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## After 'Woke:' How Millennials are Changing Philanthropy

As millennials age, we asked experts at the intersection of social impact and tech how philanthropy is changing.



Many an industry has wrung its hands at the prospect of being killed off by millennial values, from chain restaurants to breakfast cereals. While philanthropy can conjure images that are stodgy, paternalistic and only for super-rich people, there's a lot happening to connect those born between 1980 and 2000 to nonprofit organizations and causes.

ALMA hosted a talk with [General Assembly](#) in Washington, DC where we asked social impact experts about how technology and transparency are key to engaging millennials in social good. Our panelists included:



*Dan Hill, CEO of ALMA, moderated the panel at General Assembly*

Dimitra Hatzudis, account director for [LGND](#)

Edward Hart, deputy administrator of the [United States Digital Service](#)

Terrance Stevenson, assistant operations manager at [PeaceTech Lab](#)

Nick Hamlin, data scientist at [Global Giving](#)

## **Here's what we learned:**

### **Millennials want to do more than just donate to causes.**

"Millennials want to do more than just give, they want to be a part of something and be activists," said Terrance.





*Dimitra Hatzudis of LGND in Washington, DC*

"That transparency element is huge," said Dimitra. "The mindset of just mailing a check to a charitable organization and that's it is gone. You want to know where that money is going and what's it's actually being used for, so back to that human element."

## **Instability and insecurity have changed how millennials think about giving back.**

Millennials have witnessed and instigated dramatic upheavals in politics and society — the first Black U.S. president, Arab Spring and #MeToo are just a few. Concurrently, some of the guardrails of the American middle class have been loosened, meaning fewer millennials own a home than in previous generations or expect a pension upon retirement.



*Nick Hamlin of Global Giving in Washington, DC*

"In the context of a lot of the political volatility and increasing awareness of social inequalities, more in this generation have tuned into that and the conversation is a little more public and more prominent recently than it has been historically," said Nick.

Old-school charity commercials with a guy walking around among sad children won't cut it, he said. "There's not as much tolerance for this historically very negative messaging, but leaning into the diversity and acknowledging the historical inequities that have led to a lot of these issues [is key]."

This generation wants messaging that centers the people making change in their communities and explains why they're worthy of support.

**Millennials have lofty goals and society needs a better way to measure their impact.**





*Terrance Stevenson of PeaceTech Lab in Washington, DC*

"Peace encompasses so much more than just stopping direct violence," said Terrance. "It's spreading human rights and allowing people to live in dignity.

"One thing PeaceTech Lab is trying to do is help people understand that achieving peace is not that hard of a task, it's something we can do, particularly with technology."

"We're still measuring things the way we did in 2000," said Edward. Even though millennials are not giving to nonprofits like previous generations, "there's a lot of sweat equity going on" as this generation has shown they're willing to take lower pay to engage in a mission they care about.



*Edward Hartwig of the United States Digital Service in Washington, DC*

"People want to solve these problems," said Edward. "Maybe that means fewer donations but they're asking for a higher stake in the game and that sweat equity pays out greater. My organization only thrives because people are willing to do that."

*We're excited to empower a new generation of philanthropists and help you engage in the causes you care about. Let us know what other features you'd like to see on ALMA [via this form](#).*