



Muhammad's biography

Muhammad Yunus

Visionary, Nobel Laureate, internationally recognized for his work in poverty

The visionary who pioneered the use of micro-[finance](#) as a means to help the poor, Muhammad Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

Muhammad Yunus' background

It was when he began working as a professor of [economics](#) that he realised that much of what he taught did not help the poor. He defied convention and founded Grameen Bank in 1983 based on micro-lending, a bank which has helped the most impoverished people in his native Bangladesh and which has been emulated in countries all over the world. His dedication to helping the poor and promoting the rights of women have seen Yunus win the Nobel Peace Prize and become an internationally renowned authority on human rights.

Initially set up in Bangladesh, the bank's aim was to turn conventional practice on its head providing small loans only to those in real need of them, thus providing the means for the poorest people to escape from poverty. Micro-lending is now carried out by similar banks around the world, lending money on terms which enable those who take them out to repay them and to succeed.

The concept of micro-lending (or micro-credit) initially occurred to Yunus whilst he was working as a professor of economics at Bangladesh's Chittagong University. At this time, in the 1970s, poverty and famine were rife and the fact that hard-working people were unable to raise themselves out of poverty as they were not eligible for loans of any kind disturbed Yunus. He felt that loans should be provided to those who needed them, with suitable repayment terms. He began providing micro-loans and soon found that it had the desired effect helping poor people to succeed, leading him to found Grameen Bank.

Today, 96% of the banks customers are women as they often have more difficulty obtaining loans from ordinary banks, but are welcomed due to Grameens policy of helping those in need.

Over the years the micro-credit system has proved doubters wrong as approximately 98% of loans are repaid, the highest rate among banking systems. Yunus has been outspoken about his dedication to helping women and has previously been a member of the Global Commission of Women's Health and has served on the advisory boards of the United Nations Expert Group on Women and [Finance](#) and the Fourth World Conference on Women. 90% of the shares in Grameen Bank are owned by the impoverished people that it serves (the government own the remaining 10%).

His work with Grameen Bank and with his numerous other companies has led to Yunus being awarded

some of the highest humanitarian accolades in the world and he is a sought after professor, speaker and human rights expert.

Muhammad Yunus was born in Bangladesh and attended Dhaka University, where he was awarded a Fulbright scholarship. He went on to study Economics at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, achieving his Ph.D. in 1969 before returning to Bangladesh and working as a Professor of Economics.

Awards, Accolades, Achievements, Honours

- Founder and Managing Director Grameen Bank
- Chairman The Yunus Centre
- Congressional Gold Medal Award for efforts to combat global poverty – 2013
- Dwight D. Eisenhower Medal for Leadership and Service – Eisenhower Fellowship (2009)
- Friend of Children Award – Save the Children (2008)
- Vision Award – Global Economic Network (2007)
- South – South Cooperation Award – United Nations (2007)
- Global [Entrepreneurship](#) Leader Award – National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (2007)
- Red Cross Gold Medal – Red Cross Society (2007)
- Nobel Peace Prize (with Grameen Bank) (2006)
- Seoul Peace Prize (2006)
- Global Citizen of the Year Award – Patel Foundation for Global Understanding (2006)
- Foundation of Justice Award – Spain (2005)
- Freedom Award Freedom Foundation (USA) (2005)
- World Affairs Council Award (2004)
- Mahatma Gandhi Award (2002)
- Grand Prize of the Fukuoka Asian [Culture](#) Prize – Japan (2001)
- OMEGA Award of Excellence for Lifetime Achievement (2000)
- Indira Gandhi Prize – India (1998)
- Sydney Peace Prize (1998)
- Cabinet Minister (Advisor) – Caretaker Government, Bangladesh (1996)
- Man for Peace Award – Italy (1997)
- Max Schmidheiny Foundation Freedom Prize (1995)
- Pfeffer Peace Prize (1994)
- World Food Prize – World Food Prize Foundation (1994)
- Rear Admiral M. A. Khan Memorial Gold Medal Award – Bangladesh (1993)
- Member – International Advisory Group for the Fourth World Conference on Women (1993 – 1995)
- Humanitarian Award CARE U.S.A. (1993)
- Independence Day award Bangladesh (1987)
- Central Bank Award – Bangladesh (1985)
- President's Award Bangladesh (1978)
- Project Director – Grameen Bank Project (1976 1983)
- Professor of Economics – Chittagong University (1975 1989)
- Director – Rural Economics Programme, Chittagong, Bangladesh (1975 1989)
- Associate Professor of Economics/Head of the Department of Economics – Chittagong University, Bangladesh (1972 1975)
- Deputy Chief – General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Bangladesh Government (1972)
- Assistant Professor of Economics – Middle Tennessee State University, USA (1969 1972)
- Lecturer of Economics – Chittagong College, Bangladesh (1962 1965)

Yunus has created a number of Grameen companies in his native Bangladesh, within industries including: mobile telephone providers, Internet Service providers, Software, Social Venture Capital, Capital Management, Textiles, Knitwear, Renewable Energy, Health, [Education](#), Agriculture, Fisheries,

Livestock, and Business Promotion. There is also a Grameen Information Technology Park. He is a board member for numerous national and international organisations and has been awarded Honorary Doctorates by universities throughout the world.

Current/Past Roles and Positions

- [Economist](#) and Professor
- Founder and Managing Director of Grameen Bank
- Nobel Peace Prize Winner
- Helped battle poverty through his pioneering use of micro-credit systems

Speaking Style

Passionate, knowledgeable and experienced, Muhammad Yunus is determined to educate others and to inspire corporations, organisations, governments and individuals to assist those in dire need.

Muhammad's talks

- **Women's Issues**

Speakers Associates Ltd | +44 (0)1628 636600 | info@speakersassociates.com | www.speakersassociates.com