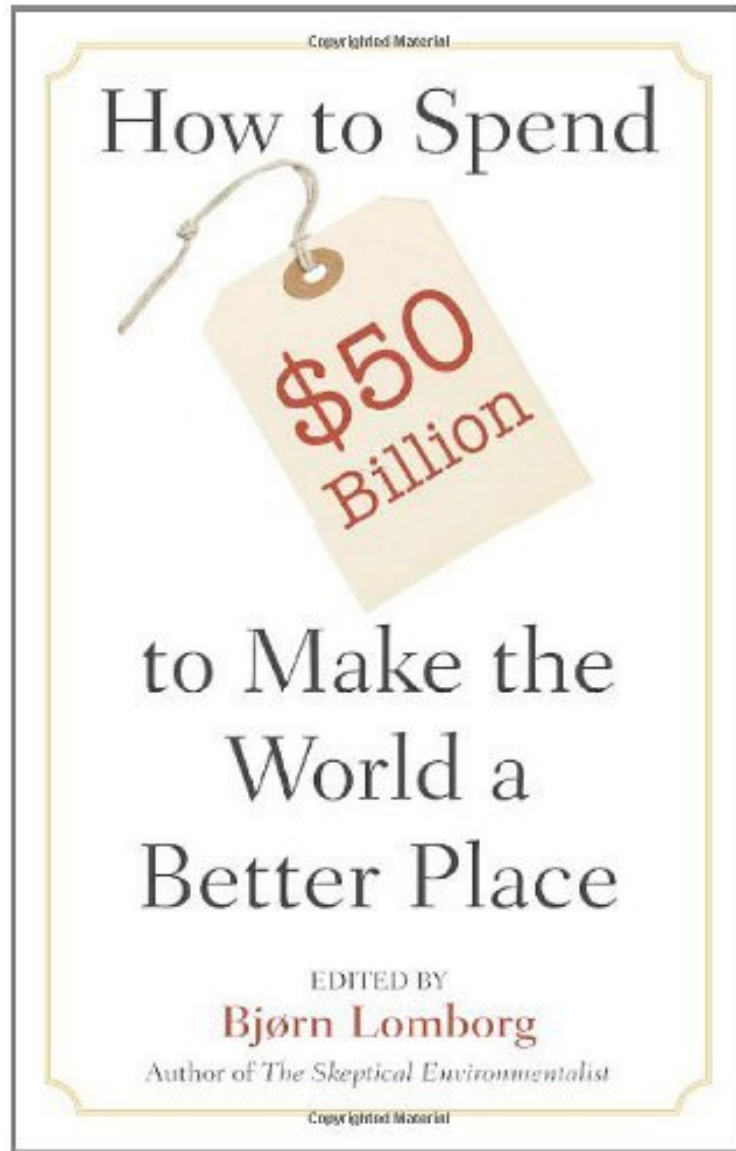


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How to Spend \$50 Billion to Make the World a Better Place

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From Cambridge University Press : How to Spend \$50 Billion to Make the World a Better Place before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How to Spend \$50 Billion to Make the World a Better Place:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Global Warming Distracts from the World's Truly Pressing ProblemsBy Jay LehrGiven tens of billions of dollars to protect the planet and improve the human condition, how would those dollars best be spent?Some of the world's leading social economists were recently asked to tackle this question, and former Greenpeace activist Bjorn Lomborg has reported on the results in his excellent book, How to

Spend \$50 Billion to Make the World a Better Place."Green" is now a major world religion, and the belief in anthropogenic global warming is evidently the pathway to heaven. Actually, it looks more to me like a religious cult from an old Indiana Jones movie, but its greatest crime is the wasting of the world's economic resources when they could so easily be used to solve many of the real problems of the developing world.

Tackling Human Misery

This book is written in readable economic language, concisely placed on only 208 pages, containing nine chapters dealing with communicable diseases, civil wars, the lack of education, poor governance, corruption, hunger and malnutrition, population migration, water, subsidies and trade barriers, and global warming. Each subject is covered by one or more authors and then critiqued by someone with slightly opposing views.

The second half of the twentieth century brought enormous improvements in health across the world. In fact, life expectancy in developing countries has increased faster than in industrialized countries, although this is easier done because of a lower initial baseline. Areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, however, have largely been left behind.

An early example of the excellent facts contained in Lomborg's text tells us, "in 2002 there were 57 million deaths worldwide. Of these 20 percent were children under five, and 98 percent of these childhood deaths occurred in developing countries." Communicable diseases account for seven of the top 10 causes, resulting in 60 percent of premature childhood deaths.

Desperate Need for DDT

One downside of Lomborg's environmental activist roots is evident in the chapter covering malaria. While malaria kills two million people each and every year and exacts a huge burden on Third World economies, the book fails to mention DDT, the most effective weapon against malaria, among its proposed solutions. In fact, the acronym DDT appears absolutely nowhere in the text, proving the contributing economist authors have been brainwashed by the environmental zealots who have allowed, if not caused, the deaths of more than 50 million people worldwide over the past 30 years by banning a chemical that's harmless to humans and animals but kills and repels mosquitoes effectively.

Lomborg himself proposes treated bed nets, which pale in comparison to the effectiveness of targeted, indoor DDT applications.

Cost of Conflict

Moving on to a less-frustrating section, I will wager few readers have seen real-dollar calculations for the economic effects of reducing the incidence of civil war. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, two contributing authors to the book, tell us, "one year of conflict reduces a country's growth rate by 2.2 percent. Since, on average, civil conflict lasts for seven years, the economy will be 15 percent smaller at the end of the war than if the war had not taken place." They also inform us it takes an average of 21 years for an economy to get back to its prewar condition. At the regional level, analysis shows the growth rate of neighboring countries not directly involved in the conflict is reduced nearly a full percent during the war.

Excluding India and China, the 21 countries that were involved in wars between 1965 and 1969 each suffered an average of \$54 billion in economic costs. While this is indeed a significant figure, Collier and Hoeffler tell us countries that have experienced a civil war are almost twice as likely to experience another civil war over the next five years as those that did not.

This is fascinating stuff and makes one respect the humorless but altruistic and useful effort of economists to measure human misery in dollars and cents.

Costs of Corruption

Contributor Susan Rose-Ackerman brilliantly describes the challenge of poor governance and corruption. She notes researchers at the World Bank estimate governments are influenced by \$1 trillion in bribes annually, which is 3 percent of global GDP. Rose-Ackerman says, "Corruption is one symptom of a failure to achieve an appropriate balance between private wealth and public power." Ineffective government breeds corruption. Thus policies focusing solely on economic growth will not be sufficient to reduce corruption if the state is not well-governed. But compared to other global challenges such as hunger, disease, and conflict, corruption is too often overlooked as a root cause of the world's problems. Rose-Ackerman tells us, "There seems to be two ways to limit corruption via grassroots involvement: monitoring the use of central funds and reporting misuse, or local provision of service under contract."

Fighting Hunger, Malnutrition

The chapter on hunger and malnutrition reviews the nature and scale of the problem and the economic benefits that would flow from successful solutions. They propose four opportunity areas for effectively reducing malnutrition: Reduce the prevalence of low birth weight; promote infant and child nutrition and exclusive breast feeding; reduce the prevalence of deficiencies in iron, vitamin A, iodine, and zinc deficiencies; and invest in technology to assist agriculture in developing countries. To reduce the prevalence of iron, iodine, vitamin A, and zinc deficiencies, the authors are confident additional micronutrients can be delivered in a variety of ways including fortified flour, the use of iron skillets, and an all-out effort to provide vitamin supplements at extremely low cost.

Water Distribution Problems

Frank Rijsberman's chapter, "The Water Challenge," is quite outstanding. It's important because nearly half the population of the developing world suffers disease related to access to clean water and sanitation. His opening paragraph nails the problem: "There is clearly sufficient water available in the world for all mankind's needs: domestic, industrial, and agricultural, although distributed very unevenly. The problem is not lack of water, but that the unserved do not have access to capital (financial or political) to make it available to them." Rijsberman tells us poor returns from centralized water infrastructure projects have shown such projects are best managed at the local government or community level. Additionally, he notes, there is evidence government is not necessarily a better provider of water service than the private sector.

Encouraging Trade

Kym Anderson does a nice job sorting through barriers to economic growth. The main thing, the author says, is to press for free trade. Anderson reports economic gains "arise from countries producing more of the goods and services they can provide most efficiently, and less of what others can produce more efficiently. Each country will maximize the value

of its output of goods or services and these will be sought by trading partners because they are competitively priced. After trading, each individual country will be better off than in a world without trade."Evidence gathered during the second half of the twentieth century shows countries that have liberalized their trade have enjoyed an average 1.5 percent increase in annual GDP growth over the pre-reform rate. Warming Money Wasted In the end, unfortunately, Lomborg tackles global warming in a most unsatisfactory manner. Sound scientific objections to global warming alarmism are altogether absent from the book. Despite this deficiency, Lomborg certainly does not recommend precious economic resources be spent on global warming. As the book shows, the massive amount of financial resources needed to cause even a minor change in future temperatures would be far better spent addressing many of the problems described in the book, as they are already killing and impoverishing millions of people each year. The book is a quick and easy read. While not all its answers are simple or definitive, it is guaranteed to open your eyes to the real problems of the world--and to the absurd waste of resources promoted by the wrongheaded do-gooders so prevalent in the world today.-----Jay Lehr, Ph.D.

(lehr@heartland.org) is science director of The Heartland Institute. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An overly short overview By Mec Just what it says on the tin. Lomborg chairs a panel of economists who analyze ten possible charitable interventions and rank them for effectiveness using cost-benefit analysis. This book is condensed from a longer, more detailed work with the original papers and their reviews. Unfortunately, too much is cut. There aren't enough references for me to learn more and the overall tone becomes too take-my-word-for-it. I am not saying the authors are wrong. I'm saying it's difficult for me to corroborate their claims. Still, this analysis is much better than nothing, and well beyond judging charities by their public relations material. I have a certain amount of money to available to make the world a better place, and this book has helped me allocate it. I'm still looking for a better book in this category, though. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One Star By Estragoacut;n Made just for the show. Don't expect any deep discussion on structural/systemical issues.

Edited by Bjoslash;rn Lomborg, this abridged version of the highly acclaimed *Global Crises, Global Solutions* provides a serious yet accessible springboard for debate and discussion on the world's most serious problems, and what we can do to solve them. In a world fraught with problems and challenges, we need to gauge how to achieve the greatest good with our money. This unique book provides a rich set of dialogs examining ten of the most serious challenges facing the world today: climate change, the spread of communicable diseases, conflicts and arms proliferation, access to education, financial instability, governance and corruption, malnutrition and hunger, migration, sanitation and access to clean water, and subsidies and trade barriers. Each problem is introduced by a world-renowned expert who defines the scale of the issue and examines a range of policy options.

From Publishers Weekly This abridged version of the much admired *Global Crises, Global Solutions* pulls together recommendations of the Copenhagen Consensus, a meeting that asked what problems experts and policy-makers should address, given \$50 billion to use as they please. Ten areas of inquiry are covered: disease, civil war, education, global warming, trade barriers, population migration, poor or corrupt governance, and water scarcity. Although those involved found many points of agreement, the dissimilar particulars of each case are laid out so that the casual reader can grasp major issues and viewpoints that otherwise might overwhelm. Along with specialists, the overviews of economists are featured in order to give balance to experts more interested in their pet issues. Disclaimers such as "however" appear frequently, an acknowledgement that a long-run view involving complex problems, undeniably confusing economic calculations and the stubborn unpredictability of future events is more than a bit tricky to address; in deference to that reality, each article concludes with an opposing argument from additional researchers present at the Consensus. This small volume reflects an admirable undertaking, gracefully explained for those interested in guarding the future. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Idquo; This is a stimulating intellectual game with important real-world consequences. Lomborg asks all of us to stop talking grandly and vaguely about solving global problems and instead to rank them - based not only on the potential harm they can cause but also on our ability to turn things around. To govern is to choose and this pithy book forces us to choose. rdquo; -Fareed Zakaria, Newsweek columnist and author of *The Future of Freedom* Idquo; The world's staggering problems won't be solved by singing pop songs, denouncing villains, or adopting the proper moral tone, but by figuring out which policies have the best chance of doing the most good. If the world is going to become a better place, it will be because of the kinds of thinking on display in this courageous and fascinating book. rdquo; -Steven Pinker, Professor, Harvard University, and author of *How the Mind Works* and *The Blank Slate* Idquo; This book helps you make up your own mind, prioritize, and make your own choice. Just in time. rdquo; -Kevin Roberts, CEO Worldwide, Saatchi Saatchi, and author of *Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands* Idquo; Bjoslash;rn Lomborg and his economist colleagues have produced a fascinating and unexpected consensus, which can start a debate about global priorities: Should we prioritize a costly and uncertain attempt to reduce effects of global warming in a hundred years time while millions are dying for lack of mosquito nets or condoms? rdquo; -Matt Ridley, author of *Nature via Nurture* Idquo; This small volume reflects an admirable undertaking, gracefully explained for those interested in guarding the

future" -Publishers Weekly"Lomborg's Copenhagen Consensus Center has posed a challenging question: If we had an additional \$50 billion to spend on mitigating global problems, how should we spend it? To suggest answers, the center convened a panel of eight distinguished economists to evaluate proposals by over two dozen specialists on problems ranging from AIDS and malnutrition to water shortage, civil war, climate change, and migration, among others. Their collective recommendation: focus on AIDS prevention, the provision of micronutrients to poor children, trade liberalization, and the control of malaria. Their choices were determined by the expected payoff, largely but not wholly in economic terms, that each of these programs could generate relative to its cost. Some issues, such as civil war, could not be evaluated in general terms and so were not ranked. The motivating principle of the exercise was that resources are limited, political leaders must make choices, and those choices should be governed by where the most good can be done for humanity -- especially for those who are so poor that they cannot look beyond where their next meal is coming from." -Foreign Affairs"Great book title and a thought-provoking exercise, whether or not one agrees with the worldview and methods of economists." -Future SurveyAbout the AuthorBjorn Lomborg is Adjunct Professor in the Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy at the Copenhagen Business School and the director of the Danish Environmental Assessment Institute. He is also the author of the controversial bestseller, *The Skeptical Environmentalist* (Cambridge, 2001).