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# Gender Equity and Reconciliation International

## Breakthrough in Transforming Gender Relations Across the Globe

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Gender Equity and Reconciliation  
International



## The need for Gender Equity and Reconciliation

Gender-based oppression and violence afflict every segment and level of human societies – from the bedroom to the boardroom—irrespective of race, class, culture, religion, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The #MeToo campaign and recent revelations of rampant sexual harassment lay bare the raw pain of gendered dysfunction in contemporary society, and dispel any illusion of having gone beyond this legacy of oppression. Daily acts of physical or psychological violence and ‘micro-aggressions’ in gendered relationships establish social conditions that foster violence on a larger scale.<sup>1</sup> Nations with greater gender inequality are statistically more likely to engage in warfare.<sup>2</sup> Gender is a central fault-line in all societies, and there is urgent need for new strategies and effective methods to transform gender injustice on all levels – to foster a peaceful, sustainable future for humankind. Gender Equity and Reconciliation International was founded as an innovative step in this direction.



*I was deeply moved and changed, and am profoundly grateful for the experience. So many clients in my psychiatric practice are depressed and traumatized by gender violence, as is our entire culture. The GERI vision is unique, and uniquely valuable to the world.*

—Peter Rutter, MD, Jungian psychiatrist,  
author of *Sex in the Forbidden Zone* and  
*Understanding Sexual Harassment*

<sup>1</sup>Melanie Verwoerd and Claudia Lopes (eds.), *Sexualized Violence in the National Debate: Cross-border Observations on India and South Africa*, Heinrich Boll Foundation Southern Africa, April 2015.

<sup>2</sup>Valerie Hudson et al, *Sex and World Peace*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

## What is Gender Equity and Reconciliation?

Over the past 25 years, Gender Equity and Reconciliation International (GERI) has developed a transformative process called Gender Equity and Reconciliation that has been introduced in nine countries: the United States, South Africa, India, Colombia, Kenya, Australia, Croatia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Born of necessity in the 1990s from revelations closely analogous to the recent exposés of Harvey Weinstein, Bill O’Reilly and others – the GERI process provides a rare forum for women *and* men to *jointly* confront the personal, social, and cross-cultural origins of gender oppression and exploitation, and to reach mutual healing and understanding. Open to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, the GERI process aligns with principles of truth and reconciliation. Our trainings apply an experiential learning methodology combined with skillful facilitation in a group setting, to provide a community-based approach that complements traditional activist, political, and academic approaches. The GERI methodology was explicitly endorsed by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu in 2013.



## Who can participate?

GERI programs are open to adults of all ages from all walks of life, with a strategic focus in five target areas: (1) Peacebuilding and reconciliation in NGO and governmental sectors, (2) Community organizations, (3) Universities and colleges, (4) Mental health and psychotherapy, and (5) Religious organizations. We also hold workshops for the general public. Follow-up programs are offered to support participants to integrate key learnings and practices in



their personal and professional lives.

Men are strongly encouraged and welcomed into GERI programs, which entail no ‘male-bashing,’ but instead inspire men to

take part joyfully in the transformation of gender relations in society. The greatest male privilege is not any of the social advantages afforded to men in a patriarchal society, but rather for men to actively participate in dismantling the unjust patriarchal system itself.



Archbishop Desmond Tutu officially endorsed GERI and its methodology in 2013.

## Gender Equity and Reconciliation - Implementing legislation against gender injustice

By addressing root causes of gender injustice, GERI programs offer a practical approach that helps implement legislation against gender-based violence and peace and security for women, such as the Convention to Eliminate All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, and United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1325 of 2000 and 1820 of 2008, and more recent UNSCRs on women, peace, and security.

## Impacts of GERI programs

Monitoring and evaluation research indicates that GERI workshops have significant impacts on participants' lives, attitudes, and behaviours towards other genders. Participants report applying new skills and knowledge to address gender-based conflicts in their lives and communities, including speaking up to a greater extent about gender injustice and oppression in the workplace, the family, and in communities. Men often report a new awareness of the plight of women in patriarchal society, and a commitment to curb their own afflicted behaviors (or violence), and that of those around them. Women often report healing from gender-based violence and trauma, and a new understanding of ways that men are afflicted in patriarchal society.

## Academic research validates the efficacy of GERI programs

Research on the GERI methodology is underway at two South African universities: University of the Free State, and Stellenbosch University. A three-year research initiative was launched in 2015 by Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a leading international researcher in trauma and forgiveness, who serves on the Board of the Desmond and Leah Tutu

Legacy Foundation, and who also played a key role as staff psychologist for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

Initial research findings were presented by Dr. Samantha van Schalkwyk at the Third International Conference on Advances in Women Studies (Buffalo, NY, July, 2016). Two intensive GERI programs were conducted for a cohort of 28 university students, with monthly follow-up meetings over an academic year. Voluminous data were collected and meticulously analyzed, revealing two major impacts of the GERI programs on the students: (1) 'hegemonic masculinities' among the men were significantly transformed, and (2) underlying 'gender ideologies' and relational dynamics between women and men were significantly shifted in a positive direction. The researchers characterized the latter result as unprecedented, and reported that their data enables them to pinpoint precise dynamics in the transformation of consciousness in gender relations between women and men. This research will be published in peer-reviewed journals in 2018.

## Professional trainings in Gender Equity and Reconciliation

Professional trainings for facilitators of the GERI methodology are currently conducted in the United States, South Africa, and India. More than fifty professionals completed the 2017 year-long trainings in these three countries. New professional trainings are being launched in the United States, South Africa, Colombia, and Kenya in 2018 and 2019. For more details and application information, please visit the GERI website at [www.GRworld.org](http://www.GRworld.org).



*I have been looking for a long time to find a way to bring healing and reconciliation between women and men. This work is the answer. We need much more of this work.*

— Nozizwe Madlala Routledge,  
former Deputy Speaker of Parliament, and  
Deputy Minister of Health, South Africa

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## GENDER EQUITY & RECONCILIATION INTERNATIONAL - PROFESSIONAL STAFF

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Cynthia

Will

Zanele

Judy

Julien

Laurie

Desiree



Garrett

William

Esther

John

Rob

Judy

Natalia

**William Keepin, PhD** and **Rev. Cynthia Brix, PhD (hon)** are founding Directors of the Gender Equity and Reconciliation International (GERI) project and the Satyana Institute in Seattle, Washington. They have conducted over 120 workshops and trainings in nine countries. Their books include *Divine Duality: The Power of Reconciliation Between Women and Men*, and *Women Healing Women*. Will's other books include *Song of the Earth* (with M. Harland) and *Belonging to God: Spirituality, Science, and a Universal Path of Divine Love*.

**Zanele Khumalo, MA** is International Program Officer, Senior GERI trainer, and director of GenderWorks, an affiliate of GERI based in Cape Town, South Africa. She is a professional facilitator with experience in diversity management, intercultural communication, and Alternatives to Violence. Zanele is directing an inspiring initiative to implement GERI programs in South African township communities.

**Judy Bekker** is a Senior GERI Trainer based in South Africa. She has been instrumental in the development and delivery of GERI professional trainings in South Africa and internationally. Judy has been a professional facilitator and solo wilderness guide for 35 years.

**Julien Devereux, PhD** is Senior GERI Trainer, based in Texas. He is former Chair of the ManKind Project USA, and brings vast experience in clinical counseling and management. He has served GERI domestically and internationally since 2002.

**Rev. Laurie Guam** is a GERI Trainer based in South Africa. He was for many years the only openly gay minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. He and his father were instrumental in the Church's landmark ruling to ordain gay ministers and bless same sex unions in 2015.

**Desiree English** is Operations Officer and Facilitator for GenderWorks, GERI's affiliate in South Africa. She is highly skilled in HR, and is a trained practitioner of Integrative Trauma Healing, and Trauma Release Exercises (TRE).

**Garrett Evans, BS**, is Program Officer and Facilitator for GERI based in Seattle, WA. He has extensive experience in Zen, silent meditation, and conflict resolution practice.

**William Diplock, M Soc Sc** and **Esther Diplock, M Couns** are mental health counselors in private practice, GERI Facilitators, and co-directors of Gender Equity and Reconciliation Australia (GERA), an affiliate of GERI in Brisbane, Australia.

**John Tsungme Guy, MA, LMHC** is a psychotherapist in private practice based in Seattle, Washington, and a Facilitator and Trainer for GERI.

**Rob McLeod** is a GERI Trainer based in South Africa. He is an organizational consultant specializing in leadership training, change management, diversity, and conflict transformation. He travels internationally as GERI trainer.

**Judy Connors, MA**, is a senior GERI Trainer based in South Africa. She is a Kundalini yoga teacher with extensive leadership experience, and leads interfaith spiritual retreats. Judy led the early implementation of GERI programs in Johannesburg, Soweto, and surrounding areas.

**Natalia Cediél, PhD** is senior Consultant for GERI in Bogotá, Colombia. She is a lecturer at Universidad Nacional de Colombia.



For more information, visit Gender Equity and Reconciliation International at [www.GRworld.org](http://www.GRworld.org)