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6 Principles of Conscious Fintech

What are the ethical guidelines of a financial technology startup?
How can entrepreneurs be sure that their ideas are actually
beneficial for society? How can ethical, social and value based banks
make better use of technology to deepen their impact?

Authors: 450+ collaborators of the Conscious Fintech community including the cofounders and team members Jan Bohnhorst, Markus Duscha, Sanika Hufeland, Ludwig Schuster, Pola Vayner, Konstantin Wolf

<http://meetup.com/conscious-fintech> | <http://facebook.com/consciousfintech>

Over the last year, the founders and community members of Conscious Fintech discussed the defining ideas and activities behind value driven financial technology ventures. During a community process including four physical Conscious Fintech meetups, online discussions and feedback loops some defining principles for good, sustainable, green, social, (or our preferred moniker, “conscious“,) fintech were developed. We would like to share with you this draft and invite you to contribute to the development of a roadmap to Conscious Fintech.

Ecological and Social Impact oriented: From our community’s perspective, Conscious Fintech innovations should be seen as social, not merely technical or financial, innovations. Creating a positive impact should be a core feature, not only a byproduct: As “intentional Fintechs”, they should add new “value vectors” to money, credit and payments and leverage the purpose-driven approach of ethical finance. Conscious Fintechs are intentional Fintechs, addressing all aspects of strong sustainability, place particularly strong weight on social, ecological and environmental issues.

Enhancing financial resilience: Regarding economic sustainability, Conscious Fintechs provide the building blocks for a resilient economy. Conscious Fintech offers a fruitful diversity of technical approaches, services and currencies, adding resilience to our crisis-prone financial system. They may care for a fair allocation of risks and earnings, as well as an equitable allocation of liquidity both globally and socially. Conscious Fintechs should bring money where it is needed most: to finance the good (real) economy and to collectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

People and stakeholder oriented: Conscious Fintechs reflect upon the needs and interests of all stakeholders, responding to real human needs and urgent social problems. They provide financial tools for cooperation and social cohesion, building the kind of conscious relationships which are essential for a peaceful human co-existence. Conscious Fintechs can pro-actively connect like-minded consumers, investors and entrepreneurs into an “impact crowd” that quite naturally and effortlessly multiplies the impact of existing values based financial services.

Democratically governed: Conscious Fintechs challenge the governance and business culture of most financial institutions: They are ideally run on open and transparent business models and open source code, and built in a decentralized or distributed manner. They offer full data sovereignty and individual control of privacy for their users. Ideally they may even be co-owned and co-developed by their users, integrating their voices into decision making processes.

Accessible and convenient: Conscious Fintechs are providing adequate means for financial inclusion: By consequently optimizing their usability and convenience, they help to lower the entry barriers, thus providing for inclusive participation unconstrained by branch, geography, ethnicity or social status. Conscious Fintechs provide access to finance for everybody, independent of location and time.

Empowering and educative: Conscious Fintechs apply responsibility to the Fintech world: They help individual users take charge of their money, providing them with the necessary information and power to control their financial streams. They raise awareness and consciousness for the value side of the coin. Through transparent communication, they educate and at the same time empower people to make their own judgments concerning money, banks and finance.

We would be happy to hear your opinion!

If you are interested in the topic, please contact us via meetup or facebook:

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