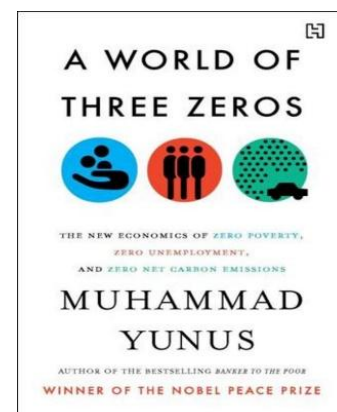


BOOK REVIEW: A WORLD OF THREE ZEROS: THE NEW ECONOMICS OF ZERO POVERTY, ZERO UNEMPLOYMENT, AND ZERO NET CARBON EMISSIONS

Reviewed by
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Yunus, Muhammad: A World of Three Zeros: The New Economics of Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, and Zero Net Carbon Emissions. Public Affairs, New York, United States, 2017 (ISBN 978-1610397575), Pages: 304



Review

The book “A World of Three Zeros- The New Economics of zero poverty, zero unemployment, zero net carbon emission” was published in 2017. In it, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus shares his powerful vision of rethinking the global economy. He questioned the conventional capitalistic economic system regarding poverty, unemployment, and environmental crisis. He envisions a world of three zeros and advocates a transformative economic model prioritizing social business concepts over profit to reduce social issues.

The book is divided into three parts, each enlightening an aspect of one zero. The content has ten chapters highlighting the dimensions of Yunus’s vision of a new economic model through social businesses. While the introductory part includes the argument of the existing economic downside, the concluding section is about the visionary future.

In **the first part, zero poverty**, Dr. Yunus claims that conventional economics has been unsuccessful in addressing poverty and inequality. He believes that poverty is the result of an economic system that limit opportunities for the poor and if the right opportunities is given, they can become self-reliant. Grameen Bank, one of his initiatives, is an instance through which millions of people have been lifted out of poverty through microfinance services. Referring to Grameen Danone Foods and its focus on malnutrition, he states that social business can provide a sustainable approach to social challenges like poverty by keeping social objectives in mind.

The second part, zero unemployment, critiques the job creation process of the traditional economic system dominated by large corporations which ultimately creates unequal wealth distribution. Believing that human has the ability to be entrepreneurs, he suggests that people should be given the opportunity to be self-employed instead of depending on jobs. The idea is clarified with the examples of two social businesses named ‘the Grameen Bank and Grameen Telecom’ which help people to become economically independent through start-up businesses like small shops, tailoring, and agro-poultry businesses as entrepreneurs.

In Part Three, Yunus states climate change and proposes using social businesses to enhance environmental sustainability. He referred to initiatives, ‘Grameen Shakti’ which provides affordable solar energy to rural Bangladesh and ‘Grameen veolia’ promotes safe drinking water and sustainable water management. These initiatives exhibit how social businesses can protect the environment.

The first half of the book - **chapters one to five**- critiques the current economy and its failure to address the key issues of poverty, inequity, and the concentration of wealth. Yunus examines the historical rise of inequity, the uncertain future of work amid automation, and how these factors threaten democracy and social liability. He also reflects on how the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity from the French Revolution have been undermined by today’s economic practices.

The rest part from **seven to ten** articulate Yunus’s concept of social business as a solution to these challenges in achieving the vision of the world of three zeros. The book concludes with a roadmap for achieving this transformative vision and reinforces the call for action in individuals and societies to embrace the new economic concept presented in the book. He leaves the readers with a sense of optimism to contribute to building a world of three zeros.

The book showcases Yunus’s vision of a world where business serves humanity and the planet together is inspirational and thought-provoking. The book is rich with examples of successful social business and the author’s real-life experience to illustrate how this proposed model works in practice, lending credibility to his ideas. Another motivating aspect of this book is that it deals with a complex economic concept, written in an accessible way that suits a wide audience, from policy-makers to students and social entrepreneurs. The readers may find Yunus’s vision of the world of three zeros overly idealistic as it would require significant shifts in global thinking, policies, and economic practices. While Yunus passionately advocates for social business, the book could have been more balanced by addressing potential challenges and counterarguments. Without this, it may seem one-sided, overlooking the complexities and possible hurdles in implementing his vision into reality.

The book is an inspiring call to action for anyone interested in social justice, sustainability, and economic reform. It is a must-read book for anyone interested in understanding the potential of social business to create positive social change globally. It left me with the sense of urgency to explore how social business could be integrated into mainstream economic practices. The world of three zeros concept needs a solid empirical study which hopefully sheds the light on close associations of these 3 zeros. This could also be aligned with global SDGs, paving the way for a more equitable and environmentally responsible future.

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