



Gender Equity & Reconciliation International

*Transforming gender injustice & establishing beloved community*

# Gender Equity and Reconciliation International (GERI)

## *Annual Report 2023*



This year of 2023 has been truly remarkable for Gender Equity and Reconciliation International (GERI). The year was marked by several milestones:

- ***Four new simultaneous GERI Professional Immersion and Facilitator Training programs were launched around the world.*** These include three year-long in-person trainings now underway—in India, Kenya / East Africa, and North America—plus our first full online training for Spanish speakers from across Latin America and Spain. These trainings are bringing

together over 80 trainees, representing 10 countries, who are entering into the process of becoming GERI Facilitators.

- ***Continued growth and implementation of existing GERI programs, and the launch of the GERI work in new countries and specialized formats.*** These include an online BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) Course, two in-person LGBTQ+ courses, a specialized program for Christian leaders, a GERI workshop for provincial government leaders in South Africa, several conference presentations, introductory workshops at three universities in Canada, four online programs with the Girl Child & Her Long Walk to Freedom project, inaugural GERI workshops in Austria and Costa Rica, and more.

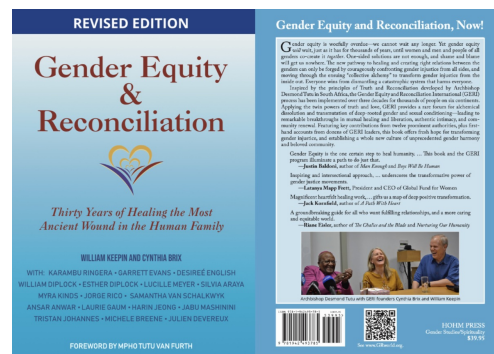
- ***Launch of a new initiative and substantially expanded partnership with Chrysalis Academy in Cape Town, South Africa.*** This is a new collaborative initiative co-sponsored by GERI and local government funding raised by Chrysalis Academy, a leading youth training program in South Africa. This initiative is delivering the GERI program to nearly 1,000 young people over one year, with Monitoring and Evaluation conducted by researchers at Stellenbosch University.

These inspiring developments coupled with dozens of other GERI courses and introductory programs this year have been instrumental in advancing our mission. For a complete list of our 2023 programs, click below.

**GERI Programs 2023**

We are pleased to announce the new Revised Edition of our book, just published in August.

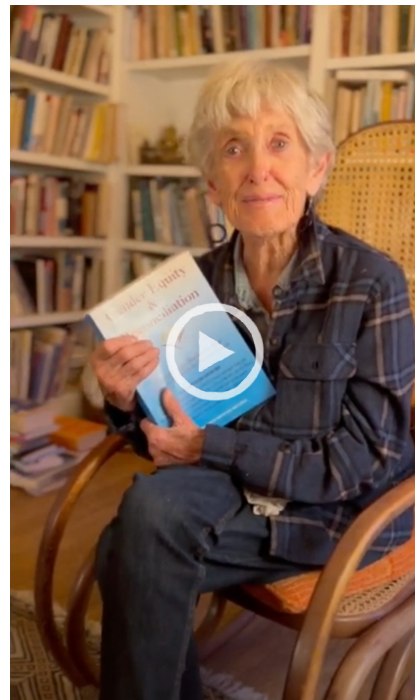
The title remains the same: *Gender Equity and Reconciliation: Thirty Years of Healing the Most Ancient Wound*



Updated cover to GERI's new book



*in the Human Family*. What's new in this revised edition are several more photographs distributed throughout the book, a comprehensive index, and a few revised and new sections of the book. The back cover is also redesigned, with new summary text plus a photograph of Archbishop Desmond Tutu with GERI co-founders Cynthia Brix and Will Keepin. We are grateful to our book publicist, Kelsey Butts, for continuing to distribute this book widely to interested podcasts, universities, and therapists; and also to our publisher, Hohm Press for this beautiful new edition.



*Joanna Macy, author, activist, and founder of The Work that Reconnects, offers her blessing for the GERI book and work.*

The mission of GERI is to “transform gender injustice, and establish beloved community”—in societies, institutions, and communities, large and small—across the globe. This is admittedly an audacious mission, yet 31 years of work in 18 countries has convinced us that the GERI approach of collective alchemical transformation in community offers a unique and remarkably effective methodology for radical transformation of gender injustice in human societies.

People everywhere across the globe are aching for this liberating transformation, and the forces of gender oppression and conditioning that hold it back simply cannot withstand the skillful application of the twin forces of truth and love. Our conviction is that the ‘GERI revolution’ is just now beginning to go to scale at a whole new level.



As we close out 2023 and welcome in the new year, we

warmly welcome you to read this report and join us in this inspiring time of rapid growth. Become part of this engaging transmutation of gender-based violence and oppression—into heart-based healing and awe-inspiring networks of beloved communities across the planet.

We also extend our deep gratitude to everyone who has supported the GERI work and its global community. What a profound privilege it is to collaborate with such wonderful friends and supporters on this inspiring mission.

With blessings,  
Cynthia Brix and William Keepin,  
GERI Co-Founders

## Four Facilitator Training Programs Launched in 2023!

*“Facilitators of the GERI work cannot stand firmly outside the process they invite participants into, but must learn to immerse themselves into the alchemy of the gender healing process, while also remaining centered and present as facilitators to the full group and their needs.”*

(Excerpt from: *Gender Equity and Reconciliation – Thirty Years of Healing the Most Ancient Wound in the Human Family* - Chapter 25: Training the Next Generation of Leaders)



North America Training Cohort



Kenya Training Cohort





Spanish-Speaking Online Training Cohort



India Training Cohort

The GERI Professional Immersion and Facilitator Training program is a one-of-its-kind learning experience. The groundwork and foundation are embedded in a methodology that invites all participants to personally immerse themselves into a journey of self-discovery, truthful expression, experiential learning and mindful practice. With a special emphasis on the complex nexus of gender conditioning, spirituality, and sexuality—and working with these issues and dynamics in diverse groups—facilitation skills are honed and expanded to different levels and new depths. The result is a deeply transformative experience, on multiple levels.

In 2023, we are thrilled to have launched four simultaneous facilitator trainings in North America, India, Kenya/East Africa, and Latin America/Spain. The 83 trainees - representing more than ten countries - have engaged in the training programs and stepped onto this journey with courage and openness to deep transformative learning and development.

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## North America

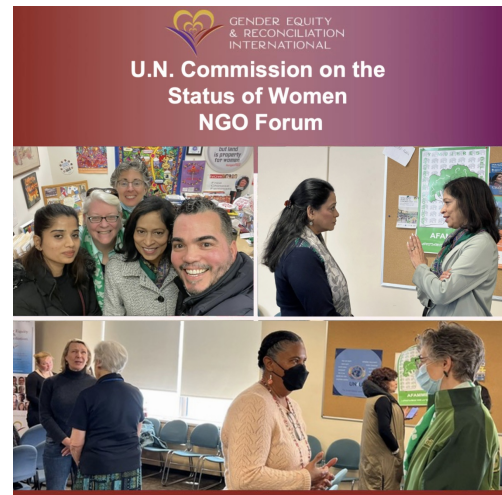
*“I had a major visceral shift after silently witnessing the men, and hearing their reflections after witnessing us. This was potent for me as I began to see the possibilities. I felt effervescent joy over the hope of*

*transformation...”*

~ Female Participant, North America



What a year this has been for GERI North America! We are grateful for all our collaborations and partnerships that include: Bioneers, The LGBTQIA+ Center of Southern Nevada, the Girl Child & Her Long Walk to Freedom, Illuman, ManKind Project (MKP), and special projects at Royal Rhodes University, Waterloo University, and other partners.



The year has been brimming with an array of online and in-person workshops and trainings, conference and keynote presentations, 29 podcasts, and conventions, including the Parliament of the World Religions held in Chicago, the UN-CSW NGO Forum in NYC, the YWCA staff summit in Kalamazoo, and the online Engendering Love conference. We also began our 2023/2024 North America GERI Yearlong Professional Immersion and Facilitation Training, which has 33 participants from the USA, Canada, Australia, Austria, Argentina, Costa Rica, India (living in the States) Italy, Mexico (living in the States), South Africa, and Venezuela (living in the States). To date, two weeklong in-person modules have been completed (out of four).

Early in 2023, we launched our GERI-Christian program and

continued to expand our *MeToo to WeTogether* courses (in-person and online) throughout the year. In mid December, we offered a GERI workshop for a transgender and queer community in Las Vegas, Nevada, in collaboration with The Center and at the invitation of Gard Jameson. All of these programs will continue to grow and develop in 2024.

Read More . . .

## Spanish-Speaking Programs

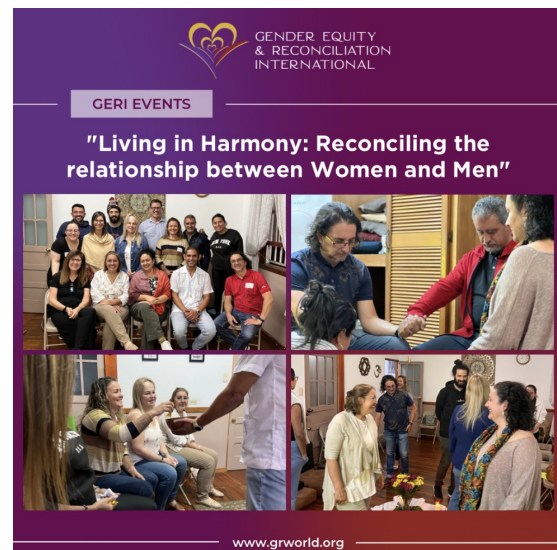
*"It is an awakening for an inclusive, equitable, egalitarian and loving society where we can have and build a better world."*

~ Male Participant



GERI Latin America / Spain looks back on a year of remarkable growth and impact.

In 2023 the Spanish-speaking initiative expanded its reach, deepened connections with communities, and left a profound impression on the lives of many, as we continue to expand in Spain and Latin America. This has been a year of several important initiatives, including our inaugural GERI in-person workshop in Costa Rica





(March 10 - 12), online courses, taster sessions, and a major milestone: the completion of our first ever full online facilitator training program held in Spanish.



Huge congratulations to our Spanish-speaking GERI leaders, Silvia Araya, Hugo Sanchez, Alejandra Warden, Jorge Rico, and Odette Rasgado.

GERI continues to expand in Spain. Recent events led by GERI Facilitators Antonia Porter and William Keepin include a two-hour experiential GERI session at the 19<sup>th</sup> conference of the Forum Against Gender Violence, in Barcelona on November 4, with skillful translation provided by Yolanda Lucas. An introductory GERI session followed on November 5 in Valencia, graciously organized and hosted by Jacob García de Rueda and Yolanda Lucas in their home. Afterward, a queer participant shared tearfully that this was the first time and space where she felt she could share her truth safely. Then on November 7 in Mallorca, GERI was featured in an interview on the IB3 Radio show, “Between Today and Tomorrow,” followed by a lively introductory GERI session for 25 fully engaged participants. Valentín Oller did a superb job of organizing and hosting both Mallorca events.

[Read More . . .](#)

## India

*“This week created a space where I was able to unveil my story, which was buried deep inside me for many years... It gave me the courage to unwrap myself. I was able to share with men for the very first time... I*

*wasn't finding space to share this anywhere else, but here I was able to share and begin releasing myself from this pain."*

~ Female Participant, India



This has been a beautiful year for GERI in India as we launched our second yearlong facilitator training program in Bangalore, with 18 promising new trainees. This new training has been several years in the making, as we



conducted online and in-person programs throughout India in the past few years, spreading the work and identifying prospective trainees and facilitators. Beginning with the first training module June 6 - 11, the trainees immersed themselves in the GERI process for a full six days of deep sharing and listening on issues of gender and sexuality. The second module, held October 2 - 7, delved into the profound themes of spirituality and sexuality, inviting trainees to explore their personal stories and deepen their spiritual practices.

We're enthused to continue into 2024 with this amazing cohort, as they immerse themselves more deeply into the training process, and to continue to expand the GERI work in India.



*India Training Module 2*



*In February, Vijaya Lakshmi and Garrett Evans were also delighted to present at the first ever ShaktiKumbh conference in Rishikesh India, organized by Nilima Bhat.*



## Kenya and East Africa

*"The training helped me a lot to open up, express myself and talk about sensitive sexual traumas. It was my first time expressing myself in a group of men and women.*



*GERI Kenya Module 1*

*Something about the flow of the process helped me better connect with people, even outside the training room. I think I will give spirituality a second shot, trying to separate it from traditional religious institutions."*



*GERI Kenya Module 2*

~ Male participant, Kenya



This has been a powerful year for GERI in Kenya, East Africa, and beyond as we launched a new yearlong facilitator training program July with over 30 new trainees.



The first module, held in Nairobi, July 11 - 16, took trainees through a full immersive experience of the GERI process, sharing six days of deep truth telling and compassionate witnessing on the essential and sometimes challenging issues of gender and sexuality. Trainees courageously unpacked their personal histories, deepening their individual learning and growth through this process. As one male participant reflected,



*I finally could connect some scattered dots connected to the story of my father. I realized that I could not heal the relationship with my dad without healing elements of trauma with my mom since my childhood. Because it is a window that I never opened, I did not realize it existed.*

This diverse group from Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia, and Egypt - ranging in age from their early 20s into their 60s - came together beautifully through the process in this first module. As one young woman reflected,

*The aspect of community stood out for me. The 'I am because you are' and 'because you are, I am' - Ubuntu - has come out clearly and made me feel a sense of belonging.*

Module 2 of the training process was held in Meru, December 17 - 22, focusing on spirituality and sexuality.

## South Africa

*"The GERI workshop was so inspiring. Just to listen to other people's stories really gave me the*



*realization that all genders suffer in silence. These three days gave me aspiration and made me be more mindful of how you are with your family... The experience I am taking home is to be more mindful, to listen attentively, and also to value others no matter the circumstances. To use my voice. It's okay to be vulnerable. Nurture yourself, love yourself."*

- Female Participant, South Africa



This has been a year of continued deepening and expansion for GERI in South Africa. Two new collaborative projects began this year, both with highly promising results, as outlined below.

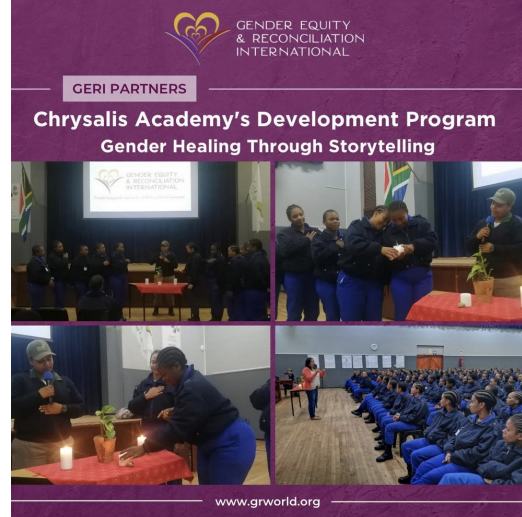
### **Collaborative Initiative between GERI and Chrysalis Academy**

In April, GERI spearheaded a new year-long collaborative initiative with Chrysalis Academy in Cape Town, which is one of the premier leadership training academies for young adults in South Africa. This new initiative will deliver the GERI program to nearly 1,000 young people over a year-long period, both within the Academy and in surrounding communities in the Western Cape. Monitoring and Evaluation of this initiative is being conducted by researchers at Stellenbosch University.



This exciting collaboration was launched with a strong start in June, with GERI facilitators leading 200+ young men at Chrysalis academy through the

full GERI process. This included a special and remarkably powerful session with the students and their fathers (or father figures), as they came together to share their hopes and dreams, lived experiences, and to heal together. As our colleagues at the Academy reflected, “*Each parent gathering is an*



*opportunity to build and heal families together. Together we are disrupting intergenerational wounds, and discovering new ways of showing up in our relationships with our loved ones and our community.”*

Gratitude to Chrysalis Academy CEO Lucille Meyer and to GERI Facilitators Janine Turner, Desireé English, Tristan Johannes, Laurie Gaum, Xolile Pro Zulani, Lesley Thomas, and Thuli Mbetse, and interns Reuben Piet and Unathi Dikani.

### *Further academic research on GERI*

In July, this partnership was joined by Dr. Samantha van Schalkwyk of Stellenbosch University, who will lead the research and evaluation components of this project. Dr. Schalkwyk is Deputy Director and Research Manager at the Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence and the Reparative Quest (AVReQ) at Stellenbosch University. AVReQ was founded by its Director, Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, who together with Dr. Schalkwyk launched the first academic research project on GERI in 2015 at the University of the Free State.

### **GERI workshop for the Provincial Government Department of Social Development and Partners**

A pioneering two-day GERI workshop on gender equity and reconciliation was hosted by the Provincial Government Department of Social Development (DSD), August 21 - 22, in collaboration with GERI, Genderworks, and the Chrysalis Academy in Tokai (near Cape Town). As Minister Fernandez



reflected, *"I'm honoured to be among government officials and stakeholders who see the importance of doing work on the inner self and between genders, so we can be better humans, better citizens, and better serve communities across the Western Cape."*



*We are delighted to share this video of Western Cape Minister of Social Development, Sharna Fernandez – interviewed here by Dr. Lucille Meyer, GERI Senior Trainer and Chrysalis Academy CEO.*

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## BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)

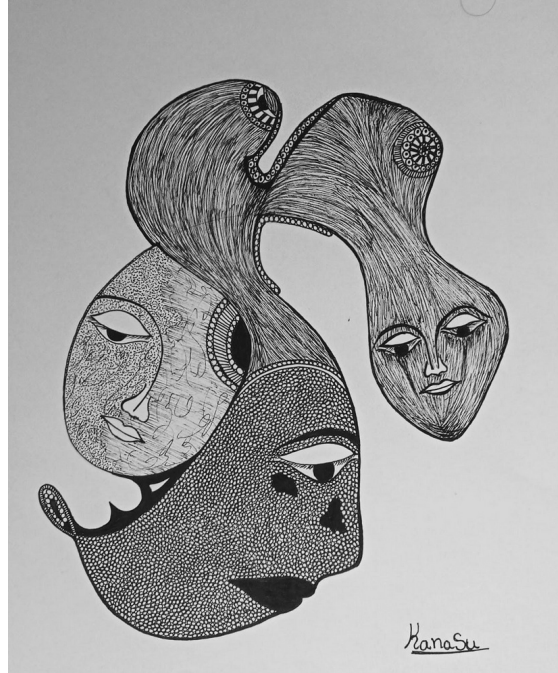
*"When we entered the space, we did not realize we were holding parts of our stories in our breath until we exhaled."*

Excerpt from *Gender Equity and Reconciliation – Thirty Years of Healing the Most Ancient Wound in the Human Family* - Chapter 11: Intersectionalities and BIPOC Communities)



It is amazing and fulfilling to see where we are today, at the end of 2023, with our GERI BIPOC community. After the first in-person workshop in 2018, and sowing the seeds of GERI BIPOC online in 2022 – holding continued BIPOC tasters, information sessions,

and introductory programs – the time came in 2023 to reap the fruits of all the preparation work. From February 28 to April 4, we launched GERI BIPOC as a full online course experience.



*Picture gifted to women during the GERI BIPOC honoring ceremony. Drawn by male participant.*

GERI BIPOC Lead Myra Kinds writes,

*With 13 participants, 7 women and 6 men, we were BIPOC – Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, spanning the globe across Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. For six weeks, we gathered during the BIPOC workshop, wrestled with our truth, affirmed one another, and tore down the limiting beliefs that divided us, even within our own BIPOC community space. We addressed how as BIPOC individuals we had been conditioned to look and value one another, on not just gender but also our features, birthplace, caste, and the melanin in our skin—to name a few. On and off screen we shared and addressed barriers. In our time together we affirmed our collective narrative of growing up BIPOC, offering and receiving forgiveness. Silence was no longer an option, and no subject was off limits because we’ve lived and understood the damage that silence had already inflicted.*

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**LGBTQ+ Healing Across the**

# Gender Spectrum

*“The three day workshop facilitated by the GERI facilitators was nothing short of amazing. The whole process and everyone who was present was just awesome.”*



**GERI Program for transgender and queer community with The LGBTQIA+ Community Center of Southern Nevada**

*What really stood out for me was how I was able to dive deep into my vulnerable state and not be judged about it and I also learnt how to connect with my inner being through breathwork and meditation. After the three days I can proudly say I feel worthy of existing; I feel noticed and celebrated for being myself, and I have made a new family from different gender expressions and sexual orientations. I would do it all over again if I have to. I am grateful to the facilitators and every amazing soul that I shared space with. It brought me joy as a transwoman to be in a space where I was honored, dignified and respected as a human who is holy and sacred.”*

~ Transwoman Participant, GERI LGBTQ+ program in South Africa

Throughout the past year, GERI continued to develop its specialized LGBTQ+ program, both online and in-person. An important part of this has been continuing to offer online introductory sessions to invite people around the world of all gender identities and expressions to step into this specialized format of the GERI work, so deeply needed in LGBTQ+ communities. Beyond





these introductory sessions, and despite the challenges of internet connectivity and power shortages in so many parts of the world, we also conducted a six week LGBTQ+ Healing Across the Gender Spectrum course February 27 to March 3 of this year.



We were also delighted to conduct two full in-person LGBTQ+ specialized workshops, the first held November 1 - 3 in Cape Town, South Africa. As Tristan Johannes, GERI's LGBTQ+ Project Lead

reflects – *“We have been dreaming since 2020 to do in-person GERI workshops for the LGBTQ+ community.”*

The second workshop was held for 27 transgender and queer participants at The LGBTQIA+ Community Center of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas, December 9 - 10. GERI was invited by Gard Jameson, longtime friend of GERI, interfaith leader, and social justice innovator. As he shared in the closing council of the program, *“The work of Gender Equity is the gentle but firm leading edge of a new era of Peace on Earth!”*

[Read More . . .](#)

## Australia

*“It was life changing to meet with others this way on a journey, riding the waves of challenges around our gender. I was able to be wildly authentic and allow healing, joy and love to be received by myself, and given to others.”*



~ Female Participant

*“A great opportunity to enter into a safe space where intimacy, vulnerability, sharing and listening leads to healing and bridging the gender gap.”*

~ Male Participant



G'day GERI mates! What a fantastic year we had for GERI Australia. We are consolidating our presence and feel very enthused about what has been happening in 2023. May 27 - 29, we ran our first three-day workshop in a face-to-face format since COVID, what a joyful experience!

The workshop had 24 people including facilitators with an even balance of women and men, gender diversity, and some ethnic diversity. It was held at the Abbey, outside Brisbane, a beautiful, sacred, tree-lined location. The process unfolded beautifully, with deep sharing and a strong sense of beloved community forming.

Gratitude to the GERI Australia team: Esther Diplock, William Diplock, June Lambourne, Jeremy White, Kara Salter, and Robert Grimes. We're delighted that Kara Salters from Perth is part of the GERI yearlong training in the North America cohort. Kara is doing a work-exchange and is volunteering her services as administrative support for GERI-Australia.

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**South Korea**

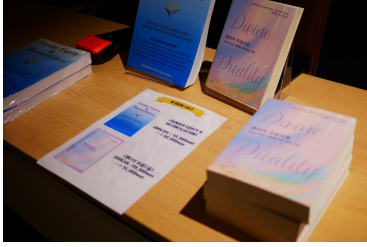
## Glimpses from GERI's Introductory Workshop at 18th Sakyadhita Conference Seoul, South Korea



On July 25, GERI South Korean facilitators Harin Jeong, Soonho Lee, and Kanghei Lee led a captivating bi-lingual workshop introducing GERI at the 18th Sakyadhita Conference, a global conference of women Buddhists. *Sakyadhita* means "Daughters of the Buddha" in Sanskrit, and the conference brings together ordained nuns and lay Buddhist women from all three major schools of Buddhism (Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana).

In this two-hour breakout session at the conference, participants entered wholeheartedly into the GERI process, sharing experiences and stories from their lives, and realizing the common thread unifying their gendered journeys across religions and borders. Emotions ran deep as some participants teared up, opening up about challenges in their lives, as well as their continued work to address gender disparities within Buddhist communities.





The experiential workshop stood out amidst a diverse array of concurrent sessions. Several of the nuns, moved by the experience, expressed their gratitude and encouragement for the team to continue forward with the GERI work in the Korean and Buddhist contexts.

We are thrilled by the debut of the GERI South Korea team at the conference, leaving a positive impression and building anticipation for the first full GERI South Korea workshop in 2024!

## Austria

*“I lived the process very intensely, deeply, throughout its development – but the thing that surprised me the most was coming home and feeling different, truly different, more solid, more complete, and stronger to sustain a reconciliation and gender equity.”*



~ Male Participant, GERI Austria



It was a joy this year to launch our inaugural GERI workshop in Austria, August 31 – September 3, in collaboration with Klaus Muik from M.A.L.E.s International.

What a deep, emotional, meaningful, and inspiring time it was in this workshop near Linz, Austria. In our several days together we shared and witnessed a depth of cross-gender authenticity as rare as it is precious.

Our group of 11 women and 11 men dove deeply together into our personal stories of challenge, heartache, and pain as boys and men and girls and women. This delicate journey into each of our inner worlds was done with remarkable courage and deep compassion – held beautifully by the whole group.

As one woman reflected,

*“The safe space made it possible to share feelings and to witness the sharing of others, enabling understanding, compassion, belonging, connectedness, healing...”*

This whole process then blossomed exquisitely in the honoring ceremonies for one another, as we each blessed, uplifted, and appreciated one another for the deep work and learning we had done together.

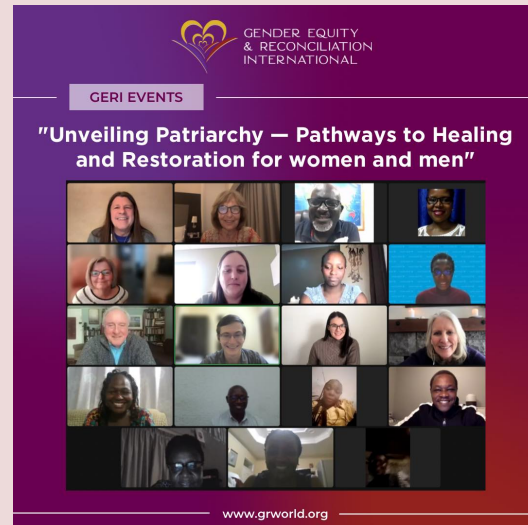
Our gratitude to Klaus for his excellent organization, and to the facilitation team: Lucille Meyer, Phil Rogacki, Michele Breene, Antonia Porter, Garrett Evans, and William Keepin. Building from this first program, we have further workshops already scheduled in 2024 in both Vienna, Austria and Steinen,

Germany, as we continue to spread far and wide the seeds of a gender healed world. ([www.gender-equity-reconciliation.eu](http://www.gender-equity-reconciliation.eu))

## GERI for Christian Communities

*“You all created and held a space where people shared and heard remarkable things. And I came away feeling seen and heard; respected, connected and changed. You also showed care for us as we heard what it can be like to know of evil - done to us and others - and stay faithful to God. This has been a life-long struggle for me (and it will always be so), but you are all beacons of hope in the ways you've worked through your personal stories and stayed faithful.”*

~ Male Participant



For generations, the religious ecosystem has been dominated by male hierarchies centered on male images of God. Both men and women miss out on the many blessings of their gender because of this. Within Christian institutions and communities, the Divine feminine is often silenced, excluded, or seen as less valuable. The voice of women and the vision of flourishing and fruitfulness arising from the combined gifting of men and women in partnership, is only infrequently realized. And of course, there remains a considerable amount of unresolved pain for women seeking to fulfill their true sense of calling, especially in the Church.

From January 18 - March 1, GERI held an online program specifically designed for Christian leaders working to bring healing and reconciliation between men and women. We shared a profound seven weeks together. This beautifully diverse group of 24 participants across 3 continents from 10 different countries engaged with a level of authenticity and openness that is often hard to experience virtually. We touched rare depths of cross-gender, cross-racial sharing and listening —



and through this, discovered and celebrated a richness of unique gifts that we have to offer each other as women and men.

Deep gratitude to GERI Christian program lead Michele Breene for her leadership, organization, and facilitation of this important project.

[Read More . . .](#)

## 2023 Finances

GERI is funded through charitable gifts from individual donors, foundation and grant awards, and earned revenue from training and program tuition. To see a summary of our 2023 finances, click [here](#).

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*It has been a privilege to share with you some of the highlights of this past year from our different regions and projects.*

*May this work continue to flourish and expand to touch the hearts of many more people in all corners of the world. . .*

Your support is deeply appreciated and make this work possible.

We warmly welcome your tax-deductible donation to our 501(c)3 educational non-profit. Just click the donate button below!



[Donate](#)

Checks will also be warmly received and may be sent  
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