

Diversity Report 2023

FOSS Backstage is a conference dedicated to everything related to FOSS governance and open collaboration. The fifth edition of FOSS Backstage took place as a hybrid conference from March 13-14, 2023, onsite at our venue TUECHTIG in Berlin & live streams, online talks & podcast stream available online.

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 2023
- Encourage feedback from the FOSS Backstage community

Diversity ticket fund

In order to promote diversity at FOSS Backstage we initiated a Diversity Ticket program in 2021 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 1 diversity tickets with additional tickets being provided through partners and diversity fund contributions.

In total 7 diversity tickets were available for FOSS Backstage 2023. Of these:

- 1 were funded by FOSS Backstage as unused diversity tickets from last year.
- 3 were funded by our community partners Google, Linux Foundation, and Red Hat
- 3 were funded by attendees purchasing Diversity Fund Contributions.

Of these 7 tickets, 6 were utilized leaving 1 remaining. Funding for this 1 ticket will be used at FOSS Backstage 2024 to provide diversity tickets.

We also provided Diversity Online Tickets for the first time this year. Diversity Online Tickets provide access to our online event platform, but not to our venue in Berlin. This enables people who are unable to travel to Berlin to attend the conference. We initially provided 25 Diversity Online Tickets, 19 were used, leaving 6 remaining. Funding for those 6 tickets will be used next year to provide additional Diversity Tickets.

Survey highlights

This is the third 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.

We tried to increase participation in the survey this year by attaching the demographic survey to the registration process. The demographic survey was hosted externally and not connected to our ticketing system to preserve participants privacy.

The only demographic item directly attached to the booking process was the question about participants preferred pronouns. This was printed on participants badges onsite, but answering this question was not compulsory.

After the conference, we send a feedback survey to every participant of FOSS Backstage 2023. We also provided an QR-Code at the venue which linked to the survey on the second day of the conference for participants. The survey was in two parts, with the first part collecting feedback about accessibility, diversity, and inclusivity; and the second one being about general feedback to the conference. The answers to the first part of the survey are attached to this report.

Of a total of 202 attendees of FOSS Backstage 2023, 62 persons or 30.7 percent completed the demographic survey and 40 persons or 19.8 percent completed the feedback survey.

The demographic survey yielded the following results:

- Of the speakers who completed the survey, 30.8% identified as female, while 69.2% identified as male, compared to 43.3% of speakers who identified as female and 42.8% who identified as male last year.
- Of the attendees who completed the survey, 46.8% identified as female, while 53.2% identified as male, compared to 46.2% of attendees who identified as female and 53.8% who identified as male last year.
- Of all participants of the survey 1.7% identified as non-binary and non identified as trans.
- Using the question about pronouns asked at registration as a proxy for gender, 57.1% of all participants of the conference identified as male (i.e. used he/him pronouns), 40.1% identified as female (i.e. used she/her pronouns) and 2.72% identified as non-binary (i.e. used they/them, he/them, or she/them pronouns)

- Of the speakers who completed the survey, 23.1% identified as a person of color, compared to 7.1% who identified as a person of color last year.
- Of the attendees who completed the survey, 36.1% identified as a person of color, compared to 7.7% who identified as a person of color last year.
- Of all participants of the survey, 7.4% considered themselves to have a disability, compared to 16.7% of participants who completed the survey last year.
- Of the persons with disabilities who completed the survey, 8.3% reported problems with accessibility during the online or onsite event. In the following question about which problems with accessibility were encountered, the following relevant answers were provided:
 - „There was quite some chatter, made it hard to concentrate. Also the 2 tracks not ending at the same time - which happens <3 - but being so close, disrupted the speaker that wasn't finished yet.“
 - -„While masks were required for the event, it was not enforced strictly.“

Participants had various suggestions on how to improve diversity and inclusion at FOSS Backstage. This is an excerpt of answers that participants gave; you can find the complete list in the survey responses below.

- Diversity of speakers: It was suggested to invite more female speakers.
- Travel grant: It was suggested to set up a travel grant for remote speakers.
- Pre-conference socializing event: There was a suggestion to include an opportunity to socialize and connect before the conference, especially for people of underrepresented groups.

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 planning future FOSS Backstage events.

Lessons Learned

There has been a significant uptick in participation in our demographic and feedback survey this year, which in turn increases our confidence in the data gathered. Still, it must be remarked that only 30% percent of all participants filled out the demographic survey and 20% participated in the feedback survey. We would like to increase participation further in the future in order to have more meaningful results.

That being said, we see an increase in diversity at FOSS Backstage, speaking from the data gathered in the survey as well as from feedback provided. Still, we are looking for

ways to improve diversity & equality, and make FOSS Backstage welcoming and open for everyone.

Related to this, the idea of sponsoring travel costs was mentioned. Since FOSS Backstage is a rather small conference with limited budget, this is difficult to implement, but we are exploring options to collaborate with other organizations to hopefully being able to offer this in the future.

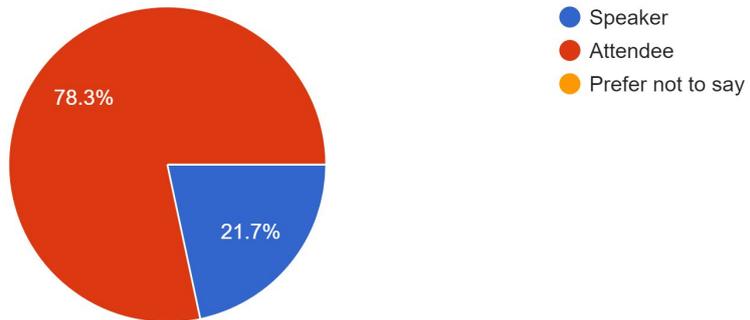
One of the issues that was mentioned as being problematic in terms of accessibility, was that there was no separate „coffee-area“ that could be used for conversations. We are currently looking at other venues that could be used for future editions of FOSS Backstage to address this issue.

If you have any questions or concerns, about this report, or if you want to share further ideas or improvements with us, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at info@foss-backstage.de.

Full survey responses:

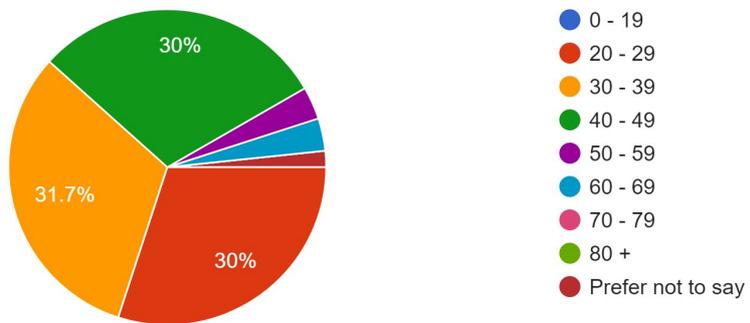
Are you a speaker or an attendee?

60 responses



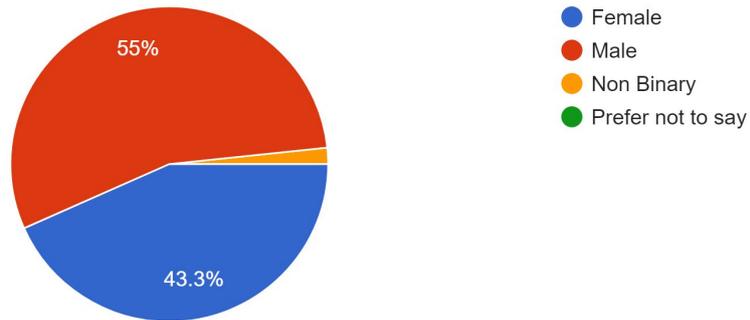
How old are you?

60 responses



Which one of the following best describes your gender?

60 responses

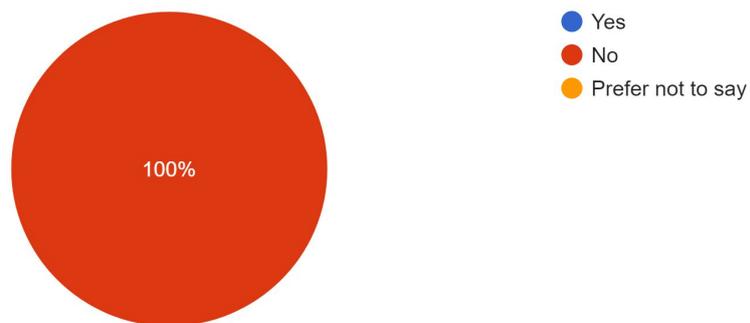


If you prefer to use another term to describe your gender identity, please provide it here 1 response

Alien

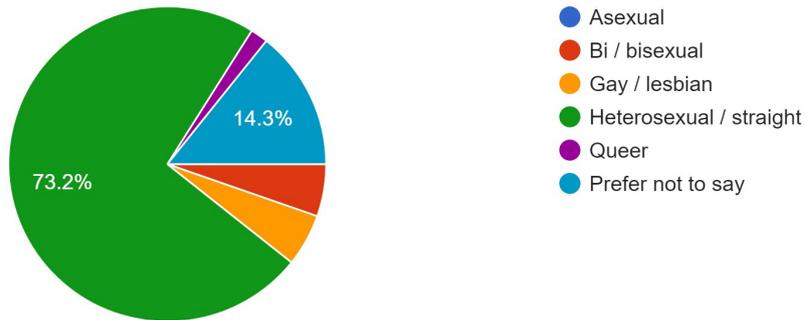
Do you consider yourself to be a trans person?

60 responses



Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

56 responses

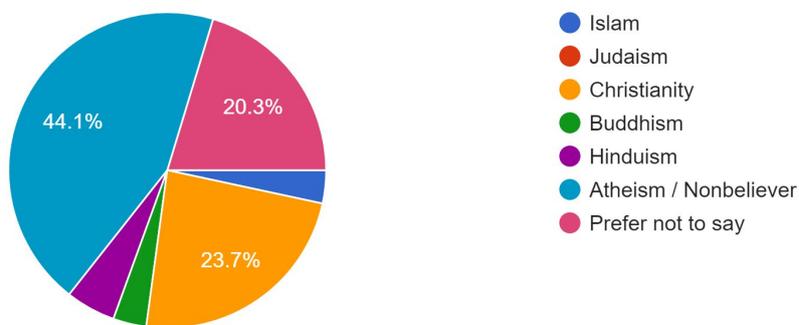


If you prefer to use another term to describe your sexual orientation, please provide this here

0 responses

Which of the following best describes your religious affiliation?

59 responses

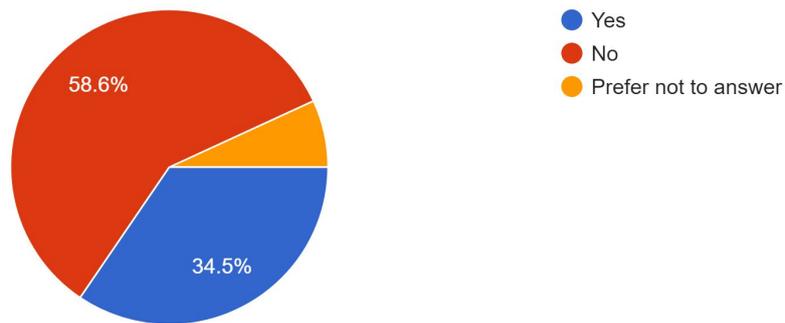


If you have a different religious affiliation or prefer to use another term to describe your religious affiliation, please provide it here

0 responses

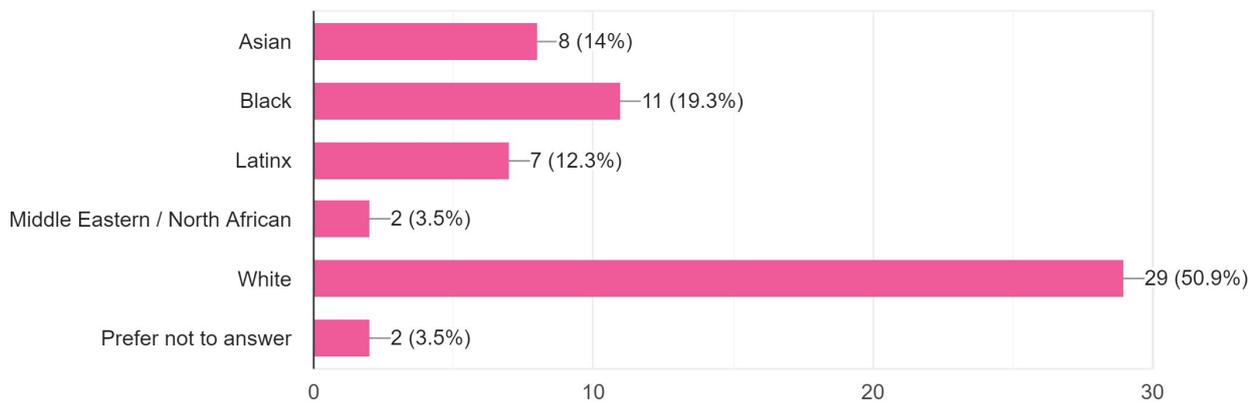
Do you identify as a person of color?

58 responses



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

57 responses



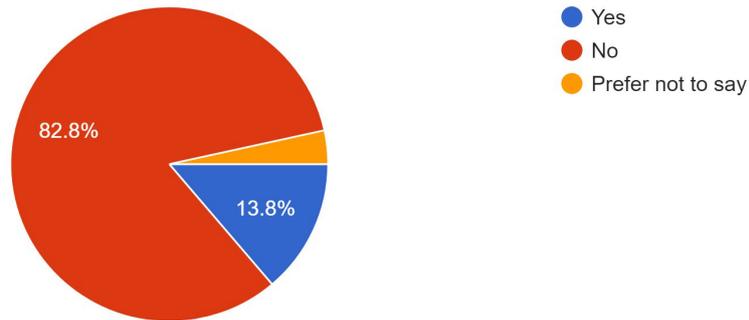
Please write any other ethnic backgrounds that you identify with here

3 responses

Jewish, German
Eastern Europe
Turkish

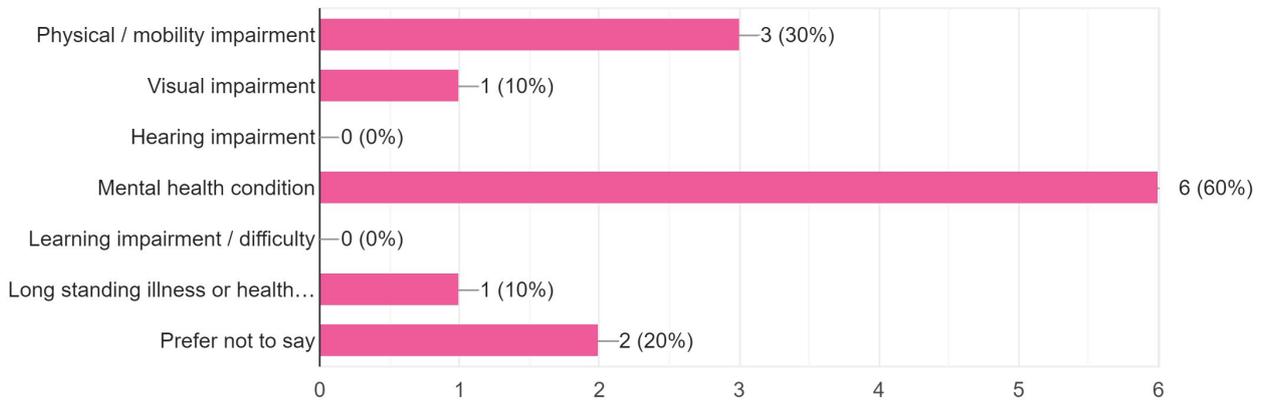
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

58 responses



If you consider yourself to have a disability, please indicate the type(s) of impairment(s) that apply to you

10 responses



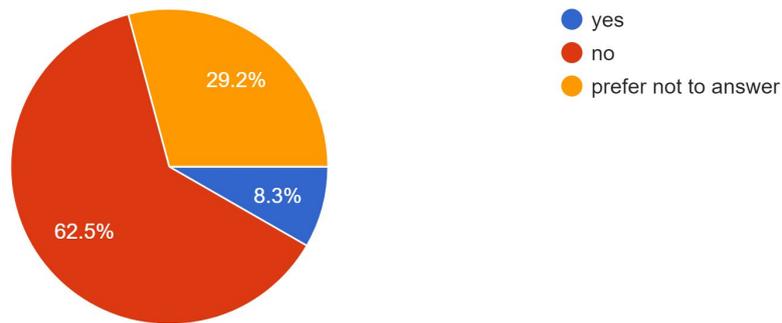
If you consider yourself to have a different type of disability, please provide it here

0 responses

No responses yet for this question.

If you have a disability, did you have problems with accessibility either during the online or onsite event?

24 responses



If you had problems with accessibility, or suggestions how to improve accessibility at FOSS Backstage, please provide it here:

6 responses

There was quite some chatter, made it hard to concentrate. Also the 2 tracks not ending at the same time - which happens <3 - but being so close, disrupted the speaker that wasn't finished yet.

how to answer this question, if one does not have a disability?

I do not have a disability

I have no problem with accessibility because I joined the event online, except some network connection issues which are not your fault.

While masks were required for the event, it was not enforced strictly.

None

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

9 responses

The event was pretty diverse

I attended to the online event, so far the panel was quite diverse. Maybe having 50-50 panel for next year.

have the 2 tracks further apart, or maybe catering in the other room as well so that people can stay and network until the doors open.

Maybe a travel grant for a few remote speakers, e.g. from African FOSS communities. it could be funded by sponsors or open donations

free access for POC and LGBTQ

The whole event was a perfect mix in my opinion. Nothing to improve here.

A pre-event mixer or social for folks to find a conference buddy or a friend would be a fun idea. I have seen other events do this, especially for diverse peoples, to connect with others attending the conference from similar backgrounds. For example, this could be an evening social or networking event for people who registered with the Diversity Ticket to meet other attendees before the conference.

Try to include more diversity and women speakers.

Sponsored Travel costs?

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

13 responses

Asking for pronouns was great, and also great to see of LGBTQA+ and BIPOC on stage as well. I would have preferred the font of the pronouns to be printed a bit bigger on the badges though.

I was pleased with the number of women both attending and presenting, as well as the number of people presenting who were from non-western countries

It was great to meet so many Community builders and to chat about common issues we face in open source and community management

I think it was quite good.

no space for hallway track without interfering with talks. noise from outside interrupting speakers at start of talk as door is opened multiple times.

POC and LGBTQ rather not present?

I appreciated the (in my perception) high number of women/non-males and of non-whites/POC, especially among the speakers. I also very much appreciated the mask mandate and the very visible Code of Conduct, that was displayed everywhere. I also was very happy about the signage that led from the street to the location.

I would have liked a separate seating area/coffee corner, where people could comfortably sit and relax/talk with each other while the talks were running. People tended to talk in the coffee corner which disturbed the talks on stage 1, but there wasn't really another indoor space where people could go to talk while talks were running.

Questions from the audience were usually very nice, just sometimes men liked to give a "this is more of a comment than a question" remark and explain the topic of the talk back to the female speaker that just gave the talk. I would have liked for moderators to maybe announce at the beginning of the Q&A part that this is not something that is perceived well at the conference or to announce that they'd jump in with their strict moderation whenever someone would start with a "question" like that.

I didn't feel any diversity or inclusion issues, on the contrary, this is one of the most inclusive FOSS events! (Note: I am white and male, and probably blind to inclusion issues:)

I really enjoyed the event from how easy, with great communication signals how to get there, sending questions online,

Great diversity of people, great schedule big enough to have options, small enough not to be overwhelming. I really enjoy having QA time and breaks to talk to people. Lastly I love the program had public, companies and communities <3! OMG the photobooth <3 I felt really safe and crowd and speakers did really great balancing diverse representation

The event met and exceeded my expectations regarding diversity, equity and inclusion!

This event is far more than I expected about diversity and inclusion. I saw at least two diversity talks and hopefully will see more in next edition.

The atmosphere seemed inclusive and inviting to me.

Exceeded my expectations because of the great audience, content and general vibe at the event. Having the second track join the first track was a slight problem because of the noise pollution.