



Shaping Research (culture) Through Communities

Lessons from Open Science

Malvika Sharan

STEP-UP RSLondon Conference

7 July 2025



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Find this talk on Zenodo: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15825321>, DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15825321



London, UK



Co-Founded Open Life Science, RCM-Coop

Until June 2025: **Co-lead of The Turing Way**

Senior Researcher - The Alan Turing Institute

Lead of Community Management Team

Germany

M.Sc, PhD, Community Building experience

Worked in European Molecular Biology Laboratory,
connected with Open Science projects

Bangalore,
Karnataka

**Bachelor's degree
and worked briefly**

Ranchi,
Jharkhand

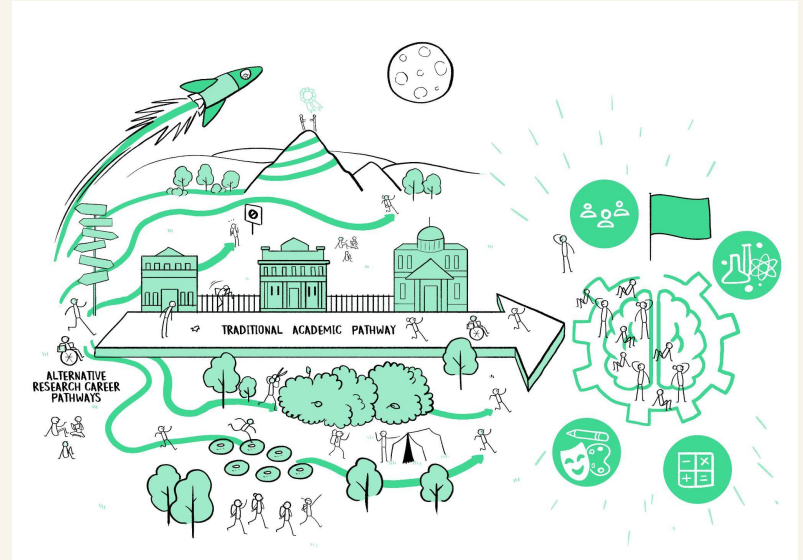
Hometown



Research Culture

Research culture encompasses the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes and norms of our research communities. It influences researchers' career paths and determines the way that research is conducted and communicated.

– Royal Society



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Zenodo: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3332807>.

Lessons I have learned from working with communities

- Community view
- Community management view



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Lessons I have learned from working with communities

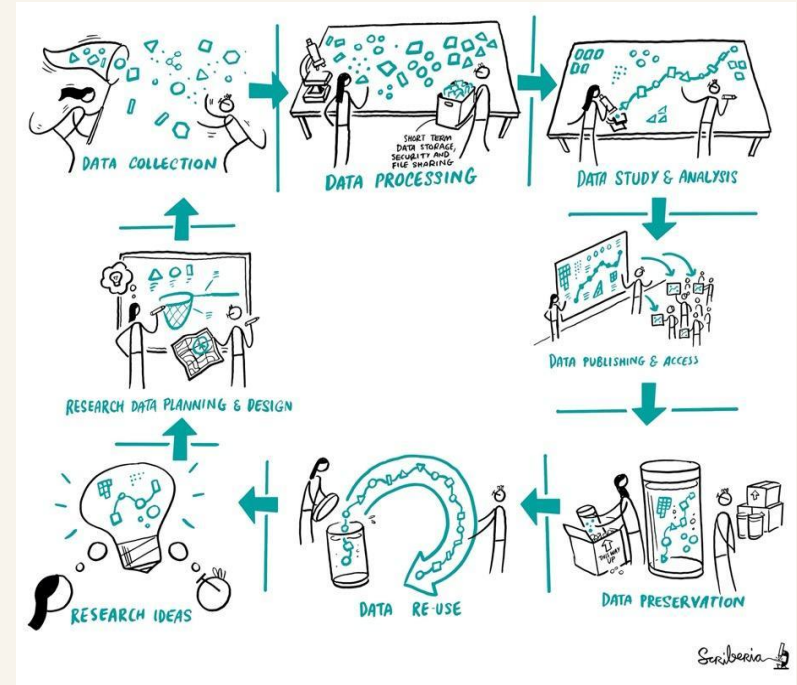
- Community view
 - Community management view
1. Role of mentorship
 2. Intentional inclusion
 3. Assessing volunteering practices
 4. Importance of showing up
 5. Open leadership
 6. Collaboration is key
 7. Clarity is kindness
 8. Pursuing growth authentically
 9. Honoring our needs



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Zenodo: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3332807>.

Mentorship & Intentional Inclusion

Inclusive communities provide mentorship and networking especially for those finding their place in the ecosystem



Community view



Open science for equity

Combines many forms of practices to make scientific knowledge 'open' (by design).

Accessible for everyone

No price barriers, no technical barriers!

Inclusive for everyone


Enables everyone to participate and benefit from scientific advancements.

Mentorship & Intentional Inclusion



Intentionally
co-creating inclusive
communities for
collaboration,
peer-based learning
and mentoring

Community management view



*Openness and access are **not binary conditions**, but highly situational, contingent and dependent on the privilege and context of **knowledge makers and gatekeepers**.*

Contextualizing Openness: Situating Open Science, Leslie Chan, Angela Okune, Rebecca Hillyer, Denisse Alborno, and Alejandro Posada

Open science for equity

Combines many forms of practices to make scientific knowledge 'open' (by design).

Accessible for everyone

No price barriers, no technical barriers!

Inclusive for everyone

Enables everyone to participate and benefit from scientific advancements.

Framework for Collaboration

Everyone can **freely access, reuse,** reproduce, build upon and distribute research objects.

Community framework for **collaboration,** peer production and sustainability.

Active approaches to inclusion can **empower actions** that work to dismantle challenging power dynamics.





Open Seeds
Mentoring & Training Program

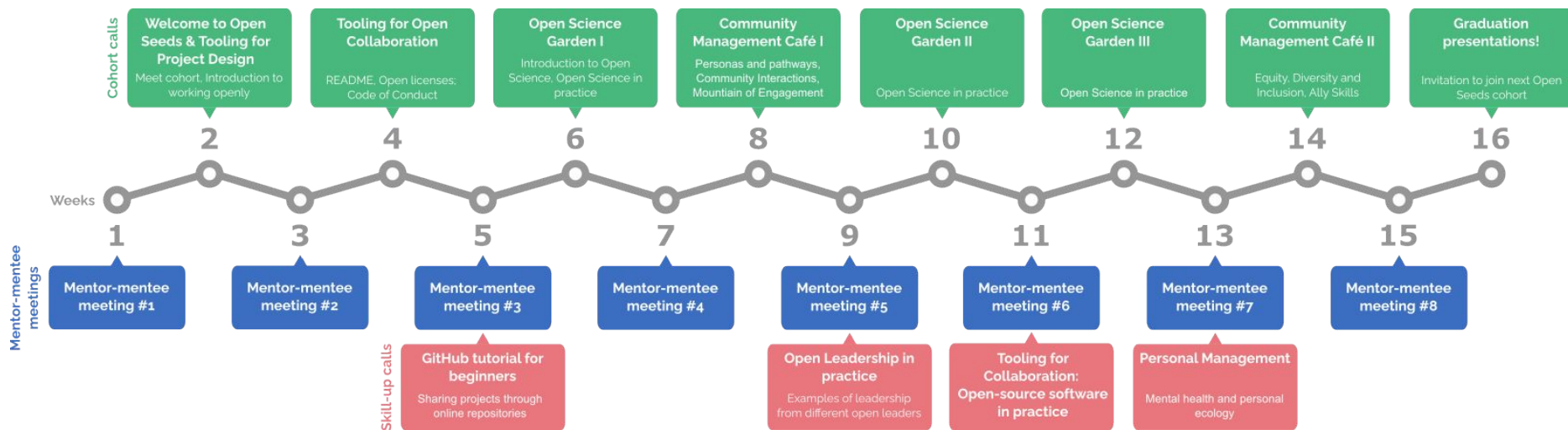
OLS is dedicated to capacity building and diversifying leadership to build a future together where research is accessible, inclusive, and equitable.

Established in 2020, we are known for our structured mentoring and training, and our wonderful community of open science practitioners.

<https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/initiatives/mozilla-open-leaders/>
<https://2019.biohackathon-europe.org/about.html>
Logos from respective organisations!



16-week program with 1 on 1 **Mentoring**, **Cohort-based** training and hands-on experience on **local/personal projects**



Volunteering & Importance of Showing up

Showing up in community can help build new skills, ideas, connections and support system

Community view

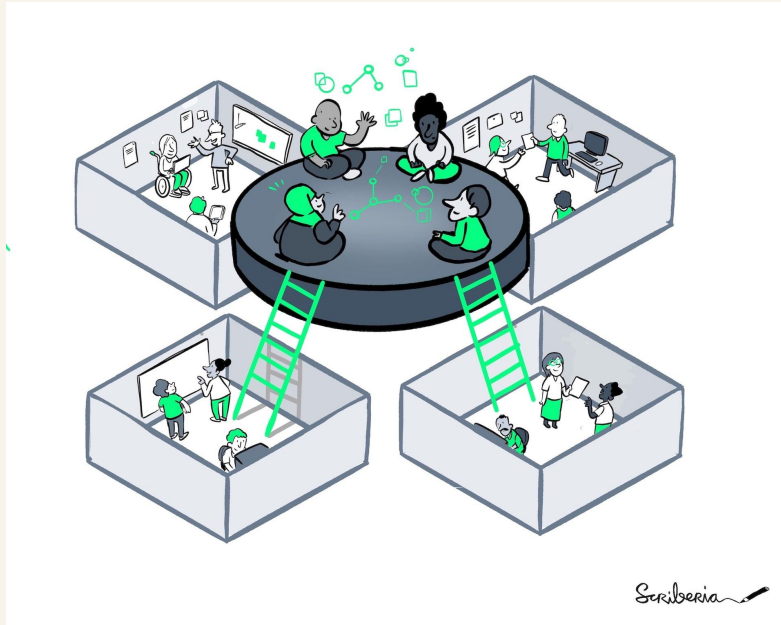


Volunteer and (personal) impacts

- Gained and shared **skills, ideas and experiences**
- Participated in collective efforts towards **shared goals**
- Exchanged **ideas and solutions** transferable to teams
- Explored diverse paths to **leadership and growth**
- **Exposure** to people, resources, concerns and challenges
- Meaningful collaborations and cross pollination
- Resilient **community** and spaces for **accountability**



Volunteering & Importance of Showing up



Creating paths for people with diverse skills, expertise and lived experience to engage and act

Community management view

Since launching in 2020

11
Cohorts

700+
Participants

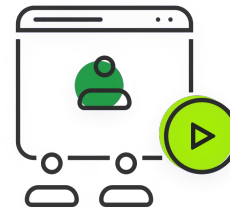
350+
Projects

100+
Microgrants

Nebula Project A worldwide community



Our three pillars



**Open Science
Training**



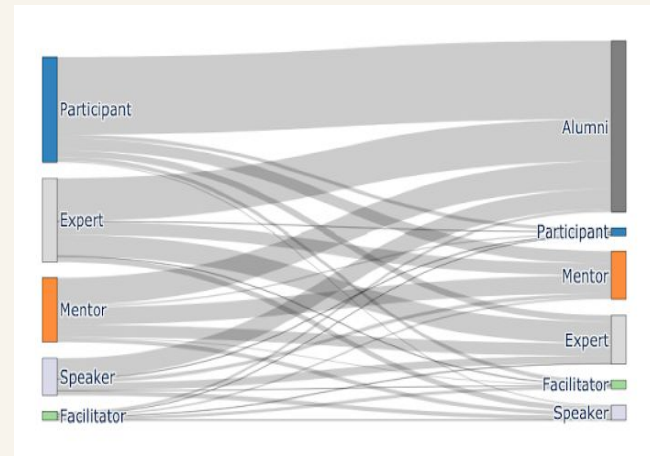
**Research
on Open**



**Open
Incubator**

Creating Paths for Community to show up

- Onboarding people to groups and goals
- Sharing skills and mentorship
- Ensuring transparent communications
- Guiding authentic engagement
- Improving community processes
- Taking on community leadership roles
- Correcting mistakes iteratively
- Fostering genuine sense of belonging





Patricia Herterich

Associated Director - Finance



Irene Ramos

Research Fellow



Bethan Illey

*Finance Manager &
Researcher*



Rive Quiroga

Research Fellow



Sara Villa

*Resident Fellow:
Open NeuroSeeds*



Tajuddeen Gwadabe

Programme Manager



Deborah Udoh

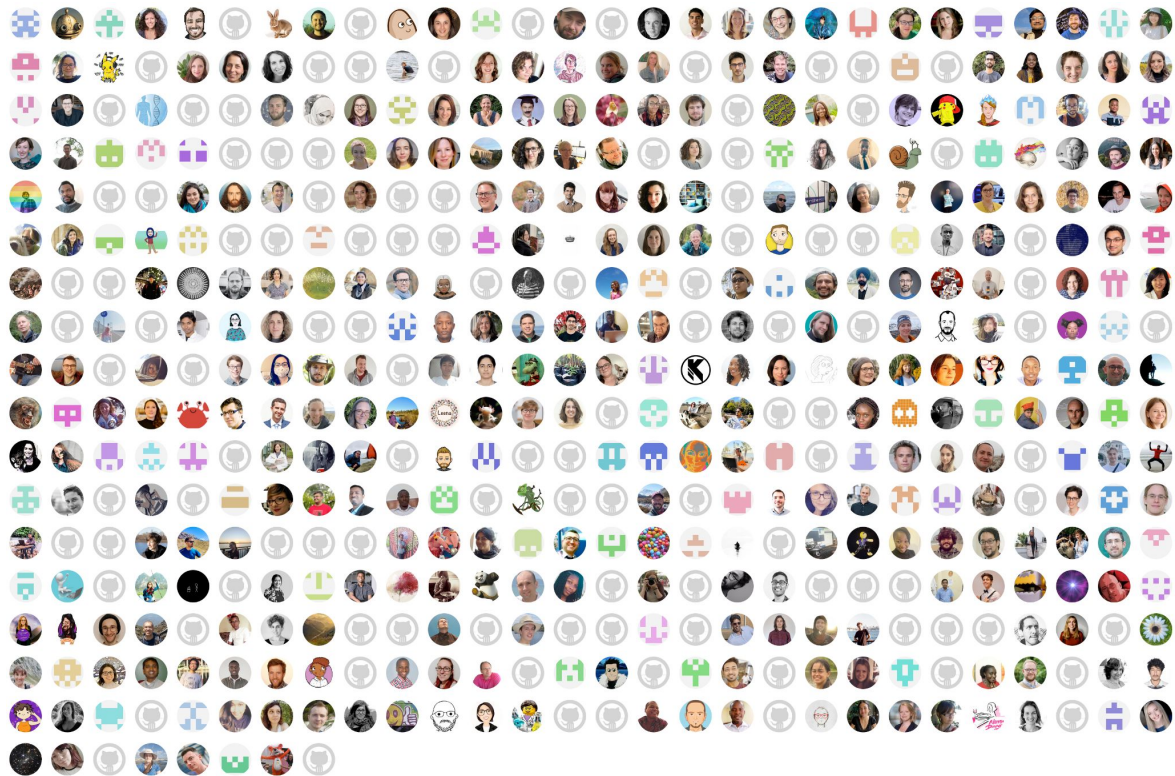
Junior Web Developer



Camille Gonzalez

Executive Assistant

Thanks to the OLS Community



700+ members

who have mentored, facilitated,
contributed shared skills and
graduated from OLS

Chan
Zuckerberg
Initiative



The
Alan Turing
Institute

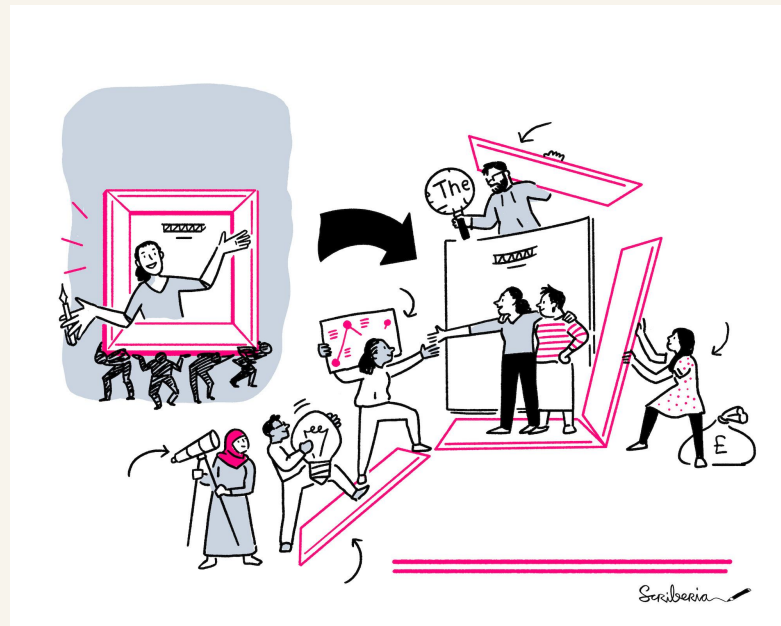


CS&S
Event Fund

Code for Science & Society

Clarity is kindness

Seek clarity on the scope, goals and values of work you participate in



Community view

FOMO is not a strategy!

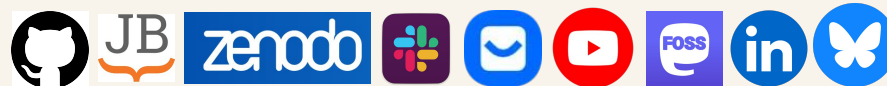
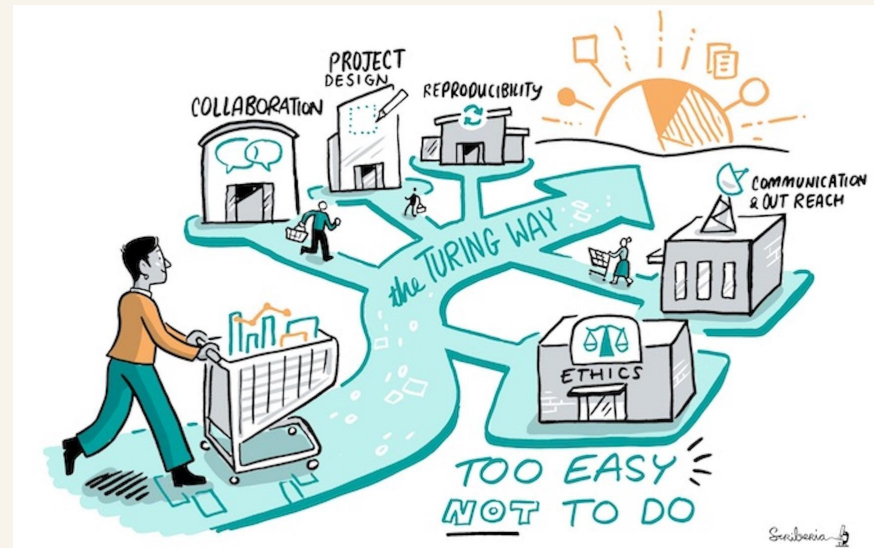
- What is the shared goal, purpose and value?
- Who makes decisions?
- Who gets to participate in knowledge/tech production?
- Who controls and protects this system?
- Who enjoys and benefits from the outcome?
- Who is responsible for addressing challenges and harm?
- How can open source/science further knowledge equity?
- How can you/I build agency and take leadership roles?

The Turing Way



An open science project and
community-driven handbook on
data science and research practices.

5 years; 500+ co-authors; 6000+ monthly users, informal collaboration with 100+ organisations; citations in peer reviewed papers, reports, policies and articles; HiddenREF awards; influenced and inspired other open resources & community projects.



Leadership & governance

Steering Committee, Working Group chairs, Project Leads

Community Management

Newly formed group to support day-to-day community support

Chapter writing, training, outreach, maintenance

Regular volunteer and experts from the community

Accessibility & Onboarding

Liz Hare, Anne Lee Steele, Precious Onyewuchi + WG

Infrastructure Maintainers

Jim Madge, Danny Garside, Brigitta Sipőcz, Sarah Gibson, + WG



Different PathWAYS
in *The Turing Way*

Organisational advocacy

Esther Plomp, Carlos Martinez, Zoe Turner, Lena Karvovskaya

Book Dash

Previous Book Dash attendees return to support others

Localisation & Translation

Batool Almarzouq, Renato Santos + WG

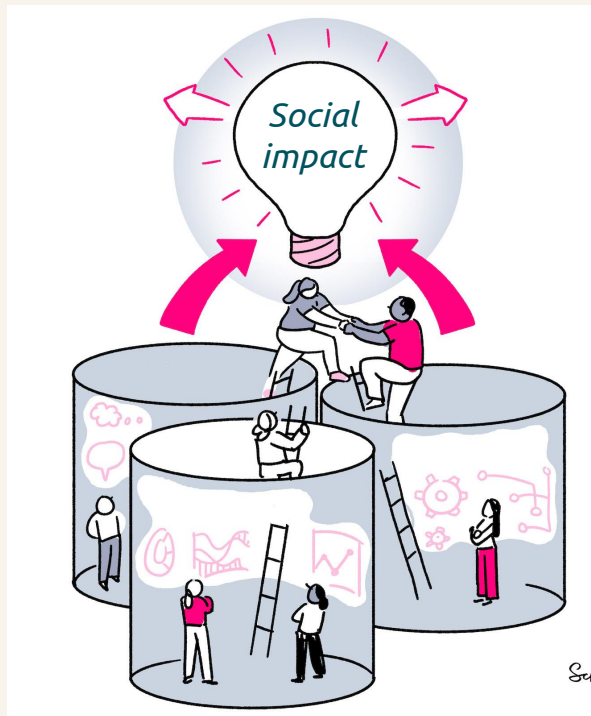
Collaboration/Projects Delivery

SSI, Data Science Without Borders, Jupyter DEI project

Fundraising

Previous Project Delivery Team, supporting fundraising

Clarity is kindness



Setting clear roles,
processed and
documentation for
membership, progress
and recognition

Community management view



Welcome

Foreword

Guide for Reproducible Research

Guide for Project Design

Guide for Communication

Guide for Collaboration

Guide for Ethical Research

Community Handbook

Afterword

Legal Disclaimer

Data Usage Statement

Contributors Record

the-turing-way / the-turing-way

<> Code • Issues 461 🔗 Pull requests 100

the-turing-way Public

all contributors 534

This project follows the [all-contributors](#) specification. Contributions of any kind welcome!

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(molunorichie)
149739 words

ar, zh-CN, fr,
ja, pt-BR,



cozenkaplan
5914 words

tr



All Contributors

Recognize All Contributors

Including those that don't push code



THE TURING WAY - COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE

ARCHIVES

The Turing Way Community Forum 19 June 2020 15:00 UTC+1 (GMT)

Learn more about the community, decision making, governance, working groups and more

Community Forums

by The Turing Way

Playlist • Public • 9 videos • 40 views

In 2024, we are hosting public community calls that bring together folks from across the project - open to all ...more

Play all

Sort All Videos Shorts

1 The Turing Way Steering Committee Fireside Chat - Part 1: Governance in The Turing Way • 27 views • 10 days ago

2 The Turing Way Community Forum 19 June 2020 15:00 UTC+1 (GMT) 29:31

3 The Turing Way Community Forum 17 April 2025 The Turing Way • 29 views • 2 months ago

4 The Turing Way Community Forum 21 February 2025 The Turing Way • 48 views • 4 months ago

5 The Turing Way Community Forum 12 December 2024 The Turing Way • 120 views • 6 months ago



OpenUK Awards Winner 2022

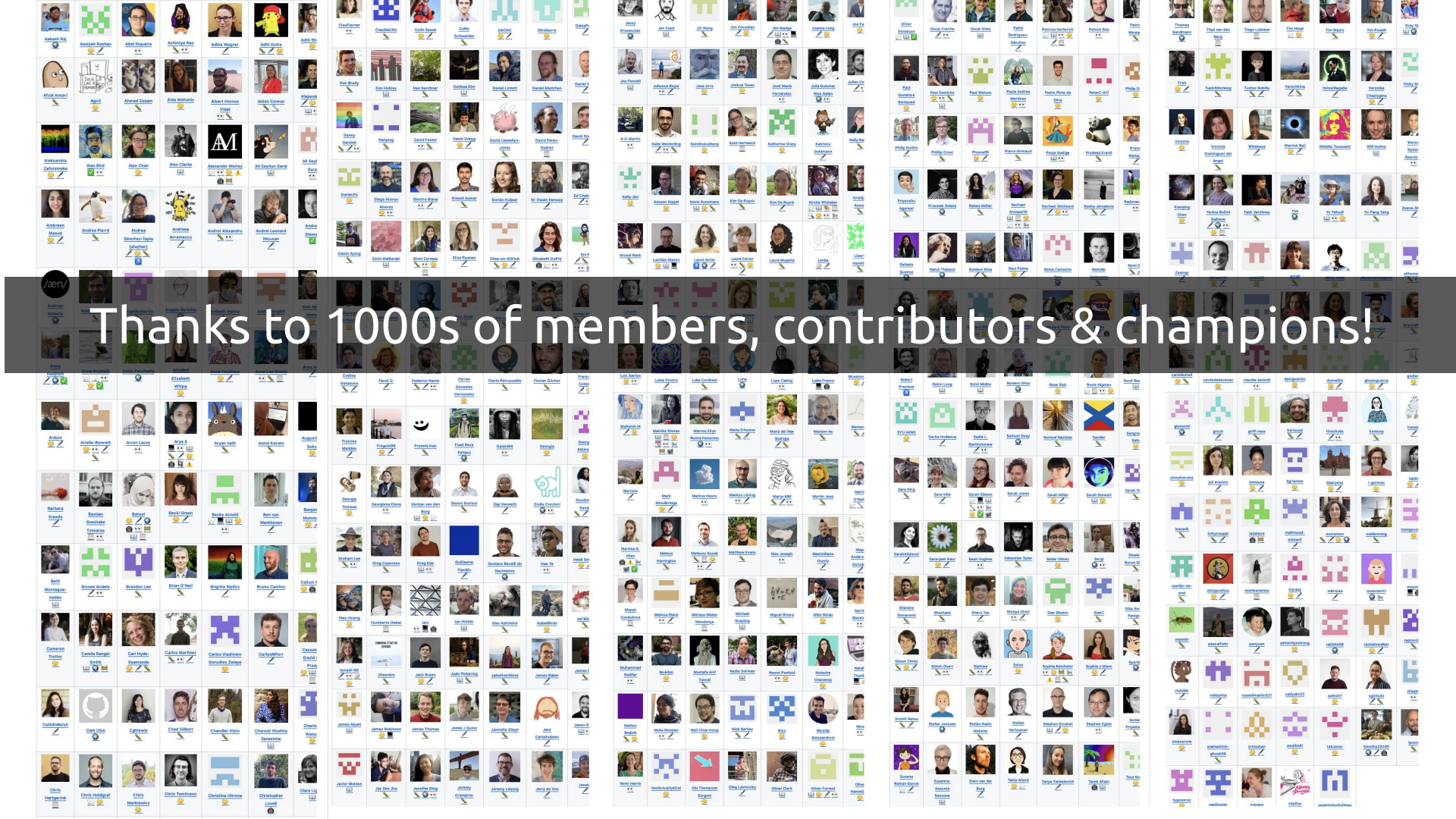
Open:UK

Category: Belonging

The Turing Way

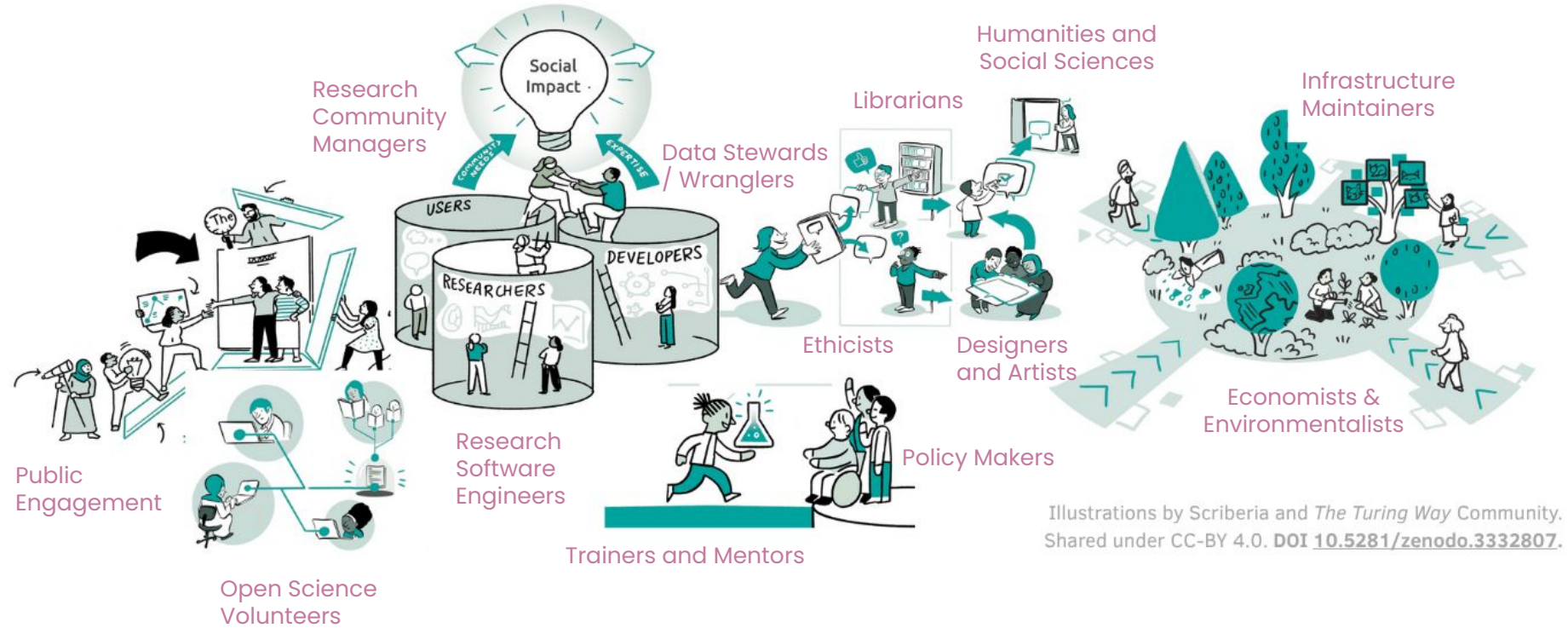
Sponsored by avanade

openuk.uk/awards #openukawa



Thanks to 1000s of members, contributors & champions!

Applying team science approach



Open Leadership & Collaboration

Self-advocacy is a form of leadership that inspires collaboration to achieve shared goals



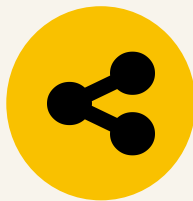
Community view

Open Leadership

Group-oriented leadership model for building healthy and open culture of engagement by embodying inclusivity, transparency, adaptability, collaboration and community.



Understanding



Sharing



*Participation
& Inclusion*

moz://a Open Leadership Program

mozilla.github.io/open-leadership-framework/framework

Open Leadership

Group-oriented leadership model for building healthy and open culture of engagement by embodying inclusivity, transparency, adaptability, collaboration and community.



Understanding



Sharing



*Participation
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moz://a

Open Leadership Program

mozilla.github.io/open-leadership-framework/framework

Open Leadership is **not a way to** (Thompson, 2011):

- get free labor.
- avoid process / structure.
- hit deadlines faster.

Instead, it requires us to create **robust, value-led, transparent systems** for collaboration, governance and co-development.

Examples of Open leadership

Helping improve
community process

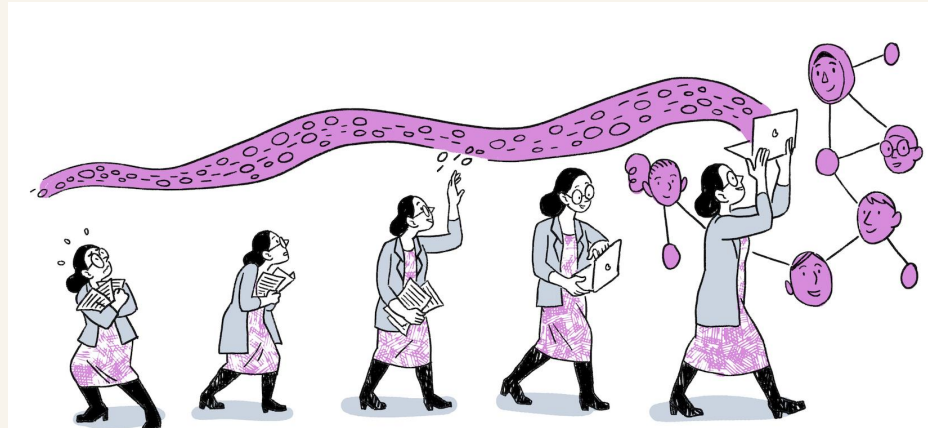
Showing up for
self (and others)

Hosting a community
space / effort

Responding to a
call for help

Answering a question
someone asked

Raising an issue and
suggesting solutions



Joining a task force /
working group

Forming and
mobilising a group

Doing something that you, your community and others will benefit from

Open Leadership & Collaboration

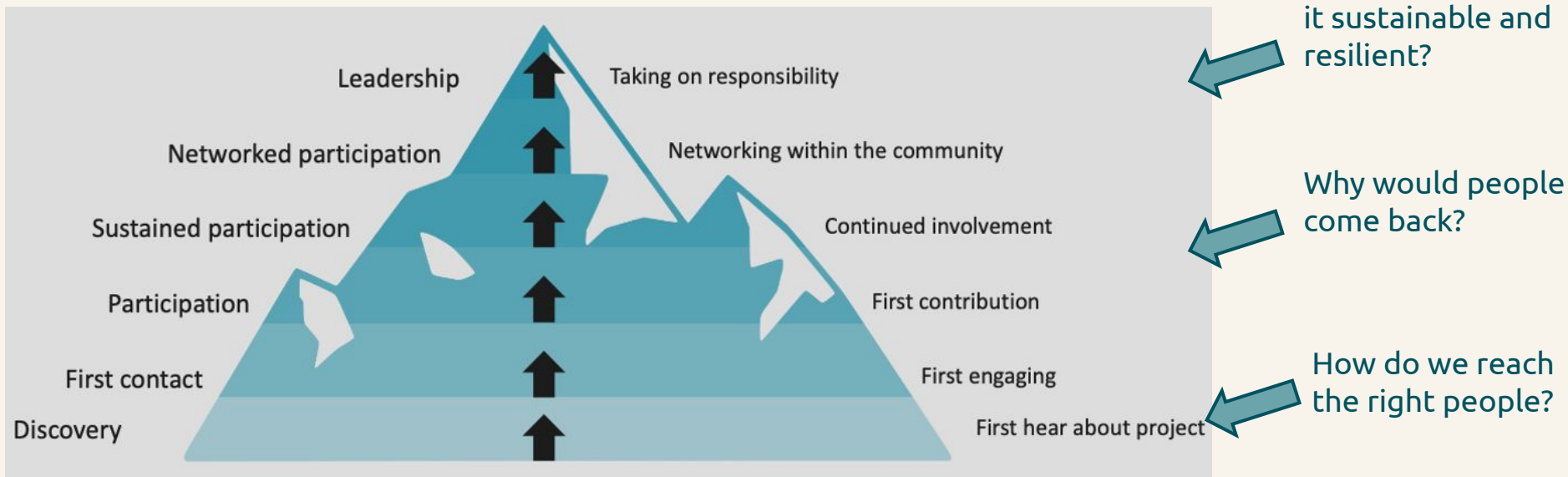


Modeling open leadership, guiding emerging leaders and fostering meaningful collaboration



Community management view

Mountain / Matrix of Engagement



Different paths to attract and engage people with different levels of engagement in the community in a way that benefits both the project and the contributors

moz://a



Research Community Management for Advocacy, Equity and Care

Organisers



Dr Malvika Sharan
Senior Researcher, Open
Research, Tools, Practices
and Systems



Dr Emma Karoune
Principal Researcher -
Research Community
Building | Tools, Practices and
Systems

Researchers and collaborators



**Dr Cassandra
Gould Van Praag**
Senior Research Community
Manager for the Environment
and Sustainability Grand
Challenge



Dr Gabin Kayumbi
Senior Research Community
Manager, Data Centric
Engineering (DCE) | Tools,
Practices and Systems



Anne Lee Steele
Research Community
Manager, The Turing Way |
Tools, Practices and Systems



Ayesha Magill
Widening Participation Officer



Denise Bianco
Senior Research Community
Manager | Tools, Practices
and Systems



**Alexandra
Araujo Alvarez**
Senior Research Community
Manager



André Piza
Senior Research Community
Manager, Turing Research
and Innovation Cluster in
Digital Twins (TRIC-DT)



Arielle Bennett
TPS Senior Researcher in
Open Source Practices

arXiv > physics > arXiv:2409.00108

[Submitted on 27 Aug 2024]

Professionalising Community Management Roles in Interdisciplinary Research Projects

Malvika Sharan, Emma Karoune, Vicky Hellon, Cassandra Gould van Praag, Gabin Kayumbi, Arielle Bennett, Alexandra Araujo Alvarez, Anne Lee Steele, Sophia Batchelor, Arron Lacey, Kirstie Whitaker



RCM cooperative

SERVICES JOIN ABOUT TEAM CONTACT



Cassandra Gould van Praag
Co-Founder / Executive Director



Emma Karoune
Co-Founder



Malvika Sharan
Co-Founder



<https://www.rcmcooperative.com/>

Pursue growth & honor your needs

**Pursue your growth
while honoring your
needs!**

*You can't sustain a movement
if you don't sustain yourself.*

- Akaya Windwood

Community view



Pursuing your growth authentically

**Small is good, small is all.
What you pay attention
to grows.**

- Adrienne Marie Brown,
Emergent Strategy

Respect your needs and give
yourself the permission to
leave (legacy), move on and
pursue new growth (and
make room for others)



Individuals



Navigation



Feedback

Groups



Interaction



Engagement

Community



Shared
ownership



Decentralised
leadership

Governance for Agency and Decision-making



The Turing Way Fireside Chat Series: Governance

A joint event by The Turing Way and Software Sustainability Institute

Register to attend Fireside Chats in 2025

The Turing Way Fireside Chat

Exploring Governance in the Open

A JOINT EVENT BY



CO-ORGANISERS:



Oscar Seip
Research Software Community Officer
Software Sustainability Institute



Malvika Sharan
Senior Researcher
The Alan Turing Institute

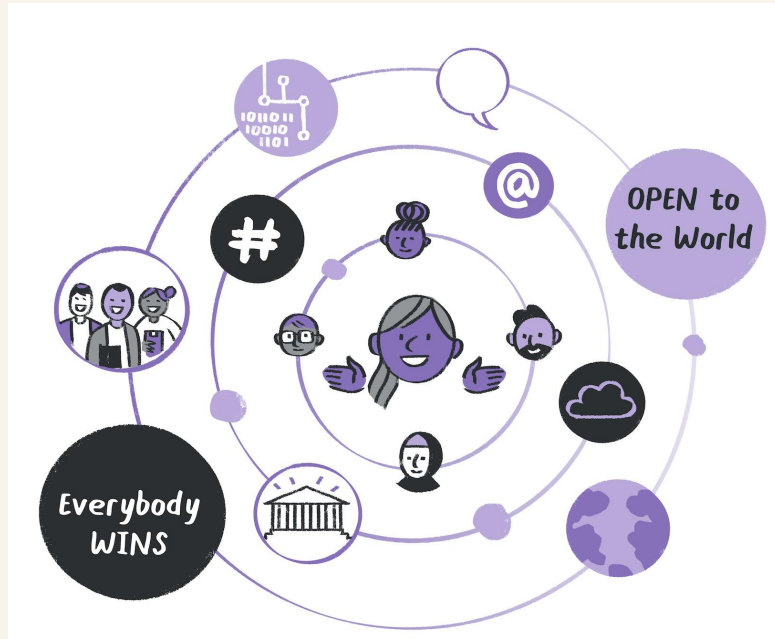


Arielle Bennett
Senior Researcher
The Alan Turing Institute



Elinor Ostrom. Understanding Institutional Diversity / E. Ostrom. *Princeton, NJ*, January 2005.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/50209015_Understanding_Institutional_Diversity_E_Ostrom.

Pursue growth & honor your needs



Sharing responsibility
for maintenance and
care to improve
community agency
and well-being

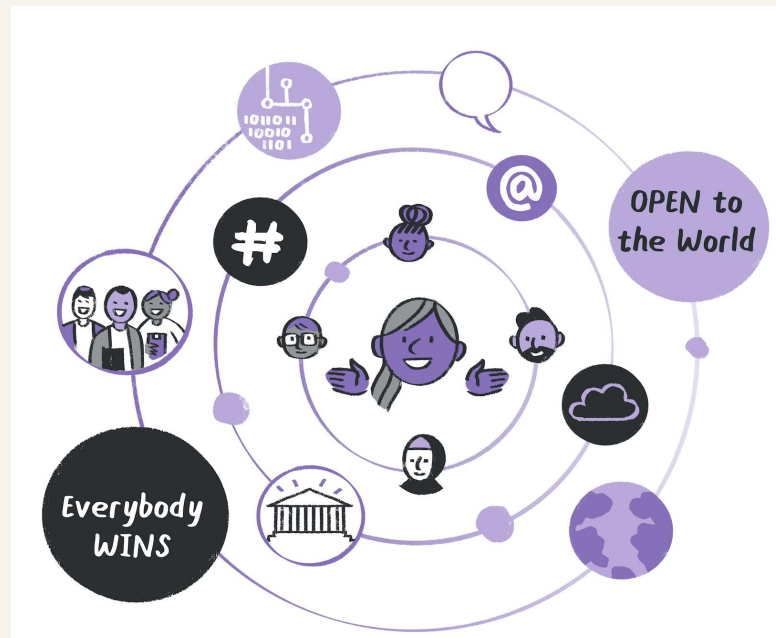
Community management view

Creating meaningful value exchange

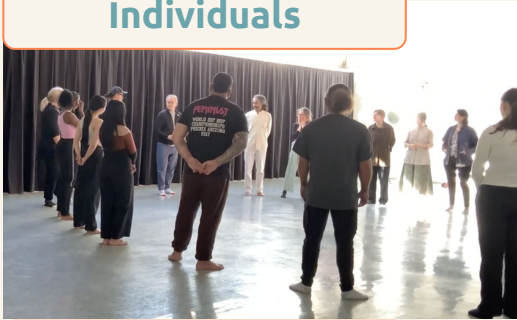
There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.

- Adrienne Marie Brown,
Emergent Strategy

What values members give to the community? what values they receive? **Is this value exchange balanced?**



Individuals



Groups



Community



Connections Inspire Positive Change



Video of “EchoEight Workshop - Arts for Social Change” on (6 April 2025) by Alex Boyd and Intercultural Roots team: <https://www.interculturalroots.org/project/echoeight>.

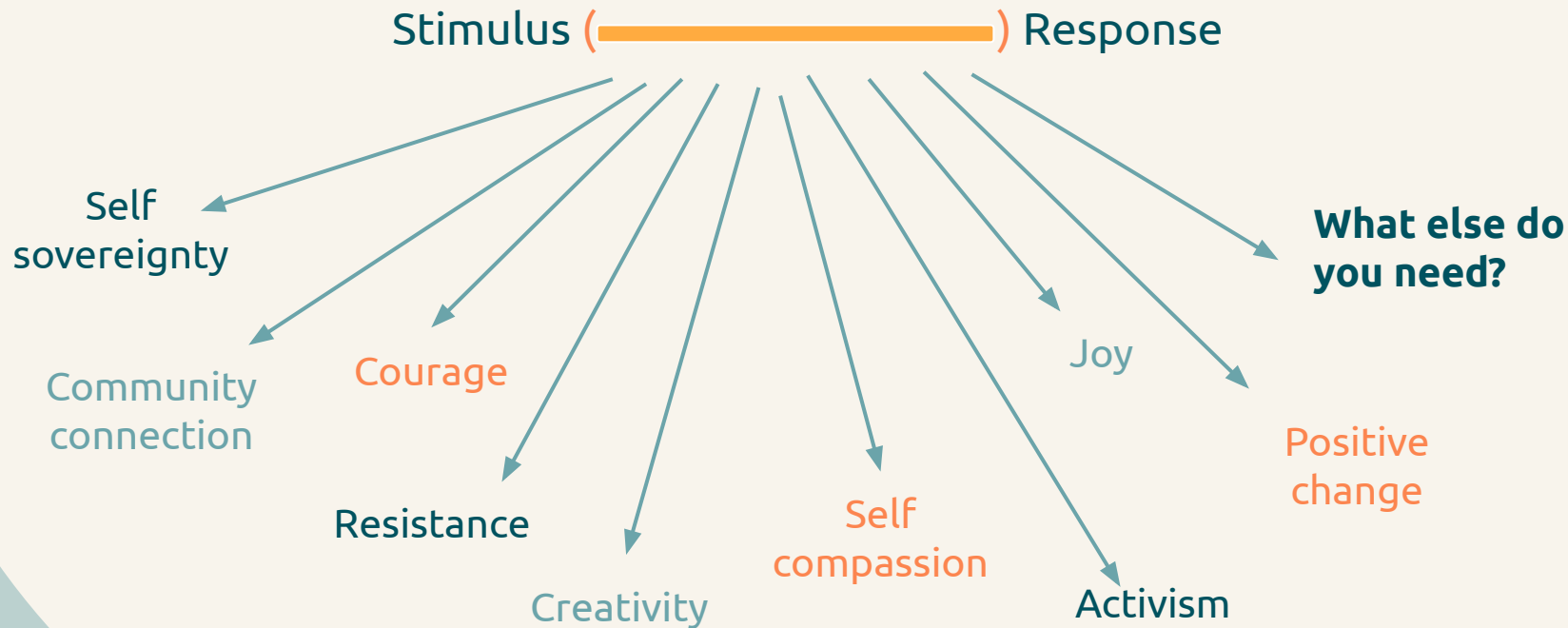
“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” – Viktor Frankl*

Stimulus () Response

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” – Viktor Frankl*

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Lessons from open science communities

1. Role of mentorship
2. Intentional inclusion
3. Assessing volunteering practices
4. Importance of showing up
5. Open leadership
6. Collaboration is key
7. Clarity is kindness
8. Pursuing growth authentically
9. Honoring our needs

What are some of your lessons?

Thank you!

Connect with me/us

- Personal page: malvikasharan.github.io,
@malvikasharan on most platforms
- OLS: we-are-ols.org
- The Turing Way: the-turing-way.org
- RCM Coop: www.rcmcooperative.com