shows us how this is based in ignorance, as a genetically modified rice strain is not necessary to provide vitamin A in Asia, as plenty of local varieties of vegetables provide ample amounts. This ignoring of biodiversity-based solutions to nutritional deficiencies is a

grave mistake, since in June 2018, the FDA concluded that Golden Rice does not meet its nutritional claims of providing enough daily beta-carotene. Shiva shows us how Gates' insistence with technological solutionism, eclipses the actual solutions to the proposed problems, while simultaneously creating new ones.

This biopiracy and insistence with false solutions of GM varieties lines up as Bill Gates has routinely expressed his full-fledged support of GMO seeds as 'necessary technical solutions' to agricultural development. This is where Gate's full denial of the problems, inefficiencies, and consequences of GMOs shines. This pattern is also repeated in the case of Bt Brinjal (or eggplant). Farida Akhter, founding Executive Director of UBINIG, Bangladesh, reveals in her piece ***Bt Brinjal: Alliance for Crooked Science & Corporate Lies*** how in Bangladesh has become the testing ground for Bt Brinjal through the Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II funded by Cornell who is funded by the Gates Foundation, and USAID in partnership with Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI). She exposes the false claims of BT brinjal proponents that Bt Brinjal has become popular with farmers both in cultivation and with the public in the markets, to show the success of the BT crop. Farida instead shows how the crop has in fact not been readily accepted by the people of Bangladesh and has failed in field use, in favor of native varieties, as well as in market sales. Showing how the corporations, with the Bt Brinjal patent and its proponents, actively lie in order to keep public discourse in their favor.

### **Gene Drives and Fake Food**

But why else are private interests, which very much include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation looking to privatize farmers seeds? Now, it is not just for the development of GMO varieties. ETC group's revealing piece lays out the extent to which Gates and the Foundation are implicated in the moulding, development, experiments, and application of gene drive technology under the guise of eradicating malaria in Africa. ***Driven to Exterminate: How Bill Gates Brought Gene Drive Extinction Technology into the World*** goes through the history of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation being the primary donors, following the US military group DARPA, in the development of gene drive technology- starting in 2003 with yeast enzymes, up through 2015 with the discovery of CRISPR, until now. A protein technology which marks the next phase of genetic manipulation. Gene drives are classified as a form of synthetic biology (synbio) or GMO 2.0 where living things are redesigned to have new abilities through redesigning their internal DNA structure or other components in a way that does exist in nature, to create synthetic

ingredients, chemicals, medicines, lab-grown food products, and organism genetic manipulation. All part of the “cellular food revolution”, something Vandana Shiva will reveal later on. As can be seen, this kind of gene drive technology has many implications, and although the technology is still in development, ETC explains how the rhetoric of eradicating malaria serves as the cover of developing this technology further. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have since been shaping public debate and media discussions on the subject through MIT media lab, Cornell Alliance, and their covert funding of Emerging Ag (a private PR firm who has rounded up and infiltrated with hired ‘experts’), in order to flood international institutions such as the UN CBD with planted ‘experts’ who favor of the Gates narrative. This sway of public debate allowed for the release of the first GM mosquito after the opening of labs in Burkina Faso, Mali and Uganda, in 2014. Mosquitos designed to make themselves extinct by rendering female infertility to be genetically passed down, allowing for the genetic manipulation to a species extinction.

Ali Tapsoba, President of Terre à Vie, Burkina Faso, a leader in the movements against the GM and gene drive mosquito, writes then, **Scientific Terrorism in Burkina Faso**. As a voice for all the protests around this movement in Burkina Faso, Tapsoba exposes the lack of consent or ethical considerations of releasing genetically modified mosquitoes by the Target Malaria project, a Gates funded initiative. He highlights the civil societies’ protest at the three-phase plan, or release of GM mosquitoes, and eventual release of gene drive mosquitoes. phase one of which has already been undertaken with GM mosquitoes being released in July 2019. Tapsoba explains how this project is riddled with unconsidered uncertainties of the environmental impact of the elimination of mosquitoes, as well as blatant ethical violations rendering Burkina Faso communities as guinea pigs for Gates’ experiments.

In this sense Gates comes in with a new ‘charity development’ where he appears as the grand benefactor ready to swoop in to save the poor of their miserable conditions, with technologies only he and his experts understand, but are generous enough to make available to the masses. But this charity business is exactly that, a white-saviorist business where the poor become ever dependent on the rich. In other words, Gates pushes through his philanthrocapitalism the further rotting of society and its further consolidation into private markets. As with each dollar given away as a grant, several other million are directly invested into these startups- whether by him, his personal investment funds, the foundation’s trust fund, or other private corporations with whom the foundation or Microsoft

have a privileged relationship with. Even though Gates appears to be giving away his money for a 'charitable cause', Gates' net-worth has been steadily increasing since he became a full-time philanthropist.

This becomes evident as the interest around the development of Crispr technology and synbio have many implications beyond just the genetic manipulation of whole mosquito populations for their extinction. Through Gates' personal investment fund, Breakthrough Energy Ventures, he and other fellow billionaires such as Jeff Bezos, Michael Bloomberg, Richard Branson, John Arnold and Saudi Prince Al Weed Bin Jala , fund biotech companies developing product alternatives with synbio technologies in the name of climate sustainability. Two examples of these products include Biomilq and Impossible Foods, who develop synthetically produced food alternatives such as synthetic breast milk and meat replacements, respectively. In **Lab Made Breast Milk and Lab Made Meat** by Vandana Shiva underlines again how through his investment and technological ventures, Gates has been, "Rushing to find substitutes for natural ecological processes and then patenting [as] has been the trend for making profits from life and its living processes..." seen through most private company interventions. Shiva shows us how clearly, the introduction of food alternatives is about patenting for profit, as well as returns on their initial investments. Not to mention that these fake foods are reliant on vast monocultures of pesticide laced GM soya and untested chemical processes. Once again working to eclipse true food for health.

### **Influence over Health, Media, and Education**

Throughout all of these pieces, 'humanitarian' efforts provide a thin veil to the real priorities of expanding corporate profits through market expansion and technological development. Working to create their own artificial world devoid of real-life processes. Since what is used to create this brave new artificial world, is a monopolistic business model, the Gates Foundation works to expand 'consensus' and a friendly regulatory environment to push his funded 'innovations' from lab to market as quickly as possible, regardless of the risks, consequences, or past failure. This manifests in an aggressive tactical assault on dissenting voices in the international debate, with little to no accountability of foundation projects and initiatives. In effort to reach this consensus and 'friendly regulatory environment' he funds everything to align to his interests, from media coverage, research, universities, start-ups, development programmes and projects, research initiatives at international institutions, and government programs. As shown, often co-investing with other giant businesses such as agribusiness, the fossil fuel industry, the

pharmaceutical industry, Big Tech and so on.

In the article ***The Philanthropic Monopoly of Bill and Melinda Gates*** Nicoletta Dentico Goes over the history of how the Bill and Melinda Gates Empire ensued and subsequently spread to monopolize global health. Starting with the financial pre-conditions that gave rise to the money the Foundation has at its disposal- including public funds, tax avoidance and bloated investment funds. This is reflected in the structure of the Bill and Melinda Gates Trust Fund which is run by Warren Buffet and holds investment assets in companies' whose work is contrary to the development goals of the foundation, such as Walgreens, Kraft Foods, Coca Cola and so on. She details how his philanthropic style is akin to the vicious monopolistic methods executed at Microsoft, forming a tandem relationship of the foundation opening the door to new country's markets for Microsoft and other privileged private companies. Effectively working to spread its huge financial influence on international organization, media, medium to low income countries and research institutions. The place where this work strategy first manifested was with the Bill and Melinda Gates health initiatives, starting in 1998 with the Bill and Melinda Gates Children's Vaccine Programme and the anti-polio vaccine program. Soon after, this initiative gave way to GAVI- the Global alliance for Vaccine Immunizations which marked the beginning of unraveling public institution multilateralism in favor of a public-private model. The gradual decreases in funding of international health institutions since the end of the Cold War, have left the Gates with ample maneuvering space to put global health issues back on the table, through a generous injection of funds. This is evident in the case of the WHO, for whom, the Gates Foundation proves nearly 20% of the funds necessary for their staff, serving to merge the interests of the WHO with those of the Gates Foundation. Dentico states, "[Gates] created an increasingly complex and diversified constellation of public-private initiatives to 'harness advances in science and technology to save lives in developing countries', which allowed him to interface comprehensively with the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, and international institutions, formalizing public-private partnerships as the central model of global health."

The other area necessary for influence is the scientific research establishments, for example Cornell University. In the ***Messengers of Gates' Agenda: How the Cornell Alliance Spreads Disinformation and Discredits Agroecology*** CAGJ/ AGRA Watch shed light on the true workings of the Cornell Alliance for Science, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The purpose of the Alliance is to depolarize the GMO debate and create scientific

consensus and promotion of biotechnology. It employs three working strategies: a) establishing a global network; b) "training with a purpose"; and c) developing multimedia communications on agricultural biotechnology. This results in the gifting of grants to other research institutions, scientists and young professionals with its primary focus being African countries in order to shape policy, public and scientific discourse and the areas of research in biotechnology in favor of those technologies Gates has promoted and actively invests in. Showing how no grant (investment) is without purpose to his larger agenda of profit, technological development, and market consolidation.

But this takeover of education does not just end with funding universities. Satish Kumar, the founder of Schumacher College in the UK, denounces the rhetoric of online learning through technology as a solution to education problems, in his piece **Digital Dictators**. He explains how digital education, something so many are now submitted to due to the Coronavirus pandemic, denies education as a form of caring for students in order to bring out unique individual qualities and diversity of the students. Education cannot be a completely centralized system of impersonal and wholly predetermined curricula that sees children as empty vessels to be indoctrinated. A topic all the more relevant as one of the Gates Foundation's areas of work is the development of tools for remote and technology-based education. Digital learning is really only intellectual. It ignores the holistic environment of school as also responsible for teaching social skills and values, not just the machine-like processing of information. Not to mention that further digitalization and centralization of schools could eventually lead to a further surveillance state headed by big corporations.

At the root of so many of Gates' justifications for his development schemes is the issue of climate change. A crisis duly caused by industrialization and the fossil fuels used to power it, and all subsequent industrial/technological mass consumption which has triggered biodiversity loss, ecological degradation, and climate destabilization. This means that (hopefully) the 'carbon bubble' of big fossil fuel industries is about to pop. But ETC's article, **The Sugar Daddy of Geoengineering: Bill Gates' fossil fuel interests and funding for global climate engineering**, detail the last-ditch efforts of big business to not lose trillions of dollars in assets is through funding the escape hatch known as geoengineering. According to Gates, geoengineering can serve as an emergency measure to give humanity more time to pump carbon into the atmosphere through mass carbon sequestration and blocking of sunlight through solar engineering. Regardless of Gates' coy attitude toward geoengineering and his seeming interest in funding



climate change solutions, Gates is simultaneously the largest shareholder in one of Canada's largest oil and gas company, Canadian National Railway, while simultaneously investing in geoengineering research. Ties Microsoft also has to the oil and gas industries. Gates stand in as the PR face of the geoengineering interests of fossil fuel industries who cannot actively show their face due to public suspicion. This effectively monetizes the rot of society's problems through the mentality of never letting a crisis go to waste, which also perpetually ignores the true causes of the crisis in the first place. Carbon sequestration so far has not proved successful. The different technologies so far used are energy intensive, producing more carbon than they sequester, or not sequestering any carbon at all. The other option proposed is that of solar engineering, or spraying sulphuric acid into the atmosphere to block sunlight and radiate it back out into space. As geoengineering can only be implemented on a massive scale and intervene into complex ecosystems which are largely still not fully understood, there is at high risk of irreversible, unintended consequences. Geoengineering promotes climate inaction and deviates resources, funding and research efforts from urgently needed, real, precautionary, ecological, transformative action and system change.

Through his various initiatives, sub-organizations, development schemes and funding mechanisms, the Gates weave a complicated web of international power and influence, itself obscured through all the separate strands. This Global Citizens report looks to address at least a large part of this web of power the Gates are attempting to wield. A power which completely ignores the past failures of the very technologies they wish to push, a power which lives in denial of the very problems and consequences their new initiatives might yield, and a power whose only interest is in profit making and market expansion. There is nothing altruistic, coy or 'optimist' about Gates and his foundation. Instead it stands as both a product of recent, precarity-inducing history, and will only serve to continue to corrode life in the future. In other words, Bill Gates and his fellow private business partners, as always, will continue to produce exponentially worse problems than the ones they propose to 'solve', while simultaneously working to concentrate ever more power into corporate hands.

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