



# Democratic Education & Sociocracy

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Wondering School / School Circles

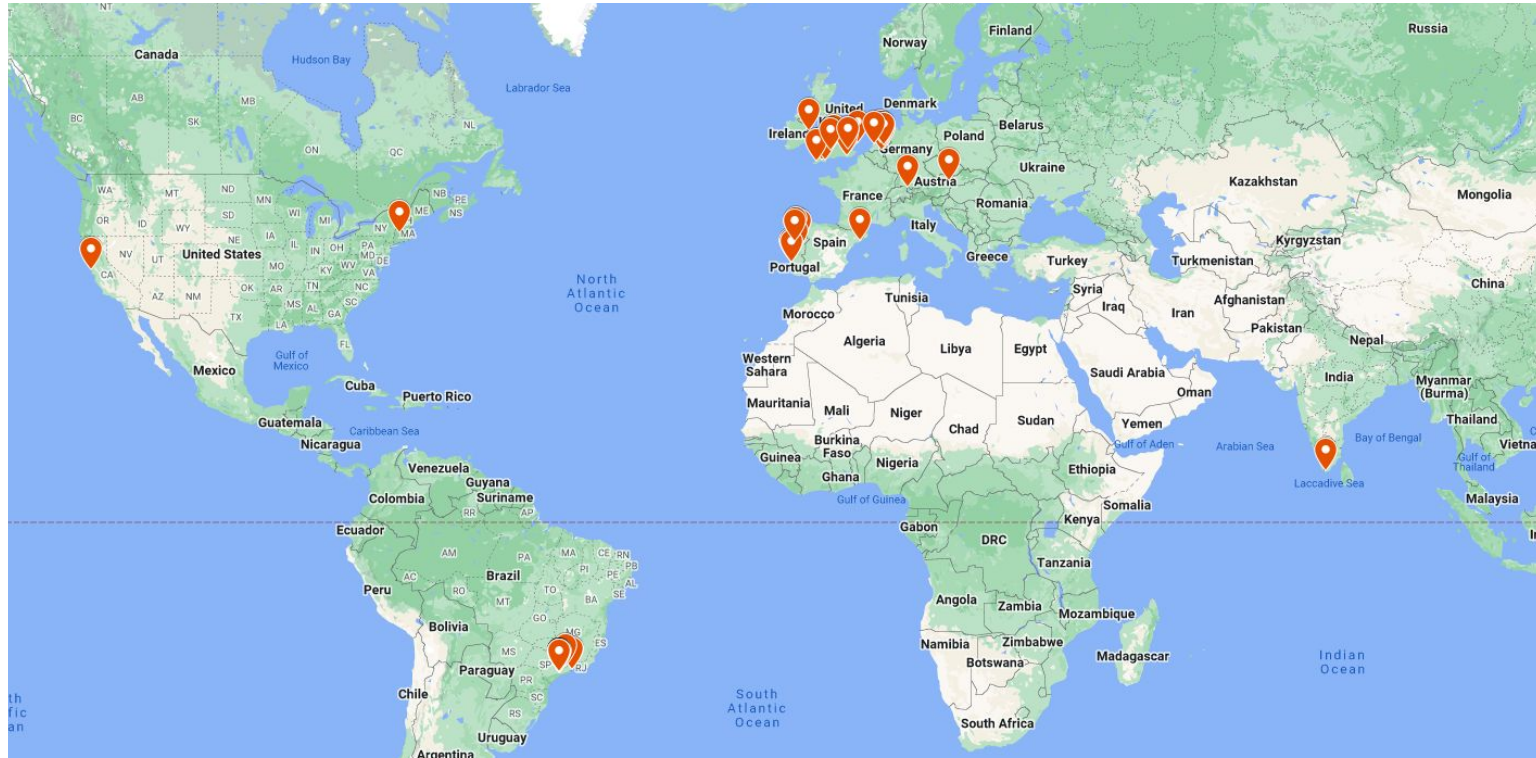
Transforming the Non-Profit Sector Conference 2022  
Teaching and Learning from One Another

# Introduction

- Wondering School: investigate and support a liberating education
- Training, Videos (case studies), Talks and Consulting



# Wondering School Journey



[Open Map](#)

# Liberating Education

*"No one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught.  
People teach each other mediated by the world."*

- Paulo Freire

1. **Autonomy**
2. **Dialogue**
3. **Problematization**
4. **Engagement with the World**



Reference: [School as practice of freedom? A dialogue between theory and practice](#)

# Democratic Schools



Laboratory School - 1894  
John Dewey, USA



Escola Moderna - 1901  
Francesc Ferrer, Spain



Summerhill School - 1921  
A.S. Neill, UK



De Werkplaats School - 1926  
Kees Boeke, Netherlands



Sudbury Valley - 1968  
Daniel Greenberg +, USA



Escola da Ponte - 1976  
José Pacheco +, Portugal



Hadera School - 1987  
Yaacov Hecht +, Israel



Sands School - 1987  
David Gribble +, UK

# Democratic Education

1. **Democratic governance** - school meetings with students and staff
  2. **Student's autonomy** in their learning process
    - SDE, Project-based Learning, Study Guide, Study Groups, Self-evaluation...
- + Curriculum based on **Human Rights**

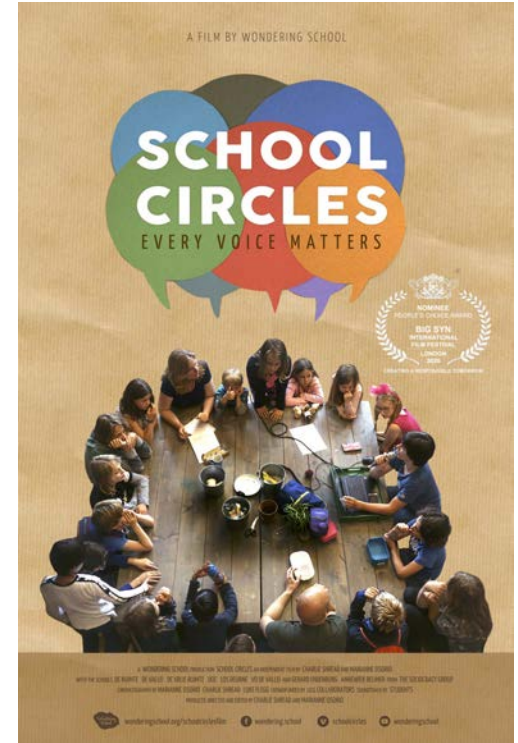


# School Circles

Documentary about 6 democratic schools that practice **Sociocracy**

## Motivation:

- Overcome punitive justice
- Overcome minority exclusion, segregation, polarization and competition
- Overcome status quo and punishment culture - generate change



[www.schoolcirclesfilm.com](http://www.schoolcirclesfilm.com)

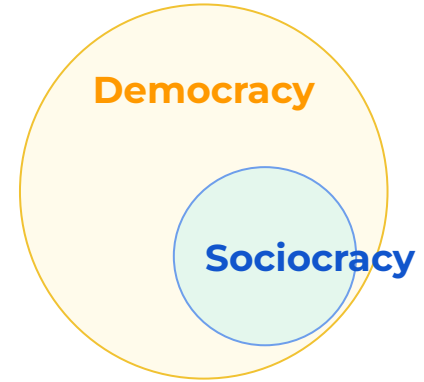
# Democracy & Sociocracy

**Democracy**: demos (people)+ kratos (power)

= power of the people

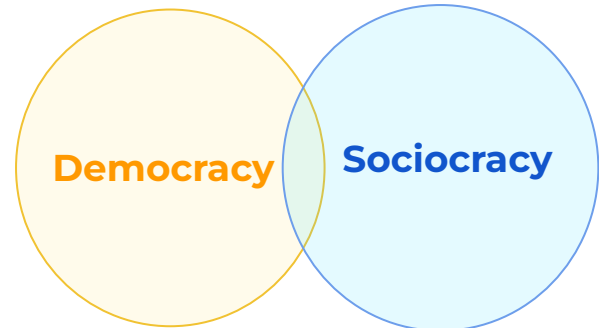
**Sociocracy**: socius (companions)+ kratos (power)

= power of the companions



**Democracy** (commonly): majority rule

**Sociocracy**: consent of all members





# Sociocracy in Education

## 1. Pedagogy

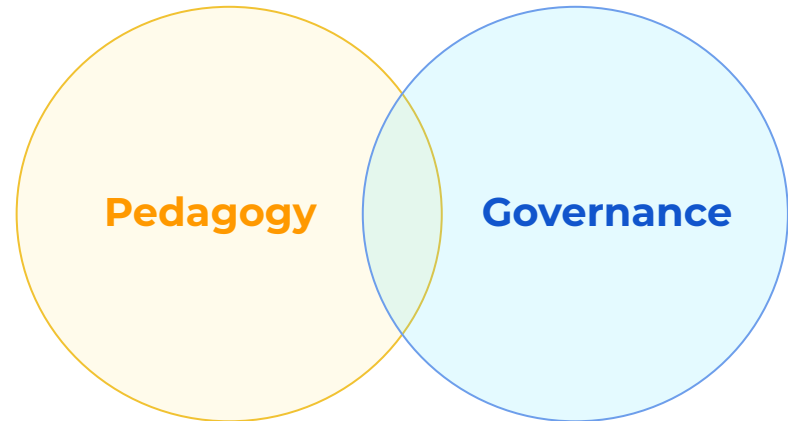
- Traditional
- Behaviourist
- Constructivist
- Humanist
- Sociocultural

## Non Traditional Education

- Critical Pedagogy
- Waldorf
- Montessori
- Reggio Emilia
- Sudbury Valley
- Modern School (...)

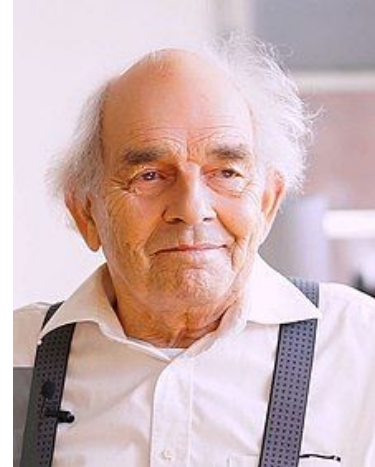
## 2. Governance

- Authoritarian
- Democratic
  - Majority Rule
  - Consensus
  - Sociocracy (consent)



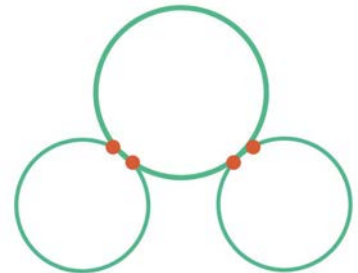
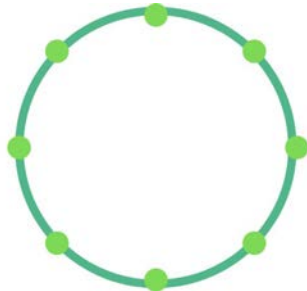
# History of Sociocracy

- **Auguste Comte (1851):** Sociocracy and sociology
- **Kees Boeke & Betty Cadbury (1926):** The Werkplaats School
- **Gerard Endenburg (1960's):** Sociocratic Circle Method (SCM)



# Sociocracy Principles

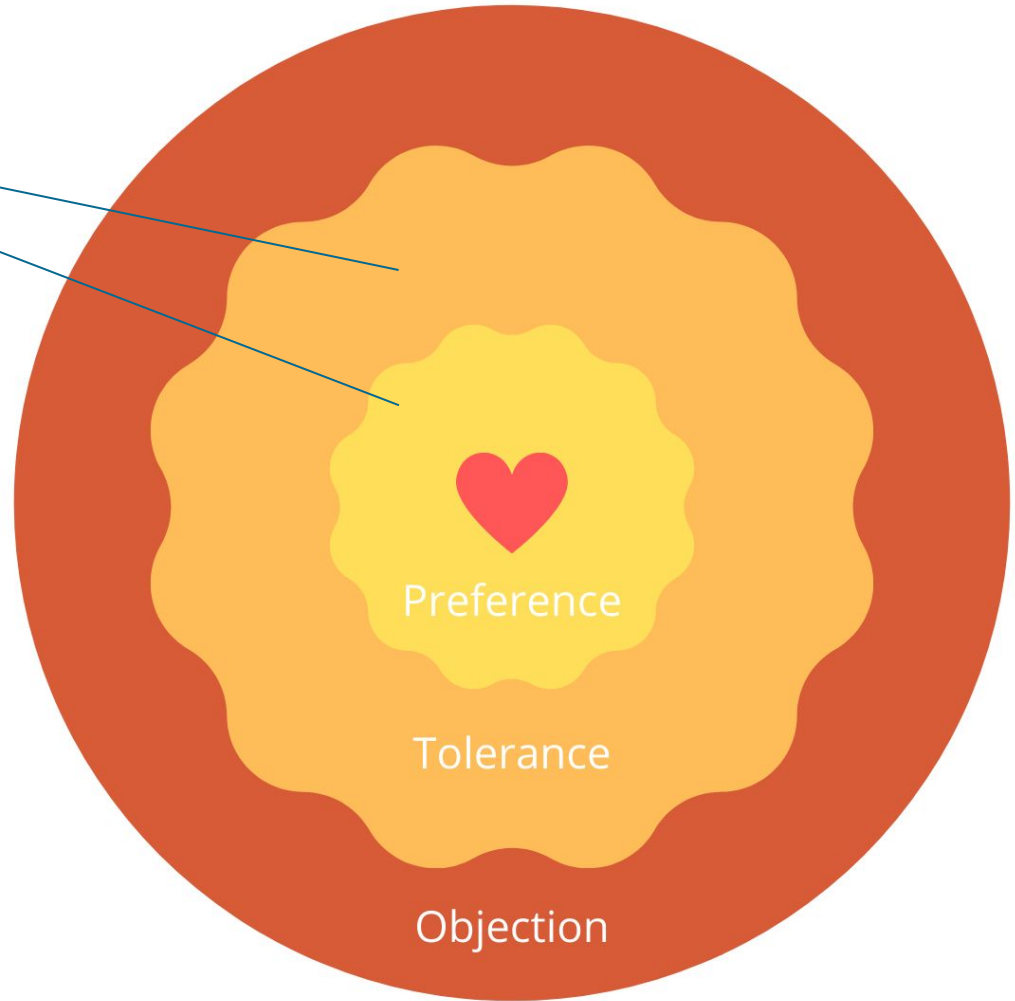
1. **Consent** - no objections
2. **Circle** - group with aim and domain, using rounds and consent
3. **Sociocratic Election** - open election of roles using consent
4. **Double Link** - feedback and communication between circles



# Consent

“Good enough for now,  
safe enough to try”

**Objection** = Bezwaar  
= feeling heavy



# Consent Decision-making

**De Vallei PO**  
State funded school  
Ages 4 - 13  
200 students  
Driel, Netherlands



# Sociocracy Decision Making Process

## 1. Picture forming

Identify elements of the issue

## 2. Proposal shaping

Generate ideas and tune proposal

## 3. Consent

3 rounds: questions, opinions & consent

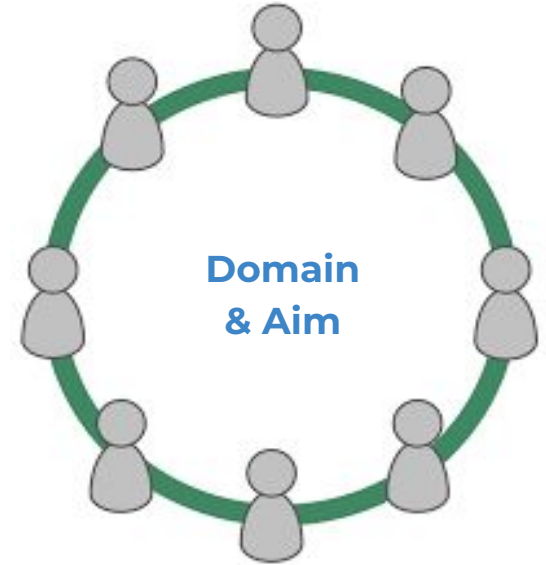


# Conflict Mediation Circle



# Circle

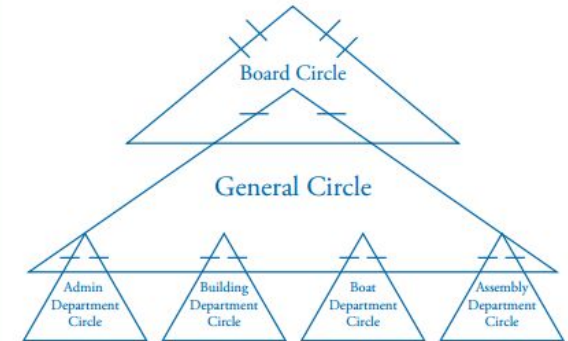
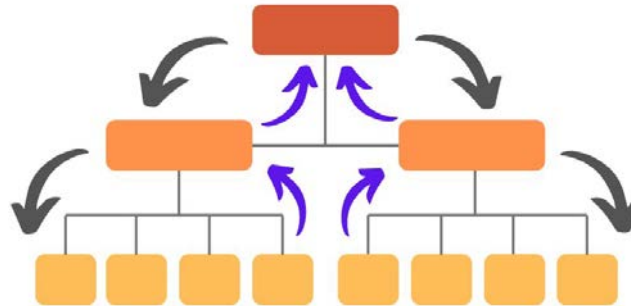
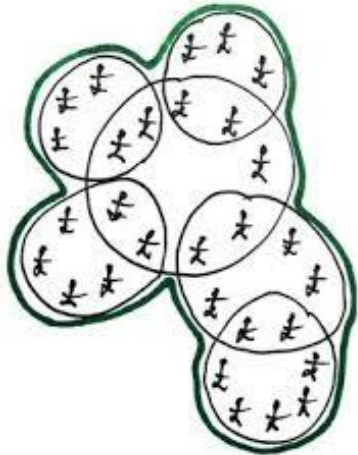
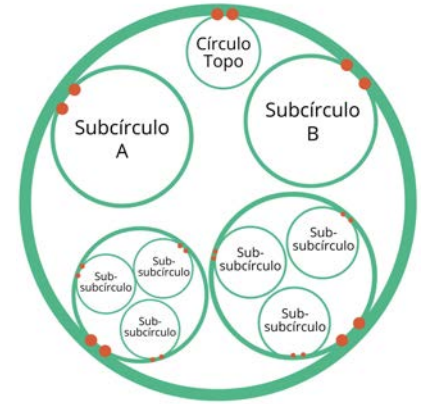
- **Circle:** group of people who make **consent** decisions and work together
  - **Domain:** area of responsibility & activity
  - **Aim:** what the circle does or produces
- **Rounds** (circle process)
- **4 Roles:** facilitator, admin, op. leader, representative





# Circle Structure

- **Circle:** area of responsibility (domain)
- **Double link:** operational leader (top-down) and representative (bottom-up)



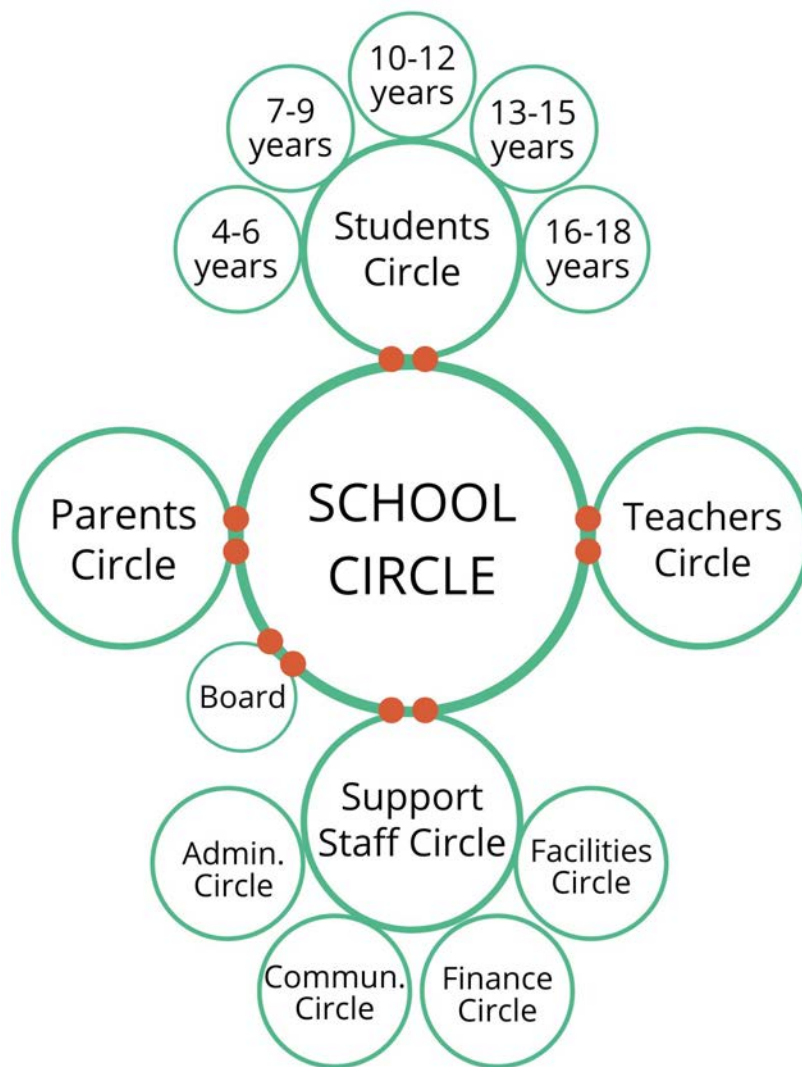
# School Circle 1

De Vrije Ruimte  
The Hague, Netherlands



# Example 1

De Vrije Ruimte  
The Hague, Netherlands

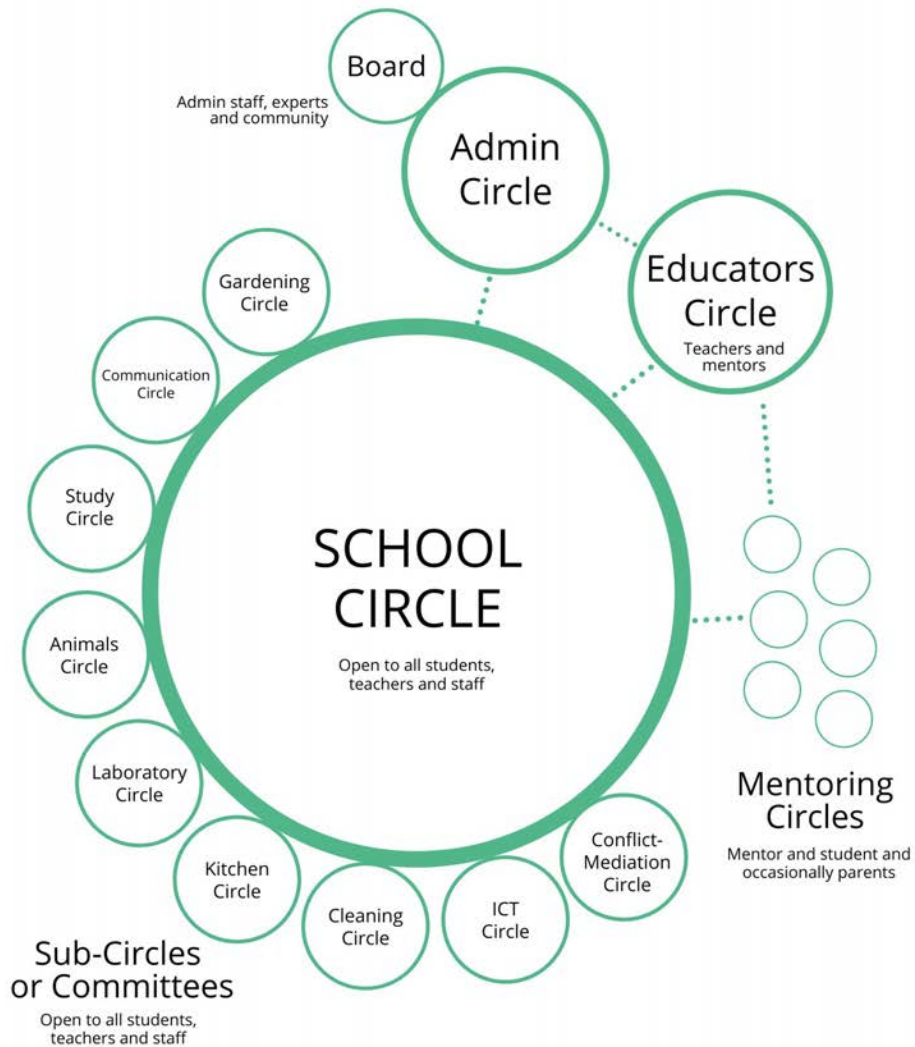


# School Circle 2

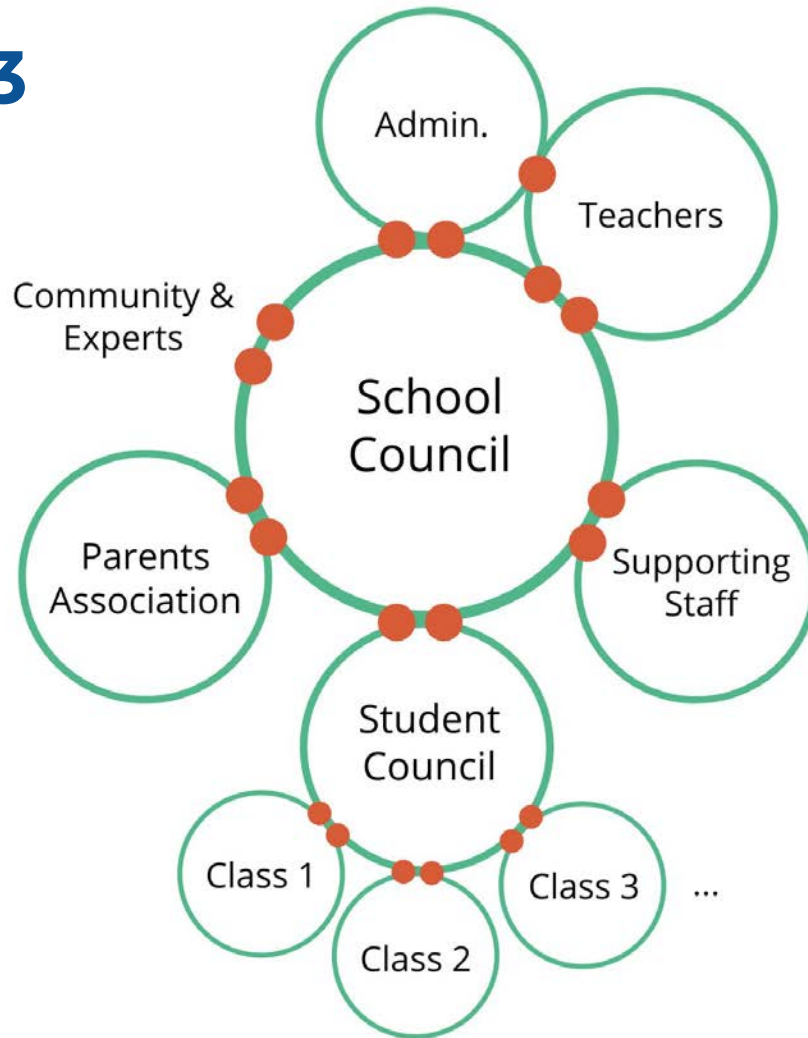
De Vallei PO  
Driel, Netherlands



# Example 2



# Example 3



## School Council (Brazil)

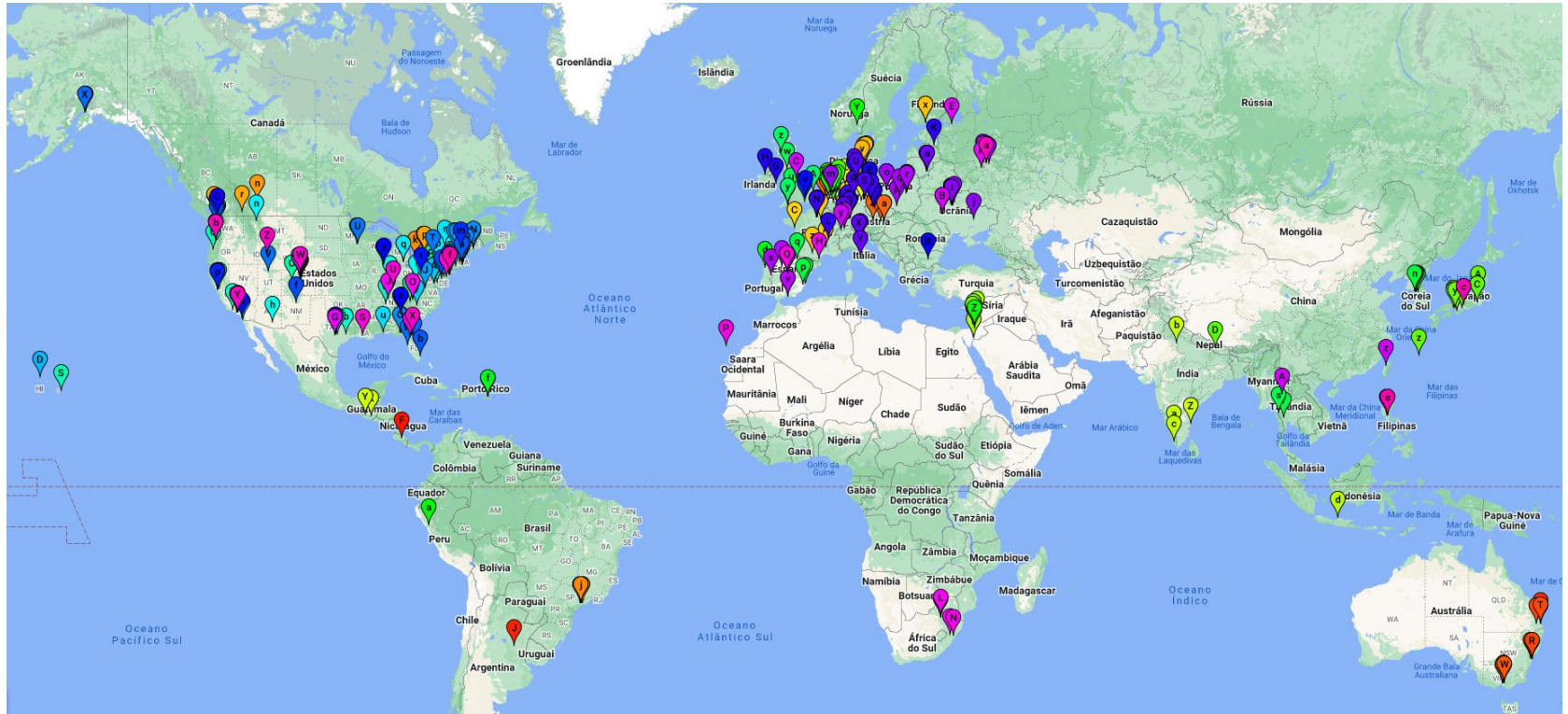
- 40% = teachers
- 5% = specialists
- 5% = staff
- 25% = parents
- 25% = students

# Sociocratic Schools



[Open Map](#)

# Democratic Schools



More Resources: [APDEC](#), [IDEC](#), [EUDEC](#), [AERO](#)



# LEARN MORE

Wondering School: [www.wonderingschool.org](http://www.wonderingschool.org) > Sociocracy for Schools course

School Circles: [www.schoolcirclesfilm.com](http://www.schoolcirclesfilm.com) > Sociocracy in Schools

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