

Markkula Ethical Analysis

Hack For Humanity 2020

Who are the stakeholders, the people directly or indirectly impacted by your project?

Our target demographics are disadvantaged scholars who are pursuing higher education in the Bay Area and people who are willing and able to financially support higher education. Indirectly, our project affects higher education institutions because they are the recipients of the money and they will have a more diverse student body. Indirectly, our project would also affect society because having a larger and more diverse population of more educated individuals allows companies to have more diverse teams who can make more well-thought-out products and services.

What are one or two compelling ethical issues related to your project?

The ethical issue that we're targeting with this project is the rising cost of tuition, which is limiting who stays and completes higher education. However, since our project's system involves donations directly to people instead of a group or organization that also leaves room for biases as to who gets helped.

Our second issue is diversity, which is already decreasing due to the rising cost of tuition. Diversity is beneficial in higher education and companies because it brings different approaches when observing the world and different perspectives when problem solving. Because our project is mitigating the effect of higher tuition, a more diverse group of people will have the option of attending higher education.

What are the potential benefits and harms related to this project?

Our project is directly helping make education more accessible to those financially disadvantaged, diversifying higher education classrooms -- at least in socio-economic class. This project, if not properly designed, could allow people who have skills or resources to cultivate and share a more compelling story get more donations than others.

If you've identified some potential harms, what might be possible ways to prevent or minimize those harms?

However, to place bias prevention measures -- as much as possible from a developer standpoint -- we're restricting what and how much information someone can share. We're restricting it to basic information such as a student's name, school, year, major, and a small description.