

Bill Gates says aid must be tied to results

30 January 2013

Bill Gates on Wednesday urged the world to take a page from his corporate playbook and link aid to measurable results, saying a harder-nosed strategy could dramatically reduce disease and poverty.

The Microsoft co-founder—whose charitable giving spree has contributed to him slipping to second place behind Mexican telecoms tycoon Carlos Slim in the world's richest rankings—said any profit-driven business pursues concrete goals and finds ways to measure them.

Gates said his [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#), which has awarded \$25 billion in grants since its inception, follows the same process.

"Given a goal, you decide on what key variable you need to change to achieve it—the same way a business picks objectives for inside the company like customer satisfaction—and develop a plan for change," the software entrepreneur said in his 2013 "annual letter."

"Historically, aid was largely discussed in terms of the total amount of money invested. Now that we're more precisely measuring indicators like [child mortality](#), people are able to see the impact aid has in stark terms," he said.

"I think a lot of efforts fail because they don't focus on the right measure or they don't invest enough in doing it accurately."

Gates, 57, said the United Nations' ambitious Millennium Development Goals—eight goals established in 2000 for completion by 2015—prove that a data-driven aid program brings results.

"We've made amazing progress and the goals become a report card for how the world is performing against major problems affecting the poor," he said.

Gates mentioned success in cutting [extreme poverty](#) by half and halving the proportion of

people without access to safe drinking water.

Gates said that with careful collection and analysis of information, rather than unspecified charity, near miracles can be achieved.

He said Ethiopia, which was synonymous with mass starvation and instability in the 1980s, has turned a corner since signing on to the [Millennium Development goals](#) and putting "hard numbers on its health ambitions."

Eradication of polio worldwide is "a primary focus" for his foundation, Gates said, and is now within reach, with only Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan never having wiped out the crippling disease.

Last year India marked its first full year without a single case.

In Nigeria, Gates said, the problem was exacerbated by lack of reliable data. "We decided to invest heavily in another layer of quality monitoring to understand what was wrong," he said.

"The Nigerian government and its partners will need to keep working closely to adjust tools and approaches like these," he said.

"The global polio community is now finalizing a detailed plan which I believe should allow us to finish the job of polio eradication in the next six years."

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