

Project Description and Strategy

Project Title: FuBuntu Mississippi: An Intergenerational Black Male Civic Leadership Movement (FuBuntu)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

“Mississippi led and we looked to Mississippi to lead the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, and we look to Mississippi to lead social justice today.” Rev. Al Sharpton, Medgar Evers Wiley 60th Assassination Anniversary Gala, Jackson, Mississippi

Our project, FuBuntu Mississippi, conflates Futures and Ubuntu, which means humanity or “I am because we are” in Nguni Bantu, particularly exemplified in the South African freedom movement and culture. With its epicenter in Canton, a fiery light of the Movement, including the famous Anne Moody, FuBuntu envisions the civic engagement of generations of leaders, notably those of the Pine Grove Association (PGA), which is developing a strategic, operational and fundraising plan driven by the intersectionality of equity, innovation and futurism. More specifically, FuBuntu will animate PGA’s HOPE Center/ HOPE Futures Lab as a groundbreaking demonstration of the contemporary and anticipatory futures of social justice in the cyber age. While focusing on the Mississippi counties of Hinds, Madison, Rankin, Yazoo and Holmes, where we already serve, FuBuntu exemplifies PGA’s innovation in and impact on rural/semi-rural, small town and impoverished communities, which are the greatest geopolitical profile of Mississippi.

Through this intergenerational Ubuntu imagination, spirituality and voting engagement, we mean the inclusion of the following : First Generation: Honoring our activist ancestors/ those of the Mississippi Diaspora who have joined the ancestors; Second Generation: Grandfathers/elders/easoned mentors; Third Generation: Fathers/father figures; and, Fourth Generation: Sons/boys/young adults/ rising voters. These generations include differently abled, religious minorities, politically diverse and queer men and boys.

FuBuntu tests the idea that Black male led activism and voting rights must be created by Black men and their allies in an intergenerational model that is driven by the futures of social justice in the cyber age, including emerging technological opportunities and threats, Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity, the intensification of social justice/social disruption and the need to have both traditional and new skill sets such as strategic foresight, empathy, adaptability, creativity and collaboration. While informed by the vicious attacks of voter suppression, rabid white supremacy, anti-Wokeness and the decimation of diversity and inclusion, FuBuntu starts first with the mantling and building of its own vision of affirmative Black male identity, civic power, moral architectures, beauty, joy and trends of its preferred futures rather than dismantling supremacist narratives, policies and practices. Let us respond to ourselves first and let them, then, respond to us and not the other way. Finally, FuBuntu avers that Black males and their allies must finance their civic and voting agenda to have a sense of sovereignty and self-determination; therefore, we focus on developing the financial mechanisms and mindsets that drive generational wealth and movement making.

Mississippi's storied voting rights legacy includes the imprimatur of major Black male civil rights leaders: 1) The last three national presidents of the NAACP either lived, worked or were educated in Mississippi; 2) Mississippi is the home of Medgar Evers, Amzee Moore, Aaron Henry, C.C. Bryant, E. W. Steptoe, Hollis Watkins and many more who then influenced and nurtured the likes of Dr. Bob Moses of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Algebra Project; Moore and Bryant with the assistance of Ella Baker were responsible for Bob's being in Mississippi; 3) Mississippi is the home of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party; and, 4) Mississippi is to the nation, what Africa is to civilization, that is, there is a Mississippi Diaspora in which all roads lead to, through, and from Mississippi because of its genealogical, artistic/cultural, political, social and prophetic traditions and contributions, including the legendary Black women leaders such as Fannie Lou Hamer, award-winning actress and activist, Aunjanue Ellis, Wakinya Canton, national activist and director of the Mississippi Southern Poverty Law Center, Ellen Collins, Executive Director, Mississippi Alliance for Nonprofits and Philanthropy, Myrlie Wiley Evers, former chairperson of the NAACP and activist, and Senator Laphonza Butler, newly appointed senator of California. Thus, FuBuntu, while Black-male illuminated, recognizes our existential and interconnected futures founded on the love, centrality and acumen of Black women.

More concretely, this intergenerational approach builds on several key PGA programs and partnerships: 1) Madison Area Global Innovation Collaborative, out-of-school time program for youth and their families; 2) Advocacy: Voters registration, expungement clinics, womanist futurism to engage women, girls and their families, non-profit capacity building, including the principal founders' establishment of over 150 501 c 3 organizations and school reform, including support for LatinX communities; 3) JUNETEENTH celebrations as locuses of community organizing and celebration; 4) Mississippi Dreams Futures Lab, a collaboration of the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation/Young Futurists Envision22 Lab, HOPE Futures Lab and the Dreams Innovation Lab, dedicated to engaging our communities in technology innovation, entrepreneurship and social impact solutions; 5) Participation several RWJF Pioneering Ideas-funded/potentially funded initiatives: Prophetic Innovation Consortium, ReImagineJXN Economic Futures Lab, Womanist Futures Project, FutureGood Studio, founded by Trista Harris, former Futurist-in-Residence at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and mentor to Mississippi futurists; Islamic Thought Futures Institute of the International Museum of Muslim Cultures, TECHJXN, in which the founding director of PGA facilitated the future of education track and Dr. Lori Melichar, RWJF's director of equity and Pioneering Ideas, and others; and, G) PGA NextGen, the organization's innovation, futurism and equity driven new strategic plan. In concert and with the robust contribution of PGA, Mississippi is being seen as an emerging national innovator in Black futurism that leads to civic, economic and spiritual mobility empowered with values such as dignity, inclusion and other aspects of Ubuntu.

FuBuntu will target 5,000 Black males in five counties and 20 organizations through the following mechanisms: 1) Story Telling/Interpretation; 2) Hackathons/Pitch Competitions; 3) Temple of Joy: Social Media, Arts and Culture; 3) FuBuntu Mississippi Leadership Cohort, including training in strategic foresight and Prophetic Innovation, a culturally informed futurism platform; 4) Voters Registration Drives; 5) Extended Reality Symposia; 6) Black Males Flourishing Fund; and, 7) Black Males Financial Power to finance Black males' civic, voting and preferred futures/ agenda.) These components will include both planning/discovery for more long-term impact, institutionalization and systems change and direct strategies for immediate to short term/high impact demonstrations.

FuBuntu will use the following strategies¹:

- a) +Storytelling and Interpretation: Hybrid gatherings using conventional and nonconventional methods in which Black men and boys tell their stories to each other and the world;
- b) +3 Hackathons for civic engagement and voters registration solutions, including but not limited to new technologies; strategic-foresight infused actions, advocacy, including the restoration of voting rights of former felons, programs, policies, talent and financial investment influenced and led by Black males. This includes participation in understanding artificial intelligence, generative intelligence, machine learning and the Sixth Industrial Revolution, driven by Quantum Mechanics/Quantum Physics and instantaneous technological innovation.
- c) +FuBuntu Leadership Cohort: 3-Month Training and development of 20 Black male leaders and allies in strategic foresight and other competencies through hands-on practices and thought leadership facilitated by the FutureGood for Prophetic Innovation, being developed by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded partners and others such as One Voice, the advocacy and leadership development arm of the Mississippi NAACP and organizations that use arts and culture to engage community;
- d) +Temple of Joy: Social media, pop up events, JUNETEENTH, rising voters, young voters and disengaged voters concerts/music production studio, Black male civic film festival, Hip Hop voting/futures operetta, animation series, fashion show, puppetry, podcasts, spoken word and speculative/design fiction, community parties, dance and choreography, website development and the FuBuntu application.
- e) +Quarterly Voters Registration Drivers In each county and on-site registration at all events;
- f) *Extended Reality Symposia and Development of a virtual reality, holography/avatars and Artificial Intelligence generated scenario and ecosystem that shows the preferred futures of Black male achievement and flourishing driven by Black male design today using the future of emerging technologies, learning, civic life and so on, identifying and starting signals, trends, megatrends and counter trends; This work complements the Mississippi Dream Innovations Labs coalitions through the infusion of civic engagement and social impact strategies, tools and technologies in hands on imagination and project based facilities.
- g) *Black Males Flourishing Fund: The development of a grassroots generated fund to support Black male flourishing/civil life/voting, including the mobilization of local to national philanthropy and influencers; however, the animus of the fund is Black male generated resources and autonomy in decision-making for their preferred futures;
- h) +*Financial Power: How does money and intergenerational wealth influence Black male future agendas build around six financial principles:
 1. Understanding one's relationship to money: For example, both studies based on evidence and anecdotes show that Black leaders in the community and the non-profit sector disproportionately financially sacrifice for their community building efforts and the sustainability of their families, that is, one's culture and socialization drive one's self-actualization and concept related to areas like wealth-building and who can and deserves to be job creators in a highly inclusively competitive milieu versus being a worker in an anti-worker environment like Mississippi, which is the last in the nation in worker mobility, rights and voice and economic

¹ A + indicates short-term high impact activities and an * indicates planning, discovery and design.

competitiveness, including the innovation and inclusive economies. Who deserves to vote and wield power? How does one become financiers of advocacy and movement-building?

2. Fundamental personal , institutional and business financial literacy;
3. Learning to finance and own entrepreneurship and innovation that create jobs;
4. Regional economic development and social and economic policy making that promote Black male flourishing;
5. Financing One's Agenda: Creating generational wealth and power such as political and civic authority that finance one's social, entrepreneurial, philanthropic, familial, spiritual, economic and other agendas. This is the primary missing link in our endeavors; and,
6. Advocating and understanding the role of public policy and other form of policy in resource investment, budgeting, executive, judicial and legislative decision making and allocation for Black male flourishing, civic, voting, climate, community and economic futurism.

Budget: \$250,000

Personnel

(Staff)

- a. Angela Carson, ED, PGA, \$50,000
- b. Events/Voters Drive Coordinator, PGA, \$25,000

(Consultants)

- a. Futurist- in-Residence/Lead Strategist, David Bickham, \$30, 000
- b. HOPE Futures Lab Designer/Technologist, \$20,000
- c. Creative Director, \$20,000
- d. FuBuntu App Designer, \$20,000
- e. Strategic Communications, Social Media and Black Males Narrative/Advocacy Publication Producer \$25,000
- f. Black Male Financial Empowerment Facilitator, \$10,000
- g. Street Futurists/Community Organizers: \$25,000

Other expenses

- a. Hackathon Production and Prizes \$15,000
- b. FuBuntu Leadership Cohort, \$25,000

- c. Temple of Joy Events \$20,000
- d. Voters Registration Drives \$20,000
- e. Planning, Design and Discovery Charettes, \$7,000