Open Source Software in the Social Sector - User (Proto-)Personas

Description

The (proto-)personas included in this document are based on the research conducted from September 2019 - February 2020 as part of the GitHub Open Source Software in the Social Sector report, which was published in April 2020.

This research project required interviewing many types of users - including consumers, funders, and producers - in different types of roles and organizations. Personas that are based on fewer than five interviews are considered proto-personas. Some behaviors, needs and motivations are represented in the proto-personas, though they are not as detailed as would appear in full personas. For more information about proto-personas, please visit https://www.nngroup.com/articles/persona-types.
User Proto-Persona - Social Sector Tech Funder

“IT has only been in the past 5 years or so that funding social sector tech is a distinct exercise. The solutions are becoming more sophisticated, and are using more AI, cloud computing and open source software.”

Hector, 56
Nairobi, Kenya

OSS and Tech Profile

Career Profile

Attitudes and Behaviors
- Advocates for OSS whenever it makes sense
- Directly funds tech companies and organizations building OSS
- Believes there is an untapped potential with OSS in the social sector

Motivations and Needs
- More sustainable funding structures
- Way to share out learning and outcomes to bigger orgs that fund social sector tech
User Proto-Persona - Generalist Programmatic Funder

"I worked in a few countries before making the transition to a foundation. We have a five-year plan that heavily influences the grants we award. I’d say we’re tech agnostic. We care more about the programme area."

Anna, 32
London, England

OSS and Tech Profile

Career Profile

Attitudes and Behaviors
- Understands tech products can be important, but mostly concerned about program design
- Likes the idea of open source collaboration

Motivations and Needs
- What tech is aligned with programmatic needs
- Needs better understanding of how open source collaboration works
- Clear return on investment with OSS and other tech spends
In my previous life working in corporate technology, I implemented and contributed to open source software (OSS) on a daily basis. I'll have my organization build OSS if a funder requires us, though I’m still unclear how to sustain building OSS for social sector.

Raj, 57
New York, NY, United States

**OSS and Tech Profile**

**Career Profile**

**Attitudes and Behaviors**
- Deep understanding of commercial applications of OSS, mixed feelings for the social sector
- Stays compliant on funders’ OSS requests, though does not go beyond

**Motivations and Needs**
- Cost to refactor code for legacy tools to publish usable OSS is often too high
- Needs clear understanding of the return on investment of OSS for the social sector.
- Collaborative nature of OSS is a plus for teams
I have to make sure everyone in my organization worldwide can understand what we’ve created and how to effectively use the application. I try to use open source solutions whenever possible, but cost and usability are the most important factors.

Christina, 41
Berlin, Germany
User Proto-Persona - Tech Staff, Social Sector Org Headquarters

"So much of my job is making sure the tech needs of HQ and of our country offices are met. That's a tough job when the needs are so different. Often, open source software can be the best fit."

Aja, 35
Washington DC, United States

OSS and Tech Profile

Career Profile

Attitudes and Behaviors
- Supports company staff who are less technical
- Uses OSS libraries to build tech solutions
- Learns from popular OSS communities
- Believes in the value of open source software
- Active conference participant and speaker

Motivations and Needs
- Decision points to help staff make tech decisions
- Way to stay updated on latest socials sector OSS
- Easier way to contribute back to social sector OSS
User Proto-Persona - Junior Developer, Corporate Tech Company

"I work on open source stuff all the time to build my portfolio. It's a great way to get involved in cool projects, but I haven't found many ways to do that for the social sector. I want to contribute to social good work!"

Zak, 26
San Francisco, CA, United States

OSS and Tech Profile

Career Profile

Attitudes and Behaviors
- Wants to do social good work that he can't do through his day job
- Searches code repositories on a daily basis for new projects

Motivations and Needs
- Build portfolio
- Connect tech work with the feeling of doing something good for the world
"I’m widely considered to be one of the foremost experts on adolescent wellbeing in the Middle East. I have control over my department’s budget, including our technology spend. I have heard of open source, but don’t know how it could apply to our work."

Hannaa, 45
Amman, Jordan

OSS and Tech Profile

Career Profile

Attitudes and Behaviors
- Selects technology based on recommendations from tech consultants in country office
- Not an active part of any tech or open source communities

Motivations and Needs
- Technology that is easy to use, trusted and supported
- Must stay within budget
- Meeting project monitoring & evaluation indicators is a high priority
User Proto-Persona - International Tech Consultant

"As a former software developer, I understand the value of open source software, especially how it can be a cost effective solution in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. But I can’t always stray away from what my client recommends."

John, 39
Kigali, Rwanda

OSS and Tech Profile

Career Profile

Attitudes and Behaviors
- Uses technology recommended by HQ staff
- Subscribes to tech for international development (ICT4D) listservs

Motivations and Needs
- Knowledge of ICT4D trends
- Deep knowledge of wide range of tech tools and products to land next job
- Clearer path of open source software to employment
User Proto-Persona - US Non-Profit Tech Consultant

"Reputation and referrals are critical when you’re an independent consultant. I can’t risk leading a client to use an open source software they can’t trust."

Mary, 41
Seattle, Washington, United States

OSS and Tech Profile

Career Profile

Attitudes and Behaviors
- Believes in the values of open source
- Expertise and knowledge of recommended tools are majorly not open source
- Stays informed on latest tech trends

Motivations and Needs
- Client’s trust in recommended tools
- OSS software that has supported vendors
- A way to shape what OSS is being built