

# Good intentions

[Philosophy](#)



Ivan Illich's article "To Hell with Good Intentions" is primarily concerned with exposing how volunteers are hypocrites at times. They want to pursue a certain course of action because it suits them and they close their eyes in some instances only to see what they want. Ivan states that volunteers have good intentions to help but they do not even get a thank you for that. In some instances, they even ignore poverty at home and look beyond borders to help others in "poverty." Illich argues that if the volunteers are so much concerned about alleviating poverty among the poor, then they should assist the poor in the ghettos around their backyards. To impose themselves as volunteers in villages in Latin America where they do not understand anything is sheer hypocrisy displayed by the Americans. In fact, charity should begin at home but that is not the case with these volunteers who want to associate with their kith and kin who belong to the middle class not the poor at all.

Illich argues that North American volunteers in Latin America are there as a result of the quest to invade Mexico under the guise of benevolent gestures. In actual fact, the volunteers in Latin America are there to create "social disorder" as aptly put by the author. Once this social disorder has been created, the targeted audiences would tend to view themselves in light of the ideals that have been disseminated to them by the people who have been working as volunteers. The intention is good but unethical at the same time given that there is a hidden agenda behind the whole initiative that is destructive to other nations.

The volunteers want to seduce the people they purport to help to share the same ideals of America that based on affluence and education. In other words, the volunteers want to impart a lifestyle full of American ideals to

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people who obviously cannot match the standards. These people are better off if they follow their usual way of life. In other words, the good intentions of the volunteers amount to dominance of other countries. The US wants other people to believe that there is “heaven on earth” through their policies across the globe.

To a larger extent, I strongly agree with Illich because most of the volunteers who operate in poor areas have a hidden agenda. First and foremost, they would be concerned with imparting their values and ideals on weaker nations. This would put them in a position to dominate these nations that are poor. It can be seen that these volunteer groups have good intentions but upon a closer look at their operations, it can be seen that they are more interested in achieving political domination and power. These organizations want to create dependents who cannot survive without their help. In times of crisis, the poor nations would look up for help from the super powers such as America. This makes it easy for the US to control as well as to interfere with the territorial integrity of other countries. This can also give it the autonomy to impose a puppet government that would serve the interests of the dominant power. To a larger extent, I also believe that the volunteer groups have a hidden agenda that is destructive to the countries they purport to help.

#### References

Ivan Illich's article "To Hell with Good Intentions" [http://www.swaraj.org/illich\\_hell.htm](http://www.swaraj.org/illich_hell.htm)