

## **Voluntourism and the Problem of Good Intentions**

**Beatrice Harvey**

What motivations might voluntourists have for lending a hand? Do these intentions matter or does the rightness or wrongness of this act depend solely on its consequences? Why might volunteers choose to help those from other countries rather than providing this aid to those in need at home? Is one of these groups more deserving than another?

The author cites Tina Rosenberg as saying that “the last thing a Guatemalan highland village needs is imported unskilled labor.” Can you explain why this is the case? Are volunteers doing more harm than good? Does that depend on which countries and which organizations volunteers choose to help at?

What relation does voluntourism have to colonialism? Does this dynamic mean that voluntourism is never a good idea? Under what conditions might escape this charge of colonialism? Is this the only time voluntourism can be justified?

The author suggests that it’s important to see the difference between “building a school house and reforming educational policies.” What is this difference? Should voluntourists be involved in the process of things like educational reform? Under what conditions, if any, might voluntourists have a role to play in that kind of structural reform?