Fully Being Group Format
Philadelphia, USA

I think the format of the Philadelphia Fully Being group may be a helpful example of how a group may be organized. Though some of the ways we organized the meetings may benefit other groups, I'm unsure if all the aspects discussed below apply.

Our group consisted of seven people. Three people had a deeper connection to Tsoknyi Rinpoche and Pundarika, and four people had less of a relationship, including not having completed an in-person retreat with Rinpoche.

We started with a planning meeting to build consensus on how to proceed.
We agreed on a zoom meeting once per week and each gathering to be 1 hour in duration. If I were to facilitate future Fully Being classes, I would encourage 1.5-hour classes. With so much content to cover in Immersion 2, it took us almost eight months to cover the material, which was ok for some of us, but others thought it was a more significant time commitment than they had planned. Initially, we thought we could finish the course in six months. With 1.5 hours per class, we would have completed it in about six months.

1.5 hours per week would have allowed us to practice together longer before each class. We sat together for 5 to 10 minutes before each class. It wasn't enough time. If we had practiced for 15 to 20 minutes, it would have been more beneficial. After sitting, we did a few opening chants.

I would select 2 to 4 videos for us to view individually on our own before the class. After viewing each of these videos, we took notes to refer to them during the course with any comments or questions we might have. During the class, we watched another 2 to 4 videos together. After each video, one person would read the "key points" for that video to the group, and we then would move on to the following video. After viewing the videos and reading the key points, we would open it up for group discussion. The reason for viewing some videos individually is to reduce the lengthy of time needed for the Fully Being curriculum. We ended each meeting with a few closing chants.

If I were to facilitate another Fully Being study/practice group, I would encourage a 1.5-hour weekly class for the reasons described above. If there were no Covid threat, I would also encourage folks to get together in person periodically to practice/study and socialize together.

The Fully Being curriculum was well-received, effective, and inspiring. Our fledgling group has decided to continue getting together soon. We have decided to select a Tsoknyi Rinpoche book to read and discuss together. We will take the time to practice more together too.