

# Can Open Source fix Public Governance?

OpenGov Africa June 16, 2026

Dr. Dawn M. Foster

OSS Strategy consultant. CHAOSS & OpenUK Boards

 <https://chaoss.community/>

 <https://github.com/chaoss>

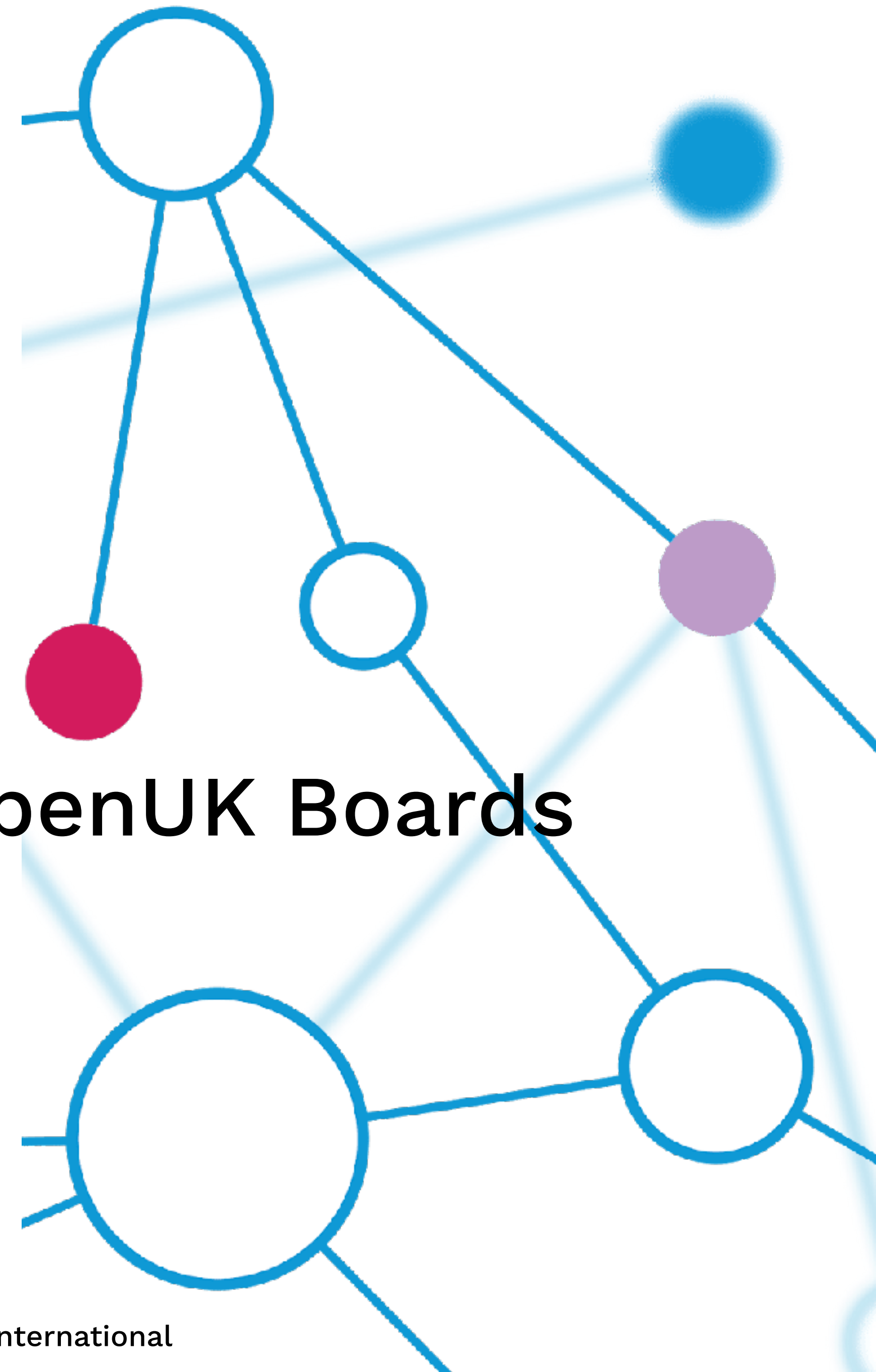
 @chaoss@fosstodon.org

 <https://fastwonderblog.com/>

 <https://github.com/geekygirldawn>

 @geekygirldawn@hachyderm.io

 @geekygirldawn.bsky.social



# Agenda

- **Overview / definitions**
- **How open source works**
- **Choosing projects and shades of open**
- **Demonstrating value of open source**
- **How you can help open source fix public governance**

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# Whoami



- Geek, traveler, reader
- 30+ yr tech career focused on open source (VMware, Intel, Puppet, ...)
- Open Source Strategy Consultant
- OpenUK Board
- CHAOSS Board and WG lead
- Previous CNCF TAG Co-Chair
- PhD on Linux kernel collaboration

Photos by Mom, the Linux Foundation, and me

# What is Open Source?

Source code distributed  
under a license that  
allows for it to be freely  
modified, used, and shared.



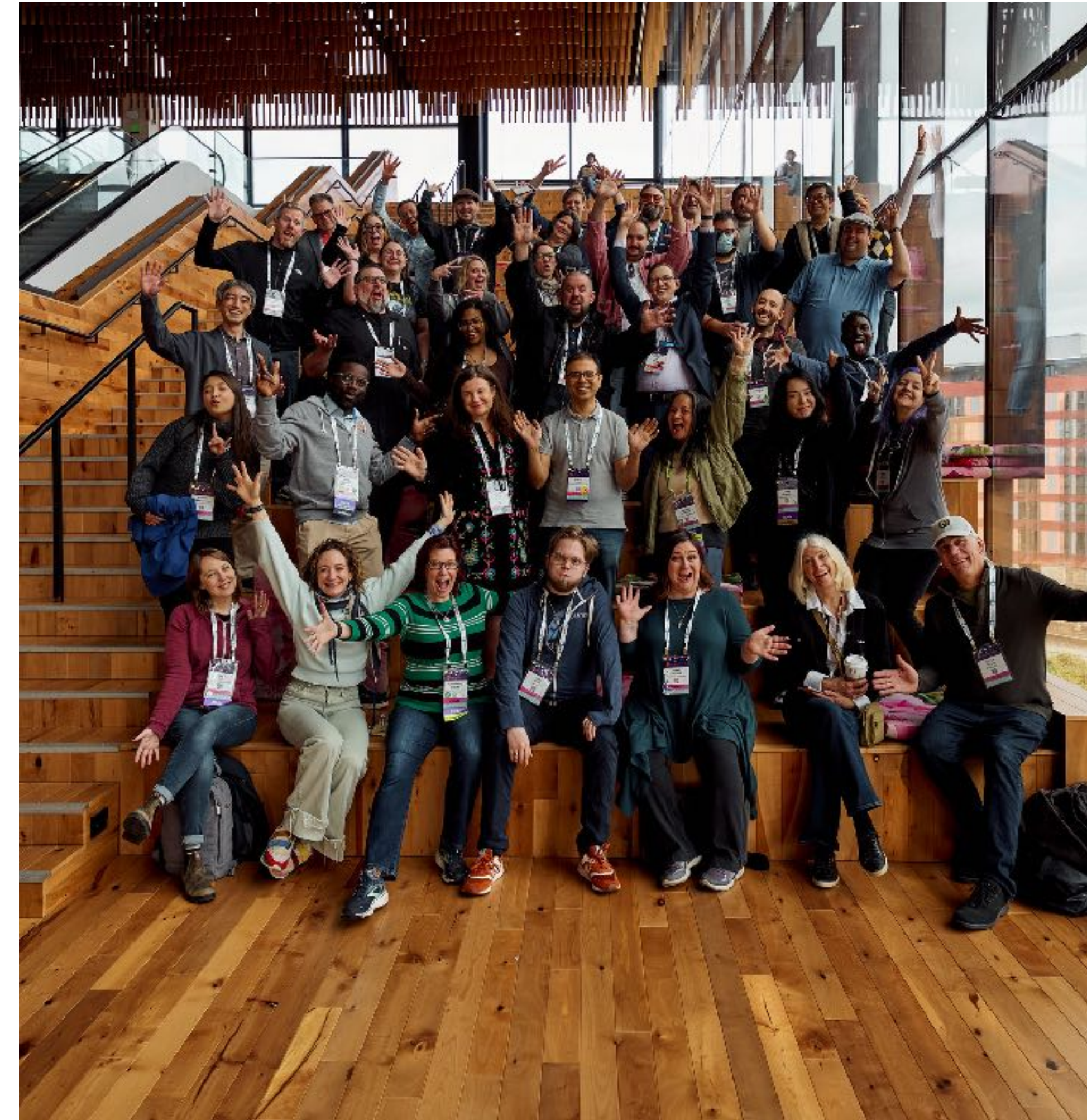
# CHAOSS: Community Health Analytics for Open Source Software

**Open Source, Linux Foundation Project**

**Working Groups:** OSPOs, Data Science, UN SDGs, Funding Impact, AI Alignment, DEI, Education, Package Metadata

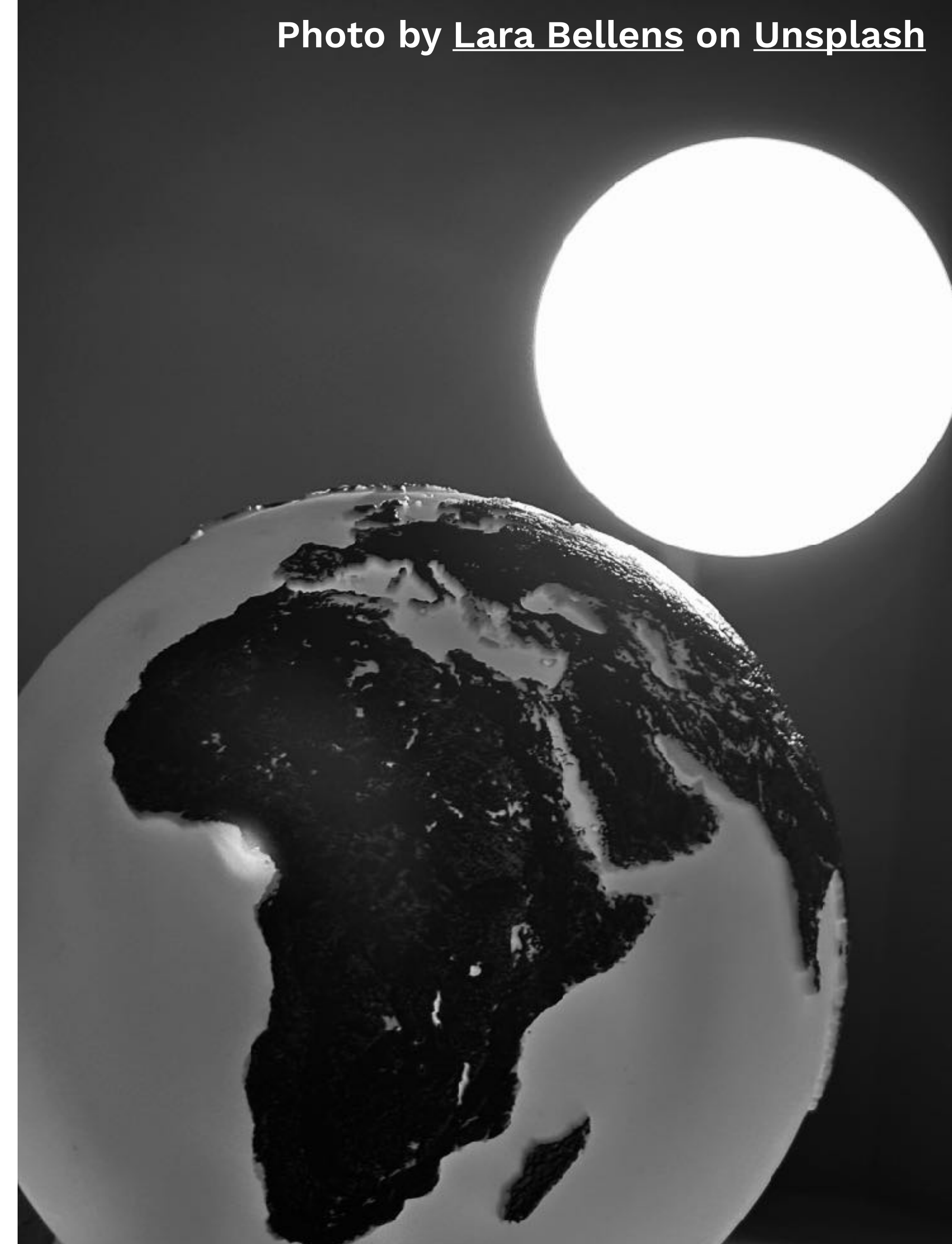
**Chapters:** Africa, Asia

**Software:** CollectOSS and GrimoireLab



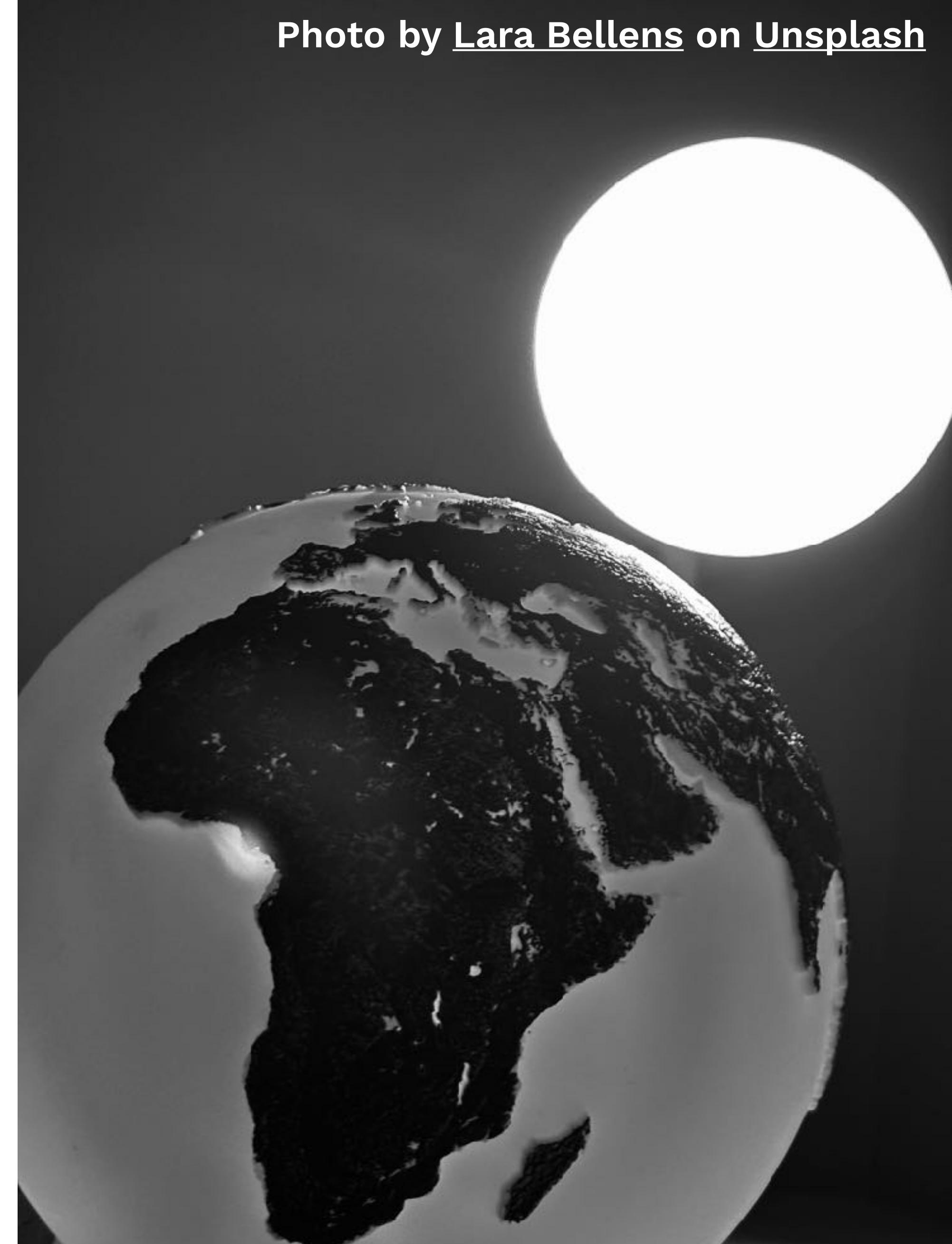
# Digital Sovereignty

**Developing and controlling  
key technologies with  
less reliance on providers  
from outside of the region**



# Open Source for Digital Sovereignty

Open source allows for local control and reduced dependence on companies in other regions while also facilitating global collaboration and innovation



# What is Governance?

**Governance is a framework of processes, structures, rules, and norms based on relationships, interactions, power dynamics, and communication within an organized group of individuals**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governance>



# Context is Important

Governance may refer to ...

**Governments**

**Societies**

**Companies**

**Communities**

**Open Source Projects**





# How Does Open Source Work?

**Collaboration between individuals, organizations, and communities**

# Individuals

**Make contributions  
and earn  
leadership positions**



Image by [the Linux Foundation](#) CC BY-NC 2.0

# Organizations

Employees contribute as individuals, but often on their organization's behalf



# Community = People

Community comes before organization or individual needs



# Choosing Projects and the Varying Shades of "Open"



**Foundation vs. Company Projects**

# Company Projects

Higher risk:  
single company  
in control



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# Neutral Foundations

Embrace projects  
under foundations  
where we can all  
participate as equals



# Neutral Project Governance

Level playing field with leaders/ maintainers from a variety of organizations and a fair and transparent process for selecting them



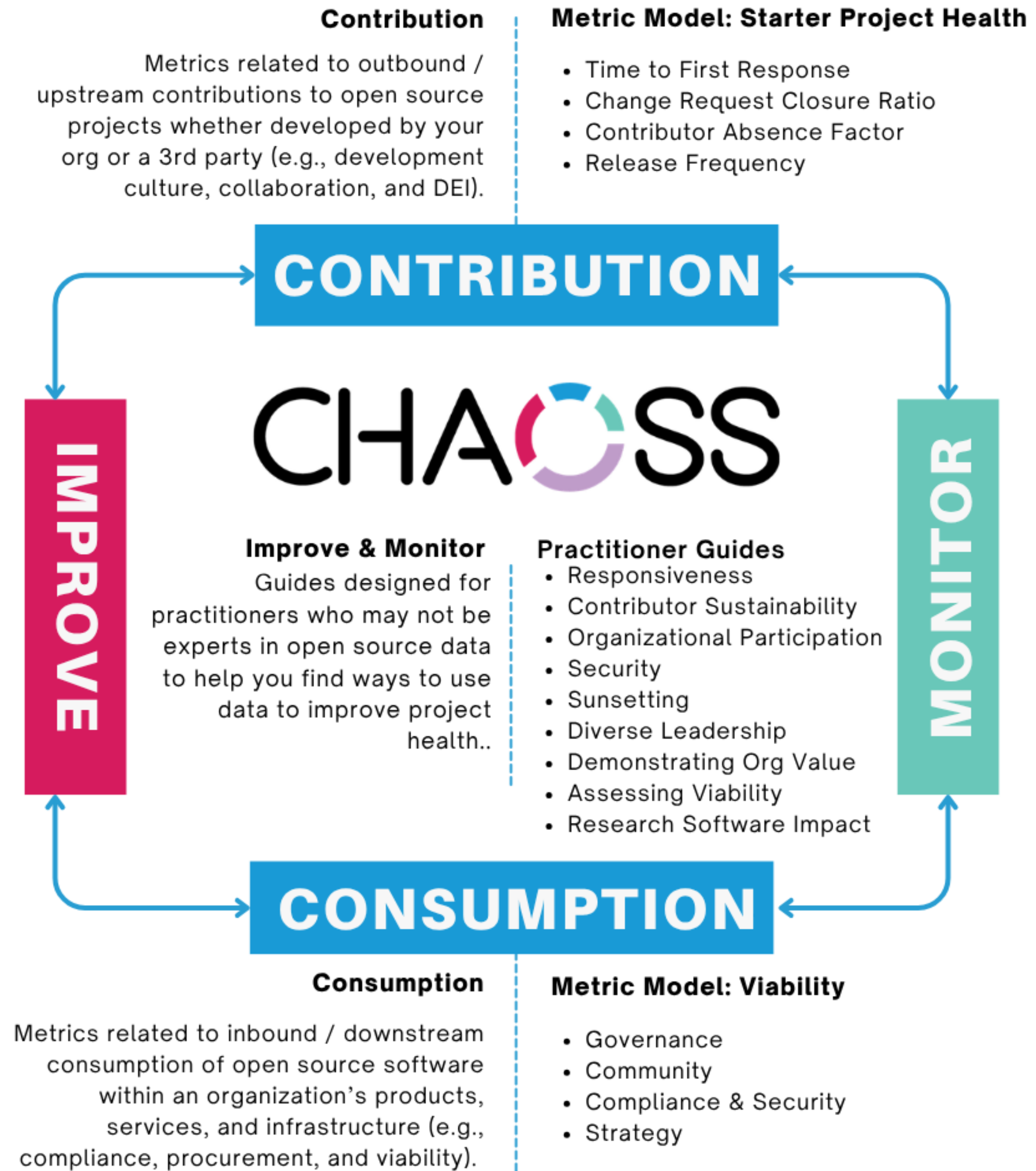
# Demonstrating the Value of Open Source



# Practitioner Guides

## CHAOSS Practitioner Guides to improve your work in open source

<https://chaoss.community/about-chaoss-practitioner-guides/>



# Demonstrating Org Value

Organizations need to show the value of their open source engagements to continue them over the long periods of time needed to sustain OSS efforts.



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# Organization: Goal Alignment

**Align with organizational goals  
to demonstrate OSS value  
to your leadership**



# Funders: Goal Alignment

Open source plans may also  
need to align with  
funders' goals



# Other Goal Alignment

**Stakeholders may also include policy makers, public constituents, and others**



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# Criticality

Note: This has nothing to do with the OpenSSF Criticality Score

Determine which open source projects are the most critical for your organization

**Priority = Criticality X Health Risk**



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# Criticality: University

Note: This has nothing to do with the OpenSSF Criticality Score

Research software impact,  
educational outcomes,  
funding opportunities,  
and more



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# Criticality: Public Sector

Note: This has nothing to do with the OpenSSF Criticality Score

Infrastructure and applications  
for public services, support for  
broader initiatives (dig sov),  
compliance, and  
competency center



# Project Health Risk

Assess open source project health risk to understand which projects might need your contributions

**Priority = Criticality X Health Risk**

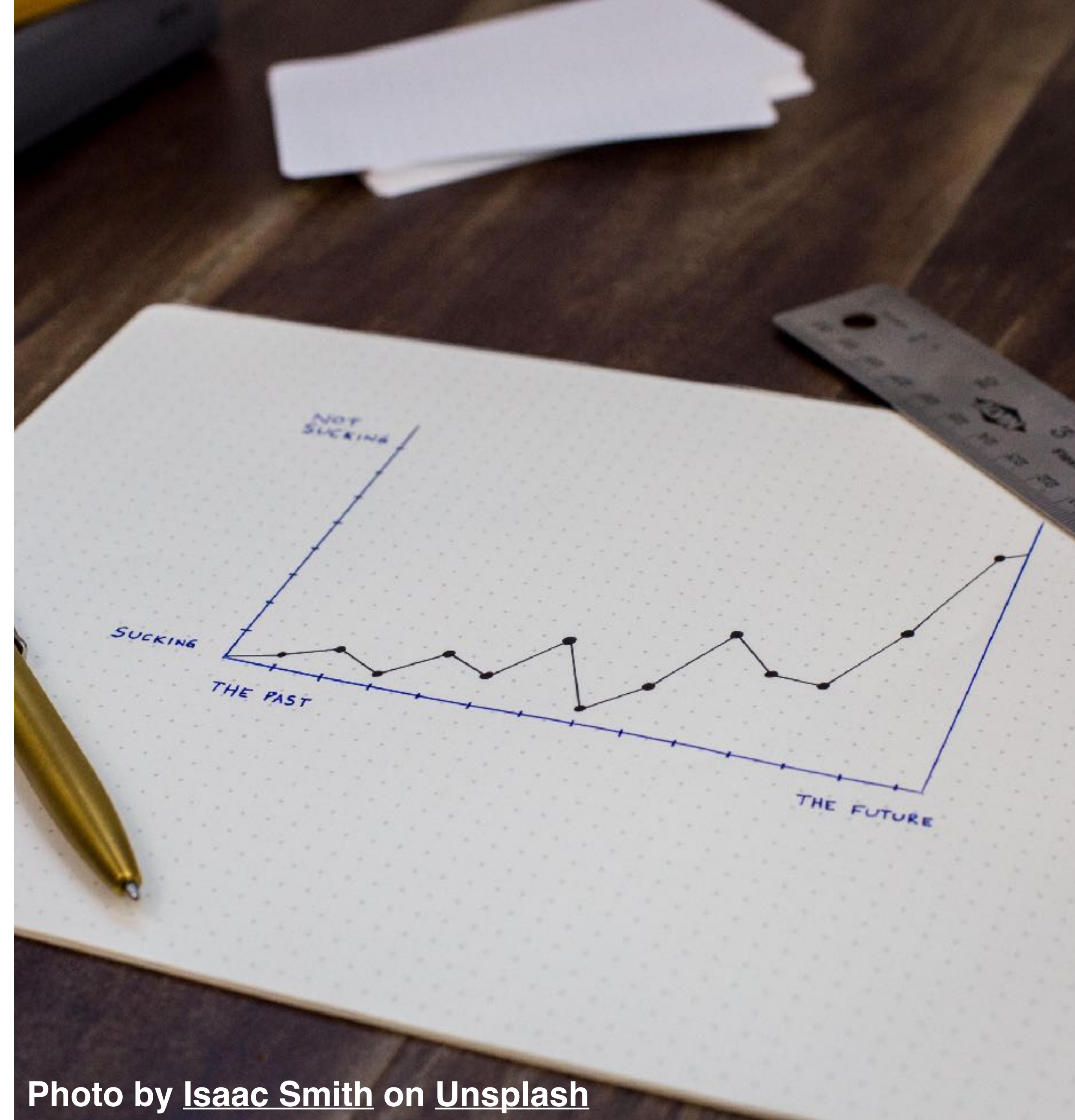
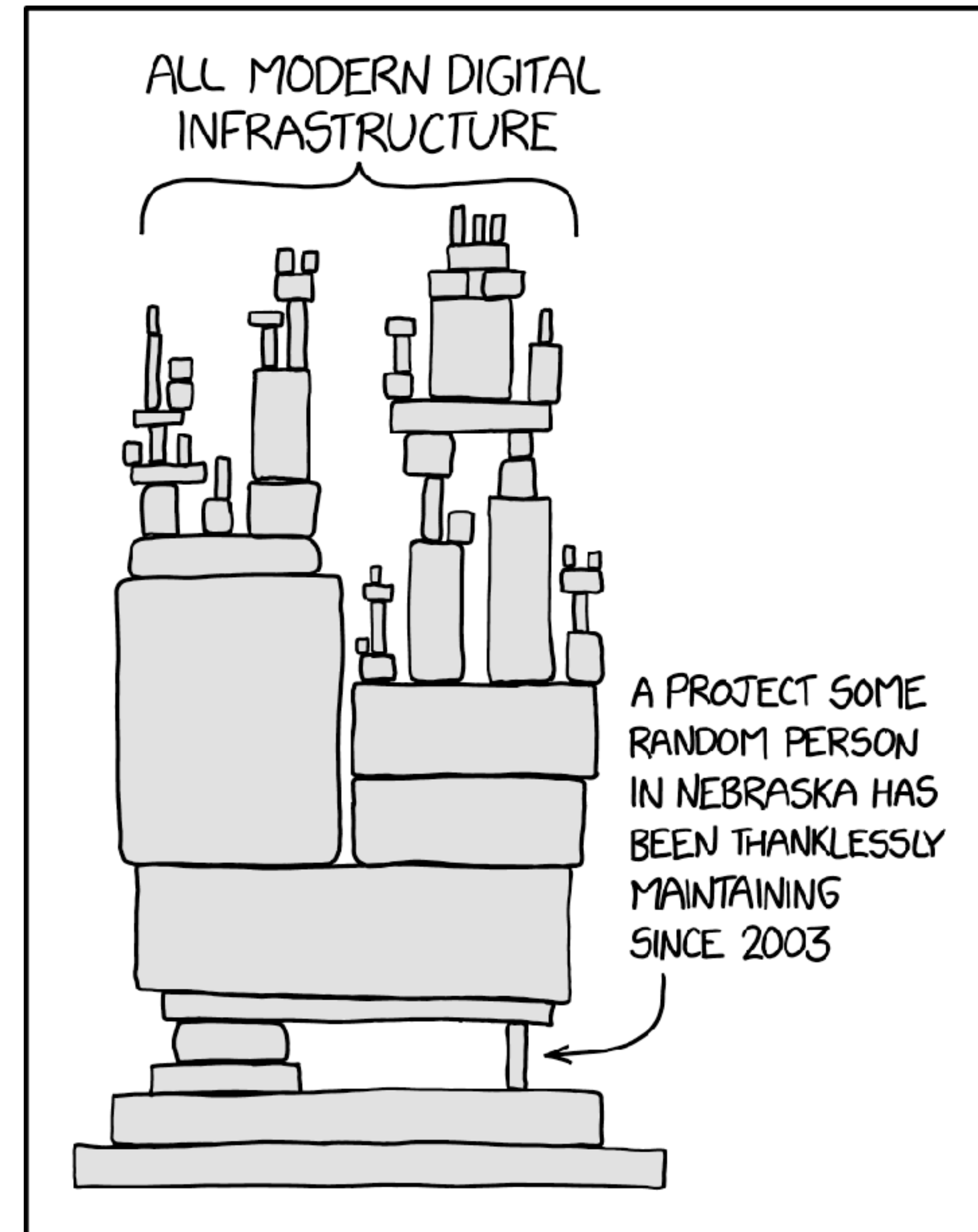


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# Project Health and Viability

Governance, community, compliance / security, and strategy can all impact a project's health and viability

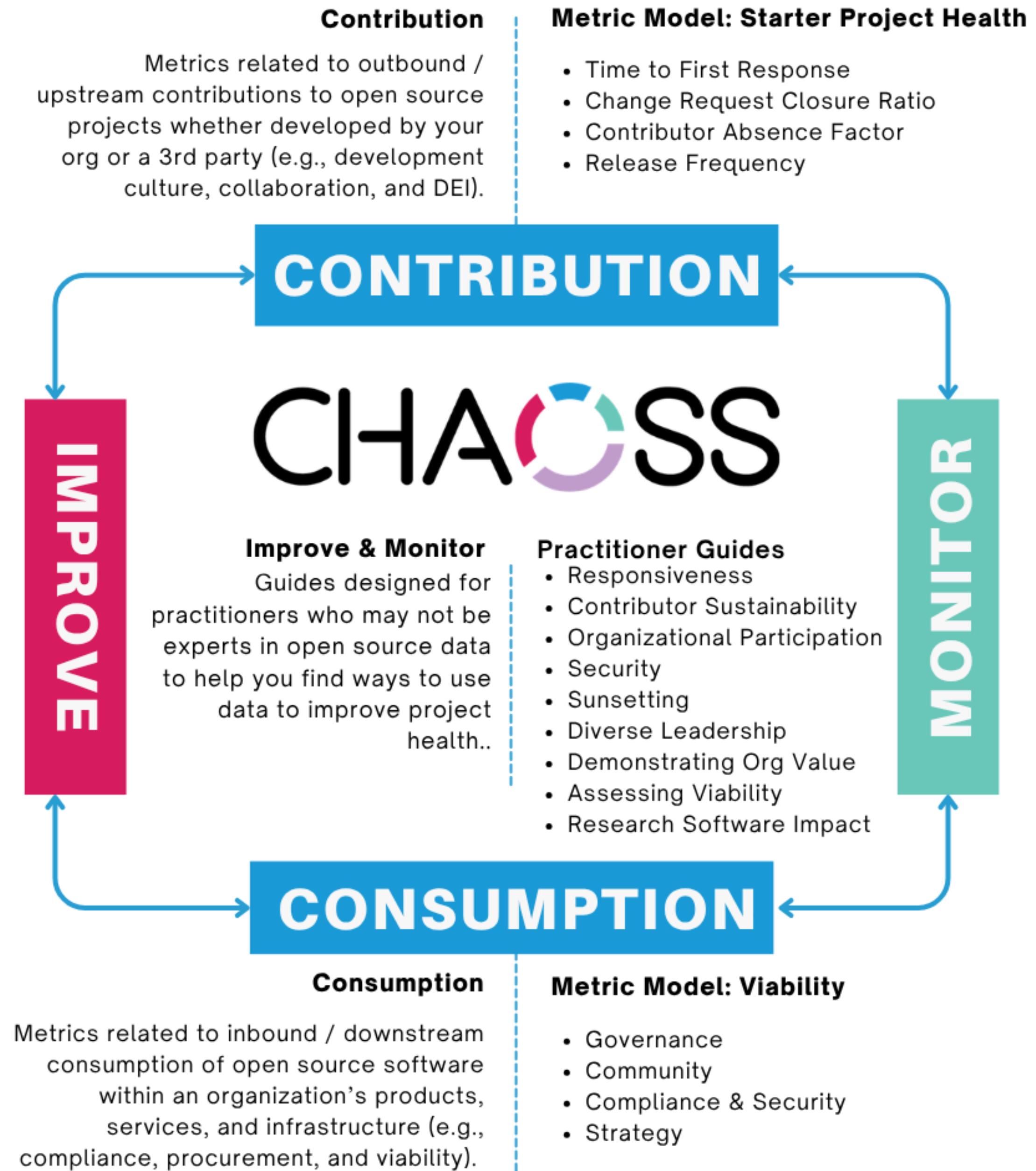


# Improving Project Health

Reducing risk by improving project health can be used to justify the work and demonstrate value.

The CHAOSS Practitioner Guides can help.

<https://chaoss.community/about-chaoss-practitioner-guides/>



# Prioritization

Prioritizing your investment in  
open source within your  
organization's limited resources

**Priority = Criticality X Health Risk**



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# Framing the Value

Measure and frame the value  
in ways that resonate  
with leadership, funders,  
and other stakeholders



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# Value Summary

**Demonstrating the value  
of your open source efforts  
should align with the  
unique goals of your  
organization and stakeholders**

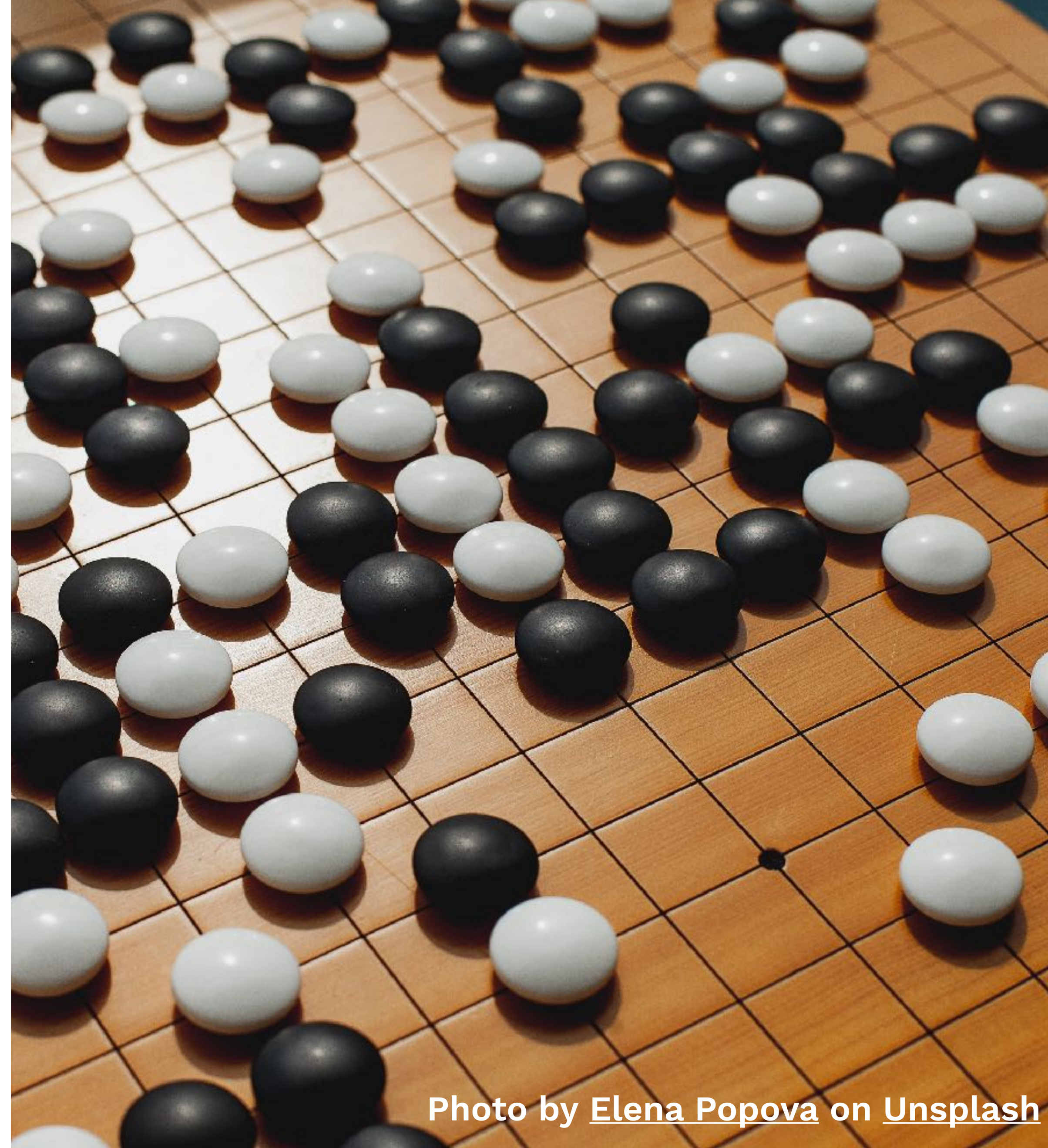


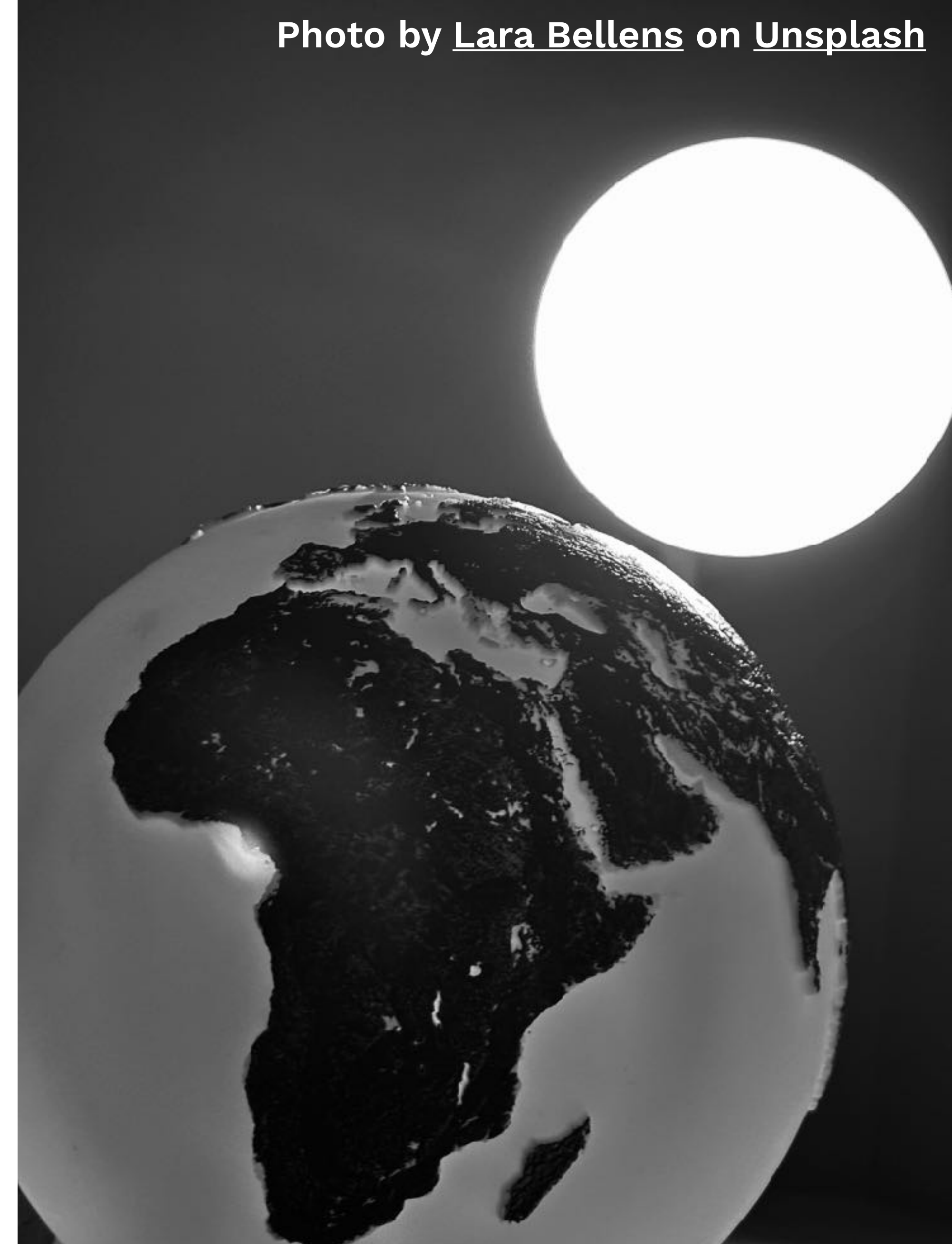
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# How You Can Help Open Source Fix Public Governance

# Open Source for Digital Sovereignty

Open source allows for local control  
and reduced dependence on  
companies in other regions  
while also facilitating  
global collaboration and innovation



# Transparency with Constituents

Software that can be freely  
modified, used, and shared  
means that you know what is  
being delivered to constituents



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# Educate Yourself

- [UN Open Source Week](#)
- [UN Open Source United Portal](#)
- Kenya and Trinidad OSPOs
- [EU Open Source Strategy](#)
- [EU Resources Public Sector Open Source](#)



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# Advocate

**Be an advocate for  
open source usage  
within your organization  
and government**



# Use and Contribute

Be a part of the solution by  
using and contributing to  
open source projects



# Getting More Involved in CHAOSS




- Newcomer Hangouts
- Join our weekly Community call each Tuesday or any of our WGs
- CHAOSS Africa
- Education
- Event and Project Badging
- Software







# THANK YOU!



ALFRED P. SLOAN  
FOUNDATION

 <https://chaoss.community/>  
 <https://github.com/chaoss>  
 [@chaoss@fosstodon.org](mailto:@chaoss@fosstodon.org)

 <https://fastwonderblog.com/>  
 <https://github.com/geekygirldawn>  
 [@geekygirldawn@hachyderm.io](mailto:@geekygirldawn@hachyderm.io)  
 [@geekygirldawn.bsky.social](https://bsky.social/@geekygirldawn)

