



COMPASSIONATE RECONCILIATION

March 16 – March 30, 2021 Project Update

April 2, 2021

Dear Community,

We are happy to provide this biweekly update on our work with the 3HO, Kundalini Yoga and Sikh Dharma communities. For background about the Compassionate Reconciliation Project, please feel free to visit the project website [here](#). Thank you for your time and interest in reading this update.

A Word About Trust

One of the opportunities of Compassionate Reconciliation is to build (or re-build) relationships of trust. In this update we would like to explore the issue of trust, which can be simply defined as a belief in the reliability and integrity of others.

The surfacing of varied experiences of harm within your community has brought about deeply painful questions about trust for a great many people. For some this is a crisis of trust in Yogi Bhanjan/Siri Singh Sahib as a spiritual teacher. For others it is about trust in organizational leadership, or in the foundational norms of the community. Some have experienced a crisis of trust at an interpersonal level: among Sangat members, co-workers, friends, and within families. Many are sitting with inner conflict and unsure about what to trust within themselves.

For some, the crisis of trust occurred long before this current moment. They have long awaited signals and actions from the community and its organizations that could signify a recognition of, and reckoning with, harms that occurred in the community. Others have left the community on their own accord or have experienced being compelled to leave.

In this context there are naturally many questions about the trustworthiness of the Compassionate Reconciliation process itself. Whose interests is it meant to advance? Is it really intended for authentic dialogue and change? Will it privilege harmony over meaningful justice? Will I/we be silenced or have a voice?

Near the outset of our work, Just Outcomes distributed an initial survey to gather input on perceptions of and interest in Compassionate Reconciliation. With thanks to the 395 people who responded, a summary of the survey results can be viewed [here](#) (for privacy, the written responses in Q6 are omitted). As a part of this survey, we asked about perceived barriers to participation in Compassionate Reconciliation. Notably, nearly 50% of those responding indicated “Mistrust of the process” as a potential barrier to community participation (see Q5).

Trust is a quality that is earned through relationship. It cannot be coerced, demanded, or expected. Decisions about trust are usually based on observable actions, not simply words or intentions. At this stage of our work, we expect that many community members – especially those whose trust in institutions or leadership has been previously violated – would have little reason to confer trust in our team or the processes we are supporting.

Our last update contained a link to a web form, inviting you to register your name for ongoing updates about the Compassionate Reconciliation Project. The webpage contained a template disclaimer stating that listserv registrants would consent to receiving SSSC marketing materials. This statement was concerning and even triggering for some community members. We received feedback that for some, this created serious doubts about Just Outcomes’ independence and impartiality.

The inclusion of this marketing language was an error that we should have caught and remedied before making the site live. The reality is that registrants will only receive Compassionate Reconciliation-related updates and nothing more. We sincerely apologize for this oversight and the uncertainty it caused for some community members. We have worked with the SSSC staff to remedy this error (see 'Stay Connected' below for more info). Understanding the impact this had for some individuals was an important learning for us.

We also would like to take this opportunity to provide some information that was requested of us through questions raised following our previous update, so that each of you can be as informed as possible when making decisions about your participation or connection to the Compassionate Reconciliation Project.

- Just Outcomes is contracted with the SSSC to facilitate the Compassionate Reconciliation Project.
- The SSSC hosts the Compassionate Reconciliation website and listserv. We work collaboratively with SSSC staff on these elements of communication. As an independent organization, we also of course have our own [website](#).
- Our team is committed to an ethic of care for all who are in relationship with your community. We are not in the business of reproducing adversarial relationships (i.e. right/wrong, winners/losers), nor interested in advancing the interests of specific factions over others. Instead, we work to support processes that uphold the dignity, rights, values, and well-being of all. If this becomes impossible, we no longer see ourselves as having a role in your community.
- We do not determine the outcomes of the Compassionate Reconciliation process. Rather, our role is to construct and facilitate a process where community representatives chart the path forward based on collective values.
- We are here by invitation. By extension, all of the processes we support are purely invitational and voluntary for everyone participating.

There is an element of risk, unknown, and vulnerability that will always be present in this type of process. This is particularly acute for those who have experienced harm within the community, and whose voices we believe are essential in guiding a path toward just relationships. We recognize and honor the fact that not everyone will be willing to take the risk of investing in this process. For the success of the Compassionate Reconciliation process, we will continue to work at earning trust. Without expectation or compulsion, we will also hold an invitation to explore what a gradual exploration of trust may mean among the relationships of this community.

[Stay Connected](#)

To receive regular updates from Just Outcomes about the Compassionate Reconciliation Project, please visit the [project website](#) and scroll to the bottom of the homepage to enter your information. Again, by signing up you will receive updates about Compassionate Reconciliation *only*. If you already signed up using the previous form, your information has been transferred to the new system and you do not need sign up again. You can also share your thoughts and perspectives on the Compassionate Reconciliation Project [here](#).

We look forward to providing you with further updates on the progress of this work during our next update, on April 16.

Yours in kindness, compassion and gratitude,

Catherine Barga, Matthew Hartman, Cara Walsh, Aaron Lyons, and our extended team

Just Outcomes