Disrupting the Status Quo: Case for Diversity in Open Source

Dr. Vandana Singh
Associate Professor, University of Tennessee
www.sis.utk.edu/vandana
Hello!

Vandana Singh

About 20 years of research on OSS – variety of settings - recent focus on Diversity in OSS

www.sis.ut.edu/vandana

vandana@utk.edu
Agenda

- Diversity in OSS – Why Bother?
- Actionable Results from my Research
- Current Diversity Initiatives in OSS
  - Challenges
- Way forward
  - What can we do as individuals?
  - What can communities/community managers do?
Definitions – DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

➢ **Diversity:** The term diversity is used to describe **individual differences** (e.g. life experiences, learning and working styles, personality types) **and group/social differences** (e.g. race, socio-economic status, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, ability, intellectual traditions and perspectives, as well as cultural, political, religious, and other affiliations)

➢ **Inclusion:** The term inclusion is used to describe the **active, intentional, and ongoing engagement/commitment with diversity**
Equality vs Equity

Equality is about dividing resources in matching amounts, and **Equity** focuses more on dividing resources proportionally to achieve a fair outcome for **ALL** involved.

- **Diversity** is where everyone is invited to the party
- **Equity** means that everyone gets to contribute to the playlist
- **Inclusion** means that everyone has the opportunity to dance

https://diversity.umich.edu/about/defining-dei/
WHY DEI is important?

WHY DIVERSITY IN OSS?

Let’s brainstorm...

Jamboard Link:

https://jamboard.google.com/d/1m3-igoYPeMRpECBxeTbPdFlfyBeqVszC3ZZHgjaQChg/edit?usp=sharing
Diversity in OSS - Why does it matter?

A diverse set of contributors can bring more productivity to the team.

Diversity improves the working experience even for existing community members.

Technology will become more Human.

Software is more secure since neurodiversity yields better security.

If we are not diverse, we’re missing enormous swaths of the population as potential contributors/employees.

OS is the often the foundation for other software, and big-scale software needs to be scalable to represent the population.

Open source is driven in science, and diversity of thought is critical to benefiting all people and cultures.

Diversity helps in keeping people involved in the tech industry as a whole, especially those who are really talented but are not well represented. Otherwise, they will leave the industry that nurtures them.

Several Approaches

More empathy

More inclusion

More thought-out solutions

More inclusion means better cross-disciplinary integration.

More diversity means a wider net of users and invite them to use your products.

In software, diverse opinions can better target a wider net of users and invite them to use your products.

Diversity means we're closer to what the real world looks like.

Diversity means less people will feel lonely, more people will feel represented.

More pvs to check for bugs, pitfalls and use cases.

More diversity means outcomes that are more effective for everyone.

More diversity means better cross-disciplinary integration.

More diversity means better cross-disciplinary integration.

Attract and retain talent to contribute to the projects.

It's the right thing to do. (Hard stop)

Can help to improve the accessibility of the project to different audiences.

Group think rarely leads to the best solution. Diversity of thought and ideas is the key to improving solutions. Everyone wins and wins more together.

Diverse perspectives lead to improved solutions. Everyone wins...and wins more together.

Design better products. Designing a product in US for people in Africa doesn’t work without participation from real users.

Unbiased software - Fairer experiences.

That’s how Open Source works.
“Women make more than 51% of the US work force, more than 20% of the tech work force and less than 2-3 % of the OSS community; these numbers have been stagnant for last two decades; ”
Why Diversity in OSS?

- Right now it looks pretty bad
  - The numbers are horrible
  - The experiences that are being highlighted are mostly negative

- The bottom line is hurting
  - More and more jobs in IT and not enough qualified people – women can help with that!

- Diversity is great for innovation!
  - Supporting diversity is in favor of creating innovative software

- Women USE the software – if they had equal say in creating it, the products will be more successful

https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter
Why do women care?

- They are missing out on benefits and opportunities that men avail from participating in OSS communities
  - Learning new skills
    - Programming, Testing, UX, etc.
    - People/software management
  - Networking and Connections
  - Job opportunities
  - Documented experience
  - Knowledge!
Why Diversity in OSS?

➢ OSS has a bad reputation: Anecdotal evidence (blogs and forums) and Research show “hostile, discriminatory and predatory” experience of women and underrepresented minorities (URMs).
My Research
Results and Ongoing Projects

For list of published articles please see:
https://sis.utk.edu/vandana/women-in-oss
Motivated and Capable but No Space for Error – Women’s Experiences of Contributing to Open Source Software

➢ Methodology: Surveys and Interviews

Key Takeaways:

➢ All women impacted by the underrepresentation of women and feel isolated.

➢ First experience with OSS was critical; often a “welcome person” made it a positive experience. Mentors + Safe Spaces

➢ Coding is NOT the only thing you can contribute.

➢ Codes of Conduct are important!!

➢ Women have to prove themselves and work extra to justify
Methodology: Website Content Analysis

Key Takeaways

No Standardized spaces or activities

Activities such as increasing the visibility of active women, connecting mentors, opportunities for collaboration, organization of events, educational opportunities and spaces for social support
Methodology: Forums Content Analysis (5 forums, 10698 messages and 1,344 participants)

Key Takeaways - “safe spaces” In these spaces, women receive and provide social support, emotional support, informational support and technical support.

- Help each other to succeed in the hostile OSS environment by sharing experiences, expertise and opportunities.
- Women only spaces foster gender diversity by women supporting each other.
Codes of Conduct and their role in OSS

Methodology: Forums Content Analysis

Key Takeaways

- Codes of Conduct are important; customized are better
- Declare your take support for minorities (Specify separate harassment procedures)
- Enforcement planning is critical
  - Conflict of Interest, Visibility of Enforcement, Include women in governance.
Codes of conduct in Open Source Software—for warm and fuzzy feelings or equality in community?

Vandana Singh¹ · Brice Bongiovanni¹ · William Brandon¹

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Study of the Discrimination and Hostility

- **Methodology:** Forums Content Analysis

**Key Takeaways**

- Harassment of women is common; ranges from micro aggressions to rape and death threats; Women report persistent and normalized experiences of sexism and misogyny.

- Impact on their well being is real and damaging. Shows individual harm and collective harm (me too).

- Women leave OSS because of this treatment.
Action Items:

➢ Create and support **Safe spaces** for women
➢ Create and Enforce customized **Codes of Conduct**
➢ Highlight the profiles of successful women/URMs
➢ Facilitate **mentoring and networking** opportunities
➢ Engage women in OSS **governance**
Improving Software Developer Diversity and Inclusion

The mission of SDDI is to discover, evaluate, and promote best practices from research and industry to increase diversity and inclusion in software engineering.

More information about SDDI will be available soon.

If you are interested in participating in the project, please email us at info@sddiproject.org
Diversity, inclusion, and belonging at GitHub

At GitHub, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DI&B) is both a journey and a commitment. We are grateful for this year of reflection and renewal, and are proud to share our annual Diversity Report.

At GitHub we strive to build the best platform for our interconnected community of developers all over the world. By being globally diverse ourselves, we are an extension of the global developer community, enabling GitHub to be more inclusive and create the sense of belonging that fosters creativity and collaboration, and truly becomes a home.

This year we have significantly increased our investments in Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DI&B) to support our global expansion and achieve our mission to advance human progress through technology. We have implemented a cross
Open Source Diversity

For more diversity & inclusion in free & open source software communities 😊

Join our forum! Join us on Telegram!

Basics

First steps to help make your open source project more friendly and inclusive
Diversity, Civility, and Inclusion WG Home

Charter

Description

The Hyperledger Diversity, Civility and Inclusion Working Group (DCI) is chartered with measuring and improving the health of our open source community. We seek to provide constructive recommendations to the TSC, projects, and working groups. All are welcome to join us and help Hyperledger continue to grow in a diverse, civil, and inclusive way.

Scope

For more information about the scope of the group and how to get involved watch this short video.

How to Get Involved - Hyperledger...
About the Inclusive Naming Initiative

The Inclusive Naming Initiative’s mission is to help companies and projects remove all harmful and unclear language of any kind and replace it with an agreed-upon set of neutral terms. The initiative’s goal is to define processes and tools to remove harmful language from projects. This includes creating a comprehensive list of terms with replacements, language evaluation frameworks and templates, and infrastructure to aid the transition. Red Hat, IBM, LF Networking, and the Kubernetes Naming WG are all already on board.

Goals

We’re looking to:

- Provide a consistent set of language recommendations in projects
- Recommend implementation paths for different use cases
- Provide tooling to measure implementation success
- Act as a platform for community recognition of organizations actively doing the work

Roadmap

Note: Roadmap is subject to change

- Q1 2021
  - Define best practices and replacements with the community, providing documents and tools for folks to get started

Participating organizations

[Images of participating organizations]
What we do

Together, we are building a community to make Artificial Intelligence more inclusive to everyone

Our Mission
Our Goal, Vision & Commitment

Events
Register & Help Make Change

Get Involved
Volunteer, Participate, or Donate
Outreachy Internships

Outreachy is a diversity initiative that provides paid, remote internships to people subject to systemic bias and impacted by underrepresentation in the technical industry where they are living.

Outreachy provides internships to work on open source. Our internships are:

- **Paid** - $6,000 USD total internship stipend
- **Remote** - both interns and mentors work remotely
- **3 months** - internships run May to August, or December to March

**Timeline**

Initial applications are closed for the May 2021 internship cohort.

- **Sign up for our mailing list** to be notified of future internships. Applications will open in August for the December 2021 cohort. Applications will open in February for the May 2022 cohort.
- **Read the Outreachy applicant guide** for details on our application schedule.

**Work on Open Source**

Outreachy interns work with experienced mentors from open source communities. Outreachy internship projects may include programming, user experience, documentation, illustration, graphical design, data science, project marketing, user advocacy, or community event planning.

**Supporting Diversity in Open Source**
Other Diversity Initiatives in OSS

Jamboard

https://jamboard.google.com/d/1m3-igoYPeMRpECBxeTbPdFlfyBeqV SzC3ZZHgjaQChg/edit?usp=sharing
Challenges
Challenges

Lack of Awareness
Lack of Allies
Lack of positive storytelling
Enforcement of Codes of Conduct
Ruthless decisions by Organizations
Lack of Awareness

➢ About the status of diversity in OSS
➢ About the value of diversity – measurable impact on the overall value of a brand/product
➢ About the level of hostility/discrimination/harassment faced by URMs
➢ About the IMPACT of this hostility on the careers and well being of URMs
Lack of Allies

BEING AN ALLY IS A JOURNEY

UNDERSTAND YOUR PRIVILEGE

GET CURIOUS

KEEP LEARNING

BE OKAY WITH MAKING MISTAKES

START WITH A SINGLE ACT

@BETTERALLIES

BETTERALLIES.COM
What can allies do?

5 ways to sponsor coworkers from underrepresented groups:

- Speak their name when they aren’t around
- Endorse them publicly
- Invite them to high-profile meetings
- Share their career goals with decision-makers
- Recommend them for stretch assignments and speaking opportunities
“We find that the combination of these strategies allows them to claim identities as allies *without* having to engage in concrete efforts that could challenge systems of oppression. We argue that systematically examining processes through which people construct and perform what it means to be an ally may provide insights into mechanisms whereby inequality is maintained and justified.”

https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article/68/2/358/5809595

**What can allies do?**

- Amplify stories
- Raise voice in advocacy
- Enforcement of CoC
“VM (Vicky) Brasseur, an award-winning free/open-source advocate and corporate strategist, said, "A little over a year ago I finally joined @fsf". They had finally taken action against RMS, a man who has not only been demonstrably toxic himself but is also a role model of toxicity in #FreeSoftware. RMS was holding FSF and Free Software back. Despite that well-known toxicity, FSF announced on Twitter that RMS is returning to its board of directors. Their one step forward in September 2019 converted to two large steps back to the Free Software dark ages."

Josh Simmons, president of the Open Source Initiative (OSI), which oversees open-source licenses, tweeted "I am shocked and appalled by the news out of LibrePlanet that RMS, a known harasser, is returning to the FSF Board."

Ruthless decisions by Organizations
Time for Disruption
My Commitment

➢ Continue my research so that I can keep publishing empirical evidence to increase awareness
➢ Providing actionable results for OSS
➢ Continue introducing my students to OSS
➢ Developing formal mentorship alliances with OSS communities
➢ Disseminating my research at diverse venues
➢ Supporting future development of “safe spaces” for women of OSS
Do something, measure it and then improve upon it - iterative problem solving

➢ DEI is not a **Big Bang Approach** but consistent commitment and improvement is needed.
Measuring The Disruption!

Did you succeed?
“What gets measured, get done”

➢ Define DEI dimensions you will monitor
➢ Select metrics for Diagnosis:
   ➢ Representation, Recruitment, Retention, Pay
➢ Select metrics for tracking progress to prioritize resources
➢ Select ROI measures to advocate future investment
➢ Adapt these measures to changes in the environment
Establish Baseline metrics
Establish Responsibility and Accountability
Publish the results

Publish your Diversity Report and Reaffirm your commitment
Roadmap for Disruption:

1. Become Aware!
2. Create Awareness
3. Commit to Disruption!
4. Implement Disruption
5. MEASURE the impact
6. Improve and Implement Again

You will need Allies!
What’s your intention?
What’s your commitment?

 Jamboard Link
Questions?
Thank you!