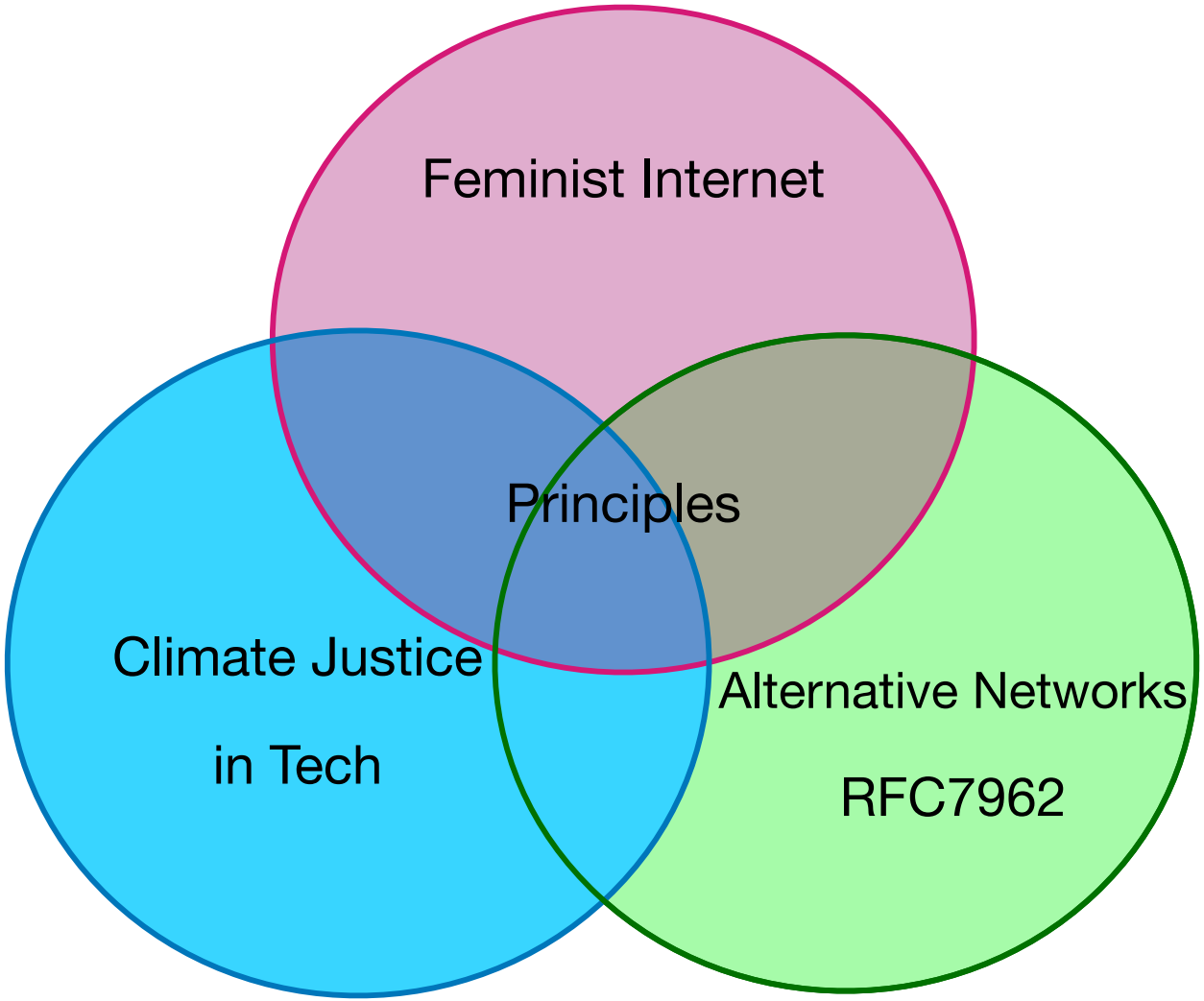
Invitation to join the project:
“Getting Lika Connected”
Achieving Rural Digital Commons
via Climate Justice, Mesh networking & Feminist Internet
Vesna Manojlovic : BECHA@UnCiv.NL
https://wiki.techinc.nl/User:Becha/Lika/ProjekatPovezanoPolje

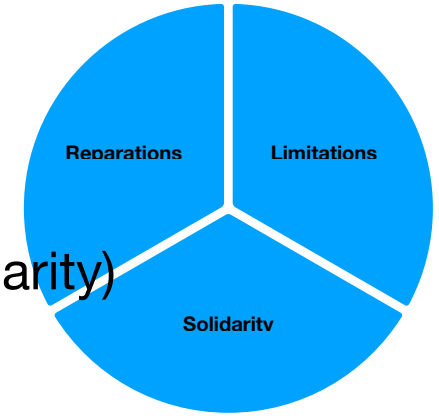
Goals of the project

- bringing internet **connectivity** to a village in Croatia (Gubavcevo Polje)
- rejuvenation of the remote **rural** communities
- enabling **digital rights** for the marginalised

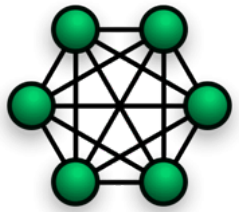
- …while following the **principles** of Alternative Networks, Climate Justice, Feminist Internet, DeGrowth, biophilia

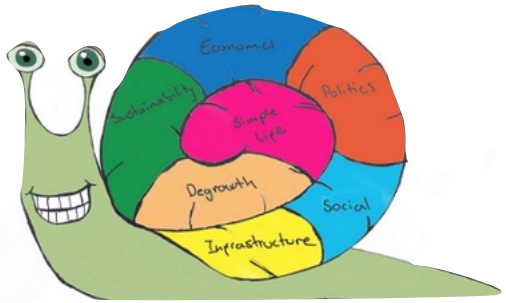

Feminist Internet
Principles
Climate Justice
in Tech
Alternative Networks
RFC7962

Principles



- "**Climate Justice** in Tech" principles (Limitations / Reparations / Solidarity)
  - renewable energy, repurposed equipment, community governance
- principles of **Feminist** Internet
  - (FLOSS, embodiment, care)
- "Alternative Networks" RFC7962
  - (**mesh**, commons, not-for-profit / non-commercial)
- **DeGrowth** Principles
- **Love** for more-than-human
  - (nature, trees, animals)





Principles of Degrowth

Sustainability

Never deteriorate supporting ecosystems

Circularity

Waste not, want not

Cooperation

People and planet, not profit

Useful Production

What is not needed should not be made

Sharing

Sufficiency for all, excess for none

Local Production

Produce local, consume local

Work-Life Balance

Work less, play more

Relational Goods

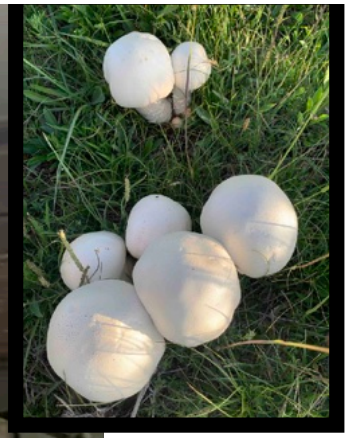
Less stuff, more relationships

Joie De Vivre

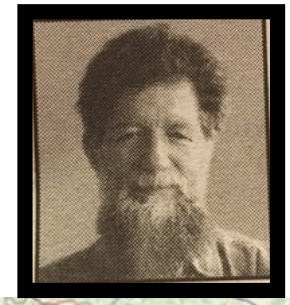
If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your economy!

Source: https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-02499463/document

Love for More-Than-Humans

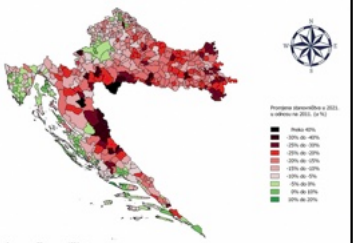


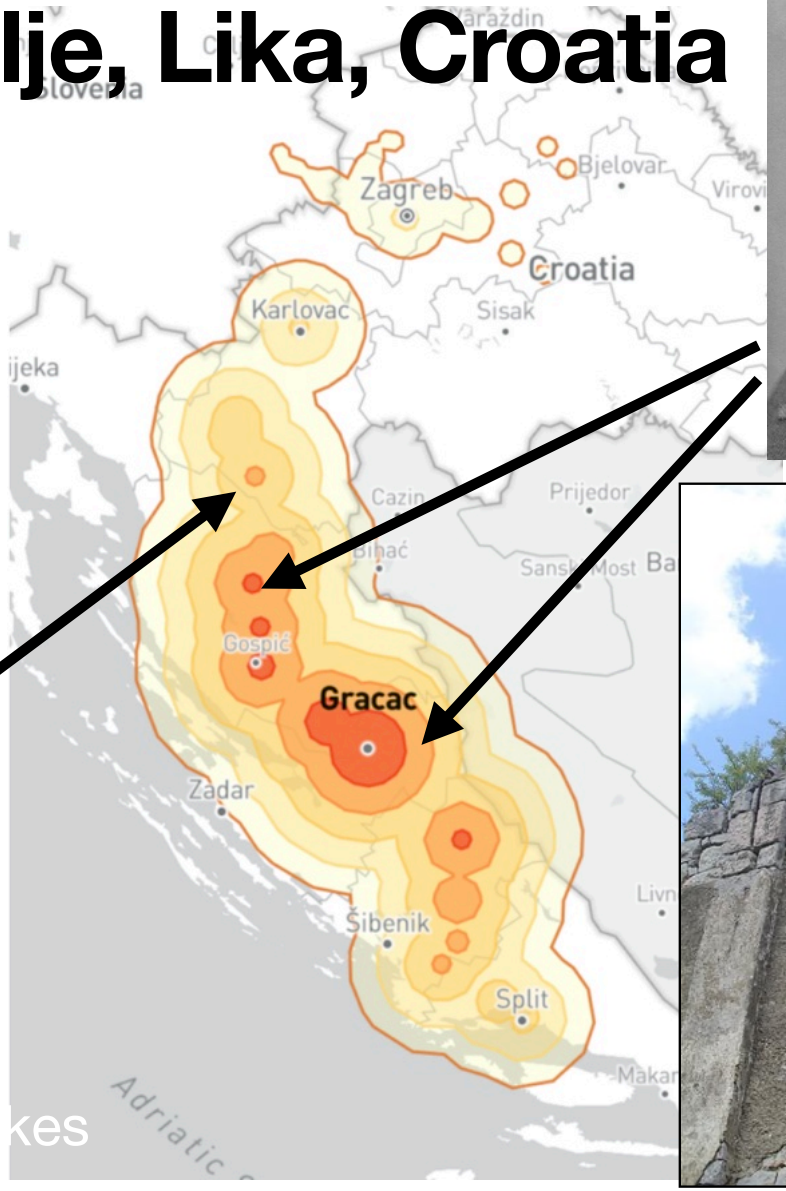
Introduction

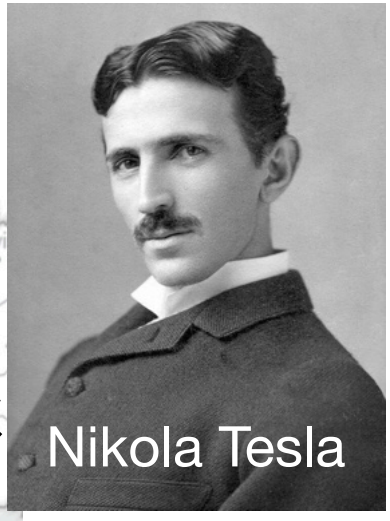


Gubavčevo Polje, Lika, Croatia

Demographic decline of Croatia between censuses 2011-2021. The country is turning into a deserted hinterland and stagnating coastal big cities and Zagreb metro area. Lika region is literally a population desert.







Solutions & Reasons

- build a wireless community **mesh** network:
- distributed, decentralised, not-for-profit, **communally** owned & operated,
- from repurposed / refurbished equipment
- using **renewable energy & free software**
- set up by volunteers from the **hackers** & (digital rights / climate justice / feminist) **activists**.

- disadvantaged (**historical**, political, economic) in the last 30 years
- ravaged by **wars** (1941-1945, 1991-1995)
- **de-population**, isolation, **poverty**
- Climate & Environmental crisis,
- Economic crisis, Political crisis...

Project Details

Project Phases

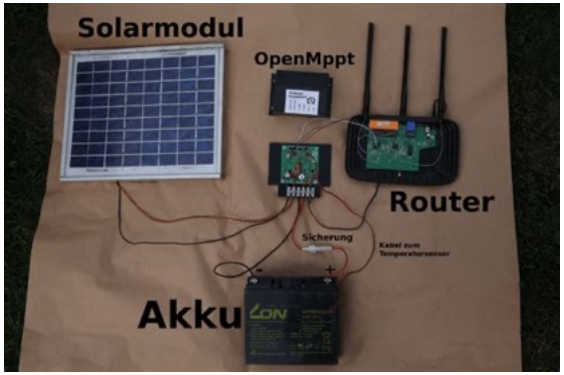
- Exploration Phase
  - Project planning (90% done)
  - Promotion (60% done!)
  - Securing funding (30% done!)
  - Mediation (20% done) -> 2025!
- Building Phase (2026) : #LikaCamp2026 / BattleMesh ?!
- Maintenance Phase (2027-2030)

IEEE Future NETWORKS
IEEE Connecting the UNCONNECTED
An IEEE Future Networks Program
IEEE Advancing Technology for Humanity
1st PLACE
$2,500 USD
AWARD
presented to
Vesna Manojlovic
for their solution
Getting Lika Connected : Povezano Polje

SOCIAL IMPACT, INCLUSION & INNOVATION

- Social Impact
  - promotes community engagement
  - grassroots empowerment of women
  - integration between diaspora, aging population & next generations
- Inclusion (overcoming digital divide)
  - promotes principles of “Feminist Internet”
  - for underserved users : rural population, women, elderly, low income
  - LDBTQ* youth actively involved
- Innovation
  - promotes Climate Justice & ecological values & environmental sustainability
  - business model based on cooperative ownership, commons & shared ownership
  - e.g. Independent Solar Energy Mesh System https://isems.netlify.app/en/

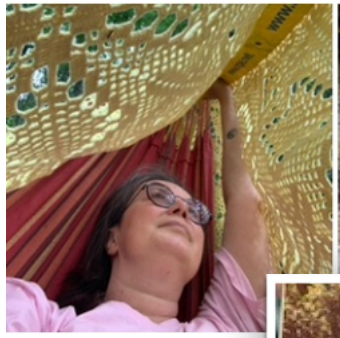
battlemesh.org



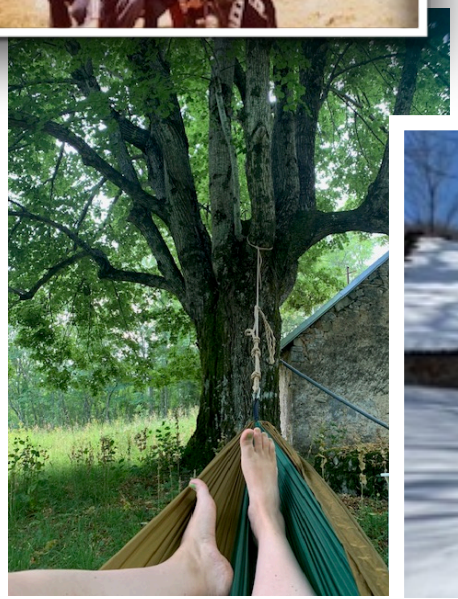
Who will benefit

Risks & Challenges

- Practical Challenges:
  - Area Challenges: - hilly; - hard to access; - isolated from supply chains
  - Technical Challenges: getting "backhaul"; - securing electricity supply;
  - Legal / Administrative : creating a structure for shared ownership; revitalising a culture of commons governance ; - negotiating with land owners for setting up equipment ; vandalism (destroying the antennas by hunters or bored youth) ; theft of equipment,
  - Climate disaster challenges: deep snow, strong winds, flooding or no water, heat waves…
- Principal Challenges:
  - Climate Justice principles: using ONLY renewable energy / fossil-fuels free
    - using only repurposed / recycled equipment
  - Feminist Internet principles: using only Free & Open Source software



http://tinyurl.com/
Lika-Lodge



Possible Technical Solutions

1. Get regular subscription in Gračac (pay a friend who lives there)
2. Place antenna on the roof of friend's house
3. Place one repeater on the ridge of the Kokerna mountain (with solar power)
4. Place antenna on the top of tall Linden tree near LikaLodge ; & in fields

- Open to alternative suggestions!
  - e.g. digging ditches for fiber-optic cables, as suggested by local NGO?!
  - Receiving donated equipment, e.g. from eventingra.org (slides)

Examples of Existing Solutions

… but very different in some aspects

- RuralNet: Croatian, Commercial, based on optical fiber, state-owned (or state sponsored) https://www.ruralnetwork.eu/hr/o-nama/
- Rhizomatica: Very successful with community, based on mobile technology https://wiki.techinc.nl/Rhizomatica_Community_Telecommunications_Infrastructure
- Off-grid micro-net: Ideologically perfectly right, good tech tips, but not yet successful: https://anarchosolarpunk.substack.com/p/off-gridinternet

#LikaCamp2016

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