



level up democracy

strengthen
youth leadership

PROJECT RESULTS & IMPACT REPORT

Level up democracy & strengthen youth leadership
with the sociocratic election of class representatives



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Abstract: The "Project Results and Impact Report on Strengthen youth leadership through the sociocratic open election of class representatives" was produced by the partners of the SLY project and published in January 2025. This research report outlines the outcomes, impacts, and lessons learned from the Erasmus+ Small Scale Project "Strengthening Youth Leadership through Sociocratic Class Representative Elections." Spanning Germany, Austria, and Spain, the project aimed to foster participatory decision-making and leadership skills among youth while equipping teachers with innovative tools to integrate sociocratic methods in classrooms. The project's key deliverables include a multilingual online course, a pilot testing phase, and comprehensive dissemination efforts.

„Strengthen youth leadership through the sociocratic open election of class representatives“ is a Erasmus+ co-funded project under the Agreement Number 2022-2-AT01-KA210-VET-000096210. It runs under the claim "Level up democracy", which describes the motivations, contents and goals of the project in a nutshell.

Delivery date: 2025

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Keywords: elections, youth leadership, learning guide, handbook, digital learning, sociocracy, democratic education, Europe.

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This project is based on the [handbook "We nominate!"](#), which was financed and created during the [Wirkstätten der Utopie](#) and [published](#) for the first time by the association Tage der Utopie in Austria under the CC BY 4.0 - Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. Lisa Praeg is the person behind the idea. The experiences of practicing and teaching sociocratic open elections in schools since 2017 have been integrated into this open educational resources.

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not imply any endorsement of its contents, which reflect solely the opinion of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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Project results & impact report **Level up democracy: strengthen youth leadership with the sociocratic election of class representatives**

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The "Strengthening Youth Leadership through Sociocratic Class Representative Elections" project is co-funded under the Erasmus+ Programme. The project was implemented over 22 months, from February 2022 to November 2024, across three European countries: Germany, Austria, and Spain.

The partnership brought together schools and training organizations promoting sociocracy to introduce innovative, democratic practices into educational settings. The primary ambition was to empower the youth in the school community to actively participate in decision-making processes and ensure that every voice is heard.

Background of the Project

In 2015, the project initiator Lisa Praeg was introduced to a sociocratic election for the first time. She discovered that positions could be filled in a transparent, constructive, and relationship-enhancing manner. This experience inspired the creation of the first analogous German guide in 2017, supported by an initial grant by the association Tage der Utopie in Austria under the CC BY 4.0 - Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. Over 3,300 booklets were distributed, reaching over 250 teachers and 470 students through workshops. The guide highlighted the potential of sociocracy to foster practical vocational training, inclusion, diversity, and democracy education in schools.

With the Erasmus+ grant, this methodology was scaled to provide tools and guidance for educators and students across Europe, enabling them to participate in democratic processes peacefully, respectfully, and effectively. While Sociocracia Práctica has made significant strides in training individuals online in sociocracy, there remains a growing demand for schools to adopt democratic methods, underscoring the need for deeper integration into educational settings.

This effort was aligned with the following priorities:

- Horizontal Priority: Common values, civic engagement, and participation.
- Horizontal Priority: Inclusion and diversity.
- VET Priority: Adapting vocational education and training to labor market needs.

Additionally, the project addressed three key topics:

- Democracy, in particular inclusive democratic participation.
- Entrepreneurial learning - entrepreneurship education.
- Promotion of alternative forms of participation.

Youth leadership

Youth leadership refers to the process of empowering young people to develop and enhance their leadership skills and abilities. It involves providing opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making and take on leadership roles in various contexts, such as schools, communities, and organizations.

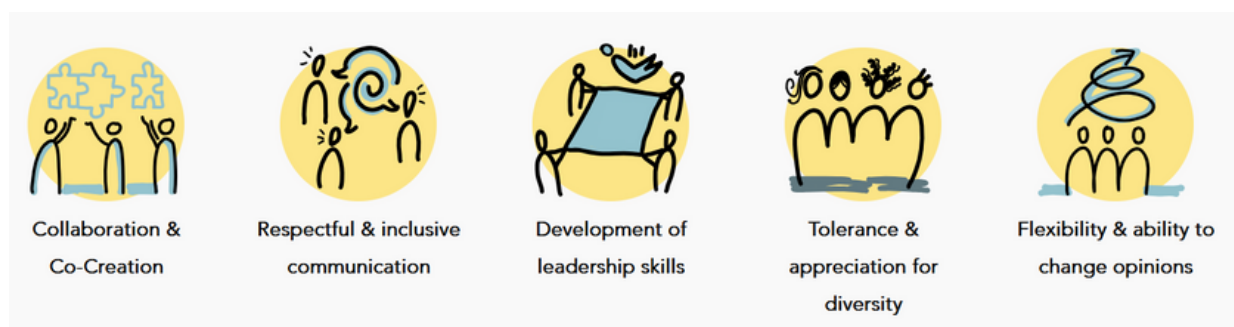
Youth leadership aims to cultivate a sense of responsibility, confidence, and self-awareness in young people, while also promoting positive social change. It is a crucial aspect of youth development, as it prepares young people to become effective leaders and active citizens in their communities. Ultimately, youth leadership is about empowering young people to make a positive impact on the world around them.

Teaching young people skills and methods that support a new way to collaborate so that their ability of leadership is strengthened.

Participatory leadership

Participatory leadership is a style of leadership that emphasizes collaboration and inclusivity. It involves actively engaging all members of a group or organization in the decision-making process, rather than relying solely on the leader's decisions. It's important to understand that the leader has also an equal voice in the consent decision-making process and needs to state his or her objections!

This approach values the input and perspectives of all individuals, and seeks to create a sense of ownership and investment in the group's goals and outcomes. Participatory leadership can lead to increased creativity, innovation, and commitment among team members, as well as improved communication and problem-solving skills.



What is sociocracy?

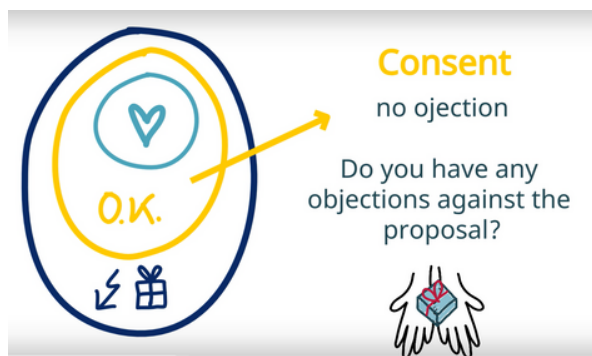
Sociocracy can be best translated by “ruling together”. This method helps to distribute power. In Sociocracy diversity is seen as a great chance to solve complex problems together. The developer of the sociocratic circle method, Gerard Endenburg, was a student at a residential school community in the Netherlands during the second world war. In this school students and teachers were all equally involved in decision-making. Gerard Endenburg studied Engineering afterwards. He used his engineering knowledge and longing for peace to develop the consent method. This is the basic principle of sociocracy. It's a more efficient decision-making-method than consensus decision making and basic democracy, but also as inclusive as them.

Consent means...

that the group goal stands over the personal preferences. Consent also means good enough for now and safe enough to try. There is no need to look for the perfect solution. To find perfect solutions aka consensus takes more often than not a long time with a group. In a fast changing world we need to be able to be agile rather than perfect. A role description that is good enough and safe enough for one school year is totally acceptable.

Objections are...

like gifts in the sociocratic mindset. They give information that the proposal is missing something important. If we share objections we share our experiences and views on a topic. To have a look on a topic from different angles is valuable to find good solutions.





Consent building process

Consent means "No objection = I go along with the decision".

- Good enough for now. Safe enough to try it out. Lead us closer to the goal.
- Facilitate consent-building in the circle, so that everyone gets a chance to contribute.

Round 1: Define a goal

It is important to set the goal together so that everyone knows for what a solution is now being sought for. What information is available and needs to be gathered in order to form an opinion? It is important that all questions are cleared out so that everyone is on the same page.



1

- define goal
- share information
- clarify questions

Round 2: Ideas + opinion formation

Do two rounds to collect ideas on how to achieve your goal in a way that everyone shares the responsibility. In the first round, be open and do not judge the ideas. You are not making any decisions yet. In the second round, you can build on the ideas from the first round.



2

- collect ideas for a solution
- share opinions

Round 3: Formulate a proposal

The facilitator or someone from the circle formulates a proposal from the ideas heard. It is written down for all to see. Make it possible to have "both and" instead of "either or". It is not about finding a perfect compromise as a solution, but a proposal that meets no objections.



3

- good enough for now
- safe enough to try
- brings us closer to the goal

Round 4: Query objections + consent decision

Now everyone is asked whether they have an objection or a consent on the proposal. If there are objections, they are heard and you work together on how the proposal can be adapted. It is helpful to keep the goal in mind, or to change the validation period of the decision (for how long is the decision good enough?). If everyone can share responsibility for the decision and there are no objections, there is a consent!



4

- hear objections if necessary
- if necessary, formulate a new proposal
- consent decision

4 steps of the sociocratic election of class representative

Session 1: Preparation

01

- Introduction to Sociocracy
- Motivation and goals
- Speaking in rounds

Session 2: Role description

02

- Role description of the class representative election
- Decide the role description by consent

Session 3: Sociocratic choice

03

- Fill out the nomination sheet
- First nomination round
- Second nomination round
- Finding consent

Session 4: reflection

04

- Reflect on the election



What distinguishes a sociocratic from a democratic election? Sociocratic decisions are not made by majority vote, but by the "no objection principle" (also "consent principle"). This means that all participants are heard equally and included in the decisions. In contrast to democratic ones, nobody can be overruled in sociocratic elections.

How can one describe a sociocratic election? Essentially, it is an open nomination; decisions are only valid if no one has an objection in the context of a previously agreed-upon goal. The goal is to find a person who is the most suitable to the agreed-upon role description.

What is the advantage of sociocratic election decisions? All voices are heard. The mutual feedback and the sense of responsibility of each individual involved play a central role. Sociocratic elections are therefore characterized by a high degree of acceptance and sustainability.

2.1.

THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK
Objective of the project



We derive the following project goals from this:

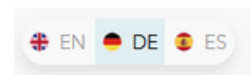
Build capacity for youth empowerment and inclusive leadership through the training of sociocracy on the example of the election process for class representatives.

Objective 1: Create a multilingual online course with videos, tools, and guidelines tailored for teachers in German, English and Spanish for the purpose of vocational training.

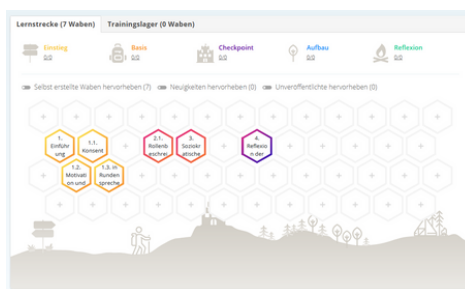
Objective 2: Testing the online course with teachers in vocational schools in Austria, Germany and Spain with high socio-economic diversity, focus on inclusive institutions and the use of sign language to enable especially in these schools inclusive education and the training of participatory methods.

Objective 3: Distribute the online course through Erasmus+ tools, educational institutions, pedagogical college, the school and education network of "Sociocracy for all", networks from all partner organizations and through curriculums for vocational education to spread the open learning material as wide as possible.

analogue & digital teaching materials:



learning videos



interactive learning journey



worksheets

www.levelupdemocracy.com



Need and Vision

In modern educational environments, the inclusion of students with neurodivergent qualities, disabilities, and special learning needs is essential to uphold their right to participation and inclusion. These students require tailored methods to actively engage in participatory and democratic processes.

Experiencing and learning these methods not only empowers them to voice their perspectives but also fosters their confidence to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Sociocracy, as an inclusive governance model, provides a unique opportunity to empower pupils and teachers alike. By fostering support rather than exclusion, sociocratic decision-making strengthens a sense of belonging, improving both individual and community well-being.

Inclusivity and Empowerment

The project emphasizes the importance of enabling students with special educational needs to participate actively in democratic processes, fostering their self-confidence and sense of belonging. This approach aligns with broader goals of inclusion and diversity in education

Research Collaboration

The Leopold School Altshausen, part of the "Zieglersche" diaconal network in Southern Germany, served as a dedicated partner for this research. Specializing in education and counseling for students with hearing and language impairments, the Leopold School provided a rich context to explore the integration of sociocracy in inclusive settings.

With 317 students and a legacy of over 175 years, the school exemplifies a commitment to education that prioritizes empowerment and inclusion. The successful implementation of the sociocratic open election at Leopold School is a potential model for replication across the network's other schools and organizations, further enhancing their inclusive practices and social dialogue.



Research Process

1. Initial Testing

Teachers at Leopold School were the first to utilize the online learning guide, offering critical insights into its practical application for students with special needs. Their feedback shaped necessary adaptations for inclusive facilitation.

2. Live Workshop

To deepen the understanding of training requirements, Lisa Praeg and the school's headmaster conducted a two-day workshop with a class of students. This session was video-recorded, capturing student reactions, challenges, and the effectiveness of playful, step-by-step explanations of the sociocratic open election process.

3. Key Takeaways

The live workshop and subsequent analysis provided a robust set of actionable tips for facilitating sociocratic elections in inclusive classrooms. These insights addressed specific needs for engaging students with language and hearing impairments, ensuring their meaningful participation in democratic processes.



Tolerance &
appreciation for
diversity

The development of the online guide was a cornerstone of this project, meticulously designed to cater to teachers and students across diverse learning environments:

- **Collection and Sorting of Existing Materials**

The foundational materials included the original brochure "We Vote!", workshop resources for teachers and students, and valuable feedback from previous implementations. These were synthesized into a structured curriculum comprising four sessions, each designed to be delivered in a minimum of four two-hour school periods.

- **Elaborating the Didactical Concept for the Online Course**

The guide was developed to address the needs of two distinct learner groups: beginner educators unfamiliar with democratic education and those already experienced in participatory teaching methods. A multi-faceted approach ensured engagement for diverse learning types, including readers, listeners, and autodidacts. Key features include dynamic "folding-unfolding" tip boxes, creative learning videos, and distinct learning paths for teachers and students. The student-specific content was integrated into the Chabadoo digital learning environment.

- **Developing Course Content**

The course content was organized into succinct, visually engaging graphics and a comprehensive overview of the four sessions, with clear step-by-step instructions. This layered approach ensured accessibility and practicality for educators.

- **Video Script Development and Translation**

Scriptwriting for learning videos was streamlined by the team's extensive training experience and ability to use simple, effective language. Translations, initially planned to leverage AI tools, were primarily completed manually due to the lack of adequate sociocracy terminology in automated tools.

- **Video Production**

Introduction videos were produced live, while session-specific instructional videos were created with AI assistance. These videos were tailored to meet the needs of both teachers and students, ensuring engagement and clarity.

- **Establishing the E-Learning Course**

The course combined videos, instructional content, and a clear distinction between foundational and advanced topics. This structure allowed for both introductory guidance and deeper exploration of sociocratic principles.

Outreach Efforts: The project team personally reached out to *at least 65 teachers and multipliers across all participating countries*, requesting feedback and encouraging them to share the guide with their networks.

The outreach and feedback collection process was comprehensive, ensuring diverse perspectives to refine the guide effectively:

- **Feedback Workshop at Leopold School:** Fifteen teachers participated in a workshop where the feedback form also served as a structured questionnaire. Additional in-depth research workshops were conducted with four of these teachers.
- **Webinars:** Three webinars, one hour each, were offered in all project languages to explain how to use the guide. These sessions had a total of 12 participants, providing additional insights and clarity to educators.
- **Written Feedback:** Ten educators, including teachers, headmasters, and university professors, provided detailed written feedback. An additional ten teachers completed the structured feedback form.
- **Multimedia Feedback:** Five schools contributed detailed explanations with accompanying pictures and video statements, which will be published on the project website in the section “In Action”.
- **Supportive Statements:** Ten motivational and supportive statements were received from educators, school leaders, and students, highlighting the guide’s impact and potential. These will also be featured on the project page.
- **Conference Insights:** Spoken feedback was collected during conference presentations and workshops, offering real-time insights into the guide’s reception. We produced flyers in all languages to reach even more teachers.

This diverse feedback enriched the guide, ensuring it meets the needs of educators and students while aligning with the project’s goals of fostering inclusive, participatory educational practices.

The process revealed the rigidity of school schedules, emphasizing the need for early planning and extensive promotion of sociocracy in education. Despite challenges, sufficient teachers were engaged for testing.

Take-outs from the detailed Teacher Feedback

The project engaged educators across Germany, Austria, and Spain, gathering valuable insights into the practicality and impact of the sociocratic guide:

- **Margit Sutterlüty, Pedagogical Director, BAfEP "Educational institution for elementary education" Feldkirch St. Josef, Austria**

"The online guide for sociocratic class representative elections is extremely useful for our teachers. Without the need to travel, they quickly gain a clear overview and an initial engagement with the topic. Especially before the election, the guide offers valuable information and supports the preparation and distribution of relevant content. It effectively introduces democratic decision-making processes in a fair and inclusive manner."

- **Florian Pfeiffer, Teacher, Tyrolean vocational school for photography, optics and hearing acoustics, Austria**

"The time constraints in our 10-week course cycles made it challenging to integrate such a comprehensive process. However, the focus on student strengths and the clear steps outlined in the guide provided significant inspiration for inclusion in other areas of the curriculum."

- **Elke Martin, Youth Coordinator, Montafon Youth Forum, works with all schools in the Montafon (10 districts), Austria**

"The worksheets are clearly structured, concise, and easy to understand. I appreciate the focus on student strengths and the reflection tools that encourage ongoing development. The availability of materials in multiple languages also enhances accessibility."

- **Blanca San Martin, Teacher, IES La Janda, Spain**

"The design is attractive, and the process is clearly structured. While the material is comprehensive, it would benefit from guidance on addressing group dynamics and adapting the process for younger or older age groups."

- **Pedro Moreno Ferrari, Teacher, IES Maimónides, Córdoba, Spain**

"The videos are engaging, but their length should be optimized for better attention retention. The guide is a valuable tool, especially for introducing democratic methods in classrooms."

- **Roberto Spano, Professor, UCI University - Cuautitlán Izcalli University, Spain**

"I find it a very complete guide, and it can be a richer process of information and mutual knowledge for the student body, to get to choose class representatives in a more informed and collaborative way. I think that for a first experience or if we want a first cycle nothing is missing in the process, it is described in an exhaustive way. What could enrich it could be to adapt the model to the specific cases, cultural, of the educational institution and of the specific group of students, however I feel that this could be a second cycle of the process to be implemented after a first feedback. I think that the guide is quite friendly for the public, not too saturated and with a nice graphic and well representative of the content."

- **JAUME ESTEVE USACH, Institut Castellbisbal Barcelona, Spain**

"I find the guide very useful for the clarity in the organization of the different items. I like the layout, which also helps the clarity of the structure. Also the keys that help to clarify concepts. For me it is very complete. It contributes from the beginning to the awareness of the importance of a good choice. As an improvement, at the point where consent and objections are explained, the material could work better if it were made to be delivered on paper, or projected, but addressed to the student, not to the teacher. For example: instead of: let by groups. I would put: present by groups your proposals. As a more simplified document, obviating the indications for the teacher."

- **Vivian Breucker, innovation lab, OSK open school Cologne, Germany**

"I truly appreciate the efforts behind this project and the resources provided. The section dedicated to working with students with special educational needs stands out as particularly valuable, offering practical and inclusive approaches that resonate deeply with our needs. While the materials, such as the worksheets, are excellent, having them available in an editable Word format would make it easier for us to adapt them to specific classroom requirements. The workshops and deep-dive research have been insightful, and I look forward to seeing the additional video materials from these sessions. The ability to exchange experiences and insights through such projects is invaluable."

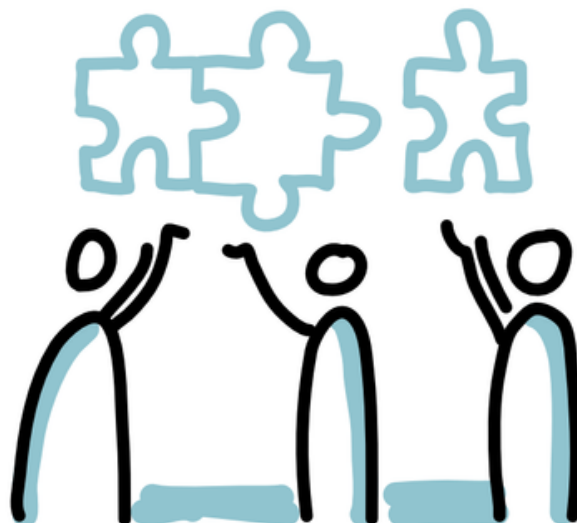
- **Carolin Halder, Teacher, Leopold School Althausen, Germany**

"I find the guide to be well-structured, with clear points followed by detailed explanations, making it easy to navigate. The improvements made to the homepage are notable—it's now more user-friendly, visually appealing, and simpler to operate. Regarding the open election process, while the concept promotes critical thinking and engagement among students, I feel less confident about implementing it independently based solely on the guide. Additional materials, such as Word-format worksheets, would be beneficial for customization. In terms of inclusion, the process helps students recognize the importance of communication, though it may highlight their challenges in this area. The open election fosters democracy education effectively but depends heavily on the time allocated for individual conversations and listening to every student."

The main changes and adaptations towards the feedback of the teachers within our possible resources were the following:

- **Expanded glossary** of the key definitions for clarity.
- **Printable handouts** were created to complement digital resources, accommodating classroom practices.
- **Specific learning videos for students** were added alongside teacher-centric materials.
- **Worksheets were differentiated into basic and advanced levels** to address diverse student needs and teacher preferences.
- **Adapting Materials for Special Needs:** The two-day workshop conducted at the Leopold School provided critical insights into real-time application, leading to the creation of actionable tips for inclusive facilitation: Special glossaries and simplified worksheets were developed to ensure accessibility for students with language and learning challenges.
- **Interactive and visually appealing elements** were incorporated to maintain teacher and student engagement throughout the learning process.

Through these collaborative efforts, the online guide evolved into a comprehensive, inclusive resource for implementing sociocratic elections, laying the groundwork for meaningful participation and leadership development in schools.



Direct feedback from 65 teachers and multipliers across all participating countries.



Homepage Engagement

- 1,229 sessions from 447 unique visitors
- Worksheets were downloaded 320 times

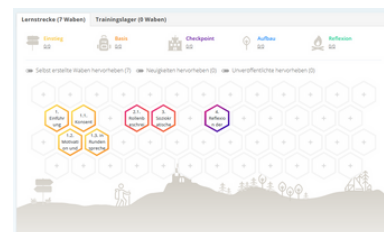


chabaDoo Platform Engagement

Honeycombs were accessed 135 times

Social Media Engagement

7,377 impressions; reaching 1,400 unique accounts, and engaging 212 users, solely from project-specific accounts



Direct Promotion Engagement

Through workshops and personal talks in conferences, in which we also promoted the project, we directly engaged with 508 teachers, headmasters, students, and pupils.

Indirect Promotion Engagement

Through newsletters, market stands at conferences, podcasts, mentioning in articles and newsletter of partners we reached indirectly approximately 90,000 teachers, headmasters, students, and pupils.

Publishing

The project has been featured in 4 different articles.
We spoke in 2 podcasts about it.



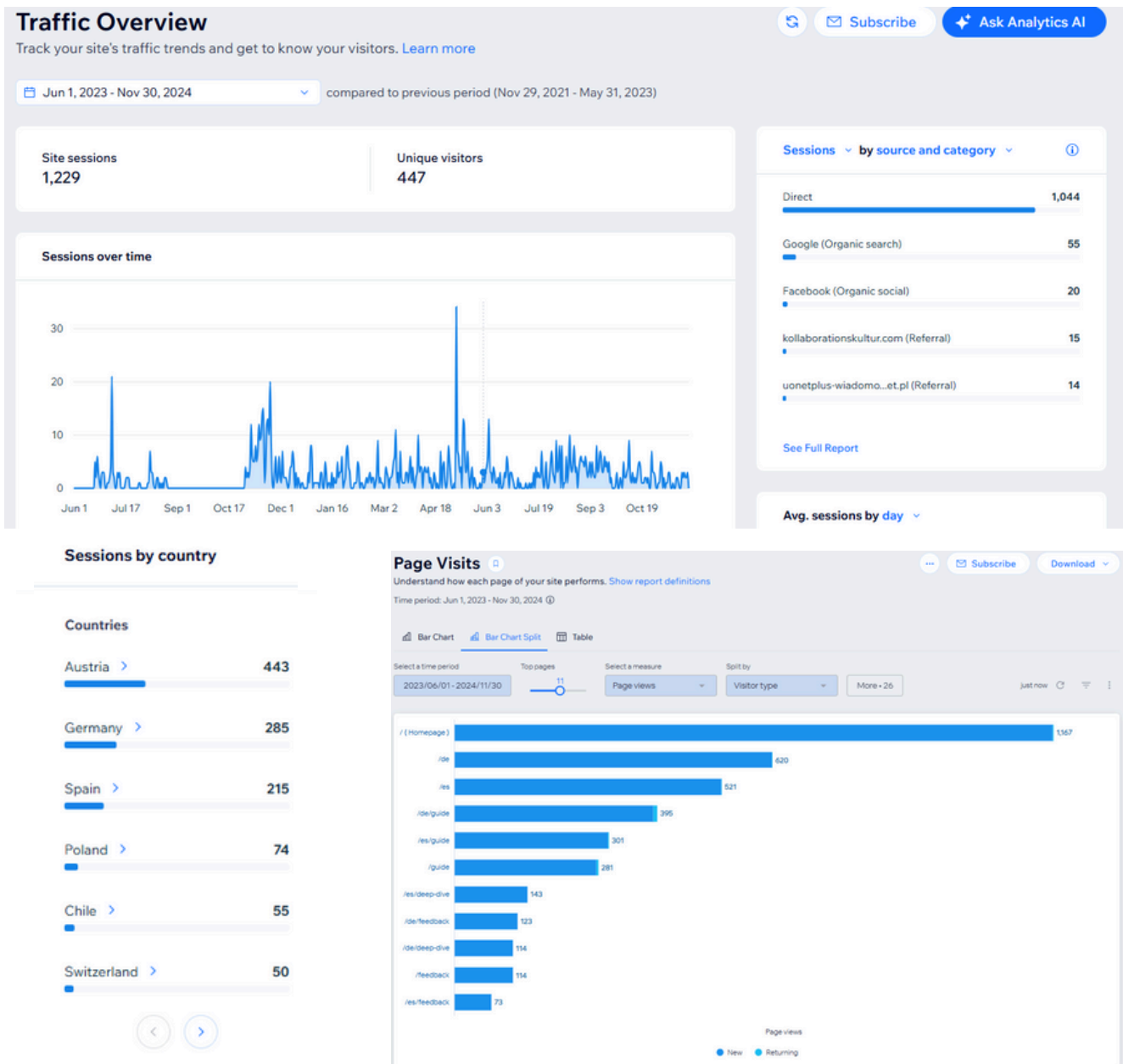
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OUTCOME Homepage engagement



Between June 2023 and November 2024, the project website recorded **1,229 sessions from 447 unique visitors** (data is not retained for longer periods). The **majority of the traffic came from Austria (443 sessions), Germany (285 sessions), and Spain (104 sessions)**. Most visits were direct, indicating strong engagement with the target audience. The homepage emerged as the most visited page, highlighting the success of our outreach efforts. The

From January 2024 to November 2024, the worksheets were downloaded a total of 320 times. This is a huge success rate! Unfortunately, the analytics do not provide additional information about the period prior to January 2024.

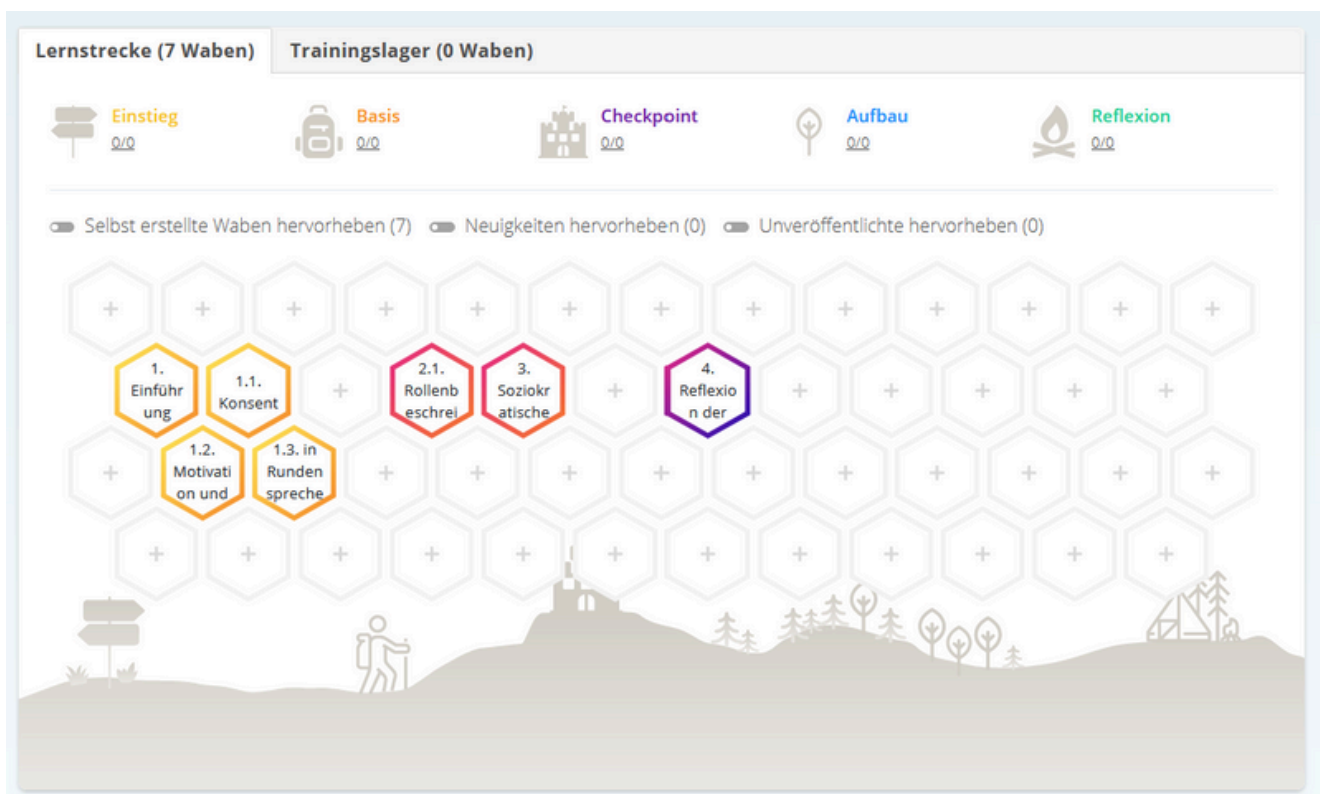


Platform Engagement on chabaDoo

- Total Learning Tracks Created: 18 (indicating active teacher engagement and adaptation to personal needs).
- **Honeycombs Accessed: 135**
- Schools Actively Participating: 7

These figures demonstrate the **significant success of the digital learning course**, showcasing that teachers are actively utilizing the platform to implement and adapt the materials in their classrooms.

However we didnt received direct feedback from these teachers. This is one of the challenges of providing open educational ressources without direct contact to teachers.

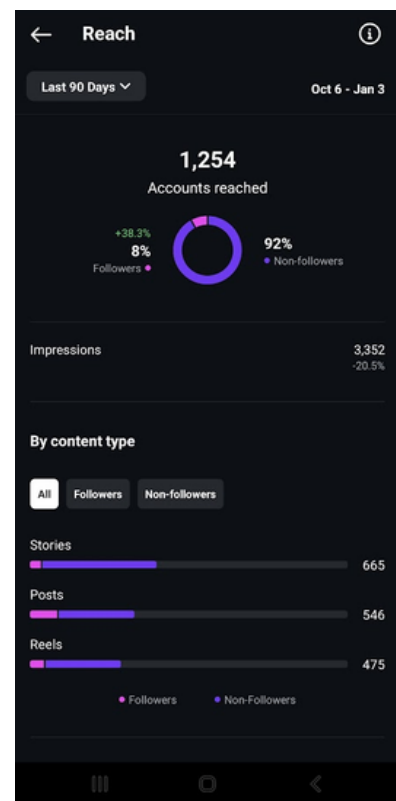
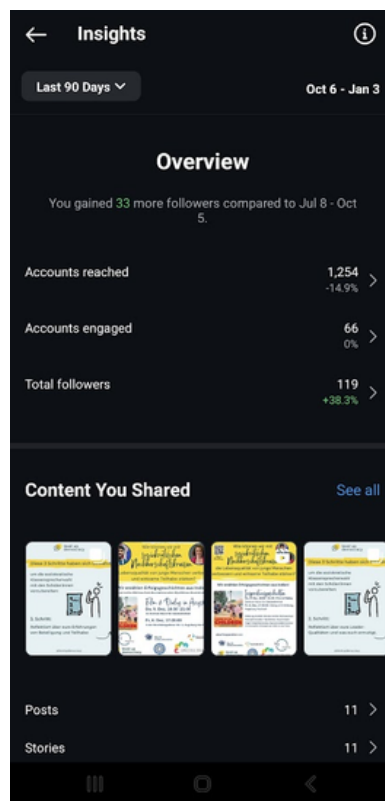
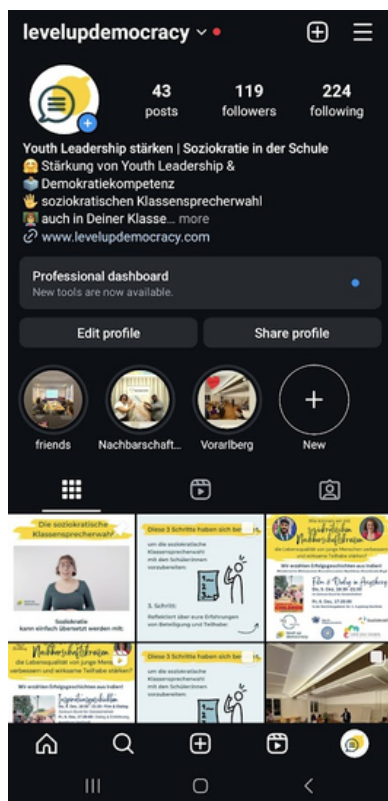
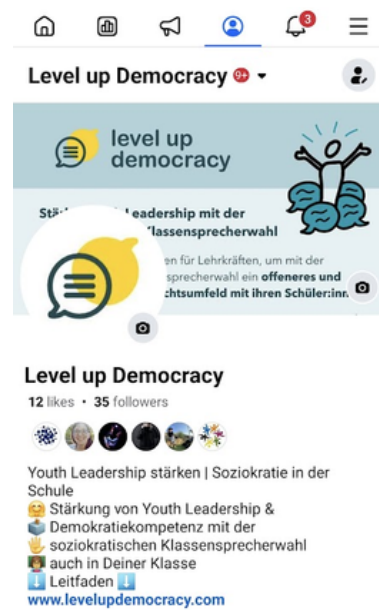
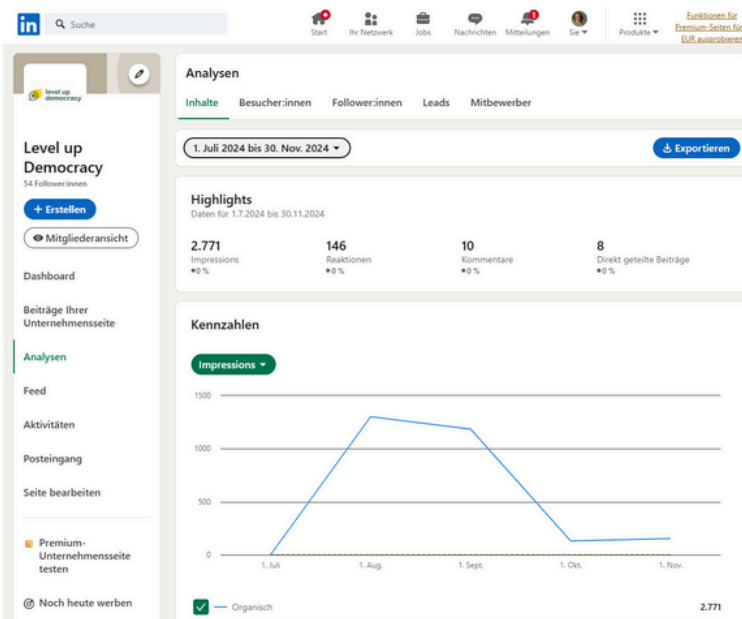


3.1

OUTCOME Social Media Traffic



Across Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, the project achieved a combined total of **7,377 impressions**, reached **1,400 unique accounts**, and engaged **212 users**. These platforms collectively amplified the project's visibility and engagement through targeted posts, stories, and reels.



3.1

OUTCOME
Promotion & Dissemination activities



Through a diverse range of dissemination activities, including **newsletters, participation in conferences and events focused on democratic education and participatory leadership, regular workshops and consultations, outreach to partners, podcast interviews, and published articles**, we **directly** reached an estimated **508 individuals**, and indirectly nearly 90.000 individuals. This group included teachers, headmasters, educational administrators, students, and educational activists.

Sociocracy is still a relatively unfamiliar concept in many educational circles, highlighting the ongoing need for awareness and advocacy. Therefore, significant efforts in promotion, education, and consciousness-raising are required to expand its reach and understanding.



The project Level Up Democracy „Strengthen youth leadership through the sociocratic open election of class representatives“ has **profoundly influenced all participating partner organizations, strengthening their expertise, outreach, and ability to advance sociocracy in education:** The collaboration enhanced their expertise, visibility, and capacity to continue working with sociocracy, democratic education, and participatory leadership in educational settings.

The collaboration allowed for the exchange of best practices, network-building, and long-term sustainability planning, ensuring that sociocratic methods continue to develop beyond the project's initial funding period. **This project is only the beginning—sociocracy in education needs long-term investment to become fully embedded in school structures. All project partners gained inspiration to further invest in promoting sociocracy in the educational field in order to strengthen youth leadership and democratic practices.**

All Project partners agree on: “ The resonance, learnings and responses so far leave us optimistic that the project has established a solid foundation for embedding sociocratic principles in schools.”

Especiall in this kind of field such positive experiance are vital for a future perspective and ongoing engagement!



**Büro für
Kollaborationskultur**
Lisa Praeg

- Through the initiative, it became evident that offering structured training for school leaders, teachers, and students is crucial for broader adoption of sociocracy. It is a great opportunity to offer teachers and school leaders now a open educational ressource on this topic. However it became clear that 1:1 trainings and coachings will still be needed in future to implement the practices of sociocracy in depths and that our skills are much needed.
- Collaboration with diverse partners was identified as a key success factor in bringing educational innovation into schools. The experience emphasized the importance of strong networks to support ongoing sociocracy implementation. It also showed that collaboration and partnerships need time to be hosted. Leadership in collaborations is also needed.
- While working in multilingual project teams was enriching, the time needed for coordination, translation, and alignment was underestimated. Future projects will require more dedicated resources for managing linguistic diversity effectively.



Sociocracia Práctica

- For us it has been a great learning experience, working in several languages has been a challenge, and at the same time an enriching experience.
- We have contacted several people and centers who, although they have not yet taken the step of trying this method, have shown interest and we believe that they will do so with our support. To have the possibility to continue co-creating with the people involved in this project, future projects on sociocracy and education. We have been able to reach out to more educational audiences and
- Collaborating in the creation of the website and videos has helped us to update dissemination techniques that will allow us to reach more people.



- As part of our Erasmus project on political education, focusing on sociocracy in schools, the provided learning tracks and microlearning units (referred to as "honeycombs") were specifically utilized to deliver practical content to students and teachers.
- The project successfully demonstrated that digital learning materials can be effectively used to introduce sociocracy in classrooms. However, the digital platform saw strong engagement, teachers require additional support for full implementation in daily school routines.
- Initial Successes: The usage of the learning pathways demonstrates that the concept of microlearning units resonates with participants. Particularly popular were the modules on decision-making through consent and practical exercises on the sociocratic circle structure.
- Insights for Further Development: while overall usage indicates room for growth, the results provide important insights into how the offering can be better integrated into everyday school routines. Improved user navigation and targeted support for implementation appear to hold significant promise.



- This project provided a structured opportunity to explore and apply sociocracy in an inclusive school setting. The experience highlighted the potential of sociocracy to support students with diverse learning needs. A key challenge was time constraints—schools operate under demanding schedules, making it difficult to fully integrate new decision-making methods.
- Through the project we found reaffirmation of our great expertise in inclusion, recognizing that our best practices could be shared with other institutions interested in implementing sociocracy!

Detailed impact report of the Leopols school Althausen can be find on "in action" on www.levelupdemocracy.com

The Transformative Impact of Sociocracy in Education

Through our work on this project, it has become increasingly clear that sociocracy is still widely unknown in many educational settings. Yet, the feedback from schools, teachers, and students who have engaged with this method has been overwhelmingly positive. Implementing sociocratic principles in classrooms, vocational training, and student leadership has fundamentally changed how participation, democracy, and decision-making are experienced.

Sociocracy does not just introduce a new way of electing class representatives—it shifts the entire culture of how decisions are made, ensuring that every voice is heard and solutions are found collectively rather than through majority rule. The schools that have implemented this approach report that students and teachers experience a new quality of participation that goes beyond traditional school structures.

Our project was built on the foundation of key Erasmus+ priorities: fostering civic engagement, strengthening inclusion, and preparing young people for the labor market. Now, after seeing sociocracy in action in schools across different countries, we can confidently say that this method has the power to bring about real change in how schools function as democratic spaces.

The following sections highlight the impact sociocracy has had on key educational priorities and showcase the ways in which this method has empowered students, educators, and school leaders to engage in participatory leadership in a meaningful way.

COMMON VALUES, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, AND PARTICIPATION

Impact:

- Schools implementing sociocracy reported a significant shift toward more inclusive decision-making processes where all students, regardless of background, felt their voices were heard.
- The method teaches pupils how to navigate democratic structures, fostering active citizenship at a young age.
- Feedback from educators confirms that students develop a deeper understanding of democratic principles through consent-based decision-making, rather than simply following majority rule.
- Schools noted that sociocratic structures helped create a more engaged and responsible student body, leading to stronger participation in school governance.

"This is precisely why I find the concept of sociocracy particularly valuable. Many pupils are unfamiliar with participation and democracy, but through this process, they learn responsibility in an engaging way."

– Elke Martin, Youth Coordinator, Montafon Youth Forum

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Impact:

- Sociocracy removes traditional barriers to participation, especially for students with disabilities or neurodivergent needs.
- In Leopold School Altshausen, sociocratic methods enabled hearing- and language-impaired students to actively contribute to decision-making, strengthening their sense of belonging.
- The method ensures that students who might struggle with traditional debate-style discussions can express themselves in structured, equal-opportunity settings.
- Schools using sociocratic elections observed that more diverse student representatives were elected, shifting power from the most vocal students to those who are recognized for their skills and capabilities.

"Sociocracy strengthens inclusion by ensuring all voices are heard. In contrast to traditional elections, where the most confident speakers tend to win, this method allows the entire class to choose the most suitable person for the role through structured dialogue."

– Sanja Liebermann, former headmaster, Leader of the circle “children & youth” in Sociocracy center Leipzig

ADAPTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO LABOR MARKET NEEDS

Impact:

- Sociocracy equips students with essential workplace skills, including collaboration, decision-making, and constructive feedback.
- Schools implementing sociocracy in vocational training reported that students were better prepared for real-world workplace structures, where hierarchical decision-making is increasingly being replaced by collaborative leadership models.
- The method fosters entrepreneurial mindsets, as students take ownership of decision-making processes and learn how to navigate group dynamics effectively.
- Teachers noted that students in vocational education who experienced sociocratic decision-making were more prepared for democratic workplaces and self-organized teams.

"For vocational educators, sociocracy is a valuable tool. It allows students to learn responsibility in a structured way while also strengthening their problem-solving skills in collaborative environments."

– Margit Sutterlüty, Pedagogical Director, BAfEP Feldkirch

DEMOCRACY, IN PARTICULAR INCLUSIVE DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Impact:

- Schools using sociocracy reported fewer conflicts and a more respectful debate culture among students.
- The consent-based decision-making model helps students understand that democratic participation isn't just about voting and majority rule, but about finding solutions that work for everyone.
- Pilot studies showed that students who engaged in sociocratic elections were more likely to stay engaged in civic activities outside of school, indicating a long-term impact on democratic participation.

"Since implementing sociocracy, discussions have changed. Instead of rigid 'pro/con' debates, students now seek mutually beneficial solutions. This shift has transformed our school culture."

– Jaume Esteve Usach, Institut Castellbisbal Barcelona

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING - ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Impact:

- Sociocratic methods encourage students to take initiative and co-create solutions within their school environment, mirroring the self-management principles used in modern workplaces.
- Students who go through sociocratic decision-making processes develop stronger leadership skills, improving their ability to work in teams, delegate tasks, and engage in constructive dialogue.
- Teachers using sociocracy in project-based learning reported that students were more willing to take ownership of tasks and engage in proactive problem-solving.

"Sociocracy mirrors real-world decision-making. In project-based learning, students experience leadership and responsibility firsthand, making them better prepared for entrepreneurial careers."

– Francisca Lozano, teacher, IES La Janda Vejer de la Frontera Cádiz

PROMOTION OF ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

Impact:

- Traditional student council elections often result in popularity-based voting, whereas sociocratic elections focus on identifying the most suitable candidates based on structured feedback.
- Schools implementing open elections reported that students felt more responsible for their representatives, leading to a higher engagement in school governance.
- Through sociocracy, students who previously did not engage in school decision-making became active participants because they saw that their input had a tangible impact.

"Our school parliament has become more diverse. Previously, the loudest and most confident students dominated elections. With sociocracy, students now select class representatives based on skills, not popularity."

– Ellen Even, School Leader in Winterthur

- **The project highlighted the need to actively promote sociocracy as a versatile tool for participatory education, youth leadership, and school governance.** We celebrate the energy that has been generated to be able to continue bringing new methodologies to schools that have an impact on the improvement of education and the well-being of students.
- **Teachers need structured support to integrate sociocracy into school processes, as they face high workloads and institutional constraints:** We welcome the interest and support received in our webinars by some of the attendees and by some of the teachers with whom we have shared the project. Although the project provided a clear, well-structured online resource, many teachers struggled to find the necessary time to implement sociocracy in their classrooms. It shows that teachers face a heavy workload and limited time to engage with new educational tools, despite their high interest. Sociocracy is scalable, but institutional support and policy integration are needed for long-term adoption in schools.
- **Digital learning tools are helpful but must be complemented with printed and in-person training materials to ensure adoption:** Many teachers are still hesitant about digital materials, requiring a combination of online and print resources to ensure accessibility. We will engage in the goal of finding new grants in order to print the learning materials as analogue brochures for teachers in the project languages as a future project.
- **The election of class representatives is a great door opener and sociocratic selection methods should be implemented beyond class elections, ideally becoming a year-round practice integrated into broader school governance.** This would require alignment with educational departments and school leadership. Students showed no resistance to sociocratic elections, demonstrating openness to this alternative form of decision-making. Schools that fully applied the method witnessed positive changes in student engagement, but they requested ongoing support to maintain progress.
- **Direct engagement with schools is essential; cold outreach strategies had limited effectiveness in generating school participation:** The amount of time and effort needed for outreach, teacher onboarding, and resource development was underestimated. Strong partnerships with schools and educational networks are needed to present new topics in schools.

The project has generated strong interest among teachers, many of whom have expressed a desire to continue using sociocracy. It is a great achievement that the people involved want to give continuity and continue to meet in order to move forward with this project after the end of this grant. Given the impact and momentum generated, the project partners are committed to continuing the work through new funding applications and expanded initiatives. Moving forward, the focus will be on **deepening institutional support, expanding training programs, and strengthening sociocratic networks in education.**

Applied Funding Applications:

✓ Erasmus+ Grant

- Application: 2024-2-DE02-KA210-ADU-000276804, "Level Up Democracy: Capacity Building for More Sociocracy in Schools"
- Score: 86 out of 100 → Placed on waiting list (Rank 15) .

✓ Austrian Federal Ministry Funding Application

- Training programs for teachers** in sociocratic class representative elections.
- Includes: A new print edition of the guide, expanding on content developed under Erasmus+.

Future Actions

✦ Development of New Resources

- Publication of a revised print guide on sociocratic elections.
- Expansion of learning content to support teachers with practical classroom implementation, such as "Facilitate the class council with sociocracy" and "Facilitate the planning of projects with sociocracy"

✦ Expanding Sociocracy in Education

- Integration into teacher training programs at universities and educational institutions.
- Continued certification process for the Chabadoo learning app to make it a recognized digital learning tool.

✦ Scaling and Network Building

- Establishing more partnerships with schools and networks to expand sociocracy beyond project partners.

✦ Ongoing Dissemination & Outreach

- Hosting webinars and onlineions to maintain engagement with educators.
- Strengthening the international network of sociocracy practitioners in education.