GUIDE FOR STARTING A PACHAMAMA ALLIANCE COMMUNITY

October 1, 2017
Welcome to the guide for starting a new Pachamama Alliance Community! This guide is designed to take you through the process and thinking behind beginning a Pachamama Alliance Community, and to explain the tools and resources available to support you along the way.

Creating any community takes time, and the initial phase presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. This document is intended to help you get started on the path of building a vibrant and robust Pachamama Alliance Community. There will be additional resources available to you as you move into other stages of community development.

Keep in mind that this document is meant to support you, not to get in your way. If you have other ideas, we encourage you to try them out and to let us know how it goes! Our goal is to build a global network of people committed to personal transformation and collective action in support of an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet, and this document offers one approach for moving towards that goal. Like our broader work, this guide is a collaborative project and we invite your feedback.

In partnership,

The Pachamama Alliance Engagement Team

Contact us: support@pachamama.org
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I. Introduction to Pachamama Alliance Communities

Pachamama Alliance is here to inspire and galvanize the human family to generate a critical mass of conscious commitment to a thriving, just, and sustainable way of life on Earth. This is a commitment to transforming human systems and structures that separate us, and to transforming our relationships with ourselves, with one another, and with the natural world.

Pachamama Alliance Communities provide an opportunity to pursue the vision of Pachamama Alliance at a local level, in connection with like-minded people in your area and in collaboration with other Communities and partner organizations around the world. Pachamama Alliance Communities connect people with common purpose to inspire, educate, and empower each other, to support a higher vision for humanity, and to promote local action in pursuit of global goals as part of a far-reaching network. They tackle big questions that are hard to grapple with as individuals. Together, in community, we can make a tangible impact on the big issues of our time.

Pachamama Alliance Communities are part of the Up to Us engagement pathway, a series of programs designed to engage you with the most pressing issues of our time and to inspire you to envision and take responsibility for bringing forth a thriving, just and sustainable future for all:

- **Awakening the Dreamer** is a transformative educational program available in person and online that awakens you to both the challenge and the opportunity of the crises that humanity now faces, and inspires you to find your role in creating a new future.

- **The Game Changer Intensive** is an interactive, online course with a deep commitment to both personal and societal transformation that connects you with participants around the world and inspires and engages you to be a game changer in your community.

- **Game Changing Movements** are aimed at addressing the root causes of two of the most pressing issues facing us today—climate change and unrepresentative democracy. The Up to Us engagement pathway offers you the opportunity to get involved at the grassroots level with key partner organizations that are central players in changing the game.

- **Pass It On** is a leadership development program that supports you in finding your role in creating a world that works for everyone.
Pachamama Alliance Communities use the programs and trainings of the Up to Us engagement pathway to generate local activities aimed at bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on the planet. These activities will vary based on the needs and opportunities in your particular area, and will have some common features based on the vision of Pachamama Alliance.

The benefits of being in a local Pachamama Alliance Community include:

- Continual support and inspiration to stay awake and engaged in meaningful action.
- A sense of tribe that generates the experience of interconnectedness with others who share your values and commitments.
- A collaborative space in which everybody’s unique gifts are encouraged, allowing for effective teamwork that promotes collective actions that “change the game,” globally and locally.
- A framework to engage in community projects, which is often greater than what individuals could achieve acting alone.
- Be part of the critical mass of commitment generating a new dream for humanity.
II. Fundamental Operating Principles

Pachamama Alliance developed these Operating Principles to create a context for this work, and we offer them as a context for your Community as well.

**Environmental sustainability, spiritual fulfillment, and social justice are interconnected.**
We assert that humanity is profoundly interconnected with all life, and with the Earth. Therefore, what we do to others, and what we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves. Holding people as separate from one another and from nature is the root cause of the environmental, spiritual, and social crises humanity faces. A shift in worldview is required in order to embody this perspective.

**The worldview of our indigenous partners grounds and inspires our actions.**
This work is a response to a call from the heart of the Amazon rainforest, from life itself. We are open to, and are listening for, guidance from the spirit of nature, believing that there is a calling from something bigger than ourselves. As such, we operate from gratitude, humility, respect, and love for all life. Ancient indigenous wisdom and the advances of modern science are both essential to this work. We are open to the miraculous—of human origin and otherwise.

**Success requires everyone’s highest contribution.**
This work requires a team of leaders, people responsible for and committed to the success of the whole. We are committed to personal development and broad collaboration, not only amongst ourselves but across all of humanity, believing that the greatest creativity and effectiveness will emerge when everybody can contribute their highest gifts. Because structural barriers inhibit many people from making that contribution, we actively seek to identify and undo systems of oppression. We seek different perspectives as an opportunity for developing greater self-awareness, interconnection, deeper understanding and relationships, and we strive to harvest collective wisdom believing that none of us is as smart as all of us.
III. A Framework for Success

Forming a successful Pachamama Alliance Community takes time. As people come together around a common vision, it is helpful to keep in mind that your group must go through a series of developmental stages as you change from being a collection of individuals to a united group able to achieve common goals. People are often eager to move into action and it is easy to overlook the foundational aspects of group development that are needed to be successful. A framework for group development offers helpful context for understanding the experiences in your Community.

One useful framework for group development is: **Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing**, developed by scientist, and Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology, Bruce Tuckman. Keeping these stages in mind can be very helpful for identifying the needs of your Pachamama Alliance Community at any given time, and for understanding how those needs change over time. Building a strong foundation of collaboration initially enables Communities to grow into thriving, just, and sustainable vehicles for change.

**Stages of Group Development**

- **Forming** - The Forming stage begins when you decide to bring people together to start a Pachamama Alliance Community. This stage may persist for some time as the group develops clarity around where it’s heading and how to get there. People will have unique perspectives around those questions, and it will be important to align on a purpose for the group as well as some ground rules and ways to collaborate effectively, such as having clear lines of communication. Trying to do everything at once can overwhelm your Community at this stage so pick some focus areas to get started, such as hosting Symposiums or a local Game Changer Intensive Small Group. You’ll have to learn how to work together to accomplish your goals, and the way you come together plays an important role in creating the context for your Community. Keep in mind the suggestions for gathering in the Appendices at the end of this document.

- **Storming** - The Storming stage involves working through conflicts between people’s distinct styles and approaches to Community activities. Resolving these conflicts requires the willingness to step out of your comfort zone to try out other perspectives, which can be challenging but offers an opportunity for individual and collective growth. Consider the question, am I listening to this person to see where I’m right, or am I listening to see where I might be wrong? Is there a way to meet both of our needs at once, rather than seeing them as mutually exclusive? This learning process leaves a Community stronger and more resilient.
- **Norming** - in this stage, a true sense of community emerges with the group focusing on tasks, roles, leadership, and decision making. There is a shared culture and commitment to developing ways to collaborate together effectively, and a respect for each other’s differences. You may relapse into the Storming stage from time to time—don’t be discouraged! It means you’re expanding into new areas that uncover new issues. The process will develop greater clarity and understanding, and a stronger Community.

- **Performing** - The Performing stage represents a high functioning Community where you trust each other and can work through differences collaboratively while keeping projects moving. A Community at this stage has often created a recurring schedule of events and activities, and has established clear roles and responsibilities. New Community members are brought into that process to gain familiarity with the norms and expectations as their contributions increase over time.

This document is designed to help your Pachamama Alliance Community be successful during the Forming stage, and to help set yourself up for success in later stages. Here are some key points to keep in mind to facilitate that process:

- The purpose of the Community must be clear to all members. When considering new events or activities, check to see whether they align with that purpose. Revisit the purpose periodically to see if it still makes sense for your Community.

- Create opportunities for everyone to contribute. Rotate responsibility for facilitating meetings and other roles within the Community.

- Establish ground rules to ensure that people are able to make their greatest contributions. Refer to those ground rules to move conversations along as needed, and conclude each session with a round where people share their perspective on the group process so that everyone can offer feedback.

- Conflict is a normal and necessary part of group development. Approaching it as an opportunity for developing greater self-awareness, interconnection, and deeper understanding and relationships will help your Community thrive.
IV. Getting Started

Getting Clear on Your Intentions
So you’re ready to start a local Pachamama Alliance Community. Fantastic! Take some time to think about why you are reaching out to people—what is it you are inviting them into? As described above, the Forming stage of group development requires clarifying a purpose, so put some thought into your own version and be open to modifying it based on what others see.

Consider the questions below to articulate your reasons for wanting to start a Pachamama Alliance Community, how you can best serve that process, and where you may want some help. Keep in mind that as more people join it is important to be open to new possibilities and ideas about the role the Community plays. **Here are some questions to guide your thinking:**

- What moves you about the work of Pachamama Alliance?
- Why do you want to create a Pachamama Alliance Community in your local area?
- What excites you about that possibility? What would such a community make possible that wasn’t possible before?
- What space do you want to create that others can step into?
- What are the unique gifts that you bring to this process?
- What support would you like from others, including from Pachamama Alliance?

Connecting with People Who Share Your Values
One of the first steps towards starting a Pachamama Alliance Community is to connect with people who you think would be interested in joining you. You may already have people in mind, or want to know who else in your area has been through Pachamama Alliance programs. The following approaches can help you identify others interested in building a Community alongside you.

Connect with the Pachamama Alliance Engagement Team
There may already be people in your area connected to Pachamama Alliance that share your interest in building a local Community. We can help you with identifying good candidates and support you in connecting with them! There may be Awakening the Dreamer Facilitators, Game Changer Intensive graduates, or people who have participated in a Pachamama Journey to the Amazon rainforest.
Contact the Pachamama Alliance Engagement Team at support@pachamama.org and let us know that you are interested in starting a Pachamama Alliance Community so that we can connect you with people we know in your area.

Connect with People in the Pachamama Alliance Global Commons
Many program participants, leaders, and supporters have asked for ways to connect, collaborate, and inspire each other, in local areas and around the world. In response to those requests, we developed the Global Commons, an online community to support the global Pachamama Alliance network. This online tool empowers you to interact with people in your area and around the world and it is set up to help you build a local Pachamama Alliance Community. Sign up at connect.pachamama.org/welcome and then search for people near you.

Start a Group in the Global Commons
Pachamama Alliance Communities are represented as Groups in the Global Commons. We recommend that you start a Group for your area early on in the process if one doesn’t already exist. Groups allow you to organize events, discussions, and resources for your Pachamama Alliance Community.

Before you create a new Group, check to see if one already exists for your area. You can learn more about how to create your Community Group in the Global Commons at connect.pachamama.org/community-group.

The benefits of having a Group in the Global Commons include:

- Publicly listing your local events
- Organizing discussions about local activities
- Connecting with new people in your area
- Sharing events and opportunities near you

Identify Others in Your Area Who Might Be Interested in Joining You
Who do you know that shares the vision of an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet? Consider using the resources in Appendix #1 at the end of this document to help you introduce them to the organization and the work.
V. Organize Two Gatherings

Once you have created the online group and established the first connections with people in your area, it’s time to explore the possibilities for being in community together. We recommend that you organize two types of gatherings to begin bringing people together, and that you start to form a Core Team - a small group of people that creates space for others to gather and takes responsibility for the well-being of the Community - to guide that process.

**Developing a Core Team**

As you create these gatherings, it is ideal to recruit two or three people to join you in planning, organizing, and facilitating to serve as an initial Core Team. You might have a friend that joined you for the Awakening the Dreamer Online Facilitator Training, or someone you met during the Game Changer Intensive. We recommend using the Global Commons online community in this process to connect, discuss, plan, and organize so that others can find and join you along the way.

If you are able to create a team to plan the first gatherings, it may be easier to schedule phone calls than in-person meetings. One useful free conference call service is freeconferencecallhd.com. You can also connect in a video conference using Skype, Google Hangouts, or video meeting services such as Zoom or GoToMeeting.

**Scheduling In-Person Gatherings**

Depending on the number of people you are trying to coordinate, it can be difficult to find a time for everyone to meet. **Consider these possibilities to help schedule the gatherings.**

**Use an online scheduling tool** - Free online services such as doodle.com or when2meet.com offer opportunities for people to indicate their availability in a clear format that reveals which times work best for the group. You may also just want to pick the time and date that works best for you and begin inviting people to join you.

**Meet with the people who are available** - The desire to be inclusive is a great one in balance with the ability to move the conversation forward. Be open to meeting at a time that works for most people and include others in the process by asking for input in advance, sharing notes from the meeting, or having follow up conversations.

**First In-Person Gathering**

We recommend that your first gathering begins with Awakening the Dreamer to inspire participants and to establish common ground. Towards the end of Awakening the Dreamer, be
sure to provide ample space for participants to connect and to begin exploring next steps for formalizing a local Pachamama Alliance Community.

See the Appendix #1 for an invitation sample, and Appendix #2 for a gathering agenda sample.

**Second In-Person Gathering**
The second gathering will go over everyone’s intention for starting a Community and will be a space to share everyone’s thoughts, ideas, and vision for a Pachamama Alliance Community.

Think about how to “generate and engage people everywhere in transformational conversations and experiences” as put forth in the Pachamama Alliance Purpose. Think about how Pachamama Alliance’s unique programs and perspective could benefit your area.

A constructive way to generate ideas is to go through a collective brainstorm process to create a space in which everyone has the opportunity to contribute and to be heard.

This is the time to gather your heads and hearts to see what you, as a group, feel called to do to bring forth a thriving, just and sustainable Community. This is about building excitement and coming up with what the group would like to get out their time together moving forward.

For meeting agendas and guidelines see the Appendix #3 of this document

**Next Steps**
Next steps can be as simple as agreeing on a time to meet again to continue the conversation. Setting a next meeting date and time right away—helps to keep the momentum going. In addition, you can acknowledge any topics that were not covered and move them to the next meeting.
VI. Creating a Successful Gathering Context

“If we can change the way we meet, we can change the way we live together”
- Dick and Emily Axelrod, co-authors of Let’s Stop Meeting Like This

Providing clear guidelines for a gathering helps people know what to expect, and enables full participation and creativity. The Pachamama Alliance Community Building Resource goes into more detail about empowering meeting processes—some highlights are included here as well.

● Determine some roles ahead of time to ensure the meeting proceeds smoothly. You may want to designate a Facilitator and a Time Keeper, and possibly a Note Taker. Keep in mind these roles are intended to support a meeting, not to dictate it.

● Have everyone sit in a circle. Create an egalitarian space where everyone is visible and audible.

● Welcome everybody to the conversation. People may not know each other, or may be uncertain about what to expect. Be warm and friendly to help people feel comfortable, and share some general intentions for the meeting.

● Include multiple ways for people to participate. Consider an introduction round where everybody shares, small group or partner conversations to explore questions in more detail, and open conversation to see what emerges.

● Become present at the beginning of the meeting. Many Pachamama Alliance meetings and gatherings begin by connecting with each other and with the Earth. You may choose to share a poem or reading, or to lead a short, guided meditation.

● Present a clear agenda, possibly with time frames for each section. Setting clear expectations for a meeting is important so that people know how to participate. Even if your plan is to spend time in unstructured conversation, let people know!

● Suggest some ground rules. People participate in meetings in many aspects of their lives and develop habits around how to engage. To create a collaborative space for your gathering, consider the following guidelines:
  o Speak briefly, being mindful of time for all to share. Share on the topic of discussion.
  o Speak to the whole group, not to an individual. Avoid one-to-one cross-talk, which can exclude others or seem attacking.
  o Step up, step back: Pay attention to whether you are speaking more or less than others. If less, try to step up and speak more. If you are sharing more, try to step
back and make space for people to participate without having to assert themselves. Be sensitive to forms of privilege and oppression that might serve as barriers to equal participation.

- Don’t take things personally. Be open to seeing each unique perspective as a valid experience. What someone else says isn’t “true” or “the truth,” it is just their perspective or their experience. As such, it may be useful feedback for you.
- Help evolve the discussion. Listen actively, contemplating contributions for deeper understanding.

Based on this information we created a sample agenda for your ongoing gatherings, which you can find in Appendix #2 & #3 at the end of this document.
VII. Agreements between Pachamama Alliance and your Community

A new Pachamama Alliance Community becomes a local representative of the work of Pachamama Alliance, beginning with the creation of a Group in the Global Commons online community. Certain responsibilities accompany the public promotion of your Pachamama Alliance Community and we would like to introduce some agreements with Pachamama Alliance at this stage. These agreements are offered as guidelines to provide clarity around what to expect of each other, and to foster a sense of ownership and accountability in your growing Community.

Commitments from Pachamama Alliance

Ongoing support - You have the support of the Pachamama Alliance Engagement Team at every stage of community development. We are available by email and for monthly strategy and coaching calls, and will help connect you with new people in your area who come through the Pachamama Alliance programs.

Programs and materials for gatherings - Pachamama Alliance will create and share materials that support you in bringing people together in your Community. In addition to educational programs such as Awakening the Dreamer and the Game Changer Intensive, you can access Pachamama Alliance Community Learning Resources to meet around diverse themes. Ongoing content development will provide additional opportunities to engage together.

Connection with a global network - Your local Pachamama Alliance Community is part of a global network. You have access to regular conference calls and the Global Commons where you can meet people from all over the world who are passionate about creating a new future for humanity.

Trainings and resources - You don’t have to guess at the best way to go about building your Pachamama Alliance Community, you have access to trainings and resources (such as this one) that offer suggestions. See Section VII for a current list. New materials are being continuously developed to address the needs Communities identify along the way.

Commitments by Your Local Pachamama Alliance Community

Respond to incoming inquiries - It is important for Communities to respond to inquiries in a reasonable time frame. These messages may come from people who find you in the Global Commons, or from Pachamama Alliance staff. You don’t need to check your email every hour, but it is important to reply to people within a few days.
**Host regular events** - It is important to stay active by creating regular opportunities for people to come together. Those events can take many different forms, and can occur weekly, monthly, or quarterly. It is helpful to create a schedule so that people know how to connect on an ongoing basis.

**Track and report activities** - Tracking event participants is important for a Community, and for Pachamama Alliance as a whole. Creating events inside your Community Group in the Global Commons and encouraging people to enroll there are all important ways to document the impact that your Community is having.

**Share with the global network** - Pachamama Alliance Communities around the world are collectively engaged in discovering what it means to build a thriving, just and sustainable community on a local level. Your participation in the Call of Collaboration and the online community benefits the global network.
VIII. Trainings and Resources

There are a number of trainings and resources that you can access right now to use the tools of the Up to Us engagement pathway to build your local Pachamama Alliance Community.

Awakening the Dreamer
There are regular Online Facilitator Trainings where you can learn to present Awakening the Dreamer Symposiums, and there are additional training videos available in the Global Commons.

You can access the materials for delivering Symposiums in the Global Commons to download the Presenters Manual and presentation slides you need to host the workshop.

You can share the Awakening the Dreamer online course to show people the program in a self-paced form.

Game Changer Intensive
You can enroll in the upcoming Game Changer Intensive course, to become a game-changing leader in the world.

You can use this guide for Starting a Game Changer Intensive Local Small Group to learn about bringing people in your area together to go through the Game Changer Intensive in person.

Pachamama Alliance Communities
The Community Building Resource offers suggestions you can use to build a dynamic and empowering Community. Specific topics include sharing leadership, holding effective meetings, making decisions, and resolving conflict.

The Community Learning Resources document offers articles and videos your Community can use to explore the role that the current systems and structures play in creating the environmental, spiritual, and social crises humanity faces, and ways to address them through community organizing and collective action.

The monthly Call of Collaboration provides a space for Pachamama Alliance Communities around the world to interact and connect such that they feel inspired by the power of collaborating with the global network of communities they are a part of.

Pachamama Alliance offers trainings called Community Days that supports you in being successful as a community. These events are co-created with local volunteers to reflect their
unique needs. You can read about Community Days offered in Southern Oregon, China, Rochester, Peru, and Tampa Bay Pachamama Alliance Communities.

**Global Pachamama Alliance Network**

Monthly Global Calls offer a connection to like-hearted people and the indigenous spirit that has inspired Pachamama Alliance since its inception, and the opportunity to be inspired and energized by the possibility these connections represent in creating something greater than what any of us are capable of individually. Once per quarter there is a featured speaker, and the calls in between focus on small breakout discussions.

The Pachamama Alliance Global Commons is an online community where you can meet people from all over the world who are passionate about creating a new future for humanity.
Appendix #1: Invitation to First In-Person Gathering

You can use this sample invitation to invite your friends, family, and community at large to join your first gathering. We recommend being open and direct about your intention to build a Pachamama Alliance Community in your area. Feel free to modify the language as needed to make it your own.

Dear First Name,

I am so excited to extend this invitation to you!

I have been captivated by the work of Pachamama Alliance, an organization whose vision has inspired me to gather people together to explore ways to bring forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet. To that end, I invite you to join me on DD/MM from Xpm-Xpm to experience one of Pachamama Alliance’s transformative educational programs: Awakening the Dreamer.

Awakening the Dreamer explores the challenges facing humanity at this critical moment in time and the opportunities we as a human family have to create a new future. During our time together we will also engage in conversation around ways to collaborate on an ongoing basis as a Pachamama Alliance Community here in [CITY NAME].

This is the first of several gatherings to start a local Pachamama Alliance Community. If you can’t attend this event, but are interested in this effort, let me know and I will keep you in the loop!

You can learn more about Pachamama Alliance by the video Two Worlds, One Future: The History and Mission of Pachamama Alliance at pachamama.org/videos/two-worlds-one-future.

Please let me know if you can join us on dd/mm. I really look forward to seeing you then!

In partnership,

[Your Name]
Appendix #2: Agenda for the First In-Person Gathering

Purpose of the Gathering
For all participants to be inspired by Awakening the Dreamer to see that they have an important (and accessible) role to play in the world and that such can be best done by starting the local Pachamama Alliance Community.

Intended Results
- For participants to have understood and to be inspired by the work of Pachamama Alliance
- To have inspired individuals to start a Pachamama Alliance Local Community

Duration
3-5.5 hours, depending on chosen format of Awakening the Dreamer

Agenda for the Gathering
This is your first time with this group of people and you’ll want to create a welcoming, safe space for all participants.

Start the gathering by sharing the agenda for the day. The agenda has five basic elements:

1. **Introduction (15 min)** - share the purpose of your gathering in your own words (that which you want to see emerge by the end of the gathering that includes the creation of a local Community). This is also a good time to let people know how their time will be used in the upcoming hours.

2. **Awakening the Dreamer (2-4 hrs)** - You may stream the Awakening the Dreamer Online Course, or facilitate an Awakening the Dreamer Symposium by downloading the slides and Presenters Manual. Use this Symposium Planning Checklist to prepare for this part of the gathering.

3. **Possibilities of a Local Pachamama Alliance Community (1 hr)** - Toward the end of Awakening the Dreamer, in the *Where Do We Go From Here?* section, you will have a first chance to expand on the importance of working together, in community, in order to shift from an industrial to an ecological civilization. Use this section as an opportunity to make an appealing invitation for participants to join you in your effort to start a local
Pachamama Alliance Community. Remember that part of the magic of Awakening the Dreamer is the space it allows for participants to discover their own role in the emerging local Community, so be gentle in your invitation and allow people to discern for themselves how to best serve this endeavor. It’s ok to express your hope to have them join you, and let them know you are excited about starting a local Pachamama Alliance Community.

One way to transition into discussing the creation of a local Pachamama Alliance Community is by having an inspirational conversation about what each person sees is possible when working together, in community. You can go around the room inviting each participant to share their thoughts on one or more of the following questions:

a. What experiences have you had where joining efforts with others has contributed to the emergence of a new reality?

b. What possibilities do you see in starting a local Pachamama Alliance Community?

c. What moves you about the work of Pachamama Alliance?

d. Why do you want to create a Pachamama Alliance Community in your local area?

e. What excites you about that possibility? What would such a community make possible that wasn’t possible before?

f. What space do you want to create that others can step into?

g. What are the unique gifts that you bring to this process?

h. What support would you like from others, including from Pachamama Alliance?

4. Setting a date for a second gathering (5 min) - Before closing, discuss having another gathering to move forward with starting a Pachamama Alliance Community. Let participants know that you will be sending an invite to a next gathering within the next 2 days. You may want to consider scheduling the next gathering before people leave the venue.

5. Closing (5 min) - In order to close the circle, it is important to mark the boundary between the sacred space just experienced and the return to “everyday” life. In order to do so, the group can do a number of things. Find suggestions for Closing in the Community Building Resource, on page 27.
Appendix #3: Agenda for Second Community Gathering

Purpose of the Gathering
To create a space of connection to one another, to the spirit that guides this work, and to a shared sense of purpose.

Intended Results
- To have found focus for a common purpose
- To have set basic Community ground rules and group norms
- To have been inspired to take specific next steps as a Community

Duration
2 hours

Before the Gathering
The date and time are set, the guests have confirmed that they will attend, and you can feel that some very important work is going to be taking place in your house (or other meeting location) very soon! In order to allow the Community Gathering to be as focused and fluid as possible, there are some preparatory steps you can take and some expectations you can think through.

The gathering may follow a slightly different format than subsequent meetings. This is likely a time when the Community members become more acquainted with one another and set the intentions and norms that will really color and inform meetings that will follow. You may want to consult the Community Building Resource for helpful information before your first meeting.

Before guests arrive, have a list ready of who has confirmed attendance, including any special needs they might have communicated.

Set up an open space in the middle of a room that can accommodate the number of people who will be attending. Arrange pillows and chairs in a circle to set up a rough estimate of how the circle will look, acknowledging that some shifting and reorganizing will take place as your guests enter the space. Make sure there is room in the center for an altar, or other sacred centerpiece, where members of the circle will place their special items (invite them to bring a meaningful item to the meeting).
Agenda for the Gathering

Everyone has arrived and it is time to begin your first formal Community gathering!

This first meeting will be mainly moderated by you, the host. Moving forward, you can determine roles for each person in the Community as it relates to meeting structure.

1. **Sit in a Circle** - Have everyone take a place in the circle, bringing attention to the fact that this is the first of hopefully many times that you will be creating this special shape. While you have probably welcomed everyone individually already, take this moment to welcome the group as a whole as a new community of friends and allies.

2. **Opening, Create Sacred Space (5 min)** - Take a moment of silence, listen to a piece of music, share a poem, read a quote, or ask everyone to share a word or phrase that expresses their inner being in the moment. What is needed to create sacred space is the centering of everyone’s attention into the shared communal space and the sacred purpose of the circle meeting. Be creative!

3. **Agenda (3 min)** - Share the agenda for the gathering

4. **Introductions (15-25 min)** - As the host, it is a good idea to be the first to introduce yourself. After you offer your introduction, choose a direction and go around the circle inviting everyone to introduce themselves. Be clear about timing. Depending on the size of the group and the duration of your meeting, the time per person will change. It is recommend that each person has up to 3 minutes to introduce themselves and go into some depth about their beings. Make sure to time them and use a soft chime to notify them when their time is up.

**While anyone can offer their introduction in whatever manner they feel called, you can offer these suggestions:**

- What is your name, and what are some of the issues that are most important to you?
- What is your name and what are you grateful for?
- When did you realize that you were called to bring about a spiritually fulfilling, environmentally sustainable, and socially just human presence on the planet?
- What is your name and which quality do you bring to this gathering?
- What special item did you bring to include in the central altar and why what does it represent for you?
- What Pachamama Alliance programs have you participated in? The Awakening the Dreamer Symposium, the Game Changer Intensive?
● What excites you about the possibility of creating a Pachamama Alliance Community?

5. **Community Ground Rules (20 min)** - This first Community gathering is a space meant to be the beginning of a collaborative, self-organizing community focused on mutual support and group learning. Each Community will be a unique entity created by its members. To this end, the guests will agree on certain ground rules and group norms that are suitable to the unique needs and desires of the particular circle. Ideally, all agreements will lead to build trust, commitment, focus, and continual action.

Use this part of the meeting to let the circle know that you will be moderating today and that in the next meeting you will discuss meeting structure and roles.

By now everyone is engaged in the meeting. Here are some suggestions you can use for your Community’s ground rules. Feel free to refer back to these ground rules as needed during the conversation.

● Speak briefly, being mindful of time for all to share.

● Share on the topic of discussion.

● Speak to the whole group, not to an individual.

● Avoid one-to-one cross-talk, which can exclude others or seem attacking.

● Step up, step back: Pay attention to whether you are speaking more or less than others. If less, try to step up and speak more. If you are sharing more, try to step back for people to participate without having to assert themselves.

● Don’t take things personally. Be open to seeing each unique perspective as a valid experience. What someone else says isn’t “true” or “the truth,” it is just their perspective or their experience. As such, it may be useful feedback for you.

● Help evolve the discussion. Listen deeply, contemplating contributions for deeper understanding.

● Take time to agree upon expectations for ongoing participation.

Establishing these types of expectations at the outset helps create space for everyone to feel safe and contribute in meaningful ways. Brainstorm other beneficial ideas as a Community. Remember that everyone is responsible for the health of the group, and agreeing on ground rules ahead of time enables everyone to collaboratively create an effective meeting dynamic.
You can find more on Community Ground Rules in the *Community Building Resource* (pages 19-25).

6. **Finding Purpose (40 min)** - Finding a common group purpose can take many shapes. One recommended way to start is by using the Pachamama Alliance’s purpose statement as a baseline. Engage everyone in the group in making this statement their own, until it resonates and speaks to the essence, vision and purpose of the group.

“*Pachamama Alliance, empowered by our partnership with indigenous people, is dedicated to bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet.*

*Our unique contribution is to generate and engage people everywhere in transformational conversations and experiences consistent with this purpose. We weave together indigenous and modern worldviews such that human beings are in touch with their dignity and are ennobled by the magnificence, mystery, and opportunity of what is possible for humanity at this time.*

*We are here to inspire and galvanize the human family to generate a critical mass of conscious commitment to a thriving, just and sustainable way of life on Earth. This is a commitment to transforming human systems and structures that separate us, and to transforming our relationships with ourselves, with one another, and with the natural world.*”

If you notice the group getting out of focus, feel free to use your agreed upon ground rules!

It will be tempting to spend time wordsmithing! Remember this doesn’t have to be perfectly written by the end of this meeting, as you will have many more sessions to modify it, if you so choose to.

7. **Next Steps (20 min)** - Pachamama Alliance provides possible next steps for emerging local Communities. Encourage the group to explore such opportunities!

- Take the Game Changer Intensive together, as a local group. Review this document for more information on how to start a Game Change Intensive Local Small Group
- Take the Awakening the Dreamer Online Facilitator Training as a group to begin presenting Symposia locally

8. **Closing (5 min)** - In order to close the circle, it is important to mark the boundary between the sacred space just experienced and the return to “everyday” life. In order to do so, the group can do a number of things. Find suggestions for Closing on the *Community Building Resource* (page 27).
Appendix #4: Future Meeting Sample

**Purpose**
For participants to feel inspired by the power of being in community and moved to continue as part of this emerging Pachamama Alliance Community.

**Intended Results**
- To have agreed to meeting Community roles
- To have been inspired by the power of learning together
- To have reviewed their shared purpose and modified it, if needed

**Agenda for the Gathering**
You had a successful first Community Gathering, and now it’s time to identify some roles for shared responsibility and successful ongoing meetings. Here is a proposed agenda for future meetings.

1. **Sit in a Circle**
2. **Share Agenda** (possibly send it ahead of time)
3. **Opening** - Find ideas in the *Community Building Resource* (page 26).
4. **Introductions** (as needed)
5. **Presence Common Purpose**
6. **Presence Agreed Upon Group Norms and Add New Ones**
7. **Determine Roles** - In order for the discussions and the group-learning of the Community to progress smoothly, there are certain roles that are helpful. Members may decide to take on a role for a longer duration of time, or members can rotate between roles in any frequency selected by the group. Here are a few roles that are helpful to identify early on: Facilitator, Note Taker, Time Keeper, Stack Taker. More roles will emerge as the Community engages in action. Again, these roles are just suggestions. Your Community should determine what is best for all the members. Find out more about these roles in the *Community Building Resource* (pages 21-22).
8. **Following up on Agreed upon Next Steps** - (from point #7 of the Second Community Gathering). If needed, make room to check in on commitments made by the group.
9. **Group Learning** - Principles of Spiritual Leadership: Once again, it is up to the group how to use time. Remember that part of the purpose of a Community is to create a space for the development of each member as a Game Changer in the world. In other words, the Community is meant to be an incubation space of sorts for the development of spiritual, social, and environmental leaders in our unique, and sometimes strange, times. In order to start group learning, we suggest reading, contemplating, and discussing Will Keepin’s 12 Principles of Spiritual Leadership for the group learning experience during this meeting. See Appendix #6 of this document for the complete list of principles.

10. **Closing** - In order to close the circle, it is important to mark the boundary between the sacred space just experienced and the return to “everyday” life. In order to do so, the group can do a number of things. Find suggestions for Closing in the *Community Building Resource* (page 27).
Appendix #5: Holding Space

One of the most important aspects of presenting and hosting events is “holding the space” for the benefit of everyone there.

Holding space can be defined as “taking conscious responsibility for what happens for all of the participants, on all levels: visual, verbal, physical, emotional, energetic, aesthetic, etc.” Here are some examples:

- On a production level, it is being conscious of all the physical needs of the participants—clear signs, easy enrollment, water and snacks available, a clean and orderly room, good lighting & temperature.
- On a hosting level, it is being conscious of making participants feel welcome & invited, that the environment is well taken care of, and that participants are treated with consideration.
- On a presentation level, it is being conscious that the presentation & instructions are clear, respectful of participants, that the emotional state of the participants is seen, acknowledged and responded to, that they generally know someone is conscious of them and their needs.

There are some fundamental elements to holding space:

- Being present & aware of what is going on in the whole space you are holding
- An attitude of service—the intention to be attuned to the needs of everyone in that space (including the team) & meet them
- Projecting energy through the whole space, in a positive way

Holding the space can be done in an unhelpful energy, too: being nervous, controlling, frantic, etc so be aware of the energy and values that you bring to the space. And so, the values and energy to bring are the ones that are the foundation of Pachamama Alliance events in general, the same ones that generate the Symposium: respect for participants, acknowledging their wisdom, desiring to empower them, trust in what supports us, don’t make it about yourself etc.

More on holding space is shared during the in-person Facilitator Training. Let us know if you’d like to bring a training to your local Pachamama Alliance Community!
Appendix #6: Principles of Spiritual Leadership

We don’t often hear about “spiritual leadership,” but Will Keepin, of the Satyana Institute in Boulder, Colorado, has outlined a remarkable set of principles to get us thinking about how we can apply spiritual teachings and wisdom in the work of changing the game. Now, more than ever, these principles can provide a guiding inspiration.

Adapted from a presentation given by Will Keepin
Schumacher College July 17, 1997

The first principle is that the motivation underlying our activism for social change must be transformed from anger and despair to compassion and love. This is a major challenge for the environmental movement, for example. It is not to deny the legitimacy of noble anger or outrage at injustice of any kind. Rather, we seek to work for love, rather than against evil. We need to adopt compassion and love as our foundational intention, and do whatever inner work is required to implement this intention. Even if our outward actions remain the same, there is a major difference in results if our underlying intention supports love rather than defeating evil. The Dalai Lama says, "A positive future can never emerge from the mind of anger and despair."

The second principle is a classical spiritual tenet, though challenging to practice. It is the principle of nonattachment to outcome. To the extent that we are attached to the results of our work, we rise and fall with our success and failures, which is a path to burnout. Failures are inevitable, and successes are not the deepest purpose of our work. This requires a deepening of faith in the intrinsic value of our work-beyond the concrete results. To the extent that our actions are rooted in pure intention, they have a reverberation far beyond the concrete results of the actions themselves. As Gandhi emphasized, "The victory is in the doing," not the outcome.

The third principle is that your integrity is your protection. The idea here is that if your work has integrity that will tend to protect you from negative circumstances. For example, there are practices for making yourself invisible to the negative energy that comes toward you in adversarial situations. It's a kind of psychic aikido, where you internally step out of the way of negative energy, and you make yourself energetically transparent so it passes right through you. But this only works if your work is rooted in integrity.
The fourth principle is related to the third: the need for unified integrity in both means and ends. Integrity in means cultivates integrity in the fruit of one’s work; you cannot achieve a noble goal using ignoble means. Some participants in our workshops engage regularly in political debates, testimony, and hearings. We have them experimenting with consciousness techniques for transmuting challenging energy into compassion and love-right there in the hearing room. Early indications are that this is helpful in defusing charged psychological situations, and reducing tension in heated debates.

The fifth principle is don’t demonize your adversaries. People respond to arrogance with their own arrogance, which leads to polarization. The ideal is to constantly entertain alternative points of view so that you move from arrogance to inquiry, and you then have no need to demonize your opponents. This is hard to do, as we often feel very certain about what we think we know, and the injustices we see. As John Stuart Mill said, "In all forms of human debate, both parties tend to be correct in what they affirm, and wrong in what they deny." Going into an adversarial situation, we can be aware of the correctness of what we are affirming, but there is usually a kernel of truth-however small-in what is being affirmed by our opponent. We need to be especially mindful about what we deny, because this is often where our blind spots will be.

The sixth principle is to love thy enemy. Or if you can't do that, at least have compassion for them. This means moving from an "us-them" consciousness to a "we" consciousness. It means recognizing that I am the logger: when I write these principles of spiritual activism and publish them in this newsletter, I give the command to the logger to fell the trees, to produce the pulp, to produce this paper so that I can publish these spiritual principles about how best to save the trees. It is seeing the full circle of our interconnected complicity, and discovering all the problems of humanity in our own hearts and our own lives. We are not exempt and we are not different. The "them" that we speak of is also us. The practice of loving our adversaries is obviously challenging in situations with people whose views and methodologies are radically opposed to ours, but that is where the real growth occurs.

The seventh and eighth principles are a bit contradictory. The seventh is that your work is for the world rather than for you. We serve on behalf of others and not for our own satisfaction or benefit. We're sowing seeds for a cherished vision to
become a future reality, and our fulfillment comes from the privilege of being able to do this work. This is the traditional understanding of selfless service.

But then the eighth principle is that selfless service is a myth. Because in truly serving others, we are also served. In giving we receive. This is important to recognize as well, so we don’t fall into the trap of pretentious service to others’ needs and develop a false sense of selflessness or martyrdom.

The ninth principle is do not insulate yourself from the pain of the world. We must allow our hearts to be broken-open by the pain of the world. As that happens, as we let that pain in, we become the vehicles for transformation. If we block the pain, we are actually preventing our own participation in the world’s attempt to heal itself. As we allow our hearts to break open, the pain that comes is the medicine by which the Earth heals itself, and we become the agents of that healing. This is a vital principle that is quite alien to our usual Western ways of thinking.

The tenth principle is what you attend to, you become. If you constantly attend to battles, you become embattled. On the other hand, if you constantly give love, you become loving. We must choose wisely what we attend to, because it shapes and defines us deeply.

The eleventh principle is to rely on faith. This is not some Pollyannaish naiveté, as many "realists" would interpret it. Rather it entails cultivating a deep trust in the unknown, recognizing the presence of "higher" or "divine" forces at work that we can trust completely without knowing their precise agendas or workings. It means invoking something beyond the traditional scientific worldview. It implies that there are invisible forces that we can draw upon and engage, firstly by knowing they are there; secondly, by asking or yearning for them to support us—or more precisely, asking them to allow us to serve on their behalf. Faith is understood not as blind adherence to any set of beliefs, but as a knowing from experience and intuition about intrinsic universal principles beyond our direct observation, and relying upon these principles, whatever they are, to support us in creating what we aspire to create. This actually brings great relief when we realize it really isn’t up to us to figure out all the steps to manifest our unfolding vision, because we are participants in a larger cosmic will. Nevertheless, it is our job to discover what our unique gift is- our unique role-and for each person to give their gift as skillfully and generously as possible, while trusting that the rest will all work itself out.

Finally, the twelfth principle is that love creates the form. As Stephen Levine says, “The heart crosses the abyss that the mind creates.” It is the mind that gives rise to the apparent fragmentation of the world, while the heart can operate at depths unknown to the mind. So, if we begin imagining with our hearts, and work from a place of yearning as well as thinking, then we develop an unprecedented effectiveness that is beyond our normal ways of understanding because it doesn’t have to do with thinking. When we bring the fullness of our humanity to our leadership, we can be far more effective in creating the future we want.
In closing, we are urgently called to action in two distinct capacities: to serve as hospice workers to a dying culture, and to serve as midwives to an emerging culture. These two tasks are required simultaneously; they call upon us to move through the world with an open heart-meaning we are present for the grief and the pain-as we experiment with new visions and forms for the future. Both are needed. The key is to root our actions in both intelligence and compassion-a balance of head and heart that combines the finest human qualities in our leadership for cultural transformation.