

ANNUAL REPORT 2024: A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

'Over the 4 sessions, I felt increasingly alive.' - course participant SS

In March 2024, our research paper into the benefits of the LRC Memoir Course was published in the respected peer-reviewed *British Medical Journal* (BMJ), confirming that life writing is a useful non-medical, cost-efficient activity that promotes resilience to trauma, as well as psychological well-being in [individuals](#).

Here is an extract from the conclusions and recommendations of the study:

"Five major interconnected themes emerged. The LRC as a specific intervention was central to the benefits described. The findings of this study indicated that life writing is a useful, non-medical, cost-efficient method to improve resilience to trauma, as well as improving the psychological well-being of the participants.

In addition, participants reported positive experiences regarding personal development, overall wellness and mental health, and that life writing can engender a sense of community. Resource constrained countries in the Global South, like South Africa, where there have been historical and ongoing multiple traumas, need interventions for healing and wellness that are low cost and can be replicated."

From course feedback, we still receive comments such as these:

"I got to experience the different ways of writing to express myself and my life. I experienced destinations of self-expression, scary yet exciting, unexpected tunnels which helped me get out of my comfort zone. If I hit a brick wall, I can let it stop me or I can choose an alternative route."

"I really loved interacting with different people and listening to their writing. Absolutely amazing course. I was so nervous in the beginning and the thought of reading my work was terrifying. However, the feedback and support I received was so amazing I was brave enough to read more of my work.."

"I named and faced what it is I fear/feel unable to do - talk/write about myself. Meeting others who are also out on their edge, going deeper and exploring new ways of being in the world. I got courage from their courage. I like how the course was pitched to bring us to meet our authentic selves gently and kindly. There are strong parallels in the best possible way with a course that I did with Anne Schuster 15 years ago or so."

This is no accident. Anne asked me to take over her memoir course when she became unable to run them 12 years ago. We will run a course in her memory next year to honour her extraordinary contribution to the reading and writing communities in South Africa, and her role as our inspiring patron.

Although the LRC income and reach grew during 2022 as the world was recovering from the pandemic, in 2023 we experienced a downturn in our numbers.

Although our social media following increased – Instagram was up 22.2% - our membership declined (11.6%), and we ran half the number of courses (some had to be cancelled due to too few applications) than in 2022. Income fell, affecting our ability to market courses and to provide sponsorship. Perhaps we have not been able to put the right emphasis or resources towards attracting younger participants as recommended by the research. In addition, there are increasing numbers of writing courses being offered across the country – often at rates we cannot, given our sponsorship mandate, match.

The NPOs keen to invite us to work with their staff or clients are frequently too busy to organise an event, or they cannot fund our basic costs, and neither can we at present. Pending collaborations at present are TSIBA and Shonaquip; in the past we have also been invited by Rape Crisis, SWEAT and the Social Justice Coalition.

The needs in our country are great - from food to shelter, health to literacy and, of course, employment. With our government cutting funding drastically, and many NPOs on the brink of closing as a consequence, there is increasing pressure on any remaining funding. In this scenario, the LRC must rethink ways to stay solvent in order to contribute to the well-being of our society.



After seven years in operation, the challenge is how we can continue to meet our mandate, offering people the chance to harness their creativity through life writing. The healing power of writing remains our core premise, based on neuroscientific evidence that we are born creative and that that birthright is educated out of us to our detriment.

Some glimmers of hope twinkle on our grey horizon. Our inimitable administrator, Terry Ayugi, has offered to take on the vital fundraising role, applying for larger and longer-term funding. Our move to primarily online courses, to save on costs, allows us to increase our reach – recent courses included participants from Germany, India and the USA. Our new facilitators are talented and enthusiastic. Our new *'The Writers' Way'* series will launch next year.

We strongly believe there is a need for our services and course reviews continue to be positive. Our Exco and Board retain remarkable enthusiasm for our mandate to provide an economical, creative tool that promotes improved mental health for those who cannot afford other mental health interventions.

We remain hopeful that the contribution of the LRC will continue next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dawn Garisch', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

DAWN GARISCH - CEO: Life Righting Collective

Life Righting Collective													
2024 Financial year													
For the period from 01/03/2023 to 29/02/2024													
	YTD	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Income													
Book Sales	6,087	0	400	0	4,217	470	0	0	0	1,000	0	0	0
Courses	98,996	10,850	2,700	9,850	7,950	6,000	15,820	5,000	2,886	15,640	8,250	11,700	2,350
Donations	114,450	100	34,500	500	6,250	15,250	6,050	50	50	1,550	50	50,050	50
FUG Donations	8,450	1,700	800	2,000	700	400	300	100	100	1,350	200	500	300
My School	3,092	249	215	204	387	246	207	262	260	225	309	275	255
Patreon	55,407	0	7,000	6,000	4,300	9,850	4,200	4,031	0	7,400	900	7,826	3,900
Paypal	21,100	21,100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Snapscan	2,415	0	0	966	0	0	0	483	0	0	0	966	0
Total — Income	309,998	33,999	45,615	19,520	23,804	32,216	26,577	9,926	3,296	27,165	9,709	71,317	6,855
Less: Cost of Sales													
COS - Catering	14,579	395	1,765	3,000	4,100	0	600	0	0	4,719	0	0	0
COS - Facilitation fees	93,200	15,000	1,700	10,500	0	6,000	29,800	6,000	0	0	7,500	16,700	0
COS - FUGS	3,600	600	200	200	200	600	800	200	0	400	400	0	0
COS - Travel	1,437	0	0	1,437	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COS - Venue costs	19,329	2,146	0	2,450	0	0	4,542	0	1,191	0	3,000	4,000	2,000
COS - Workshops/courses	5,400	4,000	1,400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total — Cost of Sales	137,545	22,141	5,065	17,587	4,300	6,600	35,742	6,200	1,191	5,119	10,900	20,700	2,000
Gross profit	172,453	11,858	40,550	1,933	19,504	25,616	-9,164	3,726	2,105	22,046	-1,191	50,617	4,855
Less: Expenses													
Accounting fees	2,967	0	0	0	883	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,085
Administration fees	101,886	16,000	10,800	8,000	0	16,836	13,000	7,000	7,000	0	14,250	9,000	0
Advertising and social media	50,594	6,233	1,284	4,100	2,682	6,192	2,900	5,600	4,408	1,194	5,200	5,800	5,000
Annual report	2,500	0	0	0	0	2,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bank charges	2,489	196	209	192	190	294	198	222	186	199	192	205	206
Computer software	3,186	0	0	0	0	0	3,186	0	0	0	0	0	0
Internet data	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legal fees	10,879	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,879	0
Marketing	97,030	0	0	5,300	11,200	8,800	2,400	7,130	31,000	5,000	18,800	7,400	0
Website costs	12,575	1,750	0	1,250	2,250	1,682	1,250	250	0	250	500	2,559	835
Total — Expenses	284,206	24,278	12,293	18,842	17,205	36,304	22,934	20,202	42,594	6,644	38,942	35,843	8,126
Net profit (loss)	-111,753	-12,421	28,257	-16,909	2,299	-10,688	-32,098	-16,476	-40,490	15,402	-40,132	14,774	-3,271

Life Righting Collective				
Balance Sheet				
As at 29/02/2024				
	2/29/24			
Assets				
Cash & cash equivalents	32,144			
Total assets	32,144			
Equity				
Retained earnings	30,060			
Liabilities				
Accruals	2,085	J. Kleu fees for 2024 finances		
Total liabilities & equity	32,144			