



The Sahana Software Foundation's Program for the Google Code-In

A primer for interested students

The Sahana Software Foundation is one of twenty mentoring organizations for the 2010 Google Code-In. The Google Code-In is a contest sponsored by Google to introduce pre-university students to the many kinds of contributions that make open source software development possible. In addition to Google's providing escalating cash prizes for the successful completion of tasks, the Sahana Software Foundation will be picking one grand prize winner from amongst Sahana's participants who will win a trip to Mountain View, California along with an accompanying adult, to visit Google headquarters.

About Sahana Free and Open Source Software

Sahana software is one of several humanitarian free and open source software (FOSS) projects that are now revolutionizing information management for international disaster response operations. Sahana software was originally developed in Sri Lanka in the immediate aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami by members of the Sri Lankan IT community who wanted to find a way to apply their talents towards helping their country recover from that disaster. (Sahana means "relief" in Sinhalese, one of the national languages of Sri Lanka).



Since 2004, Sahana has grown into a global effort with hundreds of volunteer contributors from dozens of countries working on multiple FOSS projects supported a non-profit organization. Sahana software has supported national and local authorities and relief agencies respond to numerous large scale sudden onset disasters, including, most recently, the Haiti earthquake, flooding in Pakistan, and a hurricane in Veracruz, Mexico.

About the Sahana Software Foundation

The Sahana Software Foundation was established in 2009 to govern Sahana free and open source disaster management software projects as a non-profit organization to serve the needs and requirements of a diverse group of customers: Government agencies and jurisdictions at the national, provincial or state, and local levels; UN Agencies, international and local charitable organizations (NGOs); communities & disaster victims; technology companies & software developers. The mission of the Sahana Software Foundation is to help alleviate human suffering by giving emergency managers, disaster response professionals and communities access to the information that they need to better prepare for and respond to disasters through the development and promotion of free and open source software and open standards.

Why Sahana for the Code-In?

Most open source projects are about developing tools for open source developers as a social good. Sahana software projects are different; they are about providing open source solutions for disaster victims and those seeking to help disaster victims. It is about the essence of humanitarianism; doing good in the world. Completing tasks for the Sahana Software Foundation as part of the Google Code-In is a great way to contribute to the world and to learn about open source software.

The vision of the Sahana Software Foundation is to build and sustain a global open and collaborative community of contributors to information and communications technologies for disaster management. We have a strong commitment to free and open source community development. We have been partners for many years with the H-FOSS Project at Trinity College, which has undergraduate students working on humanitarian free and open source projects like Sahana as a means to teach computer science, and members of the H-FOSS Project team will be mentoring Sahana tasks for the Google Code-In. We have been a mentoring organization for the Google Summer of Code every year since 2006, and have a deep team of mentors who are experienced at working with new contributors to Sahana software projects.

We see the Google Code-In as an opportunity to get you excited about contributing to open source projects long before you get to colleges and universities. We already have a sizable list of interesting tasks for students that span all eight categories of tasks and levels of difficulty, and this list will grow and be actively maintained by our community throughout the contest. Some of these involve working on simple coding tasks, but knowledge of open source programming languages and coding conventions is absolutely not required here. Many of our tasks involve helping with our user documentation or testing the system and looking for bugs or enhancements that are needed. The tasks we have identified are all things that we need to have done; your contributions will be directly contributing to our ability to carry out our mission, helping disaster victims, and will be highly valued.

How to participate in the Google Code-In:

Instructions on how to participate in the Google Code-In are available from [Google's main Code-In page](#) and on the [GCI portal](#), which is used for managing the program. Interested students should go to this portal, log in with your Google account, create a profile, and then start claiming tasks with the Sahana Software Foundation on November 22.

The [GCI FAQ](#) provides a lot of useful information about the program and how it works. Please also review the [official rules](#) and the [timeline](#) for the contest. Interested students should subscribe to the [GCI announcement list](#).

There is a great [video on the Google Highly Open Participation Contest](#) from 2008, which was the precursor to this year's Google Code-In. This will give you a good idea of what the experience of participating in the Google Code-In might be like.

How to connect with the Sahana community:

The best way to reach our community and designated mentors for support and questions is through our main discussion e-mail list. We invite all students to please [subscribe](#) to discuss@lists.sahanafoundation.org. We use IRC as the main channel of live communication and support. Our main chat room is #sahana on freenode (irc.freenode.net). For those without a chat client, freenode has a [web-based chat page](#). You can visit the [Sahana Community IRC page](#) for more information. Please send any questions you may have and please identify yourself as a GCI participant and you will be warmly received.

Our [wiki](#) will contain all updated information about the Sahana Software Foundation's GCI program on our main [Sahana Google Code-In page](#), as well as general information about Sahana and our work. All announcements will be made on the wiki, through our discussion list, and/or on the [Sahana Software Foundation website](#).

For more information: Contact Sahana's Google Code-In Program Administrators at Sahana-GCI@sahanafoundation.org