

Techies in the social sector

The need for tech volunteering in the social development sector

■ Tech for social development



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Over the last couple of years, a few of us volunteering under the umbrella of FOSS United, have been helping non-profit organisations working in the social development sector with tech capacity.

I have realised that this sector has extremely limited technical capacity which seriously affects their ability to do the important social development work they set out to do, be it work with civic issues, poverty, education, or climate. Here, tech isn't the solution to these problems (it rarely is), but is aid to solving problems better, reducing waste of time, money, and effort. Even tiny optimisations can be deeply impactful and meaningful in social development.

Here are a few examples where volunteers actually built software pro-bono for social development orgs. Many of these were quickly built on top of Frappe (instead of something like Django) as it comes baked with a lot of high level workflows and components that most of these orgs require. Turns out, often, it's CRUD, forms, views, reports, permissions, and data based workflows. Case studies for these are pending.

- We helped [PeriFerry](#) ⁹⁴ bring down a manual process that would take 8 hours to 20 mins.
- [Volunteer checkin platform](#) ³⁹ for the [Robin Hood Army](#) ¹⁷ .
- [India Labour Line](#) ³⁶ .
- Volunteer management platform for [Living My Promise](#) ²⁶ .
- HR, Payroll system for [Waste Warriors](#) ³³ .
- WIP: Civic services / volunteering platform [Samaaja](#) ¹⁸ with [ReapBenefit](#) ¹¹ .
- [Kerala Digital Archive](#) ²⁰ , open document repository using [Omeka](#) ¹⁸ .

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The open-source collective fueling **social** **impact.**

Open Source Alliance For Social Innovation &
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What if we reimagined technology with people and peoples' rights at its centre?

PDGI is a collective effort to create an evidence-based grammar for principles, standards, rights, and practices covering the entire spectrum of technology from conception and design to deployment and governance.

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Who is in the room?

- As a CSO, how have you recently seen technology impact people, positively or otherwise
- Have you interacted with a FOSS/tech community before? What was that like?

- Techies, when was the last time you used (or saw) technology for a civic problem
- Have you interacted with a non profit organisation before?

Provocations for CSOs

- What is the biggest ops/tech challenge your org faces
- What s/w, tooling do you depend on?
- Do you use any FOSS tooling?
- Are there problems you wish you could solve but don't have the technical capacity

Provocations for FOSS devs

- Which of these problems can be addressed using existing FOSS tooling
- How would you go about building a solution for said problems