



GROWTH & INSPIRATION

February 2016

Letter from Cynthia Brix and Will Keepin:

Dear Friends,

Heartfelt greetings! We've just completed the first module in the four-part series of the Gender Equity and Reconciliation Training in Bangalore, India. What an inspiring and uplifting experience it has been for us to work with this incredibly committed group of 26 new trainees. We sense that this was a heart-opening experience for all involved. It certainly was for us. Even after 24 years of sharing this work, we are constantly buoyed with a renewed sense of what is possible when such courageous people come together to transform gender injustice head-on.



Next, we are bound for Cape Town, South Africa where we will join some of our senior facilitators and embark together to lead a new round of trainings beginning March 2, 2016, and complete a year-long training that began last year. We are thrilled to welcome the cohort of 20 new trainees to Module one of our South Africa Training. What a joy to be growing the work of GRI

concurrently in three countries around the world! Please read on for inspirational stories from the extended GRI community, meet two newest members of our GRI professional team, find a new feature called, "Stories of Transformation," and learn about exciting updates from South Africa.

With gratitude and blessings,
Will and Cynthia



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STILL TIME TO APPLY:

only two spaces left!

March 2-6, 2016

South Africa Gender Equity &
Reconciliation Training

[Click here to apply!](#)

APPLY BY MAR 15 FOR SPECIAL RATE:

April 23-38, 2016

United States Gender Equity &
Reconciliation Training

[Click here to apply!](#)

HIGHLIGHTS from GRI Training in India

"This was my first time
experiencing the Gender Equity
& Reconciliation work..."



Patrick Fischer, GRI Project Coordinator
shares his experience of the recent
Training in Bangalore, India on
February 8-12:

"What a joy to experience this work with 25 other individuals, both young and old from all different backgrounds. The experience was touching, and heartfelt in every capacity. I not only witnessed a personal evolution of my own gender story, but I experienced a change of perspective through others' stories as well."



The most moving aspect of the

experience for me watching the division between the men and women dissolve more each day. After day five, I don't believe anyone was ready to say goodbye; they were stirring with anticipation for Module 2 in May to begin!

*I can't wait to join the **US Training** beginning April 23rd at Ghost Ranch!"*



GRI at UN Commission on the Status of Women

March 14-24,
2016



GRI is delighted to be presenting a parallel event and taste of our work at the NGO Forum for this year's UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, NY next month.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST GRI Staff!



We extend a hearty welcome to our two newest GRI staff, Patrick Fischer and Britt Conn!

Patrick Fischer joined our GRI staff in December 2015 as the Project Coordinator for the U.S. Professional Immersion Training. He brings with him 10 years of management, consulting and recruitment experience in the for-profit sector. Patrick is the friendly and informative person with whom you will communicate when you are applying for a training in the U.S.

Just as Patrick's yoga, meditation and spiritual practice has grown in his life, so has his calling to serve others and work in the non-profit sector. Patrick is currently experiencing GRI's experiential process in India and South Africa

Our presentation is entitled:

"The power of cross-gender story-telling to empower women, reduce violence against women, and transform the roots of patriarchy"

Our presentation will take place March 21 at 12:30 pm



and will be attending the U.S. Training beginning April 23 at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico.

Britt Conn came on board as our new Operations Manager in January 2016. She brings over 10 years of experience in the non-profit sector, specifically in non-profit management, public speaking, fundraising, and operations, all of which and more she will be doing with GRI!

When Britt is not coordinating with the GRI team, she can be found planting organic veggies and flowers on her farm with her husband and son on Whidbey Island, WA, or hiking, sailing, and exploring around the Pacific Northwest with her family.

Send them a greeting at:

Patrick@GRworld.org

Britt@GRworld.org

STORY OF TRANSFORMATION

We have been gathering stories of change and transformation from former workshop and training participants around the world. Follow along in our regular newsletters to learn how Gender Equity and Reconciliation is having an impact on real people's lives!



*Les Thomas
GRI Facilitator*

In this issue we share the story of Les Thomas, now a certified GRI facilitator in South Africa.

Les' journey with Gender Reconciliation began in an unlikely place; Medium B Male Section at Pollsmoor Prison where he was serving a 10-year sentence for armed robbery. The year was 2007 and for the first time female and male inmates at Pollsmoor were brought together for what was to be a transformative process which led to breakthroughs in mutual understanding, forgiveness and reconciliation across the gender divide.

"It was a forum where I was able to speak to my own pain [as a man]. Prison is not that kind of environment. The workshop was an opportunity I used to release all that I carried - even from before prison growing up without a father. It was my space."

In the Gender Reconciliation workshop, the floodgates opened for Lesley. "I felt safe. The facilitators held the space. This was what I had prayed for. I was able to speak about my family, growing up without a father...and I listened to other people open up. Other men opened up." Through dialogue and interactive exercises, contemplative practices and group process, Gender Reconciliation workshop participants engage on some of the most divisive and seemingly intractable gender issues. The highly experiential methodology enables participants to openly share and address issues rarely discussed aloud.

"I saw the healing taking place. You don't know until you experience it. I began to see my father in a different light - never having had an understanding of who he was. I developed more compassion for the prison warders. I looked at people differently. Everyone needs help and goes through their own pain."

The sense of freedom and relief in speaking truth to his pain is something Les describes as "true inner peace." "I could speak as a victor and not a victim," he concluded. In 2008, Les was released on parole and has since completed the Gender Reconciliation facilitation training and is now a certified GRI facilitator.

Les is currently a leading facilitator of peace-building workshops and Alternatives to Violence programs that work with prison inmates and other socially challenged groups in South Africa.

*- as told to Zanele Khumalo, GRI Program Officer,
and used with permission.*



Exciting Updates: South Africa

GRI and its South African non-profit affiliate, Gender Works, have been exploring ways of bringing Gender Reconciliation work to broader and more diverse groups in South and Southern Africa. Read on to learn more about exciting new connections!



Institute for Justice and Reconciliation

In August 2015, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) hosted a Gender Reconciliation Introductory Workshop for peacebuilding NGOs in Cape Town. In early February, Gender Works staff met with IJR to explore ways of taking Gender Reconciliation workshops into some of the communities that IJR works with across South Africa. We are excited about the possibilities of such a collaboration!

Medecins Sans Frontieres

Gender Works staff had an inspiring conversation with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) at the Khayelitsha office to explore the possibility of hosting a joint workshop later this year. Stay tuned!

UK Department for International Development

GRI staff were invited to a roundtable discussion with the UK Department for International Development to offer a professional gender perspective for the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This request followed the publishing of a book chapter on gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2 GRI staff: Zanele Khumalo and Antonia

Porter. Following this meeting, Antonia and Zanele were invited to a strategic planning meeting with renowned Southern African NGO Gender Links, and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

And more!

GRI staff also shared about our trainings with the United Religions Initiative, a global grassroots interfaith network that cultivates peace and justice; the Inner Circle; a social group formed by Sufi Muslims; and the South African Council of Churches. GRI staff made a presentation at the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative in late January which was very well-received, and also participated at the UN Interfaith Harmony Week on ending racism in early February.

U.K. Gender Reconciliation Introductory Workshop February 11-13, 2016



We are happy to share the completion of the first 3-day Gender Reconciliation workshop in the United Kingdom, organized by Natalie Collins, founder of SPARK. Seventeen men and women (many who are professionals in the fields of gender violence and men's work) came together for deep truth-telling, learning, and personal growth.

Heartfelt thanks to the participants for making the workshop a profound experience, and to Natalie Collins, founder of Spark, for inviting GRI to London and for her work organizing and hosting the workshop. Deep thanks to GRI facilitators Judy Bekker and John Tsungme Guy for skillfully holding the space.

**"Those 3 days have been so powerful, I still feel the loving energy between all of us...
and it is a delicious feeling indeed!"
-UK workshop participant**

This workshop was unique in that many participants were volunteers and professionals working with men and women in the field of gender and gender-based violence. The Great Men Programme, Esteem Resource

Network, Next Leadership, and North East Lincolnshire Women's Aid were the NGO's represented in the workshop.



In answer to the question: "What was most valuable?"

"Listening and hearing mens' stories and experiences. Seeing and experiencing the power of witnessing silently and the absolutely excellent facilitation and safe space created."

-UK workshop participant

" The Truth Mandala and Forum process was extremely powerful and revelatory. Wiser Communication. We need more of this work in the world... we really do."

-UK workshop participant

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

The Mask You Live In

Screening & Panel Discussion

March 10 | 6:30pm

SIFF Cinema, Seattle WA

The Mask You Live In (97 min, Jennifer Newsom, 2015) follows boys and young men as they struggle to stay true to themselves while negotiating America's narrow definition of masculinity.



WOW! Stories

Women of Whidbey

featuring Cynthia Brix

March 11 | 7-9:30pm

WICA, Whidbey Island WA

WOW! celebrates the incredible lives, talents and passion of women of Whidbey. Cynthia Brix was selected to share her story and the story of GRI this year on center stage. Cynthia will present on Friday, March 11 to a sold-out audience. If you weren't able to get a ticket, check back for her filmed presentation on our website.

Born in 2012 from the idea that women of Whidbey have amazing stories to tell, the Seriously Fun

Following the film, please join us for a panel discussion with some of the leading voices in this movement:

- **Will Keepin**, PhD, Co-Founder, GRI
- **Rev. Cynthia Brix**, Co-Founder, GRI
- **Ashanti Branch**, M.Ed Executive Director, The Ever Forward Club
- **Lorenzo Cooper**, Alumni and Mentor, The Ever Forward Club
- **Teri Jo Wheeler**, Executive Director, Global Teen Experience

Moderated by **Dan Mahle**, Founder, Wholehearted Masculine

For more info: [click here](#)

Production team is comprised of energetic friends who care deeply about empowering Whidbey women to tell their amazing stories, and above all, take fun seriously.



S.O.U.L GROUPS

Do you wonder what happens after a Gender Reconciliation workshop or training?

Self Organizing Ubuntu Learning (S.O.U.L.) groups expand the Gender Reconciliation process beyond the workshop and training context, and provide a process for this work to become an integral part of participants' lives. These groups provide on-going communities of practice, accountability, and mutual support. Participants encourage one another to work within their own lives and spheres of influence to reduce, eliminate, or call attention to gender injustices - thereby establishing the foundation for a new gender healed community.

Your support is 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:
Satyana Institute, P.O. Box 1324, Freeland WA 98249



For more information visit:
www.GRworld.org