

The Zero Hunger Project NL | [‘Een wereld zonder honger: het kan wel’](#) (‘A world without hunger: it is possible’; nomination Fly in the Eye Award 2023)

Last year we noted that, because of the global COVID19 crisis, Dutch INGOs seemed to make more animation and explainer videos, and various of them worked well. That an animated video can also turn out completely of the mark, is something that is proven by [‘A world without hunger: it is possible’](#) from The Zero Hunger Project NL. While animation and explainer videos are often quite modest, with this video The Zero Hunger Project NL takes a sensational approach. It starts with the voice-over, which exclaims that ‘every day (...) millions of people lack food, even though hunger is totally unnecessary’. Not only is the tone but also the content of what the voice-over says is extremely misplaced. Hunger is called ‘the world’s biggest solvable problem,’ which is both sensationalist and simplistic. The idea that, ‘if we all put our shoulders to the wheel’, no one will have to be hungry by 2030 completely ignores the [political nature of poverty](#). In addition, it is peculiar, and particularly disturbing, that The Zero Hunger Project chooses to depict a naked, black child huddled on a cork-dry ground with flies around his (oversized) head. Although the animation aims to touch on, and break from, the common (Dutch) perception of hunger (‘a child in a war or disaster zone’), it is quite unbelievable that they reproduce this so stereotypical image of hunger so graphically. Then, when explaining chronic and intergenerational hunger, which The Zero Hunger Project says is the most common form of hunger, purely black people are shown in some kind of traditional costume. After about a minute of introducing the problem in this ridiculous way, the second minute of the video goes into how The Zero Hunger Project is ‘investing in these people’ so that ‘they dare to dream of a better future.’ Although they rightly argue that hunger cannot be solved in the long run with food packages but through self-reliance, even with this explanation, the animations (of mostly ‘primitive’ black people) remain itching. And how many times can one use the word ‘hunger’ in a video of just two minutes (15 times, it appears)?

Besides this animated video *gone wrong*, The Zero Hunger Project’s animated video [‘Invest in female leadership in India’](#) is also not ideal, partly for the same reasons and again mainly because of the disregard for power relations (coaching and training alone is never enough). Another animation video *gone wrong* is [‘The Power of family’](#) by SOS Kinderdorpen, which gets a special mention for its sensationalist and simplistic message. Finally, we would like to give a special mention to another campaign for its sensationalist, simplistic and even misleading message, i.e. [‘Stop sex for water’](#) by Simavi. This campaign calls for stopping the sexual exploitation of women in Africa and Asia at water sources. Although this is a very good cause in and by itself, if you read the fine print, the campaign ultimately turns out to be aimed at freeing up budget for more local water solutions, which does not necessarily prevent ‘sextortion’. In short, the thrill of ‘sex for water’ is thus being used, and actually abused, here to generate attention to another, less ‘attractive’ problem, namely the shortage of water points.

P.s. That such simplistic campaigns are still common may not be so surprising when reading [this kind of fundraising advice](#). Despite the fact that this is not a campaign in the classic sense of the word, we are happy to give this blog of [Fundraising.Blog](#) a major special mention, because ethical communication is completely subordinated to fundraising here.