

The Journey of the Shambhala Process Team: February 2019 to February 2020

The Shambhala Process Team

February 2020

Acknowledgements: The PTSC would like to thank all members of the PT – past and present – for being willing to step forward into the unknown in order to be of benefit to the Shambhala community.

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I. Introduction

In 2018, the Shambhala community was thrown into crisis. Reports of misconduct by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and others led to the resignation, in July, of the Kalapa Council and subsequent stepping back from leadership for 2 years by the Sakyong. The outgoing Kalapa Council convened and empowered a [Transition Task Force](#) (TTF) to assist in filling the leadership vacuum. The TTF acted first by selecting and appointing an [Interim Board](#) in October to manage the legal and fiduciary needs of Shambhala and second by assembling a [Process Team](#) and [Steering Committee](#) in late 2018 and early 2019 to help the community discover what was needed at that time. This report details the work of the Shambhala Process Team (PT) from the date we took our seat on Shambhala Day, February 2019 to February 2020.

The [PT comprises volunteers](#) from across the Shambhala mandala with an aspiration to help explore ways of supporting the community and finding a path forward. From the beginning of our work together, many different and conflicting views have been expressed about what should or should not change in Shambhala, what it would mean to “move forward,” and whether and how our social relations, cultural practices, and structures could be transformed to be more in line with our Shambhala-Buddhist values. Rather than try to come up with final *answers* to these contradictory impulses, we focused on our mandate to develop sane and supportive *processes* for collectively exploring needed changes. Our [PT Mission and Vision Statements](#) (see Appendix B), developed by the Charter Working Group, reflect this emphasis.

A number of PT Working Groups (WGs) were operational by May 2019, meeting regularly and working together both to develop relationships within their groups and to establish and make progress toward achieving their work goals. You can read the bi-monthly [WG reports](#) from the last year on the [PT website](#). In the next section, we highlight the main initiatives that have crystallized during our tenure.

Our experiences of working on the PT has varied among us; but there has been no shortage of heart and passion, deep learning and realization, a good dose of frustration, and a sense of mutual respect for the basic goodness in each of us. We offer this document as a manifestation of our collective self-reflection and aspiration for Enlightened Society.

II. Specific PT Initiatives Emerging from Year 1

While Appendix A provides a fuller accounting of PT activities over the last year, this brief overview highlights some specific initiatives that have gathered momentum and energy during this time.

Code of Conduct Support Group (CCSG)

The Code of Conduct Support Group (CCSG), along with other groups and individuals across the PT, acknowledges that abuses, serious misconduct, and lack of transparency have occurred in our community, that people have been harmed, and that trust has been broken. Since May 2019, members of the CCSG have dedicated themselves to developing a new Code of Conduct Policy and Process based on the Shambhala principles of warriorship. They subsequently proposed to the Board a draft Code of Conduct that applies to everyone in Shambhala, and that everyone shares a responsibility to uphold. The draft framework includes specific policies relating to persons holding positions of authority, child protection, sexual misconduct, and discrimination, as well as a systematic, fair, transparent, and caring process for handling complaints (see Appendix C for an outline and principles of this Code of Conduct).

Theory U Working Group

In order to support the PT mandate of initiating processes for community transformation and healing, a group of PT members came together to explore the options for a system-wide methodology in which the sangha could participate. They eventually chose [Theory U](#), an awareness-based approach to transformative change. In September, over 400 Shambhalians joined a free [“u.Lab” 1x course](#) to build capacities in dialogue, deep reflection, and inclusive group decision making. Several spontaneous [“Shambhala hubs”](#) emerged, and over twenty teams went forward to the [u.Lab 2x course](#) where they could test out emerging ideas for application to specific challenges within Shambhala. To widen the impact of Theory U, individuals and groups in the PT are exploring the feasibility of regional meetings, as well as a sangha-wide process that could bring work from PT groups into a community-wide engagement and enable new voices, new energy, and new projects to emerge.

The Survey Working Group

The Survey Working Group (SWG) worked intensively over many months with the PT and the Shambhala Board to develop three major community surveys. The [initial survey](#) was received by nearly 9,000

current Shambhala Members, of whom 3,150 (35%) completed the survey. This was followed by a [Care and Conduct survey](#) in July 2019, completed by 2,736 people. The latest community survey, which is in progress as of this report, invited all current and former community members to participate.

The Charter Working Group

The PT Charter Working Group has sought to improve the coherence, effectiveness, and transparency of the PT as a whole through the co-creation of a '[Team Charter](#)' to guide the PT and its work moving forward. As part of this effort, they developed a process for determining strategic aims, goals, and objectives, which were shared with the PT working groups. The Charter Group then helped to collect this information from across the PT in order to improve the coherence of PT activities and clarify its purpose, achievements and future objectives (please see Appendix B for final working group Strategic Aims).

The Process Team Steering Committee (PTSC)

The PTSC began its work together by focusing mainly on creating and convening “working groups” in the four topic areas recommended by the TTF (Community Healing and Learning, Culture Change, Governance, and Community Building). By mid-2019, a working group of the PT had identified, and the PTSC supported, the adoption of “[Theory U](#)” - an awareness-based change methodology with ties to Shambhala - as a method for building capacities for engaging the community in transformational processes. The PTSC also worked to build relationships with the Board and other entities within Shambhala, and developed several means of communication for the community, including a PT email address (ProcessTeam@shambhala.info) and [website](#) where we post information regarding our work, including PTSC [meeting minutes](#), full [updates from the PT Working Groups](#), information on [Theory U](#), and [Community Experiences](#).

The PTSC also contacted the Sakyong in December 2019 to request that he engage with PT-related work as he enters his process of reconnection with the community. The Secretary to the Sakyong, David Brown, subsequently responded by saying that the Sakyong is grateful for the work of the PT and the request by the PTSC to open a dialogue, and that he wishes to work through the Shambhala Board on collective community processes.

This report is the “final project” of the PTSC for Year 1, and comprises a summary of the work of the PT in 2019 and recommendations for the next year. Several PTSC members are expected to step down and new structures may be needed in order to continue this work.

Summary

This brief overview does not capture all of the activities from the PT, but does provide examples of some of the initiatives that have materialized in the last year. Our work has been challenging throughout, but as we have gotten to know and develop some trust with one another, we have initiated a number of projects designed to engage our global community in working toward positive change. You can read a more complete overview of these key activities in Appendix A. In the sections that follow, we will highlight some lessons learned, and where our work may fruitfully go from here to benefit the Shambhala community.

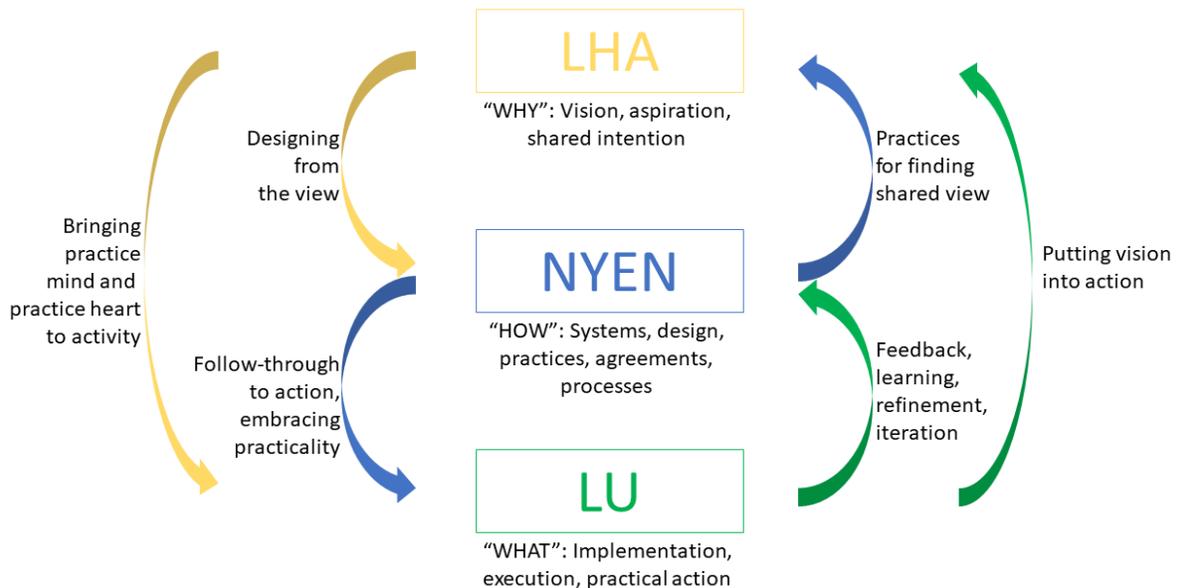
III. Key Learnings: Creating Spaces that Work

Many of our key learnings as members of the PT have concerned the importance of creating effective working spaces, or “spaces that work.” A *working space* in this context refers to any project, team, group, process, or initiative that intends to bring a defined benefit through work that has concrete outputs, such as a Shambhala center’s leadership team, a group of volunteers conducting a fundraiser, the Shambhala Board, a Process Team Working Group, or the Process Team itself.¹

The contours of an effective Shambhala working space can be understood using the familiar concepts of *lha*, *nyen*, and *lu*:

- *Lha* is a working space’s vision or “why” it exists, including a clear understanding and description of the needs and issues it will address and the benefit it aspires to bring.
- *Nyen* is skillful means, “how” a working space does its work, meaning according to what designed systems, practices, agreements, and processes.
- *Lu* is practical action, “what” a working space does at any given time based on its vision, its design, its resources, and the practical realities it encounters.

Diagram of an effective working space in Shambhala



Based on this structure, see Appendix E for a description of both helpful and challenging patterns as they have emerged within Process Team Working Groups, as identified through feedback from Process Team members; and see Appendix F for an analysis of design challenges that the Process Team as a whole has faced in our first year.

¹ For more detail on these concepts as they apply to Shambhala working spaces, see Appendices D through F.

This framework also supports structuring the large volume of direct feedback collected from PT members into specific design suggestions for our work together moving forward, as presented in the following sections.

IV. What is Emerging, Part 1: Need to Initiate a Community-Wide Process

As of this writing, nobody knows exactly how the PT and its work will manifest in Year 2. Whatever the next steps, what emerges can and should be based on our learning and explorations to date as PT members, in particular their implications for community engagement.

To this end, the PTSC gathered PT member insights and views through various methods: three “all-PT” Zoom calls, bi-monthly working group (WG) updates, WG convener calls, a document containing reflections by WG conveners, strategic aims submitted by WGs to the Charter WG, and suggestions by individuals and WGs through the website and email.

Feedback from both PT members and other community members has repeatedly emphasized the need for the PT to engage more deeply with the Shambhala community at large. This has been quite challenging during our first year, due in part to issues of power, legitimacy, and transparency related to the design of the PT, as well as major challenges to sangha-wide communication.

Despite these challenges, it is clear that satisfying the PT’s mission of facilitating positive change in Shambhala requires an inclusive and community-wide process, with the goal of helping all parties heal from past harm, repair the ground of trust together, and begin to co-create a stronger Shambhala community.

Overall Description of Proposed Community-Wide Process

Processes for community engagement are still in the design phase, and will likely need to take many forms. The main point is that *we need to hear from the many different voices in our community as we attempt to create a new future for Shambhala*. The process to engage all community members must be open, genuine, and inclusive - grounded in Shambhala teachings of wisdom and compassion - and include our practices of mindfulness and awareness as we share our hearts and minds with each other. Through this collaborative and ongoing journey, we can learn together how to guide our community as we authentically relate to issues of conduct, healing, reconciliation, financial relationships with local centers, practice offerings, and community leadership.

Potential Structure and Design of Community-Wide Processes

Any sangha-wide process undertaken to bring healing to the community will require significant commitment and resources from those in Shambhala who hold decision-making power; it must therefore be given a clear mandate and empowerment from the Board.

The process will require coordination. In putting together a coordinating team, the following considerations were suggested by PT members:

- Hiring at least one dharma practitioner with skills in facilitating large-scale community change

- Incorporating persons with skills in project management and the technical aspects of web-based communications
- Including at least one person who was involved in organising and supporting the Year 1 Theory U initiative
- Including at least one person from the 2019 Process Team Steering Committee and one or more from the broader PT
- Hiring a dharma practitioner with skills in narrative analysis or scribing to collect qualitative insights of mandala wide initiatives. An accurate record of the wisdom being generated at the grassroots could contribute to local and global community building, sharing lessons learned, and empowerment.
- Striving for a balance between a workable-sized team and ability to represent a variety of constituencies (e.g., regionally)

Enacting this community-wide initiative will require trained facilitators. Over 400 sangha members enrolled in the fall 2019 u.Lab (discussed above); many of those people, as well as people trained in other types of facilitation and dialogue (including Shastris and Acharyas), could guide local and regional conversations with support from the coordinating team.

In addition, most active PT members have learned firsthand lessons about “what works and doesn’t” in building trust and collaborating fruitfully across differences of opinion and geography. The community-wide process should seek and value the input of all PT members who wish to participate.

Suggested Avenues for Community Involvement

Specific suggestions for involving the community include:

- Planning and scheduling regional retreats at 4-5 sites (initially), to discuss the draft Code of Conduct and other emerging reconciliation, healing, culture change, and growth topics. Retreats should be as inexpensive as possible, and offer need-based scholarships for attendance.
- Offering free or sponsored webinars for those who are not able to attend a regional retreat, to enable remote, live, web-based participation.
- Creating a “toolkit” of resources for local centers (e.g., procedures manual for understanding the legal and financial linkages between local Centers and SGS, guidelines for collaborative decision making and holding dialogues on issues affecting local communities); some of these have begun to be collected on the [PT website](#)
- Establishing inquiry and feedback mechanisms, possibly through community “ambassadors,” to assess the health of our approximately 200 local centres and groups; exploring how they can be supported to remain viable; and gathering and sharing their views, experiences, and experiments with the mandala as a whole.
- Discussing the possibility of a Shambhala citizens’ assembly or community council as a way to expand community involvement with, and input into, issues affecting the community as a whole.
- Supporting the community in building means to connect with each other across local groups, working groups and individuals (e.g., Zoom calls, website) so information and ideas can spread
- Providing clear information regarding how community processes will feed into decisions by the Board and SGS, as well as how community members might join the PT.

Emerging Initiatives as Vehicles for Community-Wide Process

Among other possible initiatives, existing efforts by the PT and u.Lab participants can serve as means to engage the community, particularly:

- Introducing the proposed Code of Conduct to the community through a process of dialogue; the Code of Conduct Support Group (CCSG) and the new director of community care and conduct could develop plans for community conversations with the Code of Conduct locally and determine training needs in relation to the Code of Conduct
- Engaging the community in a robust conversation about practice and education offerings, in coordination with Charlie Goetzl and Jeff Scott; the Path, Teachings, and Practices WG has started this process
- Exploring ways to support the financial and community health of local centers; the Finance and Legal group has started this process
- Testing out “community-wide” proposals emerging from other 2019 PT Working Group activities
- Testing out ideas that emerge from groups currently participating in u.Lab 2x

While the ideas presented here are still mainly ideas, there are many dedicated Shambhalian both on the PT and in the community who are excited at the prospect of bringing these ideas to fruition.

V. What is Emerging, Part 2: Potential Next Steps for the PT

This section represents a compilation of recommendations for moving forward into the coming year in regard to the work of the PT – whatever form this work may take. It is important to note that there is no consensus across the PT regarding these recommendations, given the wide range of views of individual members. Nevertheless, there were identifiable trends in the feedback that are summarized herein.

As the work initiated by the PT continues, it will be essential to establish certain grounding conditions:

- Develop a shared view of issues to be addressed within the purview of the team
- Determine how work will be coordinated (e.g., with a steering team, a “coordinating circle” made up of convenors, or some other form)
- Develop a shared view of the mandate, role, authority, function, scope of work, length of tenure, and methods for decision-making across the team and between the team and its coordinating body
- Reach a formal agreement with the Board on PT areas and lines of authority and responsibility
- Establish a means to communicate and coordinate regularly with the Board and relevant Shambhala Global Services staff (e.g., Director of Operations or Community Care and Conduct), and among the various PT groups, including its coordinating body (e.g., through a quarterly all-PT and Board zoom call)
- Create clear criteria and requirements for PT membership, as well as processes for retiring and thanking outgoing members and inviting new members
- Hire, through collaboration with existing team members, at least one paid staff to assist with time consuming but necessary administrative tasks

Continuation of Process Team Working Group work

The Process Team Working Groups have produced strategic aims (see Appendix B) and objectives describing their goals for their ongoing work, and are positioned to carry this work forward as they have outlined in the [PT Charter](#).

Core Values

There is widespread agreement within the Process Team that any future PT work should embody the core practices and values of the Shambhala and Buddhist dharma. These values include kindness, honesty, sense of humor, transparency, compassion, and openness toward, appreciation for, and willingness to learn from the experiences of different people, voices, views, and paths.

Role and Mission

Notwithstanding the co-created [PT Mission and Vision Statements](#), dynamic tension remains between approaches to PT work that involve *deep listening* vs. *advocacy*, and between seeing the PT as providing *processes* (such as Theory U) for sangha-wide engagement with critical issues in Shambhala vs. exploring and advocating for *solutions* to those issues. While some propose dividing the PT into groups based on different approaches, most would like to further explore and try to resolve this tension and seek a shared view. The fundamental purpose of the PT could be usefully re-examined, given this context.

Mandate and Authority

There is near-universal agreement that the relationship between the PT, its coordinating body, and the Board needs to be clarified and strengthened. Direct, frequent communication is essential. Clear areas of responsibility and authority must be established for the PT to be effective. At the same time, the PT and its coordinating body must be allowed to function independently within their areas of responsibility.

Composition and Membership

Another area of dynamic tension is between differing views of the PT as a grass-roots organization representing the sangha versus a collection of experts for addressing specific problems. The current working groups, based on topic areas, have emulated the latter, producing mixed results. While some groups have been productive, there is a common perception that the PT has been “working in silos” in a way that too often ignores the interdependence of topics (e.g., governance models and healing), leading to those outside the groups feeling their voices, much less the voices of the community, were not heard.

This tension might be resolved by re-thinking how the work of the PT is subdivided. A proposal that the work of the PT be subdivided by skills and function rather than topic has some support: e.g., subdivide by facilitators of sangha discussions, researchers and information-gatherers, consulting specialists, communication, etc. Each functional group would keep all topics in mind, aligning their work with agreed-upon aims, objectives, and initiatives in Shambhala. This organizational structure could then more naturally determine the criteria for PT membership and procedures for inviting new members, including the possibility of representation from local centers and groups.

Internal Process Team Governance

The role, composition, and authority of the Steering Committee or any future central coordinating group remains a point of friction within the PT. While it seems apparent to many that coordination among initiatives is crucial, how this coordination manifests in actual decision-making, power, and group

autonomy is less clear. (Several members note that the PT is in this respect a microcosm of the sangha at large.) While 'natural hierarchy' is part of Shambhala teachings and culture, there is disagreement over whether Shambhala's historical practices of hierarchy and control are viable in the context of the PT. These concerns lie at the heart of how the PT might function in the coming year.

Reaching agreement on processes for decision-making is also an area of substantial difficulty for the PT, but is widely seen as essential. Obtaining consensus in a situation where people hold strongly differing views about the mission and goals of the PT has proven to be either very time-consuming or impossible.

Some suggestions offered by PT members for improving the internal workings of the PT include:

- Constituting a coordinating body for the PT, possibly made up of delegates appointed from and by working groups. Unlike the current PTSC, coordinating group membership might be rotated. The function of this coordinating group would be to coordinate, not direct
- Hold in-person gatherings or conferences with the whole PT to establish and nurture working relationships
- Establishing decision-making processes within groups that foreground dialogue and the emergence of group wisdom, and that walk a middle path between consensus and majority rule (e.g., sociocracy, consent models); once a formal decision-making process is established, reasonable adherence to that process should be expected
- Exploring mechanisms for input and feedback, based in the dharma, that allow people to feel heard and appreciated, even when they do not "get their way"
- Supporting each other in being mindful of the tendency to dominate conversations, processes, and working groups, with sensitivity to the potential silencing effect of such behavior
- Examining and coming to agreement among group members on the proper balance between confidentiality and transparency in deliberations
- Creating advisory councils or community "sounding boards" for each working group that include representatives of those who are impacted by this work
- Inviting, encouraging, and fostering the engagement and participation of all sangha members into future discussions, focus groups, and positions of authority

VI. Conclusions

While this document was crafted inclusively, drawing on input from across the Process Team, it is not a "consensus" document. A few PT members' views differ significantly from what we have shared here. Working with our differing perspectives has provided a tremendous opportunity - to learn and share with the Shambhala community how we can open our hearts and minds to each other across differences. We worked together with tremendous spirit, exertion, and good faith, and are proud of our accomplishments. We are also grateful for what we have learned together, and for the ways that, in our daily and weekly work, we find ourselves beginning to experience enlightened society.

In the coming year, we look forward to engaging more deeply with the Shambhala community as a whole, and to helping create effective spaces for us to process as a community the challenges facing Shambhala. We thank you for reading this document, and we welcome and encourage your feedback and participation as we move forward together.

Appendix A: Summary of PT Working Group activities

This appendix provides more detail about the key activities undertaken by the Process Team (PT) in its first year. Though there are many other perspectives and experiences that the 80+ members of the PT may hold, we have aspired to capture the key elements in this brief overview. You may find all [WG Updates](#) from 2019 on the [PT website](#), including from working groups not explicitly mentioned here.

Code of Conduct Support Group

Code of Conduct Support Group (CCSG) work is based on an acknowledgment that abuses, serious misconduct and lack of transparency, and misuse of power have occurred in our community, that people have been harmed, and that trust for many has been broken. This was fully reflected in the responses from the community to the 2019 Care and Conduct Survey, which members of our group have been involved in analyzing.

Good conduct is the basis for a good human society. Since May 2019 we have been dedicated to developing a new Code of Conduct Policy and Process based on the Shambhala principles of warriorship. This new Code of Conduct clearly articulates both good conduct and misconduct. It is based on the principles of accountability, transparency, inclusivity, and care, which altogether can provide a path toward restoring and establishing trust, which is the foundation for building a healthy, dignified and vital community.

After a six-month period, while attempting to embody these principles in our own work, the CCSG proposed to the Board a draft Code of Conduct that applies to everyone in Shambhala, and that everyone shares a responsibility to uphold. The draft framework includes specific policies relating to persons holding positions of authority, child protection, sexual misconduct, and discrimination. The process of handling complaints in the new Code of Conduct Process is designed to ensure that it is systematic, fair, transparent and caring. The process also establishes structures that would operate locally, regionally and internationally. It also includes prohibited behaviors that will have consequences for those who violate those behaviors. You can see the complete outline of the new Shambhala Code of Conduct in the appendix.

The CCSG started as a Code of Conduct Task Force within the Process Team and in November was appointed by the Shambhala Board to support the implementation process. Although these draft policies and procedures have clearly not yet been approved by the Board, they have been accepted as a working basis from which to explore community discussion, refinement, implementation and integration. In collaboration with the newly appointed Director of Community Care and Conduct, the CCSG looks forward to discussions with the community and receiving feedback about these proposals in the very near future.

(Please see Appendix C.1 and C.2 for a Table of Contents demonstrating how CoC policy and process documents relate to one another, and a list of principles that have been woven into the CoC)

Theory U Working Group

A group of PT members who are experts in system-wide, transformative change came together to explore how the entire sangha might participate in such a change initiative - as called for in our mandate. After considering possibilities including Participatory Action Research, Appreciative Inquiry, and Future Search, we eventually chose an awareness-based methodology called [Theory U](#). While these approaches share many qualities, we [saw Theory U as particularly helpful and relevant](#). Particularly important is the fact that its values very much align with Shambhala as a contemplative community (in fact, some originated in Shambhala); it complements our existing wisdom practices; and it encourages broad participation and a diversity of viewpoints. In addition, sangha members could be trained through the free introductory [u.Lab course](#) provided by the Presencing Institute, led by a team which includes our own Acharya Arawana Hayashi. We felt that, at the very least, completion of the training would mean that participants could, with support, bring these methods (deep listening, generative dialogue, prototyping, etc.) into their own sanghas, regional meetings, retreats, and so on. However, we also had a longer-term intention - that these trained sangha members could act as facilitators in an eventual, sangha-wide process.

Approximately 400 sangha members (including most PTSC and some PT members) completed the introductory training (u.Lab 1x). Several spontaneous “[Shambhala hubs](#)” emerged, supported by a “Hub Host” team. Enthusiasm, raised lungta, and excitement about the relevance of the training prevail; many have spoken of ways they have put the training to work in their own local context. In addition, over twenty teams are going forward to the [u.Lab 2x course](#) where they will prototype emerging ideas for application to specific challenges within Shambhala. At present, in January 2020, individuals and groups in the PT are working on ways to support participants in the trainings and to widen the scope of our Theory U work. On the latter, we are exploring the feasibility of multiple, regional meetings where participants might widen the range of participation in their prototyping, for example by developing short, non-technical training videos and so on. Last but not least, we are continuing to work on ways to craft a sangha-wide process that is grounded in awareness, embraces deep listening, and centers generative dialogue in order to (a) bring work from PT groups - starting with the new draft Code of Conduct - into a community-wide engagement, and (b) to enable new voices, new energy, and new projects to emerge.

The Survey Working Group

The Survey Working Group (SWG) worked intensively over many months with the Process Team and the Shambhala Board to develop three major community surveys. This work involved troubleshooting the conceptual and technical issues necessitated in constructing such a survey and translating it so that people whose native language is not English could participate. The [initial survey](#) was received by nearly 9,000 current Shambhala Members, of whom 3,150 (35%) completed the survey. This was followed by a [Care and Conduct survey](#) in July 2019, completed by 2,736 people. The latest survey, which is in progress as of this report, explores people’s individual situations, their relationship and experience with their local center, and their relationship and experience with the international Shambhala organization. All current and former community members were invited to participate.

The Charter Working Group

One of the aims of the PT Charter Working Group this year has been to improve the coherence, effectiveness and transparency of the PT as a whole. We have sought to capture shared agreements that could form the basis of a 'Team Charter' to guide the PT and its work moving forward. As part of this effort, we developed a process for determining strategic aims, goals, and objectives, which we shared with the PT working groups. The Charter Group then helped to collect this information from across the PT in order to improve the coherence of PT activities and clarify its purpose, achievements and future objectives (please see Appendix B for WG strategic aims; the PT Charter in its entirety is on our [website](#)).

Dialogic Methods Working Group

The Dialogic Methods WG spent the early months of our tenure developing resources that could be shared with the wider PT and sangha. Our intention was to provide a basic set of principles by which we could express differences, deeply listen to the views of others, and have kindly conversations that open up possibilities rather than closing people down in simplistic, dogmatic, certainties. With a dialogic orientation and methods, we hoped to support peoples' awareness and ability to work from mind and heart and body. Exercises in deep listening, dialog, body work, and storytelling all were explored; short articles and exercises can be found on the PT website (<https://shambhala-process-team.org/dialogue/>).

Governance Models Subgroup (GMS)

Over the past year, the GMS has been on the "descent of the U-curve" in Theory U terms; that is, we have been gathering information in various ways. Some of our actions and achievements, beyond what other WGs have also done, include:

- Collecting a library of texts on governance, from both within and beyond Shambhala
- Clarifying concepts needed as building blocks for a model or models (e.g. "What is Governance," difference between governance and administration, "What is Shambhala," etc.) and pinpointing the agreements and differences in view regarding those concepts among our group members
- Advising the Board on the creation of a Mandala Nominating Group for the recruiting and hiring of new Board members
- Interviewing and collating anonymized interview information of almost 40 people who have held various positions in governance over the years and summarizing the results and emerging trends
- Attempting to establish communication with the Board

We hope to finish the information gathering stage by summarizing a clear overview of what the root texts say about Shambhala Governance, as well as complete additional interviews and distill relevant governance views from the community survey. From here, we hope to use this information to build one or more governance models, invite comments on these from the sangha, and adapt any emerging prototypes to a sangha-broad consensual workable model for the governance of Shambhala. This model would not be presented as definite, but as a work-in-progress to be evaluated and adapted over time.

Culture Change Working Group

The directive of the Culture Change WG (CCWG) was to address the *habitual patterns in our practices and social relations that reproduce domination, inequity, and exclusion based on gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, and other forms of marginalization.*

The CCWG came together as a geographical ensemble of 17 members from Canada, Germany, France, Sweden, New Zealand, Switzerland, the UK, and the United States. From the outset, group members presented a multiplicity of views on what constitutes Shambhala culture, as well as strong, divergent opinions about the relevance of topics the group should explore. More than half of the topics brought forth diverged from those suggested by the Transition Task Force. Progress was impeded by these polarized views, as well as erratic meeting attendance (mostly due to time zones, illness, and work schedules) and the absence of the emergence of a group leader. Without leadership and a common view, this ---group disbanded in October 2019.

It is clear that the work tasked to the CCWG must continue. The absence of a CCWG has left a void in the mission of the PT and the future of the Shambhala community. Some of the topics that were designated for exploration by this WG have been picked up in the work of other PT working groups, e.g., code of conduct, governance, and dorje kasung. However, without organized, concerted efforts to address the topics intended for the CCWG, many of the problems that existed prior to the start of the crisis will continue unabated. What is needed is a dedicated group of practitioners who are willing to help raise awareness and integrate the topics of power, bias, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility on the path, teachings, and practice.

The Process Team Steering Committee (PTSC)

Since Shambhala Day 2019, the Process Team Steering Committee (PTSC) has done its best to guide the work of the Process Team (PT). This committee, originally consisting of 10 members, was selected by the Transition Task Force (TTF) from among PT applicants. During the first four months of the PT, the PTSC focused on creating and convening “working groups” within which all PT members could participate. These groups were originally designed to emphasize the four topic areas recommended by the TTF (Community Healing and Learning, Culture Change, Governance, and Community Building), but later evolved to include additional subgroups within each of those categories (such as the Code of Conduct, Offerings, Legal and Finance, and Governance Models). Throughout the year, we have worked to build relationships with the Board and other entities within Shambhala.

As the working groups continued to meet, we realized that although progress was being made in general, there was a need for skill-building in dialogue, inclusive group decision making, and prototyping. In May, the PT identified, and the PTSC supported, the adoption of “[Theory U](#)” - an awareness-based change methodology with ties to Shambhala - as one method for building these capacities. Although some members of the PT expressed doubt that Theory U methods and philosophy were consistent with Shambhala's root texts, many felt it was beneficial for members to strengthen skills in dialogue, deep listening, and collective problem solving. The Presencing Institute provides a free [“u.Lab” course](#) accessible from anywhere in the world, and in September, over 400 Shambhalians from

within and outside the PT joined the training; many are continuing their training in Spring 2020 with [u.Lab 2x](#).

In the spirit of our commitment to making our work as transparent as possible, the PTSC developed several means of communication for the community as a starting point, including a PT email address (ProcessTeam@shambhala.info) and [website](#) where we shared our vision, our inspiration, our work, and our progress in an easily accessible format. We also added a [contact form](#) to the website for feedback. We continue to post information regarding our work, and are progressively adding new items of potential interest and benefit to the community, including PTSC [meeting minutes](#), full [updates from the PT Working Groups](#), information on [Theory U](#), and a [Community Experiences](#) feature to share reports from Shambhala Centers and Groups that may provide inspiration or ideas to the rest of us.

Through the course of our work, the PTSC has responded to pointed questions regarding contact between the PT and the Sakyong, specifically whether we did (or would) contact him, either to implore us to request that he return to teaching or to insist that we demand he step down permanently. These contradictory positions evident in the community were also reflected in the PT itself. We did contact the Sakyong twice: first, to express our condolences at the passing of his mother, Lady Konchok; and second, to request that he engage with the PT, in particular in relation to his process of reconnection with the community. We asked him to consider joining us in a constructive, community-led process that could help all parties heal from past harm and repair the ground of trust together. We believe it is part of the PT's mandate to help design this process, in conjunction with the Board, the Sakyong Potrang, and the Shambhala community. The Secretary to the Sakyong, David Brown, subsequently responded by saying that the Sakyong is grateful for the work of the PT and the request by the PTSC to open a dialogue, and that he wishes to work through the Shambhala Board on collective community processes to ensure alignment moving forward.

This report is the “final project” of the PTSC for Year 1, and comprises a summary of the work of the PT in 2019 and recommendations for the next year. We have gathered information from the PT to determine what has worked well, as well as lessons learned, for any potential Year 2 iteration of the PT. Several PTSC members are expected to step down and new structures will be needed in order to continue the work of the PT. Our aspiration is that our reflections will guide the Board and PT toward establishing structures, roles, and activities that can meet our strategic aims (see Appendix B, 4.1).

Appendix B: Process Team Vision, Mission, and Strategic Aims (from the [PT Charter](#))

Vision

Where we hope to see the community several years in the future:

Shambhala as a thriving community, abiding in accord with the wisdom of all humanity and the Shambhala teachings and practices, which continually evolves through gentleness, kindness, fearlessness, and wisdom.

Mission

What we intend to achieve with our day-to-day efforts:

To facilitate a community-wide process that engages the Sangha through dialogue while honouring the fundamental nature of basic goodness and abiding in accord with the Dharma, thereby identifying a path forward for the community that nurtures healing and learning, and respects diversity, inclusion, and cultural differences.

Strategic Aims of the Process Team's Working Groups

This collection of Strategic Aims is understood as a living document and represents the knowledge of the Charter Group as of 13th February 2020.

1. Healing, Learning and Protection

1.1 Healing and Learning Group

- a. To complete a proposal for sharing knowledge and recommendations for providing trauma-informed containers and trauma-trained staff at all kinds of Shambhala programs. This project will include information and recommendations for working with mental health issues that arise during programs.
- b. To develop a plan for disseminating information about Restorative Circles and providing trainings for anyone interested in learning to become a leader of this method.
- c. To continue to support the process of applying the Code of Conduct policies and procedures throughout the community and offer ourselves to the Governing Board and Care and Conduct Committee as supports to this process.
- d. To develop, by listening to the experiences of our members and sanghas, an understanding of a community healing process that we can offer to other communities who are experiencing this type of crisis.

1.2 Dorje Kasung Group

- a. To establish mechanisms for interchange and communication between the Dorje Kasung and the civilian community in order to foster greater mutual understanding and appreciation.
- b. To reach out to those who hold command roles and inquire as to how we might support them through this period of uncertainty and transition, as well as into the future.
- c. To reach out to current Dorje Kasung and inquire as to what could be of support or comfort to them through this period of uncertainty and transition, as well as into the future.
- d. To advocate for and support the development of training within the Dorje Kasung that emphasizes kindness and skillfulness in working with ambiguity and difficulty, based on real-world situations facing the community.

2. Governance

2.1 Charter Group

- a. To prototype participatory means of collaboration and decision-making as an active learning journey within the Process Team.
- b. To improve the coherence, effectiveness and transparency of the Process Team and its work.
- c. To crystallize the wisdom that arises in the Process Team's journey as a way to strengthen and nurture an approach to our work that is in accord with the dharma.
- d. To practice openness, gentleness and kindness in all of our activities.

2.2 Governance Models

- a. To understand Governance as it applies to the Shambhala vision of Enlightened Society and the teachings of the Buddhadharma.
- b. To explore that understanding with the Shambhala community through informative and open dialogues.
- c. and, based on that, to recommend one or more governance structures for the organization going forward.

2.3 Finance & Legal

- a. To offer an environment to engage in dialog around key financial and legal considerations for the various aspects of the Shambhala Organization.
- b. To improve the Financial and Legal arrangements by planning in order to stop running on love, no money, and facing persistent episodes of financial and governance crises by tapping into subject matter experts within Shambhala in the field of non-profit governance, management and financing.
- c. To recognize and invite subject matter stakeholders at all levels including sangha members with financial, legal and non-profit management expertise, to enhance the clarity and coordination in financial and legal planning.
- d. Based on dialog with stakeholders and those with subject matter expertise to develop underlying principles and options for improved financial and legal structures and systems for adoption by the Shambhala International Board.
- e. Based on dialog with stakeholders and those with subject matter expertise, to create a manual for those charged with legal and financial responsibilities for Shambhala entities (e.g., Center directors). The manual would lay out established and acceptable procedures for legal and financial structures and reporting mechanisms as well as suggestions such as Officers and Directors liability insurance.

3. Community Building

3.1 Centre & Group Support

- a. To offer a regular cadence of support for Centre and Group leadership through zoom Director's Cafes.
- b. To improve communication between and throughout the mandala
- c. To invite the Shambhala community into Theory U training and use of its methods to encourage generative dialogue within Centers/Groups in order to bring about the emerging future.
- d. To recognize that communities are transient and develop inter-generational knowledge transfer. That this fragmentation occurs when we don't gather or practice together.
- e. Based on the diverse resources of the community we enrich and learn from each other and new patterns of relating

3.2 Path, Teachings, and Practices

- a. To draw together insights from the community of practitioners and from our practice history, to gain a comprehensive view of the key issues and opportunities for path and practice in Shambhala now.
- b. In accordance with Shambhala path requirements and the vision of Shambhala, to recommend opportunities for best aligning practice and education with shared community values and vision.
- c. To help assist centers and groups in resolving questions and issues on curriculum and teachings, so as to meet community needs.
- d. To work with, support, and facilitate Shambhala's existing practice and education resources and office holders, at both the local and mandala-wide level.

4. Coordination and Support

4.1 Steering Committee

- a. To guide the Shambhala community toward creating a healthy culture and to help repair and restore trust.
- b. To offer a process that facilitates the implementation of the code of conduct in a way that benefits the whole community.
- c. To harvest and report back to the Shambhala community, including Shambhala leadership, the themes and learnings that emerge from surveys and other methods, to help set future priorities for community process.
- d. To offer spaces, processes, and other skillful means that support deep listening and dialogue around topics of importance to the evolution of the Shambhala community.
- e. To actively invite the voices of non-dominant cultures into ongoing dialogue about the future of the Shambhala community to ensure that all voices are included and heard.
- f. To model an approach to governance that emphasizes dialogue and listening as a way to encourage this approach within the wider community.

4.2 Survey Group

- a. To provide the community with the ability to communicate with the PT and the Board through well-designed online surveys.
- b. To improve the community's understanding of itself by reflecting back what is learned through surveys.
- c. To bring the highest professional standards and ethics to the construction and analysis of surveys.

Appendix C: Outline of the Shambhala Code of Conduct

C.1 Table of Contents

Below is a 'Table of Contents' of the ten Draft documents that altogether comprise the Code of Conduct.

Please note: *These draft documents are not yet released. The next stage is to have conversations with the community and receive their feedback on what is needed in a Code of Conduct.*

(1) Introduction to the Code of Conduct Policy

This provides the context: view, practice, action and result of Shambhala vision.

(2) Shambhala Code of Conduct Policy

This 'core' document includes seven 'red line' behaviors to protect the space for everyone, and to abide by local laws. There are also 17 points on the practice of good conduct to develop virtue, and to manifest dignified communities. These policies apply to everyone, and everyone shares a responsibility to uphold them.

(3) Conduct of Those Holding Positions of Authority or Influence

Makes clear that those holding authority must not misuse the power of their position.

(4) Shambhala Policy to Address Sexual Misconduct

This policy defines sexual misconduct in a clear manner, and defines the principles of consent and mutual respect.

(5) Child Protection Policy

This policy upholds laws concerning children and sets out the conditions by which children in Shambhala can be protected from harm or sexual abuse.

(6) Anti-Discrimination Policy

On the basis of their unique identity, nobody should experience prejudice or be prevented from enjoying the dignity of the Shambhala path.

(7) What to Do if You Have a Concern in Shambhala

Clearly sets out the process and path for those who have a concern or complaint.

(8) When a Formal Complaint Has Been Filed Against You

Clearly sets out the process and path for those who are the subject of a complaint.

(9) Confidentiality Agreement

To protect any party in a Code of Conduct process from having their situation exposed to others inappropriately.

(10) Procedure and Guidance on Addressing Concerns and Complaints in Shambhala

A comprehensive set of procedures for addressing reports of misconduct. These procedures aim to be systematic, consistent, and as fair and kind as possible to everyone involved. The procedures are designed to: a) empower effective action locally, regionally (4-5 regions across Shambhala), and internationally, b) be internally integrated and c) safeguard against bias or corruption. This document also suggests restorative processes for relating to violations as well as some consequences and protective and rebalancing measures.

C.2 Principles in the Code of Conduct

For Shambhala to manifest good human society depends on each individual conducting themselves in accordance with the principles of Shambhala. We acknowledge that we have not ‘walked our talk’, and the Code of Conduct seeks to restore these Shambhala principles.

Some primary principles woven into the Code of Conduct and their procedures include acknowledging that we all affect each other and depend on each other, and to act in a way that is just and fair. Among the most important principles are those which support mutual trust. These include being inclusive, being open and transparent, being accountable and being kind and caring.

These principles, if applied, also define what is the correct use of power. If we are inclusive, we do not discriminate against others or act in self-interest. If we are open and transparent, we inspire confidence and trust. If we are accountable, we act with integrity. If we are kind and caring, we ensure and protect the well-being of those in our charge.

Another key principle is manifesting confidence, through which we can act in a self-empowered way in order to resolve conflict in local communities. Within the Code of Conduct the integration of activities locally, regionally and internationally reflect mandala principle.

Appendix D: The *lha*, *nyen*, and *lu* of effective working spaces in Shambhala²

Lha is a working space's vision or "**why**" it exists, including a clear understanding and description of the needs and issues it will address and the benefit it aspires to bring. Lha elements of "spaces that work" include the following considerations:

- A working space's vision cannot simply be stated: it must be felt as a shared, heartfelt inspiration. Skillful means exist for developing and maintaining this shared view.
- If a working space carries a vision that is unclear or too broad, it will cycle repeatedly attempting to define that vision. If the cycle is not resolved, the working space will fail.
- A working space must also "walk the talk": both the systems and design it follows (*nyen*), and its members' specific work and interactions (*lu*) must be congruent with its vision.
- To "walk the talk," a working space can "design from the view" in architecting its systems and skillful means, and it can include helpful supports for its members in bringing practice mind and practice heart to their individual work and interactions.

Nyen is skillful means, "**how**" a working space does its work, meaning according to what designed systems, practices, agreements, and processes. Much of the challenge in fostering an effective working space is at this design level: establishing the systems and practices that make its vision achievable in practice. Some elements of the *nyen* of "spaces that work" include the following considerations:

- A working space's stated vision must itself be the result of a well-designed process, so that the vision is clear, appropriately specific, and has members' shared buy-in.
- Structural and material supports must be in place to facilitate the effectiveness of any space, including defined roles, clear boundaries, and defined spheres of empowerment
- A working space must also be oriented to practical action, through effective design in meetings, communications, decision making, and project management.

Both conventional workplaces and social change methodologies have numerous well-designed systems to meet these needs. Wisely selecting from among existing design elements is preferable to improvising.

Lu is practical action, "**what**" a working space does at any given time based on its vision, its design, its resources, and the practical realities it encounters. Success at the *lu* level entails attending to practical realities, such as:

- available and needed resources
- progress through workflows
- changes in the external situation

Shambhala working spaces have at times underappreciated the *lu* element. Practical considerations that should be of concern to all sometimes become the domain of one or a few members, who experience intense burnout. When Shambhala working spaces do embrace *lu*-level practicality, what results is often an intensely rewarding experience of creating enlightened society in a visible, tangible way.

This overview of the *lha*, *nyen*, and *lu* of effective working spaces is not one-directional, but iterative. Sensing the *lu*-level situation in detail is a necessary element in developing general aspirations into a coherent vision (*lha*). Moreover, successfully "Putting vision into action" greatly strengthens further

² You may view the full "Creating Spaces that Work" document, available [here](#).

vision and inspiration (Iha). Lastly, practical results and feedback should continually inform the working space's process design (nyen), as well as help refine its delivery of practical outputs into the community (lu).

Appendix E: Helpful and challenging patterns within Process Team Working Groups

Helpful Patterns Within the Process Team Working Groups

Based on feedback from Process Team members, we can identify clear patterns that, when present, have helped Working Groups work effectively:

Lha: The group has a clear purpose, founded in a clear aspiration that all members can feel, identify, and work concretely toward. The group has a culture of “walking the talk”: working to find common ground, respecting the fundamentally good intentions of all members, and so on.

Nyen: The group has some element of overall process design, such as a hoped-for product by a hoped-for deadline, with milestones along the way. The group follows good meeting practices, such as regularly scheduled meetings, clear agendas, and identifying and following up on action steps. The group has ratified decision-making structures that allow at least some decisions to be made without relying on the indefinite full consensus of all members, and empowers some actors to take action within defined parameters.

Lu: The group has members with experience or expertise relevant to the Working Group’s intended output. One or more members are able and willing to contribute large amounts of personal time to follow through on time-intensive workflows.

Challenging Patterns Within the Process Team Working Groups

Process Team feedback has identified these patterns that, when present, have made it difficult for Working Groups to work effectively:

Lha: The group has a vague, poorly specified, or overly ambitious purpose. Design-level (*nyen*) issues reinforce this problem when the group lacks processes for establishing or reestablishing shared vision, and lacks specific members empowered to define or conduct those processes.

Nyen: The group has no overall process design: is not designed toward a clear outcome, on a clear timeline, following a clear set of processes. The group has no defined process for decision making, meaning that it defaults to a full-consensus model that is cumbersome in large groups. The group has no clear sense of empowerment, or of defined roles. What the group is and what it should do is a matter of each member’s opinion, and no member can act without the approval of all others. The group follows no clearly established practices for communications, meetings, or project management.

Lu: The group has done no assessment of what resources are needed to conduct its work. Agreed-upon next steps are executed slowly or not followed up on. Members’ availability is fleeting, and declines over time with attrition and discouragement.

Appendix F: Impact of design challenges on Process Team overall effectiveness

Within the context established in Appendix E, it is possible to articulate key challenges that have confronted the Process Team as a whole during our first year, at the *nyen* or design level.

First, **while the vision of the Process Team was well articulated, we did not have processes for establishing this vision in shared agreement** among our members from the outset. The Transition Task Force clearly articulated the vision of the Process Team as a whole, but early engagement of Process Team members with each other did not include or follow processes designed to create shared buy-in to that vision among all members.

We have struggled because of a lack of cohesive process design. The PT was given a purpose and a one-year initial term, but no actual design - no sense of *how* to fulfill our purpose - meaning that our work proceeded in a less coordinated way as we attempted to design our processes from within.

As a result, **Process Team work has been fragmented and siloed.** We have not proceeded primarily as one coherent, cohesive initiative with multiple facets, but rather as many less coordinated sub-projects. While this has led to positive outcomes in some cases, it has also resulted at times in Process Team working groups following overlapping mandates and duplicating or even impeding one another's efforts in the absence of effective communication or collaboration across spaces.

Relatedly, the Process Team has often experienced an **uncoordinated relationship with Shambhala's other empowerment structures.** The Process Team's design gives us independence from other empowered actors in Shambhala, and these actors have sometimes lacked processes for sharing workflows with the Process Team, or at times even a clear motivation for doing so. Thus, we have again sometimes found ourselves "working in silos" relative to other Shambhala working spaces. The Process Team and these other working spaces are aware of their own mandates and initiatives, but not always of how these intertwine, or how to meaningfully collaborate.