I am applying for the fellowship to work on a project **Connecting Lika**: Rejuvenating & Reconnecting Remote Rural Communities [31], while following "Environmental Justice in Tech" principles [3], in cooperation with locals & diaspora, hackers & activists, and non-human collaborators: large Linden tree, small rodent "puh", and the mountain Lisac. (see pictures in portfolio).

 The vision guiding me is of **participation, altruism & Climate Justice** - combined with tech (community network / wireless mesh) - because we will be practicing sharing of the common resources, preferring cooperation over competition, holding the common benefit higher then the personal (or corporate!) benefit; we will be not consumers, but active contributors with what skills we have, receiving from the abundance of resources available.

Networking technology enables connection between "indigenous" & displaced populations, emigrants & their families; provides redistribution of jobs & money from overpopulated urban centres into isolated rural areas; by using only repurposed equipment & renewable energy we are not making the climate crisis worse. The "leadership" model is decentralised, based on distributed power, horizontal relations & care.

Vision

In 2012, I defined my ideal future of both the society [1] and "the Internet governance" [2] as **PARTICIPATORY ALTRUISM** . Ten years later, my plea [3] to the technical communities is for creating the future based on **Climate Justice: using Limitations, Reparations, Solidarity** [3], Urgency, De-Growth, Rebellion [4] and Intersectional Feminism [5,6,17] as principles.

Challenges that we are facing now are poly-crisis [7, 69], HOWEVER these are not "equally distributed" [8]. I am blessed with experiencing two sides of this inequality:
- as a privileged white cis educated tech-worker in West-European Country, I am on the receiving end of the benefits of colonialism, racism, extractivism and capitalism;
- but as an (old) woman, immigrant, neurodivergent, chronically ill, bisexual and coming from inter-generational trauma family background (from a civil-war-thorn country that doesn't exist any more, with (grand) parent & cousins being refugees and economic migrants) - I viscerally understand & suffer from the consequences of patriarchy, nationalism & religious prejudice, exploitation, alienation, marginalisation and INTERSECTION of these oppressions.

This unique background gives both inspiration and urgency to my practices of feminism, non-violence and climate justice activism.

In addition, having children connects me to the future in a different way: I am both learning from the youth I am surrounded with, taking part in their Rebellion (XR) [28] and striving to leave the world better for them.

My practical work towards this vision has been a mix of professional and personal:
- in my role as a Community Builder at RIPE NCC [9], I have been speaking at conferences [7], publishing articles [3,5,8,11,19, 29] and giving presentations to students [12,13,14].
- as a hacker, member of "Technology Incognita" hackerspace, I have been collecting documentation about projects for the common good [15], organising events [16]
- I have organised a community around concepts of UnCivilization since 2013:
    - moderating mailing list [20]
    - organised events [21] & a large "unconference" [22]
    - made videos [23] and published documentation [24]
- I've been learning NonViolent Communication - the language of peace - for 25 years, in 3 languages: Serbian (1998), English & Dutch (2018). I have trained as a Mediator in 2019.

Project

For me, projects about **Lika** are both "old" and "new", both very broad and very focused:
- it started as a "dream" in 2013, of going back to Nature and escaping civilisation [30]
- and in 2022 I formulated one small part of that dream as **"Connecting Lika" project**: bringing Internet Connectivity, in the form of Wireless Mesh Network, to Lika. [31]

Detailed descriptions of the **Connecting Lika** project are the web site [31], and a PDF in portfolio.

Fellowship would allow me to focus more time and energy on this dream, and this project!
I would take a sabbatical / unpaid leave from work (that's why I can only start in November) for several months (still to be negotiated), and after that I would work part-time.
I find that my work as a Community Builder would allow me to combine both my professional contacts & accomplishments, and my personal interests as an hacker, activist and artist.

Practically, the project is divided in 4 phases: Exploration, Building (the network), Maintenance & Closing. Exploration & Maintenance phases already contains elements of Community Building: negotiations with local community, connecting with regional NGOs, fundraising & awareness raising, learning from & educating local collaborators & thus practicing solidarity, care & mutuality… and Closing phase does include Reporting & Documentation tasks.

However, with the Fellowship, I would be able to introduce the 5th Phase: Replication of experience, Repeating the experiment in other rural communities, Re-combining the stories with contributions from other Fellows.

Fellowship Goals, my job as a Community Builder, and "Connecting Lika" project

I find that my past work as Community Builder, and when I come back to work from Fellowship, has been / is / very much in alignment with the goals for this fellowship, namely:

1.   the promotion of open, diverse, and resilient societies
* I've been part of Diversity Task Force at RIPE Community, 2016-2022 [32, 33]
* I have been performing a role of Trusted Contact, Dispute Committee, Code of Conduct Team member or Wellbeing Team both at work [25] and at hacker/activist community events [26,27].
* In 2021-2022, I have been focusing on **resilience** with articles [8] & presentations [7] I've already mentioned, as well as many more [35-43]
* In 2017-2018 I have been focusing on Ethics (in Tech) [44], [45]
* as a hacker, I've been teaching Feminist Tech [6], [17] and organising Ladies (hacking) Nights [34]

After the fellowship, I will be able to bring my experiences, and specially connection & knowledge from exchanges with other Fellows, back to RIPE NCC & RIPE Community — and one of our 5 main strategic goals is to "Support an open, inclusive & engaged RIPE Community".

2.   the support of marginalized people and the creation of equal opportunities
* As I have detailed on the project web pages [31], the area of the project (village of Gubavcevo Polje, and the municipality of Gracac, Croatia) has been suffering a lot in the last 30 years: ravaged by war (1991-1995) , de-population due to "rural drain" & globalization, isolation (due to nationalism), (global) Climate & Environmental Crisis, Economic Crisis, Political crisis… This resulted in displaced people, disconnected families, and destroyed infrastructure. People who are left are marginalised in many ways.

* By bringing **Internet connectivity** to the village, we could achieve many ambitious goals:
    * keeping (online) connections / communication between locals & emigrant population / families
    * rejuvenation of the local communities - by attracting youth back to the area (or at least attracting grandchildren to visit!)
    * making local community more connected with the region, country, Europe & world
    * enabling "remote working" for temporary visitors, and thus invigorating local community interactions

* By making the model be Community Owned, we would be:
    * strengthening local community by sharing a common infrastructure
    * transforming mainstream modes of ownership & consumerism, by making sure that the project & service is NOT-FOR-PROFIT / non-commercial
    * educating local workers in the skills of building & maintaining Internet infrastructure, and thus empowering them to participate constructively in their communities

* Since my family is FROM that village, and I have been involved in the history of Internet in Yugoslavia since 1992 [10], [11], I am in unique position to understand the local needs, and to be (literally) a translator between multiple cultures: local & global, rural & urban, East & West, collectivist & individualist…

3. the fight against the climate crisis and the protection of a livable planet

* However bad the wars and economic crisis was for the population & infrastructure, the "Nature" has flourished in Lika: left to its own devices, there was a lot of spontaneous ReWilding.
  * This is a large part of the attraction to this area: unspoilt wilderness!
  * And this is something could to be studied and replicated elsewhere (via other means)

* One of the goals of Connecting Lika is to protect this area from the consequences of the e-impact [51,3] of the "unchecked" Internet deployment - and therefore, the focus on (technical) Environmental Justice principles: **Limitations, Reparations, Solidarity** [3]
  * limiting extractivism
    * using ONLY repurposed / reused / recycled equipment!
    * using ONLY renewable energy / fossil-fuels free (Solar & Wind)
  * decreasing growth
    * Limiting project duration to 3 years
    * focusing on LOW TECH & SLOW TECH (offering only MINIMUM VIABLE SERVICES)
  * supporting public infrastructure & commons
    * using ONLY FLOSS solutions (Free/Libre Open Source Software) & open standards HW
  * giving back to the most affected communities
    * & using offers from the "developed" world : equipment, expertises, volunteered time

Leadership

I am an anarchist - I reject traditional (patriarchal) concept of "leaders", and hierarchical authority, and "power over". Personally, have always preferred "lateral leadership"; when I was in a position of (relative) power as a (middle) manager of a small department, I have used my position to HIRE women, TRUST women, EMPOWER women and PROMOTE women. However, the company culture even within non-for-profits / NGO is not immune to intersection of oppressions, so my "reign" was short lived & lead to burnout: I gave up my "position of power" and reverted to lateral role. When my employer transitions to Holocracy I was overjoyed! I got trained to take some of those "lateral leadership" / sociocracy roles, and I was happy for a while! Unfortunately, with new senior management this "horizontal" organisation structure was dropped. Currently, I am part of multiple cross-departmental teams; I encourage and model personal responsibility and inter-dependancy, based on empathy and care.

Within other organisations I am part of, I took part in rotation of leadership roles: I was on the board of association of our local hackerspace in 2013-2014; I was main organiser of LikaCamp2016 [22] and I am a founder & moderator of UnCiv mailing list / community [20].

Within this Fellowship programme, I am looking for the further opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, as a continuation of my previous participation in Alchorisma [52], OffDem [53], "cybiosis" [54] and hackathons that I have been organising from 2014 till today [55-58] .

Main references:

[31] Connecting Lika : https://wiki.techinc.nl/User:Becha/Lika/ProjekatPovezanoPolje

[9] RIPE NCC Community Builder https://labs.ripe.net/Members/becha

[3] Climate Justice & Environmental Impact of Internet https://labs.ripe.net/author/becha/a-plea-for-climate-justice-report-from-the-iab-workshop-on-e-impact/

[19] Towards Climate Justice in Tech https://labs.ripe.net/author/becha/towards-climate-justice-in-tech/

[51] Environmental Impact of Internet: Urgency, Degrowth, Rebellion https://wiki.techinc.nl/File:Vesna-ripe86-Environmental_Impact_of_Internet.pdf

[35] RIPE Community Resilience: You are not alone https://labs.ripe.net/author/becha/you-are-not-alone-ripe-community-resilience/