What to Expect in Civic Engagement During the Next Decade
This *Hartz & Minds* is based on a talk given by Hands On Atlanta's CEO, Jay Cranman
[Hands On Atlanta](#)

Anne Frank wrote in her diary, "in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart." We agree. The volunteerism of the future will more efficiently and effectively channel *good intentions* into *meaningful action*.

Volunteer Centers Activate $375B in Donations in US Each Year
The structure of service shifted after the 1980's: Women in the workforce became the new normal; TV and computers brought local and global challenges into our homes and offices; the US and much of its citizenry was flush with cash. Hands On Atlanta's 12 founders were young adults interested in serving the community. Nonprofits offered shifts, "Tuesdays from 9 to 2," or commitments, "twice weekly for at least six months." Neither option worked for professional schedules. The Atlanta Community Food Bank struck a deal; if the group deployed two volunteers each week, people could take turns. As HOA grew, we created a Saturday program for students and staffed it with a mix of regular and episodic volunteers. Then came AmeriCorps; people were trained and paid a small stipend to volunteer for an entire year (mimicking the Peace Corps). This was a seismic shift.

1. Nonprofits no longer hold a monopoly on doing good – Over the next 5-10 years, the convergence of for-profit and nonprofit organizations will continue –it will become increasingly difficult to tell them apart. Legal structures, of 501(c)3, B-Corp, L3C, and pro bono will no longer be civic differentiators. For-profits of all sizes engage their employees, customers, and other stakeholders directly in their corporate social responsibility or sustainability efforts. Imagine the virtuous cycles that will be ignited, when more businesses use their workforce skills and marketing budgets to directly involve people in service.

2. What it means to "volunteer" is evolving – Traditionally, volunteers bring goods, services, and advocacy to people and causes that are underserved – from arts to oceans, from shelters to parks, from the disabled to the schools. Volunteerism itself is evolving to keep pace with changing business models. New engagement models will come from collaborative consumption, the sharing economy, crowd-funding, and other innovations. Going forward, volunteers need to be change-makers for individuals in need, causes they care about, and society as a whole.

3. Volunteering goes virtual – Technology creates innovative flexible ways to share time, goods, and money today using an app, Tweet, Skype, website, virtual reality, chat room, text, or phone. Amazon is disrupting retailers; on-line volunteer platforms, will disrupt nonprofits. They will reduce some of the friction of time and space, enabling civic engagement to become even more integrated into our daily lives. In the next decade, virtual opportunities, like [TutorMate](#), may surpass traditional community volunteering.

4. Investing is the new philanthropy – We must unlock new sources of financing to address critical problems like poverty and health. People want their financial capital to go beyond short-term profits. Citizens are asking 401K and pension funds to assess the impact of investments. BlackRock's portfolio is worth about $4.6 trillion. Its CEO, Larry Fink says, we have "been undertaking a multi-year effort to integrate ESG (environmental, social, governance) considerations into our investment processes, and *we expect* companies to have strategies to manage these issues." The World Economic Forum predicts that the impact investing market could grow to $1 Trillion over the next few years. As new models emerge, we will see a global increase in the amount of money that is being invested in "doing good."

With additional funds flowing to charitable causes over the next decade, it is critical that non-profit organizations are implementing best practices. Please share this piece with civic groups addressing issues that matter to you. Thank you!