

SUSTAINABLE WORLD SOURCEBOOK

~ Engagement Circles Program ~

Convener/Facilitators' Guide

Welcome to the **SUSTAINABLE WORLD SOURCEBOOK ENGAGEMENT CIRCLES** program!

Across the nation, **ENGAGEMENT CIRCLES** bring together small, local groups (Circles) of people who are committed to embodying sustainability, social justice, and interconnectedness in their worldviews and actions.

All that's needed to start an **ENGAGEMENT CIRCLE** is the new 2014 edition of the award-winning *Sustainable World Sourcebook*, this brief Facilitator Guide, and a comfortable room to seat 6-12 committed participants. The *Sourcebook*, with the new "Explore & Engage" section added to each chapter, is available on the website of the nonprofit Sustainable World Coalition (swcoalition.org).

The *Sourcebook* fosters a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of the world's most pressing global challenges — and of the most promising solutions. By diligently working with the book in the program format described below, individuals and whole communities can learn together to be part of the solution.

To thank you for starting your Engagement Circle, SWC is offering Engagement Circle conveners one free pdf plus a 20% discount on any number of hardcopies of the Sourcebook. To take advantage of these offers, go to our online store (swcoalition.org/store) and, for the pdf version, enter "CIRCLES2014" into the discount code field; for the hardcopy version, enter "CIRCLES2014P" into the discount code field.

Program Guidelines

CONVENERS COMMIT TO:

- Recruit 6-12 members who will commit to full participation over the course of at least nine Circle meetings. Membership is ideally multi-generational and multi-cultural (sample invitation: info@swcoalition.org)
- Organize the first Circle session—find a date and time that works for members, and choose a comfortable, focused, and effective space to meet (often the meetings can take place in the homes of members).
- Facilitate this first meeting—or enroll a facilitator for it among the members.

FACILITATORS COMMIT TO:

- Adhere to the intended structure of each Circle meeting (see below) — although you may customize the structure to fit the needs of specific groups when appropriate.
- In the initial session, lead the group through an orientation to group process guidelines, covering:
 - honesty and authenticity
 - deep listening
 - spirit of collaboration, free from judgment or monopolizing
 - coming to meetings fully prepared
- Support and challenge the Circle to focus not just on information and inspiration, but on individual and collective action toward environmental sustainability and social justice.
- Invite participants to promote and/or initiate the **ENGAGEMENT CIRCLES** program in their respective larger communities — including at local high schools and colleges — as they see fit.
- Attend a quarterly "best practices" session with other facilitators, organized by Sustainable World Coalition staff.

CIRCLE MEETINGS

- Each **ENGAGEMENT CIRCLE** participant must commit to at least nine meetings of the Circle – at least one meeting devoted to each of the seven chapters of the *Sustainable World Sourcebook*, plus an opening orientation meeting and a closing “sustaining the momentum” meeting.
- Meetings should be 90 minutes to two hours in duration, and may be spaced two weeks to a month apart.
- Meeting spaces should be comfortable, quiet, and accessible in terms of transportation and travel time to arrive there. Refreshments are an optional asset, ideally provided in “potluck” fashion by the members.
- At the initial meeting, members may volunteer to host subsequent meetings in their homes; the location may rotate among members who can host meetings.
- In the first, orientation Circle meeting:
 - participants get to know each other, sharing about themselves
 - they express their reasons and intentions in joining the Circle
 - they review the structure of the *Sourcebook* (including the “Explore & Engage” sections at the end of each chapter)
 - they commit to reading the first chapter of the *Sourcebook* and doing the reflective exercises in the Explore & Engage section at the end of the chapter before the next meeting
 - the facilitator sets up a “buddy system,” dividing the group into pairs or triads who will commit to support each other in their intentions between meetings
- Each subsequent Circle meeting should include:
 - discussion of both the reflective and discussion questions drawn from the Explore & Engage section for the current chapter, which participants have read to prepare for this meeting
 - dialogues about participants’ experiences with the exercises or practices they took on (individually or collectively) during the preceding weeks
 - (optional) facilitation of the participatory exercises within the group from the current chapter’s Explore & Engage section
 - (optional) brainstorming/dialogue on collective practices or projects the Circle might undertake
 - agreement to read the next chapter of the *Sourcebook* and the corresponding Explore & Engage section before the next meeting and to individually engage in at least some of its reflective exercises; alternatively, the Circle might decide together to spend more than one meeting on any particular chapter
- After engaging with Chapter 7 of the *Sourcebook* during the second-to-last meeting of the Circle, one final meeting should be held to:
 - review the practices/exercises engaged in during the preceding sessions
 - brainstorm/dialogue on continuing the Circle, or a subset of it, in any way that works for participants
 - bring closure to the Circle experience and celebrate the community it created, the growth participants have experienced, and the changed behavior, new actions, and new projects that have been initiated
 - have each participant do a written evaluation of the **ENGAGEMENT CIRCLE** program as feedback for the facilitators and the creators of the program, for the purpose of improving it
- In addition to the quarterly all-facilitator conference calls, facilitators are welcome to contact Sustainable World Coalition for support at any time.

