□□ Funding is not the (only) solution: Keynote at FOSS Backstage 2022 [EN]

How does a FOSS project survive its initial wave of wild enthusiasm? How does one build something sustainable far from the traditional path of “build a proprietary tool, gather user data, sell everything”? How do we prevent our small FOSS projects from dying out, replaced by overly powerful tech giants and start ups with no regard for their users?

At Prototype Fund we fund this initial phase where a person or a small team comes up with a great idea and spends a few months figuring out how to bring it to life. And we see that the hardest part is rarely the initial building time: Keeping a project alive in the long run is the real challenge. While we (obviously) believe that a diverse range of funders is key for a healthy FOSS ecosystem, we see over and over again how great projects focus on this path only, struggle to survive on funding and slowly give up.

Funding can be a valid model for specific projects, but it can’t be the only solution to survive. With this talk we would like to encourage the FOSS community to look into different options. Based on experiences mady by various projects who were initially funded by the Prototype Fund, we’ll give an overview of what can work, what definitely doesn’t, and where to look for inspiring examples.

Marie and Patricia, co-directors of Prototype Fund, spoke about the topic in their keynote at FOSS Backstage 2022: https://pretalx.com/foss-backstage-2022/talk/9Q99L9/.

And these are the slides: https://pretalx.com/media/foss-backstage-2022/submissions/9Q99L9/resources/FOSSBackstage_KzjinTF.pdf.

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