

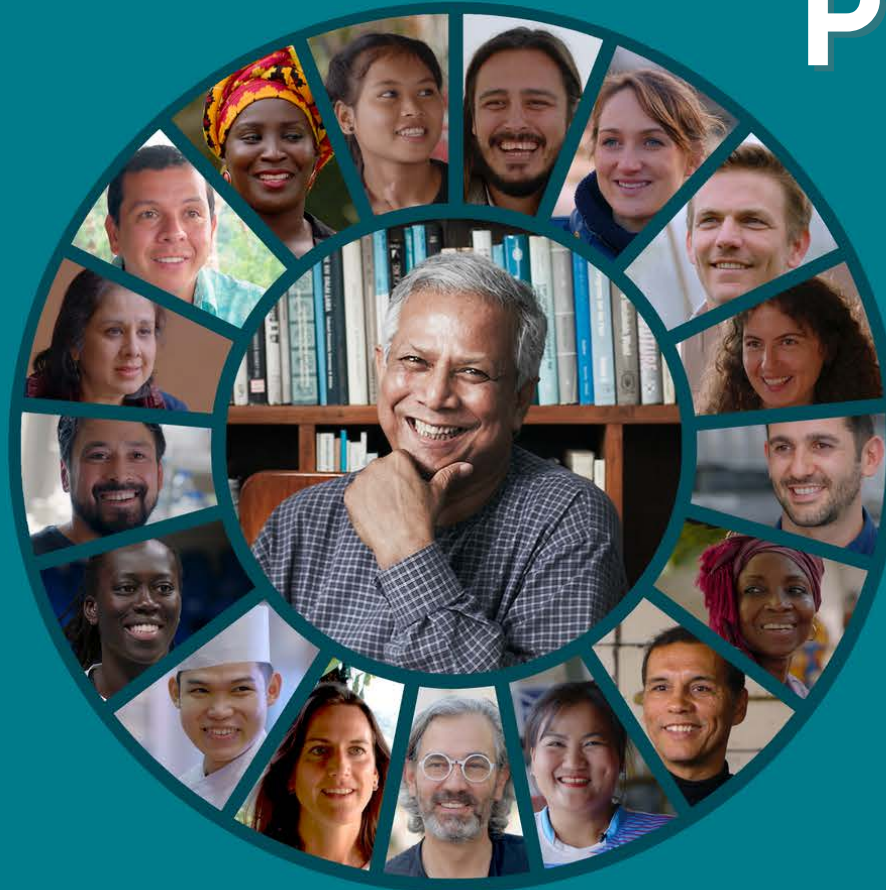
A WORLD OF 3 ZEROS

ZERO NET CARBON EMISSIONS - ZERO POVERTY - ZERO UNEMPLOYMENT

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OFFICIAL SELECTION



A FILM BY ÁINE CLARKE AND MICHEL VAN DER VEKEN

A CO-PRODUCTION AGENT DOUBLE AND AZIMUT COMPANY - PRODUCED BY BENOIT RENSONNET, ETIENNE DONTAINE, NICOLAS HAESSEN - WRITTEN BY ÁINE CLARKE
DIRECTED BY ÁINE CLARKE AND MICHEL VAN DER VEKEN - DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY LUCAS RUYSSSEN - SOUND OLIVIER PHILIPPART
POST PRODUCTION AZIMUT COMPANY, DAME BLANCHE - EDITORS JEANNE BALITEAU, FIONA FATOLLAH - MUSIC PIERRE GILLET
WITH THE SUPPORT OF TAX SHELTER FROM THE BELGIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT - WITH THE SUPPORT OF GO WEST, TAX SHELTER INTERMEDIARY



A WORLD OF 3 ZEROS

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DISTRIBUTION - SALES - PRESS

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SYNOPSIS

Poverty, unemployment, and carbon emissions are global problems. A World of 3 Zeros explores the ability of social entrepreneurship to address these issues and bring them to zero. This documentary takes the audience on the journey undertaken by filmmakers Áine and Michel, to shed light on the works of this new type of business. A concept purposely designed to address social and environmental problems with entrepreneurs who joyfully aim for impact over profit maximization.



“Nothing is impossible for a human being”

PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD YUNUS

INTERVIEW

Áine Clarke & Michel Van der Veken - Directors
Nicolas Haesen - Production Manager

What brought you to the project in the first place?

Áine Clarke : In 2016, we were celebrating 25 years of making corporate films and commercials. But instead of staying comfortably in our position, Michel said to me : “We should be using our skills to help other people, instead of keeping on making people who are already wealthy even wealthier.” And you never go back from that. I had no idea what it would imply, but I knew that was a turning point, and Nicolas [Haesen] who was with us since 2009 was also in that mindset, so it really clicked with him too. So we started reaching out to NGO’s to offer our skills and services. And the first that answered was an organisation in Germany which needed help to edit some footage from Professor Muhammad Yunus’ visiting social entrepreneurs in Uganda. From there, we met with him, and little by little the idea of creating a documentary became clear to us. It’s a way to reach out to a wider audience, immersing ourselves deeper in the subject of social entrepreneurship. And we couldn’t have done it without Nicolas. He’s a really organised person and has been the bridge between Michel and I during this whole journey.

How did you manage this switch from corporate films to feature length documentary?

Nicolas Haesen : It’s a new mindset. We face other issues, organisational issues but also financial issues. But the subject and the development of this film were so thrilling. You get a lot back from such projects.



Michel Van der Veken : Coming from corporate filming, being recognized as documentary filmmakers was, and is still, a challenge for us. And while we used our technical skills and experience to make this film, we had to convince the people and the public that we could tackle such projects, both from a formal and from a content perspective. Sadly, some people just viewed our film as a way to redeem ourselves, after working for so long in the advertising industry. But we kept on working, and we hope the result can prove them wrong.

Áine Clarke : Luckily, our co-producer Agent Double supported us along this journey, with help from the Belgian Tax Shelter. We worked with them before on other projects, and when we came to them with this story, they believed in us. Looking back on our process, when you’re coming from the background that we had and you make such a radical shift, it’s very hard to get other people on board. It doesn’t show in the final result, but I don’t think people realise what it takes to get to that stage, when you’re not playing on that court in the beginning.

How did professor Yunus react to the idea of a documentary?

Áine Clarke : We met him for the first time in Paris, in 2016, in the midst of a conference set up by one of the companies we were working with. His book *A World of 3 Zeros*, from which the film takes its title from, was about to come out, and we were supposed to ask him a few questions on that subject. In the end, we had a great discussion, and after that we kept meeting in other conferences and other events, repeating the process and getting great footage. In 2019, we told him about the idea of making a documentary about his achievements, and he said to us : “I really think it would be more interesting to make a documentary about lots of different examples.” And this idea of depicting all the people around the world that were applying his concepts or were inspired by his ideas, that’s where our film was born. It’s not so much about Muhammad Yunus - we even thought of the title *It’s not about Yunus* - as it is about the projects we discovered, and the inspiring people driving them.



Can you tell us more about the locations and people you met along the way?

Áine Clarke : One thing that I want to point out is that every location and every person we met are in the final cut of the film. It’s something that we wanted out of respect for those who gave their time to talk to us. It was a challenge, but every single person we filmed is in there.

We have footage from 13 different countries, more than twenty projects given voice on screen, and roughly 400 pages of interviews transcript. Going from there to a 106-minute documentary was achieved with the help of our great team, especially our two editors Jeanne Baliteau and Fiona Fatollah. Even though we hadn’t planned on it, we ended up with a final cut with 26 women and 25 men presenting the projects, which perfectly mirrors the values of our production company.

Michel Van der Veken : And if it hadn’t been the case, we would probably have corrected it.

Áine Clarke : It’s part of our DNA, and that’s been something we’ve been really careful about way before, that’s just the way we operate. Shooting took place from 2017 to 2023, and Nicolas helped us organise all the different film shoots and travels.

Shooting and arranging all those interviews must have taken a lot of effort...

Michel Van der Veken : Of course. For us, we simply couldn't rush any of those interviews, nor could we have a poor image or sound quality. When you're making such a film, it's really important that people can relate to the people interviewed, and you cannot achieve that if you don't have an inviting setup and perfect sound. However, we operated on a very small crew. More often than not, it was just a DOP, Áine and I, sometimes with the help of a sound engineer, with no scouting prior to the shoot. The crew and I thus had to find a good shooting location remotely and hope that it matched our expectations when we arrived on site. Which led to several disappointments. But in the end, we always took the time and energy to find the perfect setting. And we drove our crew to do the best possible images of what we wanted, while Áine was meeting the people and getting to know them.

Áine Clarke : It's not just a catalogue of projects made with or inspired by social business. For me, it was always about the people making them. And to achieve that, you have to take the time to talk with them, study and learn about their projects, their backgrounds. It's the only way to get into a better understanding of where they come from and why they chose this path. And I think that's what is really interesting in a documentary. We shot all the footage ourselves on location, except in Bangladesh where we couldn't get a Visa. We now know why.

Michel Van der Veken : What we can also discuss is the role of music in the film. Early on, when we discussed with Pierre Gillet, I told him that we wanted a recurring theme throughout the film. An inspiring melody that could adapt to the different settings, different projects. Pierre created forty variations of that melody to accompany these testimonies from all around the world, with sound and voice recorded by us on location. In the end, it creates what we were trying to achieve : an inspiring documentary with beautiful images.

How are you feeling, now that the project is going to be shown to the public?

Áine Clarke : Excited. Our World Premiere at LA Femme International Film Festival means a lot to me, as a female director. But we've also been selected to several other film festivals - eight so far - and we are very happy to continue this journey with the film. People think that when you've finished the film, the work is over, but it's actually just a milestone. Pitching for festivals is also a laborious procedure, one that we handle ourselves. It takes a lot of time, but it's also very rewarding when you get accepted. Getting the news about these selections, and thoughts or congratulations from other documentary filmmakers, that's what keeps you going.



POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND CARBON EMISSIONS ARE GLOBAL PROBLEMS. WHAT IF THERE WAS A WAY TO FACE THESE ISSUES AND BRING THEM TO ZERO?

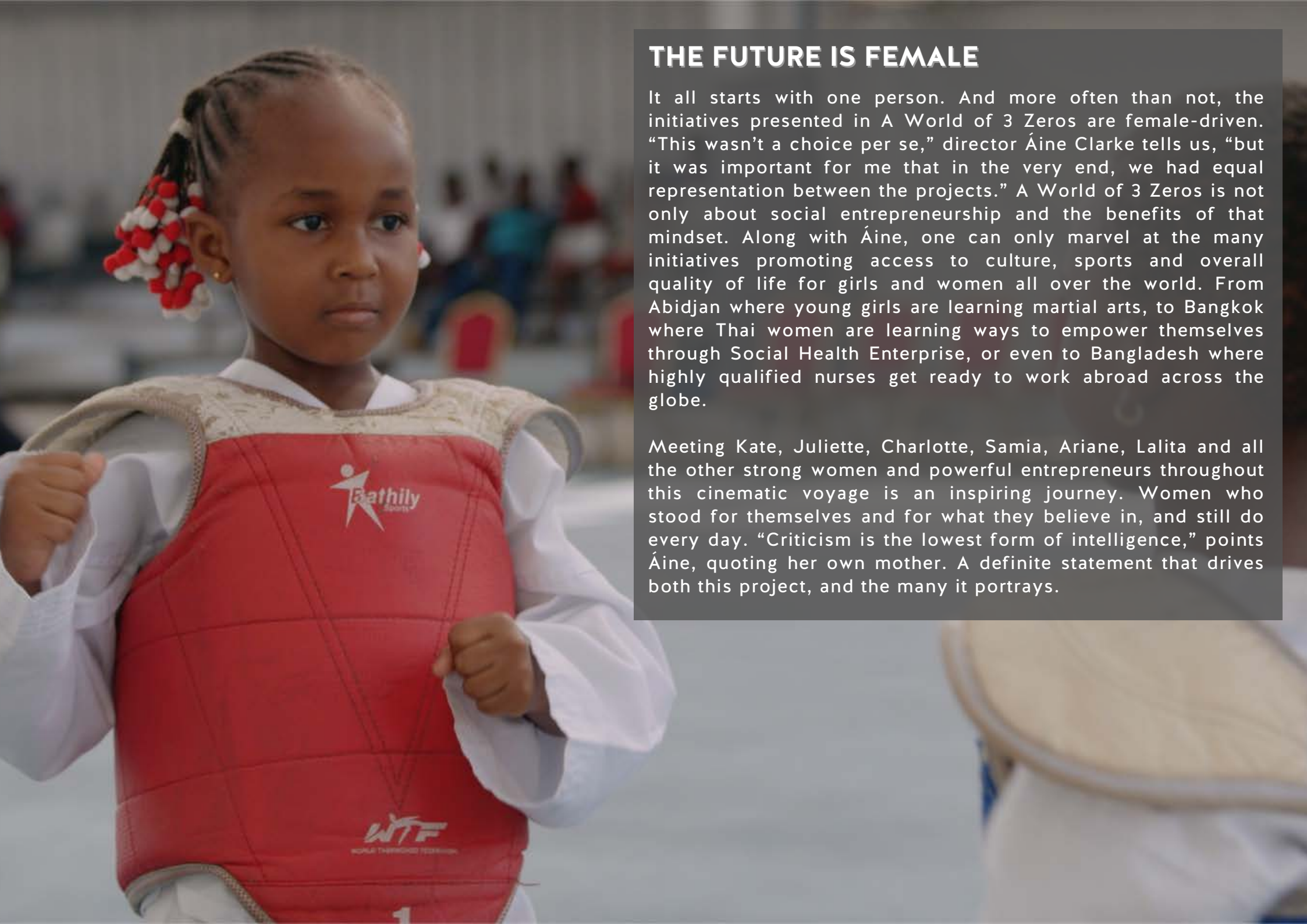
Borrowing its title from Muhammad Yunus' bestseller **A World of 3 Zeros**, this documentary explores the ability of social entrepreneurship to tackle these issues across the globe, discovering new ways of living together and doing business in a responsible and sustainable perspective. Zero net carbon emissions. Zero poverty. Zero unemployment.

Directors Áine Clarke and Michel Van der Veken first met with Muhammad Yunus in 2016, ten years after he had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, along with the Grameen Bank, **“for their efforts to create economic and social development from below”***.

Inspired by his achievements and by his own humility, fascinated by his visionary business ideas, Áine and Michel started their own journey. This documentary is both their journal and their open letter to people and businesses all over the world.

*MLA style: The Nobel Peace Prize 2006. NobelPrize.org. Nobel Prize Outreach AB 2023. Fri. 13 Oct 2023.
<<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2006/summary/>>





THE FUTURE IS FEMALE

It all starts with one person. And more often than not, the initiatives presented in *A World of 3 Zeros* are female-driven. “This wasn’t a choice per se,” director Áine Clarke tells us, “but it was important for me that in the very end, we had equal representation between the projects.” *A World of 3 Zeros* is not only about social entrepreneurship and the benefits of that mindset. Along with Áine, one can only marvel at the many initiatives promoting access to culture, sports and overall quality of life for girls and women all over the world. From Abidjan where young girls are learning martial arts, to Bangkok where Thai women are learning ways to empower themselves through Social Health Enterprise, or even to Bangladesh where highly qualified nurses get ready to work abroad across the globe.

Meeting Kate, Juliette, Charlotte, Samia, Ariane, Lalita and all the other strong women and powerful entrepreneurs throughout this cinematic voyage is an inspiring journey. Women who stood for themselves and for what they believe in, and still do every day. “Criticism is the lowest form of intelligence,” points Áine, quoting her own mother. A definite statement that drives both this project, and the many it portrays.

FILMING CHANGE AND CHANGING YOURSELF

Coming from corporate filmmaking, directors Aíne Clarke and Michel Van der Veken began filming in 2017, documenting change from Amazonia to Bangladesh, from Ivory Coast to Belgium and many other locations. From a business past and building on their 25 years of experience, they changed their own perspective while discovering projects and entrepreneurs encouraging community involvement, non-greed mindsets and eco-consciousness. Through this documentary, they explore the social side of human beings. The innate capacity to work both in large numbers and collectively towards a common cause. From bee-supported environmental monitoring in Belgium to female-driven cocoa processing cooperatives in Ivory Coast, Aíne and Michel take us across the globe and invite us to change our perspective on business. Depicting beautiful initiatives with finesse and visually inspiring shots, the duo led by Aíne are both guides and wanderers as they meet with motivated leaders driven by refreshing ideas. A feat that is not - as it's often said - reserved only to the younger generations. In Senegal, France, Thailand, Gen X leaders are switching models, from local initiatives to global-reaching events such as the Olympic Games. The result is a film bursting with fact-based optimism, giving voice to the numerous people across the globe that strive for a better future. If one ends up being changed by this film, it will be no surprise to learn that making such a documentary changed both filmmakers alike.





BUILDING TOMORROW, NO MATTER WHAT

Today, social business as a way of thinking is being taught in Universities across the world. Paris, Montreal, Glasgow, Florence, more than a hundred business schools and faculties are promoting new teachings inspired by the works of Muhammad Yunus and his peers. Yunus Social Business initiatives are present in Brazil, Germany, India and many other countries through global partnerships with local institutions or multinational brands looking to change the way they do business. Yet there is still much work to be done. Coming to a world where society can function with zero net carbon emissions, zero poverty and zero unemployment is not something these businesses can achieve alone, and there are - sadly enough - still people who won't believe it is possible, or simply don't want to. Since 2008, Muhammad Yunus and his colleagues have been harassed by the Bangladesh authorities, facing more than 150 lawsuits. An intimidation campaign that has been labelled early this September "a blatant abuse of labour laws and the justice system and a form of political retaliation for his work and dissent"* by Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

Film has an impact that few other media have in the image-driven world that we live in today. With this feature documentary, directors Áine Clarke and Michel Van der Veken aim to help widen perspectives, and to inspire audiences to participate in creating a better future for the common good. It takes work, creativity and resilience. But in the end, as said by Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus, "nothing is impossible for a human being."

*Amnesty International, Bangladesh: Stop weaponizing labour law to harass Nobel Laureate Mohammad Yunus, Sep. 18, 2023, <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/09/bangladesh-stop-weaponizing-labour-law-to-harass-nobel-laureate-mohammad-yunus/>>

CREDITS

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Post-production	AZIMUT COMPANY / DAME BLANCHE
With the support of the Belgian Federal Tax Shelter, Go West, Intermediary Tax Shelter	
Duration	106'

WWW.AWORLDOF3ZEROS.FILM

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