



The Right Livelihood Award

for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people

Pat Mooney (Canada)

Joint Award with Cary Fowler (1985)



"...for working to save the world's genetic plant heritage."

Pat Mooney

Pat Mooney has more than four decades experience working in international civil society, first addressing aid and development issues and then focusing on food, agriculture and commodity trade. Mooney's more recent work has focused on geoengineering, nanotechnology, synthetic biology and global governance of these technologies as well as corporate involvement in their development.

Pat Mooney, born in 1947, has spent most of his life on agricultural development work in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the mid-1970s he became increasingly concerned about the loss of agricultural genetic resources and in 1979 he published a report on the subject, *Seeds of the Earth*, widely credited as being the first analysis to draw international attention to the problem. This was followed in 1983 by his study *The Law of the Seed: Another Development and Plant Genetic Resources*, which attracted wide notice.

Fowler and Mooney began to work together in 1975. As international advocates for genetic conservation they have initiated worldwide educational campaigns and proposed far-reaching conservation programmes. One of their proposals was for the establishment of international seed banks, a plan that was adopted by the UN in 1983.

From 1978, Fowler and Mooney joined forces with the Rural Advancement Foundation International

(RAFI), a small, non-profit organisation that focused on the socio-economic impact of new technologies on rural societies. Mooney later became the Foundation's executive director. Through RAFI they played a major role in the formulation of the Commission and Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In 1993, the FAO hired Fowler to help draft their Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources; he then stayed on to organise the international conference in Leipzig, Germany, in 1996, at which the Global Plan was adopted.

At the same time, RAFI organised numerous workshops in Africa, Asia and Latin America to address both global issues and the need for local farmers to secure their own crop genetic diversity. In 1988, Mooney led a research team with Fowler and others to produce *The Laws of Life: Another Development and the New Biotechnologies*, published as a special issue of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's Development Dialogue. This work led RAFI to research into international agricultural research institutions and, more recently, into the attempts by private corporations to patent life forms including human cell lines. In one important victory for the campaign to prevent commercialisation of life forms, the European Parliament in 1995 rejected a proposed law that would have permitted the patenting of human genes.

In 2001, RAFI's name was changed to ETC group (pronounced "etcetera" group). ETC Group is a small international CSO addressing the impact of new technologies on vulnerable communities. It has offices in Canada, the United States, and Mexico; and works closely with CSO partners around the world.

The author or co-author of several books on the politics of biotechnology and biodiversity, Pat Mooney is widely regarded as an authority on issues of global governance, corporate concentration and intellectual property monopoly. Although much of ETC's work continues to emphasize plant genetic resources and agricultural biodiversity, the work expanded in the early 1980s to include biotechnology. In the late 1990s, the work expanded more to encompass a succession of emerging technologies such as nanotechnology, synthetic biology, geoengineering, and new developments in genomics and neurosciences.

In 1998 Pat Mooney received the Pearson Peace Prize from Canada's Governor General. He has also received the American "Giraffe Award" given to people "who stick their necks out".

Quotation

"The diversity of agriculture and human culture are bound together. In the end it is up to all of us - as governments and communities and individuals - to prize diversity."

Pat Mooney

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