Breakout Session at DPI Day, UN Open Source Week 2025

Digital Sovereignty in Practice: Co-Creating Trustworthy and Inclusive DPI

Co-organizers:
GovStack Initiative, Mastodon

Session Description:
As governments digitalize core public services, **digital sovereignty** has emerged as a critical foundation for self-determination, resilience, and trust in the digital age. Yet sovereignty is not achieved in isolation: it depends on the ability to make informed choices, avoid vendor lock-in, and build interoperable, future-proof systems.

This session explores how **open-source Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** can serve as a practical pathway to sovereignty—*not* by closing off from global cooperation, but by embracing it through **shared standards, transparent governance, and community-backed technology**.

In this breakout session we will examine questions as:

- How do shared, open standards actually *strengthen* **digital sovereignty** rather than undermine it?
- In what ways does transparent governance **reduce dependency** on single vendors and build national capacity?
- How can community-driven DPI development foster inclusive, rights-respecting systems that are **locally owned but globally interoperable**?

Format:
Interactive Panel with **Fishbowl element, to include voices from the audience**. A fishbowl Panel is a format in which one seat is empty, which can be taken by the audience, once the moderator invites the audience to join.

Panelists:

- Hannah Aubry, Member of the Board of Directors at Mastodon
- David Higgins, Director of Programs at Mifos Initiative
- Yolanda Martinez, Practice Manager for Digital Development in Latin American and the Caribbean at The World Bank (tbc)
- Moderator: Nora Hauptmann, Partnership Lead, GovStack Initiatve