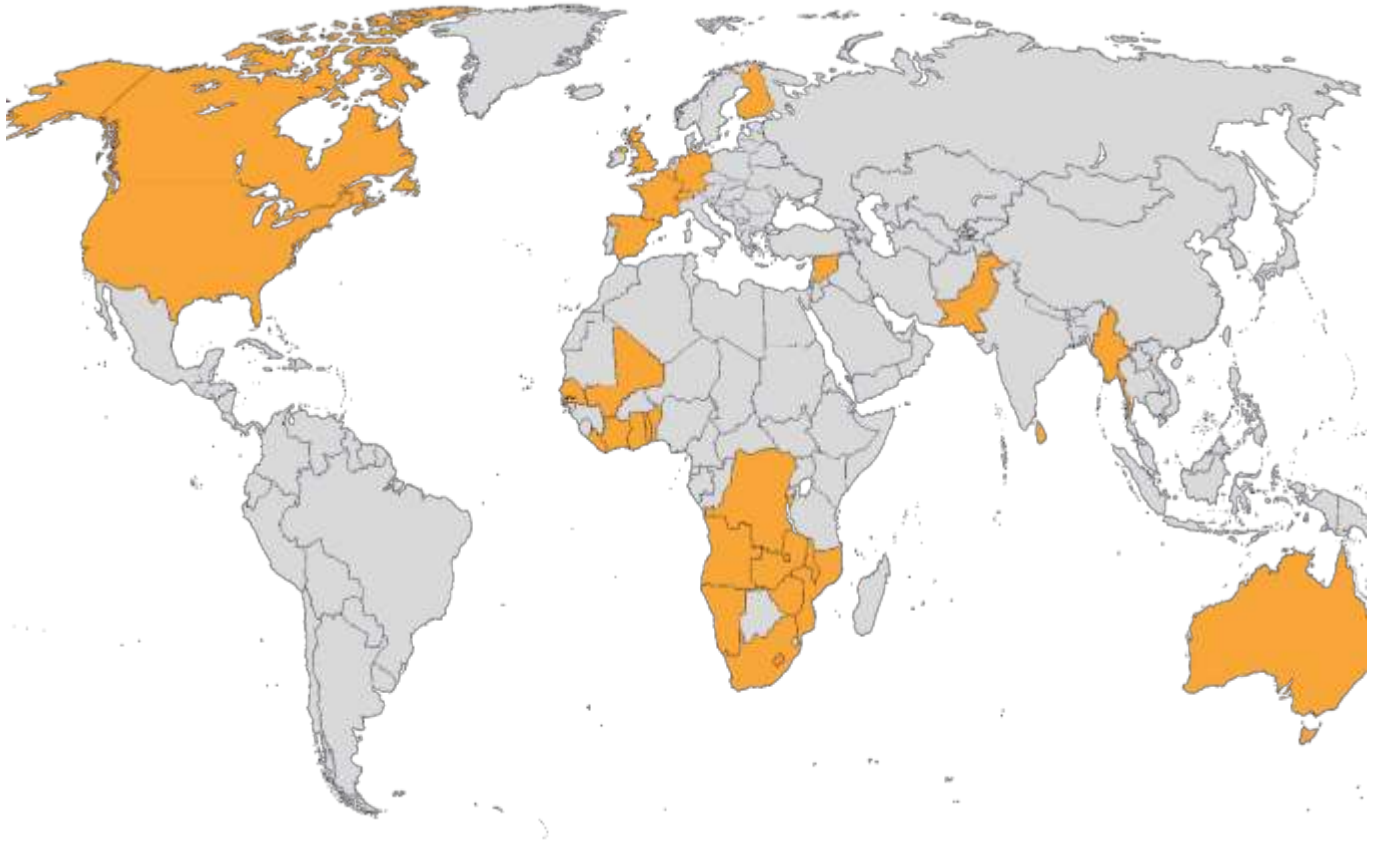




INSTITUTE
FOR HEALING
OF MEMORIES

Global Report
2022



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Fr Michael Lapsley SSM

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect with you on the year that has passed.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The year began with the days following Archbishop Desmond Tutu joining the ancestors. Some months later the Healing of Memories Global Network held a virtual reflection on what we had learnt from the life and teaching of Archbishop Tutu.

My role

Personally, I continue to work full time for the Institute, no longer as the Director in South Africa but as President of the Healing of Memories Global Network. As the most draconian restrictions of Covid-19 were lifted, my international travel increased markedly during 2022.

Angola

In March I travelled to Angola as part of the Institute's Africa Program. For some of the participants in our workshop, the Russian invasion of Ukraine brought back their own fears of renewed conflict and the unhealed wounds of their own long-running civil war.

Europe

For the first time since Covid I travelled outside Africa to Marseille in France, Luxembourg and Hamburg in Germany under the auspices of Healing of Memories Luxembourg, doing workshops, training and speaking events. In Marseille this included a launch of the French edition of my memoir, Guérir du Passé.

Support groups in KwaZulu Natal and Myanmar

I had the opportunity to facilitate an online support group for our facilitators in KZN following the recent floods.

We did something similar over the weekend with what they describe as the "alumni" of healing of memories work in Myanmar, which remains under military occupation.

After listening, I realised that I and Brother Moeketsi were witnesses to the painful journey of resilience, endurance, healing and self-care, imbued with compassion, creativity, joy and music, during a pandemic and in a time of war.

Volmoed

We have been in conversation with the Volmoed community near Hermanus since last year to see if we could contribute towards healing old wounds and becoming a healthier community. For the first time, arising out of their complexities we had three one-hour sessions on 2 and 3 August and two more on 16 and 17 August. It worked well. For their chaplain, the Rev Wilma Jakobsen, the workshop was a dream come true.

An Anglican religious congregation from the United States, the Order of the Holy Cross, also has a house there.

Archdiocese of Bloemfontein

As part of the work we have contracted to do with the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Archbishop Zolile invited us to do a workshop for the priests in the Archdiocese of Bloemfontein. Brother Max also helped with the facilitation.

Goedgedacht

Having heard about our work at Volmoed, Deon Snyman invited us to Goedgedacht on 23 August to begin a similar process, culminating in a fully residential workshop for all the participants at the end of November just after I returned from the US. Later we were told that for one or two of the participants, it was life-changing.

Francophone West Africa

In July I travelled to Benin in West Africa, where in collaboration with Luxembourg we did our first francophone international training with 29 participants from seven countries - Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and Togo.

The 29 trainees from Cotonou chose, by mutual agreement, to call themselves the "Desmond Tutu Class" in tribute to the Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, who died six months before the session and who had faithfully supported the work of healing memories as a Patron of IHOM since its foundation in 1998.

International Training

In September in Cape Town we held a 10-day International Introduction to Healing of Memories with 21 participants coming from Namibia, Germany, Zambia, South Africa, Tanzania, Syria, Burundi and Lesotho.

North America

At the end of September, I began a two-month visit to North America.

The visit began with 10 days in Canada. Our first stops were in Ontario with the Diocese of Algoma in Sudbury and North Bay, under the leadership of Archbishop Anne Germond, originally from South Africa. The visit focused on popularising healing of memories.

A few months previously, I had spoken to their clergy conference.

The visit to North Bay had special significance for me, as I had met school children there shortly before my bombing. The children sent paintings with messages of love and support when they heard the terrible news.

A year later I went back to thank them for their part in my healing. Thirty-one years later I again met one of the children and the widow of one of the teachers.

The next stop was Edmonton, where I am also the Canon for Healing and Reconciliation at All Saints Cathedral.

The program included a workshop and training. A number of participants were First Nations people from a community where a community member had stabbed to death quite a number of people not long before.

Then to the United States, beginning in New York with a speaking event at Emmaus House in Harlem, where IHOMNA is beginning a long-term program with formerly incarcerated people.

For the first time, I travelled to Indianapolis, as the guest of Second Presbyterian Church, the seventh largest Presbyterian Church in the US. God willing this may become a long-term partnership.

The mover and shaker of the visit is an expatriate South African, Rod Smith. Among his diverse qualities, he is a Presbyterian minister, a therapist, and a newspaper columnist in a Durban newspaper. Although we had not met since, we were students together in Durban in the mid 70s.

Then back to the old stamping grounds of Arizona, work with veterans and a couple of presentations on our role as peacemakers at two different retreat centres.

A visiting priest from Canada said privately that most people are not used to hearing the things I was saying.

There is particular interest from folks in Arizona with our forthcoming veterans' conference.

I led a workshop and facilitator training for students at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in Chickasaw.

Whilst there, I gave the Abelson Lecture on Religious Reconciliation. I framed the lecture as a conversation with Brad Abelson, a Naval Chaplain who died five years ago. Given the dominant politics of Oklahoma and some ominous warnings, I was half expecting to be stoned. To my surprise a woman approached me before the lecture. She said she had checked me out online. She presented me with a hand-crocheted blanket....so much for the stoning.

Next in our trip was a visit to Bishop's School in San Diego in California, where I gave an endowed lecture to the whole school on "Choices" built around the prayer, "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference".

I had been invited to the school by the school chaplain, the Rev Nicole Simopoulos, with whom I had worked at Iolani school in Hawaii about five years previously.



With friends in Hawaii



Laird with Fr. Michael

Meeting Laird

Before my arrival, Laird, one of the students, heard about my visit. He wrote to the chaplain asking if he could meet me. Laird has cerebral palsy and communicates by fixing his eye one letter at a time on a computer. He was keen to explore with me issues of faith in relation to disability.

Having dinner with Laird and his family was one of the most memorable experiences of my time in North America.

Whilst in Pasadena, there was a presentation to an interfaith organisation. We also had a film showing of "Unseen Wounds" which is a story of redemption of Adolphus Stuart, a Vietnam vet, through food. We also made use of the film in a mini workshop for people to share their unhealed wounds and signs of hope.

I preached at St Mary's Episcopal Church in Laguna Bay where Lester MacKenzie is the priest, the grandson of Cape Town's Bishop MacKenzie. They want to become a satellite centre for Healing of Memories.

Our last stop was Honolulu. The main event focussed on Healing the Wounds of History. Including a courageous conversation. The illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy and annexation at the end of the 19th Century is still an open wound. Shamefully the main instigators were greedy white businessmen who were the grandchildren of the missionaries.

Conference with military chaplains

Early in the year, in Gauteng, I worked with military veterans and helped to train new facilitators. At the end of March 2023, we will hold an international conference of military veterans which we hope will include participants from Lesotho.

Publication

Last year the Institute published a number of articles and presentations I had given under the title: Reflections in the Age of Covid.

The world-wide experience of Covid caused immense suffering, grief and loss.

Thanks to Zoom we have been able to develop and collaborate together in ways that we had never imagined to be possible.

You will see from all the reports that the footprint of the Institute is increasing across the globe,

We salute all those who have participated in healing of memories work and all those who have provided support in countless ways.

Fr Michael Lapsley SSM
President, Healing of Memories Global Network



CANADA – WEST

Edmonton, Alberta

After a long pause due to Covid-19, Healing of Memories in Edmonton is pleased to be active once again.

In September, we welcomed Fr Michael Lapsley and Philani Dlamini to lead a workshop followed by a facilitator training day. Stories told at the workshop were particularly poignant, as four of the participants were leaders from the James Smith Cree Nation, which had experienced a horrific mass murder two weeks before. This emphasized the importance of creating healing spaces and the weight of the work still to be done.

Over the past two centuries in our context (Western Canada), government and churches led a campaign of cultural genocide against Indigenous peoples. Survivors continue to suffer from multigenerational effects of trauma and abuse due to these colonial policies and practices. Many refugees from different parts of the world have also settled here, carrying experiences of displacement, war, famine, oppression, and other hardships. We are grateful to Fr Michael and his coworkers for giving the healing of memories process to begin to address these challenges.

We look forward to continuing to build Healing of Memories in this part of the world, focusing on expanding our capacity by raising up and training facilitators and building local partnerships. We plan to offer another workshop this year along with courageous conversations sessions as we continue to participate in this much-needed global community.



CANADA – EAST

Montréal, Québec

In 2022, the Center for Restorative Justice Services hosted two Healing of Memories workshops. A virtual workshop, on 19 and 20 March, brought together 16 people. A face-to-face workshop, from 7 to 9 October, brought together 24 people. This year again, we benefited from great collaboration with IHOM-Luxembourg, one of their facilitators, Javier Garcia Alves, came to strengthen our small team of three certified facilitators.

It was the first face-to-face workshop organized since the start of the pandemic. Also the first without the presence of Michael Lapsley, so we were a little feverish. What a joy to meet again and to savor the possibility of celebrating together on Saturday evening, dancing, singing, playing and laughing! We had missed it. We realized how much this part of the workshop (the party) is an integral part of the healing journey.

Another first this year: the presence of a greater number of Aboriginal women, coming from an Atikamekw community. This gave a particular color to this meeting, when Quebec society had been shocked by the death of a young Atikamekw woman in hospital as a result of negligence related to racism. It was an opportunity to address the collective wounds of our common history and to work on prejudices. Very touching moments that were restorative and liberating, according to the testimonies received.

We are happy that four new people have started the training process to lead workshops and that two are finalizing their certification course. The team is growing and diversifying, which will make it possible for the workshops to be better known and experienced by a greater number of people in the future.

Estelle Drouvin
Director CRJS
April 2023



FRANCOPHONE AFRICA PROJECT

Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and Togo



**Above: At the opening ceremony: participants, trainers, interpreters, and special guests
Below: Welcome to the Cotonou 2022 facilitator training session!**

Two years ago, in response to the interest shown by several of its African partners, Healing of Memories Luxembourg, in cooperation with the IHOM (South Africa), took up the challenge of devising a training project for Francophone Africa, as a complement to the Institute's existing Africa Programme. The aim was to enable these groups to live the healing of memories experience, learn the methodology and train facilitators so that they could implement and 'translate' it into their own social and cultural contexts.

Thanks to support from the Luxembourg Government and the Grand-Ducal Foundation, this idea is now becoming a reality! From 15 to 25 July 2022, the very first facilitator training session in this new programme was held in Cotonou (Benin). 29 participants from seven countries - Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Togo - attended this introduction to HOM and



the role of facilitators, and showed great engagement throughout the session. They were sent by various local organisations - human rights groups, such as sections of the ACAT anti-torture movement and human rights leagues, as well as non-violence groups such as the Martin Luther King Group in Goma (DRC) and the Centre for the Prevention of Violence and Healing of Memories in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

The trainers' team included Fr Michael Lapsley, three colleagues from South Africa (Loret Mougani, Wilondja Rashidi Williams and Fatima Swartz) and three others from Luxembourg (Patrick Byrne, Javier García Alves and Valdemar Santos). Organisational arrangements in Cotonou were coordinated by the very efficient and welcoming ACAT-Benin team, to whom we are extremely grateful.

The 29 trainees who attended the course decided by mutual agreement to call themselves the "Desmond Tutu Class", in tribute to the Emeritus Archbishop of

Cape Town, who died six months before the session, and who had been such a loyal supporter of healing of memories work and a patron of the IHOM from the outset in 1998.

During the session's opening day, each of the seven national teams gave a presentation on the preliminary work they had done in response to a questionnaire on 'ancient, old and recent wounds' that affect their countries. Details of this work can be found on the HOM-Luxembourg website:

https://healing-memories.lu/?page_id=3798&lang=en



Two smiling participants: Reine from Mali and Ferima from Côte d'Ivoire



***Above: Experiencing the HOM workshop: a story-telling group
Below: End of the Slaves' Route: The Gate of No Return***

LESOTHO

Greetings from Healing of Memories Lesotho. We wish you all the best for 2023.

In our plan for 2022, we planned to train a new co-facilitator, to have three workshops for adults (including a retreat) and two for youth. We also planned to visit our past workshop participants. Taking part in the fight against GBV through partnering with other organizations was also our top priority. We planned on having reunions and lastly introducing Restoring Humanity for the Youth to our program.

Activities

We managed to hold two workshops for adults.

The first was on 11 - 13 February, where we had four facilitators, one co-facilitator and 19 participants, and which was followed by a reunion on 9 April.

We had a facilitators' retreat on 21 - 22 May.

The second adult workshop was on 14 - 16 October and there were three facilitators, three co-facilitators and 13 participants. The reunion for this workshop was planned for 11 February 2023.

For youth we had our first workshop on 22-24 April, with three facilitators, three co-facilitators and 13 participants.

The last youth workshop was on 19-21 August with three facilitators, three co-facilitators and 16 participants. The reunion was on 6 November.

Training new co-facilitators

We trained new facilitators. We started the training with eight participants, six of whom completed the training. The other two participants said it was not easy for them to listen to other people's pain so they will support healing of memories in other ways. The last training was with Fr Michael. The number of co-facilitators is increasing, and we will be open to having more facilitators.

International Training

There was a 10-day international training in Cape Town where we had two representatives from our team, a man and a woman. They returned fruitful feedback from that training, with the following points:

1. There was the Phase One of the training, where there was a HOM workshop and a visit to Robben Island. The trainees watched the DVD of Black Christmas, related to the 1996 Worcester bombing, which triggered emotions and feelings from the participants, like anger, hatred, understanding and forgiveness.
2. The Phase Two workshop focused on how to deal with anger, overcoming hatred and struggling with forgiveness. The training continued with a visit to Langa (the first township in Cape Town), where a community dialogue took place.

Fun walk

Healing of Memories also held a Fun Walk on 13 November. The walk was from SSM premises to Durham Link. We expected to have 80 participants but ended with 56 and most of them were young people even though the weather was not on our side. The Bishop of the Anglican church in Lesotho, Dr Vicentia Kgabe, was to be the main speaker but she did not make it due to heavy rain; she arrived later when the rain stopped. The Fun Walk was a success, with positive feedback and an impact on some participants. The walk was also covered by national television (Lesotho Television). The theme for this year is GBV whereas last year's theme was *healing and gender-based violence*. Some may ask why GBV again? It is because there is a lot of GBV in the country, so if we continue to beg people to stop GBV maybe some will understand it and stop.

Open to work with other NGOs

After the success of the Fun Walk, we received many invitations from other NGOs that are willing to work with us:

1. Makhala Girls Foundation, whose purpose is to help young girls aged 9 to 20 who are orphans and less privileged. It also helps girls with sanitary towels and homework and to discover their talents.
2. The Office of Gender-based Violence and Femicide in the Anglican Church of Lesotho. We were invited to a GBVF workshop led by HOPE Africa and we sent two members to attend the workshop.
3. Thabo ea maqheku, which means *happiness for elders*, is also willing to work with us. This is a foundation for grandmothers and grandfathers. It helps elders to exercise, provides counselling and takes them to check-ups.

Closing party

We had a closing party on 3 December, where each person contributed a certain amount of money toward the cost. We had braai, snacks and soft drinks and we had fun.

Achievements

We had positive feedback from all our participants throughout the year on how healing of memories changed their lives. Our most encouraging feedback was from youths. Some had attempted suicide and some were still on the verge of killing themselves but after healing of memories workshops, they saw light at the end of the tunnel and saw life in a positive way. Young people who attended the workshops are encouraging their parents to attend too, and we received calls from the parents whose children attended the workshop saying their children had changed from worse to better. Some wanted to know the secret because their children did not tell them. We have another team of six people in the north side of Lesotho at Butha-Buthe who are willing to continue with facilitator training. We visited them and had one-day workshop in July.



Personal reflection

At end of every workshop, this question is asked. 'What do you say healing of memories is?' Here are a few answers from different participants from different workshops;

1. New chapter of one's life.
2. Pain removal
3. A place of reconciliation
4. Spiritual growth
5. A place of redemption
6. A place of free expression of feelings
7. A place of emotional support.
8. Home of abundant living

Plans for 2023

One of our goals is to give interested participants training to be facilitators. There are both adults and youths who wanted to be trained.

1. Participants training to become co-facilitators.
2. Workshops (Retreats) two for adults, three for youths.
3. Pastoral visit to our past workshop participants and our members.
4. Reunions will be still continuing.
5. Two facilitators will go to Cape Town for international training.
6. Phase two workshop.
7. More training in Butha - Buthe team.

Restoring Humanity Program

In 2021 it came to our realization that the youths for whom we held healing of memories workshops were more affected than we had imagined and wanted to participate more on this program because somehow, they felt at home during our programs. We then spoke to the Institute on how we can help young people more. That's when we were introduced to the Restoring Humanity Program.

Training

On 25-27 February 2022 we had a restoring humanity coordinator from Cape Town, Mr Clint, as our guest to host a RH introduction training. We had 16 participants and the training turned out successfully, with the youths being eager to learn more.

On 5 March we had a meeting to plan for the year. Firstly, we discussed topics that mostly affect youth in our area, which turned out to be: gangsterism, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and depression. In all these topics, we discussed their types, signs, and symptoms and also how to prevent them. We then divided the participants into four groups, each with their topic to discuss for our first training workshop, which was set to be on 14-15 May, later postponed to 11-12 June due to them writing exams.

On 11-12 June we held the first training workshop with 14 participants. Each group presented on given topics. The training was a success, but we needed more training, especially to increase confidence in standing up in front of people. Also, some topics, such as gangsterism, were too uncomfortable for them.



Clint Bowers leads a Restoring Humanity training workshop

On 13 -14 August we had the second workshop, and we used the same topics but we swapped the participants to topics they were comfortable with. Sixteen participated and the outcome and confidence were better than the first time. We realized then that they are ready to facilitate the healing of memories workshops for youths.

Workshops

On 5 November we held a one-day workshop at SSM for youths who had previously attended the healing of memories workshop. We had eight facilitators and nine participants which was fewer than expected, as we had invited 25. The reason was the year-end exams. Regardless, our youths showed a lot of interest in our topics, which made the facilitators' work easy.

Our last workshop of 2022 was held on 26 November for ACL church youth at ha Makhoathi, outside Maseru. We had 20 participants and eight facilitators. The participants were very much interested in our topics and they pleaded for another workshop.

Achievements

Is it so amazing how our youth were clueless about gangsterism, depression, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy but after the workshops we heard fruitful feedback from the parents on how they changed for the better since the workshops and are willing to spread the word to their friends, how they would like us to host more workshops in future?

Challenges

The challenges we encountered is that the number of trained facilitators is decreasing due to school commitments and work at weekends. Also, they were uncomfortable talking about gangsterism as it is a very sensitive topic in our country at the moment.

Plans for 2023

We realized that we still have a lot of work to do for Lesotho youths. They lack information and they are ignorant.

We are hoping to host more workshops at churches, schools, youth centers...

Also, we plan to train more facilitators as we realized that more youths are pulling out due to other commitments like school and work.

Thanks

Lastly, we would like to thank the following sponsors:

1. SSM for sponsoring HOM workshops.
2. MTS enterprises for sponsoring us with 100 printed t-shirts for the Fun Walk.
3. Myloan for their sponsorship of 100 bottles of water.
4. Durham link for free entrance.
5. St John Anglican Church, Kingsway Maseru, for sponsoring us with R500.00
6. Individuals who sponsored us with cash.

Lastly, we thank the participants who were constantly supporting us in HOM workshops.

Peace, Rain, Prosperity.



Youth participants from Lesotho

LUXEMBOURG

2022 was an action-packed year for Healing of Memories Luxembourg. We had had to postpone a large number of in-person events in 2021 owing to Covid restrictions; suddenly everything is possible again. We were delighted to welcome Fr Michael back to Europe after a two-year break and made the most of his four-week visit in May to get our activities back on the rails.

From January to April, our Luxembourg team were kept busy with arrangements for his visit and all the related events, as well as preparations for the launch of the facilitator training programme for francophone Africa, run by us in conjunction with the Institute in South Africa (see below).

A detour via Marseille

At the end of April, Fr Michael landed in Marseille, accompanied by Philani Dlamini. A small delegation from our organisation travelled down to welcome him and act as the back-up team for his first visit to the south of France. He was there at the invitation of Vincent Klein, a former member of our team. Vincent had agreed, with his Jesuit community, to host several HOM events in the region. These included a conference to launch the French edition of Fr Michael's memoir, as well as introductory talks to a variety of audiences, including two school groups. A great opportunity to meet up with an old friend and a highly successful and encouraging visit, with hopes of things to come ...

An eventful month of May

The programme of events in Luxembourg started with a celebration to mark the official founding of our organisation. Having been postponed twice on account of the epidemic, it finally happened!

Members and friends came along to be entertained by young musicians and dancers, as well as a storyteller, in a warm and friendly atmosphere. We were delighted to have Fr Michael among us for this important occasion and to hear his words of encouragement.

In the following weeks, two events were held at the Luxembourg Penitentiary Centre: an information session for inmates interested in experiencing healing of memories, followed by an actual workshop 10 days later. The workshop, held in three languages thanks to the help of our interpreters, went beautifully, in terms both of the prisoners' engagement in the process and of the attitude of the prison authorities and staff, whose cooperation made it a particularly gratifying experience.

Another workshop, open to the general public, was held a little later at Hurtebise Abbey Guesthouse, in Belgium (only a few miles from the Luxembourg border), this time using two languages, French and English. The success of this workshop was confirmed by the fact that many of the participants chose to come back for a Phase-2 workshop 10 months later.



***The HOM connection:
France, Luxembourg
and South Africa meet
in Marseille***



***Our audience with the Grand-Duchess on 20 May 2022.
Left to right: Esmeralda Chupin, Fr Michael Lapsley,
Grand-Duchess Maria Teresa, Patrick Byrne, Philani Dlamini.***

The end of Covid restrictions also meant that we could now have 'real' non-virtual facilitator meetings and training sessions. One such occasion was the Day of Reflection attended by our 20 facilitators and trainee facilitators. It was much appreciated by all because it gave us an opportunity to share about our own personal healing journeys in a more reflective tone than our regular sessions.

A small HOM team led by Fr Michael was able to meet classes of senior pupils in three different secondary schools. Such meetings with students are always among the most moving and authentic moments of our time spent with him, creating opportunities for very deep sharing.

Towards the end of his visit, Fr Michael and two of us were also received in private audience by Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg, who is a patron of both the IHOM and HOM-Luxembourg. We had a particularly rich conversation with her. She wished to be updated on healing of memories work around the world, about prison work and the ways in which groups supporting survivors of sexual violence in war environments – a key concern of hers –

could gain access to HOM facilitator training. She reiterated her wish to continue supporting our organisations.

A visit to Germany

Fr Michael's stay in Europe also included a three-day trip to Hamburg with his aide, Philani Dlamini, and a member of the Luxembourg team. The visit was hosted by several former participants in the Institute's international training sessions who had been eager to engage in further training with a view to organising workshops in Germany. The programme included a prayer service at the Ecumenical Centre, followed by a lunch-hour event open to a wider audience, with a presentation and conversation about healing of memories with those in attendance. A facilitator training session, led by Fr Michael, took place the following day for half-a-dozen participants who already had some experience of a workshop. In addition to the training, this was also an excellent opportunity to discuss plans for the future development of HOM, including the German group's keen interest in cooperating with facilitators in Luxembourg.

A Luxembourg film about healing of memories

Our group decided at the beginning of the year to commission a short film about the story of healing of memories in Luxembourg. The film crew started shooting during Fr Michael's visit in May and continued later in the year. The film "Healing the wounds of the past: A project takes shape in Luxembourg" was finalised early in 2023.

Francophone Africa training programme

Healing of Memories Luxembourg devoted a lot of time and energy in 2022 to organising the facilitator training programme for francophone Africa, in cooperation with the Institute in South Africa. (For further details, see the relevant section)

Visit by a former death row inmate from Benin

We felt it important to join our partner organisation in Benin in supporting a prisoner, Yaovi Azonhito, on his release following a presidential pardon, after spending 25 years on death row in dreadful conditions. We invited him to speak to participants in the Cotonou francophone Africa training session in July and at an event in Luxembourg in November after he attended the World Congress against the Death Penalty, in Berlin.



Three film crew members (left) with participants in a workshop simulation for the Luxembourg film

MYANMAR

Since the first visit of Fr Michael Lapsley SSM in February 2018, religious groups, civil society organizations (CSOs) and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kachin and Northern Shan have been initiated onto the healing journey. However, after two years of military coup, the people of Myanmar have been confronting multiple crises again, including daily atrocities and the deepening of the suffering of people across the country. Enormous stress, anxiety, fear, and traumatic situations have become everyday reality for the people. In this given context, the Healing of Memories alumni are struggling with their own survival at individual level while accompanying the people around them.

In the midst of challenges and crises, each alumnus is contributing to the psychosocial support-related activities, including retreat sessions and self-care in their own organisation as well as serving the other civil society organisations and those who are working very closely with the people on the ground. The alumni also met one time together physically for the first time after COVID-19 and the coup period. Fr Michael and Brother Max provided their solidarity and accompaniment online during the alumni gathering. This experience was very helpful in enabling each other to go through this difficult time.

One of the alumni has commended the work done by the alumni in this challenging time and makes a request to the Healing of Memories Global Network as follows:

"Healing of Memories Myanmar Alumni try to help in various regions as much as possible. We are giving healing for minds and hearts. Some through storytelling, some by sharing food and safe-space conversation circles, some of them following Jesus' fourth way of non-violence, and also some are meeting with traumatized youth and parents. For me, I try to meet and give a two-day workshop about personal healing. Most of the participants are farmers, villagers, religious leaders, development workers and young people. They are facing hunger and health problems during this period. I am also giving inspiration to try to plant and share seeds among them.

We would like to request all of you, please pay attention to the people of Myanmar and pray for us."



**2019 HOM
forum in
Myitkyina,
Kachin Region**

NAMIBIA

During this year we were able to hold workshops in a number of different places in Namibia. We held Phase-1 workshops in Katima Mulilo, Okakarara, Mariental, Grootfontein, and two workshops on different dates in Dobra. The number of participants exceeded 200. On one occasion in Dobra we divided the group into two and held two separate workshops at the same place and time at the one venue. Altogether we held seven workshops.

We sent six people, two men and four women, to attend the international training course with the Institute held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 28 August to 8 September 2022.

We held a number of Phase-2 workshops and some training get-togethers for all our facilitators at different times during the year.

During the month of October 2022, we held two important meetings which warrant some mention in this report.

The first meeting was with the Vice-President of the Republic of Namibia, the Honourable Nangolo Mbumba. He wanted to hear something about our Healing of Memories program. We gave him a short explanation and we spoke about the various people we have been targeting. We mentioned all those affected by the liberation struggle and the different sides involved in the conflict, including those who spent time in the dungeons. We also mentioned the people affected by the 1904-1908 war: the Nama, the Herero, and the German Namibians.

He spoke of his proposal to bring together the leaders of the Nama and the Herero Namibians. He asked that we as Healing of Memories Namibia be present for this gathering. He asked Ida Hoffmann, who is a leader of the Nama people and a member of our Healing of Memories Namibia family,



To prepare a presentation for that coming together and to speak about reconciliation and the possibility of healing the wounds of the past.

The second meeting we had was in Swakopmund with a man called Anton Van Wietersheim, who is an active member and a spokesperson of the Forum of German-speaking Namibians. He expressed his happiness about our meeting with him and about hearing of our desire to spread reconciliation within Namibia by means of the Healing of Memories. He expressed his willingness and his desire to participate in our program. He has already been part of a movement to hold discussions involving

German, Herero, and Nama Namibians. As part of our plans for 2023 we are intending to have a workshop in the Erongo region, and we will be targeting members of the Forum of German-speaking Namibians as well as Nama and Herero Namibians. Two of our facilitators in the Erongo region are Baster Namibians and they are very keen on the possibilities this course of action will open up for the cause of reconciliation in Namibia.



A representative of the German Catholic Bishops' Justice and Peace Commission has made contact with us. He explained that they are in the process of studying the effects of German colonialism in Africa and are concentrating on two countries in the continent, Cameroon and Namibia. They have heard about the Healing of Memories program in Namibia and they want two of their members to visit Namibia and to attend one of our workshops. They would like to experience the program, and to meet with our team members and with some of the people who have participated in our workshops. Our thinking is that it will be a good idea for them to come and attend the workshop in the Erongo region because at that workshop they will meet a good cross-section of Namibian society.



During 2022 we helped some of our brothers in the Vaal area of South Africa to organise and run some workshops.



We have reorganised our leadership structure here and we now have a team in place who will be responsible for continuing with reaching out to all who live in Namibia and inviting all to join in the process of healing and reconciliation.

Our outgoing coordinator will continue to spread the message about Namibia outside our borders and will continue to seek funding for the Healing of Memories Namibia program.











IHOM NORTH AMERICA

It has been an exciting and busy time for us. Last year we made significant organizational changes and updates to lay a foundation for future growth. We began hiring facilitators as part-time employees (13 hires in 2022). This is important because it allows us to build a core team we can rely on as we develop more partnerships and demand for our work increases, which has been the case for the past couple of years. It also solidifies their place in a growing organization and provides benefits such as unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, etc. We also streamlined processes and placed them online, such as flight requests, reimbursement requests, and scheduling of workshop teams. We also combined our qualitative and quantitative evaluation forms into one online form. Online evaluations allow easy access for participants and for us to easily access data that helps us understand how we might do something better or if there were any issues in a particular workshop that need addressing. It is also easy to produce reports and utilize and share data as required.

We still need a significant amount of capital to move forward, as the capacity of our executive director is beyond the maximum. In addition, we must secure enough funding to hire an administrative assistant and a development person. Building organizational capacity in human resources at this point is essential. We are working diligently to secure the funding needed in 2023.

We continue to utilize Zoom to deliver our abbreviated Healing of Memories workshops. We facilitated a Zoom workshop for the staff and partners of Emmaus House Harlem, with a particular focus on their Re-entry Program.

Given many people's losses through Covid and the escalating hatred and violence in America, we decided to pilot a Zoom workshop focused on Grief & Loss. Since we did not have a grant, we charged participants on a sliding scale. The workshop went well, and we are evaluating how we may offer these ongoing.

We facilitated three in-person healthcare workshops this year. Our partner, the Franciscan Renewal Center, raised \$38,000 to make these possible. All workshops had waiting lists. Participants came from many health systems, including the Mayo Clinic and Banner Health.

Healthcare participant comments

"This helped me to release weighted emotional baggage, which will help me be a better nurse."

"I was able to release built-up emotions that I now feel free from."

"The narrative style of the workshop was really helpful, which helped me realize that I am not alone. I was also blessed to be in a diverse group."

"It was nice to be able to tell my story and have people listen."

"Amazing experience."



We had numerous veteran in-person workshops, with some for all veterans and some for women veterans only because of their unique experience of war and many who have experienced military sexual assault. HOM workshops for women veterans are in great need because there are still very few spaces for them to heal from their war experience. Veterans and women veterans will continue to be an essential focus for us in 2023 and beyond.

Veteran participant comments

"I found a connectedness with people for which I am extremely grateful. Words like 'peace, strength, and hope' mean something now, whereas before, they were just silly words that I felt were overused and had lost meaning. I found my love for people again."

"I feel different in my body and feel as though much of the tension I have held has been released."

"I feel more validated, integrated, and safe than when I started the workshop and feel more of a sense of connectedness and closeness with others as well."

"I found the experience cultivated a deep sense of empathy in me that was unexpected and profound. I also feel that telling my "story" in such a safe space and witnessing others' stories shifted something inside me and connected me in a way that felt genuine and deep."

"I came in broken - I'm leaving restored, renewed, and happy."

"I have been given a second half of my life being able never to be broken inside."

Women veteran participant comments

"Being able to speak my truth for the first time in an environment that understood and supported me."

"The highlights of this HOM workshop were a commonality with the vets regarding abuse and a refreshing of purpose."

"Being able to share my story and be understood, heard, and believed. Realizing that I have not been "STUCK" because I need to forgive others."

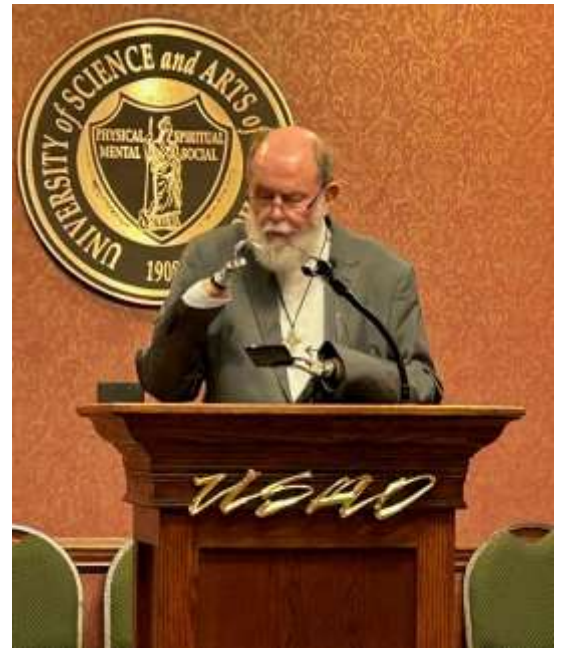
"I had a realization that what was truly bothering me at my deepest parts was not what I truly needed to heal from. Instead, I received healing for the loss of a loved one and, more importantly, uncovered a dark, deep hurt that has rooted a large portion of my trauma. I was able to release some pain from this hurt and make a personal plan to continue working."

"This is my first ever workshop, and from this experience, I have decided to seek counseling to help me deal with my mental health issues."

"I wish I could have brought some family members, friends, and co-workers. I believe what I've experienced should be shared with women from all walks of life. Especially in our society today."

"Thank you for this workshop from the bottom of my heart."

"I drove away amazed at how much work can be done in a short amount of time. I am grateful for the opportunity to be there. I feel ready to continue my post-traumatic growth."



Other programs

During Fr Michael's visit there was much activity. At Emmaus House Harlem, he facilitated a courageous conversation with everyone sharing and finding insight and healing. This program supported Emmaus House Harlem, becoming a significant partner in our work in New York City. At Franciscan Renewal Center Arizona and Spirit in the Desert, Fr Michael led a Veteran HOM workshop, did a public talk, and met with local funders during a luncheon. At Bishops School, La Jolla, CA, Fr Michael spent three days interacting with the children in the classroom, addressing assemblies, and meeting with students, and at St James By-The-Sea, La Jolla, CA, Fr Michael preached at two liturgical services and spoke at their adult education forum.

Our Southern California facilitation team had excellent programming during Fr Michael's visit, which included a presentation for Guibord Interfaith Peace Center, who are interested in having an IHOM workshop; an Unseen Wounds film screening and dialog about HOM and veterans; an Intro to Healing of Memories Workshop, with a particular focus on veterans. The first part of the workshop included a screening of Unseen Wounds and a Q&A session. The second part had the drawing exercise; all participants shared and listened to each other's stories.

All our SoCal facilitators were engaged and energized, and they had several local veterans join the screening and workshop. It was very enriching to have Kelley Settles, the Unseen Wounds film director, and Adolphus Stewart participate. It was an incredible experience for the veterans and all. Unfortunately, Adolphus is currently attending to some health issues. Still, he would like to continue working with IHOM in the future.



Partnerships and other programs

We had the opportunity to facilitate a workshop and conduct a facilitator training at the University of Science and Arts Oklahoma. Together, we developed a course, IHOM Workshop on Global and Experiential Strategies in Reconciliation, Healing and Peacebuilding, and students received credit for their participation, which included participation in the workshop and training, journaling, homework assignments, and assigned reading.

Our time on the ground in Oklahoma was challenging. The facilitation team did an exemplary job managing all the various factors, from getting everyone to Chickasha, Oklahoma, being there, health needs, and students who had severe trauma and were not clear on what they had got themselves into. But, as always, it was very impactful for many. It was a significant learning experience for IHOM-NA regarding the massive trauma more prevalent in certain places in the United States, like Oklahoma, and how best to prepare and engage in university work moving forward.

Last Day of Training, a journal entry from a student

I honestly do not know where to start when discussing this day of training! I want to start off with the fact that I waited two days after the end of training to write about it because I have been shocked by how training has impacted me. I know that probably sounds very stupid, but I really want to explain what I mean. Yesterday I had two friends come to me with problems, one of these girls I mentor and the other girl has mentored me. The first friend came to me about problems with her roommate, my typical response would have been to offer advice and try to fix the situation. However, I just asked some questions that I learned in training. "When your roommate yelled at you, what emotions were you feeling?" After a lot of active listening, I learned that the situation was more from a semester of pent-up emotions. When she asked for advice, I told her of resources and offered to be a mediator between her and her roommate, but mostly I was there in the moment with her.

The second situation was with my other friend who was experiencing difficult problems with her family invalidating her about serious health problems. Again, I would typically have offered advice, but I also would have gotten angry because we have the same autoimmune diseases and that is personal for me. Throughout talking with her I learned she just needed someone to sit with her in the pain and to validate her that she is not overreacting. I was so proud of her and I both, we recognized her emotions, and I did not try to relate with her with my story. We were able to focus on her. I would not have been able to handle these two situations like this if it had not been for the last day of training!

I had the opportunity to practice being a facilitator with both Amanda and Lori. This was incredible because I worked with two different personalities and had coaches there with me through both of them. This day we also chose one scene of our story to draw about to share. Both times we drew our stories through the training and workshop, I was surprised with how much I thoroughly enjoyed it while also wishing we had more time. I am not good at drawing, but I truly enjoyed it. It was very meaningful for me to be able to look at my life on a piece of paper in crayon and remember how far I have come. Also, the detail that I used in both pictures was surprising to me, my aunt's house is a significantly nicer house than my parents. When I was drawing, I gave little details like cute strawberry curtains in my parents' house and made my aunt and uncles' look like a brooding castle. This was a reminder that how we remember experiences shapes how we view things.

When talking about our peace symbols that we did at the end of the workshop, I acknowledged how I was shocked at some disrespectful comments that had been made by some people. Our facilitators took that moment to remind me that is a reflection on where people are in their individual journeys, and that as facilitators it is our job to remember and to remind people that this is a judgment-free zone.

I would love to do more training like this in the future, when my schedule allows. I loved this training and believe it began to build my foundation for my future as both an individual and a professional. I cannot thank the IHOM team enough for coming and participating with us.



We had the opportunity to participate in the EMI Ending Mass Incarceration Conference, January 2023, IHOM-NA. The conference was inspiring and profound. Our talks were well-attended and participation deep. As a result, we are exploring ways to partner with EMI going forward.



In 2023 we will start building Healing of Memories capacity for Emmaus House Harlem. First, we will facilitate a complete Healing of Memories workshop and, later, facilitator training. This is an essential step in Emmaus House becoming a home for the Healing of Memories, something they are committed to.



We met with the founder and team building Live Oak Truth Witness Justice. Live Oak is a 245-acre former plantation in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, rooted in a complex and painful history. We are exploring different ways to partner as they want Healing of Memories to be part of their work there. We have a large project in development which would be a learning exchange between the USA and South Africa. They are working to secure funding at this time.



*Emmaus House,
Harlem,
New York City*

We are partners in developing and presenting the Building Bridges 2.0 conference with Professor Tonnia Anderson, Director of the Dr Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Center for Social Justice and Racial Healing at the University of Science and Arts Oklahoma. This three-day conference will examine the dynamics and effects of America's status as a backsliding democracy by evaluating themes of justice, liberty, and equality. The conference will be presented face-to-face and live streamed on 23-25 October, 2023, at USAO in Chickasha, Oklahoma.

One primary goal of the conference is to stimulate dialogue and reflection about the status of American democracy. To achieve this, community dialogues will be facilitated daily by the Institute for Healing of Memories (IHOM) staff to help participants process and share their feelings, experiences, and a general understanding of the topics covered.

The objectives of the community dialogues with IHOM facilitators are the following:

1. Begin the process of building bridges by fostering authentic dialog with and between participants.
2. Examine the complexities of transforming social and political ideals into everyday life.
3. Provide a safe space to explore the fissures of difference that polarize American society.



SOUTH AFRICA

The year 2022 returned to some sort of normality as the Covid pandemic restrictions were lifted and infection rates declined. The numbers succumbing to Covid greatly decreased, as it no longer dominated the news headlines. While the news moved on, the realities of the impact of the Covid pandemic in many ways are just beginning to absorb into the lives of so many people affected by it. Many of the activities of the year included dealing with the loss and grief people are experiencing, made more painful as they feel the world has moved on. It will continue to be a focus of IHOM work for the coming months if not years.

In April 2022, the province of KwaZulu Natal suffered a disastrous flood, the most catastrophic natural disaster in the living history of the province. Close to 500 people lost their lives, many people are still missing and presumed dead, 4000 homes were destroyed with countless people left homeless. Furthermore, damage to

infrastructure and the economy has further added to the hardships people endure. Our KZN team, in partnership with local organisations, provided as much support as our limited resources allowed. The floods brought home the need for organisations to be much more responsive and nimble in our response to natural disasters caused by climate change. Whilst we gave support to the communities we work with, we also needed to be mindful of the importance of giving support to our staff and facilitator team.

This introduction is a snippet of the context in which we continue to implement the core of our work, primarily in the three provinces of Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and the Western Cape in South Africa. We continue to participate in workshops, meetings, and various platforms in other provinces in the country. These interactions are usually by invitation.



Catastrophic flood damage in KwaZulu Natal

The table below is an overview of fully funded activities we hosted in the past 12-month period. It is a representation of approximately 85 % of our core work. Most of the work takes place in economically marginalised communities that are neglected and generally in a state of disrepair.

Activities	Total	Female	Male	Total
IHOM Workshops	35	402	299	701
Phase 2	15	141	71	212
Reunions	5	62	30	92
Community Healing Dialogues	23	422	247	669
Psycho-social support	183 sessions	23	14	37
Psycho-education workshops	7	196	12	208
Totals		1246	673	1919

The Healing of Memories, the “One step towards healing” workshops, the Dealing with Anger, Overcoming Hatred and Struggling with Forgiveness process and the Reunions focus primarily on individuals who are victims of or impacted by gender-based violence (GBV). The HIV/AIDS pandemic, whilst not trending in the news, remains of huge concern in communities, influencing our ongoing work with people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. We still have a long way to go towards being an inclusive society that welcomes people living with physical disability; we continue to be intentional in making our offerings accessible to all. Crime is destroying our

communities, with the assassination of political foes increasing at an alarming rate. We should be doing more to strengthen our communities impacted by drugs and violence. The continued political and economic instability of the African continent continues to ensure the arrival of migrants and refugees in the country, so that hosting workshops with South Africans is important in fostering solidarity among different groups of people. The mental wellbeing of young people is of particular concern, as are military veterans and people in prisons. The impact of Covid is a thread that runs through all the different groups of people we accompany.



From a workshop participant:

"Thank you so much for all the coping mechanisms the Healing of Memories facilitators provided. Before attending the healing of memories session I was in denial for some time with my issues; instead of facing them, I was very aggressive. The day when the facilitators requested us to draw our own stories, I did not want to draw but to my surprise I managed to draw all my pain on the paper, thinking back it was when my healing journey started without me even knowing it.

Secondly, before going for a healing training I was carrying lots of burdens, work-related and personal, I did not see the need of self-care and self-sustainability. I did not want to cry whenever I felt pain instead I wanted to be everybody's hero.

After the session, I felt relieved and light as if 70% of my burdens were offloaded. I was courageous to face my own demons...I'm able to allow myself to be vulnerable I don't count how many times I cry now."



From a youth workshop participant:

"Before the workshop, I was not concerned about anything happening around me. In other words, I was like a statue. The process of the workshop has really helped to find myself. I also started to know myself that I needed help from other people to vomit out all the toxins that was within me.

I have learnt the importance of forgiveness for myself and not holding grudges to other people. I never knew the importance of talking about things that bothered me. I had so much anger for a long time because of the things that happened to me previously.

My journey through the workshop gave the space to reveal what was hurting me, although I cried unexpectedly but after the tears flowing on my face, I found out that I needed to feel vulnerable instead of hiding it, because it felt like my heart was having a big sore. I was dead in a breathing body, because nothing was happening in my life and I was not even thinking of anything going forward.

After the whole process of the workshop, I felt like I threw away the biggest burden I was carrying in my life. My life has changed, I do not have a full-time job but I have the biggest hope that I will get it when the time is right. I started to pray again because I stopped because I was feeling like God did not care about me and I did not exist to him that is why bad things happened to me, I was angry with God.

Now I am feeling happy and I am optimistic. I have sent my CV everywhere and I know I will be able to get more work because my attitude has changed for the better."



Community Healing Dialogues

The Community Healing Dialogues are contributing in communities by creating an intimate public space for community members to talk about issues that are important to them. It can be a conversation in a backyard or in a community hall. These dialogues provide an opportunity for people to connect to the collective struggles and pain in communities, and to seek ways to contribute to finding solutions to the challenges they face.

Special project: Power of Art - Journey of Military Veterans

The mission statement of the Institute for Healing of Memories states that the organisation is committed to empowering individuals, communities and nations by; "Redeeming the past through healing and celebrating that which is life-giving." There is arguably nothing more life-giving than creating and making art.

In February and March 2022, the Institute embarked on a Healing and Art project with military veterans and anti-apartheid activists who have started their healing journey with the Institute. The project consisted of six one-day sessions that took place in six successive weeks. The 15 participants - three women and 12 men - represented three different military formations. South Africa's unique history has resulted in military veterans from 10 different military formations, an estimated 81 000 in 2020. This speaks directly to our divided past.

Since its establishment, the Institute has facilitated workshops and events that enable people from different racial, religious and social backgrounds to reach a better understanding of themselves and of each other. The Institute believes that when personal stories are heard and acknowledged, individuals feel healed and empowered and dignity is restored; at the same time, bridges can be built across communities and a common path forged based on mutual understanding and shared values.

This process reflects the unique healing and creative social space created for participants to express themselves and build relationships with each other. The participants surprised themselves with the pieces of art they produced. The art-making healing processes allowed the participants to get to know themselves in different ways and the possibilities of how they live in this world. We thank Ann Short for her generous bequest to the Institute that made this possible.



“The Institute believes that when personal stories are heard and acknowledged, individuals feel healed and empowered and dignity is restored; at the same time, bridges can be built across communities and a common path forged based on mutual understanding and shared values.”

Restoring Humanity

The young people participating in the Restoring Humanity programme continued their focus on gender-based violence. On 24 March, the exhibition **#thehandsofmen** opened. The exhibition was a culmination of healing journeys, popular education workshops focusing on gender-based violence, femicide and violence against children.

Themes in the exhibition included the exploration of gender roles and the influence of culture in this regard and how it perpetuates gender inequality in a patriarchal society. It further explored the objectification of women's bodies, perceptions of beauty and the impact this has on the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of women. The exhibition highlighted the far-reaching impact of gender-based violence and its prevalence and pervasiveness in communities.

This theme was also taken up in KwaZulu Natal with the implementation of the Boys to Men project dealing with masculinity, gender roles and gender-based violence. They partnered with YMCA and Tanham Art Gallery on a mini exhibition during the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children. A group of 16 boys from the communities of Imbali, KwaPata, Emadamini and France participated; these boys were between 15 and 20 years old.

In Gauteng, Restoring Humanity was implemented in the communities of Stanza Bopape Informal Settlement in Mamelodi for boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 17, facilitated by youth facilitators (male & female) aged between 21 and 27 from Stanza Bopape Settlement, other parts of Mamelodi and Tembisa.

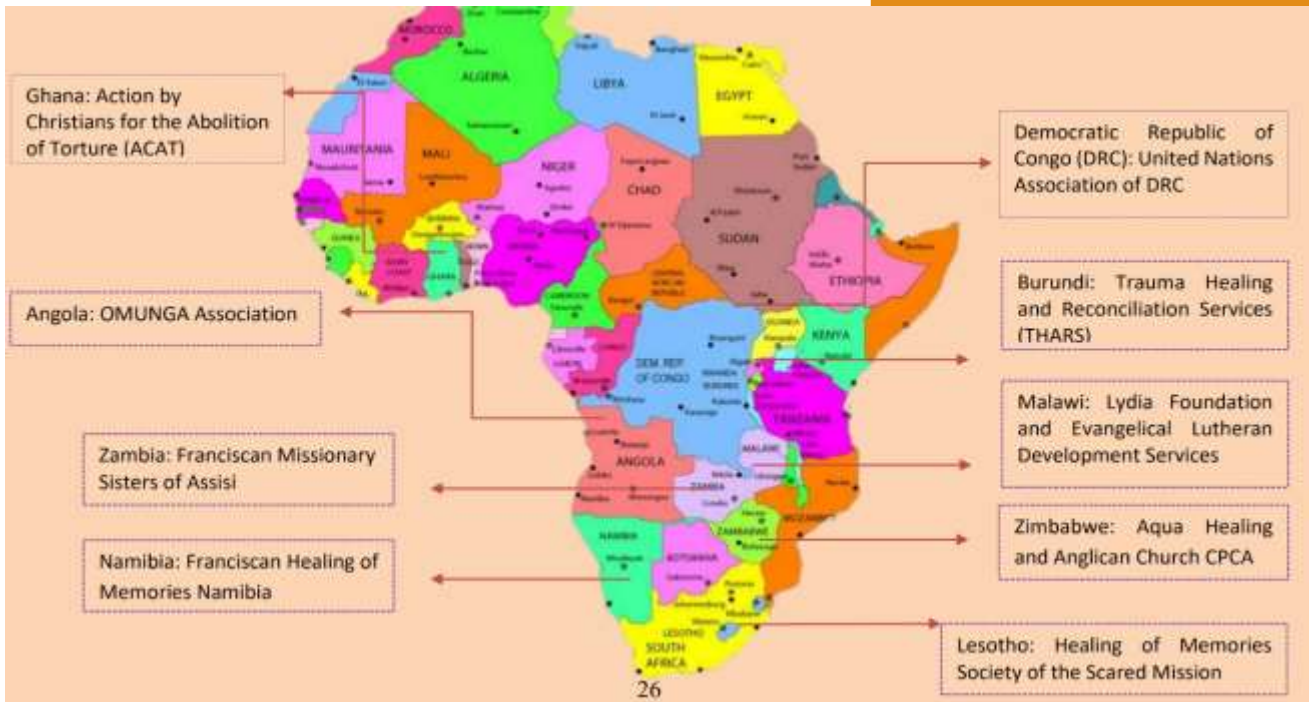
In these two townships, youth unemployment, teen pregnancy, broken families, gambling, and perceived marginalisation are common. Other issues include a lack of information and a lack of positive role models; also, crime and violence are prevalent. These two townships are among the top ten hotspots for gender-based violence in South Africa.



Africa programme

The Africa Programme was initially intended for implementation in Lesotho, Namibia, Burundi, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, and Angola. However, additional countries were added to the target list to include Ghana and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). As a principle, the IHOM works through partner organisations for the implementation of the Africa programme and was able to secure in-country partners for each project site. **The map below locates each partner organisation.**

Can people start their healing when they are in the midst of ongoing systemic political trauma?



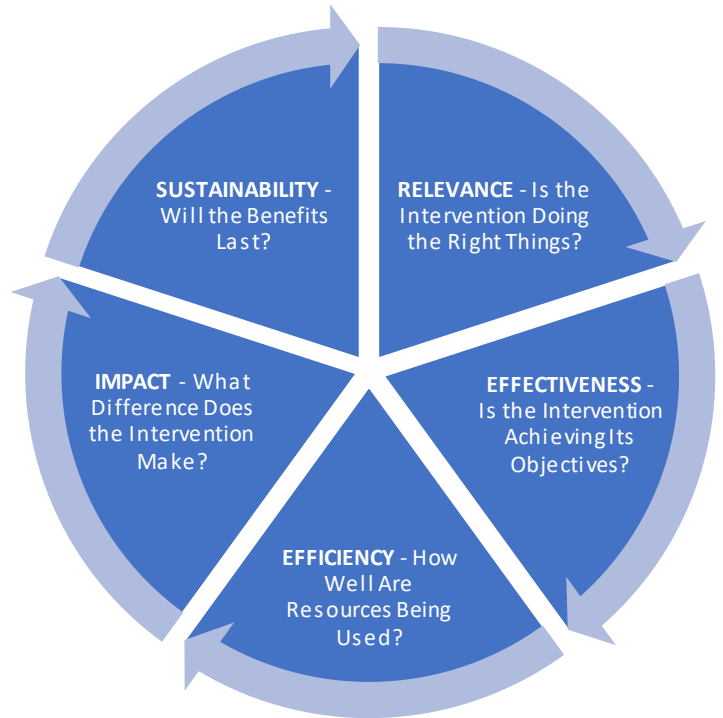
A new project

In the second half of the year we started with the implementation of a new three-year project focused on strengthening civil society in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland. It encompasses supporting human rights defenders in coping and dealing with stress, increasing security, preventing burn-outs and fostering networking. The first retreat for leaders of NGOs in the three countries was held toward the end of the year, with the healing of memories workshops scheduled for their staff and partners in their countries.

“Can people start their healing when they are in the midst of ongoing systemic political trauma?” This question has been asked on many platforms where IHOM engaged people experiencing state violence.

Conclusion

The Institute for Healing of Memories (IHOM) commissioned an external evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the programme activities in the period 2020 to 2022 as funded by *Brot für die Welt* (*The Bread for the World Relief Agency*) abbreviated as *Brot*. The evaluation focused on programme activities conducted in South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Namibia, Burundi, Ghana, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The purpose of this evaluation was twofold: firstly to provide feedback and insights on the effectiveness, progress, and potential impact of the programme and secondly, to identify and highlight key lessons and opportunities for the institute to enhance the programme. Please contact IHOM if you would like to read the full report.



Evaluation criteria

Communication

"We learn to listen with the intention to hear the person and understand what is being shared"

Patience

"It brings self-awareness on how I impact other people subconsciously, then I strive to be a better person not only for me but also the people who are around me."

Confidence

"It helps with knowledge and to build confidence to be able to share and to dig out that inner trauma so that you can find understanding of the issue so that you can find healing and a way to move on"

Perspective

"Healing of memories has taught us the importance of opening up and listening to others without judging them, so I would highly recommend these workshops to people around me."

Forgiveness

"It taught me that it is not okay to bottle things up; you must share with others and let it all out. It also taught me the importance of forgiveness, and that forgiveness frees your mind."

Lessons learned



We are grateful for the guidance and support of our board as we continue to navigate the road to focus on our mission and strive to resource IHOM adequately.



SRI LANKA

Three workshops were held during the period:

1. 30 plantation widows (3-5 April) - Hatton
2. 35 social activists, farmers' leaders and peace activists (1 September- 2 October) - Monaragala
3. 35 ex-LTTE combatants (11-13 November) - Monaragala

HOM workshop held in the plantations

The workshop was targeted at plantation widows. About 30 plantation widows from the regions of Hatton, LabuKalewatte, Matta Kale watte, Lindula and Maskeliya participated in the workshop. The majority were Tamil Hindus. There were some Christians and a few Muslim women among them.

Being widows, they were very nervous and uncomfortable at the beginning of the workshop.

When we start other workshops, we talk about the life story of Fr Michael Lapsley, while in this workshop the history of the sufferings of the people of the plantations for two hundred years was shared. With this initial surprising opening, they started to successfully engage in the workshop.

During the workshop, specific changes could be identified. At the beginning, these women were reserved and held back with bitterness in their lives but they gradually became more open and interacted with each other.

They started to relate to one another. They were always reminded of their position as widows by society and they were used to isolating themselves from society, but during the workshop they started relating with a new-found freedom. At the end of the workshop they said that they were feeling equal each to one another, they were not outcasts, losers or a bad omen, they were individuals. It was almost as if they had regained a lost identity and had their dignity and self-respect back.

Before coming to this workshop, these women thought that they were the only ones who were suffering, but they realized that the others who participated in the workshop also have bitter memories and pain just like them. They learned to listen to each other and respect each other. At the end of the workshop, they insisted that this bitterness will soon come to an end. This was a big step towards their healing, they said.

This workshop was held at a time when there was a very turbulent and volatile situation in the country. A curfew was observed across the country on 3 April, the last day of these workshops. Due to the curfew, the women had to stay at the workshop for one more day. Spending another day with their facilitators and the group brought them further healing. Everyone dispersed happily on the next day.

Total participation: 100



Joy instead of bitterness – the healing journey

Comments from participants:

"I used to worry all the time and after participating in the HOM workshop, I have changed."

"The time when I was really worried all the time ended after participating in this workshop. I started to listen to another person as a sensitive confidant. I got the opportunity to be a facilitator of healing over time by talking with several people about their problems and challenges. After all the training I have gained the ability to listen to someone else, listen to them and facilitate their healing journey, and respect others. I realized that it is possible to let go of anger and hatred. I was gradually drawn to join others with compassion for their suffering.

Thank you"

"This workshop was very useful for me, as a person who was worried all the time and suffered immensely as a result. I was able to bring healing to the lives through forgiveness and through listening. I intervened to facilitate healing to the problems of people, for example, from Athemale and Siyabalanduwa. Another person, who was in the middle of a financial conflict, received healing through the listening process. This program has healed the lives of many people including my own life. Thank you to everyone who organized this program."

"I often see how people who have problems in their lives try to run away, take their life or bring harm on others. But through this program I was able to understand how to take a step forward to finding a solution to the problems of my life. I have been able to help many others in my life as much as I can. And at least now I have been able to comfort another person by listening to the problems in their mind. The joy this brings is sufficient motivation for me to continue my own life."



"I am usually a person who gets very angry. After participating in the HOM workshop, I have been able to control myself a little. And I have received knowledge and developed the ability to understand people to some extent. I have been able to open up space in my life to family as well as society. I feel that many people appreciate me today more than the past. It all happened after this program. I have started to take life easy. Anger has been controlled. Thank you"



"I was a young woman and a widow. My husband left me and was in Colombo. He was addicted to drugs. There was no way I could live with the little girl. It was not easy for me to live. I was caught in the web of men. I was in the most difficult place mentally.

It was at such a moment that I received an invitation to this healing of memory workshop. I think God sent me to it. It has been six months since the workshop ended. Little by little I can see my life moving towards a recovery. I have managed to let go of some of the wrong things in my past. I was able to build a relationship with my husband once again at this time. He is back in the village. We do various odd jobs to survive. Also, I am involved in the women's society that is run by the institute as a program that provides food to children. I experience joy by joining them. You are feeding children at a time when they do not have a proper meal. I am happy to devote my time to this cause.

I participate in every program conducted by the Women's Society. We meet once a month and I also gain awareness regarding several things there. We expect support from your organization in the future. We will also be contributors."



ZIMBABWE

Two Healing of Memories workshops were held in Harare in May 2022, both at Daisy's Lodge, not the best venue as it left little space for quiet reflection.



Both were organised by Aqua Healing, taking their turn at this task. Facilitators came equally from Aqua Healing and the Order of St Luke and equal numbers of participants were selected by each partner organisation. There were 20 participants in each workshop. In the first there were 12 women and eight men, in the second 14 women and six men. This is in line with Aqua's observations in other groups. The situation in the country is very tough and more of the burden of stress and trauma seems to fall on women.

The participants approached the process with open minds and they said they soon felt at home. Several said that hearing other people's stories helped them to open up to allow their own healing. A large number were elderly people who shared their journey of life freely without fear of being judged. Most of the stories centred on family, social and political problems.

In this election year 2023 the need remains great.





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