

ACTIVITY REPORT



2023

HEALING OF MEMORIES LUXEMBOURG

<https://healing-memories.lu>

Every story needs a listener...



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Editorial

2023, another step forward

Fifteen years already of healing of memories in Luxembourg!

Our group was set up in 2008 to welcome Michael Lapsley on his first visit to the Grand Duchy and has evolved step by step: the translation and publication in several languages of Michael's memoir, the organisation of workshops in Luxembourg and elsewhere for a diverse range of participants. Thanks to Michael's constant support, we have made good progress with the long-term task of training our facilitators. And then, the creation of our non-profit and the launching of a training project for francophone Africa....

As this new report sets out, 2023 marked a turning point in more than one respect.

- Our team is now able to run workshops independently. We are very happy about this, as it means we can offer additional services to people in search of inner healing.
- For years we had thought about establishing a partnership with professional psychologists. This project came to fruition this year and we are now collaborating with two women who work with Omega 90 and to whom we are very grateful.
- Our Africa project has also moved forward. This year, we planned and implemented several trips involving joint teams of facilitators from Luxembourg and South Africa who met up with the newly-formed groups from seven countries in West and Central Africa.

I hope you enjoy reading this report!

Patrick Byrne
Chairman

LIFE OF THE ASSOCIATION

In 2023 ...

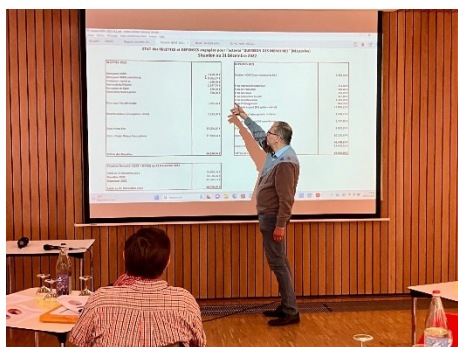
27 February – 16 March: visit by Michael Lapsley to Luxembourg

During this stay, Michael Lapsley's programme focused on workshops and facilitator training. He led a workshop at Schrassig prison and a second-phase workshop (see page 8, Workshops). As for training, he led sessions for three groups (lead, intermediate and new), a day of reflection and training for all the Luxembourg facilitators and a session for the delegation of trainees from Hamburg (see page 9, Facilitator training, and page 10, Participation in the global network / Hamburg group).

He also spoke during two religious ceremonies (at the Christ the King community and in the parish of Bonnevoie).

Michael's visit enabled us to consolidate the skills of our facilitator team with a view to organising workshops independently in the future.

1 July: Annual general meeting and an event open to the public

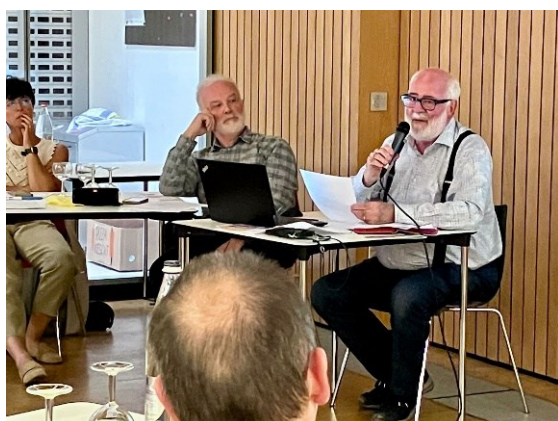


In 2023 the Executive Committee was determined to make the annual general meeting more attractive by providing a complement to its purely statutory aspect. They therefore organised an event on « Redeeming the past », a subject which is central to the healing of memories but also to many other situations.

Thus following the AGM, which reviewed the previous year's activities, the association's accounts and future projects, and allowed time for a discussion among the members, the doors were opened to a wider public for the official launch of the documentary on our association « Healing the wounds of the past: A project takes shape in Luxembourg » in the presence of the director, Eileen Byrne.

(This film is still available on our website.)





After the screening and the discussion prompted by the film, the participants heard the moving testimony by Guy Dockendorf, who spoke about his father's commitment to keeping alive the memory of the Nazi period and the Second World War, in Luxembourg and elsewhere. This commitment, born of his father's traumatic and devastating experience in the camp at Mauthausen, inspired Guy Dockendorf, Chairman of the International Mauthausen Committee, to continue this work for the benefit of each new generation.

This event was well attended, offering participants – members, friends and newcomers – an opportunity for sharing and reflecting which was both deep and convivial.



10-12 November: first healing of memories workshop run entirely by a team of Luxembourg facilitators (see page 8, Workshops).



Creation of a paid position

Since 1 September 2023, Healing of Memories Luxembourg has a part-time post, 14 hours a week, which is occupied by Ms Valinda Batoto. This role is principally concerned with the follow-up and administrative coordination of the francophone Africa project, in close collaboration with the working group dedicated to the project and with the Executive Committee of the association. Valinda Batoto provides vital assistance for this project, whose scope is constantly expanding.

TRAINING OF HEALING OF MEMORIES FACILITATORS FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

Second year – from theory to practice!

As mentioned in last year's report, the first stage in the new project for francophone Africa was a 10-day training session held in Cotonou (Benin) in July 2022 with 29 trainees from seven countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Senegal and Togo).

At the conclusion of this session, each delegation took home a 'road map' setting out its programme for the following year, in particular the steps involved in organising a healing of memories workshop in each country as part of their practical training.



*Participants in the Burkina Faso workshop
Ouagadougou, May 2023*

As a result, in 2023 workshops were held in five countries (Burkina Faso in May, Togo and Benin in July, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal in November-December), each time in the presence of two or three trainers from Luxembourg and South Africa. In the case of Luxembourg, Patrick Byrne, Javier García Alves and Valdemar Santos took turns to participate in these five trips. Given the major safety and security issues in Mali and in the eastern DRC, rendering it impossible to travel there, a Plan B was required: the trainees from those countries travelled to Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, respectively, to participate with the trainees from those countries in running their workshops. Each of the five workshops was preceded by a full day of interactive training to enable the trainees to prepare to welcome the 12-15

participants

arriving the next day and to fully assume their role as facilitators. A further day's training took place after each workshop for those trainees from the seven national teams who it was felt could in future become lead facilitators.

Organising these sessions was no easy task, since the availability of the local teams of trainees, together with their participants, had to be coordinated with that of the peripatetic teams of trainers. Nevertheless, this first edition of the practical training was a great success. It was encouraging to see the extent to which the trainees from each country had entered into the spirit of the project since its launch in Cotonou in 2022. It was likewise encouraging to see their commitment, in particular to finding the most suitable location for the workshop and the training sessions, to recruiting the participants and to undertaking this first practical experience of the role



*Participants, trainee facilitators and trainers
at the end of the Togo workshop – Sichem,
July 2023*

of co-facilitator. And how enthusiastic and effective they were! There are, of course, aspects which need improvement or fine-tuning, but this first « Desmond Tutu » promotion is well on the way to laying solid foundations for the healing of memories project in each of the countries concerned.



Abomey-Calavi (Benin), July 2023 :

- The nine Benin trainees with their trainers from Luxembourg and South Africa (left)
- End of the workshop (right)



Participants and trainees from Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, with their trainers from Luxembourg and South Africa – Bingerville (Côte d'Ivoire), November 2023

Participants and trainees from Senegal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with their trainers from Luxembourg and South Africa - Rufisque (Senegal), December 2023



In May 2023 Patrick Byrne and Javier García Alves also spent a few days in two 'new' countries, Niger and Rwanda, to meet future participants in the training project and to offer them an introduction to the healing of memories methodology. Four new trainees from each of these countries will begin their training at the July 2024 session in Grand-Popo (Benin).



A two-day introduction to healing of memories with the trainers from Luxembourg:

- *on the left, the new HOM team in Niger – Niamey (Niger), May 2023*
- *on the right, the new HOM team in Rwanda and a member of the DRC team – Mahama (Rwanda), May 2023*

WORKSHOPS

- On **4 March** a second-phase workshop was held, open to everyone who had previously participated in a first-phase workshop. This type of workshop, which takes place over one day, aims to go more deeply into some of the principal themes at the heart of the healing of memories process.

Most of the participants had attended the May 2022 workshop in Hurtebise (Belgium). We were also pleased to welcome a delegation of facilitators from the Hamburg group, who came to pursue their training further.

The workshop was led by Michael Lapsley and provided an opportunity to revisit a number of key concepts: How can we deal with our anger? How can we overcome hatred? How do we tackle forgiveness? The far-reaching reflections and discussions, held in an atmosphere imbued with warmth and humanity, enabled each participant to move forward on their path to healing and understanding.



- From **13 to 15 March** a first-phase workshop was held at Luxembourg prison in Schrassig.

There were 13 participants: 11 detainees and two people from outside the prison. The prisoners included people who were participating for the second time because they wished to continue on their path to healing.

As in previous years, the workshop required intense preparation because of the internal rules to be respected. At the end of the workshop, both the participants and the facilitators felt great joy and gratitude for the opportunity to experience a stage in the healing of memories.

- From **10 to 12 November** a first-phase workshop open to all was held in Medernach (Luxembourg). It was the first workshop run exclusively by Luxembourg facilitators, without Michael Lapsley. There were 13 participants, four facilitators and four co-facilitators, including one from the Hamburg group. Both the participants and the facilitators testified to the success of this workshop with regard to the way it had been organised and run as well as in terms of their individual journeys.

This experience marks an important stage in the development of our association in that it demonstrated our ability to function independently and confirmed the skills of our local team of facilitators.



FACILITATOR TRAINING

At the beginning of 2023 we had a team of 20 facilitators in Luxembourg (22 at the end of the year). There are four groups, depending on their level of training: Lead (six people), Advanced (five people), Intermediate (four people) and New (five and later seven people).

In addition to this local team there are eight facilitators and co-facilitators in Canada and one in France, who participate via videoconference in the training sessions led by Michael Lapsley from South Africa (or elsewhere when he is travelling).

- On **11 March 2023** we took advantage of Michael Lapsley's presence to bring together all the Luxembourg facilitators for a day of reflection and training, which everyone found extremely enriching. A questionnaire had been sent to the participants in advance and as a result it was possible to focus the day's activities on the most problematic aspects of a healing of memories workshop. Through reflections in small groups and role-play, the team reviewed the various stages of a workshop in order better to understand the key issues and to hone their practical skills.



- On **7 October** the Luxembourg facilitators of all levels met two psychologists from the Omega 90 association, Sandra Balsamo and Isabelle Faber, who agreed to support them in their journey as facilitators. This get-together also provided the facilitators with an opportunity to strengthen the ties within the team.

PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK AND RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

Healing of Memories Global Network

As in 2022, our association continued to participate in the global network, chaired by Michael Lapsley, 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.

These discussions are extremely enriching, bringing an awareness both of the universal nature of the healing of memories project throughout the world and of the adaptations needed because of local circumstances. They are especially important as a means of keeping in touch with, and supporting, groups whose situation is fragile or whose country is facing specific difficulties.

The activities and events in 2023 included:

- the publication of a new global report (2022), to which each national healing of memories group contributed a chapter (see our website: <https://healing-memories.lu/>), with HOM-Luxembourg also providing a summary of the training project in francophone Africa;
- further work on the preparation of a document on the gradual harmonisation of the methods used to train healing of memories facilitators on the different continents and on the rules to be respected, and the establishment of a list of those who have been trained for this work;
- the launch of the online introduction to healing of memories open to all and spread over three evenings; the programme is currently in English but will eventually be available in other languages, including French.

Hamburg group

At Michael Lapsley's suggestion, the Hamburg and Luxembourg groups cooperate on training.

Following an initial meeting in December 2022, online training continued in February 2023 with Michael, Patrick and Marie-Christine. Understanding of the facilitator's function was deepened through role-play.

The Hamburg group had planned a healing of memories workshop for April 2023 but it did not take place because insufficient people signed up.

Members of the Hamburg group participated in the second-phase workshop held in Luxembourg on 4 March 2023. A training session for the Hamburg-Luxembourg group took place on the afternoon of Sunday, 5 March.

It has been agreed that a member of the Luxembourg group will participate as a facilitator in the next workshop in Hamburg.

Thanks to cooperation between the DRC and Luxembourg:

First edition of Michael Lapsley's memoir in an African language

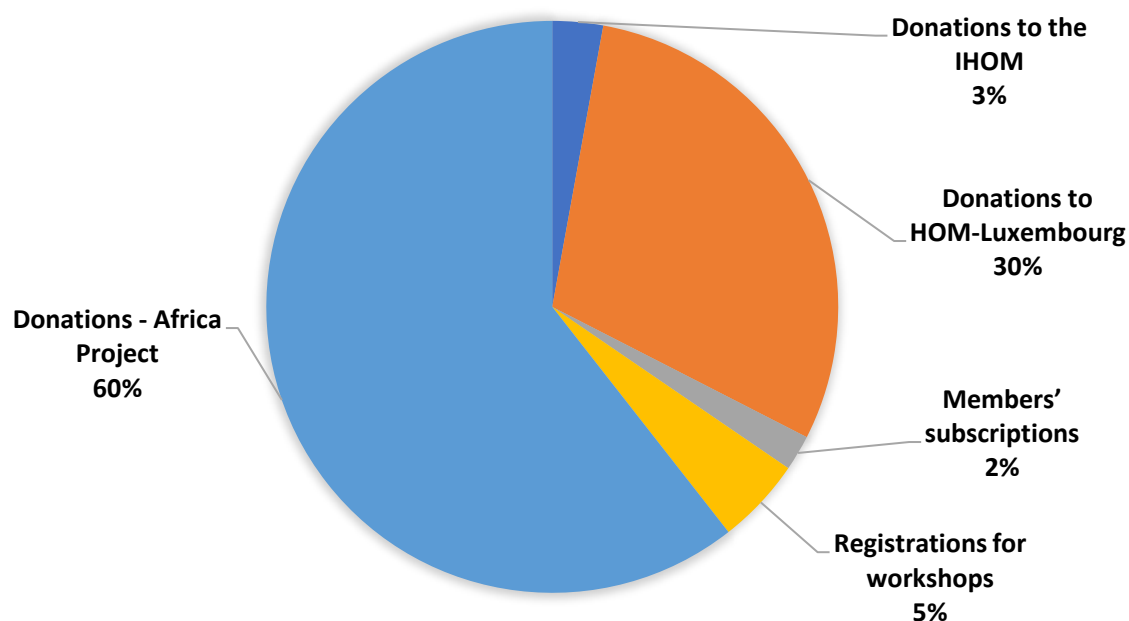
There are now a dozen language versions of Michael Lapsley's memoir in addition to the original English-language edition ("Redeeming the Past: My Journey from Freedom Fighter to Healer"). Healing of Memories Luxembourg was involved in the production of several of these versions: Spanish (three editions), French, German and Arabic. The book is an important tool in raising awareness of the healing of memories process throughout the world.

In July 2023 a new project was born: thanks to cooperation between our association and the Martin Luther King Group (Goma, DRC), one of our partners in the francophone Africa training project, work on the translation of the book into Kiswahili began. Publication of this first edition of Michael Lapsley's memoir in an African language is expected in July 2024!

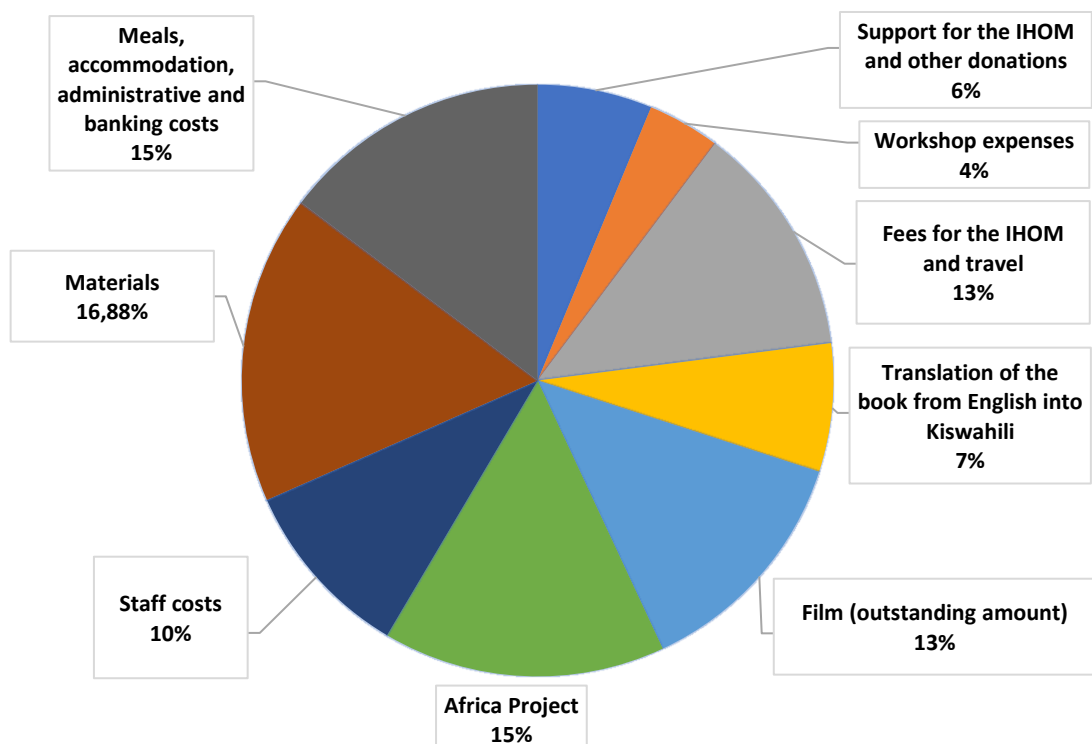
FINANCES

The 2023 accounts were examined and approved by our auditor, Mr Roger Molitor.

BREAKDOWN OF REVENU



BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE



As in previous years, donations comprised 91% of revenue. Donations enable us to cover the association's operating costs, to continue the training of facilitators, and to invite to healing of memories workshops people who would not otherwise have the means to attend.

The main items of expenditure were:

- support for the HOM Institute in South Africa, which includes the donations and fees for the work done by Michael Lapsley and his assistant;
- staff: a member of staff was recruited on a fixed-term contract from 1 September 2023 to 29 February 2024, working 14 hours a week. This person is responsible for the administrative coordination and follow-up of the francophone Africa project, which comprises training in healing of memories and the establishment of this activity in the countries of francophone Africa;
- materials: HOM Luxembourg invested in earphones in order to provide simultaneous interpretation;
- exploratory visits to Niger and Rwanda, which are not covered by the francophone Africa project (cf Partage Foundation through its framework agreement with the Foreign Ministry).

The film presenting the activities of Healing of Memories Luxembourg was completed in 2023. This film provides a way of describing our activities and raising awareness of healing of memories among the public.

At the end of 2023 the HOM accounts showed a positive balance between revenue and expenditure of €33.305,90.

OUTLOOK FOR 2024

Healing of Memories Luxembourg is maintaining its momentum, with an ambitious programme for 2024:

- continue facilitator training in Luxembourg and Quebec via videoconference, and organise regular meetings of the local team both for training purposes and to ensure cohesion within the group;
- organise two workshops open to all in May and October in Clairefontaine (Belgium). > *At the time of publication of this report, we regret that the first workshop had to be cancelled due to insufficient registrations by the deadline. The second workshop will take place during Michael Lapsley's visit;*
- continue the facilitator training project in francophone Africa: in Benin in July, a basic 10-day training for 26 new trainees from nine countries, followed by an advanced five-day training session for 14 trainees from the first promotion;
- build on the 2023 success by again combining our AGM with an event open to the public in order both to bring together our members and to reach a wider public who are interested in the general subject of healing of memories;
- design and produce a leaflet to publicise and promote our association;
- publish the Kiswahili edition of Michael Lapsley's memoir, in cooperation with the HOM team in Goma (DRC) - planned for July;
- welcome Michael Lapsley in October, with, *inter alia*, a prison workshop and a workshop open to the public.

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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

Photos: private individuals except for page 8, Luxembourg prison, photo from APL