

27 June 2023

Dear members of the Global Compassion Coalition,

I hope you are doing well. This week we celebrate one year since the founding of the Global Compassion Coalition (GCC) – Happy Birthday! – and I wanted to give you an update on all that we have achieved together.

I'll summarize our vision and strategy, describe recent accomplishments, and close with a look ahead into 2024. These are my personal opinions, and I welcome your feedback. Please use the form at the bottom of the page to send us your thoughts and reflections.

There is a lot of detail here, and I appreciate your willingness to give this your attention.

## Executive summary

We are building both the nonprofit **organization** and the large **coalition** it supports.

Our **vision** is a world with compassion and justice at its heart. Our **strategy** proceeds in three stages:

1. Establish the organization and the coalition
2. Drive an effective influence campaign for compassion in our cultures and politics
3. With major allies, pursue flagship projects to change systemic sources of suffering and spread civil society.

Recent accomplishments include:

- Building our website, events program, social media outreach, membership campaign, and initial organization of the coalition
- About 25,000 coalition members so far, growing at ~ 2000+/week
- A group of Founding Supporters and Founding Organizations
- Developing interest groups in the coalition focused on applying compassion to particular sectors and topics
- Generating revenue through programs for sale and donations from “benefactors” (\$100,000+), “major donors” (\$10,000+), and general members.

**In the rest of 2023, we will add a Compassion Corps, a Compassion Connectors program, a** one-day symposium on recent compassion science, and increasing diversity of languages and resources on our website. We'll also begin a worldwide search for an Executive Director.

**In 2024,** we'll keep building the organization and the coalition, plus add compassion hero(in)es, compassion prizes, a compassion index, and an international conference on compassion.

So far, we have been remarkably successful through the efforts of our board, donors, staff, and allies such as you.

**We have achieved this because of the support and financial backing of those who believe in our cause. Below you can read more about how you can support the GCC to grow and prosper.**

## Vision and strategy

At the **individual** level, compassion eases pain and loss, softens stress, improves health, and strengthens relationships. Compassion motivates us to relieve suffering, which must include changing its underlying **systemic** causes.

The GCC works at both of these levels - the individual and the systemic - and our overall strategy is proceeding in three stages.

### Stage One - Establishing the organization and the coalition

We are building a robust nonprofit **organization** that is a global hub for compassion. This alone is worth doing. But it is not enough.

Concentrations of wealth and power compete locally but cooperate politically to maintain the systems that profit the few at the cost of the many. For example, in America, the fossil fuel industry has spent \$2 billion over the past 15 years against climate action.

Meanwhile, most prosocial organizations rarely combine their money and other resources at a scale that can produce the systemic changes we need. Progress toward the UN's Sustainable Development Goals has stagnated; in many countries authoritarianism is on the rise, while just 6% of us live in a high-functioning democracy; and human activity continues to pour about 100 million tons of CO2 daily up into the sky.

Consequently, the nonprofit organization is fostering a large associated **coalition** in which thousands and then millions of people and organizations can come together at a scale that is big enough to be strong enough to put compassion at the heart of global society.

In countless examples - the fight against apartheid, the legalization of gay marriage, the lifting of millions of people out of extreme poverty, and many more - *it is only when large and effective coalitions form that systemic change occurs.*

The organization and the coalition support each other. Together, they promote the **study, education, application, and advocacy** of compassion.

*Their mission is to restore compassion and justice at the foundation of every society.*

Stage One activities will continue as Stage Two begins; both of these Stages will continue as Stage Three begins.

## **Stage Two - Driving an effective influence campaign in culture and politics**

Through advertising, social media, disinformation, lobbying, and corruption - spending billions if not trillions of dollars each year - toxic messaging poisons our culture and politics, and we must scale up our efforts to match it.

Prosocial campaigns for the greater good are effective when they are well-funded, **sustained over multiple years**, bold, and skillful - and when they draw on music, athletics, and entertainment to reach diverse audiences, including **the young people** who are the future of humanity. We will develop a global fund advocating for a compassionate world and use it for this purpose.

Additionally, as we have seen in multiple countries and communities, skillful sustained efforts with policy-makers (both elected and appointed) can bring compassion to the foreground of their work. We will strongly support the efforts of others to do this (e.g., in the compassionate communities movements), plus promote **an effective international coalition for compassion in politics**.

Throughout, our website hub of diverse tools for **cultivating** compassion will be a resource for turning this influence campaign into inner and outer action.

## **Stage Three - Pursuing flagship projects to restore civil society worldwide**

Remarkably, our hunter-gatherer ancestors evolved a particular way of living together that was a radical departure from the "holding-and-controlling" - alpha dominance - approaches of the hundreds of other primate species. Scientists call it *caring-and-sharing*. In essence, this is compassion and justice for the common good: we could say **civil society** focused on the welfare of the many, not just the few.

This is our deeply and uniquely human nature, our natural basis for living together for 97% of the 300,000 years that people like you and I have walked this earth. But starting roughly 10,000 years ago, the development of agriculture enabled unprecedented concentrations of wealth and power. These have fueled the biologically primitive strategy of alpha dominance as a mode of governance. And for most people, it's been more or less Game of Thrones ever since.

To help restore our birthright in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - compassion and justice, scaled up to the whole human tribe - the GCC will ally with other major NGOs to pursue highly leveraged flagship projects

One example would be ensuring that no more children die of hunger-related causes - instead of the 10,000 each day who do so currently. Imagine hundreds of major global organizations combining their money and other resources toward a transformational goal

like this. It might take a decade of sustained effort. Still, it would save over 3 million lives a year – **and necessarily increase civil society in its wake.**

\* \* \*

The path seems quite clear through Stage One, and fuzzier through Stages Two and Three. That's OK. It's a path with heart, in Jack Kornfield's memorable phrase. As long as the next steps are clear enough, it's a joy to keep walking.

## Recent accomplishments

With important contributions from Jennifer Nadel, Steve Hickman, other GCC staff, our Board and Advisory Council, and our donors, since September 2022 we have focused on five major areas in Stage One:

1. **Building a website** - It is already a rich collection of research, tools, experiential practices, advocacy, and more. As a sampler, please see the [Research Library](#), [Compassion Research Monthly](#), [Compassion Stories](#), [Case for Change](#), [Guides and Exercises](#), and [Key Documents](#). In the last quarter, over 83,000 people have visited the site from 143 countries.
2. **Producing engaging events and courses** - Each month we have a featured speaker, panel, and experiential practice. Past and upcoming speakers include Gretchen Rubin, Sharon Salzberg, Judson Brewer, Margaret Cullen, Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Tho Ha Vinh, Paul Gilbert, Gonzalo Brito, Hailan Guo, and Kristina Cavit. In April, 10,000 people registered for our [#CompassionNow](#) event, hosted by Jennifer Nadel. In June, co-sponsored by the American Psychological Association, Daniel Ellenberg chaired a ground-breaking panel on compassion+men. Events are always free, and people can access their recordings at any time.

Our courses generate income for the GCC while providing unique value. So far they include [The Heart of Compassion](#) - with Tara Brach, Thupten Jinpa, Kristin Neff, Gabor Mate, and Rhonda Magee - and [Compassion in Conflict](#) from me. In July we'll offer Heart-Centered Life: A Conversation with Mamphele Ramphela and Jim Doty. Courses are reasonably priced, and scholarships are always available.

3. **Reaching out through social media** - We post skillfully and routinely to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Our growth in these platforms has been quite dramatic, with high levels of engagement with our posts. We now have over 23,000 followers on facebook, for example.
4. **Growing membership in the compassion coalition** - The coalition has over 25,000 members, and is growing at the rate of several thousand new ones each week. (Note that the nonprofit organization does not have members, while the coalition does.)

This has built on the early and essential support of our [Founding Supporters](#) and [Founding Organizations](#), currently numbering over 500.

5. **Supporting the coalition** - Each week, members receive a richly engaging newsletter, with a remarkable 50% open rate. We are organizing various interest groups, in different stages of coalescing and leadership. For example, their “compassion+” topics include healthcare, communities, economics, climate, religion, early years, men and masculinities, business, politics, and international relations. On the GCC website, we use the Circle platform - our “Compassion Café” - as an efficient way for members to interact with each other.

\* \* \*

Of course, there is a lot more going on - all of it accomplished by our current paid [staff](#) (most of them part-time, totaling about 5 “full-time equivalents,” plus me as a volunteer):

- Khiteri Brown - Press and Membership Officer
- Kristine Claghorn - Head of Creative Partnerships
- Matt Hawkins - Chief Communications Officer
- Maria Paula Jimenez - Membership Development Coordinator
- Michael Juberg - Compassion Research Monthly
- Michelle Keane - Comptroller
- Erin Romine - Social Media Manager
- Alex Wilks - Digital Lead

In sum, we have focused on *growing by being useful*: delivering value, honoring the contributions of our donors, and **earning** the trust of our members and allies.

## Looking ahead

### Stabilizing the GCC financially

Without major corporate sponsorship or government funding, the financial backing we receive from our supporters is critical to our survival and success. Over 1000 of our members have already donated to support the GCC and we are so appreciative of their backing - but to continue to grow and have impact, more help is needed.

I invite you to please explore [our prospectus](#) which sets out the impact your donations could have. From continuing to offer exercises and guides in compassion for free to mounting campaigns for change, every donation is essential to our ambition for spreading and embedding compassion.

Happily, we have received 501c3 status as a charitable organization, so donations are tax-deductible in the USA, and in many other countries.

To make a donation to the GCC, head [here](#).

Throughout history, benefactors have provided crucial support for worthy endeavors - such as establishing our global network for relieving suffering and changing its systemic causes.

### **The second half of 2023**

We're going to keep building the organization and the coalition as described under Recent Accomplishments above. Additional highlights include:

- On the foundation laid by our previous Board chair, Jennifer Nadel, our new chair, Mamphela Ramphela, and the various board committees will keep leading us forward.
- Through the generosity of Margaret Cullen, our **Compassion Corps** program will enable certified teachers to receive small grants to offer evidence-based programs to underserved populations.
- We have **an intense commitment to diversity and inclusiveness** in our website, events, and membership outreach. For example, we are adding multiple language capabilities to the website, and are pursuing particular outreach into the Spanish-speaking world.
- Our **Compassion Connectors** program will train, organize, and support individuals to practice and amplify compassion at the community level; so far over 600 people have signed up for it, and we're just getting started.
- In September, October, and November, our events program and social media will focus, respectively, on **the themes of Peace, Science, and Climate**. For example, we hope to have a one-day symposium on recent compassion science, overseen by the board's Science committee.
- Toward the end of the year, we'll begin **a worldwide search for an Executive Director** who can manage the GCC in pursuit of the vision and strategy described in this report, and take us to a whole new level. (And I'll be able to hand off most of my management responsibilities.)

### **Plans for 2024**

Simply continuing our Stage One strategy - including stabilizing the GCC financially - will be a major accomplishment. Additionally, we aim to:

- Develop a **Compassion Index** that is an analogue to the existing happiness index.
- Identify **Compassion Hero(in)es** with compelling stories, with a particular emphasis on people from developing countries.
- Begin to offer **Compassion Prizes**
- Have an **International Compassion Congress**
- Begin edging into Stage Two - an influence campaign - with **increasingly bold and targeted messaging**.

## Conclusion

I appreciate your attention to all this. Suffering abounds, and we have a responsibility to relieve it. I could not be more grateful that you are sharing that responsibility with me and with everyone else in the compassion coalition.

Sincerely,

Rick Hanson, President, Global Compassion Coalition.