

# White Satan Complex

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## Introduction

The white savior complex is the idea that “third world” countries, or countries that are less developed than countries in Europe and North America, need the aid of a more “developed” country in order to survive. This occurs when the fact of the matter is that many of these countries do not need the major and extreme help that nonprofits and other countries believe they need. Along with the white savior complex, these nonprofits and mission trips actually do more harm than good.

## Key findings

While differences in the effects of who built the houses are minuscule, when asked if they would rather have the aid groups build the houses or send money, they said that they would rather have them send the money. On average the houses built by Hondurans cost about \$2,000, whereas a group building a single house cost \$30,000. This money raised in order to bring the group to build a single house could have been used to build 15 houses by Hondurans. The aid groups also took away jobs from Honduran people, who needed them more than ever after the Hurricane. Overall the groups could have been more effective in distributing aid if they had sent the money raised than going themselves.

Nonprofits also face the challenge of not being able to provide the necessary aid to those in need due to political tensions. As in, those being affected by a natural disaster may not be able to get things such as clothing, or food, but may get things such as financial aid. While it is aid that the country may need, it is not as crucial as something such as food, blankets, and shelter for those who need it the most after losing their home and everything in their possession in a natural disaster.

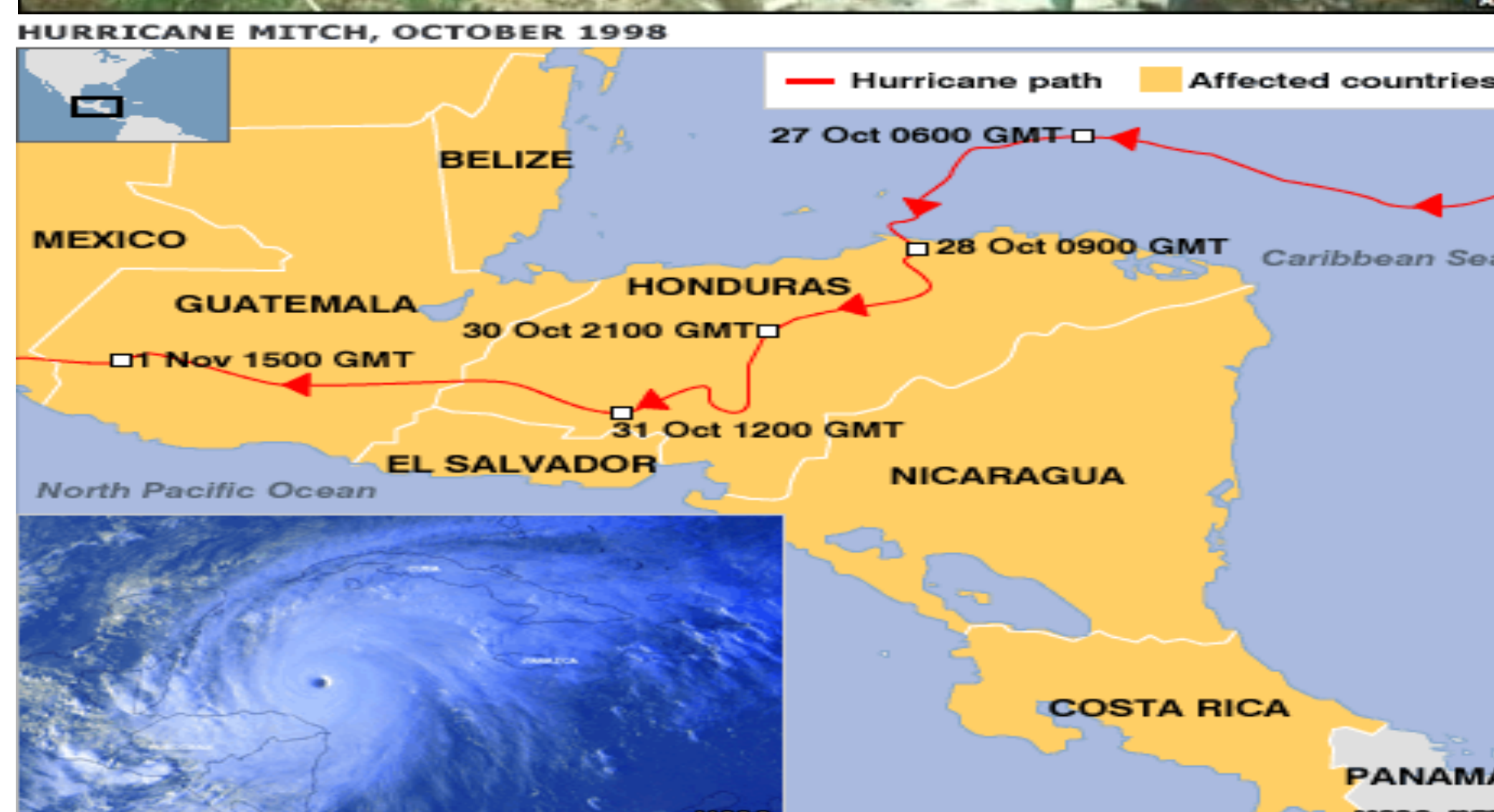
## Methods

A 2006 study led by Kurt Alan Ver Beek, researched the impact of those aid groups in Honduras, and the effectiveness of them. The study surveyed the aid groups, the beneficiaries (the Honduran people), and the agencies that put on the programs. This paper will focus on the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries interviewed were divided into two categories: those with houses built by North American aid groups and those with houses built by Honduran workers. The study wanted to see if the difference in who built the house had a significant difference in spirituality, the level of satisfaction, and the long-term effects of the beneficiaries. Overall the differences between the types of houses are slim-to-none.

Many Latin American countries are affected by the mission trips who come and visit them in order to provide aid for the problems occurring in their country. One example of this is the organization called “Save the Children”, which is a child sponsorship agency. This nonprofit was created in order to financially aid children and families in 3rd world countries, the organization asks for a periodically collected donation, which is pooled together and then evenly distributed amongst the community which the sponsored child lives. The issue with this organization is that it was caught in a legal situation which found that the organizations were still taking donations after the child being sponsored had died, in addition to that, the donor was not notified of the child passing. On the website, the country of El Salvador is listed as the most popular country to donate to, as in it is the country in most need of donations.

## Analysis

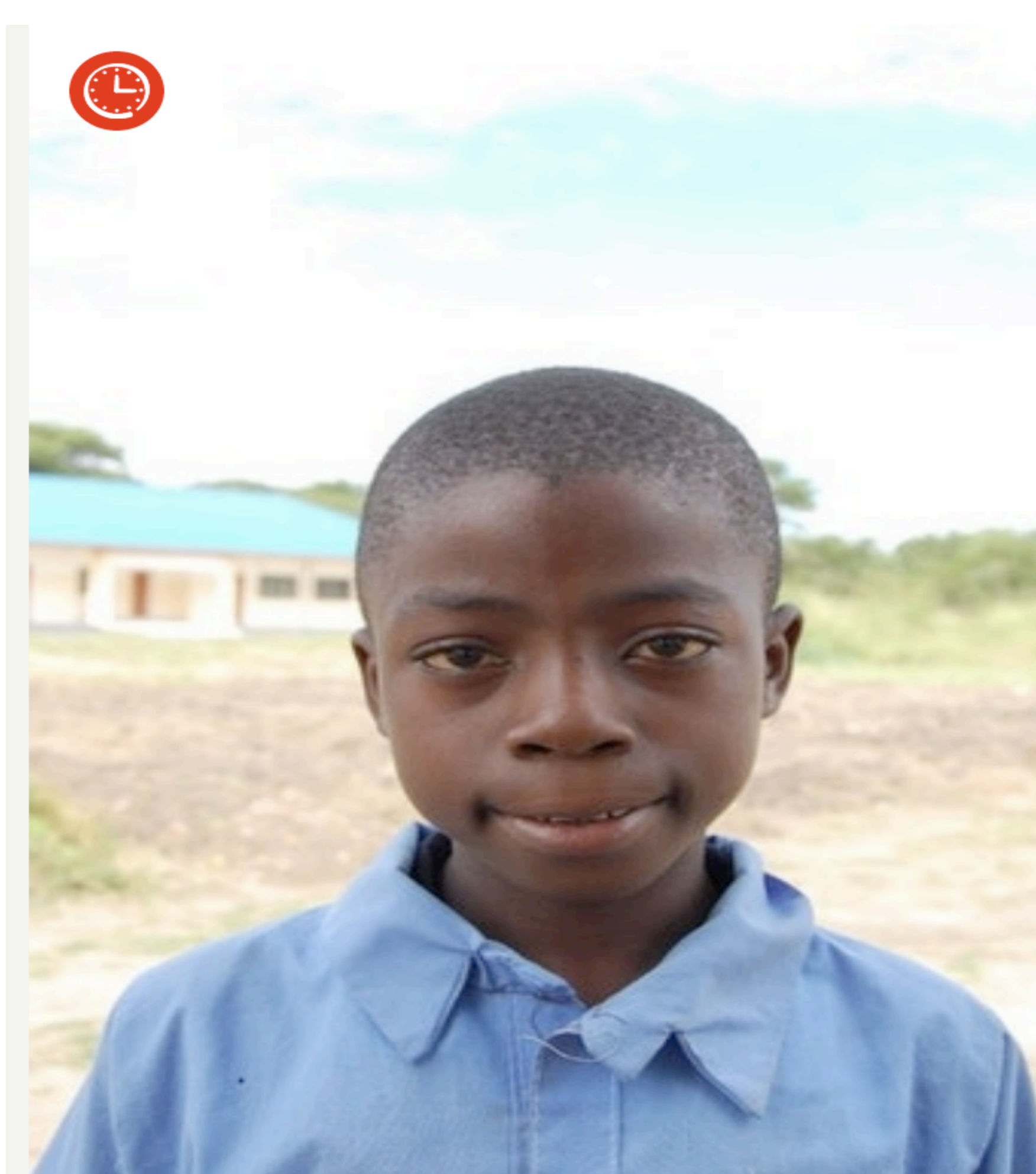
After things such as natural disasters when volunteers from the organizations and mission trips go in to do works to help, they are actually taking jobs from locals who could use the work. Along with taking jobs from locals that would benefit more from the wages, the locals of the country know the geography of the land with which the job is being done. Meaning that the locals would be able to do the job better than volunteers because they know what needs to be done in order for it to survive past when the volunteers leave. With the wages not being paid to locals who are willing and able to perform the job necessary, which would benefit the country in need economically, it is also putting a strain on those residing psychologically.



## Results

The reason El Salvador is in such need of aid is due to the overwhelming presence of gang activity throughout the country. The gang that has taken over most of El Salvador is called MS-13. Many residing in the country have fled in order to seek sanctuary and safety in bordering countries such as Mexico. Some migrate as far as the United States in order to ensure safety for themselves and their families. Many nonprofit religious organizations have been created in order to help those affected. The issue with those organizations that go into the countries to aid, is that it perpetuates the white savior complex that currently exists between countries such as the United States and Latin America.

Hurricane Mitch formed October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, and dissipated November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1998. It caused over 11,000 fatalities in Central America, including the 7,000 in Honduras. This hurricane caused the worst flooding in Honduras of the century and was the strongest of the 1998 storms. The President of Honduras said that Mitch most likely set back 50 years of economic development, in which the storm destroyed around 35,000 houses, and damaged a further 50,000. This left about 20% of the population without homes. This resulted in aid groups going to Honduras in order to help rebuild these homes, and while this can be seen as helpful, it was not necessarily the best way of helping.



### Davy

I am **9 years old**  
I am a **Boy**  
I live in **Zambia**  
I've been waiting **372 Days**

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## Conclusions

When given the opportunity to lend a helping hand, most people would jump at the opportunity. However, the unintentional consequences of this aid result in the halt of progression for an economy, feed into the white savior complex, and exploit all parties involved. It is evident in the case of the Hondurans suffering from Hurricane Mitch that the economic repercussions of aid weighed heavily on locals. In El Salvador, it was the influence of the white savior complex. Changing the way people think about aid is critical if we do not want to repeat the mistakes of previous and current aid programs. Teaching people that their presence in the country is not needed to invoke change is a very important first step to take. Their time is only good if they are successful in helping locals build a foundation of security to help the rebuilding in the aftermath of a crisis. We must evaluate who is benefiting from the relationship of aid. More often than not it is the giver and not the receiver, corrupting the ideals behind foreign aid itself. From El Salvador to Honduras, the effects of someone's good intentions can be seen for years and in multiple instances. It is the willingness of the humanitarians to see their long term effects and intentions for what they are, flawed with concerns yet to arise. Only in viewing this can we invoke the necessary change the aid system needs.

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