

introductory words

# SESSION AT LABORSCHULE BIELEFELD'S SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT DAY IN SPRING 2017

This presentation has been created for an internal training session for the pedagogical staff of Laborschule Bielefeld.

Under the heading: "How do we reach satisfactory decisions within the school?" our research and development group, including educators and reserachers, presented an introduction to the sociocratic method.

We wanted to reach decisions and agreements concerning our project week in 2019 during the following months.

Some explanatory words about the presentation:

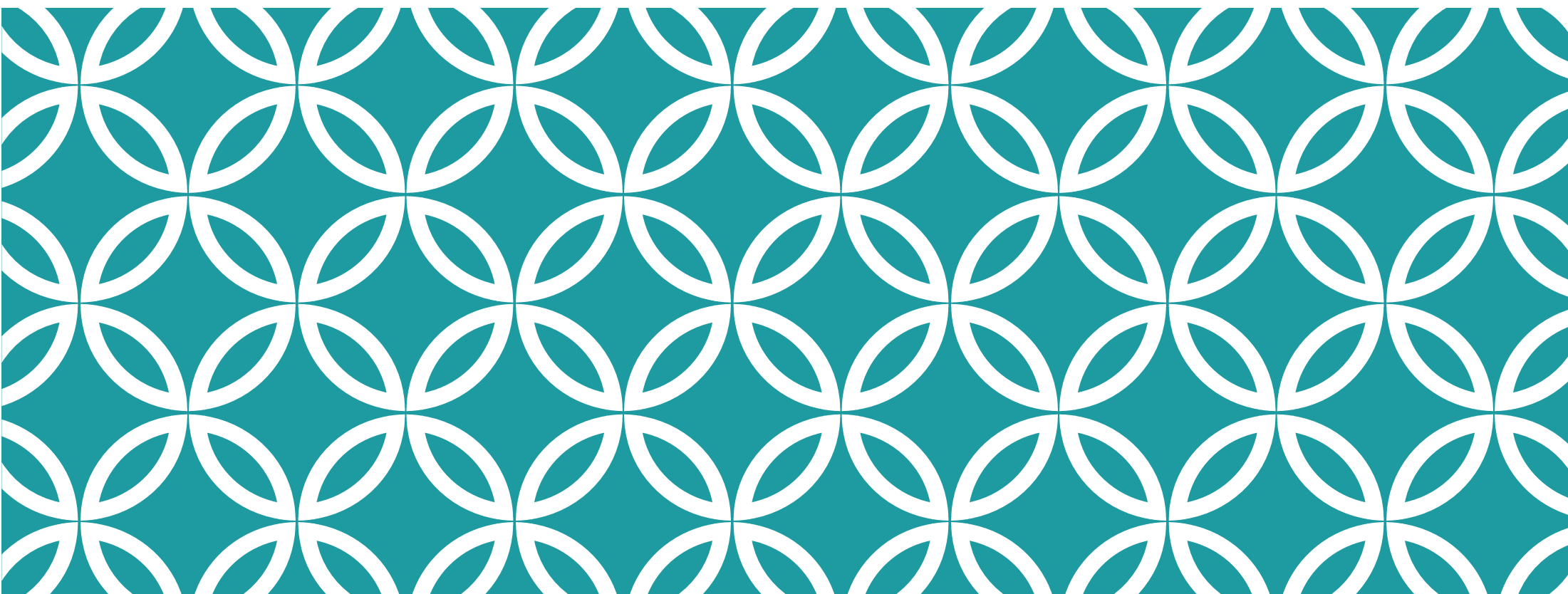
With the help of this presentation, we have visualized the problem of majority decision-making within schools and formulated goals for the future by learning about sociocratic methods, testing them, adapting them if necessary to decide on good project week structures and preparing their future incorporation into our school.



# SOCIOCRACY & PROJECT WEEK MANAGEMENT

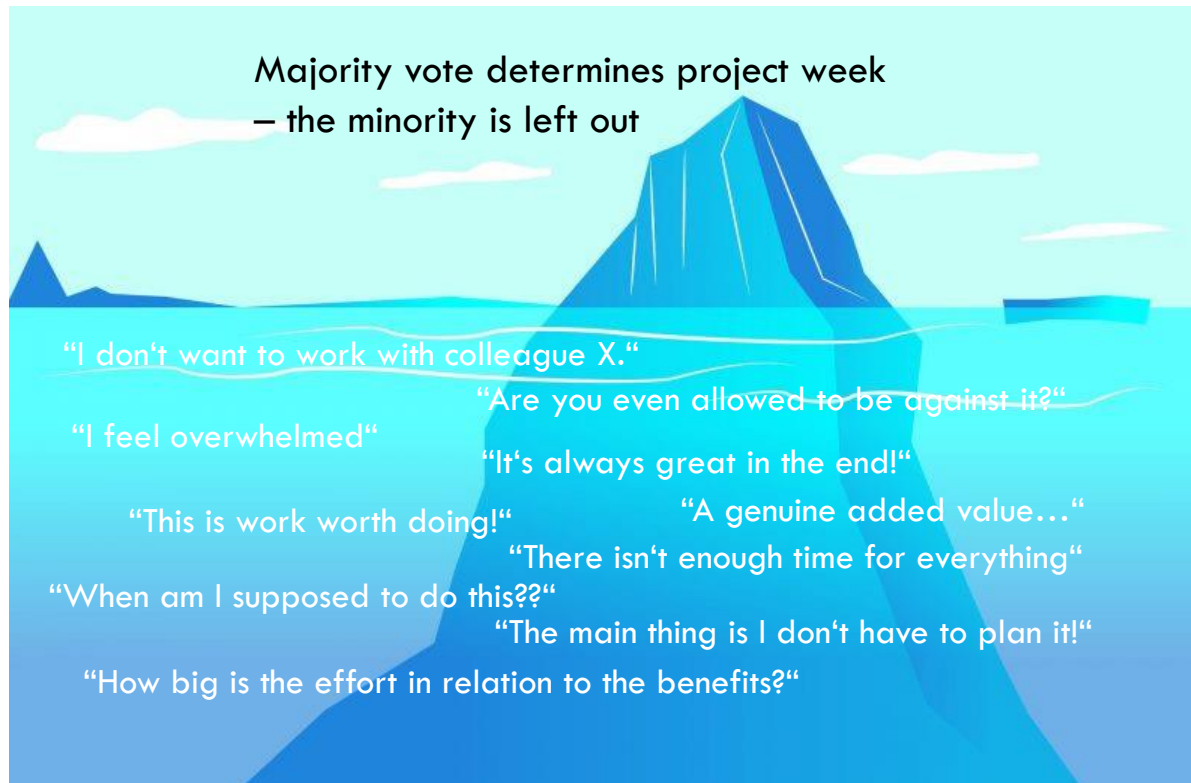
EQUAL ★ CONNECTED ★ SELF-ORGANISING

Axana Exner  
Konrad Herrmann,  
Britta Cerulla &  
Dominik Zentarra



**BASIC IDEAS**

# WHERE DOES OUR IDEA COME FROM?



Every year there is a vote to determine whether to have a project week at Laborschule Bielefeld.

This classical democratic voting process leads to a great deal of dissatisfaction among the colleagues.

Are sociocratic processes suitable for reaching a wide-ranging consent that includes everyone?

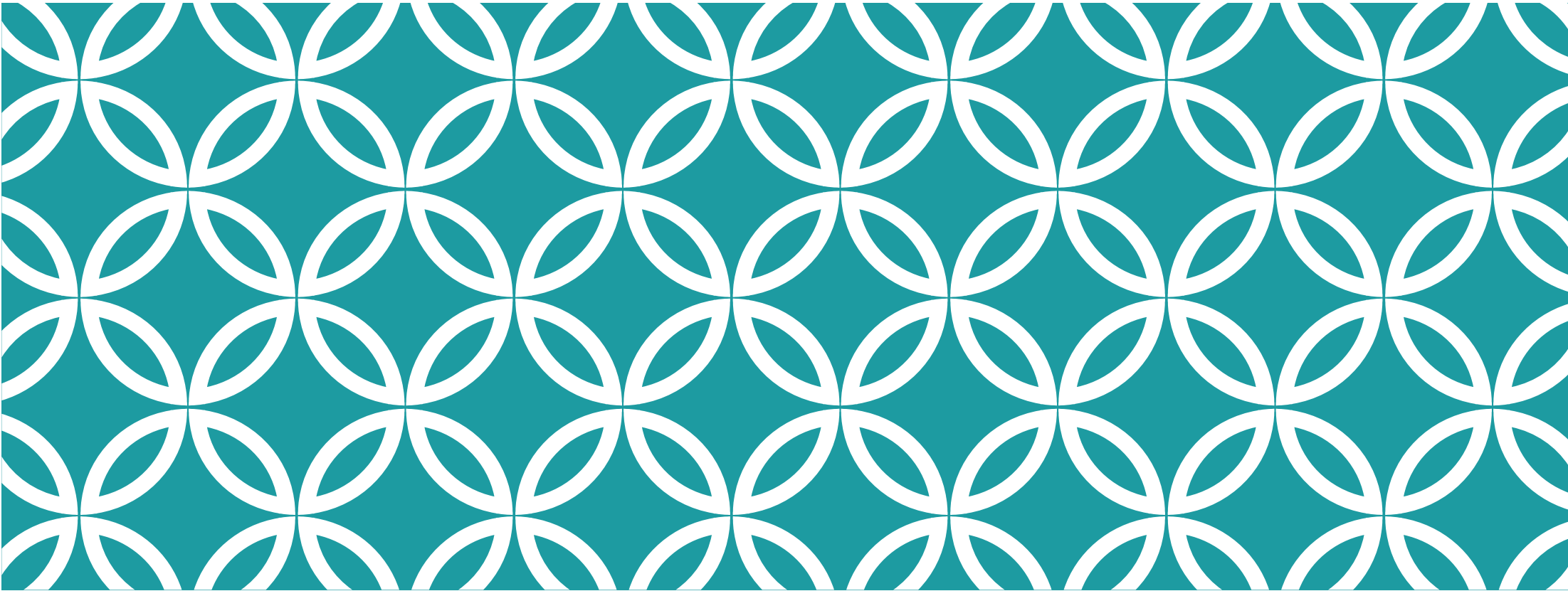
# OUR GOALS

Building a sociocratic culture of conversation for self-organizing teams

- Testing the sociocratic principle and adapting it to Laborschule
- Developing Laborschule's own culture/model
- Training all colleagues for the role of the moderator
- Handing over the tasks to the sociocratic circle
- Making good decisions → Satisfaction among the team members

Building, planning, testing

project week structures and making them a part of the school's future



# SOCIOCRACY

Basic Ideas

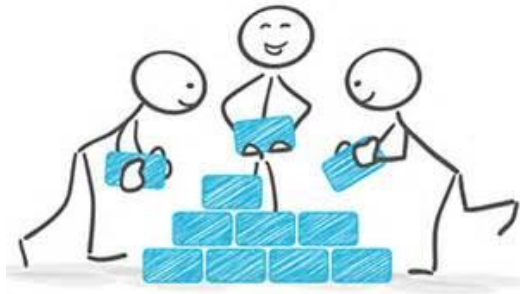
# WHAT IS SOCIOCRACY?

It...

... is an organisational model

... is not a YES/NO voting instrument

... provides the framework for personal growth



## Underlying values:

- Transparency
- High form of participation
- Equal value/equity:  
Eye level and acceptance of different points of view
- Respect and openness
- Positive error culture

# THE CONSENT PRINCIPLE

## Consent =

Agreement, approval

- No serious objection to and arguments against a decision with regard to a common objective
- The consent principle is not about agreeing, but not having a serious argument against the decision.
- I don't have to necessarily say "yes" to show my consent, but there is only a consent if I don't say "no".
- Phrase: „Yes, I can live with that.“

*A **consent** generally refers to the agreement of opinions or goals of two or more discussing or negotiating parties.*

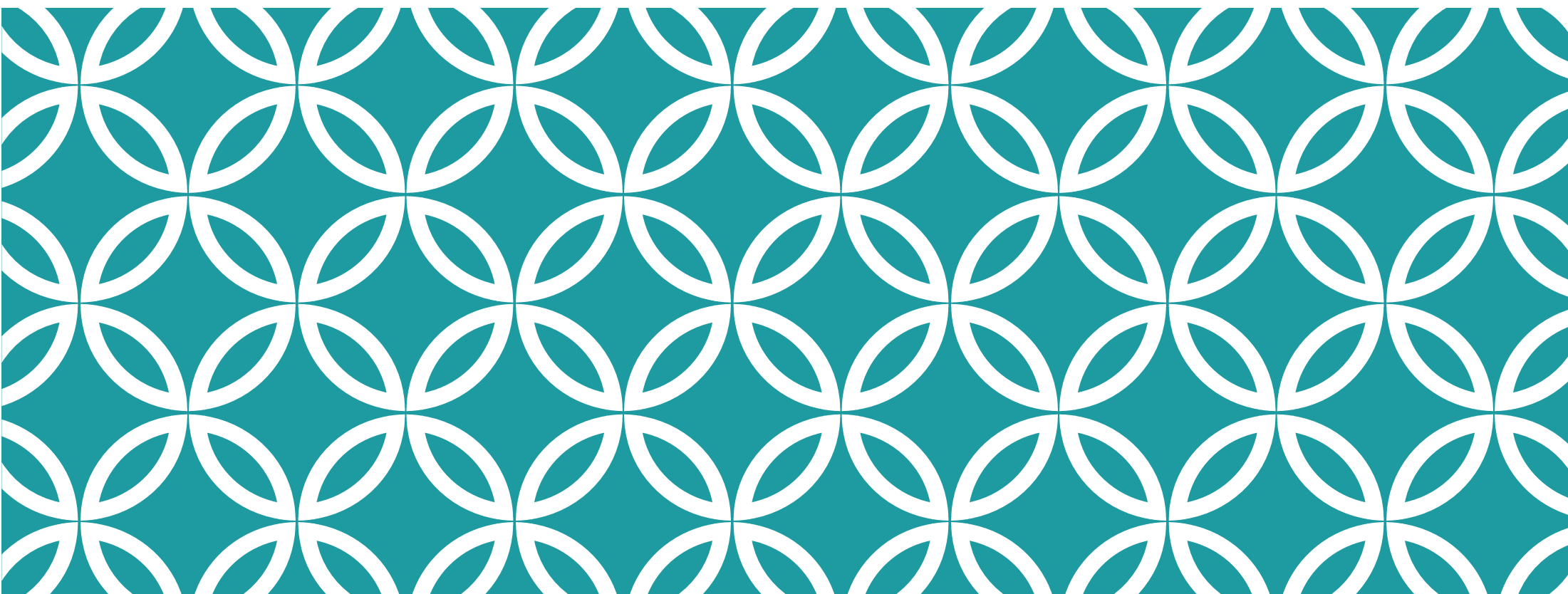


# THE RULES OF CONVERSATION — AN EXAMPLE

- Everything that is said in the circle stays in the circle!
- Speak only for yourself.
- Speak spontaneously.
- Listen and speak from the heart (empathy > rationality).
- Only refer to contents (!) (not to people).
- You may forget/repeat content.
- Everything and everyone is equally important.
- If you don't want to contribute, say, „I'm listening.“ (*Please do not say nothing*)
- Speak non-violently.
- Listen to your inner voice.

# THE ATTITUDE OF MODERATOR

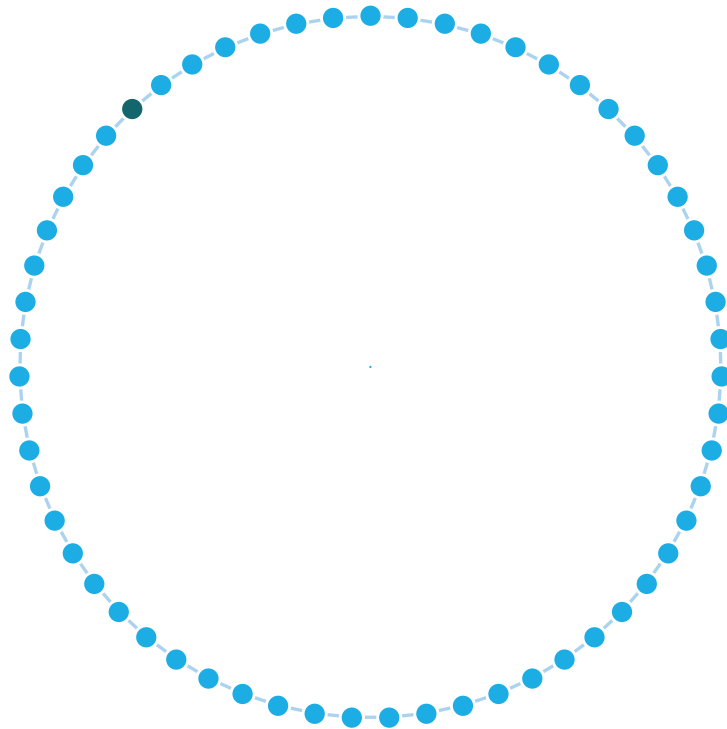
- Showing appreciation for people and contributions
- Helicopter perspective (“process hat”)
- Servants of the circle (Selflessness)
- Sensitivity for the balance between strict moderation and “letting things slide”
- Inner confidence in the approach/method
- Presence and empathy
- Openness to suggestions from the group and willingness to admit „not knowing“
- Active listening.



# CIRCLE STRUCTURES

The trial phases to date

# CIRCLE STRUCTURE 1.0 THE BEGINNING



## Broad Circle

with between 57 and 80 participants

### Topics:

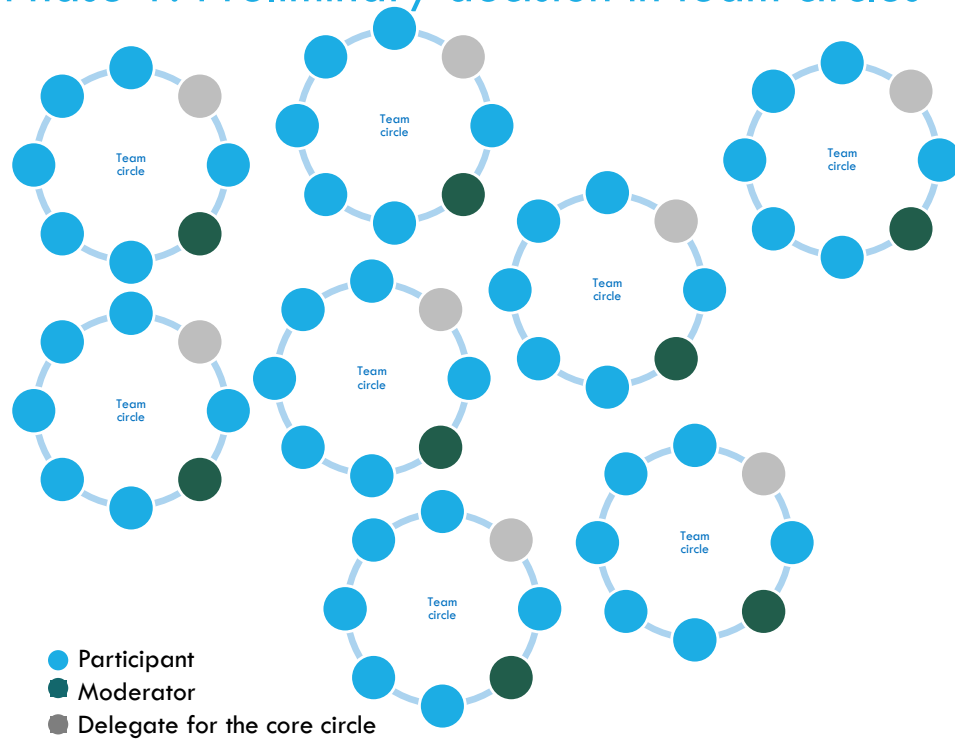
- Planning the project week sociocratically? (11/2017)
- Deputat regulation (04/2018)

● Participant  
● Moderator

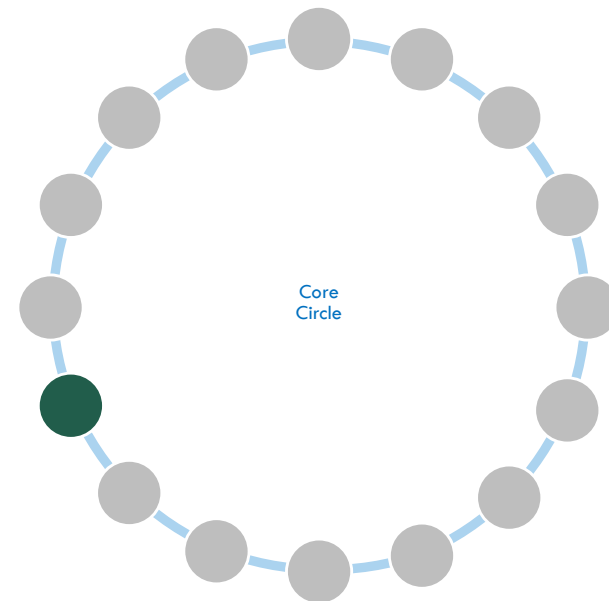
## CIRCLE STRUCTURE 2.0

# WHAT WILL BE THE TOPIC OF THE PROJECT WEEK?

### Phase 1: Preliminary decision in team circles



### Phase 2: Decision and resolution in the core circle





# LOOKING FORWARD

Guiding principle for the development of our own sociocratic culture of conversation:

- Resource orientation
- Efficiency
- Viable for the majority



# ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR DECISION-MAKING

„Does it always have to be  
sociocratic?“

DEVELOPING  
ALTERNATIVE  
METHODS ON THE  
WAY...

★ equal ★ connected ★ self-organizing ★  
★ transparent ★ sustainable ★ fair ★ collaborative ★  
★ sharing ★ consenting ★ discursive ★  
★ improving ★ satisfying ★

... TO GENERALLY ACCEPTED DECISIONS.



These resources have been created within the Erasmus+ project *LabSchoolsEurope: Participatory Research for Democratic Education*. You are welcome to use, adapt and transform these materials and share them using the same license as the original Creative Commons License **CC-BY-SA** 4.0.



With the support of the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

The creation of these resources has been (partially) funded by the ERASMUS+ grant program of the European Union under grant no. 2019-1-DE01-KA203-005003.

Neither the European Commission nor the project's national funding agency, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) are responsible for the content or liable for any losses or damage resulting of the use of these resources.