

MoCo Open Innovation Strategy Project



The State of Diversity & Inclusion in Mozilla's Communities

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Introduction

In open source, and at Mozilla, diversity is a huge challenge, but the opportunities for building truly diverse and inclusive communities are exponential.

This document contains key themes generated from research into the current state of Diversity & Inclusion in Mozilla's communities through a series of focus groups and interviews, as well as data analysis of 2500 records relevant to volunteer perspectives, motivations and experiences.

If we are to truly unleash the full value of a participatory, open Mozilla, we need to personalize and humanize Mozilla's value by designing diversity and inclusion into our strategy. **To unlock the full potential of our open innovation model we need radical change to how we build community and who we include.**

Inclusive Organizing for Open Source Communities

Our research showed that bottom-up organizing by communities enables individuals and groups the opportunity to drive their vision and ideas as part of existing Mozilla initiatives. However, we also saw that the people and communities most successful in this model tend to be of similar diversity dimensions, and often in “tenured” roles (those without end-dates), which at times harmed and isolated marginalized groups. To optimize for diversity, organizing models must adjust, or shift entirely.

Empowering Marginalized Identity Groups

Challenge

Without organizational support the formation of identity groups can lead to relegation, misinterpretation and tokenism.

Womoz (Women of Mozilla) is an example of community-led identity-based groups trying to self-advocate and overcome systemic problems like gender-based abuse and harassment without organizational support.

There is a broad range of ways Womoz shows up at Mozilla:

- Online discussions about ‘women in tech’
- A way to convene separately from abusive male dominated communities
- Cultural preference for the convening of young women.
- A label assigned to contribution that is ‘women’s work’
- A label assigned to female contributors.

“Women participate more openly when they have the chance to go [be in] Womoz, and sometimes this is due to family not letting them go out, and they have to obey by their culture.” (woman, Bangladesh)

“Womoz are more interested in doing craft work, drawing” (male, India).

Opportunity:

By providing organizational support and structure (goal-setting, governance, systems) to identity groups (Womoz being but **one** example) we can generate 'launchpad' communities for diverse groups that generate healthier, safer and more empowered participation.

Global Impact Requires Regional Strategies

Challenge:

Regional areas with cultural practices that either exclude, or limit opportunity to women and other marginalized groups demonstrate the limitations of a global-approach to community health. Many toxic communities appear outwardly productive, masking what is at times the purposeful exclusion of large numbers of people who might have even greater, and more innovative impact - given the chance.

" Women are purposefully, and forcefully excluded: "We are told why we are here, we are told what our value is" (**woman, Bangladesh**)

A toxic worker cost \$12,500 in turnovers, but the top 1% of 'rock stars' only added \$5,300 to the bottom line." - [It's better to avoid a toxic worker than hire a rockstar](#)

Opportunity:

The tremendous potential of regional communities is limited because for the most part, only those with cultural and economic privilege within those contexts are succeeding in participation.

By creating strategies for community organizing **focused on the specifics of regional community dynamics where toxic behavior has been reported, we can amplify the potential of marginalized people within.**

Metrics that Matter

Challenge:

We have no framework or standards for collecting or measuring D&I data or questions for volunteers or communities and therefore cannot measure meaningful progress with any accuracy or value.

As this research found, the variety of ways we ask questions, store and structure data is prohibitive for innovative progress.

"When we count community, we count who made it through the gauntlet of difficulty, challenge, personalities vrs who turns up at our door. How do we count people at the door to really understand where we lose diversity?"
(staff, USA)

Opportunity:

By standardizing the way we ask for, collect and store D&I data, we can better track, and measure our progress as an organization and emerge with leaders of influence in improving diversity in open source. **This should be identified as part of any specifications gathering for identity systems.**

The Urgency for Inclusive Leadership

Challenge

Historical and cultural norms of using meritocracy to develop and advance leaders causes a toxic, exclusionary norm and does not allow diverse resilient communities to thrive.

Research showed a legacy of tenured community leaders restricting opportunity, and failing to surface the achievements of others (gatekeeping)

"Overwhelmingly, our research showed that the tenured, and unchecked nature of community leadership roles contributed to toxic, abusive and exclusionary behavior." (Quantitative & Qualitative)

“ Characteristics of gatekeeping included withholding opportunity and recognition¹, lying about the availability of roles in a region, nepotism and both passive and deliberate banishment of individuals - especially women who showed a sharp decrease in participation over time compared with men.” (Quantitative Research Findings)

“People are not vouching - holding control over others.” (male, India)

Opportunity

Building transparent renewability and accountability into all community leadership structures will create a cultural shift in community that radiates inclusivity and empowerment to diverse groups who might not otherwise engage.

We See You - Messaging & Communications

When joining Mozilla or any other open source community, minority and marginalized groups look to see (among other things) their identity reflected in the values, language(s), methods of connection and behaviors of the community and project leadership.

To be truly inclusive of the most people, we need to exist in cycles of consistent analysis, and adjustment of our language, messaging and communications with a D&I lens.

Engage Diverse Perspectives - By Name

Challenge:

By definition working in the open invites participation, collaboration from anyone who feels they can add value, or achieve a personal goal through participation and contribution. However, when the majority of a community reflects a minimum diversity that invitation is not as open.

We tiptoe around some diverse perspectives - gender-identity, sexual orientation, and neurodiversity in advocacy and in opportunities - and while perhaps this is intended to not overstep cultural lines, it excludes and alienates m

any people.

In practice what this looks like, in part, is that we use 'diversity and inclusion' as umbrellas we intend to mean 'everyone', but only reference specific identities - primarily 'Women'.

*"This goes to the gender thing - a lot of time I see nonbinary people get lumped in "women" in diversity things which is very dysphoria inducing as someone was assigned female but is definitely not. I was part of that for a while (Womoz), and then I started to realize that I was definitely *not* a woman! And while I understood that the invitation was still open to me as a nonbinary person aligning with "women's" initiatives is highly uncomfortable for me because it involves misgendering me by definition "*

" From my perspective, making things more accessible to neurodiverse folks. We're a big portion of the community (and over-represented in tech!), but events are still designed around neurotypical people, who can afford to go non-stop for several days at a time."

"Innovation calls on firms to include people and ideas 'from the edges'" -
Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage

Opportunity:

By identifying members of these communities who are already aligned with Mozilla's mission, and asking them to help us design inclusively, **we can activate the disenfranchised members of the community we already have, to take ownership, step up, and help us grow.**

The Paradox of a English-First Global Organization

Challenge

Our primary method of communication and opportunity are in English, with translation and localization primarily handled by community groups as needed which is restrictive to the majority of the global inclusion of our mission. English-first limits the way people are able to express important ideas and nuances - and does lead to gatekeeping.

Only 21% of contributors indicated English as their first language, which makes language-inclusive a core issue for community engagement. The majority of presentations, media publications and video are prepared in English - and often containing slang and nuances. "It's up to us to translate" says one French community member:

"Being 'not North American' is a barrier and makes me feel less comfortable, and it's harder to express myself even though I speak English well." (male, France)

"Non-English speakers struggle to find opportunity before it expires - People want to feel part, but they feel they are late to everything that Mozilla throws. They need enough contact with those responsables or someone who speaks their language." (male, South America)

Opportunity:

By creating strategies for reaching and listening to people in their own language, we can truly engage and benefit from global perspectives which are otherwise hidden.

We found early evidence of the value in our [first language interviews](#), especially for people already marginalized within their culture. This could possibly align with recommendations for identity groups.

Accessibility & Saving The Open Web

Challenge:

Accessibility of our technology (online) and inclusion at events (offline) is not prioritized, and thus unfairly restricts people with physical challenges, and neurodiversity - requiring them to adapt or avoid opportunity altogether.

"If an event (like All Hands) is during a religious holiday, include a place for people to go - or convene for sacred time".

"Wheelchair accessibility options should be something we know about before we arrive"

"Think about whether or not we are asking people to tolerate behaviors like alcohol, and things like noisy spaces, vrs making room for opt in and out"

Opportunity:

Designing websites, resources and assets (including video), and events for the people we want, need and already have in our community, vrs just who has traditionally 'shown up', or who we think is there, will build reputation and inclusiveness that will make people more productive, more engaged and more effective.

Exclusion By Technical Jargon

Challenge:

We primarily target technical contributors in community goal-setting which alienates non-technical contributors. This deters those who underestimate their technical ability and thus their value to the project, especially women.

"Women in our quantitative research described themselves as only 'having some technical expertise' twice as often as men who identified as being 'very technical' in much greater numbers (50% to 30%) . We know that men apply for a job when they meet only 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% it then becomes clearer why touchpoints for contributor engagement require a layer that respects the various levels of confidence, and not just perceived ability." (Qualitative Findings)

'Technology focus' only feels exclusive - we need to say why that technology helps people, not just that it is cool". (female, Asia)

Opportunity:

By designing ‘technical’ contribution as a milestone on a path that may include non-technical contribution (like writing tutorials, testing, creating bugs) vrs the ‘single destination’ our projects will feel more inclusive, welcoming and ultimately benefit from the talent of contributors who may not recognize their potential in the beginning.

Open Source, Open Communication

Challenge:

Project standards for communication often require access to bandwidth for streaming, and rarely include captioning, transcription or translation.

These are especially noticed at top-level communications for strategy, and Air Mozilla videos of plenaries and company meetings. Approx 25% of our interviews were held in Telegram by request of contributors. It should be noticed that in some cases people just preferred to talk in text over voice as a preference.

(Quantitative Findings)

*“More than half of the world is still without Internet, and even people who do have access may be limited by factors like high cost, unreliable connections or censorship. Digital Inclusion” - **The Internet Health Report***

Opportunity:

Prioritizing communication for those with limited or no bandwidth, and transcriptions for video/streaming communication that might not otherwise be available can help people access Mozilla’s mission sooner, and as they come online for the first time.

Making Mozilla’s Mission Relevant For Marginalized Groups

Challenge:

The reason people contribute to Mozilla varies wildly but data shows that sustained participation is largely connected to the mission.

Additional findings have shown that our mission sometimes resonates as a *first-world*, or privileged mission and thus exclusive to specific regions, language and economic privilege - which thus excludes large numbers of peoples, and perhaps entire countries.

"Maids and Cooks don't know what Mozilla's mission is about - or even what privacy online means - we have to use terms and reach people in different ways" (male, India)

Opportunity:

Focused communication extending the mission's relevance in lives of people with limited economic resources, access to technology (as they come online), and at intersections of diversity like gender can build a more globally diverse community at large scale.

Frameworks for Governance, Incentive and Consequence

Building Effective Enforcement & Resolution

Challenge:

Community members have varying understanding, trust and knowledge of the [Community Participation Guidelines](#) as a resource for reporting abuse and violations - or as a tool for resolving conflict. As such many try to solve issues on their own, or see resolution as something only their regional community leaders can address. A segment of community also regard CPG as being North American, and unaligned with cultural beliefs (especially around gender-identity).

This includes helping staff resolve and report abuse from community and vice versa.

"We need something like a help, call line - people need ways to reach out and have a chat about something. Designated people to receive those." (male, staff, UK)

“When we lack the resources to do conflict-resolving, we often settle on avoiding them, rather than working them out.” (woman, Albania)

“While both staff, and community have begun to embrace Code of Conducts at their events, or they knew they were at events they attended - but not clear on how violations were , or should be handled.” (qualitative findings)

Opportunity:

By investing in staff time to make the CPG a source of resolving community conflict, abuse, and other violations we can build a reputation as a safe community for everyone regardless of culture, geography or economics - ultimately becoming a more inclusive project overall.

Generating Value & Incentivizing Action

Challenge:

Opportunity, recognition and resources are perceived to be largely dependant on staff and core contributors of which very few have been tasked with, or trained in - building inclusive community-driven projects. **Additionally, recognition itself varies wildly across the project to the omission or inflation of achievement or impact on the project.** Often we recognize those best at being seen; the loudest and most consistent voices.

Additionally there is both perception and evidence that lack of diversity in staff geographically, and in language contributes to surfacing only those with similar voices and background especially technical contributors, and men . (qualitative findings)

“Social connections are the only way volunteers progress: “You are limited by what you know, and who you know, not by what you do” (male, India)

Opportunity:

Creating reliable and sustainable mechanisms for recognition across the project will help diverse people visualize the potential of their contribution as a the pathway for supported success and achievement - derailing self-promotion, gatekeeping as valid methods for reward.

Safety and Identity in Systems of Engagement

Challenge:

Our systems do not adequately protect the information of people who register for community portals (Reps, Mozillians), and thus ultimately exclude or expose those who prefer to remain semi-anonymous or anonymous for reasons of safety and privacy.

People expressed a desire to better own and define their identity in our systems, with requests for better gender definitions, and [gender pronouns](#). (Qualitative findings)

"2 women who contributed to mozilla, and they had themselves under the name of men, so they were safer " (female, Asia)

Opportunity:

If we want diverse people to feel safe in our community, but also successful we need to build systems that allow for anonymity, hidden fields, gender pronouns and other layers of privacy and identity.

Adequately addressing identity in our systems would be groundbreaking for inclusive leadership in open source.

Resources & Further Reading

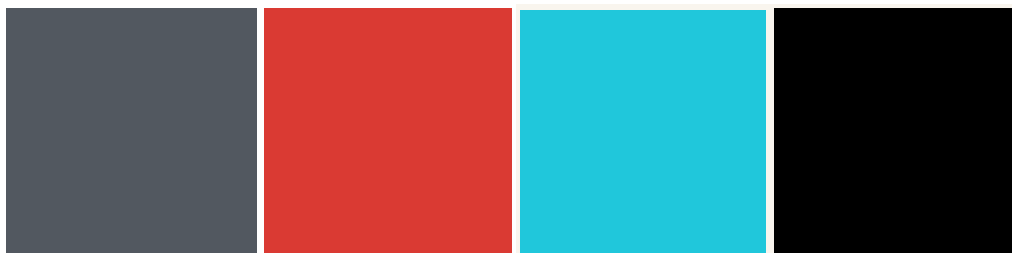
- [D&I Quantitative Report](#) - [Data Source List](#)
- [Key Findings List](#) (unpolished list of problem statements)
- [Diversity in Open Source is even worse than tech](#)
- D&I for Participation Research - Qualitative ([Emerging Trends](#))
- D&I Sprint summary of research ([from Design Sprint](#))
- [When the Internet Internet doesn't speak your language](#) (Health of the Internet Report, Mozilla)
- [Neurodiversity as a competitive advantage](#)
- [Why do women in tech 'communities' thrive, while women in tech don't?](#)
- [Github Pull Request Analysis and Gender Bias](#)
- [Why Diversity Programs Fail](#)
- [Digital Inclusion - The Internet Health Report](#) (Mozilla)
- [It's better to to avoid a toxic worker than hire a rockstar.](#)
- [Part of that World](#) (Blog post)
- [Diversity makes us smarter](#)
- [Why women don't apply for jobs unless their 100 percent qualified.](#)
- [The ethics of unpaid labour and OSS](#) community
- [Internet Health Report - Digital Inclusion.](#)
- [Yay Gender form](#) (giant form of gender identity)
- [Invisible Talent](#)
- [Minorities have degrees but don't get hired](#)
- [Mid Career Survival talk](#)
- [Manufacturing the talent shortage](#)
- http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/16-057_d45c0b4f-fa19-49de-8f1b-4b12fe054fea.pdf
- [Participation, Permission and Momentum](#)
- [Acknowledging non-coding contributions](#)
- ["Leaving toxic open source communities"](#)
- [Gender Pronouns](#)
- [What sponsorship looks like](#)
- [White Paper Cost of Bullying at Work](#)
- [To succeed in Tech, women need more visibility](#)
- [I hate the term Open Source](#)

- [The Open Source Identity Crisis](#)
- [What is participation design anyway](#)
- [Meritocracy is almost as real as this unicorn](#)
- [Geek Feminism Wiki](#)

Open Sans font available here:

<https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/styleguide/communications/typefaces/>

Color palette



Hex color
#000000

#525860

#DA3A33

#20C7DB

Mozilla Logos (black and white)



In Partnership



In Partnership

