



NEWS RELEASE

Healing of Memories Luxembourg A new organisation is born

On 28 November 2020 a new non-profit organisation, Healing of Memories Luxembourg, was established, taking the place of the Luxembourg/Europe Healing of Memories Support Group, which was part of the human rights organisation ACAT-Luxembourg. This is the latest stage in a journey which began 12 years ago, marked by a wide of range of activities and significant events.

In November 2008 Michael Lapsley, founder of the Institute for Healing of Memories, in South Africa, came to Luxembourg for the first time, having been invited by ACAT. Following that visit, a support group was gradually set up to support the Cape Town institute and promote its activities. Many events were held over the next few years, in particular during each of Michael Lapsley's successive visits to the Grand-Duchy. These included workshops, some of them for inmates in the Schrassig prison, conferences, school visits, promotion tours for Michael Lapsley's memoir and training sessions.

To respond to the growing demand and be able to further develop these activities, the Support Group took the next important step on Saturday 28 November 2020 when it established an ASBL (non-profit organisation) at an inaugural meeting, held by videoconference, and took on its new name, **Healing of Memories Luxembourg**. It took the opportunity to thank ACAT-Luxembourg for its valuable support during these first years of its existence.

Background

The Institute for Healing of Memories (IHOM) was founded in Cape Town in 1998 by Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest and anti-apartheid activist, who had lost both his hands and one eye in a parcel bomb attack carried out by South African secret agents. With the support and love shown to him by so many people around the world, he went through a long period of convalescence, moving – as he puts it – from being a victim to being a survivor, and finally a victor. This experience made him all the more aware of the trauma experienced by millions of others, sometimes over generations.

The IHOM seeks to accompany people carrying the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual wounds of a painful past on the journey towards healing and wholeness. It organises healing of memories (HoM) workshops in South Africa and many other countries around the world. These workshops provide a space in which participants can feel safe enough to tell their life stories and be listened to in an atmosphere of mutual respect, in order to heal the wounds of the past.

Building on solid foundations

Healing of Memories Luxembourg intends to develop its capacities in order to consolidate the work already started in this area in Luxembourg, as well as in neighbouring countries, in cooperation with local groups that wish to be involved. Over the past 10 years, more than 20 HoM workshops have been held in Luxembourg, France and Spain thanks to the efforts of its existing team. The team has also provided active support in terms of organising and leading workshops and training sessions in Colombia, Canada and more recently in West Africa in partnership with *Partage Luxembourg*. The Luxembourg group has also been responsible for coordinating the translation and promotion of the French, Spanish, German and Arabic editions of Michael Lapsley's memoir '*Redeeming the Past*'.

A wide range of plans and partnerships for 2021 and beyond

In addition to the workshops and facilitator training sessions which will take place in Luxembourg and elsewhere in Europe, the organisation will be involved in a number of partnership projects at international level, in particular in organising workshops in Lebanon with the region's Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), in Montreal with the local Restorative Justice Centre (*Centre des services de justice réparatrice – CSJR*) and in West Africa with the IHOM and *Partage Luxembourg*.