



Gender Equity & Reconciliation International (GERI)

- **Charter for Compassion**
- **Sixty new facilitator trainees**
- **U.N. NGO CSW**
- **Bahá'í International Community**
- **FREE Intro to GERI**
- **Upcoming online courses**
- **East Africa**
- **Latin America**
- **Religious chaplaincy & civil society**



Heartfelt greetings!

It is a great joy to share with you recent highlights from Gender Equity and Reconciliation International (GERI). As diversity and inclusion is becoming ever more important today, GERI is more relevant than ever—balancing our decades of experience with our dynamic new leadership team, plus new initiatives that build on the application of GERI for the BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities, and Latin America.



Honoring ceremony from recent workshop near Cape Town, South Africa.

At the same time, our hearts are with our GERI friends around the world who continue to feel the impact of COVID19, and for those moving through turbulent times within their countries. May peace and justice prevail.

Highlighting recent developments, we currently have over 60 dedicated professionals from eight countries who are training to become certified GERI Facilitators (half of them online, and half in-person). Our collaborative programs are continuing with established

partners, and several new collaborations have emerged recently, including: a GERI course series for the Charter for Compassion global network, a corporate Diversity and Inclusion GERI program for SheTek (which supports women in technology), a special introductory GERI session for the United Nations NGO CSW leaders, conference sessions on GERI for One Young World and the Operations Research Society, workshops with the Bahá'í International Community, University of the Western Cape, and Spiritual Directors International, as well as a series of events with the Naramata Centre in British Columbia. Other new programs, including the GERI Heart Circle community groups, continue to thrive.

Please enjoy the videos, photos, and articles below, and join us for some of our upcoming programs!

Blessings and peace,
Will, Cynthia, and the GERI Team

Upcoming Programs

Online Course

**Saturdays, Aug. 10 - Sept.
21**

Sessions begin at 8am Pacific
with Charter for Compassion

**Details and
Registration**

In-Person Workshop

Sept. 8 - 12, 2021

Naramata Centre,
British Columbia, Canada

**Details and
Registration**

***Want to learn more and experience a free taste of
GERI?***

Join us for a 1-hour interactive introduction to the program.

Tuesday, July 20

5 - 6pm Pacific Time

Register for free

Tuesday, August 3

3 - 4pm South Africa Time

Register for free

[See website for course details and times](#)

Global Facilitator Trainings in Full Swing Online and In-Person



Over 60 trainees are engaged in the GERI online and in-person Facilitator Training Modules, which are running concurrently. A new global group of 30 began their online training this spring, with trainees from Australia, Canada, Kenya, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, and the United States. The South African cohort of 33 trainees continued their in-person training in Module 2 & 3 this year in March and June.

GERI at the United Nations NGO Forum of Commission on the Status of Women

March 17 & 23

"The authentic dialogue and connections really are a step towards fostering unity and equality. . ."

~ Participant from invitational GERI session

Nearly 60 leaders from over 20 countries - representing women's & men's organizations, foundations, NGOs, and other initiatives focusing on gender equality - attended a special invitational session at the U.N. NGO CSW.

"Thank you for renewing my faith in humanity and restoring a sense of hope!"

In this two hour session, we took a deep dive into sharing our personal gender stories and challenges, discovering remarkable commonalities in experiences from diverse cultures across the globe, and making new substantive connections with one another.

Our deep gratitude to Saphira Rameshfar, who proposed this special event and helped to organize it. Ms. Rameshfar is a United Nations Representative in the U.N. Office of Bahá'í International, and she is

also an Executive Board Member of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women.

In addition to this invitational gathering, GERI also presented a public parallel event on March 17, "*Sharing Truths & Stories for Transforming Patriarchy and Achieving Equality.*"

Thanks to our team of GERI Facilitators and companions who beautifully held these gatherings, and especially to the lead facilitators, Karambu Ringera, Jorge Rico, Hazel Lobo, Tristan Johannes, Myra Kinds, Hugo Sanchez, Silvia Araya, and Gaus Sayyad.



Invitational Course in collaboration with the Bahá'í International Community

Jan 28 - 30, 2021

"I came in as a stranger with little knowledge of GERI and the surrounding community, but they brought me in completely. I feel heard, understood, and respected. My fellow

participants taught me so much through sharing their stories and thoughts with me and the rest of the group."

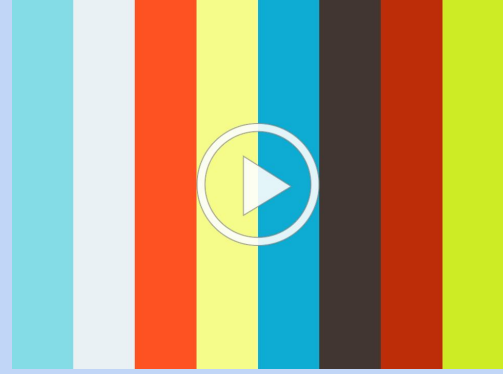
~ Participant from invitational GERI course



This was a heart-stirring GERI online course with 22 professionals engaged in various types of social justice and human rights work within governmental, United Nations, academic, and non-profit sectors — many of whom work at the interface of religion and social justice.

"I experienced an amazing shift of awareness. . . I had no idea how the structures around gender had impacted me, and still played a part in how I viewed my personal power. This was eye-opening and I felt an amazing compassion for the experiences of others, men and women. Truly, I felt an experience of the depth of human connection, that I will carry with me into all that I do."

Following the course, GERI Co-Founders Cynthia Brix and Will Keepin were guests along with Saphira Rameshfar and Rahmah Abdulaleem on the panel discussion titled, *The Role of Religion in advancing Gender Equality.*



Deep gratitude to Tschika McBean, Human Rights Officer at the Bahá'í Office of Public Affairs in Washington DC, who has held the vision of introducing GERI to her colleagues. Tschika co-organized this event with GERI.

Many thanks to our fabulous GERI facilitation team: Desireé English, Jorge Rico, Suzanne Kay, Silvia Araya, Garrett Evans, Phumzile Stofile, Phil Rogacki, Shelli Lether.

Kenya and East Africa Online Course

March 4 - 7

Online Course with Charter for Compassion

April 17 - May 22

"The journey took us around various points of human wounds inflicted by gender systemic conditioning; and brought us back home to a common ground of our power to heal in community!"

~ Karambu Ringera, International Peace Initiatives Founder & GERI Trainer

This powerful online course brought together a group of 35 people from Kenya and seven other Nile Basin countries.

"The safe space created during the online workshop invited the 'inner me' to engage me in a personal dialogue, which is still

"I think this exceptionally designed course should be taken by everyone no matter your age. Healing our experiences and attitudes around gender, even if buried or very old issues, is transformative and will heal your heart, and in turn humanity. This course and these teachings are critical to the evolving enlightenment and well being of our children."

~ Nancy Rushlow Bray, Charter for Compassion

It was a joy to hold this program in partnership with the Charter for Compassion, and to welcome over 30 people from 7 different countries for this online course.

ongoing a month after the workshop. I have found a new source of joy from the insight that only by finding inner peace and healing, can I be an agent of healing and reconciliation between genders."
 ~ Male participant



It was beautiful to see the deep and authentic sharing by women and men in the same gender groups and cross gender sharing. As one woman reflected in the final session, she found herself with tears in her eyes, not of sadness, but from the opening of her heart.



Gratitude to the facilitation team, Desiree English, Tristan Johannes, Karambu Ringera, Phil Vivirito, and Lora Williams, and also to the GERI support team, Phumzile Stofile, Tresa Antony, Evans Mwangi, Xolile Pro Zulani, Myra Kinds, Gaus Sayyad, and Sarah Flournoy.

Gratitude to Clay Boykin, Marilyn Turkovich, Olivia McIvor, and the whole Charter for Compassion team for their work and dedication in organizing this course. We are delighted to be continuing this as a regular series in partnership. Thanks also to the facilitation team, Lucille Meyer, Shivaprasad Kumarswamy, Antonia Porter, Hetal Jobenputra, & Phil Rogacki.

Growing Latin American GERI

Latin American GERI was launched in autumn 2020 through the dedicated leadership of Silvia Araya-Villalobos and the facilitation team: Jorge Rico, Alejandra Warden, Hugo Sanchez, Natalia Cediel, Jaime Valdes, and Kritin Lietz.



The team has hosted four full GERI online courses, which have been beautifully received. Participants have shared and connected around diverse (and common) experiences and stories - from living with harassment in public places, to the need to hide their strength and

intelligence in professional settings, to the challenges of being raised in a culture of *machismo*, or of fathers unable to see their children. Without fail, this sharing and truth-telling begins to open into deeper connection and appreciation. As one woman reflected, ***"I love being part of GERI because I was listened to, and I listened. I felt confident in opening my heart, and others trusted me to tell their experiences, which I treasure in my heart this and it fills me with gratitude. . ."***

All the workshops are conducted in Spanish, and Silvia dedicated intensive efforts to the translation of GERI materials into Spanish.

Recent Interviews:

Cynthia Brix and Will Keepin joined Chaya Pamula, SheTek Founder, PamTen Co-Founder, President, and CEO, and Founder of SOFKIN (Support Organization for Kids in Need), to explore how to bring allyship and strengthened gender relations into workplace communities.



Religious Chaplaincy and Civil Society Workshop - Paarl, South Africa

April 19 - 21

What a joy to welcome into GERI this group of 34 leaders from the Boland rural region outside Cape Town. Religious ministers, government officials, and NGO leaders joined for three days of deep sharing, heartfelt listening, and inspired honoring of one another's stories.



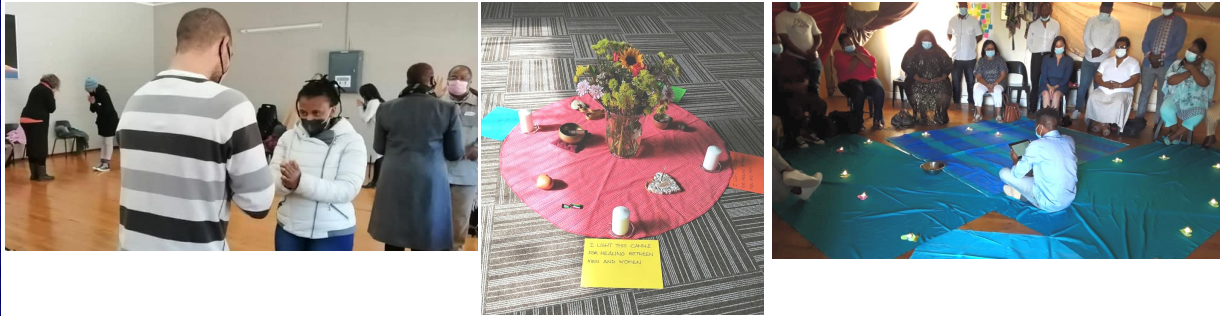
As one woman reflected afterwards, ***"The course changed my life in an amazing way. It enabled me to share my inner most intimate truths in a safe space with people who had their own inner truths and experiences too. It was practical and seemed easy, but was***

deep.

A true experience that helped me start the journey to my own healing. I was humbled by the reaction of men to my truths; it was not defensive, but allowed me to share, and to feel that I am acknowledged. This was a first experience but it surely made an impact.

South Africa needs this kind of training. We need to heal as families, communities and the country."

Gratitude to Phumzile Stofile and Desireé English for their tireless work in organizing this program, and to the facilitation team of Dorothea Hendricks, Les Thomas, Desireé English, and Xolile Pro Zulani.



Your support is welcomed and deeply appreciated and helps make this work possible. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to our 501(c)3 educational non-profit, please click the donate button below.



Checks will also be warmly received and may be sent to our non-profit:
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