



VIP Speaker Bios

William (Bill) H. Gates III (*United States*), *Co-Chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

As co-chairs, Bill and Melinda Gates shape and approve foundation strategies, review results, advocate for the foundation's issues, and help set the overall direction of the organization. They meet with local, national and international grantees and partners to further the foundation's goal of improving equity in the United States and around the world.

Bill Gates began his major philanthropic efforts in 1994, when he created the William H. Gates Foundation, which focused on global health. Three years later, he and Melinda created the Gates Library Foundation, which worked to bring public-access computers with Internet connections to public libraries in the U.S. (Its name changed to the Gates Learning Foundation in 1999 to reflect its focus on ensuring that low-income and minority students are prepared for college and have the means to attend.) The two groups merged in 2000 to form the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.