Would human beings survive another century?

Professor Muhammad Yunus

We must redesign our unsustainable economic system and create a new civilization based on empathy, sharing and caring.

Nuclear weapons have been around for many years but this has become an issue of enormous concern because of the kind of political sound bites that the world has been hearing in recent times. Some national leaders have been taunting each other about their nuclear capabilities in a language which sounds like two kids fighting over the quality of their toys. They seem oblivious about the potential death of millions of people if these toys are activated. Dark clouds are gathering around us each day with the reversal in the political direction in important countries, making the world increasingly nervous.

Bad experiences that we had gone through over hundreds of years helped us generate enough sanity to create institutions that help us bring nations together and overcome mutual fears. Organizations such as the European Union were conceptualized and put into practice, overcoming centuries of animosity, violence, and killings. Then a sudden reversal took everybody by surprise when Brexit happened. It was a rude shock to see one nation decide to break away from the journey of all nations getting closer to each other. This tendency is not limited to one area of the world; it is spreading. We see the same isolationism emerging out of other elections. It comes in the form of building physical and legal walls to isolate a country from the rest of the world. This is a very negative political direction in contrast to the earlier collective dream of building a global village.

This has immediate implications on weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. I am not an expert on nuclear weapons and I don’t wish to know how many thousands of nuclear warheads are waiting to be called into action at the push of a button. No matter how many there are, there are certainly more than enough to destroy this world many, many times over. To me this is an extreme form of insanity. What we are dealing with is not a political issue; we are dealing with human insanity of absurd proportions. Some leaders appear to be racing against each other to demonstrate
who is more insane than others in their league.

We can easily see how inconsistent we are in our behavior when we talk about achieving sustainable development goals by 2030 in one breath, then aggressively promote nuclear weapons in the next breath. We express our determination to create a wonderful world and simultaneously confirm that we don’t care whether there will be a world left or not; all that we are obsessed with is achieving only one outcome, being the “winner,” whatever it takes.

We work hard to uphold the Paris agreement on global warming and painstakingly design timelines to achieve it before we reach the point of no return. While the world is desperate to protect the planet, some countries generously allocate money for refurbishing and enlarging their nuclear stockpile to destroy everything in seconds.

Some leaders don’t see any inconsistency between these two things. I cannot explain it in any other way but to see it as an extreme form of insanity. Important question before us is to decide whether we want to continue. We have to convince the whole world that human civilization cannot continue with this insanity.

Instead of slowing down, this insanity is growing from two sides. First, from the political side, which is taking a sharp wrong turn and is showing signs of becoming inward-looking. When you become self-centered, you see the rest of the world as a threat. You tend to deal with it with fire power.

The second side is the economic side. Since I have been working with poor people, particularly poor women, many people ask me what I think are the causes of poverty.

My experience says poverty is not created by the poor people; but created by the system around us. Unless we fix the system, poverty is not going to disappear. So the solution to poverty is in fixing the system. There is nothing wrong with poor people; they are as good as anyone else.

I give the analogy of a bonsai tree — if we pick the seed of the tallest tree in the forest and plant it in a flower-pot we will only get a tiny tree out of it; probably not more than 2-3 feet in height. It’s a cute little tree, exactly like the ones in the forest but a tiny replica. Why doesn’t it grow taller than this? The explanation is very simple. There is nothing wrong with the seed, just that it was never given the base that is required for it to grow. Poor people are bonsai people, there is nothing wrong with their seeds; society simply never gives them the space to grow as tall as
others. The economic system that we have built causes poverty. If we fix the system there will be no poverty.

I have tried to demonstrate repeatedly how the system went wrong, and what damage the economic system has done to us. For example, it is designed as a process to create a continuous flow of wealth to concentrate at the top, in fewer and fewer hands.

Now we are told that eight people in the world own more wealth than the bottom 50% of the world’s entire population. Four billion people’s wealth is equal to the wealth of 8 people! We are told that this concentration is getting worse every day. Next year we may hear that two or three people own more wealth than the bottom 50% of population. Concentrated wealth can be visualized as a huge mushroom which keeps on growing, and owned by fewer and fewer people. The stem that hangs from this growing mushroom is getting thinner and thinner. The stem represents the wealth of remaining 99.9% of the population of the world. Should we accept anything which creates such a phenomenon as an economic system or dismiss it as a mockery of an economic system? In reality, we seem to be going along with it. This is another form of insanity. Since we got used to living in an environment of insanity we seem not to notice it. On the one hand, we appear not to see any harm in the extreme monopoly of economic power in the hands of a few persons in half a dozen countries, and at the same time we don’t seem to mind monopoly of power to destroy the whole world in the hands of half a dozen leaders in a half a dozen countries.

The problem of economic insanity began with the wrong interpretation of human beings in economic theory. The capitalist system assumes that human beings are driven by personal interests, in other words, human beings are selfish beings. I find it hard to accept this interpretation. Real human beings are not exclusively selfish beings, as the theory claims. They have a combination of selfishness and selflessness. By interpreting human beings as exclusively selfish beings the theory succeeded in making people believe in it, and behave accordingly. In real life people behave as if they are fitted with glasses with dollar signs to make them see only one thing — money.

But if we interpret human beings as both selfish and selfless within the theoretical framework, the whole capitalist system becomes completely different. It will then have two kinds of businesses — the existing profit-maximizing businesses on the basis of our selfishness, and the another kind of business built on the basis of selflessness — business to solve people’s problems. This I call social business, something that doesn’t exist in business theory today.

In selfless business, the entrepreneur does not have any intention of making any personal profit. Company will make profit, but profit will stay with the company, to expand after the entrepreneur gets his or her investment money back.

In selfish business, you want to make lots of money, but in selfish business you only think about bringing benefits to other people without paying any attention to your personal gain. If we can introduce social business idea to the world, we can have a better and balanced world for all of us.

Another vital area where the capitalist system went wrong is that it assumes human beings are born to be job-seekers; that they must work for somebody else, as if a job is the sole destiny of human beings.

This too is a wrong interpretation of human beings. Human beings are independent entities; every individual is a go-getter, an entrepreneur - that’s what our history shows. It is in our DNA. We should tell our young people that they are born to be entrepreneurs. The least we can do is to tell all young people as they grow up that they have two options in life - they can choose to be job-seekers or choose to be job-creators. They should prepare themselves for whichever option they choose. Today they are not given any such option.

If we accept this interpretation that every human has the capability of becoming entrepreneurs, our whole economic system would change completely. The wealth concentration that we see will slow down, even reverse itself if enough young people become entrepreneurs. They will no longer be mercenaries making other people richer and richer, providing fuel for wealth concentration. Instead they would become wealth owners themselves. They would become creative participants in the economy.

With wealth getting more widely distributed, politics will tend to get cleaner. The core of politics has to change in a way that everybody can participate in it effectively.

There is another emerging issue in this context - artificial intelligence. We are being told that soon factories, businesses and offices, will not need workers to run them. Instead, intelligent machines will run them. What would be left for humans to do? We are told that the masses of unemployed human beings that would be generated could have decent lives with the program of universal basic income. We are told that in the next 25 years artificial intelligence will reach a level of intelligence equal to human intelligence. In the following 25 years it is not unlikely that they would have 1000 times more intelligence than human beings. At that point in time human beings will appear to be as intelligent as rats on the scale of human beings and actual rats today. They will out-smart human beings easily. They will decide whether they need human beings on this planet, and in what role, if at all. Even if they find a role for human beings, it is likely not to be a dignified role. Whatever role we may hope to play in that world would definitely not be the role super-smart machines would have in mind. They may quickly realize that human beings are a dispensable nuisance.

We have another bit of insanity attached to this issue. We are so busy in the race to create super-intelligent machines we forgot to create any universal social watchdog to ensure there are strict guidelines to follow while we develop these technologies, such as, that they will bring no harm to people physically, mentally, socially, and economically, and will do no harm to the planet.

I see one common thread behind all this insanity—the basic flaw in our greed-based economic system. To address this once and for all we must redesign our existing unsustainable economic system putting our human values of empathy, sharing, and caring, at the centre of all our economic, political and social activities and create a new civilization based on those values. If we don’t do that, it is not unlikely that we - all of humankind - would disappear within a century.
SESSIONS LIVE TELECAST ON FACEBOOK FOR THE FIRST TIME

7th international conference organized on 28-29 July, 2017 on the occasion of Social Business Day to be held at 9.00 AM at Samajik Convention Centre in Zirabo, was cancelled due to unavoidable reasons. However, the sessions scheduled to be held at the cancelled 7th Social Business Day was held on 28th July, 2017 participated by foreign guests who already arrived to join the conference, at a conference room of Hotel Le Meridian. The program was supposed to be held at Samajik Convention Centre in Zirabo, Savar, Dhaka with the theme “Can Wealth Concentration be Stopped?”. The announcement of the live telecast of the sessions was sent from Yunus Centre to media with the cancellation statement at the evening on 27th July, 2017.

Ms Lamiya Morshed, Executive Director, Yunus Centre, presented the welcome speech on behalf of Yunus Centre and thanked the present guests. Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus welcomed almost 250 international participants representing over 50 countries. He regretted for not being able to welcome all interested participants physically, especially more than thousand local registered participants and media guests this time but thanked the viewers who were with the Facebook page of Yunus Centre.

Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, the focal point of UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) delivered the keynote speech. Thomas Gass talked about how sustainable development goals can be achieved and also mentioned how social business promotes a shared vision of humanity. Mr. Joël Bouzou, President of the World Olympians Association delivered his greeting speech where he talked on the subject of the Olympic movement, society and social business. Mr. Rodrigo Castañeda, Chief, Partnerships Unit, Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development Division, FAO, Italy, Mr. Bei Duoguang, Director, China Academy for Financial
Inclusion, Former Managing Director, China International Capital Corporation, China, Mr. Nicolas Hazard, Head of the strategic committee Paris, Representative of Mayor, Paris also delivered their speeches.

Video greetings by Jose Graziano da Silva, director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Erik Solheim, Head of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Salman Khan of Khan Academy, Mayor of Paris Ms. Anne Hidalgo, Mr. Christoph Heinrich, Vice Chairman and Executive Officer of Conservation at WWF Germany, Her Excellency Maria Teresa Mestre y Batista, Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, Scott Morrison, Finance Minister of Australia and CEO of Unilever Limited Mr. Paul Polman were played after the greeting speeches.

Professor Muhammad Yunus moderated the opening plenary where Prof. Anil K. Gupta, Executive Vice Chair, Indian Institute of Management, National innovation Foundation, India, Mr. Richard St-Pierre, President, C2 Montréal, Canada, Prof. Jin-Huei Yeh, Associate Professor, Department of Finance, National Central University, Taiwan, Mr. Steve Hollingworth, President, Grameen Foundation, USA, Mr. Meng Zhao, Associate Professor in Organization and Strategy, Business School, Renmin University of China, Director, Yunus Center for Social Business & Microfinance, Renmin University of China (YCRUC) were the plenary speakers.

Mr. Hans Reitz, Grameen Creative Lab, Germany moderated the second plenary where speakers were Professor Muhammad Yunus, Mr. Joël Bouzou, President of the World Olympians Association, Dr. Anne W. Bunde-Birouste, Founder, YSBHH, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, Australia. Another plenary for present and future of Corporate Action Tank was moderated by Mr. Jacques Berger, Managing Director, Action Tank and Social Business, HEC, Paris, France where Mr. Shankar Venkateswaran, Chief – Tata Sustainability Group, India, Mr. Rogerio Oliveira, Chief Partnerships Unit, YSB Brazil, Ms. Aarti Wig, Co-founder and Country Director, Yunus Social Business, India and Dr. Faiz Shah, Director, AIT, Thailand were plenary speakers.

MOU signing for setting up Yunus Social Business Centre (YSBC) with seven renowned international universities took place at the event. The universities are Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC), México, Chandigarh University, India, Catholic University of Zimbabwe, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Bethlehem University, Palestine and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) will be launching Yunus Social Business Centres (YSBC) at their respective campus. There were several other discussion panels including Pecha Kucha sessions. A video based online social business course was also launched with an aim to reach a target of enrolling half a million subscribers and break the Guinness Book of World Record. The course is created by a set of professional course creators led my Mr Wajed Salam from the United States.

At his concluding speech Professor Yunus emphasized on the importance of starting small and work consistently to realize the vision of achieving three zeroes; zero unemployment, zero poverty and zero net carbon emission. “If I can make one village archiving zero unemployment, I would think myself successful. This small achievement will also make people believe in themselves. They will move on to achieve zero poverty and then zero net carbon emission. Gradually it will be two villages, then cities and one day while country will achieve these three zeroes”, Professor Yunus said. A cultural program was held at the end.
The 8th annual Global Social Business Summit (GSBS) kicked off on 6th November, 2017 in Paris for the first time bringing together more than 700 delegates from around the world. Participants came from the private sector, civil society, governments and academia, the event fostered discussion, collaboration and the sharing of best practices around social business and its positive impact.

While inaugurating the summit, Paris Mayor Ms Anne Hidalgo acknowledged and thanked Professor Muhammad Yunus’ contribution for the entire world through his work for poverty alleviation, gender equality and environment. She also appreciated Professor Yunus’ initiative to bring sports and social business together by supporting Paris to host the Summer Olympic 2024 as the first ever social business centric Olympic. The Mayor reaffirmed her commitment for making Paris world’s social business city during her speech.

HM Queen Sofia of Spain, Grand Duchess of Luxembourg HM Maria Theresa, Mayor of Paris Anna Hidalgo, Deputy Mayor of Paris Antoinette Guhl, Thomas Gass, UN Asst. Secretary General for SDGs and Perer Bakker, President of World Business Council were present at the inauguration of the summit. Mayor of Paris formally handed over the honorary citizenship of the French capital Prof. Yunus at the inaugural session of the summit. Main topics to be covered in this year’s GSBS edition include:

- **Food and its Value** – Speakers will discuss how to make the food industry more sustainable and solidary, notably regarding catering to create inclusive Olympic Games, and debate social business gastronomy projects.
- **Plastic Pollution** – Covering the growing environmental pollution caused by plastic waste, talks will revolve around coastal and marine protection, and how to improve recycling and waste management by social business.
- **Solidarity and Refugees** – This theme aims at discussing project fostering more human solidarity and notably towards the climate and war refugees around the world, how to create social business solutions to support refugees.
- **The Paris 2024 Olympic Games** – Debates and workshops will discuss & design solutions on how to guarantee the inclusiveness and impact of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games through social business

As part of the ongoing Global Social Business Summit (GSBS) 2017, two-day Social Business Academia Conference (SBAC) 2017 took place on 8-9 November in Paris which is being held Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris. This is the fifth edition of SBAC. Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus delivered the keynote speech.
after the welcome speech by Ms. Carine Camby from Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris and introductory words by Ms Lamiya Morshed, Yunus Centre and Hans Reitz, Grameen Creative Lab.

This annual conference has attracted 135 academics from around 15 countries. There were 49 paper submissions this year, of which 38 were accepted for presentation. These included papers related to social business and education, technology, healthcare, disaster management, entrepreneurship, marketing and other issues.

There were also presentations at the conference by 10 of the 43 Yunus Social Business Centres in 29 countries established in universities around the world which are doing research, developing social business courses in classrooms as well as online, organizing competitions for social business projects with a view to mainstreaming social business within university curriculum.

A separate discussion was held on the inaugural day of SBAC on the newest book by Professor Muhammad Yunus “A World of Three Zeros” with Professor Yunus, Professor Andrea Grove, the Program Director at California Institute for Social Business of California State University Channel Islands, and Professor Rodolphe Durand, the Chaired Professor of Strategy at HEC-Paris and the academic Director of the Society and Organizations Center, France. The session was moderated by Professor Cam Donaldson, Yunus Chair in Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University of Scotland.
YUNUS CENTRE, GRAMEEN CREATIVE LAB (GLC) BASED IN GERMANY AND SPORTS AND PEACE FOUNDATION, AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION BASED IN MONACO, SIGNED AN MOU TO HELP SPORTS WORLD TO ADDRESS SOCIAL PROBLEMS AROUND THE WORLD THROUGH SOCIAL BUSINESS.

The MoU was signed by Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus, Hans Reitz co-Founder of GCL and Joel Bouzou, President of the World Olympians Association and President of Peace and Sports Foundation in the presence of HRH Prince Albert II of Monaco at the 10th anniversary of Peace and Sports International Forum in Monaco on December 7.

The agreement will create programs around the globe to encourage dialogue with the sports world and facilitate them to get involved in social businesses. It will lead to creation of a global social business fund to support social business investments from sports organizations and sports personalities around the world.

Legendary footballer Didier Drogba spoke at the event, among several other sports superstars, highlighting the role of sports persons and athletes contributing to solving social problems. The Ivorian superstar, who used to play for English Club Chelsea, expressed his interest to visit Bangladesh during his meeting with Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus.
Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus was in the United Kingdom for events organized around his new book “A World of Three Zeroes” which focuses on a world of zero poverty, zero unemployment and zero net carbon emissions.

He was invited to deliver a public lecture at the London School of Economics by the Director Minouche Shafik on the theme of three zeroes. He addressed an audience of 500 students and academics in the Old Theatre of the LSE, and challenged the youngsters to move away from conventional way of doing things, which created and perpetuates the huge global economic and environmental challenges the world now faces. He spoke of the vision of ‘A World of Three Zeroes’ and outlined the role he believes the youth have to play in achieving that world.

Afterwards, the director of the school hosted a dinner for Professor Yunus with selected academics that are working in the field of social and economic development. Professor Yunus has a long relationship with the LSE and received an honorary degree from the college in 2011.

Professor Yunus spoke at various book events organized at the Royal Society of Arts, the Royal Automobile Club, and Conway Hall. He also had media appointments with Sky News live TV, BBC News Report, BBC World Service, Today on BBC, Radio 4, and the Evening Standard. He also spoke at the Overseas Development Institute, on wealth concentration, artificial intelligence and how a world of three zeroes can be achieved.

The message throughout all his talks is that a world with rapidly growing wealth concentration is not sustainable; that this is not an economic system but rather a mockery of one. He argues that our current system focused on creating employment is merely exacerbating the wealth concentration issue, that the only way to combat this and ensure that wealth is spread more equitably is through social businesses and entrepreneurship at the grassroots. He used Grameen Bank and other social businesses as examples of how this has done with great impact. His experience leads him to believe that a world of three zeroes is possible within our lifetimes.

Professor Yunus’ visit to the UK ended with a talk at Cambridge University organized by the Cambridge Society for Social and Economic Development, attended at full capacity by 500 cross disciplinary students at the Lady Mitchell Hall. He attended a formal dinner hosted by the Lady Michell Hall with the fellows of the college. He was accompanied by Lamiya Morshed, Executive Director of the Yunus Centre. 

"A WORLD OF THREE ZEROES", PROFESSOR YUNUS BOOK TOUR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF LES CANAUX, THE SOCIAL BUSINESS HOUSE IN PARIS

Mayor Ann Hidalgo and Professor Muhammad Yunus together officially launched Social Business House Les Canaux on Thursday November 9. The Mayor had announced last year in a press conference held jointly with Professor Yunus that the historical building Les Canaux would become the home of social business and the social economy for Paris. During the launching ceremony Deputy Prime Minister of France and Environment Minister Nicolas Hulot was the chief guest.

The Deputy Prime Minister, the Mayor, the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, the Deputy Mayor of Paris, Professor Yunus and other dignitaries were given a guided tour of the Social Business House. The house, located in the 19th district of Paris, has been refurbished using recycled materials notably ocean plastic, waste paper, and waste wood for all its decor, carpets, furniture and fittings.

The newly established Yunus Centre Paris located in Les Canaux was also opened. Mayor Hidalgo had invited Professor Yunus to set up Yunus Centre Paris when they first met during the Rio Olympics in July 2016. The office is now set up and Yunus Centre Paris is a registered legal entity in the city.

The Mayor and Professor Yunus spoke at the end of the tour. Mayor Hidalgo said that she is committed to social business and wants to make Paris the social business capital of the world. The Mayor emphasized that social business is the future. She said it is the future of humanity, it is the future of the planet, mentioning that the present system is not sustainable.

Mr. Hulot, in his speech, also highlighted that social business and the work that Les Canaux has set up for itself is the most powerful way to move forward. Professor is like a bug, a friendly bug that infects it, because selflessness exists in introduced to social business he Yunus in his remarks said that the social business everyone who comes in contact with every human being. Once a person is wants to do more and more of it.
ONE YOUNG WORLD SUMMIT 2017, BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

The 8th One Young World summit kicked off at the historical Simón Bolívar Plaza in Bogotá, Colombia on Oct 4th, 2017. Global luminaries and young world leaders came together to attend the annual event. The theme of this year’s Summit was “Peace and Reconciliation”.

One Young World summit is a much-anticipated event, which brings young talented leaders together to discuss, debate and innovate on the most pressing issues of the day. Founded in 2009, the organization joins the brightest young minds with world leaders, who act as One Young World Counselors.

Since its inception the ten best delegates from Bangladesh have been sent to attend the summit each year. The selection of the delegates is conducted in three stages at the Yunus Centre. After successfully completing the three stages, these young leaders get the opportunity to be part of a delegation representing Bangladesh, headed by Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus. Ms. Lamiya Morshed, Executive Director Yunus Centre, was a member of the delegation and spoke at the Summit. This year’s delegation included students, activists and change-makers.

During his keynote at the Opening Ceremony for One Young World 2017 Summit, Professor Yunus said, “Nothing is impossible. Many ‘impossibles’ have become possible.” Kofi Annan, Juan Manuel Santos, the President of Colombia and Sir Bob Geldof were among other prominent figures that spoke.
Muhammad Yunus, who created microcredit, invented social business, and earned a Nobel Peace Prize for his work in alleviating poverty, is one of today’s most trenchant social critics. Now he declares it’s time to admit that the capitalist engine is broken—that in its current form it inevitably leads to rampant inequality, massive unemployment, and environmental destruction. We need a new economic system that unleashes altruism as a creative force just as powerful as self-interest.

Is this a pipe dream? Not at all. In the last decade, thousands of people and organizations have already embraced Yunus’s vision of a new form of capitalism, launching innovative social businesses designed to serve human needs rather than accumulate wealth. They are bringing solar energy to millions of homes in Bangladesh; turning thousands of unemployed young people into entrepreneurs through equity investments; financing female-owned businesses in cities across the United States; bringing mobility, shelter, and other services to the rural poor in France; and creating a global support network to help young entrepreneurs launch their start-ups.

In A World of Three Zeros, Yunus describes the new civilization emerging from the economic experiments his work has helped to inspire. He explains how global companies like McCain, Renault, Essilor, and Danone got involved with this new economic model through their own social action groups, describes the ingenious new financial tools now funding social businesses, and sketches the legal and regulatory changes needed to jumpstart the next wave of socially driven innovations. And he invites young people, business and political leaders, and ordinary citizens to join the movement and help create the better world we all dream of.

Genre: Nonfiction / Social Science / Poverty & Homelessness
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For more than 40 years, Muhammad Yunus, the Bangladeshi founder of the Grameen Bank and recipient of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, has been asserting that the most powerful way to eradicate poverty is to unleash the untapped entrepreneurial capacity of people everywhere. “Poverty is not created by poor people,” he says. “It’s created by the system we built. Poor people are like a bonsai tree. You take the best seed from the tallest tree in the forest, but if you put it in a flower pot to grow, it grows only a meter high. There’s nothing wrong with the seed. The problem is the size of the pot. Society doesn’t give poor people the space to grow as tall as everybody else. This is the crux of the matter.”

Yunus has recently written a new book, “A World of Three Zeros: The New Economics of Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, and Zero Net Carbon Emissions,” in which he argues that capitalism is in crisis and remains moored in a flawed conception of human motivation. He proposes a far more robust role in the economy for “social businesses,” which he defines as “non-dividend” companies “dedicated to solving human problems.”

At 77, Yunus shows no signs of slowing down. He reports on an astonishing array of work he has been involved in — supporting and codeveloping social businesses (often in partnership with large corporations) in Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, France, Haiti, India, Japan, Uganda and numerous other countries.

“We need to abandon our unquestioning faith in the power of personal-profit-centered markets to solve all problems and confess that the problems of inequality are not going to be solved by the natural working of the economy as it is currently structured,” Yunus writes.

“This is not a comfortable situation for anyone, including those who are on top of the social heap at any given time. Do the wealthy and powerful … like having to avert their eyes from the homeless and hungry people they pass on the street? Do they enjoy using the tools of the state — including its police powers and other forms of coercion — to suppress the inevitable protests mounted by those on the bottom? Do they really want their own children and grandchildren to inherit this kind of world?”

I sat down with Yunus last week to discuss his new book.

David Bornstein: This is both a solutions book and a warning call. What is the danger?

Muhammad Yunus: Wealth concentration. In the book, I cite an Oxfam report that says that eight people own more wealth than the bottom 50 percent of the world. Recently, I saw a newspaper report that said now it’s just five people. There are two things to be concerned about: the concentration of wealth and the increasing speed of this concentration. We didn’t notice it when 5,000 people or 50,000 people owned more wealth than the bottom half of the world. Now it’s five people. In a year or two it will be just one person. This is the speed at which it is happening.

The capitalist system is a machine which sucks up wealth from the bottom to send it to the top. It’s not the fault of individuals at the top. They follow what the system asks them to do: chase money. But in the process, wealth at the top grows like a giant mushroom owned by fewer and fewer people — for the simple reason that the more they have, the more they get. Wealth is a magnet. If you have a little magnet, you attract a little wealth. If you have a big magnet, you attract more. And this wealth mushroom is worse than the atomic mushroom cloud. It will destroy our politics, it will destroy our society, it will destroy our economy — because concentration of wealth goes with concentration of power. This will generate tremendous anger at the bottom, and that anger will disrupt everything. Brexit is the outcome of this anger. Same with the recent U.S. election. Now see the German election. This mushroom is a ticking time bomb. We need to spend many sleepless nights over it.

D.B.: You say that this problem lies at the root of capitalist theory.

M.Y.: The capitalist system is based on a fundamental flaw, on misinterpretation of human beings. In capitalist theory, it is assumed that man is entirely driven by self-interest. That’s definitely not the description of a real human being. Human beings are selfish, and at the same time they are equally selfless, if not more. They want to help others. Adam Smith wrote this in “The Theory of Moral Sentiments.” He was a professor of philosophy. He was interested in morality. Then he wrote a completely different book that talked about self-interest and the “invisible hand.” The first book was forgotten. He never integrated the two books.

D.B.: If we integrated these ideas, what would be the implications?

David Bornstein Credit Andreas Solaro/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images
M.Y.: Capitalism is all about options. But in the economic system, there is only one kind of business: business to make money — and it’s made more extreme by saying it produces best results when one maximizes profit. When we introduce the selflessness of people in the business world we get another option. Alongside conventional business, we add another type of business that will allow us to express our selflessness through business. The exclusive goal of this business, which I call social business, is to solve people’s problems. My book is full of examples of this.

D.B.: I suspect some readers will think, “This sounds idealistic.”

M.Y.: Actually it’s very practical. Hard-nosed business people come to me all the time and volunteer to create social businesses. Like the Canadian company McCain Foods. They wanted to create a social business jointly with us. They have 60 percent of the French fry market in the world. Jointly we are doing a social business in Colombia. Many Colombian farmers struggle to make a living, like in many other countries. Campo Vivo, our social business, helps farmers grow potatoes and vegetables with high yields.

After that, they created another social business in France, where 26 percent of potatoes are wasted because they’re of a wrong shape for the French fry-making machines. Once McCain put on social business glasses, they started seeing new possibilities. They created Bon et Bien to buy up these potatoes and produce potato soup. They hire youth who have been unemployed. Then they noticed that 30 percent of vegetables grown across Europe are thrown away because they don’t have the right shape for supermarkets. They are called “ugly vegetables.” The social business company buys up these throwaway vegetables and chops them up, making small packages of ready-to-cook vegetables. They could make money from this, but they decided not to — to make the soup and vegetables good and cheap.

D.B.: Ordinary businesses solve problems all the time. What do we gain by removing the profit motive?

M.Y.: If you remove the personal profit motive and think only about solving problems, you will suddenly see lots of possibilities that you didn’t see before. If selflessness becomes the driving force behind development of technology instead of personal profit, suddenly technology transforms into an enormously powerful force to change the world very rapidly. Then artificial intelligence will be developed to solve health care problems of people instead of taking away jobs. If you focus on the selfless part of human beings, the whole economy changes.

D.B.: Where’s the financing to come from?

M.Y.: From many directions. Charity money can be a major source. Many are creating social business funds. Personal wealth can be an important source. Hedge funds or insurance funds, pension funds, could take 1 percent of their fund and invest it in social business, with no expectation of personal profit. You’d release enormous amounts of money.

D.B.: What do you say to business leaders who are interested?

M.Y.: Try it out. Use part of your wealth or corporate social responsibility money or foundation money to invest in social businesses. One may convene a design competition for businesses that address one of the sustainable development goals that you care about. You’ll get lots of business ideas. Pick one or two and start investing in them. Not for publicity purposes. Make sure it really solves people’s problems. You’ll also learn a lot about yourself by doing it.

D.B.: How is your work in the United States, Grameen America, going?

M.Y.: We started in 2008. By the end of next year, Grameen America will have lent almost $1 billion to 100,000 borrowers, with repayment remaining nearly 100 percent. Over the next 10 years, Grameen America would like to double from 20 to 40 branches. Even with that modest growth, it can reach 500,000 borrowers by 2028. If more generous funding were available, it could reach a million borrowers. If it had a limited banking license, it could take deposits like we do in the Grameen Bank and its expansion will not be limited by availability of funds.

D.B.: You see young people as one of the “megapowers” that can transform the world. Why youth?

M.Y.: Their minds are open. They are not so protective of the capitalist system. They can think boldly. They have a lot of power, they understand technology, and they have a hunger to do something significant.

D.B.: What would you like to see schools do?

M.Y.: Bring into the curriculum the idea that business is the most creative way to be happy, enjoy life. David Bornstein is the author of “How to Change the World,” which has been published in 20 languages, and “The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank,” and is a co-author of “Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know.” He is a co-founder of the Solutions Journalism Network, which supports rigorous reporting about responses to social problems.
WORLD LEADERS DELIBERATE ON THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT IN FRANCE: AT THE ONE PLANET SUMMIT

At the One Planet Summit in France, Nobel Laureate Professor Yunus urged the global community toward building circular economy as a way to tackle the climate change challenges. Professor Yunus made these remarks during the plenary session of the conference, organized on the second anniversary of the historic Paris climate agreement. The President of France, Emmanuel Macron hosted a wide array of public and private sector leaders at the Summit. It was co-hosted by the Secretary General of UN and the President of World Bank group.

Prof Yunus said, “An important methodology to achieve zero net carbon is social business. You asked us to talk about business not as usual. Social business is business not as usual. It takes personal profit off the table. It is non-dividend company.” He shared examples of how a social business like Grameen Shakti can have tangible impact in tackling climate issues effectively and sustainably. Of the 4 million homes with solar home systems in Bangladesh, Grameen Shakti has installed 2 million. Government’s renewable energy agency has been assisting to finance the solar energy outreach in Bangladesh, he added.

In his remarks, he also mentioned the massive waste generated by the modern civilization; waste such as plastic, which he said is killing us. He highlighted a recycling initiative he is undertaking as a social business in Vietnam, with support from WWF, to clean up Mekong River of plastic waste. He emphasized the need to recycle automobile tires, less than 7 percent of tires are re-used and the rest create pollution. He is initiating a recycling project of used tires. Another big challenge he mentioned is food waste, creating more pressure on the planet. A large social business company Bon et Bien, in France, has been addressing this issue by repurposing waste vegetables and bringing them back into the food chain.

Professor Yunus said, “It is entrepreneurship and social businesses which will go a long way in saving the world. We should be preparing ourselves for creating circular economy. Nothing should go out of use.”
The 6th graduation ceremony Grameen Caledonian College of Nursing (GCCN) was held on December 17, 2017 with 70 students graduating with nursing diplomas. Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus presided over the ceremony. Mr. Frank Crossan, Professor, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU)& Consultant, GCCN represented Chancellor of GCU at the ceremony. All the girls are daughters of Grameen Bank families, and have already been hired by top hospitals of Dhaka.
The 2nd graduation ceremony of Japan Automechanic School Ltd. took place on December 18th, 2017 with 16 graduates. All students are children of Grameen Bank borrowers. Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus presided over the graduation ceremony. Mr. Hirao Tsuneaki, Managing Director of Japan Automechanic Limited (JAL) and others were also present.

The School started operations in January 2015 with 10 students. It now has 31 students and aims to gradually scale up to 200 students. It is an international social business joint venture between Japanese Foundation NPO SK Dream Japan, Grameen Shikkha and Rangs Workshop Ltd. Its aim is to train Bangladeshi youths in the maintenance and repair of automobiles, particularly those manufactured in Japan, providing hands-on mechanic and English language training to students and enabling them to work in any part of the globe. Highly skilled local and foreign trainers, from Japan and Australia, teach at the school.

For the admission process, children of Grameen Bank borrowers are screened and the selected applicants get interest-free education loans from Grameen Shikkha, which covers the cost of equipment, dress, accommodation and they have a one-year grace period before being required to pay the loan through long-term installments.

Professor Yunus congratulated the new graduates and their parents on the great occasion, urging them to become leaders in automobile maintenance services in Bangladesh and other countries. He mentioned that another automobile-related joint venture with a Japanese company would be launched very soon, which will market reliable automobile spare parts for better maintenance.
Professor Yunus calls on Indian Tribal youth to become entrepreneurs. He delivered the Keynote Speech at Samvaad, Indian Tribal National Congress in which he said the education system needs to change and encourage entrepreneurship over seeking jobs. He addressed a house packed with tribal youth from all over India, activists and scholars at an event in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand in India.

A World of Three Zeroes presented to His Holiness Pope Francis by Noble Laureate Professor Yunus in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican.

The President of École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) Professor Martin Vetterli and Professor Muhammad Yunus discussing collaboration between their institutions on technology applications to solve concrete problems. Yunus Centre will undertake field trials of all technologies developed by EPFL through social business applications. The university agreed to make the PhD students of EPFL to be encouraged to apply their technology to solve concrete social problems. EPFL is a university in Lausanne, Switzerland, that specializes in natural sciences and engineering funded by federal government.
YUNUS ATTENDS CENTENARY CONFERENCE OF INDIAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION (IEA) AS GUEST OF HONOUR

Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus was invited as Guest of honour at the 100th conference of Indian Economic Association (IEA) on December 27, 2017 in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. He was invited at the historic centenary conference of IEA, which was established in 1917. He will give a special lecture for the economists on December 28.

President of India Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the conference as the chief guest at Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh, India. Governor of Andhra Pradesh E.S.L. Narasimhan and Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu were also present at the inaugural event. The theme of the conference is ‘India development experience since Independence’. In his official address, HE President of India welcomed Professor Yunus at the conference and said, “Professor Yunus’ work in development economics has made him the pride of the entire subcontinent.”

Professor Yunus in his inaugural address to the conference highlighted what he thinks are important issues of the world such as absence of financial structure to help the poor to express their entrepreneurial ability, obscene concentration of wealth in a few hands facilitated by economic theory. Economist must fix this machine to let wealth flow from top to bottom, not the other way around. Right after the speech, Professor Yunus had a one on one meeting with the Indian President to discuss the issues raised by Yunus during his speech during the inaugural session. Indian President invited Professor Yunus to meet him at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, official residence of the President to discuss in details about the issues.

Around 5000 high profile dignitaries including civil servants, researchers, and economists participated at the inaugural session of the conference. The 100th conference of Indian Economic Association which is being held at Acharya Nagarjuna University will end on December 30, 2017. Yunus’ book A World of Three Zeros is being sold at the conference venue.

VISIT TO KHAN ACADEMY

Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus invited by Salman Khan to a fireside chat at the groundbreaking Khan Academy founded by him, followed by book signing of his new book “A World of Three Zeros” in San Francisco.
Success Stories

Mr. Aminul started his business with a small handloom factory. At first, he started with 4 handlooms, and now it increased to 30. He buys pieces of clothes from the garments factories of Dhaka and makes different types of mats. His production is in sell all over Bangladesh.

His father was a share-cropper and it was impossible for him to provide a family of 5, including 3 sons and 1 daughter. For this reason Aminul had to drop out from school, despite of his interest to continue his study. His mother Julekha Begum, a Grameen Bank member borrowed BDT. 20,000 (250 US$) from Grameen Bank and gave to Aminul for his business. However, this sum proved to be inadequate to buy a handloom. They have to cut down a tree belong to them and made a handloom with the wood. He had been struggling with his business for the lack of sufficient capital. At this point he discussed with a Nobin Udyokt (New Entrepreneur) and contacted with the field office of GTT. After learning the details, he signed an agreement with GTT in 2014 and received investment of BDT. 200,000 (2,500 US$) in two installments. Thus, his journey of success begins. He received Best NU award from GTT in 2016 for the significant progress in his business.

Aminul already refunded the whole investment from GTT and has applied for a second time investment. Today the number of his handlooms increased to 30 and number of employees are 30. There are 100 workers trained from his factory and is working currently for other factories as skilled workers. Aminul says about it, “I feel good that they are earning from other factories, though not from my factory. I was also poor one day, and I feel proud and peace as I was able to create employment for others.”

ONNOSHEBA

Onnosheba is a diner and a catering service that provides nutritious and affordable food to menial workers mostly rickshaw pullers, daily laborers, school going children, construction workers and other lower and mid income earning working adults in the urban area of Chittagong, Bangladesh who are dependent on unhealthy street food for daily meal. It currently serves 700 meals a day, and has ambitions to increase to 25,000 meals a day within a few years, all without addition of taste enhancing ingredients, according to the founder Abida Hassan. Onnosheba was established in 2015 and is already profitable, operating on the non-dividend principle, ploughing back the profits instead to expand the business and reach more of the under-served. Onnosheba was a finalist in a global social business competition organized by the City of Paris last year.

Managing Director of Onnosheba Ms. Abida Sultana explains, “Actually we are trying to solve crisis of availability of healthy food at affordable price in urban areas of Chittagong through social business frame work. Onnosheba is working for the mass people those who are deprived of healthy and good food. Within next two/ three years our target is to introduce packed food for the mass working people at street level. To fulfill this aim we need to connect entrepreneurs from different sectors to work with as it has immense opportunity to develop the group of job seekers by adding them with social business frame through Onnosheba.”

The key characteristics of Onnosheba is here food is prepared without the use of additives but with high quality ingredients and still sell it in an affordable price by keeping lower profit. Onnosheba also create entrepreneurs by giving new small & mobile shop owners food items on credit which allows them to start business without their seed capital.
As Social Business is increasingly graduating from a theoretical probability to an emerging alternative economic model across the world, the ever increasing number of exposure visitors to Yunus Centre is a reflection of that graduation. Recently, senior business management consultants, researchers, and students from all over the world who decided to commit themselves supporting social businesses in their region, visited Yunus Centre to learn more closely - how the social business ventures are flourishing in Bangladesh. Professionals from Indonesia, YAHINTARA, who are working in the social welfare especially on environment, visited Yunus Centre and different social business ventures to get inspiration. CEO of Inergy, a tech startup company of USA with a mission to provide the world with affordable solar power visited Yunus Centre to directly experience successful social business models and learn more. Visitors from leading public universities all over the world who are performing Masters or PHD, found it inspiring how social business having impact in different sectors of the society including that in the education sector. An Indian govt(semi) level team - who wanted to explore the possibility of a social business joint venture in the training field also joined . They apparently know little about social business but very much eager to learn. Visitors also came from UK, Japan, Brazil at Yunus Centre and learnt about social business lately.

SOCIAL BUSINESS ENTHUSIASTS VISIT YUNUS CENTRE

Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus and ED, Yunus Centre, Ms Lamiya Morshed with six member team from Indonesia at Yunus Centre; they are from YAHINTARA (Architect Green Nusantara Foundation), an institution engaged in nonprofit social community activities

Ms Ayako Hirota from Rikkyo University, Japan and Shane Scicluna from Middlesex University, UK at Nobel Gallery , to gather up knowledge of Nobel Laureate’s long journey at a glance
Yunus Social Business Centre is a research hub for Social Business. A Social Business Centre under the Yunus name follows the principles and guidelines provided by Professor Muhammad Yunus, and try to determine the role of Social Business in solving society’s most pressing problems. Yunus Social Business Centres spread the idea of social business among the university students encouraging entrepreneurship and social commitments in them. Beyond the activities in the base university Yunus Social Business Centre also conducts social business workshops in different universities. Yunus Social Business Centre is usually setup at the university corridor following a few rules and regulations.

By January 2018, 46 centers has been established in different universities in India, USA, UK, Japan, Taiwan, Albania, Australia, New Zealand, Nepal, Thailand, Poland, Italy, Brazil, China, France, Turkey, Germany and Azerbaijan.

Recently, Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus formally launched the Yunus Social Business Centre (YSBC) at prestigious Swiss University École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). EPFL is a university in Lausanne, Switzerland, that specializes in natural sciences and engineering funded by federal government. It is widely regarded as a world leading university. Also, Professor Yunus signed an MoU with Dr. BR Ambedkar University (BRAU), located in Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh during the centenary conference of the Indian Economic Association at Acharya Nagarjuna University last December. After the YSBC of SSM College of Engineering (SSMCE), Tamil Nadu, and YSBC, Chandigarh University, Punjab, BRAU is the third university in India.
Social Business Pedia, the online encyclopedia for social business is a free web portal dedicated to facilitate social businesses. This Platform is the one stop point for knowing about social business ideas, news, information, projects, academic resources, entrepreneurs, investors, promoters etc.

**THE WEBSITE PROVIDES A WIDE ARRAY OF FACILITIES:**
- News about what is happening in the world of Social Business;
- All social business events information updates;
- Details of various social business projects being implemented throughout the world;
- Graphs and charts portraying various Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of social business activities such as amount of investment, number of employment, projects etc.
- Profiles of friends of social business who are supporting and implementing the idea across the world;
- Profiles & contact details of the youths who initiated social businesses;
- Academic resources like books, articles, research papers, journals, speeches, interviews relating to Social Business;
- A communication interface that works like a social media site allowing people/organizations accesses to the communities (e.g. individuals, companies, universities, institutions etc.) of Social Business throughout the world
- Guidelines to start social business and paves ways for getting seed fund;
- Online library containing various social business resources;
- Live video streaming of various social business events;
- Photos & videos of various social business events & projects;
- Easy registration & content sharing by registered users.
- Business plans of thousands of social businesses
- Updates on Nobin Udyokta Program in Bangladesh and around the world

We are inviting you to take a tour of it. We invite everybody to put what they are seeing, what they are thinking, what are they producing, what kind of company they are creating. Visit us @ www.socialbusinesspedia.com

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Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus exchanging the MoU documents for establishment of YSBC with BRAU Vice-Chancellor Koona Ramji in the presence of Minister of Human Resources Development of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Ganta Srinivasa Rao in Guntur, India on December 27, 2017
Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus formally launched the construction work of the permanent campus of Grameen Caledonian College of Nursing (GCCN) on 16th January, 2018. GCCN, which has already established itself as the country’s premier nursing college, is being operated at a rented premise in Dhaka right now. This permanent campus at Diyabari, Uttara in Dhaka will be a part of the planned ‘Samajik Medical Complex’, a state-of-the-art social business medical facility of Bangladesh where there will be medical college, health sciences institute and tertiary level hospital.

Social Business Day is approaching fast. We hope you are getting ready to join this annual Social Business festival. This year has a surprise: VENUE! Instead of the traditional venue of Dhaka, this year Social Business Day will be held in India. Among the competing cities to host Social Business Day 2018, the front-runner is Bangalore. This will be a new and exciting experience for all of us. It will be held on June 28-29, 2018.

We invite you to register for the 8th Social Business Day, hosted on behalf of Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus and Yunus Centre by Yunus Social Business, India. This year, our theme will be ‘A World of Three Zeros: Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, Zero Net Carbon Emissions’.

There will also be a Pre-meeting of the Social Business Academia Network on June 29, 2018, in order to prepare for our Social Business Academia Conference 2018 which will take place in November.

We look forward for you to join us on this special occasion.