INDIAFOSS 2026

How to Build Long-Lasting Tech Communities That Thrive



A Playbook

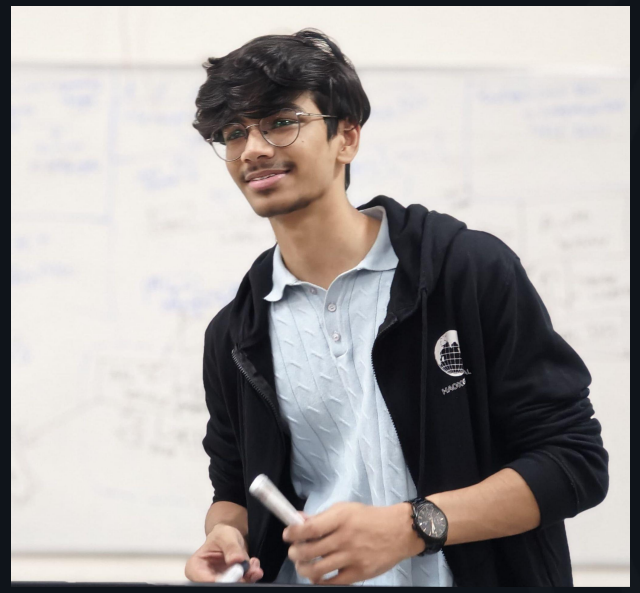
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Ashutosh Pandey · Akash Singh

PART ONE LLVM Social Bangalore

PART TWO Point Blank

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AKASH SINGH

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SPEAKER PROFILE

+ LEADS DEVOPS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND MLOPS AT SABI.
+ LEAD OF THE POINT BLANK OPEN SOURCE COMMUNITY.
+ GOOGLE SUMMER OF CODE 2024 CONTRIBUTOR
+ LINUX FOUNDATION MENTORSHIP 2025
+ GOLDEN KUBESTRONAUT
+ ORGANISES THE CLOUD & DEVOPS DEVROOM AT INDIAFOSS



ASHUTOSH PANDEY

SPEAKER PROFILE

+ COMPILER ENGINEER AT AMD
+ CO-ORGANIZES LLVM SOCIAL BANGALORE
+ GOOGLE SUMMER OF CODE 2020 & 2022 CONTRIBUTOR
+ LINUX FOUNDATION MENTORSHIP 2021
+ FOUNDER OF POINT BLANK
+ ORGANISES THE COMPILERS DEVROOM AT INDIAFOSS

Who this talk is for?

1. Technology communities
2. Student FOSS & college clubs
3. User groups around a technology
4. Meetup, workshop & conference communities

This talk takes two examples, from a student's club all the way to a national conference series.

THE PROBLEM

Community Failure Modes

01

Small and insular

02

Wide but shallow

03

Endless event cycle

04

One founder, one batch

A group chat, a large follower count or a successful event is not yet a sustainable community.

STEP 0

Define your north star

? **Who is the community for?**

? **What transformation should it create?**

? **What will it deliberately not optimise for?**

PART ONE

LLVM Social BLR

Existing compiler practitioners and researchers

↓

High-signal technical exchange

↓

Explicitly not a general introduction to programming or FOSS

PART TWO

Point Blank

Motivated students

↓

Projects, FOSS contributions, competitions, peer-led growth

↓

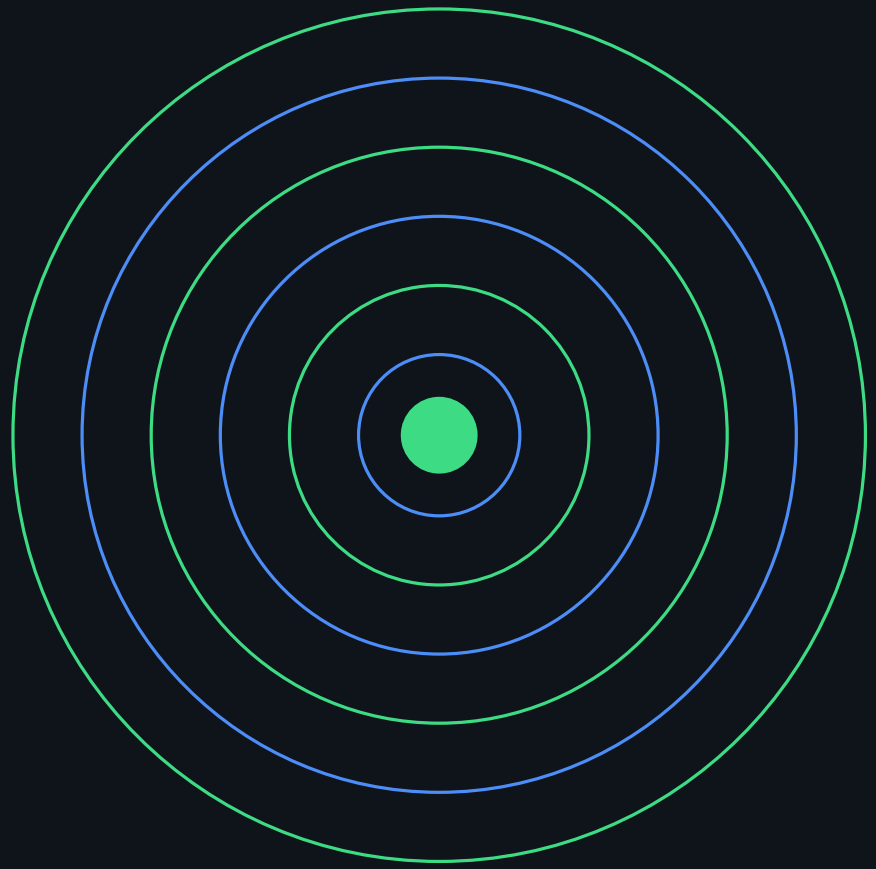
Members build serious projects, then come back to guide the next cohort.

A community for everyone usually serves no one particularly well.

THE FRAMEWORK

The layered playbook

Outer layers create reach



Inner layers create ownership

1	**Distribution**	Both
2	**Open-source programmes**	Point Blank
3	**Hackathons**	Point Blank
4	**Meetups and technical talks**	LLVM Social
5	**Cohorts and group learning**	Point Blank
6	**Workshops, devrooms and conferences**	LLVM Social
7	**One-to-one mentoring**	Point Blank

Across every layer: Culture · Collaboration · Leadership · Handoffs

LLVM Social Bangalore

North star: existing compiler practitioners and researchers → high-signal technical exchange

Layer 1 · Distribution

Layer 4 · Meetups

Layer 6 · Devrooms & conferences

COMMUNITY PROFILE

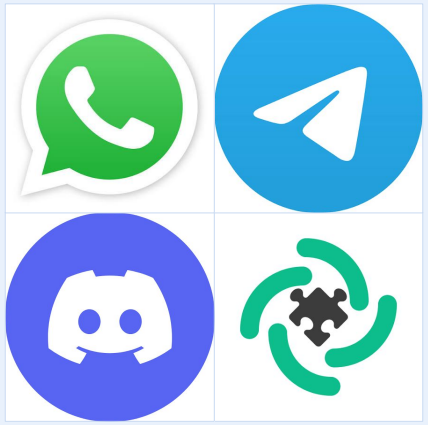
+ Compiler Community founded in 2019
+ Currently 3600+ members, largest in the world
+ 50+ meetups organized, 2K+ YouTube subs



LAYER 1 · DISTRIBUTION

Go where your audience already is

Primary Conversation



Institutional Memory



Public Archive





One Primary Chat + One Durable Archive + One Public Content Channel

Platform choice is an audience decision

LAYER 4 · MEETUPS AND TECHNICAL TALKS

Design a meetup portfolio

Do not force every meetup to serve everyone.

Beginners

Introductory workshops and guided tool sessions

Researchers

Paper discussions and state-of-the-art technical talks

Practitioners

Case studies, implementation talks and postmortems

Everyone

Coffee meetups, lightning talks and community demos



Welcoming New Members & Keeping Existing Ones

800+

Online attendees across the ten-part Introduction to Compiler Tools series

1. **Advanced content** & **Original Insights** makes people come back for more
2. A structured **beginner** series opens the door
3. Coffee turns **attendees into collaborators**

Diversity influences decision making and impacts community health - make it an integral part of your thought process

LAYER 6 · WORKSHOPS, DEVROOMS AND CONFERENCES

Workshop, devroom or conference?

Workshop

The audience is small and the learning objective is focused.

Devroom or track

You have strong content and curators, but do not need to own all logistics.

Standalone conference

Recurring demand already exists.

A conference needs

- A reliable attendee base
- A speaker and submission pipeline
- Sponsors, venue and operational capacity
- A community that exists between annual editions
- Experienced organisers

A devroom is a good proving ground: the parent conference handles venue, ticketing, marketing and attendee logistics while you curate the technical programme.

The community comes first. The event follows.

1

Recurring meetups

LLVM Social Bangalore builds a regular audience and a speaker habit.

→

2

People and credibility

Speakers, curators and trust accumulate

→

3

Devroom

IndiaFOSS **Compilers, PL & Systems devroom**: own the programme, not the logistics.

→

4

Standalone workshop

IICT grows out of an audience that already exists between editions.

200+ attendees IICT edition one → **400+** attendees IICT edition two

Growth came from the community that existed between the two editions.

We went from LLVM SOCIAL → DEVROOM → IICT/SEGFAULT

PART TWO

Point Blank

North star: motivated students → projects, FOSS contributions, competitions and peer-led growth

Layers 2 & 3 · Programmes

Layers 5 & 7 · Cohorts & mentoring

Culture · Fun & collaborations

COMMUNITY PROFILE

+ STUDENT RUN OSS COMMUNITY FROM BANGLORE
+ 13 GSOC MENTEES AND 3 GSOC MENTORS IN 2026, 36 ALL TIME
+ 5/5 SIH WINS in 2025, 13 ALL TIME
+ 10 LFX MENTEES ALL TIME
+ 50+ LIFT SCHOLARS ALL TIME
+ VOLUNTEERS AT INDIAFOSS 25,26, RUST CONF 26, IICT 24,25,26 AND MANY OSS CONFERENCES

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LAYER 2 · OPEN-SOURCE PROGRAMMES

Programmes convert spectators into owners

EXTERNAL PATHWAYS

GSoC | LFX | Outreachy | KWOC | DWOC

COMMUNITY-RUN PATHWAY

Ideas → Onboarding → Mentorship → Contribution → **Responsibility**

Prerequisites

- Clear contribution guide and getting-started path
- Well-scoped beginner issues
- Responsive maintainers and a visible roadmap

What Point Blank does differently

- Senior members share knowledge and review proposals
- Successful contributors become mentors for the next cohort
- Participants stay involved after selection or completion

The goal is not merely to get someone selected, it is to create a future maintainer, mentor or organiser.

LAYER 3 · HACKATHONS

Choose the right hackathon format

24-hour onsite

+ High energy

– Low depth

BEST FOR

Ideation and beginner prototypes

Long online

+ High accessibility

– Low accountability

BEST FOR

Distributed participation with strong check-ins

Hybrid

+ Online building + mentorship

+ Onsite finals

BEST FOR

Technically deep domains

For serious technical work, default to hybrid.

LAYER 5 · COHORTS AND GROUP LEARNING

A cohort is more than a sequence of lectures

A good cohort has

- A defined start and finish
- Selection or a commitment filter
- A shared syllabus or project
- Peer accountability
- Weekly deliverables
- A capstone or public demonstration
- A path into the wider community

EXAMPLES

Summer schools | **Winter schools** | **Reading groups**

Bootcamps | **Project cohorts**

To avoid certificate-driven participation

- Select for demonstrated motivation
- Require pre-work and deliverables
- Make the outcome more valuable than the certificate
- Induct graduates into meetups, projects, mentoring or organising

*Example: **ACM summer and winter schools** -> a selected group studies a technical subject together over a concentrated period.*

LAYER 7 · ONE-TO-ONE MENTORING

The innermost layer

Highest individual impact

Highest organiser cost

USE IT SELECTIVELY FOR

- ✓ Highly motivated contributors
- ✓ Leadership development
- ✓ Research or career transitions
- ✓ Difficult long-term projects

Make it sustainable

- Goal
- Duration
- Cadence
- Milestones
- Exit

The most successful mentees become peer mentors i.e the layer reproduces itself.

CULTURE

Fun is infrastructure

People come for the technology.
They stay for the relationships.

- Tea or dinner after meetups
- Campus hangouts
- Treks and day trips
- Demo nights
- Games and non-technical conversations
- Celebrating members' milestones

Point Blank members go on trips, treks and informal campus hangouts. Even tea after a session can turn an attendee into a collaborator.
Keep activities optional, inclusive and sensitive to cost

PROTECTING ORGANISER ENERGY

Every collaboration spends community energy

Six questions before you say yes.

1. Does it align with our north star?
2. What lasting value does it create for members?
3. Who will own the work?
4. What are we giving up to do it?
5. Does the partner align with our ethos?
6. What remains after the event ends?

A useful collaboration leaves behind at least one durable asset: new contributors · reusable content · mentor relationships · funding or infrastructure · a recurring programme · stronger institutional access

Logos are not impact.

BOTH COMMUNITIES · CONTINUITY

The founder leaving should be a transition : not a shutdown

Current team

Runs day-to-day operations

Outgoing leaders and alumni

Preserve context, advise and mediate

External mentors and institutional allies

Provide continuity, networks and escalation

Juniors operate. Seniors continue to steward.

The handoff package

- Role descriptions and decision rights
- Annual calendar and event playbooks
- Contact and sponsor history
- Budgets and financial records
- Account ownership and password transfer
- Code of conduct and conflict process
- Event postmortems
- Three-to-six-month overlap
- Named successors - not an undefined next batch

Succession is a programme, not a farewell ceremony.

BOTH COMMUNITIES · LEADERSHIP

HOW TO IDENTIFY NEXT GROUP OF LEADERS?

NO ELECTIONS IN POINT BLANK

The Fan Favourite might not necessarily be the best choice for leader

DELEGATION

Begin delegating tasks to a wide pool of applicants, keep a close eye

ROLES

Look for Individuals that take total ownership, not just complete tasks

HOW TO CHOOSE?

- Look beyond your biases
- Look for Ownership
- Don’t look for blind obedience
- No Micro Management
- Ask for opinions
- Observe interactions with others

NOT EVERY COMMUNITY NEEDS TO BE A DEMOCRACY

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Sequence the layers so they compound

Stage 1 : Establish

North star → primary platform → recurring small gatherings → documentation

Stage 2 : Deepen

Projects → open-source programmes → cohorts → mentoring → hybrid hackathons

Stage 3 : Project outward

Workshops → devrooms → conference or flagship event

MEASURE COMMUNITY HEALTH BY

- Returning participants and active contributors
- Members becoming speakers or mentors
- New organisers taking ownership
- Programme and project completion
- Successful leadership handoffs
- Reusable content and documentation

IN SUMMARY

The playbook in four lines

1. **Define exactly who you serve.**
2. **Build breadth and depth in layers.**
3. **Protect culture and organiser energy.**
4. **Design succession from day one.**

Before your next event, write down:

Who are we for?

What do we help them become?

What will remain after this event?

Do not begin by asking, "What event should we organise?" BUT begin by asking, "What kind of community are we trying to make possible?"

IN OUR EXPERIENCE

Choices we made

Keep Point Blank limited to one college with a strict entry barrier

Organize only 2 public facing events a year

No Funding from college, no intervention

Volunteer at events - IndiaFOSS, RustIndia, IICT

Flat Leadership; No hierarchy

Choices we didn't make

Expand Point Blank to other colleges and more people

Organize multiple Events a year

Accept college funding and intervention

Stay limited to our own events

Rigid Leadership with very tightly scoped 'roles'

Grow the community at a sustainable pace, while staying aligned with its north star

THANK YOU

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SEE YOU AT THE COMPILERS DEVROOM TODAY

AT 2:00PM ONWARDS