

Healing of Memories

2020 Global Annual Report

01 Introduction

02 Founder's Report Fr Michael Lapsley, SSM

04 Global Reports Canada Lesotho Luxembourg Myanmar Namibia South Africa Sri Lanka United States Zimbabwe

Introduction

The Institute for Healing of Memories (IHOM) was founded by Fr Michael Lapsley in 1998 in Cape Town, South Africa, to help address the wounds of apartheid.

People in other countries were inspired by Fr Michael and the work of the Institute and as a result they started to invite him to come to their countries to speak and run seminars. Over the next 20 years permanent programmes were established in a number of countries. Many HOM activities were hosted by local NGOs but in the United States and Luxembourg stand-alone Healing of Memories entities have been established. IHOM had become *de facto* a global network for healing of individual, community, and national wounds.

In 2019, Fr Michael suggested to the various national HOM organisations that they come together in a formal structured network to share ideas, resources, and best practices. This suggestion was well received and the HOM Network was formally established with a steering committee and participation by HOM organisations in nine countries: South Africa, United States, Luxembourg, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Namibia, Canada, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

The Network was constituted in the latter half of 2019 and approached 2020 with enthusiasm. Traditionally, HOM work involved training sessions, conferences, in-person meetings, and 2 ½ day workshops, all of which involved considerable national and international travel by Fr Michael and various staff members.

As the full impact of Covid-19 became apparent by March, HOM Network members had to cancel many of their planned activities and pivot to the virtual world of Zoom gatherings. The Network immediately demonstrated its utility. Its regular meetings provided a forum for mutual support as all the constituent organisations faced the challenge of Covid-19.

The network decided it could contribute by creating a virtual 8-hour course as an introduction to the philosophy and practice of Healing of Memories. This course would be limited to 12 participants plus a lead facilitator and three small-group facilitators. Once the course details were worked out, it could be offered by members of the Network.

A first pilot version of the course was offered in December 2020 with participants from Canada, the USA, Europe and South Africa. After receiving feedback from the course participants, the course syllabus is being revised and a second pilot will run in Spring 2021.

As we anticipate that Covid restrictions on travel and gatherings may continue for much, if not all, of 2021, the Network will continue to develop virtual materials and provide support to our members.

Founder's Report

Fr Michael Lapsley, SSM

NOTHING IN OUR LIVES PREPARED US FOR 2020.

At the end of 2019, as many of you will recall, I stepped down as Director of the Institute for Healing of Memories, a position I had occupied for 20 years. I was happy to hand over the reins to Fatima Swartz and Alphonse Niyodusenga while supporting the transition.

However, while I still had the energy and was in good health, I decided to continue doing the work which I find to be deeply meaningful and which also, I hope and pray, benefits others.

Covid-19 disrupted the lives of everyone on the planet, including all of us.

As in the previous two years, at the end of January I was due to travel with Brother Moeketsi Khomonngoe SSM to Myanmar and Thailand for Healing of Memories work. Covid-19 was already spreading beyond China. Our hosts in Myanmar from the Metta Development Foundation were raising questions about whether or not it was wise to come. The board of the Institute and my doctor said "Postpone". So we did.....until August, but even that was not to be.

Many months later we were able to hold two sets of virtual meetings with those they call Healing of Memories Alumni in Myanmar and from all different faith traditions, as well as another meeting with Christian leaders, a number of whom live in IDP camps. Most disturbing in Myanmar has been the rapid increase in suicide during the pandemic.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Every year since 1985 there has been an ecumenical and interfaith service and procession of witness focusing on issues of social justice attended by thousands of people. For the second time, I was invited to preach there. It was cancelled but they have now invited me for 2021, which hopefully will happen.

Other international trips stretching into the middle of this year were either postponed, cancelled or became virtual events. These included visits to Lebanon, Germany and Luxembourg and a number of African countries, as well as Canada and the United States.

When I stepped down as Director, it was agreed that I would focus on international work, training and sustainability and supporting the new directors. These international trips, whilst focusing on Healing of Memories work, have in addition been important for creating, nurturing and sustaining partnerships and also providing income.

We postponed our annual international training, which I co-ordinated with Fatima, at first to August and then to April this year, which may not be possible either.

Thank God for social media even though it is a mixed blessing, especially when it spreads hatred and prejudice and fake news.

Nevertheless, I would rather live through Covid-19 in 2019 than the Spanish Flu a hundred years ago. The reason I say that is because social media have enabled us as human beings and as an Institute to remain in contact and do our work.

.....AND THEN CAME ZOOM

Especially when the first lockdown began, I found it quite scary, even more so with the ever-increasing numbers of the dead and dying, and not forgetting hunger and unemployment. But with all the fear and uncertainty, life happens. Meanwhile I continue to pray that we all stay healthy, recognising that already some colleagues contracted the virus but thankfully survived.

Somehow faith and fear have been mixed together, along with despair and hope. During these months, even as I have been travelling my own journey, I have been able to do Healing of Memories work across the world thanks to technology.

INTERFAITH

I am the Canon for Healing and Reconciliation at Saint George's Cathedral in Cape Town. I have preached online quite a number of times and also face to face before the latest lockdown, very often incorporating key Healing of Memories messaging.

As part of advocating for justice and against corruption, I spoke at Friday prayers at the Claremont Main Rd Mosque, with whom the Institute enjoys a close relationship, at the beginning of September.

LESOTHO

It was good to be part of the work of emotional support to former workshop participants with the Society of the Sacred Mission Healing of Memories committee in Maseru, under the leadership of Brother Max.

I was also very delighted that the SSM HOM team now has the experience, skill and confidence to run workshops without me. At the same time, I am able to provide ongoing support and assistance with training.

When the lockdown happened, the challenge was how to do our work in the new reality. When I look back we actually did remarkably well. As the staff of the Institute, we met every couple of weeks for support which I facilitated. We also reallocated our budget and taught facilitators how to make appropriate phone calls to support people. I then helped to do the same for those who made the calls. To care for the carers.

It was not long before I began travelling the world virtually as I moved every morning from the bedroom to the lounge.

LUXEMBOURG

Training of facilitators has been the focus of our work in Luxembourg. There have also been participants from Spain and France as well as Arabic speakers from Iraq and Syria, some of whom are refugees. We have had three streams with 18 sessions each lasting between 90 and 120 minutes.

We now have:

- seven qualified small-group facilitators, who will soon be getting their certificates and of whom five are training to be lead facilitators;

- five others, who just need a little more experience to qualify

- and the 'up-and-coming group' of seven new trainees (not to mention our trainees from France, Spain and Togo.)

Zoom also provided an opportunity for the Directors to brief the Luxembourg Foreign Ministry about our work in South Africa as well as our Africa programme.

Healing of Memories Luxembourg was launched as an independent legal entity on 28 November, which is an exciting milestone. We wish them well and look forward to ongoing collaboration.

THE GLOBAL NETWORK

Delene Mark has been chairing regular meetings of the Global Network for Healing of Memories. There has been regular participation from Namibia, USA, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, Canada, Luxembourg, and South Africa. This has enabled us to learn from each other about our responses to Covid-19 and to give each other support and inspiration. There is also some collaboration between South Africa and the US. Fatima also brought the petition to silence the guns of war, which was endorsed by individual Healing of Memories entities. The global structure also successfully piloted an online Introduction to Healing of Memories, which we will be reviewing shortly.

THE UNITED STATES

In the United States the Institute provided online emotional support, especially to veterans. A new programme was also designed focusing on health workers. In addition, we managed to create a new online four-hour Healing of Memories workshop, which we have also successfully offered in our Africa programme and in Montreal, Canada. We were very encouraged to discover that on Zoom it is possible to create emotional intimacy.

In September, I was part of a webinar offered by the US organisation September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, entitled: Facing Trauma: The Intersection of Healing and Justice.

AFRICA PROGRAMME

The plan was for the Institute to roll out an Africa programme led by Loret during 2020 and for me to be part of it, especially in relation to training. Covid-19 had other plans, but we have managed to do a surprising amount through regular Zoom meetings, including a workshop with participants from eight countries and a final "How are you now?" meeting, which I led.

Flowing from the visit to Ghana in 2019 we have had a couple of calls with the team who organised the visit with our colleagues in Luxembourg and also involving Fatima and Loret. Two of the Ghanaians have also begun to participate in the Africa programme.

JOHANNESBURG

In November I spent nine eventful days in Johannesburg....my first trip outside Cape Town since March. It included a visit to St Thomas's Church in Linden to preach and be interviewed online and provided a platform for our Gauteng coordinator to speak about our work.

I spoke at the launch of the new Centre for Faith and Community, which is part of the Theology and Religion faculty of the University of Pretoria.

I am sure Fatima's report will cover the march against gender-based violence, the launch of the Hands of Men campaign, the dialogue on the Mamelodi Massacre of 1985 and the military veterans' workshop.

COLLABORATION

The Catholic Bishops' Conference Justice and Peace Commission asked me to offer a webinar involving bishops, clergy and lay people across South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland on healing and reconciliation. I led a workshop in early December in Durban for the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. During the workshop we had a visit from Coadjutor Archbishop Abel Gabaiza, who has since very sadly succumbed to Covid-19. It is expected that other Catholic dioceses will also invite us to offer workshops and training next year.

A Solidarity Network between the German Churches and South African Churches invited me to offer a virtual presentation on Silencing and Solidarity. This is part of a process which was planned to culminate at a Conference to which I am invited as keynote speaker in June 2021. We are not yet sure whether it will simply be a virtual conference.

Similarly, I recorded an interview for a Reformed Church of Switzerland Conference in January, focusing on the theme of the next WCC Assembly: "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity".

Last year I was nominated for the Armenian-based Aurora Prize. They have invited me to join the Aurora Community which is just being formed, and have asked for my advice in relation to their recent war.



I have been invited to serve a second three-year term on the International Advisory Board to the Centro Nacional Chega! of Timor Leste, which has the task of implementing the recommendations of their Truth Commission.

Professor Simon Keyes interviewed me for his Community Reconciliation Masters Programme at Winchester University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In March I was supposed to graduate from Rhodes University with an honorary doctorate in law. Eventually there was a virtual graduation and the courier arrived with the certificate. Hopefully in the future ... What was gratifying was that it was specifically in recognition of the contribution of the Institute towards national healing.

In December I received the Archbishop of Cape Town's Peace with Justice Award.

As I said on these occasions, these awards are never simply about me as an individual, but they belong to the collective and particularly all those connected with the Institute.

SABBATICAL

About two years ago, Virginia Theological Seminary in the US offered me a short sabbatical due to take place in February 2021. Due to Covid-19 it was cancelled and in lieu there will be an online seminar during February.

PUBLICATIONS

Back in February 2020 I was able to participate in the national debate around De Klerk's denial that apartheid was a crime against humanity.

It was fortuitous in the sense that a large number of interviews flowing from my opinion piece published in the Daily Maverick enabled the popularising of the idea of an intergenerational national conversation about healing and justice.

This led to an invitation to participate in a Day of Lament at the Groote Kerk in Cape Town, the mother church of the Dutch Reformed Church, on Human Rights Day.

Around the same time, I was asked to prepare an article for a journal produced by the New School for Social Research in New York on the subject of apology. I wrote on "The Journey to and From Apology: Restoring the Moral Order", focusing on De Klerk.

Late last year, I was approached by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican to write an essay on "Wounded Humanity and Planet: Christian Witness as Healing and Reconciliation in a Multi-religious world." I completed the finishing touches to this at the end of January.

LOOKING FORWARD

I am hoping and praying that like the rest of humanity we will all get the vaccine before long. I expect to continue working for the Institute in 2021. After receiving the vaccine, I hope to be able to do some travel for the Institute and even visit family in Australia and New Zealand at the end of the year.

I am thinking about how Covid-19 has changed the whole world.

When I write this, I realise that actually it was a very full year even without listing everything that was done.

Many have commented that Covid-19 has pulled back the veil on systemic and interconnected injustice in relation to inequality, structural racism and white supremacy, violence against women and children, patriarchy, the ongoing oppression of indigenous people, the oppression of sexual minorities, and the largest number of refugees in human history. The pandemic has also caused a pandemic of mental health.

In South Africa after 1994 we needed to give ourselves permission to grieve for all who had died, even as we celebrated our achievements. Perhaps now because of the impact of the pandemic, an important element of our work going forward will need to involve celebrating the lives that have been lost.

It is a privilege and a responsibility to contribute to healing the wounds of history, to continue healing ancient, old, and recent wounds as we seek to build a better world.



Reports of Network Members



CANADA: EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Healing of Memories (Edmonton) is a group of five facilitators working under the umbrella of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton. Over the past five years, the diocese has hosted Fr Michael on a number of occasions, most recently for a workshop and training event in the fall of 2019. In early 2020, we were looking forward to a workshop that May with an inner-city ministry. We were also working to build partnerships with several organizations involved in healing and reconciliation with Indigenous people. This relates to colonial projects that destroyed language and culture, separated children from their families, and often exposed them to abuse.

Unfortunately, circumstances paused our progress. The pandemic prevented the workshop taking place. Because all of our facilitators are church leaders, 2020 also plunged us into moving our parishes online and helping our communities maintain connections at a distance. Through this time, we stayed in contact with the wider Healing of Memories family online. We also sent one person to the trial online mini-workshop.

The long-term effects of the residential school system will continue to be a primary focus for us. We are also aware that the pandemic will increase the need for opportunities for people to explore the suffering it has caused. At this time, our diocese is undergoing a transition of leadership as our bishop moves into retirement. Once the new bishop is in place in fall 2021, we anticipate being able to renew our planning and begin offering workshops again.

Stephanie London



CANADA: MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC

Michael Lapsley visited Montreal in the summer of 2015 to attend an Anglican meeting. A group of his friends arranged for him to speak at a public meeting at the Anglican Cathedral about his Healing of Memories work. A small Montreal NGO, *the Centre de services de justice réparatrice* (CSJR), which admired Michael's work, organized the launch of the French edition of Michael's book. Impressed by the response to his message, the Board of the CSJR agreed to bring Michael back to Montreal the following year, to offer a 3 day HOM workshop, and created a committee to organize the workshop and raise the funds to finance the visit.

The cost and effort required to organize the workshop could be justified as part of a longer-term program to train a cadre of facilitators in Montreal. The eventual goal was to have a Montreal-based team who could offer HOM workshops with their own resources. Workshops and training sessions led by Fr Michael were held in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The arrival of Covid-19 in 2020 meant that we had to cancel our planned fall three-day in-person workshop led by Fr Michael. Instead, inspired by the example of successful on-line workshops organized by the HOM teams in South Africa and the USA, we organized an on-line mini workshop in French in November for 12 participants. The lead facilitator was Estelle Drouvin, the leader of the Montreal team, assisted by a colleague from Luxembourg, Patrick Byrne. Two of the small group facilitators were also from Montreal, Catherine Ego and Raoul Lincourt, and the third was Patrick Byrne. The evaluations from the workshop participants were very positive.



Watch the video here:

https://youtu.be/7la2_JVmMM4

This workshop was very significant for the Montreal HOM team as it was the first to be organized and run by our team. It also demonstrated that the HOM goals could be met in a virtual environment which permitted participation by individuals who might not have been able to travel to Montreal. The cost was also more affordable.

We have planned two virtual workshops for 2021. The first, scheduled for May, will be in English in partnership with the Anglican Cathedral community in Montreal, which will partially fund the workshop. We hope to have a number of participants from the Inuit community, the indigenous people of Northern Canada, who live in Kuujuaq on Ungava Bay in northern Quebec. The lead facilitator will be Catherine Ego from Montreal, supported by Fr Michael, and the small group facilitators will be Fr Michael in Cape Town, S.A., Patrick Byrne in Luxembourg and Stephanie London in Edmonton, Alberta. While the virtual world has its drawbacks, it also makes it possible for this workshop to bring together people from three continents for a common purpose. This workshop and the second one in 2021, which will be held in French in the fall, will provide a training practicum for the cadre of small group facilitators who are continuing their HOM education.

While the future remains unpredictable, the Montreal HOM team has continued to develop and expand despite Covid-19. With our own growing team able to run workshops with our own resources and able as well to offer our experience and language skills to HOM workshops, via the Network, in other cities and countries, the future looks promising.

Peter Deslauriers
HOM Committee, Montreal





LESOTHO

2020 was another year but different from other years. We had plans for 2020, but just before we began the activities the lockdown started and everything stopped and everyone was shocked.

We have a Whatsapp group where we share and chat as members of the Healing of Memories, and we also pray, say words of encouragement, and play among ourselves. We do our best to realise and understand the stress. Then we had the reunion calls to our participants to check how everyone is doing in the lockdown. There was a positive response from these calls.

During the lockdown, we had our meetings through Zoom and it was good to see everyone. We continued our activities through Zoom and we had two facilitators training in Zoom. Three members of our team attended the three African Programmes and they were very happy with how this went.

When movement was allowed or level 2 of the Covid-19 restrictions then we had a physical meeting and we continued with some of the 2020 plans. We held two workshops: the first was for the youth and it was attended by 12 people, seven boys and five girls. After the youth workshop, this is how some of them felt about it:

1. Forgiveness is very important.
2. Let us not entertain bad feeling such as anger.
3. Revenge is not in our favour.
4. Forget the past and go on with the present and focusing on the future.
5. Our lives are guided by how we responded to other people's actions.

The second workshop was for adults and the 10 participants were all female. Each of the workshops had its reunion, attended by 90% of the participants at both workshops.

At our last meeting for 2020 we came together to celebrate a thanksgiving Mass at the SSM priory chapel. After Mass we wished each other all the best for every member and then we had lunch. During these activities we observed all the Covid-19 protocols.

Plans for activities in 2021

- ☆ To have workshops quarterly
- ☆ Visit to two orphanages
- ☆ Visit to the correctional facility

NB: Dates for the visits to the orphanages and the correctional facility will be determined after a consultation meeting with the organisation.

Workshops scheduled for 2021

- 20-21 March: workshop for facilitators
- 23-25 April: workshop for adults
- 25-27 June: workshop for youth
- 20-22 August: workshop for adults
- 19-21 November: workshop for adults

We will visit churches and schools. We will have the facilitators' training, which has started. On 4 December we will have a closing social for all participants at the previous workshops.

Achievements:

1. Happiness from participants during the calls
2. Lives of the participants changing during the reunion: from bad to better
3. Posting positively to their Facebook pages about HOM
4. In our Whatsapp group there are daily words of encouragement.
5. When we held physical meetings, Fr Michael joined us through Zoom.

Challenges:

1. Because of Covid-19 our activities didn't go according to plan.
2. Zoom meetings did not include everybody because some participants did not have smartphones.
3. People declined at the last minute before the workshop.

Moeketsi Khomonngoe, SSM





LUXEMBOURG

The 'Luxembourg Healing of Memories Support Group' was born in 2010, a couple of years after Fr Michael Lapsley's first visit to the country, as a working group of ACAT-Luxembourg, a local human rights organisation. From the outset, the HoM methodology, with its universal appeal to diverse audiences seeking to deal with the pain of the past, proved popular in Luxembourg, a melting pot of nationalities, languages and cultures.

This variety has been reflected throughout all these years in Michael Lapsley's annual visits, during which we have been able to organise – in Luxembourg, but also with partners in several other European countries – presentations of the different language versions of Father Michael's memoir, as well as conferences, panel discussions, local conversations, visits to church services, prisons and schools and, last but not least, Healing of Memories workshops (for the general public, but also for refugees and inmates at the Luxembourg prison). Luckily, we have been able to deal with the major practical problem you always face in Europe, i.e. language barriers, thanks to the linguistic profile of the team of facilitators we have built up over the years – representing fifteen nationalities – occasionally supported by a network of volunteer interpreters (especially during workshops). This has enabled us to conduct our activities in nine different languages – French, English, German, Luxembourgish, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Dutch and Arabic (though never more than four in the same event!).

With the lockdown which started in March 2020, our Support Group had to postpone its face-to-face activities in Luxembourg and neighbouring countries (mainly in France and Belgium), as well as a number of international projects it was involved in.

On the other hand, the restrictions on our mobility provided us with an excellent opportunity to step up our facilitator training activities, thanks to Fr Michael's willingness to lead online sessions, once or twice a month, for three different groups: new facilitators, advanced facilitators and lead facilitators. Everyone was pleasantly surprised to discover that Zoom was not only useful for conventional meetings, but also allowed the creation of a virtual space almost as intimate as face-to-face environments.



Fr Michael Lapsley and his joint Luxembourg-South Africa team visiting the offices of Amnesty International's Togo section: from left to right, Patrick Byrne (HoM-Luxbg), Aimé Adi (AI national director, Togo), Fr Michael Lapsley, Javier Garcia Alves (HoM-Luxbg), Bruno Haden (ACAT-Togo Sec-Gen), Loret Loumouamou (IHOM), Thandikaya Ncosani (IHOM)

One of the few in-person activities we were able to engage in between the first and second waves of the pandemic was the reunion we held for participants from the last Healing of Memories workshop we had organised in Luxembourg in December 2019. Half of them were refugees. In their case, the lockdown conditions – with the social isolation this entailed – came on top of the difficulty of being separated from their families and adapting to their host country. The physical reunion was therefore doubly worth the effort, even though the prevailing social distancing and other health safety rules had to be scrupulously observed.

Another extremely important project that we were able to carry out before the end of 2020 was the establishment of the first independent Healing of Memories structure in Europe: on 28 November 2020, after many months of preparations, our new organisation 'Healing of Memories Luxembourg' was officially set up to continue the work of the 'Healing of Memories Support Group Luxembourg' as a registered non-profit organisation within the international HoM network.

The creation of our organisation constitutes a logical further step in strengthening Healing of Memories work in Europe and thus represents the beginning of a new stage in this adventure in Luxembourg, giving us a higher profile, as well as new opportunities for cooperation, in the NGO world.

In 2021 (or 2022, depending on how the pandemic evolves), Healing of Memories Luxembourg plans to engage in the following activities:

In Luxembourg, we plan to continue the online training sessions for each of the three facilitator groups and, if possible, to hold a number of combined training sessions in face-to-face mode (as we have done every year hitherto). Following the model developed in South Africa, the US and Canada, we will also introduce online mini-workshops during the second half of the year. As soon as it becomes feasible to invite Fr Michael to Europe, we will organise the face-to-face HoM workshops postponed by the pandemic: one for the general public in Luxembourg, another for inmates at Luxembourg Prison and a third in Belgium (Flanders), in cooperation with a local prison outreach organisation (this would be our first Dutch-language workshop).

At the international level, we hope to be able to resume the postponed project of co-organising a Healing of Memories workshop and training course in Lebanon for participants from that country, Syria and Jordan, in collaboration with the Middle East Jesuit Refugee Service. Before the end of this year, we also hope to launch a multi-annual HoM training programme for francophone Africa (2021-2026) in partnership with the IHOM (see further details below).

Javier Garcia Alves
Projects Coordinator, Healing of Memories Luxembourg



A screenshot from the Healing of Memories Luxembourg inaugural meeting, held on 28 November 2020

HEALING OF MEMORIES IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

In 2020, the IHOM agreed, in collaboration with Healing of Memories Luxembourg and its funding partner Partage Luxembourg, to put in place a facilitator training programme for French-speaking countries in West and Central Africa.

Over the past three years, the Luxembourg Healing of Memories group has devoted considerable time and energy to developing closer links on behalf of the Institute with partner groups in Africa. This may come as a surprise to some. Why should Luxembourg be involved in this work?

The first reason is that the Luxembourg group was instrumental in having Fr Michael's memoir translated and published in several languages (German, Spanish, French and Arabic). As a result, in 2016-17 the book was sent to many of their partners in Africa, in particular the ACAT human rights groups in Benin, Togo and Ghana. The response was so positive that these groups asked for Fr Michael to visit the region and to talk about the Healing of Memories process. With the support of a variety of donors, we were able to organise Fr Michael's visit in July and August 2019. Accompanied by Loret Loumouamou and Thandikaya Ncosani from the Institute and Javier Garcia Alves and Patrick Byrne from HoM-Luxembourg, he toured the three West African countries, launching the English and French editions of his book there, holding conversations with NGOs and church groups and meeting local leaders and civil society representatives. The team also ran two workshops for a 50-strong group of young people who had travelled down from Mali to experience the Healing of Memories process. The visit culminated in a 3-day workshop for the organising teams from Ghana, Togo and Benin at the end of the visit.

The success of the visit inevitably led to growing demand for a follow-up. On the English-speaking side, our Ghanaian hosts have since had several online meetings with the Institute in South Africa with a view to being part of its newly launched Africa programme. Two of them are due to take part in the training programme in Cape Town this year.

In response to the demand in French-speaking countries, the IHOM and HoM-Luxembourg have now been planning a training project, under a five-year Luxembourg Government funding scheme, which will bring together participants initially from six West African countries and then also from four Central African countries. The aim will be to empower local groups to set up their own Healing of Memories projects geared to local needs and conditions. Once every two years, starting in July 2022, a ten-day training session will be held in Cotonou (Benin), after which participants will continue their training online and engage in the practical work of organizing workshops in their respective countries under the supervision of a representative of the Institute or HoM-Luxembourg.

As a prelude to this five-year programme, it is hoped that Fr Michael will be able to visit Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and, possibly, Burkina Faso in October 2021 and thus meet partner organisations in their own living and working environment.

Patrick Byrne
Chair, Healing of Memories Luxembourg



MYANMAR

As in the previous two years, at the end of January Fr Michael was due to travel with Brother Moeketsi Khomonngoe SSM to Myanmar and Thailand for Healing of Memories work. Covid-19 was already spreading beyond China. Our hosts in Myanmar from the Metta Development Foundation were raising questions about whether or not it was wise to come. The board of the Institute and my doctor said "Postpone". So we did...until August, but even that was not to be. Many months later we were able to hold two sets of virtual meetings with those they call Healing of Memories Alumni in Myanmar and from all different faith traditions, as well as another meeting with Christian leaders, a number of whom live in IDP camps. Most disturbing in Myanmar has been the rapid increase in suicide during the pandemic.

In March 2021 Fr Michael sent the following message to Gum Sha Awng of the Metta Development Foundation.

To the alumni of Healing of Memories in Myanmar and indeed to all the people of Myanmar

Dear Friends, Sisters and Brothers,

I bring you greetings of solidarity from the Healing of Memories family across the world and in particular the international network of Healing of Memories stretching from Asia to Africa to Europe to the Americas.

Every day we watch with horror as we witness the killing of unarmed civilians by the military. None of these people deserved to die. We share with you in your grief and anger against the violence and against military rule.

We give thanks for the new-found breadth of unity which the world is witnessing in your homeland, crossing many lines of division. We pray that this unity will deepen and increase which will make you invincible.

People often comment that in a Healing of Memories workshop they experience their common humanity and that through their sharing of pain they become connected and deepen their commitment to transformative justice. We see this happening before our eyes in your country.

At a distance we can see the unfolding in your beloved homeland of a willingness to sacrifice in the noble cause of a decent life and dignity for every person who lives in Myanmar, which is your God-given right.

We have been moved by the sight of individuals from different faith traditions putting themselves in harm's way to prevent attacks on protestors.

As South Africans, during our struggle for freedom it was important for us to know that people of goodwill across the world were standing with us, loving us, praying with us, raising their voices in protest, demanding that the whole world acts to stop the killing and in your case, bring a swift return to civilian rule.

We understand that like millions of others, you are making your contribution under terrible conditions and at great cost to yourselves.

In the end, no force on earth can stop the will of a united people to be free and to have a better life.

If there are specific ways that we can walk with you, please tell us and we shall do so if it is humanly possible.

It is often said that the darkest hour is just before dawn. There will be a new dawn for Myanmar, I have no doubt. When that happens, you who are our alumni will have a key role to play in helping heal the wounds of history.

We know that what you are doing today, all the acts of kindness, compassion and work for justice, you do not just for yourselves but for the generations not yet born and to honour the ones who went before us.

We shall never cease to walk with you.

We are carrying you all in our hearts.

With love and prayer and solidarity,

Michael Lapsley, SSM

Gum Sha's reply:

Dear Father,

Thanks so much for your solidarity, showing your kindness and concern to the people of Myanmar and Healing of Memory Alumni.

I will further communicate this with alumni as well as the general public who are struggling.

Let's keep in touch and with warm regards,

Gum Sha



NAMIBIA

Franciscan Healing of Memories

Everyone living in Namibia has a story to tell. People have been affected by the war of liberation, the system of apartheid introduced by the South African authorities, and the longstanding effects of the German-Herero-Nama War 1904-1908, regarded by Namibians as the first genocide of the twentieth century. Our Healing of Memories programme offers all who live in Namibia an opportunity to tell their stories, to be listened to attentively and to have their stories acknowledged.

In our work:

- a. We have been targeting those who were directly or indirectly affected by the Liberation War, which took place between 1966 and 1990. Those invited to join our programme and attend Healing of Memories workshops include those who fought with or supported the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN); those who fought with or supported the South African Army (SWATF or Koevoet); those who left the country to fight alongside PLAN but who were arrested by their comrades, accused of spying for the South Africans and imprisoned in underground dungeons in Angola; family members of the above-mentioned groups;
- b. We reach out to the descendants of the Herero, Nama and German Namibians. Their forebears were involved in the war/genocide of 1904-1908. These far-off events continue to affect many people living in this country today.

“My gratitude to the selfless people and facilitators who want to make this world a better place for all of God’s children, for all of us.”

We support and advocate:

1. The right of all citizens of Namibia and all who live in this country to have their voices heard, their stories told and their experiences acknowledged;
2. The right of all to play a full part in the social, political and economic life of the country;
3. The right to access opportunities for education, housing, employment and medical treatment.

We reach out to people living in the townships, the informal settlements, and the rural areas. We help them to begin the process of dealing with their pain and suffering. We also help family members from different sides to begin rebuilding relationships that have been very badly damaged. We offer small steps but steps that can lead to healing and reconciliation. During 2020 we began holding workshops at the end of June, although the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic affected our plans in the first part of the year.

We held first-phase workshops in Windhoek in June, in Okahandja in August, and in Gobabis, Otjiwarongo and Dobra in November. Altogether we had 90 participants. Some booked to come but then withdrew at the last minute, citing fear of contracting Covid.

We held two second-phase workshops, both in Klein Windhoek, one in July and one in September. Our attendance here was reasonably good, 20 at each session.

We arranged for eight participants to attend an international training course in Cape Town organised and conducted by the Institute for Healing of Memories. However, due to Covid-19 it did not take place and has been rescheduled to take place between 11 and 19 April 2021.

In the intervening period we included those chosen to attend the training as assistants at our workshops and we included them in our planning meetings. More and more people are asking to be allowed to take part in our workshops. The increase in demand is due to our participants spreading the good news. We are committed to contributing in a small way to healing and reconciliation within the Namibian Nation.

Teddy Lennon OFM

“Feeling relieved after telling my story.”

“Try to market it more for people to be aware of it earlier.”

“I would like to recommend that this program should still continue so that we can build a better world.”





SOUTH AFRICA - GLOBAL REPORT

The Institute for Healing of Memories is marking 23 years of its existence this year. It has been a journey of healing, growth and development. The work of the Institute at the time of its inception was greatly influenced by the objectives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and largely viewed as an organisation that would continue to reach out to people to tell their story after the work of the TRC concluded. "The objectives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be to promote national unity and reconciliation in a spirit of understanding which transcends the conflicts and divisions of the past." Today we also locate our work within the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and contribute to the following SDGs #3 Good Health & Wellbeing, #5 Gender Equality, #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, and in some small measure #2 Zero Hunger.

Healing of Memories Process

Healing of Memories continues to work toward the building of national unity as we strive to bring together diverse groups of people in all our programme areas. This remains a challenge as the past is very much with us and apartheid spatial planning is still making it difficult for people of different social, cultural and economic backgrounds to meet other than in the work place. The spaces where people socialise together remain limited and are primarily determined by their economic status. Schools are largely segregated along economic lines and remain a contested space for inclusion and building social cohesion. Whilst the context we work in remains challenging, it is also a source of motivation and affirmation of the necessity of the work of Healing of Memories we are engaged in.

The Healing of Memories process remains at the core of programming in the IHOM. Over the years, the groups of people who most benefited from this process have changed as the context in the country and communities we work in changed. At its inception in 1998, military veterans and individuals who participated in the liberation struggle and those affected by apartheid repression in different ways were mostly targeted. During the height of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Healing of Memories work with people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS became a big part of our activities. Whilst it remains part of our Healing of Memories workshops, it has been overtaken by the second pandemic we are experiencing in our country right now, gender-based violence (GBV).



We have experienced over the years an increase in violence against refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers, predominantly from the African continent and to a lesser extent from Asian countries. We have responded to these xenophobic activities by building relationships with refugee communities and including them in Healing of Memories processes and community activities offered by the IHOM.

Apart from gender-based and xenophobic violence, we are experiencing an unprecedented increase in criminal and gang-related violence. In a crime statistics report published last year (2019/2020) it was estimated that 58 people are murdered on a daily basis in the country. Some would argue that in some communities the average death rate over each weekend is higher than in countries engaged in civil war.

In addition to the high rate of physical violence people are exposed to, they are also subjected to the indignities of structural violence. In 2019 the World Bank rated South Africa as the most unequal country in the world. And so we are called upon to respond to this present-day complex set of factors that are impacting on the emotional, spiritual and psychological wellbeing of people in addition to generational and personal trauma experienced by individuals. So in responding to the profound need for healing of individuals and different groups of people, communities and marginalised groups, we understand that healing is political, that implementing our strategic objectives of healing, prevention and empowerment is fundamental in contributing to creating a kinder and more just world.



Understanding the moment we are living in, we are focusing our Healing of Memories processes on working with women affected by GBV, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, individuals and communities affected by drugs and gangsterism, people living with disability, the LGBTQ+ community, military veterans and young people. The process of accompaniment includes the Healing of Memories workshop, a second-phase workshop and a reunion. In addition, we give ongoing support to groups and organisations who form support groups. We assist participants who might need referrals and also provide limited one-on-one counselling when needed. In the coming months till the end of this year we will be hosting 46 two-and-a-half-day Healing of Memories workshops, more than 20 second-phase workshops, reunions and support group meetings. Due to financial constraints we are unable to meet the immense need and requests for workshops.

The Covid-19 pandemic has added an extra dimension to our work. Pressed to respond to the immense loss and grief experienced in society, we provided online support to individuals. This was an innovation for the organisation. The feedback has been very positive and this has now become an additional offering of IHOM to communities and individuals.

Our programmes

#thehandsofmen Campaign

Last year we embarked on a campaign to be part of the multitude of voices and extraordinary efforts to stem the continued, sustained and escalating onslaught on the life and wellbeing of women and children at the hands of men. We are called to act on multiple fronts to change the reality for women and children today, tomorrow and in the years to come. As we hold men accountable for their actions, we also need to create the space for men to reflect on their life journey. What has brought them to where they are now? At the start of a Healing of Memories process we ask people to reflect on how the history of the country has affected them. The violent behavior, attitudes and actions of men have a long history. Efforts to change the trajectory have never been as urgent as now. An integral part of that change is the healing journey of men.

During the Healing of Memories process, we ask people to reflect on three questions to assist them to take one step towards their healing. What did you do? What was done to you? What did you fail to do? Men have a story to tell. We are creating safe spaces for men to share their stories, to lift the veil on secrets kept, hardships endured, pain inflicted, and to acknowledge wrongs that have been done. The process seeks to assist men to take responsibility for the choices made and where possible to make amends and become active participants in building a better world.

Our strategy is responsive to the national crisis of gender-based violence and we support the view articulated in the National Strategy for Gender-based Violence and Femicide.



FEELINGS BEFORE	FEELINGS AFTER	FEELINGS TOWARDS VIOLENT PERSON	BEHAVIOUR AS A RESULT
A good mother Did not like the person Felt scared	A mother that father hit I felt sad I felt angry I felt sad	Not a mother He beat He is dangerous	I don't know I don't know I don't know I don't know
Very loved	Family & loved	Disrespect	Strong & support

We are creating a team of men in each province where we work who can accompany men on their healing journeys, who themselves are able to acknowledge their vulnerability and the need for healing.

<https://youtu.be/kPrdJ5wJwvE> (Healing Journeys of Men)

“South Africa holds the shameful distinction of being one of the most unsafe places in the world to be a woman. We have amongst the highest rates of intimate partner violence, and recently released data from Statistics SA show that rape and sexual violence have become hyperendemic. This is a scourge that affects us all: young and old, black or white, rich and poor, queer or cis, rural or urban. It pervades every sphere of our society. Women and girls are being abused, assaulted and murdered in our country every day - at the hands of men. We are in the throes of a deep crisis that must be brought to a decisive end”

- President Cyril Ramaphosa - National Strategy on GBVF.

Community healing

Working with individuals, groups and organisations who share the vision and values of IHOM is central to how we work. Within the communities we form partnerships with Community Police Forums (CPF), Councillors, Principals, Community Leaders, SAPS, Churches, Support Groups, Creative arts groups etc. We also have solidarity partners who focus on socio-economic justice, organising, educating and mobilising within their communities for change.

The community healing programme creates different kinds of platforms for community members to discuss community problems face-to-face or virtually, to identify the root causes of the problems and their consequences, and to develop local solutions. It is a participatory and interactive healing space that focuses people's attention on a particular issue or challenge and encourages them to share their personal experiences, creating an intimate space on a public platform. During the process, individuals and the group also identify actions that can be taken to address the issue, as well as priorities that should be addressed with other partners and influential leaders at the community level. Dialogue sessions have been selected as the primary method to engage communities in order to encourage open and free discussion and diverse opinions in the process of communal problem-solving and healing around issues like racism, GBV, rape, xenophobia, drug abuse, gangsterism, teenage pregnancy, HIV & AIDS, the role of religion, etc. Providing psychoeducation at these sessions is an important component in empowering communities to deal with the myriad daily challenges they face that affect their emotional, spiritual, and psychological wellbeing.

Recently we had a reunion meeting with a group of women we worked with in Delft with our partner organisation Sakha Sizwe. Six years ago, we produced a publication telling the story of several of the women who participated in the Healing of Memories workshops and the various community healing activities in the community. <https://issuu.com/restoringhumanity>. The reunion affirmed the lasting impact IHOM had on this group of women. They shared their achievements, their dreams and what was presently blossoming in their lives.

<https://youtu.be/54d1kRsbxYg> (Building and Healing a Community)



Healing the wounds of history

Our work with military veterans and with family members and communities affected by apartheid crimes is a response to our history that is echoed in our constitution. The preamble to the constitution of the Republic of South Africa that was adopted in 1996 clearly gives the context to our healing the wounds of history project. It states:

*“We, the people of South Africa,
Recognise the injustices of our past;
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom
in our land;
Respect those who have worked to build and
develop our country; and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in
it, united in our diversity,
We therefore, through our freely elected
representatives, adopt this constitution as the
supreme law of the Republic so as to
Heal the divisions of the past and establish a
society based on democratic values, social justice
and fundamental human rights...”*

After a couple of years there was a marked decrease in the number of military veterans participating in Healing of Memories workshops and related healing processes. It would seem that at that time people wanted to get on with their lives, to move forward, and not deal with the painful memories of their past since they were hopeful of a better future. Three years ago we were approached by military veterans to accompany them on their healing journey. It would seem that we have come full circle in working with the wounds of the past.

Our work with military veterans is taking place in three provinces where our offices are located, Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal. This is arguably the most important contribution we are currently making to the reconciliation project in South Africa. We are working with a number of liberation forces: the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) was the underground military wing of the Pan-African Congress (PAC); the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) formed its own armed wing, the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA); Umkhonto-we Sizwe (or MK), translated as “Spear of the Nation”, was the active military wing of the African National Congress (ANC). We are also working with the apartheid forces: the Transkei Defence Force (TDF), the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the Cape Corps, the traditional military home of the so-called Coloured People of South Africa. Bringing different military formations together in one Healing of Memories workshop, to share their stories and listen to each other, to recognise and feel the pain of each other, is a small contribution to healing the wounds of history.

Our accompaniment of military veterans includes hosting intergenerational dialogues, supporting their food gardens and engaging them in our activities working with men to address the issues of violence against women and children. There is a massive trust deficit in working with the military veterans. The feelings of betrayal by their political parties and government runs deep in most of the veterans on the programme. The good news is that the majority of those who have started their healing with us are sharing how relationships within their families and with friends and comrades are changing. Over the next couple of months, the project will include the training of military veterans to facilitate Healing of Memories workshops.



Africa programme

Our Africa programme came online at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was a huge challenge to our implementation plans, but nonetheless we were able to start the programme via a series of Zoom meetings. Below are the countries participating in our Africa programme and the partner organisations.

Country	Organisation
DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNA-DRC
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society of the Sacred Mission
Burundi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma Healing And Reconciliation Services (THARS)
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRANCISCAN MISSIONARY SISTERS OF ASSISI
Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMUNGA Association
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aqua Healing International Order of St Luke
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lydia Foundation Evangelical Lutheran Development Service
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT)
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Franciscan Healing of Memories

Apart from introducing partner organisations to the work of the IHOM and the work of partners, participants were introduced to the Healing of Memories workshop online. An online introduction to the workshop was also implemented this year with participants from Malawi and facilitators from the Africa programme. Monthly online discussions consisting of 2-hour sessions on two consecutive days were also held, exploring themes of forgiveness and reconciliation; religion, culture and gender-based violence; healing and peacebuilding; and a session supporting the wellbeing of the participants in the programme. Country visits were made to Zimbabwe and Namibia, visits to other countries have been put on hold due to Covid restrictions. The training that was postponed last year will be taking place this April with eight countries participating, including South Africa.



Restoring Humanity

Restoring Humanity is the youth development programme of the Institute for Healing of Memories that brings together young people from diverse communities to learn from each other and to share experiences.

This takes various formats: workshops, youth platforms, storytelling circles, visits to historical and/or present-day sites of dehumanization, and youth exchanges. The aim of these activities is to develop their consciousness and understanding about social, political, economic, and spiritual issues that affect them, their communities, and the world. It also provides the space for them to develop leadership skills and creates opportunities for them to contribute to building a better world.

These learning journeys are carefully developed and supported by relevant resource materials drawing on the experiences of the participants and making the link between the past and present in a meaningful way.

Restoring Humanity has three distinct programmes: facilitators' development, material and resource development, and community development.

These programmes are all in line with the IHOM's principles of prevention, empowerment and healing. As with the rest of the programmes, RH rolled out a pilot project to support our participants and to give emotional support. The Healing of Memories facilitators made contact with the youth to give them the necessary support via a telephone conversation.



Online conversation became the new norm. We needed to look at how we could find ways to actively engage our participants and facilitators, whether through song, poetry or drama, all via social media platforms. For Youth Month in June last year, facilitators and participants sent messages by making clips to encourage and motivate others during this pandemic as well as to remember those of the 1976 Youth Uprising. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YU8miBNVLO&t=6s>

Youth have also been involved in the #ThursdaysInBlack campaign, where they highlight the increase in gender-based violence by taking photographs wearing black to show solidarity for the fight against violence against women and children. This is also a big pandemic, far worse than the coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xCiX7P6kPA&t=8s>

The young people in Gauteng are actively involved in the Boys to Men project and they have developed a partnership with Youth Inde Media, an online radio station, to develop a podcast on different topics: gender-based violence, gender roles and gender, culture and identity, and domestic violence. These are all ongoing initiatives of the young people.

Fatima Swartz



SRI LANKA

Activities (or the lack of them ;) in 2020:

In January 2020 a Healing of Memories Workshop was held for peace activists and the caregivers of the victims of the Easter Attacks¹.

Six workshops were planned as part of a holistic programme carried out with plantation workers, farmers and ex-combatants of the LTTE. We are grateful to Bread for the World for their support in this endeavour. However, owing to the Covid-19 restrictions none of this could be achieved.

Sri Lanka handled the Covid situation reasonably well. As at the end of March 2021 there have been 92,000 positive cases with 2,800 active cases and 566 deaths in total. It must be acknowledged that there is very little testing done and this may well be the cause of the low numbers. Two long lockdowns were imposed and travel severely restricted within the country. All daily wage earners were adversely affected along with those working in the tourism industry, which came to a halt during this time. Children were not able to go to school for over one full year.

Many garment factories closed operations and workers were paid half their salary, while all casual workers were let go. Most Sri Lankan citizens living overseas were brought back. However, migrant workers who bring in the bulk of foreign exchange from the Middle East were not prioritised and are still unable to come back to their homes in Sri Lanka.



There were many requests for HOM workshops but it was not possible to obtain approval from the Public Health Department owing to the country's strict policies aimed at containing the spread of the virus. In this situation we responded to requests from participants of past HOM workshops and others who found it difficult to survive in the situation that emerged as a result of Covid-19. We distributed foodstuffs to affected groups and individuals. Some of the facilitators visited individuals during this time. We arranged a street-drama group, addressing physical and mental health and the political implications of the various injustices carried out in the backdrop of the lockdown situation. This programme of awareness through drama reached over 6,000 people in several districts of the country. It not only raised awareness but brought smiles and laughter in an environment full of fear and uncertainty.

One major issue that has arisen - or been created - is that the government insists that all who die of Covid-19 should be cremated. Muslims strongly believe that their dead should be buried. Some Muslims who died of Covid-19, including a little baby, were forcibly cremated, causing an ongoing trauma to those directly affected and the Muslim community at large. We have tried our best to show solidarity in various ways.

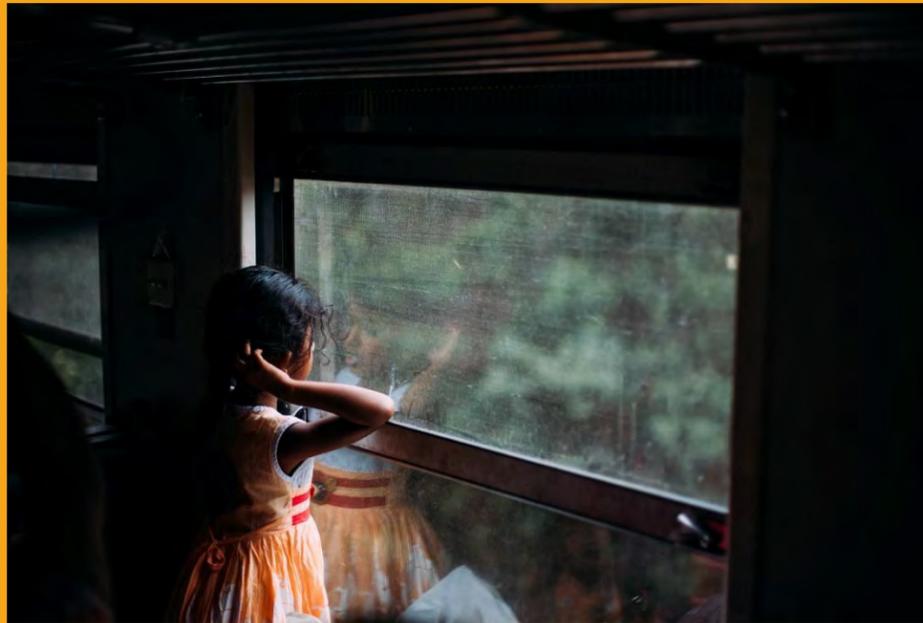
The events of 2020 – not only the pandemic but related and unrelated events - have brought trauma to individuals and communities alike. We do believe that with the vaccinations being rolled out and the current situation of a de-escalation of the number of infections and deaths we may be able to respond to the needs of our people over the second half of 2021.

We are grateful to our facilitators for taking their own independent initiatives of ministering to people wherever they are. A heart once moved by compassion will continue to respond to those who are in pain.

¹ Three churches and several large hotels were bombed on Easter Sunday 2019. Redress for victims has been inadequate and the perpetrators have not yet been brought to justice.

Twelve years after the end of the civil war, accountability, justice, restoration, and healing remain mere words to the victims and perpetrators. While the Healing of Memories Workshops continue to touch the lives of a few people, much needs to be done as a country to reconcile and move forward.

Two years after the Easter bombings – on Easter Sunday 2021 - the Roman Catholic Church is calling for justice and punishment for the perpetrators. The report on the investigation is complete and parts of it released, but there is nothing to satisfy the victims. Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church called for a "Black Sunday" protest.



Shanthi's story

Childhood

We call her Shanthi. We met her at a workshop on Healing of Memories. Shanthi is an ex-combatant and is the youngest child living in a remote village in Batticaloa in a poor family. No-one else in her family has gone to school because of poverty. However, when Shanthi was of school-going age, she went to school along with the other children. She studied very happily from year one to year two. She was a bright girl who could remember her lessons well. She didn't realise the lack of food and other necessities because she always had a book in hand. Even if she didn't have many dresses nor even a pair of slippers, this did not bother her. She may have had a slight regret about these things, but the joy of going to school surpassed it all.

In year 3 she needed exercise books for a few subjects, but she was unable to get these books. Because her mother was unable to buy her books for several days after school had started, Shanthi wrote all her subjects in one book. A teacher who noticed this reprimanded her and demanded that she bring a separate book for the subject that this teacher taught. Shanthi stayed back a couple of days hoping to get a new book, but a new book could not be bought for the whole term and Shanthi found herself at home not only that term but for the rest of her school days.

Life as a militant

Having no school to go to and nothing else to do, Shanthi listened to the stories of friends her age in the militant movements and decided to join the movement. She cannot, to this day, really identify the reason as to why she joined the movement; conversations with her friends regarding the vision and activities of the organisation would have been the motivating factors for her. She also had a sense of doing something for her own people.

The seniors in the movement noted her keenness to learn during the training period as a member of the militant movement. She now had an opportunity to educate herself even as she trained in the art of combat. Because she was so keen on education, they assigned her to learn medicine and trained her as a medical officer. While she did get on the battlefield when required, most of her time was spent treating the sick and dying to restore them to health.

When the battle was raging, she was called to the battlefield and was very seriously injured. She lost one eye, her jaw bone and several ribs in the shooting and was unconscious for several days. When she regained consciousness, she was sure that she would not live. Because they were convinced that dying in battle was an honorable way to go, she had no fear of death. She is still amazed at how she bore all that pain that day. Many wanted to go back to the battlefield as soon as they were well enough to do so. Shanthi felt the same. She cried uncontrollably as she related how her colleagues carried her back to safety in the midst of a rain of bullets. The other four people who were listening respectfully to her story and had similar experiences themselves also started sobbing along with her. A deep silence filled the space.

Shanthi and her injured colleagues could not believe their eyes when even in the midst of intense battle – when the situation was absolutely dangerous – their militant leader came to see the injured combatants, stroked their heads and encouraged them by saying they will be well enough to fight for their people soon. Even though she was not well enough to go back to the battlefield, the organisation provided her with further medical training and she continued to serve her people.

Leaving the movement

When the militant movement broke up, many combatants in the East left the movement. Shanthi also left, with pain and bitterness in her heart. Back home she faced economic hardship and many difficulties. After the war ended her life went from bad to worse.

A man who had come from Ampara to Batticaloa to work as a labourer proposed marriage to Shanthi. Keeping the vulnerabilities of the future and her physical disabilities in mind, Shanthi agreed to marry him. When she went with her new husband to Ampara she realised that he was already married and had two children. When his wife and two children came to live in the same house, Shanthi was already with child. Shanthi came back to Batticaloa and gave birth to a son. She works in nearby homes to provide for her son. She works for meagre pay, visiting homes and working hard with the dream of providing an education for her son.

Facing the future

Shanthi says that her life has changed because she was able to experience healing and peace in her heart through a Healing of Memories Workshop at this point in her life. She was very grateful that so many years after the end of the war, she was able to relate the full story of her life and convey all her feelings for the very first time during the workshop. She felt encouraged and able to face life with a new attitude by continuing her relationship with the Healing of Memories team.

With the assistance of the National Christian Council, she is now self-employed and earns a daily income. But there is still a long way to go.

Ralston Weinman





**INSTITUTE FOR HEALING OF
MEMORIES – NORTH AMERICA
(IHOM-NA)
UNITED STATES**

Due to Covid-19, IHOM-NA had to cancel all in-person workshops and facilitator trainings for the year. Knowing that our healing work was in urgent need, as lockdown orders created isolation, anxiety and fear, we quickly pivoted how we work and deliver programming. Our Executive Director, with the enormous support and collaboration of many, led the way during this time of quick organizational change and adaptation, with focus on service and optimism.

New programming was developed and current programs adapted for delivery via Zoom. The healing impact of these Zoom programs was greater than any of us could have hoped for. We have been able to serve more people in need of healing, and as an organization came together, stronger than ever, with a sense of determination, optimism, and enthusiasm to be of service in every way possible during this time of immense challenge for our human family. We are especially grateful to all our facilitators across the country, who showed up to serve with a level of commitment to our work that is awe-inspiring, our founder, Fr Michael Lapsley, our board of directors and regional coordinators. All worked very hard to make 2020 an especially impactful year. Also, we are so grateful to our partners, who adapted how they partner with us this year by supporting our Zoom workshops and promoting our Zoom support calls. Our partnerships have strengthened as we worked together to adapt how we serve together.



HoM Zoom Gatherings of Support

We began in March facilitating HoM Zoom Gatherings of Support for veterans who had attended a Healing of Memories workshop, then extended them to all veterans, and then to all who needed support during this challenging time. Zoom support calls are a safe, supportive, nonjudgmental, confidential space to share feelings, story, experiences, and to begin to heal past painful experiences, trauma and moral injury. Each session is 90 minutes and is held in groups of six to eight people. Participants find support, healing, increased trust, empathy, hope, relief, reassurance, and a sense of belonging.

Zoom Support Calls and Zoom Workshops for Healthcare Workers

In the fight against Covid-19, our heroes on the front line, healthcare workers, continue to experience unprecedented levels of grief, trauma, and moral injury. In consultation with healthcare providers, we diligently prepared to launch Zoom support calls for healthcare workers in fall 2020. We created a healthcare facilitation team and provided specific training for them to manage the challenges of facilitating these calls.

We began offering these calls in September. It was a learning process as we sought the best way to show up in this new space, knowing that we will be serving healthcare workers for years to come. HoM Zoom Support Calls for Healthcare Workers are a safe, supportive, nonjudgmental, confidential space to share feelings, story, experiences, and to begin to heal past painful experiences, trauma and moral injury. Each gathering is 90 minutes and is held in groups of six to eight people.

These Zoom Support Calls are open to all healthcare workers who have experienced the personal, professional, emotional tsunami named Covid-19 and need a safe, confidential environment in which to begin to heal the moral, personal and professional wounds it brought into their life.

We had a sharp learning curve about the lack of readiness for healing while still in the fight against Covid. We decided that we would provide our support when requested.

Participant feedback

“I realized I am not the only one with pain. I lost sight of that and it was an honor to share and to hear them share with me I am not alone.”

“I feel more connected with and aware of my story and feel moved and honored to have witnessed the stories of others. I feel very moved by the amount of compassion and empathy given by others.”

“Listening to others share their struggles, concerns, and hopes made me feel I am not alone.”



Debrief of Zoom Gatherings of Support and Healthcare Initiative



Zoom Support Calls for Healthcare Workers - Spanish Language

Our first Spanish-language Zoom Support Call for Healthcare Workers was in early November.

We have been building partnerships with health systems across the country to provide our HoM Zoom Support Calls for Healthcare Workers. We are working with Banner Health Systems in Arizona, the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation, the largest public health system in the country, and are promoting this work with State Commissioners of Health and of Mental Health in all states in the US. The Mental Health Commissioner in Puerto Rico contacted us end of August to see if we would provide these calls in Spanish for their workers. With our few Spanish-speaking facilitators, and our part-time Program Manager, Michelle Rivera, who is fluent in Spanish, we created a Spanish-language team and Michelle translated all our healthcare documents, call guide, and post-call evaluations into Spanish, and the group met numerous times to properly prepare. We had our first Spanish-language call in October and it was very successful. The folks in Puerto Rico have been so grateful to the Institute for providing this much-needed support. They are struggling on many fronts, and in wanting to show up for them, our team jumped in with a level of commitment and enthusiasm par none. We continue to work with the group in Puerto Rico but can now offer these Spanish-language calls all over the country.

Zoom Workshop Development and Pilots

With the objective of providing deeper healing than is possible in a 75–90-minute Zoom call, our team adapted our full 2.5 day workshop to a 4-hour Zoom workshop. There were two questions we needed to answer, given Zoom fatigue: would a 4-hour Zoom work for participants, regarding stamina and focus to be online, but most importantly, could real connection and healing occur over this medium. We facilitated two pilot workshops with Healing of Memories facilitators to work out any issues and create the best possible workshop experience. The first pilot included facilitators from the United States and South Africa. The second pilot was with US facilitators incorporating what we learned from the first pilot. This workshop, although abridged, provided a deep connection and healing experience for participants, which was a surprise to many.

This workshop format has now been utilized successfully by our colleagues in South Africa and Canada. And, in partnership with Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center in Carefree and the Franciscan Renewal Center in Arizona, we offered one Zoom workshop for all veterans, two for women veterans and one open to all. These workshops have been very successful, and more are planned for 2021.

Healing of Memories Zoom Workshops for Healthcare Workers

In early 2021, HoM Zoom workshops for healthcare workers became very much in demand. and feedback from participants has been very positive, with all experiencing healing, as well as improvement in six areas we measure: hopefulness, forgiveness, anger, guilt, trust and belonging. One workshop was for a team from the Street Health Outreach program, an innovative project which identifies and assists people in Central Alameda County who are experiencing homelessness and have chronic health and mental health needs. The Street Health Outreach Teams support clients to attain housing stability and improve health and well-being. Another offered in April has healthcare workers and government health officials from California to Micronesia participating.

Our plan is to continue to offer Zoom workshops and support calls even after in-person workshops are available. These online offerings are a unique opportunity to reach more people at less cost and utilize HoM facilitators from all over the United States, and has the added benefit of bringing diverse people together from all over our country, and world, which has been very powerful in this Zoom work.

Facilitator Trainings

Healthcare Program Training

To prepare to work with healthcare workers and aware of the unique trauma they have and continue to experience on the frontlines of Covid, Linda Rich, lead facilitator and IHOM-NA Board Chair and Pam Cornwell, HoM facilitator, together developed and conducted two training sessions for our healthcare worker facilitation team. The training was titled: Applying the Healing of Memories Model in Responding to the Impact of Covid-19 on Healthcare Workers. This training and the ongoing connection, support and debrief meetings have resulted in a very prepared team, with results evident from workshop evaluations. Specific feedback rating our facilitation of these workshops has been excellent.

Online Facilitator Training

We will do an online training of new facilitators for Healing of Memories Zoom workshops. The training will comprise four sessions between April 17 – May 6, 2021. Given some of these new facilitator trainees went through a full 2 ½ day workshop and others only a Zoom workshop, the training will begin with a Zoom workshop for all, allowing a healing and bonding experience for the group. This will be followed by three training sessions. Once the training is complete, trainees will work closely with and be mentored by an authorized facilitator until ready to facilitate Zoom workshops on their own. At a later date these same trainees who experience a full 2 ½ day workshop will go through additional training and mentorship to be authorized to facilitate the full workshop.



Partnerships

New York University Center for Global Affairs (CGA) Masters Program, Institute for Healing of Memories Practicum Course (Spring Semester 2020)

We were honored this year to have had our Executive Director, Gloria Hage, co-teach with Professor Sylvia Maier the Institute for Healing of Memories Masters Practicum Course. We accepted six students into the course and worked very closely with them as they did significant academic research in the form of individual and collective research reports, on-the-ground guides, recommendations, which informed IHOM's advocacy policy and strategy, and on-the-ground project implementation. This included work on military sexual assault in the US military. As well, projects included research and outreach specific to the work our South African colleagues are pursuing on gender-based violence.

Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation (George Mason University School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution)

We continued to work with this Center this year and seek to expand our work with them in 2021. One project in particular on which they are seeking our help is their work with individual States with regard to a possible US Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (Advisory Group Member)

The network is currently hosted by Finn Church Aid and supported by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The network regularly consults with the Mediation Support Unit in the UN Department of Political Affairs and the UN Alliance of Civilizations. It consists of over 50 organizations around the world and seeks to support new ways of strengthening positive engagement of religious and traditional peacemakers in peace and peacebuilding processes. The network supports collaborative work and engagement. Working collaboratively is more than just the intersection of common goals – it involves engaged, collective determination to reach shared objectives of collaboratively supporting the positive role of religious and traditional actors. The network is formed from an array of actors, including inter- and intra-governmental agencies, regional bodies, academic institutions, international and national organizations, civil society, and most importantly religious and traditional peacemakers.



Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center, Carefree, AZ

Spirit has a grants team specifically to support Healing of Memories workshops. We continue to work closely with Spirit offering Zoom veteran workshops and in addition, we are working with them to offer HoM workshops to other constituents, such as refugees, racial justice groups etc. They are also very interested in supporting our work with healthcare workers, once in-person workshops are possible. In 2020 we facilitated HoM Zoom workshops for all veterans, for women veterans only, and one open to all in need of healing. In 2021 we are facilitating HoM Zooms for veterans, and for women veterans only, and will facilitate, if safe to travel, two in-person veteran/first responder workshops in the fall.

Franciscan Renewal Center (FRC), Phoenix, AZ

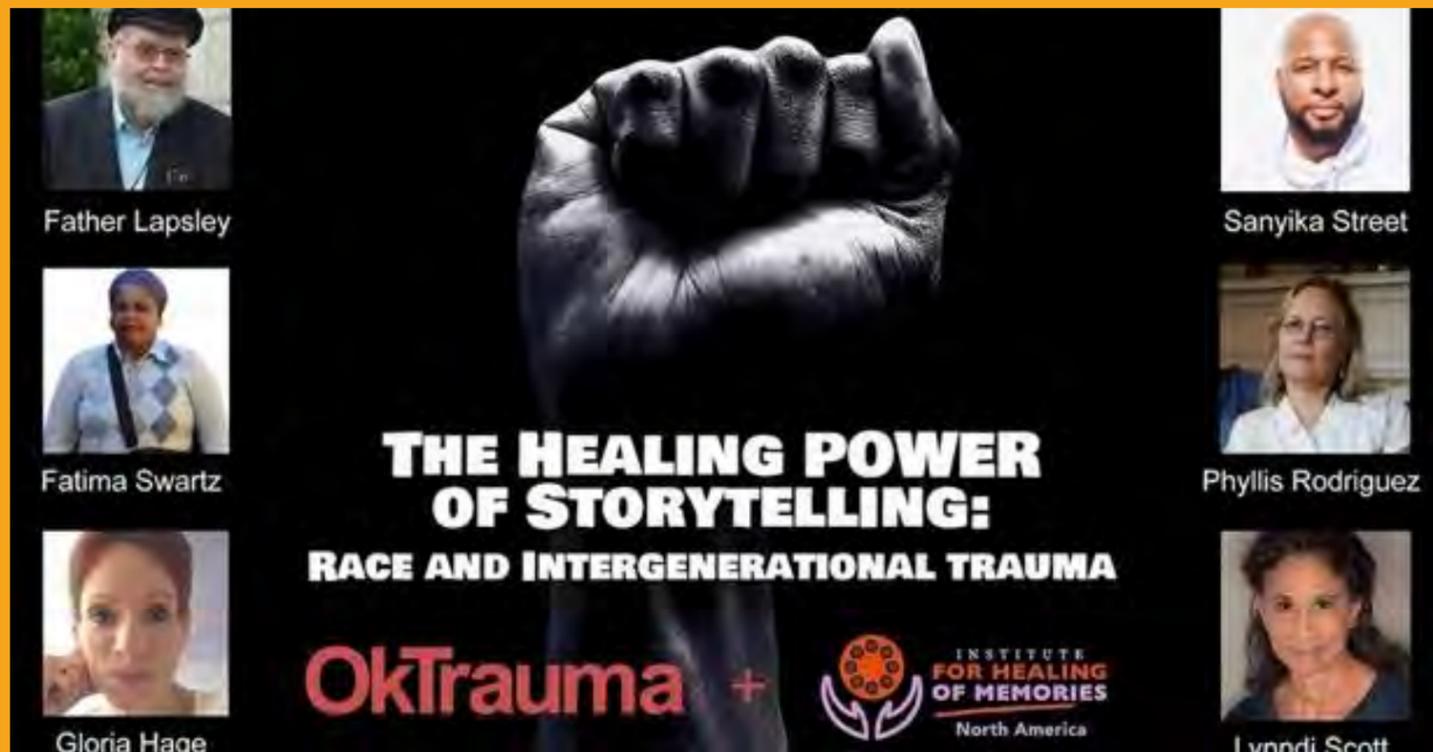
We continue to work closely with FRC. They want to expand HoM workshops, specifically for healthcare workers. They have a grants team specifically to support Healing of Memories workshops. In 2020, in partnership with FRC, we facilitated HoM Zoom workshops for veterans and in 2021 we are continuing to partner on Zoom workshops for veterans and for women veterans only and we plan to facilitate two in-person HoM workshops for veterans, and at least one in-person workshop for healthcare workers, should it be safe to travel.

Dr Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Center for Social Justice and Racial Healing at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma

We are working with Professor Tonia Anderson, Director of the Center and Professor of History and American Studies in developing and implementing a virtual workshop-conference, Building Bridges/Dismantling Racism for the Common Good, scheduled for 9-11 June 2021, as part of the Centennial of the Tulsa Ok race massacre, which has been called the single worst incident of racial violence in American history.

The workshop-conference will examine the characteristics of systemic racism and its impact on everyday life by exploring the interrelated themes of diversity, alienation (anomie), entitlement, and community. Fr Michael will be the keynote speaker and we will facilitate two Healing of Memories Zoom workshops and two dialogs to help participants process their feelings, experiences, and general understanding of the topics covered. Our aim is to 1) begin the process of building bridges through fostering authentic dialog with and between participants; 2) move what has been learned into the heart space, where personal transformation is possible; 3) provide a space to begin the process of healing.

*Every Story
needs
a Listener*



2020 Conferences and Webinars

Rotary International Peace Conference, January 2020. Our Executive Director facilitated two workshops about the work of the Institute for Healing of Memories. The event was very well attended and the feedback about our workshops was excellent. Many connections were made for possible future HoM work.

Live Event, The Healing Power of Story: Understanding Race and Intergenerational Trauma, 13 August 2020. Hosted by OkTrauma, moderated by Sanyika Street, with guests, IHOM-NA Executive Director, Gloria Hage, Organization Founder, Fr Michael Lapsley, South Africa Program Director, Fatima Swartz, and US facilitators Phyllis Rodriguez and Lynndi Scott.

Link to event recording: <https://youtu.be/3iy0LUzC5E4>

Webinar for the Disabled Veterans National Foundation, titled The Healing Power of Sharing Your Story, 10 October 2020. This webinar was presented by Gloria Hage and Arizona Regional Coordinator and US Navy Veteran, Mike Wold, as part of a Virtual Veteran Resource Fair. We were part of a small group of organizations invited to present.

Institute for Family Services 15th Annual Liberation Based Healing Conference, 6-7 November 2020. Our Executive Director, Gloria Hage, was a speaker and panelist. Her presentation was titled Healing the Wounds of History. This conference provided 12 social work CEUs.

2021 Events

Healing as a Revolutionary Act: Hosted by All Saints Church, Pasadena, CA

This virtual event was hosted by All Saints Church, Pasadena, CA, on 6 February. It was an important conversation on the nexus of two pandemics: Covid-19 and Racism. Fr Michael Lapsley and Healing of Memories facilitators shared reflections on the ways they have been impacted by the current moment, and on their journeys of healing while working for justice. The panel included China Gerstner, Karen Hayes, Patti Prickett, Sally Roberts, and Lynndi Scott. Participants took away ideas for self-care, detoxification and healing. While this was not itself an HoM workshop, experiences of the HoM workshop process were shared.

IHOM-NA and the Healing of Memories Global Network

Global Steering Committee

This committee comprises members from around the world who are involved in Healing of Memories work. We meet regularly and share our HoM work and collaborate and brainstorm. This has been especially powerful this year as all have faced the challenges of Covid-19. This committee has provided a connection and cohesiveness for all HoM work worldwide and has thereby strengthened the Institute overall.



Global Network Online Healing of Memories Course

One result from the gatherings, as mentioned above, was the development of a team to create a Healing of Memories International online course that we can offer worldwide. We have been working for months with members from the US, SA, Canada and Europe to establish this course, which is described below.

Course title: An Introduction to the Healing of Memories Approach to Healing Trauma

This online 8-hour course is an introduction to the history, philosophy, and practice of the Institute for Healing of Memories (IHOM) and includes a 4-hour experiential Healing of Memories workshop. Enrollment will be limited to a maximum of 12 persons. The course will be presented in three sessions.

The initial pilot of the course was held in December in English, with participants from the four regions mentioned above who were friends of the Institute and who agreed to provide the feedback needed to create the optimal course experience. With the feedback we now have we are in the process of making certain changes, which will be tested in a second pilot in 2021. As we progress, we will offer the course in other languages.

Gloria Hage, IHOM-NA Executive Director

ZIMBABWE

IHOM identified two partners in Zimbabwe:

- the Order of St Luke the Physician, the organ of the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe, through which it exercises its healing ministry and

- AQUA Healing, a nondenominational group of trauma survivors who have been doing group counselling for trauma victims for about ten years.

Both organisations had sent members for Healing of Memories training. IHOM brought them together and in 2020 they

1. met to plan how they could cooperate
2. held a first Healing of Memories workshop on 21-23 October, somewhat behind schedule because of enforced precautions against the Covid-19 pandemic. Members of OSL made up the majority of the participants, as planned, and balance between the two will be restored by having more participants from AQUA at the next workshop, planned for February 2021.

The second wave of Covid-19 struck in December. It carried off Mrs. Ansicaria Mushonga, OSL's dynamic Warden, who was a great loss and is greatly mourned, but OSL rapidly filled the gap. She will remain an inspiration to all of us.

Activities planned 2021

The second wave made meetings in February impossible; the workshop and a one-day training will now be held on 15-21 March 2021, with a further similar week planned for later in the year, around October-November.

- Brian MacGarry



Our Partners

Order of St Luke

The Order of St Luke's healing ministry is recognised internationally. Members join and are trained to help those who are hurting or have been hurt in the past and need to move on with life.

They come with all sorts of hurts, sicknesses, stress and depression. We walk with such people in their journey of healing.

They experience discrimination at church or in the community. They feel they are not respected in society. After making the journey of healing they discover they are just like everyone else.

We also visit the underprivileged, those with disabilities that cannot be managed at home. We visit those at the Tose Respite Care Centre, to bring what gifts we can and to spend time with them. Tose is a private charitable organisation, dependent on donations for survival.

There are many others we walk with, but these are the two we visited after the October workshop.

AQUA Healing

We are a group of four full-time and 20 part-time facilitators in Zimbabwe, with three part-time facilitators in Mozambique, who have been using a group counselling method similar to Healing of Memories for healing trauma, starting with their own, given our conflictual situation since 2008. We are all wounded healers who have made that woundedness a means of relating with and liberating others.

When people emerge from a healing workshop freed from the demotivating effects of their trauma, they want to do more to bring the liberation they have experienced. In 2013, after a group of perpetrators of political violence shared a workshop with some of their victims, their way of bringing the benefit of what they had experienced was to form a football team, and a formidable team they were, until big clubs offered contracts to their best players. They have built their strength again, and in the meantime groups of youth in 13 communities across Zimbabwe have formed under the umbrella of I am Zimbabwe. Below is their account of their current activities. You can find more on their website www.iamzimtrust.org



Brief report on services offered by I AM Mbare/Zimbabwe Trust

I AM Mbare/Zimbabwe Trust conducts workshops to help young people and the community members to acquire knowledge on self-treatment following psychological trauma as a result of a loss of importance, or of political and economic issues.

Nurturing of talents through sports and arts is also one of our objectives. As young people from the same community, we understand that our fellow under-privileged youth are gifted in diverse areas, be it in football, boxing, music and drama, athletics and journalism etc. yet they do not have access to platforms that offer those services. They do not have money to join these clubs and nor do they have money to record their music at studios, so we created a drama club for those who would like to pursue a career in music, drama and other areas. We partnered with a recording studio in the fields of music, poetry, and the spoken word so that young people can take advantage of these resources for free and have their talents heard or exhibited at more productive platforms and markets. The aim is to help them grow and focus more on their abilities and less on stressors. We have experts in fine art and painting who can help to shape the upcoming talents.

I AM Mbare/Zimbabwe Youth undertake **relief aid programmes** to serve the welfare of disadvantaged citizens. This is done through fundraising, whereby we as an organisation approach well-wishers to help us mobilise resources that can be of the utmost importance to our beneficiaries, resources such as food (mealie-meal, sugar, cooking oil), hygienic utilities (sanitisers, soap, face masks and/or latex gloves), medication such as pain relief tablets, hospital bills and maternity necessities.



These resources benefit vulnerable community members by reducing the pressure on them of having to meet their needs. It also shows love and care, resulting in people attempting to practise the same good deeds, and eventually this creates or promotes peace and unity amongst residents, turning away hatred and jealousy.

When a person is over-stressed due to lack of necessities, he/she develops various illnesses or diseases that may damage their health. Reducing stressors and pressures helps a person to stay fit and strong, so relief opens the way to happiness.

In all the above services offered by the I AM Mbare/Zimbabwe Youth to the underprivileged youth in society, they are mainly aiming to reach out to fellow youth and hear their expectations and find ways to fulfill their rights.

It is also a way to promote peace and justice, to educate them and protect them from indulging in traumatic experiences that might drive them into suicidal thoughts, and to reduce cases of early child marriages/ pregnancies.

