

# Open letter from Bill and Melinda Gates in 2019: 9 things that surprised us

An annual event, aimed at assessing the situation of human development from the couple Bill - Melinda Gates.

*This article is co-chair of the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** . The article is the personal opinion of the author, and adapted from the couple's open letter for 2019.*



I now have 2 children, and when I raise 2 children, I think I have prepared everything. But when **Bill [Gates]** visited a group of students at Chicago last year, I was surprised at what they had to go through.

This meeting was organized by the group 'Becoming a Man', a group that helps boys living in the slums to help them express their emotions and live better. Here, we were surprised to learn that many children had very difficult lives, some of whom were imprisoned, some of whom were shot by gangs. You have to go into life early, so there are emotions that many people (including us) have to experience.

For nearly two decades of fundraising, we have found that surprises are what drives us to act. Sometimes surprises show injustices that we have to correct. And there are times when change has been made, like what Bill sees in Chicago.



In *the opening letter of 2019* , we wrote about 9 things that surprised us (including the story of boys in Chicago), and from there set a goal to save the World. These may also surprise you:

**1. Africa is the youngest continent in the world:** While other continents are getting older (aging population), Africa is getting younger and younger, especially in the Saharan region. This is an abundant source of labor, and needs to be provided with health and education services.

**2. Home DNA testing can help with birth issues:** By looking at the DNA of volunteers on page 23andMe, scientists can predict who is at risk of premature birth (lack of dates), This allows doctors to find ways to help them get pregnant enough to create healthier babies.

**3. The world will build a new New York city every month for the next 40 years:** *The* number of houses will double today by 2060, similar to how we build a new New York city every month. This situation also creates a greenhouse effect, global warming. We need to find green solutions, reducing emissions for transportation and construction methods.

**4. Information is also sexist:** There is currently very little information on women and girls. For example, there are no studies to find out how much women in poor countries earn on an annual basis, or whether girls do more housework than boys. Having this information will help lawmakers create better policies to help women.



**5. *Love for the country can also expand into the World:*** Everyone has patriotism, but if you only understand in a narrow sense and put the interests of your country at the highest, it is wrong. Everyone must understand the world wide, for all humanity. Investing in developing countries is also helping yourself and your country.

**6. *Toilets have not changed for centuries:*** The flush toilets were popular in the 19th Century, but have not been changed since then. According to WHO, more than 2 billion people do not have a toilet because the design is expensive, so their waste is discharged directly into the environment without treatment. Changing the toilet design will make the lives of millions better.

**7. *Textbooks are becoming redundant:*** Many schools in the US are giving up textbooks - often heavy, costly and have to use wood - to use digital books. This is an effective tool to help make learning easier, giving students time to earn money and support their families.

**8. *Smartphones are a powerful tool when placed in the hands of poor women:*** Women can use smartphones to change lives, helping them find new services and opportunities. They also use them to combat gender inequality, to abandon social prejudices.

Some of the things that bothered us and some inspire, but they all call us to action. Hopefully they have the same effect with you, and we will make a Better World together.

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