

Big Open Source Sibling Program

The BOSS initiative aims to reach underrepresented groups in tech who want to be mentored and assisted to learn how to work on open source projects. We will provide a safe space and an accompanied methodology for them to learn basic concepts of working in a small open source project in practice and build enough background for them to, in the end of the program, be able to choose other projects to continue their contributions. The mentoring process helps build confidence, filling in technical gaps, and engaging the participants.



In the BOSS program, besides the technical aspects of introducing newcomers to open source, we deal with some challenges to inclusion, namely, intersectionality and impostor syndrome. Intersectionality demonstrates how diversity dimensions, such as gender, race, ethnicity and disabilities, are not mutually exclusive categories but intersecting ones. Impostor syndrome refers to a person's experience of feeling like an intellectual phony despite having the expected credentials. Impostor syndrome is most often experienced by women, but it also affects other minorities. In BOSS, we want people who embody diversity characteristics and measure their own qualifications and competence. We see diversity from the intersectional perspective. We want people who are not white, cisgender, and male to experience a feeling of belonging, true inclusion and engaged in OSS communities. The initiative helps to boost participants' technical and non-technical skill, while fostering a welcoming community. And it is not only about letting people in; little siblings must believe they can be successful and have corroborating experiences. Retention is a big part of BOSS initiative.

We detail the phases of the BOSS program, with some lessons learned from previous initiative season execution.

Why the Initiative BOSS is necessary

The BOSS mentorship program is focused on diversity in Software, specifically Free Open Source, and understanding why the need for this program is fundamental for an active and conscious participation in our community.

The first step is to recognize that education, processes, tools and technology products are not inclusive. There are several researches that show that our area is very homogeneous, with the majority of developers being straight white men, without children and without disabilities, and these are the people who shape the Industry. And so, technology is far from the imagined utopia, as neutral and a safe space. It has become an extension of power relations related to race, gender, also perpetuating oppression beyond these two dimensions, also reaching people with children, with disabilities, people with different sexual orientations and less privileged social classes.

There are several initiatives that try to combat the biases that permeate technologies. We have as an example of a large community the Pyladies. But why then another initiative like BOSS?

Pyladies arose in the United States, and although it has been updated and adapted to different regions, as we have Pyladies Brazil, it was created with a group in mind, already privileged.

BOSS arises in a Brazilian context, with the understanding that there is a different context in the southern hemisphere, recognizing for example that a barrier in our country is the difficulty of access for learning the English language, which is widely used in programming languages. Even more specifically, BOSS focus on Free Open Source, a branch of the Software Industry that has many barriers for contributors who are not part of the already homogeneous group in the area.

We need several groups that work with diversity, from different perspectives, so that we can enrich the debate, and also the technologies developed, so that they become more inclusive, and not control tools.

The program

- The Phase 3 submission is available [here](#)
- A general presentation about the BOSS program is available [here](#) - TODO
- The original submission is available [here](#) - TODO
- Complement Material is available [here](#) - TODO

The rest of this documents provides a set of useful links about BOSS program and the pilot execution.

- BOSS GitHub organization [here](#)
- BOSS mentors repository [here](#)
- FOSS chatbot Boilerplate used in the program [here](#)
- BOSS chatbot developed by the participants (Phase 1) [here](#)

Documentation

Weekly

This program was organized in weekly cycles. Every week, we had this moments:

1. Meeting with mentors and organizers to prepare for the next week
2. Presentation with all participants to present the content for the week
3. Checkpoint with mentors to get feedback from mentorships and adjust accordingly
4. One-on-one meetings for each big and little sister pair (mentor and mentee)

Each of them is explained in their templates and guidelines below.

1. Mentors planning meeting notes [template](#)
2. Presentation
 - Checklist to create weekly content [template](#)
 - Technical documentation and presentations [folder](#)
3. Checkpoint [template](#)
4. Mentoring sessions have more open guidelines [described here](#)

Talk like a boss

The **Talk like a boss** is a series of interviews. They are focused on real life and professional experiences of women in different areas, not limited to technical ones. Their main purpose is inspire and motivate participants and mentors. To do that, we encourage both mentors and mentees to engage in writing scripts and hosting the show.

To help them we have an [issue checklist](#) and a [script template](#).

Recorded content

To record and stream most of the content, we used and suggest using:

- [Jitsi](#) for meetings and streaming presentations
- [Streamyard](#) for interviews streaming or [OBS studio](#)

To see our streamings and presentations, please refer to:

- [Technical Live Sessions](#)
- [Talk Like a BOSS playlist](#)

Social media

- [Twitter](#)
- [Instagram](#)