



FOSS Backstage is a conference dedicated to everything related to FOSS governance and open collaboration. The third edition of FOSS Backstage took place in a fully online, interactive environment on the 10-12 February 2021.

FOSS Backstage provides a space to discuss a broad spectrum of issues related to community management, vendor neutrality and leading projects without discretionary power. Conference topics include open source project leadership best practices, community management, open source project metrics, open source strategy for enterprise, adopting open source collaboration in corporations, legal matters when dealing with open source and many more.

FOSS Backstage aims to provide a space to discuss a broad spectrum of issues related to the FOSS community. We believe we can do this best by ensuring that people taking part are valued, respected, accepted and encouraged to fully participate. Part of ensuring a wide range of opinions can be shared at FOSS Backstage is ensuring that people from underrepresented groups within the FOSS community can attend and engage with the discussions.

This report is part of our efforts to make FOSS Backstage a conference that is open, encouraging, and engaging. This report aims to:

- Keep FOSS Backstage transparent and accountable to our commitments to diversity and inclusion
- Share the lessons we have learned from FOSS Backstage 2021
- Encourage feedback from the FOSS community

Diversity ticket fund

In order to promote diversity at FOSS Backstage this year we initiated a diversity tickets program as well having reduced tickets available to pupils, students, trainees, people on social welfare, retirees and people with disabilities.

Diversity Tickets are fully sponsored (i.e. free) tickets that are available to people from underrepresented groups within the FOSS community. This includes, but is not limited to: women, people of colour, LGBTQIA people, disabled people, and people facing economic or social hardships. We initially provided 10 diversity tickets with additional tickets being provided through partners and diversity support tickets. For every two diversity support tickets purchased we also provided an additional diversity ticket.

In total 20 diversity tickets were available for FOSS Backstage 2021. Of these:

- 12 were funded by FOSS Backstage
- four were funded by our community partners Red Hat
- four were funded by attendees purchasing diversity support tickets

Of these 17 were utilized leaving three remaining. Funding for these three tickets will be used at FOSS Backstage 2022 to provide three diversity tickets.

Survey highlights and lessons learned

This is the first time that we have collected demographic data from speakers and attendees at FOSS Backstage. We hope to collect data in future years to show whether there are changes in these demographics.

One important thing to note at the beginning is the number of attendees and speakers who completed our demographic survey. 15% of the total active participants we had at FOSS Backstage completed the survey, this includes speakers and attendees. We would like to increase this percentage in future years to make the survey more representative. This demographic survey was sent to participants after the event. In the future we plan on including the survey in the ticket confirmation before the event as well as giving a reminder after the event. We hope that this will give participants more opportunities to complete the survey.

Of the speakers who completed the survey 33.3% identify as female, 58.3% as male and 8.3% as non binary. Of the attendees 37.5% identify as female and 62.5% identify as male. This shows that there is still an over representation of men in both the speakers and attendees at FOSS Backstage this is an area that we hope to improve upon.

Of the speakers who completed the survey 16.7% identify as a person of color, while 12.5% of the attendees identify as a person of color. This shows that FOSS Backstage is still a predominantly white conference and that efforts should be intensified to improve the mix of both attendees and speakers.

Of the participants who completed the survey 16.7% considered themselves to have a disability. This is in line with reported rates of disability in Germany, the country where in person FOSS Backstage events have taken place ([see report here](#)). One positive result of the move from in person to online events is an improvement in accessibility. Online events enable many people to attend who would otherwise be unable to for a variety of

reasons. This is one area we must consider in the future when it is possible to host in person events. Options for this could involve hosting hybrid events, remaining largely online, or increasing our focus on accessibility measures to enable people to physically attend out event.

Some areas for improvement that were raised by participants were:

- Timing - Talks were scheduled for European afternoons that made it difficult for people in other timezones to attend
- Translation and transcription for other languages - The conference takes place exclusively in English which excludes many
- Representation - building tool-kits that enable interested attendees be part of an expanded diversity outreach would help

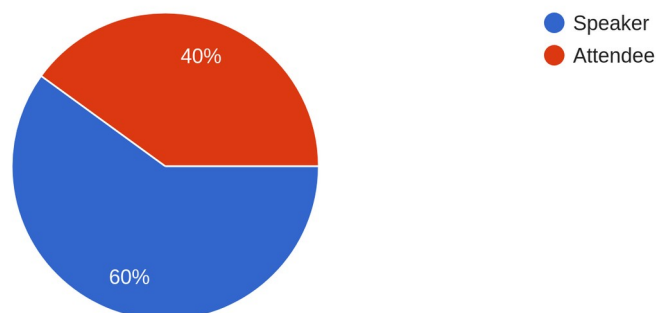
These are all ideas that we as the FOSS Backstage organizing team will be taking on board. We aim to integrate considerations of these topics when panning future FOSS Backstage events.

The over representation of men and white people at FOSS Backstage shows that we must increase our efforts to make the event a more diverse. This may be through an expansion of the diversity tickets fund or through increased outreach and engagement with user groups helping us to reach people from underrepresented groups in the FOSS community. We hope the work we started this year can act as a foundation for this work.

Data

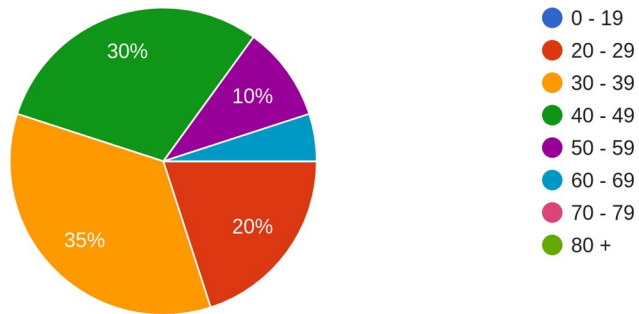
Are you a speaker or an attendee?

20 responses



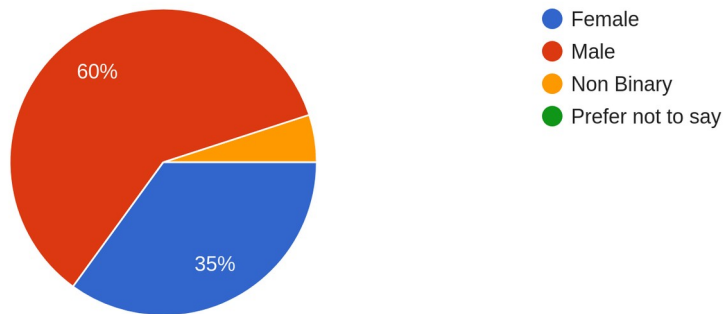
How old are you?

20 responses



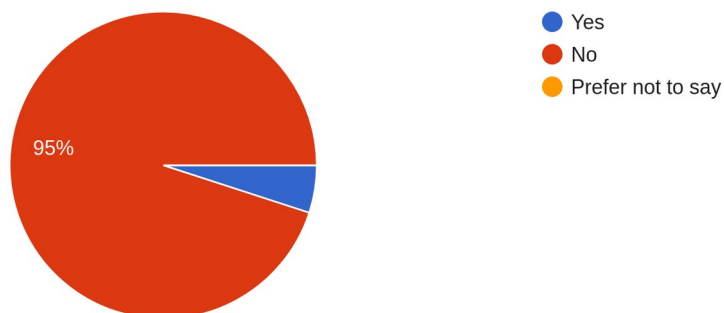
Which one of the following best describes your gender?

20 responses



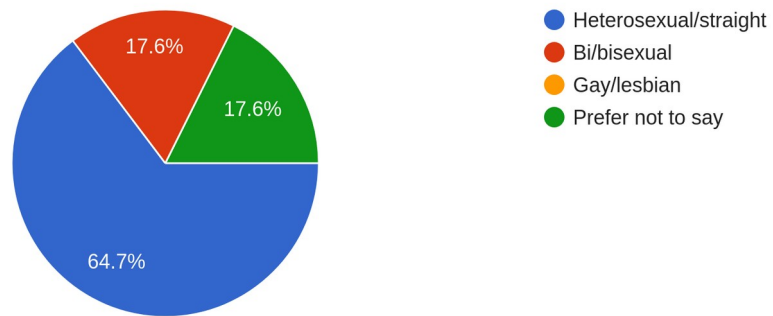
Do you consider yourself to be a trans person?

20 responses



Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

17 responses

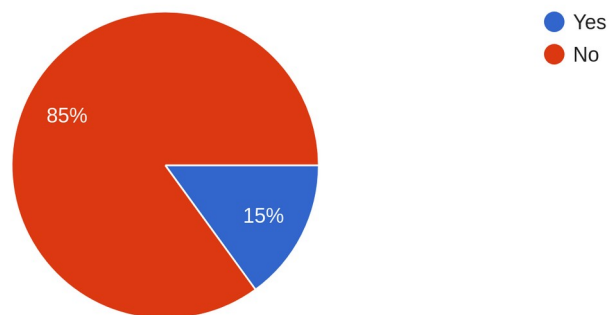


Other terms provided:

- Queer

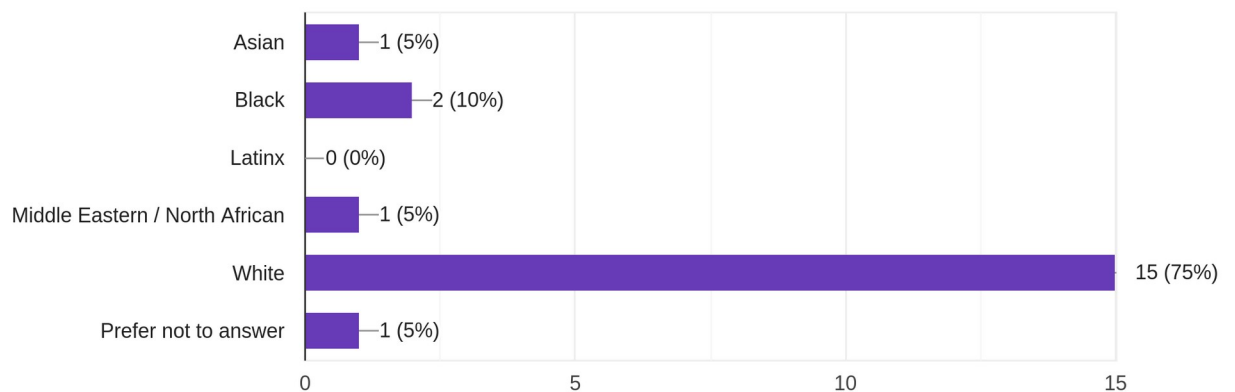
Do you identify as a person of colour?

20 responses



With which ethnic background(s) do you identify? (check all that apply)

20 responses

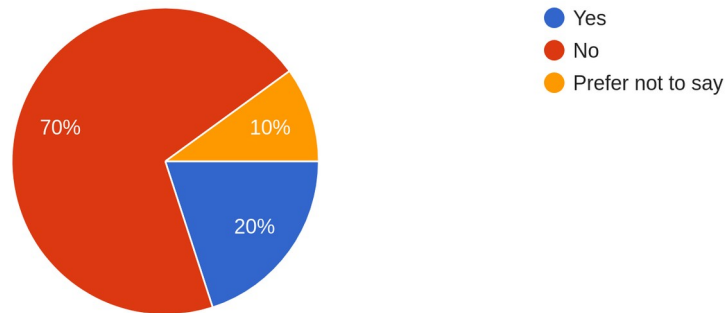


Other terms provided:

- Jewish

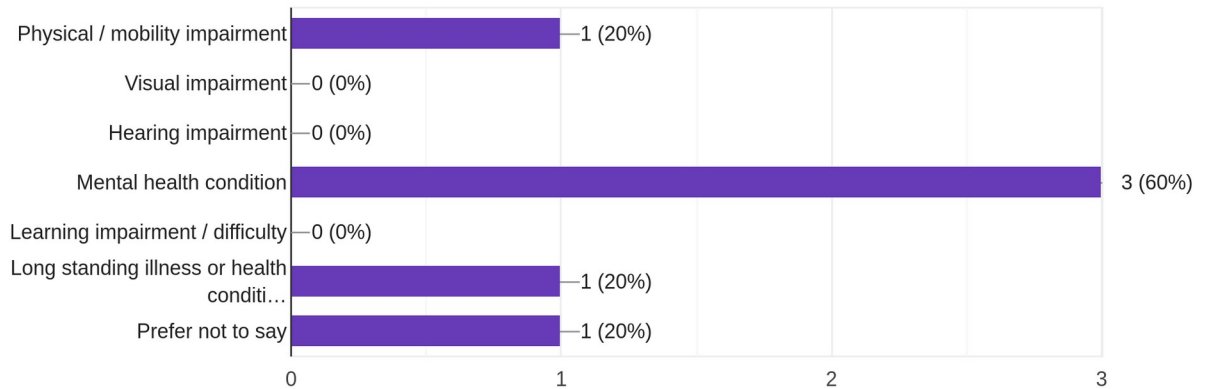
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

20 responses



If you answered yes to the above, please indicate the type(s) of impairment(s) that apply to you

5 responses



What can the organisers do to improve the diversity and inclusion at this event?

- I have no suggestions, I felt it was inclusive. I very much enjoyed participating.
- Set talks to take place not only in European afternoons, make website work w/o cookies
- Not sure, it was pretty good for me!
- Make the conference easy to access and attend, and be welcoming when minorities show interest.
- The event felt very welcoming and inclusive to me.
- By subsidizing tickets of the conference to enable interested persons from developing countries afford it.

- Continue existing outreach; work for long-standing relationships with diverse speakers/attendees and help them continue to advocate and bring in their acquaintances. PS has the history and regular conference running; building the toolkits to help willing attendees be part of your diversity outreach is important.
- I think you've done a great job!

What are some examples of how this event met, exceeded, or fell short of your diversity and inclusion expectations?

- This questionnaire is great.
- I don't think it did! Maybe translation and more transcription of other languages.
- Did not have the feel of a conference where men visit to escape their spouse.
- I really liked the idea of dev rooms that was used during the event. Made communication easier and better. I look forward to the next event.
- I appreciated the in-advance prep session for speakers with Paul. This helps those with specific needs including disability-related needs to prepare for their session to be a success. I also found everyone involved with the conference to be very kind, welcoming, and respectful - you reminded me of one of my favorite conferences in the United States, !!con ("bangbangcon")
- In no way
- Not sure what level of expectations I had; also since many attendees didn't have photos, it wasn't as obvious who was what. Looking back at the speaker roster online, it's feels like you met gender goals, but the speaker lineup is still very white. \0/