

My permaculture facilitator pathway design

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Introduction

This design started on the 10 days People & permaculture Facilitators Training (FiT) in September 2017, where I collected bits and pieces. It started with a mind map to give me visual input on how I felt about all aspects. I finished the first phase in November 2017.

In 2019, after Looby Macnamara came to Croatia to teach a course with me for permaculturists, I decided to go on my diploma pathway. Phase 2.

Before 2017 I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a permaculture teacher at all. I am living a happy family life on our homestead in the middle of Croatia. I am using permaculture to design our 12 hectares and on a daily basis I do my best to inspire young people that volunteer at our farm, to live a free life in nature too. And design their own lives with permaculture ethics and principles. I like to share my land based and people-designs, to give myself and others a better understanding of permaculture as a tool for a rich and happy life in harmony with nature.

During the Facilitator training in 2017 I saw that I could be a fun and skilled permaculture teacher and that my contribution can be valuable with my practical take. I would like to help people to understand permaculture and use it in their lives. To meet inspiring permaculturists, to have fun with them and to have an extra income stream with giving workshops.

In April 2019, when teaching with Looby, I felt that going on my diploma pathway would be an excellent way to take myself and my permaculture life serious.

This permaculture facilitator pathway design will never be "finished"; it is an ongoing learning and live design.

The Design Web

I use Looby Macnamara's Design Web to design my facilitator pathway. I find it a very helpful tool, it makes me look at my vision from different angles and it gives a nice, complete approach. Looby's questions with the different anchor points in the Design Web are much easier to handle for me than something abstract like a SWOT analysis for instance.

So I will follow Looby's Design Web steps:



VISION

I am a confident, creative, effective and fun designer and facilitator, inspired and inspiring. I am open, curious, patient, detailed/precise and clear. I address all learning styles in a serious-playful way and therefore people enjoy my teachings and find me open and approachable.

My work supports the growth of permaculture ethics in the world by inspiring transformation, using permaculture principles and design in my own life to inspire others.

LIMITS

My lack of confidence can be a limiting factor for me as a teacher. It can withhold me from acting if I don't believe in a good result.

A feeling of "Who am I to teach permaculture" can make me insecure. Other people might do it better. I don't always see what I have to offer.

I also don't think that I would enjoy teaching a PDC, unless it is with a few inspiring others.

Therefore I am not sure about my diploma pathway. If I don't need the diploma to certify people after their PDC, why would I go that route. I have very limited money at the moment, and I'm not sure if my family allows me to spend it on a tutor and an institute. That might be an investment in an unnecessary pathway.

Being (and staying) open is something I need to work on. I tend to judge what people say, and my judgement can be in the way of openness.

Patience I have only up to a certain point. When "it takes too long", I give up. Like: when I teach and there is slow response from the group, I jump in their response gap. Or when I explain something in 2 or 3 ways (in words, with drawings and/or examples) and the other person still takes his/her own thoughts more serious, I give up.

Some limiting beliefs about me as a teacher:

- I am not analytical enough,
- I am not detailed or precise enough,
- I don't dive deep into content.



A limit for me as a teacher could be that I don't enjoy being from home. At home I enjoy my family, animals and garden, excellent food from our terrain and usually inspiring volunteers and paying guests.

I can't think of any good permaculture teachers in Croatia that I would like to ask to collaborate or tutor me. There is only 1 that I haven't met yet: Karmela Kiš.

Another limit is that Croatia is a poor country and a lot of Croats don't want to pay money for a workshop or course. They expect to get things for free. Money is not flowing in Croatia.

And at the same time there are lots and lots of people with their permaculture diploma in Croatia! It is not special (any more) and I am a bit afraid of the quality.

Language is limiting me. My Dutch is excellent, but I live in Croatia; not in The Netherlands.

I can give courses and workshops in English, although that would exclude a lot of Croats (especially the ones over 35). My English is good but I still cannot fully express myself yet.

And with the Croatian language I am still at a very basic level.

HELPS

My biggest help is that I get things done, that I am creative, uncomplicated and practical, open to feedback and willing to learn. And therefore quite effective.

I love and enjoy myself and I am on my way to fully accept myself as I am. Including failures and things that I am not yet good at.

I can passionately talk about permaculture or Bogata Šuma or my designs or implementing them. With that I inspire people, and I let myself be inspired by their questions or remarks.

I usually don't use too many words and I like to use a variety of ways to get my message across, which makes my messages easy and clear.

In general I am good with people, I feel OK in front of groups and I like to bring in fun and lightness.

I noticed that my lack of confidence turns into confidence the more I prepare myself, get things done, the more I speak to people and do facilitate. So writing this facilitator pathway design is a great help too!

All the love and appreciation in my life is another big help. Especially my husband Peter



supports me in all kinds of ways.

Looby Macnamara is a great help in teaching me how to facilitate a course, to teach social permaculture, use tools, handle groups and group dynamics, how to creatively respond to questions...

I have many permaculture friends and networks in Croatia and the Balkan, who might be interested in permaculture events that I organise and/or can help with the promotion.

I live on a beautiful permaculture homestead that soon will also be a poly culture nut farm where people camp in the shade of the trees. We live almost self sufficient and we created many sustainable solutions on the land that can be nice examples for people to see permaculture in action.

We walk the talk: we apply permaculture ethics in our daily life and we develop our personal lives with permaculture principles. I did design our terrain, projects and parts of my life.

Another great help is that I am already successfully hosting and facilitating 4-week "permaculture retreats" for 1-6 people at a time, around 20 volunteers a year (since 2010). People from all over the world with various motivations and future goals, communication styles and learning styles, cultural differences... Very inspiring. It teaches me flexibility, creativity and handling group dynamics.

PATTERNS

Downward spiral pattern: I have difficulties believing that people want to come to my workshops and courses, so I don't give my best to the marketing. So the results are mediocre, what strengthens my belief that people aren't interested. A self fulfilling prophecy. I need an upwards spiral of abundance here.



Regenerative pattern: Looby's book *People and Permaculture* (p61-62) gives some tools for freeing yourself from limiting beliefs. I am practising that now, and growing my muscles to feel free.

Network pattern: when I read (more) about permaculture, I can connect my knowledge better and it turns into a network of knowledge.



and ideas, find out their “permaculture questions”, and try to engage them for workshops at Bogata Šuma.

I will also discuss my diploma pathway with them, to see with what ideas and possibilities they come up.

PRINCIPLES

Observe and Interact - I can observe a lack of People Permaculture in Croatia, or integrating permaculture in life, especially for many (city) permaculturists in Croatia. That is a facilitating opportunity; Looby Macnamara came to Croatia to give a course at Bogata Šuma.

Catch and Store Energy - I want to catch and store positive energy in this post communism, post war, right wing politics, bureaucratic and corrupt country. Designing your life is taking charge in stead of complaining and being a victim of the system. And I not only want to do that for myself; I would love to pass the tools to others to do the same!

Use and Value Diversity - I will learn from other teachers and I am grateful for the diversity of opportunities. Also bad teachers teach me something.

Creatively Use and Respond to Change - I will use opportunities and not let limiting beliefs hold me back.

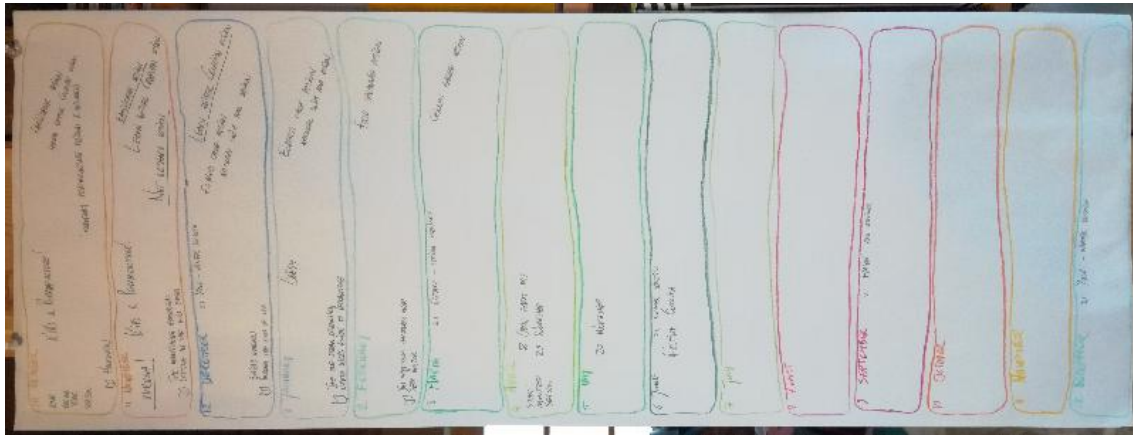
INTEGRATION

The main functions in this design are:

1. to support the growth of permaculture ethics and principles in the world,
2. to gain confidence as a permaculture teacher,
3. to give space to my creativity and
4. become an effective facilitator.

Re-activating permaculture knowledge

To gain confidence, I can re-read my permaculture books and watch films again. I read and watched most of them years ago and in the mean time my knowledge and experience deepened, so I can probably learn a lot more now from those books! Reactivating my knowledge will give me more confidence in teaching others, and it



deepens my understanding of permaculture ethics and principles.

Choosing 10 designs to finish

This renewed knowledge I can immediately apply in finishing my designs:

1. My diploma and facilitator pathway
2. Bogata Šuma overall design
3. Nut orchard design
4. Grey water cleaning swim pond
5. Our food forest is a food savannah
6. A garden for the chickens
7. Speak fluent Croatian
8. Young & elderly community
9. Give me a break!
10. Family health & well being
11. Camping design
12. The failed food forest, design and implementation
13. My polyculture no dig garden design

Professionalising permaculture retreats

In our "volunteer season" (from April to November) I can informally and creatively teach small groups (1-8 people) on a daily basis. I can try out all kinds of techniques and styles, get more experience, become more confident and they pay with working on our property, sharing their cultures and ideas from all over the world with my family.

Volunteers stay for at least 4 weeks so I can setup a broad program to cover at least basic subjects in permaculture design, homesteading and self sufficient living.

If we present this program on our host profile on the WWOOF, HelpX and Workaway websites, we will probably get more quality volunteers and probably get better/more useful feedback.



Permaculture activities at Bogata Šuma

I don't like to travel and why would I; I already live in a permaculture paradise! I can organise workshops and courses here and use our farm to give real life permaculture examples. That also gives me the opportunity to gain more permaculture knowledge, facilitating skills and connect with other permaculturists.

If I invite **Looby Macnamara** to give a course on our terrain, there is an excellent teacher-example coming to my house and I get a great facilitating opportunity. Organizing this will help me develop marketing and sales skills, organisational skills, management and financial planning.

An **open farm day** for our homestead "Bogata Šuma" can be a low threshold, cheap & fun day trip for Croats to see what we are doing up our hill, to get some ideas about permaculture, and it may inspire them to come to our workshops. It will probably expand our network.

I can also invite all my permaculture friends for this open farm day, and make it interesting for them by giving not only a tour over the terrain but also a lecture, maybe a game, and have a seed and plant swap. That keeps my network active, gives me a facilitating opportunity and forces me to get some serious content.

If I organize workshops on permaculture subjects that I am busy with/writing a design for, I force myself to keep momentum and deepen my knowledge (reading into the subject and setting up a good structure for a workshop). I might also get new insights from questions or remarks of participants. That gives me confidence.

For my workshops I will set a fair price in money, and give ideas for barter deals if money is an issue. That also stimulates New Economy.

Workshops at Bogata Šuma also create attention for our camp site and other initiatives.

Permaculture for local school kids

One of my friends, Jasenka, is the teacher of a class with 9-year old kids in the local school. She spoke to me about the school garden she set up last year and I offered my help to improve the garden and teach the kids some techniques.

It makes me prepare easy, & clear, fun teachings on a weekly basis, I can practise creative teaching skills (games!) and it teaches me better Croatian.

The kids will probably tell their parents about our "smart gardening" ideas and those ideas and tools will be spread in the local community, leading to less work - more yield gardens!



Workshop on Ekodrom's festival

A few of my local permaculture friends organise a festival in June where all their city friends gather. Around 400 people every year, and a lot of them are interested in permaculture.

If I organise a lecture or workshop on this festival, I can expand my network and facilitating skills, I can truly help people to bring more permaculture in their lives.

ACTION

- I will free myself from mentioned limiting beliefs by not repeating them/breaking the habit, asking myself questions and actively rewrite the story. This is probably an ongoing action since limiting beliefs keep popping up.
- I will make a planning for re-reading my permaculture books and movies that I want to watch again.
- Before November '17 Contact Looby for a People & Permaculture course at Bogata Šuma & start making plans.
- Make a plan for teaching 9-year old kids about permaculture with Jasenka. Setup a frame for 3 lessons, working towards a garden design. Special attention for fun games and activities; the HOW. Let Jasenka know about my plans before half of October '17.
- Make an annual planning and calendar for activities at Bogata Šuma and for myself. Publish activities on our website and as events on Facebook.
- Before the (spring) start of volunteer season I will setup a 4 week program with permaculture design for a homestead and self sufficient living. With that program I write a new text for us as a host on the WWOOF-network, HelpX and Workaway.

MOMENTUM

To keep momentum, I will make a calendar with my facilitator pathway actions and activities. With all the items in my planning, I cannot do else than keep taking steps on my pathway.

I will make a wallpaper for my laptop to visually remind me of my vision & goals for myself, and organise my priorities.



APPRECIATION

By making this design I realised what a great collection of tools and resources I have! With my husband being the greatest resource. I am very grateful for that. It makes me forget my fears.

I like it that I learned something new and useful, and I really appreciate the Design Web as a tool. I had fun doing this. Thank you Looby!

I appreciate the helpers, workers, volunteers and friends around me that help with implementing my designs, and I will organise celebrations with them.

REFLECTION

Reflections on my facilitator pathway

My vision is to be a confident, creative and effective facilitator, inspired and inspiring.

Permaculture, 8 Shields and Looby & Peter's teachings gave me tools to improve my life and be more creative in *how* I do things in my life. For me it is not all about teaching permaculture; I find living it more important. Being instead of doing.

At our FiT course, I learned a lot of tools and creative ways to improve my facilitation skills for my daily life with volunteers. Like:

- what is the best way to "teach" this? (with or without words, visual or visualization, in doing, role play, in questioning, brainstorming...)
- Look at nature to find an answer
- finding personal strengths and let the rebel think freely: it's not about how something is supposed to be, but about how I can do it so it fits in my life.

This design made me realise that I am teaching our volunteers about permaculture, ecological gardening, and sustainable living on a daily basis (7 months a year). I found new, more creative ways of "teaching" them and I experiment a lot (= almost daily) with how I bring information.

It also made me realise that if I let them do their work in a designed program, I take



our volunteers more serious, they will take their work and learning here more serious and I can expect more valuable feedback. I just need to professionalise what we have already been doing since 2010.

Before I started my facilitator pathway, I was not aware of my limits around travelling. But while travelling to Looby's Applewood for the FiT course, I noticed that I detest airports and public transport, cities and everything that city people call "food" but isn't. I don't want to invest my money in any of this.

On the other hand: it was inspiring to be in Applewood and see another 20 acre smallholding, to meet other permaculturists and to only have a role as a participant (and not being a mother, wife, cook, cleaner, project manager, team leader and teacher).

I became aware of how rich and beautiful our place Bogata Šuma is, and how happy I am here in Croatia's nature.

I find it difficult to cope with the other participants of our FiT course, who seemed to be at a different pace. It slows me down and makes me unsure when I ask people if they want to review my design and I get no response. Or I ask when we can have another coaching appointment, and total silence is the answer. Or when sending out a message to find a presentation date, lack of response looks like lack of interest to me.

I started a reflecting journal during the 10 day FiT and I carry that with me so I can journal whenever I want. I normally reflect on the past week every Friday, and whenever extra is needed. Now I take some extra time to journal about the steps I make on my facilitator pathway.

Reflections on designing

I design for projects I am already putting a lot of my time and effort in. That makes it fun and easy to keep momentum; it isn't something extra on my list. It is giving more depth to what I am already doing.

I noticed that pausing during the design process, gives new insights and helps me to zoom out/look at the bigger picture. In writing the designs, I slow down and look from different angles at what I want in my life. I enjoy seeing myself opening up for creative solutions. It gave me some new insights like the "permaculture retreat" for volunteers and how my insecurity/lack of confidence is easy to turn around, how limiting beliefs can easily be handled and how powerful and energizing it is to do some solution-thinking.



About the Design Web: I had difficulties in keeping apart the Ideas and Integration anchor points, and suppressing new ideas during making an Action plan. Eventually I skipped a lot of loose ideas that didn't really fit in.

Reflections on facilitating

My plan and the setup of a few teachings permaculture for children was received very well by Jasenka. I gave my first lesson on Friday October 20th 2017.

I used brainstorming, drawings, games, role plays, lots of questions, the kids explaining each other, teaming up in smaller groups, the kids as researchers, the school garden and other life examples.

I reflect in my journal after each teaching.

In January '18 I was asked to give a lecture on "Permaculture Day" (3 Feb '18) in Zagreb, Croatia. I felt very honoured!

I didn't want to do a dull lecture; I wanted to make it something inspiring, practical and fun. So I sat down, thought about it, selected lots of pictures for my story, found some good angles and jokes, some easy to copy good ideas on different subjects and I also showed them my people-permaculture designs. I told around 100 people about permaculture in action at Bogata Šuma and it was a success!

In April '19 Looby was here at Bogata Šuma to teach a course with me. I learned a lot from the master: how to keep the group's energy high, how to maintain my own good energy, how to handle group dynamics, how to reach people with my teachings...

I used various learning styles and I did my best to avoid lecturing. I used games, brainstorming, mind maps, visuals, questioning, a questionnaire/form, personal and group reflections and journaling, what would nature do, meditative walks...

And I wanted all my teachings to have a practical outcome for them, for their design.

Looby and the participants gave me good and useful feedback on the course.

PAUSE

My (type of) work and pauses are very related to the seasons and my personality. In general, winter for me is a time to pause and to enjoy being an introvert. While pausing, I read, write, develop plans, knit, crochet and spin wool. Those activities recharge me and give me new ideas and perspectives. Winter is also a great time for introspection and getting rid of limiting beliefs.

Summer is an extravert period when I'm open to other people and I work more outside.



At the end of the summer I am ready for my winter period and vice versa. I need and enjoy both.

As a family we create an annual pause between October and March, in which period we do not host volunteers, almost no guests, and we take time to look back to the results and successes of the year and make plans for the coming year.

Re-reading my permaculture books and watching films is a way of pausing and it is giving me more content and confidence.