

# ACTIVITY REPORT

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2022

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HEALING OF MEMORIES LUXEMBOURG

<https://healing-memories.lu>

*Every story needs a listener...*

*Chacun a une histoire, digne d'être écoutée...*



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### Editorial

#### Healing and creativity

During a visit a few weeks ago to the former internment and deportation camp in Les Milles, Aix-en-Provence, now a memorial, I was impressed by the mural paintings created in 1940-41 by some of the detainees. In a very dreary corridor and despite their distress and great anxiety about the future, they found the energy and creativity to paint joyful faces, beautiful floral motifs... I was deeply moved, both overwhelmed and filled with wonder.



This experience brought to mind some of the creative exercises used in our healing of memories workshops, both in Africa and in Europe: the astounding creativity shown by many participants, especially when they are invited to imagine the future of their dreams and to create symbols of peace. This is a moment experienced by many as a real turning-point in the workshop, after the often painful sessions telling their life stories. Healing and the creative impulse are intimately linked.

It is our hope that all the activities in 2022 which you will find described in this report enable as many people as possible to take one step towards the healing of their wounds, to stand up tall again and to find new creative energy. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this process in one way or another.

Patrick Byrne  
Chairman

## LIFE OF THE ASSOCIATION

### Some milestones in 2022 ...

**22 April-24 May:** This year, HOM Luxembourg welcomed Michael Lapsley to Europe for the first time since 2019, a visit postponed several times because of the pandemic. This was a major event, whose preparation and follow-up kept us very busy. Members of our association accompanied Michael Lapsley and his assistant, Philani Dlamini, to Marseilles (FR), Hamburg (DE), Hurtebise (BE) and, of course, Luxembourg.

His stay began with a five-day visit to Marseilles, where he was welcomed by our former colleague Vincent Klein and the local Jesuit community, as well as a delegation from HOM Luxembourg. The programme comprised various meetings with groups concerned by the healing of memories, visits to schools, lectures and talks, and the first launch of the French edition of his memoir in the south of France.



April 2022, Marseilles: meeting between Michael Lapsley and members of the local Jesuit community

During his stay in Luxembourg, several of our team accompanied him to special events:

- an audience with Grand-Duchess Maria Teresa, patron of our association,
- several official meetings and working lunches (Foreign Ministry, the Partage Luxembourg Foundation, the Grand-Ducal Foundation, the Rotary Club, and our association’s Executive Committee and Africa Group).

We also took advantage of his presence in the Grand Duchy to ask him to lead some of our activities:



- two healing of memories workshops: one in prison and one open to all (*photo opposite*), which this time took place in Hurtebise (Belgium) (see page 8)
- a day of reflection for 15 facilitators, all levels, from Luxembourg and other areas (*photo below*), and a Zoom training session for principal facilitators with the leaders of the Montreal team

- three sessions to raise awareness of healing of memories (one open to all, one for the team of psychologists and social workers at the Schrassig prison, and one for care and social welfare services and for the restorative justice team)



- four get-togethers with young people: one primary school (Reckange/Mess) and three secondary schools (Fieldgen, Lycée classique in Diekirch and Aline Mayrisch – *photo opposite*)
- two sermons at masses in two parishes (Christ-Roi and international parish).



During their stay, Michael Lapsley and Philani Dlamini travelled with Patrick Byrne to Hamburg to meet the German healing of memories team (see page 10).



**1 May** : Party for the “inauguration” of our association, it too having been postponed several times because of the pandemic. We took advantage of Michael Lapsley’s visit to Luxembourg to welcome him as our guest of honour. This celebration of our first anniversary brought together around 30 people, members and friends of the association, for a varied programme: a video projection, short speeches and artistic contributions (music, song, dance, story-telling), concluding with the inevitable cake and “Happy Birthday” sung in more than 10 languages (*photo opposite: here in Zulu!*)



**17 September 2022** : Annual General Meeting (*photo opposite*), which reported on activities in 2021, including the coordination of the new training project for francophone Africa, described the outlook for the coming years and held elections in which the members of the Executive Committee were unanimously reappointed.



**19-25 November** : visit by Pascal Zohoun, Chairman of ACAT Benin, and Yaovi Azonhito, a former detainee on death row in Benin, at the invitation of HOM Luxembourg in cooperation with ACAT Luxembourg. In addition to an evening talk open to the public: “20 years on death row: a personal account by a former detainee”, other events were organised: a vigil at the prison in Schrassig, a talk and personal testimony at the Christ the King community, meetings with two groups of pupils at the Fieldgen secondary school, and discussions at the Foreign Ministry and with the Archbishop of Luxembourg.

## SHORT FILM:

We are proud to present ***“Healing the wounds of the past – A project takes root in Luxembourg”!***

When Healing of Memories Luxembourg was taking its first steps as a non-profit at the end of 2020, the world was still being devastated by one wave of Covid-19 after another and it was impossible to organise a public event in the Grand Duchy in order suitably to celebrate this new venture. We would have liked to present our association to the public in order to highlight the specific nature of its mission as compared with other associations active in Luxembourg.

Some months later, by chance the possibility was raised in our Executive Committee of making a short documentary on Healing of Memories Luxembourg similar to those made a few years ago in South Africa (“The story of Father Michael Lapsley and the founding of the Institute for Healing of Memories”, 2012) and in francophone Canada (“Michael Lapsley – Redeeming the past”, 2020). Discussing the purpose of this documentary, it became clear that it should explain to the public not only the healing of memories process and how it developed in the very specific context of the post-apartheid era in South Africa and of Michael Lapsley’s life story and vocation, but also the different ways in which this process has gradually taken root and become a reality within the multicultural and multilingual mosaic which is the Grand Duchy.

There were some preliminary contacts with a Syrian-Eritrean filmmaker but they were unsuccessful because of his other professional commitments abroad. Finally, providence led us to Eileen Byrne, a young German-Luxembourgish film director who, moreover, was familiar with healing of memories, both in Luxembourg and in South Africa.

Filming began in May 2022 during an exceptionally long visit by Michael Lapsley to Europe, following the lengthy interruption due to the pandemic. This enabled Eileen and her team to make the most of the many meetings, training sessions and visits which took place in Luxembourg during this period, in addition to holding numerous interviews with healing of memories facilitators and collaborators.

In the autumn of that year, other scenes were filmed in the Luxembourg Jean XXIII Centre. With the generous cooperation of many friends of our association and of former participants in the healing of memories workshops held in Luxembourg over the years, it was possible to recreate an overview of the most powerful moments in a workshop, without betraying the principle of confidentiality.

Special mention must be made of the cooperation of Grand-Duchess Maria Teresa, patron of Healing of Memories Luxembourg, who from the outset declared her willingness to support the project in order to highlight the value she sees in healing of memories as a means of helping trauma victims to recover.

During the post-production phase, Eileen displayed an extraordinary gift for condensing the hours and hours of footage – which will no doubt be used in other broadcast formats – into a 20-minute audiovisual visiting card, which we now present with an understandable measure of satisfaction, gratitude and – let’s admit it – pride. Now it is for you to judge!

**OUR AFRICA PROJECT: FIRST EDITION OF THE FACILITATOR TRAINING FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA**

*Seven countries represented at the Cotonou session*



For two years HOM Luxembourg, in collaboration with the IHOM in South Africa, had been preparing the training programme for francophone Africa. Following several preliminary visits to the countries concerned in 2021, the official launch took place in July 2022.

Now this project is being implemented, thanks in particular to the support of the Partage Luxembourg Foundation (through a framework agreement with the Luxembourg Government) and the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess Foundation.

The first “plenary” facilitator training session was held from 15 to 25 July in Cotonou (Benin). Twenty-nine participants from seven countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal and Togo – assiduously followed this introduction to the healing of memories and the role of facilitator.

The team of trainers comprised four colleagues from South Africa: Michael Lapsley (President of the Healing of Memories Global Network), Loret Mougani, Wilondja Rashidi Williams and Fatima Swartz, and three from Luxembourg: Patrick Byrne, Javier García Alves and Valdemar Santos. The welcome and logistics in Cotonou were provided with warmth and efficiency by the ACAT Benin team, the programme’s partner on the ground.



*The participants in front of the Door of No Return, Ouidah*

The 29 Cotonou trainees together agreed to call themselves the “Desmond Tutu Class” in honour of the Emeritus Archbishop of Cape Town, who died six months before the session and who had faithfully supported the work of healing of memories, having granted his patronage to the IHOM when it was founded in 1998.

For 10 days, in a fraternal, cheerful atmosphere and displaying strong commitment, the 29 trainees attended both theoretical and practical training sessions, including the following:

- testimonies and sharing of stories about the collective wounds, old and recent, experienced in each of the countries represented,
- practical experience of a “standard” healing of memories workshop and of a second-phase workshop,
- introduction to the history and philosophy of the healing of memories,
- learning about the role of facilitator, in particular by simulating real-life situations (role play),
- excursion to Ouidah to walk and meditate on the Slave Route,
- drafting of a road map for each national group: programme and timetable of the practical work to be carried out in each country in 2023.



The sessions were punctuated by catchy songs from the various countries represented.



*“Family” photo at the opening ceremony*

The 2022 training session was honoured by the presence, at different moments, of its three patrons:

Mrs Robina Marks, Ambassador of South Africa to Benin and Togo; Mgr Roger Hounghbedji, Archbishop of Cotonou; and Mr Pascal Essou, Ombudsman of the Republic of Benin (represented by the Director of his Private Office, Mr Pascal Tchiwanou).

The practical phase of the training began during the months following this session. Each team of trainers met to review the extended session and to share their experiences with local partners with a view to the organisation in 2023 of a healing of memories workshop in their country for around 15 local participants.

Trainers from Luxembourg and South Africa will travel to Burkina Faso (May), Togo and Benin (July), Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal (November and December) to support these teams in the running of their workshops. Given the current safety and security issues in Mali and in the Kivu region of the DRC, the trainees from those countries will be invited to join the Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal teams, respectively, and to jointly run the workshops in those countries.

## WORKSHOPS

- From 9 to 11 May a first-phase workshop was held for detainees in Schrassig prison.

Following a two-year interruption because of the pandemic, in May 2022 we were once again able to organise a healing of memories workshop in Schrassig prison (CPL).

Like the two previous workshops (2018 and 2019), it was a great success. Despite the small number of participants – nine – we experienced intense moments of closeness, sharing and mutual support. The ability of some prisoners to share, authentically and deeply, their often very painful life stories always touches and impresses us. The respect and benevolence shown to each other and to the facilitators made this an unforgettable workshop for us all. This confirms, once again, that healing of memories workshops are well suited to the prison environment and to helping these broken and socially excluded human beings.



- From 20 to 22 May 2022, a first-phase workshop open to all was held in Hurtebise (BE), involving 17 participants from Luxembourg, France and Belgium and five principal facilitators, four co-facilitators and an interpreter. The diverse composition of the group and the location, which was highly conducive to quiet reflection, combined to make this a profound and remarkably harmonious workshop which brought great calm to most of the participants, as shown by the smiles in the photo opposite.

### Testimonies

*“My wounds were really preventing me from forming healthy relationships with other people. Thanks to the workshop, I have been able to get them in perspective. I feel that they no longer have any power over me. The workshop was unexpected. Wounds which I wanted to suppress were liberated in spite of myself. I feel light and totally at peace. ”*

*“The workshop helped me to connect to memories, good and painful, but also to see clearer feelings towards family and loved ones. The workshop helped me to see a situation in my life clear and come to important realisations in that regard, so I know which next steps I can take.”*

*“I was able to distance myself from my life story and to note its positive aspects, which outweigh the negative ones.”*

*“I feel lighter and genuinely more serene. I have felt this way only since today.”*



On Sunday, 25 September most of the participants at the May workshop came together for a reunion to assess its impact in the medium term.

## FACILITATOR TRAINING

At the beginning of 2022 we had a team of 15 facilitators in Luxembourg.

Six of them are continuing their training as lead facilitators to enable them to run future workshops more independently and more frequently, without being dependent on Michael Lapsley visiting Luxembourg.

The other nine facilitators are continuing their training in two groups at different levels. This local team is joined, for the training sessions, by five facilitators and co-facilitators in Canada and two in France.

On 14 May 2022 we took advantage of Michael Lapsley's presence to bring together all the facilitators for a day of reflection and training, which was very enriching for everyone. Likewise, the group of lead facilitators took the opportunity to hold a lead facilitator training with those in Montreal, who joined them via videoconference.

During the year, seven more people expressed interest in joining our team and beginning their training. As a result, the committee met in October 2022 to reflect on the number and composition of the facilitator groups and decided to create a new group, which will commence training with Michael Lapsley at the beginning of 2023, essentially via Zoom.

This means that our team of (co-)facilitators comprises the following:

- a "lead" group with six certified facilitators in Luxembourg and three in Montreal, who join the group's training sessions via Zoom
- an "advanced" group with five co-facilitators in Luxembourg, one in France and two in Canada
- an "intermediate" group with four co-facilitators in Luxembourg and one in Rouen
- a "new" group with seven co-facilitators who will commence their training at the beginning of 2023.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL NETWORK AND RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

### Healing of Memories Global Network

Our association continued to participate in the global network by attending the regular online meetings of delegates from the nine member countries – South Africa, Canada, United States, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Myanmar, Namibia, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe – to exchange information on their activities, and by participating in a number of practical projects.

The activities and events in 2022 included:

- the finalisation, in three interactive sessions held on 4, 5 and 11 June 2022 for a dozen participants in South Africa, Canada, Spain, the United States and Luxembourg, of the online introductory programme on healing of memories for the general public
- the publication of a new global report (2021), to which each national healing of memories group contributed a chapter (see our website: <https://healing-memories.lu/>)

- the celebration of the awarding of the Niwano Prize to Michael Lapsley, President of the Healing of Memories Global Network, on 14 June 2022
- the distribution of a document “*Reflections in the Age of Covid*” containing a dozen articles and speeches written by Michael Lapsley, President of the Global Network, during the pandemic (see our website: <https://healing-memories.lu/>)
- the drafting of a text “*Mission and Vision*” of the Healing of Memories Global Network
- an initial reflection on the gradual harmonisation of the methods used to train healing of memories facilitators on the different continents and the establishment of a list of those who have been trained for this work.

## Hamburg group

For several years now, pastors (men and women) from the Hamburg and Frankfurt regions have participated in international healing of memories training sessions at the institute in South Africa. Through Patrick Byrne, they established contact with Luxembourg.

On 10-11 December 2021, an online workshop led by Michael Lapsley, Fatima Swartz and Patrick Byrne was organised for eight participants from Hamburg et Frankfurt, including the three group coordinators (Sabine Denecke, Annette Reimers-Avenarius and Julika Koch).

On 14 January 2022 the three coordinators from Hamburg and the three facilitators held a Zoom meeting to review the workshop.

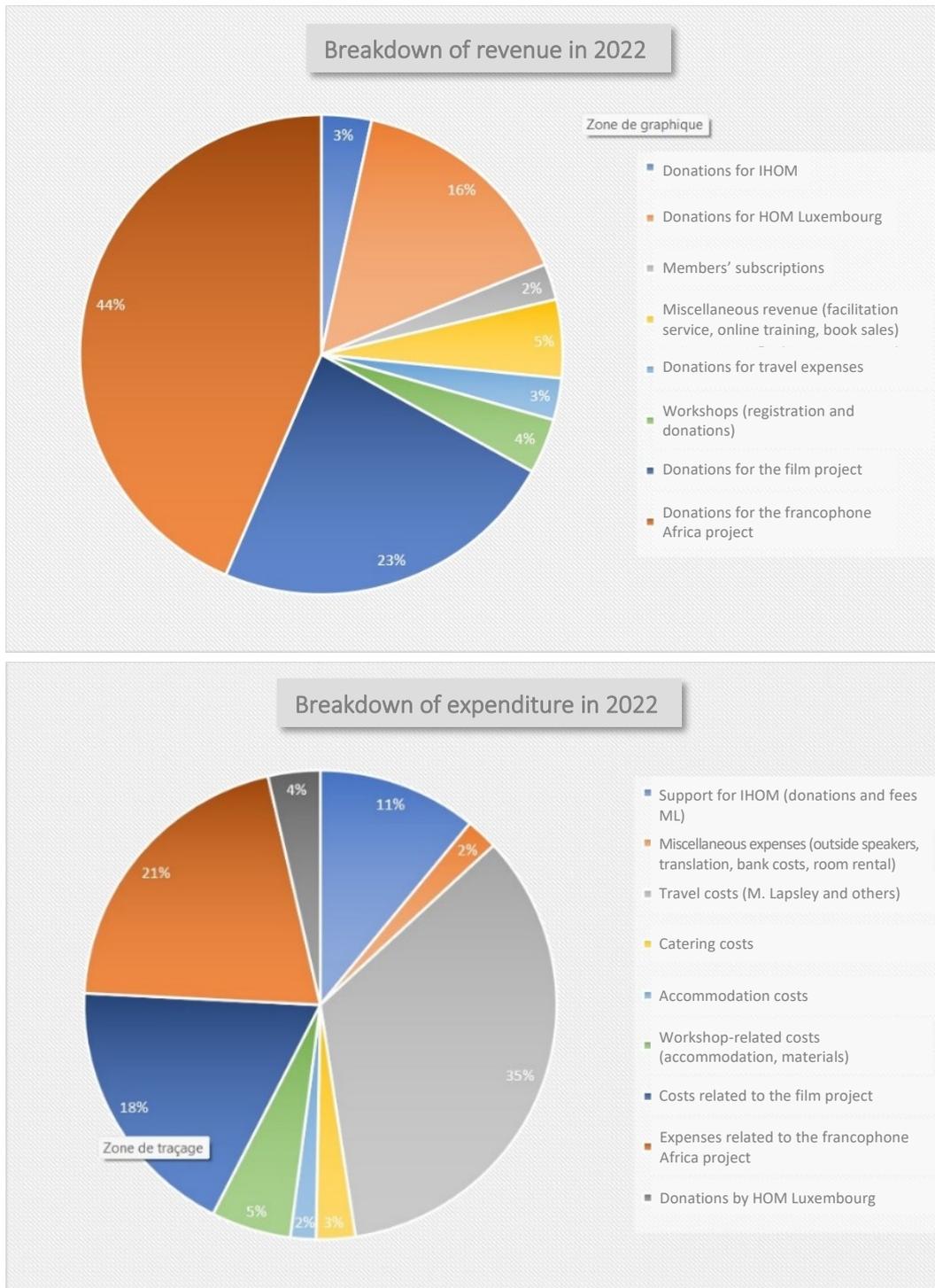
During his visit to Luxembourg in April-May 2022, Michael Lapsley travelled to Hamburg from 5 to 8 May with Philani Dlamini et Patrick Byrne. The programme included a dinner for friends of healing of memories on 5 May, an ecumenical celebration with a lunch and discussion on healing of memories on 6 May, and a training day for future facilitators on 7 May.

On 18 August 2022, at an online meeting of the German coordinators’ team with Michael, Fatima and Patrick, it was decided to step up the training: an online session in November or December, closer cooperation with HOM Luxembourg (in particular during Michael’s visit to Luxembourg, planned for the beginning of 2023) and a request to Marie-Christine Ries to collaborate with the group.

On 1 December 2022, Michael, Fatima, Marie-Christine and Patrick led the online training session for the future facilitators: Sabine Denecke, Annette Reimers-Avenarius, Julika Koch, Frauke Eiben, Eberhard Hampel and Fanny Dethloff.

## FINANCES

The 2022 accounts were examined and approved by our auditor, Mr Laurent Lepany.



As in previous years, donations comprised 89% of revenue.

The three main items of expenditure still include:

- support for the HOM Institute in South Africa, which includes the donations and fees received for the work done by Michael Lapsley and his assistant

- travel costs, mainly comprising the trip to Europe in April-May 2022 by Michael Lapsley and his assistant, and the tickets booked in advance for their trip in March 2023. The cost of these tickets increased substantially as a result of inflation
- part of the budget for the francophone Africa project, most of which is financed directly by the Partage Foundation through its framework agreement with the Foreign Ministry. The 20% of “private funding” is mainly covered, for the first three years of the project, by the Grand-Ducal Foundation, except for the exploratory visit in October 2021, which was financed by HOM Luxembourg.

In 2022, a specific budget, entirely financed by a private donation, was allocated for the making of a 20-minute film to present the activities of Healing of Memories Luxembourg and to raise awareness of healing of memories among the general public. It was available on our website from 1 July 2023.

At the end of 2022 the HOM accounts showed a positive balance of €14 843,51 of revenue over expenditure. This includes provision for payment of the final invoice concerning the HOM film, an amount of €2 723, 55, which was settled in March 2023.

Donations enable us to cover the association’s operating costs, to pursue facilitator training, and to invite to healing of memories workshops people who would not otherwise have the means to attend. They also enable us to pay for any items not included in the initial budget for the francophone Africa project, such as the exploratory visits to new countries (e.g. Niger and Rwanda in 2023).

## OUTLOOK FOR 2023

Many projects are foreseen for 2023, some of which have already been implemented:

- visit by Michael Lapsley in February-March, with one prison workshop, one second-phase workshop, one facilitator training day, several meetings and the visit by several members of the Hamburg group
- continuation of facilitator training, simultaneously in Luxembourg and Quebec via videoconference, with the creation of a new group
- second phase of the project to train facilitators in francophone Africa, with sessions in May, July and November
- public event to launch the short film on healing of memories in Luxembourg, together with testimony from Guy Dockendorf, Chairman of the International Mauthausen Committee
- creation in the autumn of a part-time post assigned to the Africa project
- first independent healing of memories workshop in Luxembourg in November
- publishing of a Kiswahili edition of Michael Lapsley’s memoir, in cooperation with the Goma HOM team (DRC).

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*Membership of the Executive Committee:* Patrick Byrne, chairman; Esméralda Chupin, treasurer; Cécile Thill, secretary; Angela Borges; Paul Chahine; Javier García Alves; Marie-Christine Ries; Valdemar Santos