



Press Kit

Yunus Environment Hub

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Who We Are

Yunus Environment Hub (YEH) is the global social business network that creates solutions for the environmental crisis. Co-founded and led by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus, YEH supports and develops social business solutions addressing environmental issues in a financially self-sustainable way.

Prof. Muhammad Yunus Co-Founder & Chairman Yunus Environment Hub

Recipient of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, Professor Muhammad Yunus is internationally recognized as the founder of microcredit and as the father of social business. For more than 40 years, he has successfully worked to meld capitalism & social responsibility. In 1976, he created the first institution to provide micro-loans to empower the poor to become entrepreneurs. Grameen Bank has since lent more than USD 26.5 billion to those suffering extreme poverty across Bangladesh while maintaining a consistent repayment rate above 98% and has been replicated worldwide.

Complimenting his work with microcredit, Prof. Yunus pioneered the global social business movement. Today, he continues to advocate for businesses that are created to solve social & environmental problems. His early career as a professor of economics - followed by years of work with dignitaries and icons influencing global culture and economy - allow him unprecedented insight into the forces and industries that can affect powerful change through social business.

Aside from the Nobel Peace Prize, Prof. Yunus is the recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal & the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Only six individuals in history have received all three distinctions. In addition, he received more than 60 honorary degrees from more than 25 countries and more than 140 awards from more than 35 countries. For his constant innovation and enterprise, Fortune Magazine named Prof. Yunus in March 2012 as “one of the greatest entrepreneurs of our time.”

Our Vision

A “World of Three Zeros”:
Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, and Zero Net Carbon Emissions

Our Mission

Our mission is to design and implement social business-based solutions to environmental and social challenges that create opportunities along the value chain.

What We Do

Building on over 40 years of Grameen's experience in developing and implementing social business solutions, Yunus Environment Hub provides expertise on all aspects related to environmental issues.

Circular Economy

We support the transformation from linear to circular economy. A circular economy is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. Our solutions are based on the 7 R's Rethink, Reduce, Re-use, Repair, Refurbish, Recover and Recycle.

Waste Management & Plastic Recycling

We need to end plastic in our environment. For this, we need sustainable municipal waste management systems including waste segregation at source, collection, sorting and recycling technology. We also work on extended producer responsibility as well as use cases, standards and quality of secondary materials to increase closed loop recycling and circularity.

Carbon Neutrality

The basis of our work is to contribute to a carbon neutral economy. We develop and support solutions that target global carbon reductions by innovating carbon-free business alternatives and compensating mechanisms for unavoidable emissions. We lead by example, as a carbon neutral organization.

Biodiversity

We contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and some of the world's most endangered rain forests by supporting local communities and indigenous people through sustainable entrepreneurship, capacity building and access to markets. Solutions include ecotourism, permacultures, sustainable forestry and afforestation programs.

Sustainable Agriculture

We promote sustainable agriculture by empowering small holder farmers and rural communities through entrepreneurship training, capacity building, digital skills and access to markets. We help to grow sustainable practices in largely remote and difficult to reach areas to sustain the livelihoods of local people.

Clean Energy

We support solutions that provide clean energy both as a replacement for traditional sources of energy such as charcoal or gas and as energy supply for households without prior access to electricity. Grameen Shakti is the world's largest rural renewable energy company and has experience in decentralized solar panels, improved cooking stoves and community biogas plants.

Access to Water & Sanitation

We foster solutions that provide access to clean water and sanitation in both rural as well as urban communities. For example, Grameen Veolia Water operates and maintains a water treatment plant that provides safe drinking water in rural Bangladesh, where the groundwater is naturally contaminated by arsenic.

How We Do It

Harnessing the Power of the Yunus Network

In order for a network to truly work, it requires trust and deep-felt human connection around a common purpose. For over 40 years, Prof. Yunus endlessly created meaningful connections around the world, building a strong network, which is the foundation of our organisation.

Our network covers over 100 countries and consists of organisations, experts & individuals around the world passionate and committed to solve social and environmental problems. This allows us to design and pilot solutions at global level while implementing at local level with local people.

What We Offer

Incubation & Acceleration

We constantly grow an extensive pool of social business entrepreneurs that focus on environmental issues through incubator and accelerator programs.

Venture Building

We build new ventures together with companies, foundations and other organizations and replicate existing solutions adapted to the local context in new regions.

Consulting & Training

We share our know-how and solutions through training, ideation and co-creation formats to help organizations identify strategies to act upon the environmental crisis.

Education

We enable community support networks, bring social business solutions to the international community and raise awareness for the urgency of the environmental crisis.

Our Solutions

For more information on these and other projects in development, please contact us directly at Christina.Jaeger@yunuseh.com.

Zero Plastic Waste Cities

Targeting the issue of global plastic waste leakage, the Yunus Environment Hub has developed a modular social business approach. Through the development of local social businesses, municipal waste management systems in developing countries highly affected by plastic waste leakage are strengthened. In collaboration with the Alliance to End Plastic Waste, the first two Zero Plastic Waste Cities have successfully been piloted in India and Vietnam. Two more Zero Plastic Waste Cities are currently being developed in East Africa. Run by teams of local entrepreneurs and staff, all social businesses founded during the course of the Zero Plastic Waste Cities program increase the amount of locally collected and recycled plastic waste while providing income opportunities to informal waste pickers and improving local livelihoods.

Extended Producer Responsibility

Yunus Environment Hub is co-chairing PREVENT Waste Alliance' working group on closing loops for packaging & EPR. PREVENT Waste Alliance was initiated by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development to contribute to minimising waste, eliminating pollutants and maximising the reuse of resources in the economy worldwide. The first working group result is an EPR toolbox that enables policy makers and local waste management stakeholders in low- and middle-income countries to finance and organize waste collection, sorting and recycling. The toolbox is centered around factsheets, FAQs, and case studies and was developed in collaboration with stakeholders from piloting partner countries Ghana and Indonesia. Find the toolbox [here](#).

A Greener Future for East Africa's Youth

Three-year program from 2020-2023 to address environmental degradation and youth unemployment in East Africa through support programs and venture building of social businesses that create jobs while restoring ecosystems and limiting carbon emissions & plastic waste. The program has three core elements: 1) A self-learning online platform that supports the training of social business entrepreneurs, 2) YEH incubator program with tailored mentorship and networking opportunities to selected early stage social business entrepreneurs in areas such as business planning, product development, fundraising, market entry and more and 3) feasibility study for Zero Plastic Waste Cities program on two high-leakage cities in need for improved municipal solid waste management.

ClimateSeed

ClimateSeed is the first social business by BNP Paribas that was created in 2018 with the support of the Yunus Environment Hub and part of BNP Paribas' social business intrapreneurship program. ClimateSeed's mission is to contribute to the preservation of our planet by offering organizations to easily and securely take actions towards a more sustainable world. The user-friendly digital platform allows companies to offset their unavoidable CO2 emissions by contributing to a variety of sustainable projects around the world. For more information see <https://www.climateseed.com/>.

Entrepreneurship in the Amazon Rainforest

The Amazon Rainforest is not only home to a variety of endangered animal and plant species but constitutes one of the world's most important regions for our global climate. Yunus Environment Hub thus engages in the preservation of the Amazon Rainforest and indigenous culture through social business support programs to enhance sustainable entrepreneurship and income opportunities among local communities. We believe that indigenous and local communities play an important role in protecting and strengthening the biodiversity of the Amazon Rainforest.

Our Contribution

Our solutions are based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals targeting a combination of different goals in each specific project, while always contributing to Professor Yunus' vision of "A World of Three Zero's": Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment and Zero Net Carbon Emissions.

Our Commitment to Carbon Neutrality

At Yunus Environment Hub, we have directed all our business activities and operations towards the aim of organizational carbon neutrality. We have analyzed our carbon emissions and introduced measures to reduce our carbon footprint to the minimum and off-set the unavoidable emissions. Our guiding principles for going carbon neutral:

- 1) At Yunus Environment Hub, we have a friendly workplace policy that allows home and remote work reducing emissions for commuting.
- 2) Furthermore, we only travel for business meetings that cannot be held in a digital form. While being one of our guiding principles long before, the Covid-19 pandemic has further strengthened our intuition that most meetings may be held equivalently efficient through online platforms.
- 3) All our staff consider their ways of transportation carefully and with regards to their environmental impact. Thus, travel policy for short-distance travel is to choose trains or buses and where appropriate public transport instead of taxi. Long-distance travels are reduced to the minimum required.
- 4) We have designed virtual workshops as well as an online learning platform for training and incubation programs. When conducting physical meetings and trainings, we refer to local staff or our global network of affiliate organizations to avoid long-distance travels.
- 5) As the fight against global plastic waste pollution constitutes one of our key areas of expertise and action, we understand ourselves as a plastic-free organization. We don't use single-use items or packaging and segregate waste for recycling and composting. Where waste segregation is not available, we promote and advise on a respective adoption.
- 6) We prefer reused or recycled materials over new products or virgin materials for our work equipment and materials. For example, we use refurbished computer and phone hardware from [Refurbed](#) or [AfB](#).
- 7) We positively promote a vegetarian/ vegan diet in our organization, at events, workshops or business meetings.

- 8) We are a digital and paperless organization. This refers to both our internal as well as our external communication.
- 9) We carefully choose suppliers and business partners that have the same environmental and social standards with a particular preference for collaborating with other social businesses.
- 10) Our bank account is with GLS Bank, the first German ethical bank with a focus on cultural, social and ecological initiatives, initiated by people, and not anonymous interests seeking capital or maximum profit. The name stands for Gemeinschaftsbank für Leihen und Schenken which translates as Community bank for loaning and giving. With the main focus on cultural, social and environmental ventures, GLS tries to deal with challenges in the society by developing creative solutions.
- 11) Our web host is Greensta using a 100% renewable energy from Greenpeace Energy eG. Greensta wants to contribute to the climate crisis through the use of renewable energies and abstains from profit maximization.

While these guiding principles help us to minimize the carbon emissions associated with our organizational activities, we use ClimateSeed – one of Yunus Environment Hub’s portfolio social businesses – to offset our unavoidable carbon emissions. Through ClimateSeed, we are able to acquire carbon credits from Gold Standard certified sustainability projects, many of them located in developing countries. We have chosen ClimateSeed for the offsets of our carbon emissions in order to support and promote social business practices that aim at reaching carbon neutrality. ClimateSeed is not only driven by its social mission of zero net carbon emissions, but also applies the UN Sustainability Development Goals as a baseline to select projects and measure their impact.

What Is Social Business

The Concept

Social Business is a cause-driven business. In a social business, the investors/owners can gradually recoup the money invested but cannot take any dividend beyond that point.

Purpose of the investment is purely to achieve one or more social objectives through the operation of the company, no personal gain is desired by the investors. The company must cover all costs and make a profit, at the same time achieve the environmental or social objective, such as providing safe drinking water, introducing renewable energy, preventing plastic pollution, reducing CO2 emission or providing health care, housing or financial services for the poor in a business way.

The impact of the business on people or the environment, rather than the amount of profit made in a given period measures the success of social business. Sustainability of the company indicates that it is running as a business. The objective of the company is to achieve social goals.

The Principles

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus defines the concept of Social Business by seven principles:

1. Business objective will be to overcome poverty, or one or more problems (such as education, health, technology access, and environment) which threaten people and society; not profit maximization
2. Financial and economic sustainability
3. Investors get back their investment amount only. No dividend is given beyond investment money
4. When investment amount is paid back, company profit stays with the company for expansion and improvement
5. Gender-sensitive and environmentally conscious
6. Workforce gets market wage with better working conditions
7. Do it with joy!

Our Background

We are a proud spin-off of The Grameen Creative Lab

Grameen Creative Lab (GCL) was set-up in 2009 by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus and his Creative Advisor Hans Reitz to serve society's most pressing needs by promoting social business globally. GCL has taken an important role in the formation of the Social Business Movement by organizing the Global Social Business Summit and countless social business initiatives have emerged from it. GCL is the front-runner of the Social Business Movement and uses its expertise, network and resources to bring social business to new areas. Several spin-offs have been created that remain part of the GCL family. In 2018, the Yunus Sports Hub and in 2019, the Yunus Environment Hub were launched, both experts in social business to bring solutions to the sports world and in the environment crisis. Together we make the impossible possible.

Contact

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