

GMO crops can't help poor in developing world unless socioeconomic, political contexts considered

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The majority of GM crops [are now](#) cultivated in the developing world. [High-profile champions](#) based in richer countries push the idea that GM crop technology is pro-poor, held back only by overburdensome regulation and irrational opposition. Their opponents [argue fiercely](#) to the contrary. But contrary to popular belief, local resistance is not coordinated “by Greenpeace” but grounded in local realities.

Debates about whether GM crops are “good for the poor” are becoming tired. They tend to discuss GM technologies as if they can be isolated from the wider socioeconomic and political context.

In India, Bt cotton uptake has occurred against a backdrop of market liberalisation. [Crucially](#), this has all coincided with changes to agrarian social structures that have meant that these new risks have fallen on individual households rather than communities. This context is lost in the globalised GM crop debate where both sides have [used the](#) tragedy of farmer suicides to “land a few blows”.

For much of sub-Saharan Africa, the context is the [G7 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa](#) . This cooperation framework was launched by USAID and aims to “accelerate responsible investment in African agriculture and lift 50m people out of poverty by 2022”. This is supposed to help smallholders in particular, but in reality it looks to be about facilitating the regulatory wishes of agribusiness.

We need to turn our attention to these framework agreements. If GM crops are to be used in ways that benefit the poor, paying close attention to international development and investment frameworks is just as important as understanding the relative merits of technologies themselves.

Read full, original post: [GM crops and the developing world: opposing sides miss the bigger picture](#)