



# DIISC

The Darwin International Institute for the Study of Compassion  
Darwin Centre Trust

**Darwin Scholarship Appeal**  
*Compassion into Action*

# CONTACT

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Registered Charity No. 1166016





“ In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a high moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear, and give hope to each other.

— Wangari Maathai  
2004 Nobel Laureate



“ More than ever, we need to understand what compassion means, what undermines it, and how it can be fostered in our lives.





**Compassion,** altruism and kindness must become core concerns in our health, social care and educational services. Compassionate action is crucial to family, community and intercultural relations and, pressingly, in the global, national and local responses to refugees fleeing war and those left behind. Easily championed, but often scarce or undermined, compassion is considered by some to be a “fluffy” concept, naïve and unworldly. However, years of research have shown that compassionate action, for both givers and recipients, creates happier, healthier and more productive people.

As a species, we need to better understand the meaning of compassion, what undermines it and how it can be fostered in our lives. The Darwin Centre Trust (DCT) has a vision to shape future leaders of societies around the world through a programme of postgraduate study facilitated by the Darwin International Institute for the Study of Compassion (DIISC). Darwin scholars will explore definitions of compassion and their scope and utility in practice. We need to seek ways to manifest and integrate compassion at the core of all and any human activity.

Patrick Pietroni

**Professor Patrick Pietroni**

# COMPASSION

/kəm'pʌʃ(ə)n/

Middle English: via Old French from ecclesiastical Latin *compassio*(n-), from *compati*, meaning to suffer with

**empathy – sympathy - kindness – altruism - reciprocity - selfless action - prosocial behaviour - empathic concern**

Easily championed, but everywhere challenged  
COMPASSION  
is a complex yet under-researched concept.

Compassion can be defined as a feeling of sincere sympathy and sorrow for another's suffering, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate that pain. Precipitated by a complex of emotions, thoughts and responses to social and moral norms, compassionate action takes a step beyond sympathy or empathy in seeking to resolve or ease that suffering.

“ Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries.  
Without them, humanity cannot survive.

— Dalai Lama XIV

**The major world religions**, humanist organisations, and a growing body of scientists, all agree that compassion is among the highest human virtues.

<b>Christianity</b>	<i>All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. — Matthew 7:1</i>
<b>Confucianism</b>	<i>Do not do to others what you would not like yourself. Then there will be no resentment against you, either in the family or in the state. — Analects 12:2</i>
<b>Buddhism</b>	<i>Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. — Udana-Varga 5,1</i>
<b>Hinduism</b>	<i>This is the sum of duty; do naught onto others what you would not have them do unto you. — Mahabharata 5,1517</i>
<b>Islam</b>	<i>None of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. — Sunnah, Bukhari and Muslim</i>
<b>Jainism</b>	<i>A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated. — Sutrakritanga 1.1.1.33</i>
<b>Judaism</b>	<i>What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellowman. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary. — Talmud, Shabbat 31d</i>
<b>Sikhism</b>	<i>As thou deemest thyself, so deem others. I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all. — Guru Granth Sahib</i>
<b>Taoism</b>	<i>Regard your neighbor's gain as your gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss. — Tai Shang Kan Yin P'ien</i>

## **The Golden Rule**

**that one should treat others as one wishes to be treated oneself**

seems both self-evident and universally accepted as the ethic of reciprocity, yet the evidence suggests that humans struggle to put

***compassion into action***

even though we are unique among species in having the capacity and motivation to do so.



## **The Darwin International Institute for the Study of Compassion (DIISC)**

was established in October 2015 and is supported by the Darwin Centre Trust (DCT, UK Charity No. 1166016) Spearheaded by Professor Patrick Pietroni - a leader in psychological therapies, mental health and wellbeing - the DCT is guided by a highly experienced board of trustees, while DIISC works with an international network of eminent academics from affiliated universities.

All agree that there is a renewed urgency to develop more compassionate ways of relating and acting in the world. In response to this need, the DCT and DIISC have established the Darwin Scholarship Fund. As with the Fulbright or Rhodes programmes, Darwin Scholars will be provided with scholarships to enable them to complete a doctoral research degree focused on the role and relevance of compassion, cooperation and altruism in the context of their particular field. Each Darwin Scholar will be hosted by one of DIISC's affiliated universities in the UK and USA. Darwin Scholars and senior academics will gather at an annual summer school in Shrewsbury to share and discuss their research and develop strategies for disseminating their findings in the wider world. The core aim of DIISC is to foster the development of these future leaders, as intelligent and skilled practitioners and promoters of compassion.

## **DIISC has four primary aims and functions**

1. To stimulate and organise exploration, research, learning and education in and between a wide range of discourses and practices, as they help us understand compassion at individual, family, social, professional, organisational, intercultural, governmental, international and ecological levels;
2. To bring together these perspectives in integrative dialogue and mutual learning, promoting inter-disciplinary collaboration and common purpose;
3. To understand the implications for all aspects of community life, education, health care, environment, business, social policy and intercultural relations;
4. To explore, develop and evaluate practices at any or all of these levels and domains of life that promote and sustain compassion in action.





Mayfair Community Centre

Run by the community for the community. Providing services, support and activities to engage and improve healthy living.

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Room Hire | IT Drop in and Classes  
Complementary Therapies | Café  
Adult Learning Disability Service  
Health & Exercise Classes | Shop  
Day Care and Bathing | Ring & Ride  
CoCo Befriending Scheme | Crèche  
Walking for Health | Volunteering  
MAYSI - Supporting Independence  
"Mayfair Meals" Home Delivery Service  
Daily Volunteer "Listeners"

Easthope

www.easthope.org.uk

Charity

“ Only a life lived for others is the life worthwhile.

— Albert Einstein



“Compassion requires us to open our hearts and minds to all others.

— Karen Armstrong







**We live in an era of discord,** between individuals, nations, cultures and ways of life. More than ever, these conflicts and the suffering they inflict have both personal and global repercussions. While many are moved to sympathy or compassionate action by the suffering of others, many close off in anger, fear or resentment.

DIISC's aim is to study these dynamics from a wide range of perspectives with open mindedness and academic rigour. Only through deep understanding can we reposition compassion as a driving force in interpersonal relationships, social and political policy and in grassroots action through education, healthcare and development work. In and across their various disciplines, Darwin Scholars will research how compassion and altruism can be more successfully fostered in human interactions. They will also be encouraged to identify the limitations and obstacles to compassionate action, seeking to enable and encourage more prosocial behaviour.

## What would Charles Darwin have to say about compassion?

Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection is the cornerstone of our modern understanding of both human and non-human origins and development. In his three major works: *On the Origin of Species*, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, and *The Descent of Man*, it is possible to trace his understanding of the evolutionary nature of compassion and empathy, although he refers to these qualities in terms of "sympathy", "moral actions" and "social instinct" in keeping with contemporary parlance. Darwin's treatises, while complex and exploratory, do not reflect the glib shorthand of "survival of the fittest" that has since become commonplace.

Instead, Darwin's position appears to reject the supremacy of crass self-interest, focusing instead on a range of human emotions, including sympathy for others, including those beyond our family group or species. In *The Descent of Man*, he wrote:

*"We are . . . impelled to relieve the sufferings of another, in order that our own painful feelings may be at the same time relieved. In like manner we are led to participate in the pleasures of others."*

In short, Darwin's research suggests that humans have evolved to behave compassionately or, at least, that we have the capacity to do so. Recent discoveries in neuroscience and neural-imaging support this biological basis for compassion, but it was Darwin who originally argued that "[T]hose communities which contained the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best, and rear the greatest number of offspring". Modern Darwinism shows how humans are intimately related to all other organisms on our planet, a cognitive-emotional tonic for improved biophilia as well as kinder, more inclusive relations between human beings. Humans derive a sense of meaning from performing costly prosocial, altruistic acts and happiness from receiving such kindnesses from others. The brain has developed in a way that allows us to engage in complex indirect and time-delayed reciprocity. We can experience the positive emotions associated with compassionate action without being immediately repaid by the same individuals we help— these positive emotions breed happiness and more compassionate action.



“ Sympathy beyond the confines of man, that is, humanity to lower animals, seems to be one of the latest moral acquisitions... This virtue, one of the noblest with which man is endowed, seems to arise incidentally from our sympathies becoming more tender and more widely diffused until they extend to all sentient beings.

— Charles Darwin





### **Continuing Darwin's legacy,**

the DCT is honoured to receive the patronage of Professor Ruth Padel, an award-winning British poet, author and scholar. Ruth won a British Council Darwin Now award for *Where the Serpent Lives*, a novel with subtexts of Darwinian theory, ecological peril and personal exploration. She has penned several collections of poetry and essays, including *Tigers in Red Weather*, a first-hand account of tiger conservation, *The Mara Crossing*, a mixed genre meditation on animal and human migration, and *Learning to Make an Oud in Nazareth*, poems of the Middle East. Her *Darwin – A Life in Poems* is a verse biography of Charles Darwin, her great-great-grandfather. She teaches poetry at King's College, London and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Like her great forebear, Ruth is a dedicated conservationist; her work combines scientific rigour with literary flair and great compassion.



“ We are ... impelled to relieve the sufferings of another in order that our own painful feelings may be at the same time be relieved.

— Charles Darwin

**Led by Patrick Pietroni**, the work of the DCT is guided by a strong board of trustees, who bring with them a wealth of life experience and professional expertise. DIISC, the operational arm of the DCT, is managed by our Shrewsbury based team. DIISC is expanding to open centres in University of Central Lancashire (UK) and University of New Mexico (USA).



*This work is a marathon not a sprint*

Chair  
**Professor Charles Easmon**  
Former Clinical Director, London Region



*We are helping to grow the future leaders of our societies*

Director  
**Professor Patrick Pietroni**  
Former Dean of Postgraduate General Practice, London



*Compassion is at the heart of nursing care*

Trustee  
**Professor Rod Thomson**  
Director of Public Health, Shropshire



*Compassion is a responsibility for all humanity*

Trustee  
**Councillor Karen Calder**  
Chair of Health and Wellbeing, Shropshire



*Let us bring compassion back into life; we owe it to future generations*

Trustee  
**Professor Mohamed Keshavjee**  
Mediator & recipient of the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Peace Award



*We're working towards a paradigm shift, putting compassion at the heart of our decision-making*

Staff  
**Dr Laura Noszlopy**  
Senior Research Fellow & Communications Manager



*Compassion is intangible, immeasurable, abundantly available - a massively undertapped resource that we can all access*

Trustee  
**Darshita Gillies**  
Business Entrepreneur



*Compassion is a virtue but also a strength; it merits study and practice*

Trustee  
**Lord Stone of Blackheath (Andrew)**  
Former Managing Director, Marks & Spencer



*Understanding compassion in action is the first step to a society we all want to be part of*

Staff  
**Lee Good**  
Operational Manager



Oh, the comfort —  
the inexpressible comfort of feeling *safe* with a person —  
having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words,  
but pouring them all right out,  
just as they are,  
chaff and grain together;  
certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them,  
keep what is worth keeping,  
and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.

— Excerpted from 'A Life for a Life'  
by Dinah Maria Mulock Craik



## Darwin Scholarship Fund Case for Support

*“This work is a marathon, not a sprint”*

There is daily news of violence, war, suffering and misunderstanding around the world. Increasing numbers of people, young and old, and from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and walks of life, report a sense of disconnect and alienation as social safety nets fall away.

Tragedy can move us to tears or to action. The world religions, while implicated in many conflicts, all agree on the reciprocal principle of the Golden Rule – of treating others as one would hope to be treated oneself. Individual acts of kindness, grassroots projects and even government policies can sometimes reveal a profound human instinct to care and provide for one another.

The Darwin Centre Trust (DCT) aims ultimately to promote such efforts. It nurtures and funds rigorous interdisciplinary research into the nature of and motivations behind compassionate behaviour. Rather than simply lobbying for people to behave more compassionately and altruistically, we have established the Darwin International Institute for the Study of Compassion (DIISC) to support high quality research that sheds light on how humans have evolved with the capacity for compassionate action, yet so often choose not to use it. We are interested in finding out what

obstacles hinder the expression of compassion and are committed to an honest exploration of its “shadow side”.

This project is envisaged as a marathon, not a sprint. The DCT is laying firm institutional foundations to support our growing network of academic affiliates and DIISC’s first cohort of postgraduate students. Our international network of affiliated universities have committed to training future leaders with a deep and critical understanding of compassionate thought and action. Our collective aim is to integrate these altruistic qualities into all aspects of social policy, international and organisational governance, social and medical care, and education. We believe that the process itself will create outward ripples of compassionate thought and action.

During a busy and successful inaugural year (2015-2016), the DCT has achieved formal charitable trust status with the UK Charity Commission. It has established an effective system of governance, with a highly skilled and experienced board of trustees. The DCT has launched DIISC; fundraising for operational costs and the Darwin Scholarship Fund has begun in earnest with a series of compassion-focused events.



Moving forward into its second year, we are working to:

1. Establish the DIISC international academic board
2. Facilitate the first summer school
3. Continue to work on the DIISC prospectus with faculty from affiliated universities
4. Establish two new academic centres for DIISC, in the UK (University of Central Lancashire) and USA (University of New Mexico)

The DCT requests your generous support for:

Capital costs:

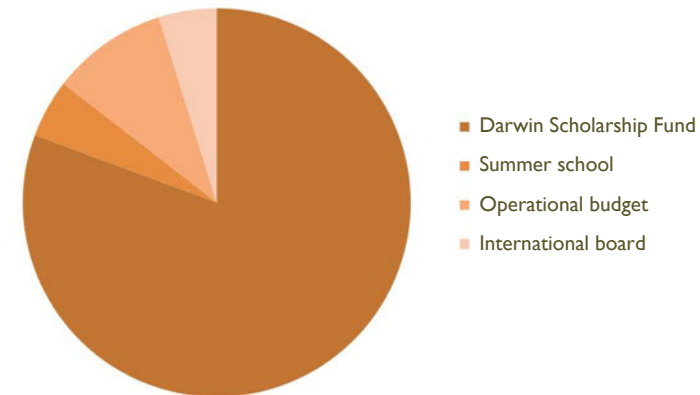
- Annual summer school in Shrewsbury
- Operational costs associated with running DIISC centres in the UK and USA

Darwin Scholarship Fund:

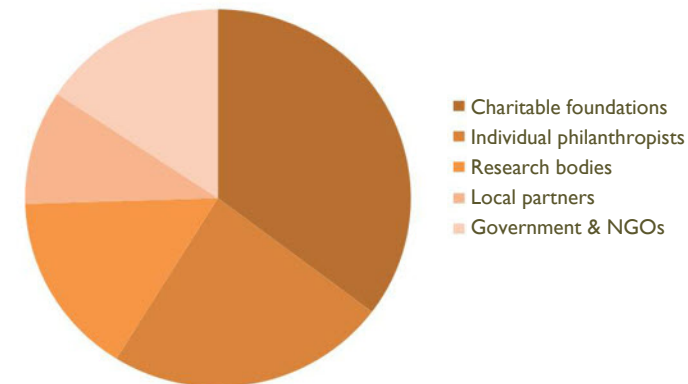
- Each Darwin Scholarship costs £100,000, of which 10% is allocated to administration of the grant and summer school costs
- DIISC aims to offer four Darwin Scholarships each year

The DCT will eventually establish an endowment fund to provide ongoing support for DIISC and the Darwin Scholarships.

**DIISC's projected budget** is divided between the Darwin Scholarship Fund and DIISC's operational costs. The largest portion will be allocated to funding Darwin Scholars for the duration of their 4-year research degrees. The remaining funds will cover operational and project costs.



**The DCT accepts funding from a range of sources.**



**DIISC relies on the support** of individuals and organisations with a shared vision for a more compassionate world. Sponsoring a Darwin Scholar is a direct way to foster the future leaders of our societies, ensuring that compassionate action is at the core of policy and practice.

## Proof of Concept

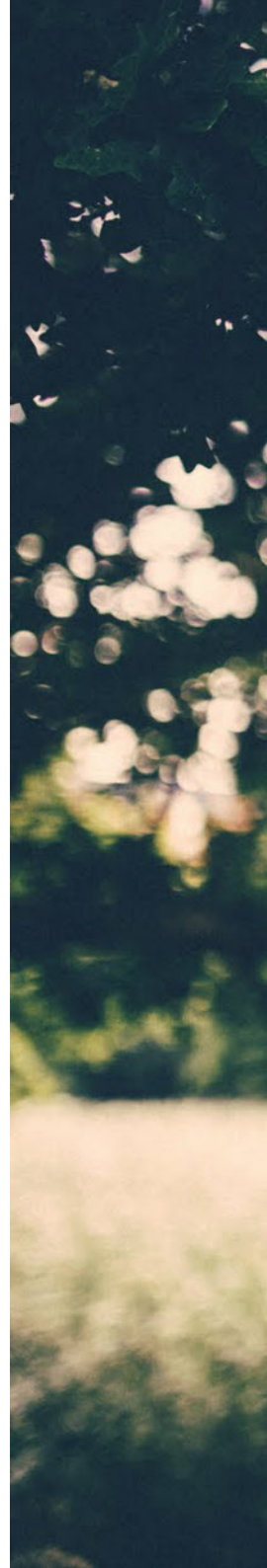
The Darwin Centre Trust (DCT, UK Charity No. 1166016) was established in October 2015 in Shrewsbury. The DCT was launched at the Working Conference on Compassion, organised and hosted by Professor Pietroni and guided by an international steering committee of experts in the field.

Since its inception, the DCT has:

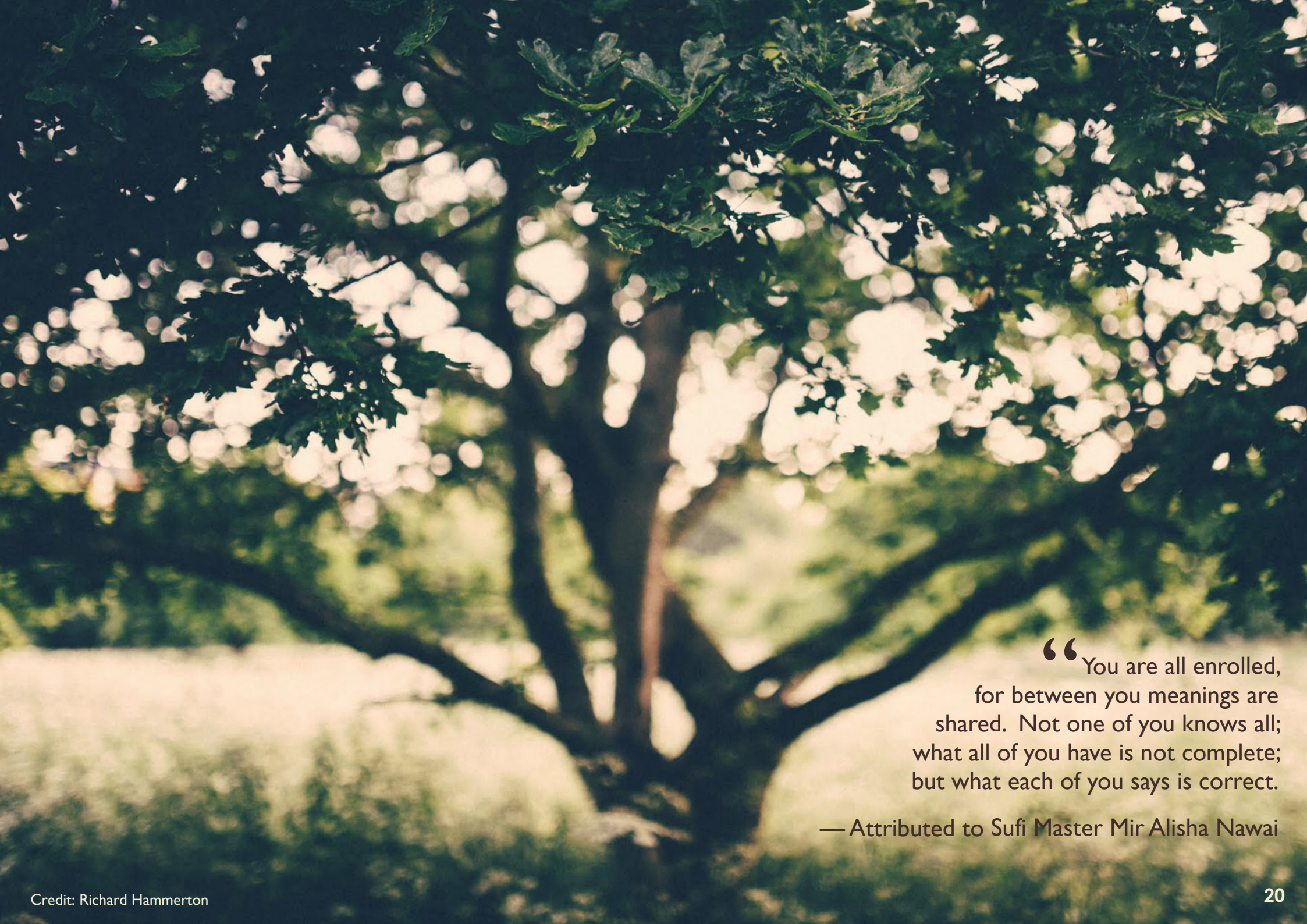
1. Established the Darwin International Institute for the Study of Compassion (DIISC) as an innovative centre for interdisciplinary postgraduate research on compassion
2. Developed a strong board of experienced trustees
3. Welcomed Professor Ruth Padel as Patron
4. Secured the support of Shropshire Council and office premises in Shrewsbury
5. Established institutional bases for DIISC in the UK and USA
6. Grown a network of affiliated universities in the UK and USA
7. Secured operational funding for year 1 (2015-2016)
8. Recruited an international academic board to oversee research
9. Organised the first summer school, taking place in Shrewsbury during August 2017

Throughout this remarkable first year, the DCT has laid the foundations to support DIISC and raising funds that will enable Darwin Scholars to complete their doctoral studies with one of a growing network of affiliated universities around the world. The Darwin Scholars will have very different backgrounds and perspectives, but all are seeking to better understand 1) what gives human beings the capacity for compassion, altruism and kindness, 2) what motivates compassionate feelings, behaviour and action, and 3) what social, psychological or physiological issues can hinder prosocial behaviour.

DIISC is a long-term project with long-term goals. Our growing network of international affiliates and high profile supporters is testimony to the relevance and timeliness of this compassionate revolution.







“ You are all enrolled,  
for between you meanings are  
shared. Not one of you knows all;  
what all of you have is not complete;  
but what each of you says is correct.

— Attributed to Sufi Master Mir Alisha Nawai

## **Interdisciplinary research and exploration**

is central to DIISC's learning model. We encourage academics and practitioners to move through disciplinary boundaries, resulting in richer and more rounded understandings of what it means to be human. While Darwin Scholars will necessarily be situated in particular faculties or departments in one of the DIISC-affiliated institutions, their mentors will actively encourage enquiry across perceived borders.

Undeniably, perspectives, concerns and methods from different fields and disciplines may at times clash or contradict each other, but our affiliates, students and teachers agree to coexistence and dialogue. DIISC will model and promote Socratic dialogue, conversation and reflection – with a firm acceptance of the inevitability of doubt and of the dark forces that can emerge within even the most benign of traditions and individuals.

This academic and personal exploration of compassion is a step towards “changing the conversation”. We aim to gain fluency in interdisciplinary and collaborative working to develop an inclusive, intellectually credible and influential narrative about compassion that sends ripples out into the wider world.

Researchers, working across the disciplines, will seek innovative and meaningful ways to integrate compassionate action into the heart of:

- arts & literature
- business & commerce
- cities & the built environment
- education
- environment & ecology
- governance & politics
- health & social care
- mediation & conflict resolution
- medicine & neuroscience
- psychology & psychotherapy
- religion & interfaith dialogue



“ The reflective practitioner will delight in another’s work, and in connecting their own to it.

— Mary Kahn





**The Darwin International Institute for the Study Compassion** is growing a global network of institutional affiliates dedicated to promoting the study of compassion. Successful Darwin Scholars will complete their research degrees at one of these academic institutions, supported by world leaders in their chosen field. With centres in University of Central Lancashire in the UK and University of New Mexico in the USA, DIISC has so far agreed a Memorandum of Understanding for collaborative work with nine institutions:

- Birmingham City University, UK
- Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, USA
- University of Central Lancashire, UK
- The CoED Foundation, UK
- The Compassionate Mind Foundation, UK
- University of Derby, UK
- The International Centre for Compassionate Organizations, USA
- University of Montana, USA
- University of New Mexico, USA

The following institutions have expressed a strong interest in becoming DIISC affiliates:

- Harvard Kennedy School, USA
- Harvard Medical School, USA
- The Law Society, UK
- Stanford University, USA
- Staffordshire University, UK
- University of Wales, UK
- The University of Warwick UK
- University of Westminster, UK

Faculty representatives from the affiliated institutions will attend the first summer school in 2017 to form DIISC's International Academic Board. The summer school will become an annual gathering where students, senior researchers and supervisors can work collaboratively towards an innovative, interdisciplinary understanding of the nature, scope and limitations of compassionate action in the world.













... you have to understand,  
that no one puts their children in a boat  
unless the water is safer than the land  
no one burns their palms  
under trains  
beneath carriages  
no one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck  
feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled  
means something more than journey.  
no one crawls under fences  
no one wants to be beaten  
pitied

no one chooses refugee camps  
or strip searches where your  
body is left aching  
or prison,  
because prison is safer  
than a city of fire  
and one prison guard  
in the night  
is better than a truckload  
of men who look like your father  
no one could take it  
no one could stomach it  
no one skin would be tough enough ...

... no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice in your ear  
saying-  
leave,  
run away from me now  
i don't know what i've become  
but i know that anywhere  
is safer than here

— Excerpted from 'Home' by Warsan Shire



Go and open the door.  
Maybe outside there's  
a tree, or a wood,  
a garden,  
or a magic city.

Go and open the door.  
Maybe a dog's rummaging.  
Maybe you'll see a face,  
or an eye,  
or the picture  
of a picture.

Go and open the door.  
If there's a fog  
it will clear.

Go and open the door.  
Even if there's only  
the darkness ticking,  
even if there's only  
the hollow wind,  
even if  
nothing  
is there.

go and open the door.

At least  
there'll be  
a draught.

— 'The Door' by Miroslav Holub