

SOCIAL TOOLS

Decentralized Organizing in Practice

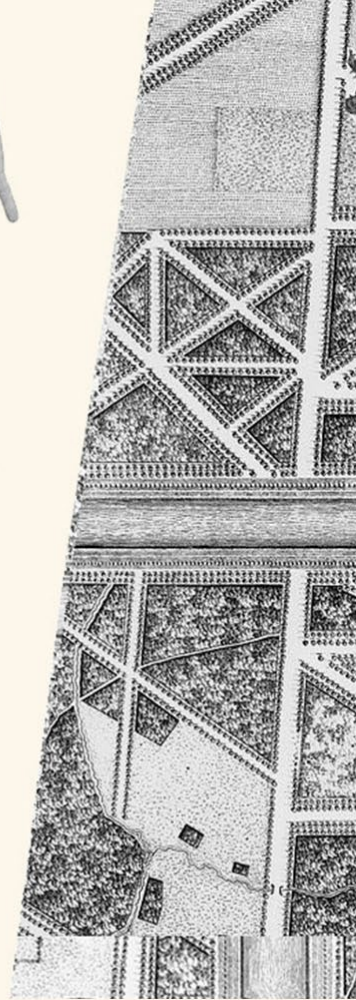
TRAINING CIRCLE

SESSION 4 - Patterns 3+4
MAY 21

- + Distribute Care Labour
- + Collectively Agree on Norms and Boundaries



www.socialtools.us



PI::ELACHE

SOCIAL TOOLS

Decentralized Organizing in Practice



TRAINING CIRCLE - THE PROGRAM



Patterns for Decentralised Organising

TheHum.org

Self-development for collaboration.

We need to unlearn hierarchy to learn collaboration. We can grow our collaboration skills with practice (empathy, self-awareness, reflection, communication, etc). We learn by mimicking people we look up to. So be intentional about which behaviours you bring to your group.



Systematically distribute care labour.

Care is work. Make it visible so it can be fairly shared. e.g. Practice giving & receiving care in a 'stewardship' peer-support circle. Monthly check-in: 'how can I support you?' Continuous improvement in emotional intelligence → help from internal specialists → external mediators → system review.



Conflict is normal. Agree how to deal with it.

E.g. conflict escalator from Loomio co-op: agreements (norms & boundaries) and practices (non-violent communication) → direct 1:1 communication → steward-supported conversation → help from internal specialists → external mediators → system review.



Build a culture of trust & belonging.

Project Aristotle research found the #1 predictor of team performance is psychological safety, i.e. everyone feels they can take risks, suggest new ideas, or disagree.



Collectively agree norms & boundaries.

Common sense doesn't exist, so define your shared norms explicitly. Review and update agreements periodically. Clear expectations: easy onboarding + buy-in.



Keep talking about power.

Power differences are inevitable. Distinguish "power-with" (social capital, legitimate reputation) from "power-over" (coercion, threats). Make it transparent.



Rotate roles that attract influence. Founders/elders/leaders be patient while new people learn the ropes.

Distinguish commitment from participation.

Define different levels of engagement, e.g. volunteers + workers + owners; or 1 + 9 + 90; or contributors + members.

Explicit rights + responsibilities for each group. Transparent pathways in and out.



Make decisions asynchronously.

Use loomio.org for transparent, accessible, inclusive decisions. More participation, less time spent in meetings. Use meetings for: bonding, trust, complexity, brainstorming.



Use rhythm to align autonomy.

Designate spaces for different conversations, e.g.:

1. Daily standup (yesterday, today, blocks, wellbeing)
2. Biweekly sprint (planning, demo, retrospective)
3. Quarterly retro + objective setting
4. Biannual retreat



Get unstuck with an external peer.

Someone you trust & respect who is not directly involved in your situation.

Help you rethink issues, gain perspective, renew enthusiasm, host difficult conversations.

Could be a friend or a professional.

For example: talk to us! contact@thehum.org

We are available for training, coaching, advising, hosting retreats...



A toolbox of decision protocols.

Mandate: I'll decide, then respond to questions
 Advice: I'll listen to input, then I'll decide
 Consent: I'll proceed if nobody objects
 Consensus: I'll proceed if everyone agrees

Prerequisites: transparency, shared purpose, psychological safety, reliable conflict resolution, regular reflection...



Agree how you're using your communication tools.

E.g., 3 tools for 3 jobs:

1. Realtime feed: chat/Slack
2. Async threads: email/loomio/forum
3. Static docs: wiki/handbook/gDocs



Intro new tools with care.

Agree the problem; begin time-limited trial; support people to learn; evaluate + repeat.

Find your own patterns with regular retrospectives.

Regular structured reflection (good, bad, change). Hear about problems when they are small. Practice trying new things. Grow the org structure that is right for you. Continuous participatory change.

see retrospective.wiki.org



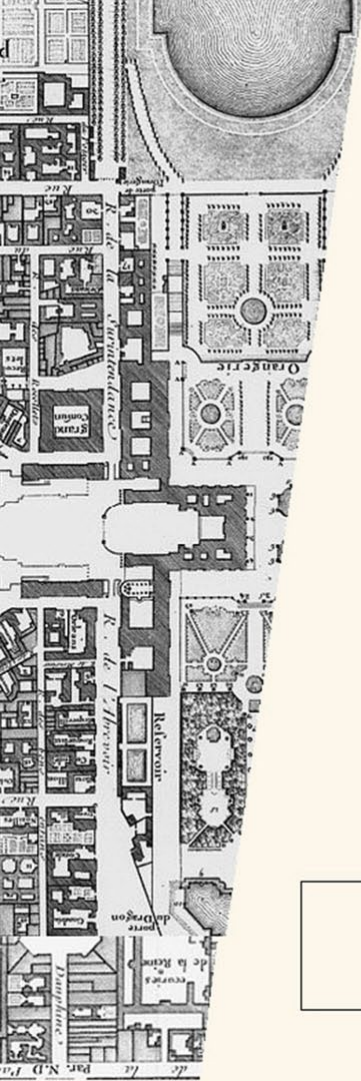
SOCIAL TOOLS

Decentralized Organizing in Practice

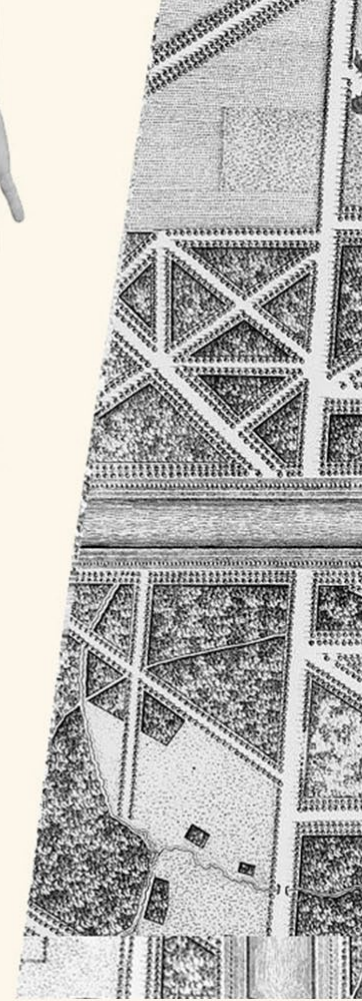
PATTERN 3

DISTRIBUTE CARE LABOUR

Video 7 min



www.socialtools.us



PI::ELACHE



Enspiral Foundation Members
Stewarding Circle September 2016

SOCIAL TOOLS

Decentralized Organizing in Practice

PATTERN 3

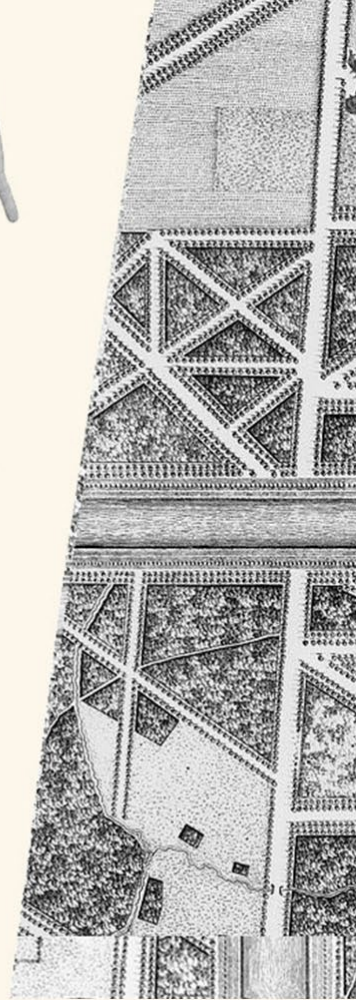
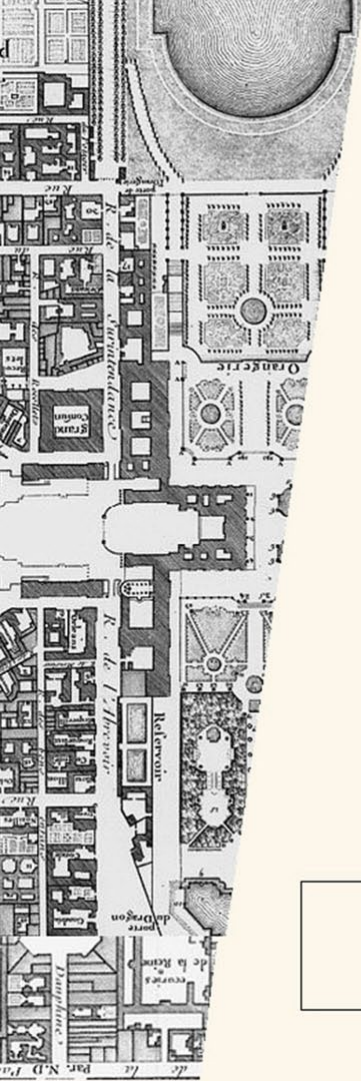
DISTRIBUTE CARE LABOUR - STEWARD CIRCLE

- + How is your wider life going?
- + How is work going for you?
- + How is this community feeling for you right now?
- + What's your role in it?
- + How can I best support you?
- + What did you like/ dislike, what would you change?
- + What do you want to do this month?
- + Is there anything you want to check in on again at our next meeting?



www.socialtools.us

PI::ELACHE



SOCIAL TOOLS

Decentralized Organizing in Practice

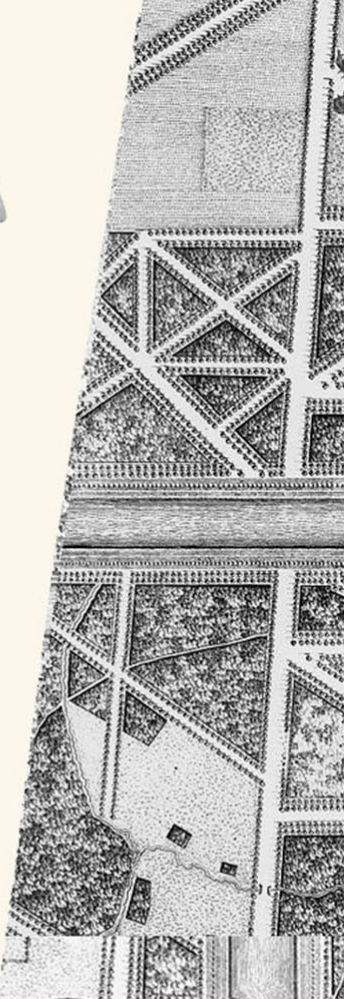
PATTERN 3

DISTRIBUTE CARE LABOUR - STEWARD CIRCLE

- + Clear meeting times (~30 mins is a good minimum)
- + Make the length clear if you have to leave
- + Make them one-on-one, and in person (where possible)
- + Listen more than you talk
- + Ask how you can support before suggesting a solution
- + Be clear on any action points you might come up with
- + Don't turn your stewarding circle into a gossip chamber



www.socialtools.us



PI::ELACHE

SOCIAL TOOLS

Decentralized Organizing in Practice

PATTERN 3

DISTRIBUTE CARE LABOUR - STEWARD CIRCLE

EXERCISE (2 x 20 min)

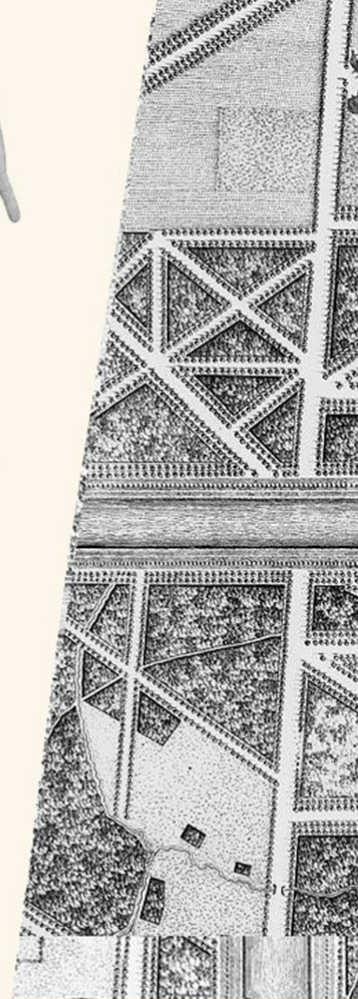
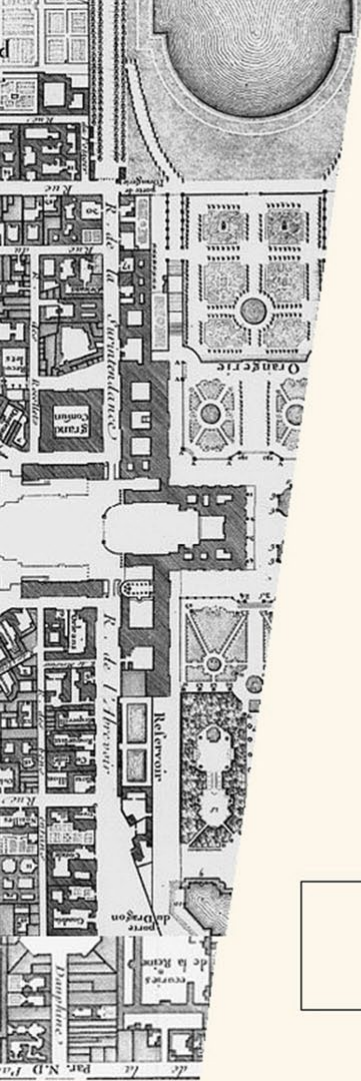
- + we create a DEMO steward circle
- + assume your role of steward / stewardee
- + with your steward bring up an issue that's bothering you in your work/organisation
- + reverse roles

BREAK !



www.socialtools.us

PI::ELACHE



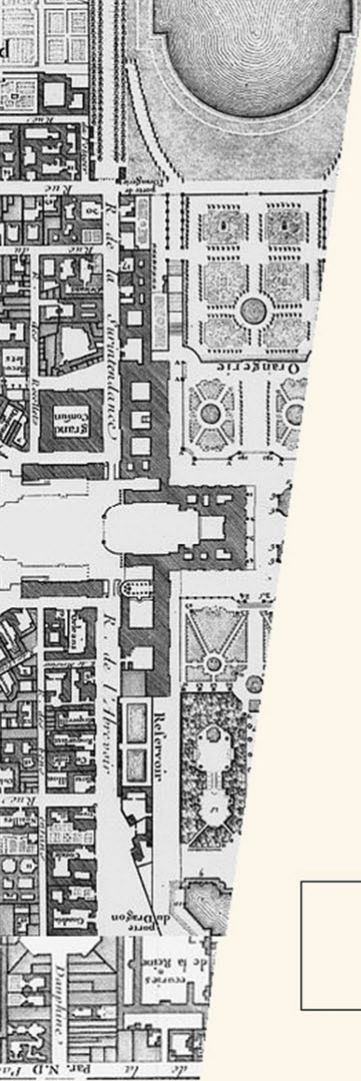
SOCIAL TOOLS

Decentralized Organizing in Practice

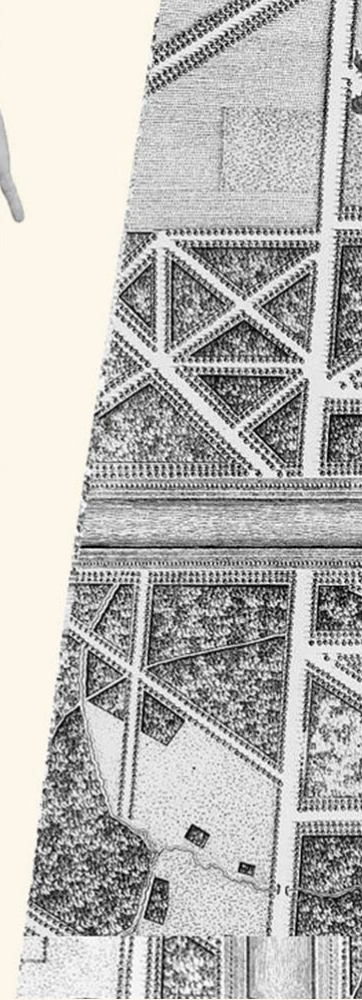
PATTERN 4

COLLECTIVELY AGREE ON NORMS AND BOUNDARIES

Video 3 min



www.socialtools.us



PI::ELACHE

SOCIAL TOOLS

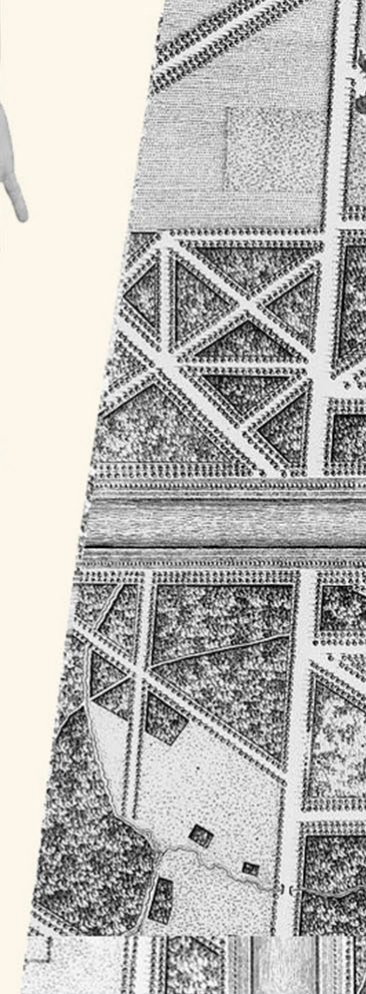
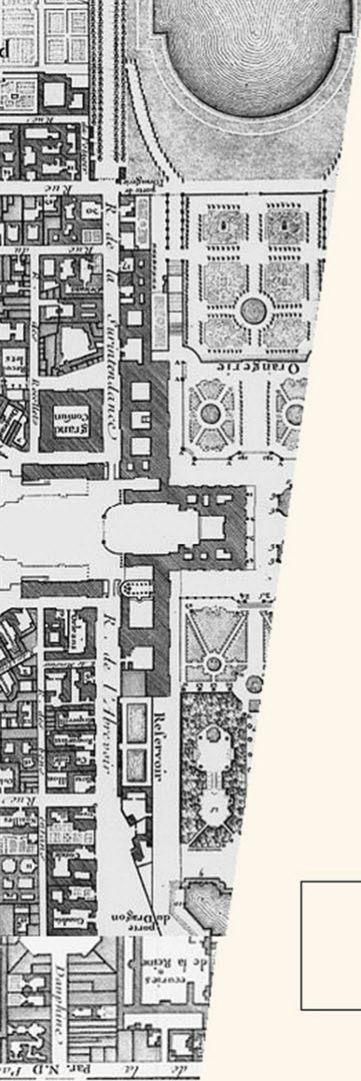
Decentralized Organizing in Practice

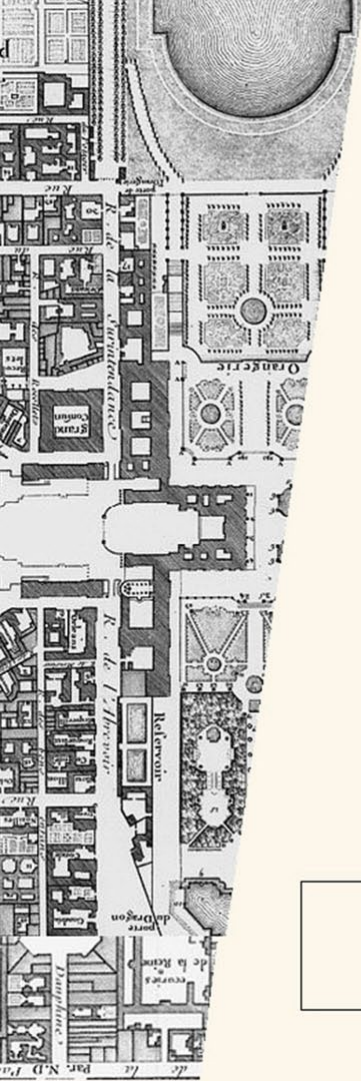
PATTERN 4

COLLECTIVELY AGREE ON NORMS AND BOUNDARIES

EXERCISE (40 MINUTES)

- + What kind of norms and boundaries does your organisation have?
- + Which norms are made explicit and which ones are implicit?
(implicit => they are assumed, or thought to be “common sense”)
- + How are they discussed and agreed?
- + Do you review agreements periodically?





SOCIAL TOOLS

Decentralized Organizing in Practice

NEXT STEPS / SUGGESTIONS

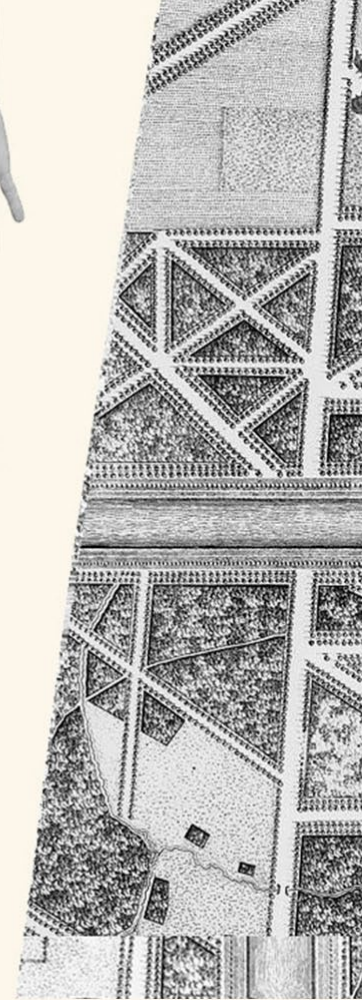
SESSION FIVE - AUGUST 12 (MONDAY)

Patterns 5+6

Conflict is Normal - Agree how to deal with it
Keep Talking about Power



www.socialtools.us



PI::ELACHE