

makhosi foundation

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



A SPACE WHERE ANCESTRAL WISDOM GUIDES THE EXPLORATION OF INDIGENOUS HEALING ARTS

The Makhosi Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to creating both virtual and physical spaces where ancestral wisdom guides the exploration of indigenous healing arts. We curate gatherings and share resources rooted in diverse traditions and lineages, fostering a harmonious connection with nature, ancestors, and human dignity. Our mission is to nurture a brighter ancient future by promoting the sacred power of ceremonial prayer and creative expression as a form of ancestral reclamation.

We are here to serve as a catalyst for social experimentation, through an integrated, multi-platform approach, aimed at inspiring people to live more meaningful lives through an embodied sense of connection, community and awe. Our projects stem from the intersection of ancient medicinal songs, energetic plant studies, and journeys to the motherland, reuniting individuals with ancestral practices and bridging our ancient wisdom with the collective creation of a new future. We weave togetherness from the roots of these practices as we remember how to be with nature, and one another, embracing fluidity and transformation to meet the ever-evolving principles of integrity and truth.

CEREMONIAL PRAYER & CREATIVE EXPRESSION AS A FORM OF ANCESTRAL RECLAMATION.



THE HEART OF OUR WORK

Born in Burkina Faso, West Africa, I immigrated to the east coast of Turtle Island (North America via the United States) with my parents when I was just three years old. Raised Catholic in the suburbs of Maryland, my upbringing was shaped by the cultural shifts experienced by my family as we left our place of birth and ancestral roots, as well as the colonial impacts on our culture from Catholic missionaries on my father's side and conversions to Islam on my mother's side.

After completing my Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, I began to face personal struggles in early adulthood, including depression, anxiety, and a rejection of societal expectations. These challenges marked the beginning of my transformative journey toward becoming a cultural bearer.

I dedicated over five years to volunteering with a small, nonprofit grassroots organization focused on international development and civil rights issues in Ivory Coast, West Africa. My initial work in the nonprofit sector stemmed from a desire to address economic development in Africa and provide relief for those facing political and economic hardships. I was involved in every aspect of the organization, from meeting with embassy members to collecting and distributing clothing donations for villagers.

During a night amid a lightning storm in a village in Ivory Coast, I had a profound realization about the importance of a holistic approach to life, starting with self-discovery. This epiphany sparked my personal "Sankofa" journey—a West African term meaning "to go back and fetch it," symbolizing the significance of returning to the past to inform the future.

I embarked on an Afro-indigenous form of rites of passage, which catalyzed my path of cultural reclamation, holistic healing, and desire to approach service to humanity and justice from a cultural lens.

My professional career has traversed the realms of business management, administrative expertise, graphic design, and program development. Concurrently, my creative trajectory has been profoundly intertwined with ancestral practices enriched by direct experiences and invaluable guidance from esteemed elders across diverse cultural landscapes: a Black American iSangoma elder who pioneered the initiation of individuals from the American diaspora into Ubungoma, a few elders on the land in South Africa, as well as an elder from Colombia, South America.

Over the past decade, my commitment to fostering healing spaces has drawn in a diverse community of individuals seeking growth and solace in the wisdom of ancestral knowledge. A vision for a more connected, balanced world continues to inspire and guide the Makhosi Foundation's mission, touching the lives of countless individuals and strengthening the fabric of our shared humanity.

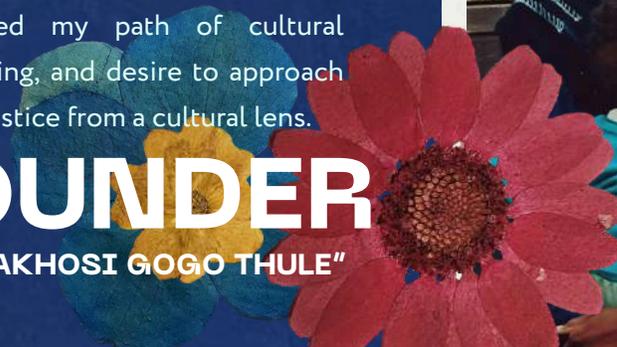


isangoma traditional healer
song ceremonialist
program facilitator
communications director



CO-FOUNDER

NICOLE DAMIBA "MAKHOSI GOGO THULE"



Gogo Ekhaya is a respected ancestral medicine healer and co-founder of the Makhosi Foundation.

Her personal journey of overcoming and healing mental health challenges led to a profound transformation, shaping her unique approach to supporting others navigating spiritual ascension symptoms. This experience shaped her commitment to social activism by bridging the gap between mental health systems and ancestral wisdom, educating communities on diverse cultural approaches to emotional and spiritual care.

Gogo's aim has been to bridge the gap between ancestral wisdom and the mental health system, fostering a deeper understanding of the various cultural methods for supporting individuals experiencing emotional and spiritual crises. She has shared her knowledge at prestigious institutions such as ISPS-US, CIIS Center for Psychedelic Therapies and Research, UCLA, and SDSU, as well as conferences including Hearing Voices, Esalen Institute, and Belgium Mental Health.

Her work in social and cultural contexts has been featured in publications such as Women & Psychosis, Shamanism In the New Millennium, Mad in America, and Ancestral Voices. Additionally, she was honored with the Eagle Feather Award by the Society for Shamanic Practice and selected for the Oral Histories Project of Black Movement Leaders led by Wild Ivy Social Justice Network.

In 2020, she further expanded her impact by establishing Simply Ancestral, an herbal healing apothecary focused on reconnecting people to the indigenous plant medicines of Southern Africa. Her commitment to mentoring others through sacred rites of passage has cultivated a global network grounded in the principles of ubuntu.

She was also featured in the documentary CrazyWise, a film that did a comparison on Western medicine and traditional cultural healing.

Through her dedicated efforts, Gogo continues to challenge socio-political norms by advocating for ancestral wisdom and fostering a more holistic and culturally sensitive approach to mental health and healing.

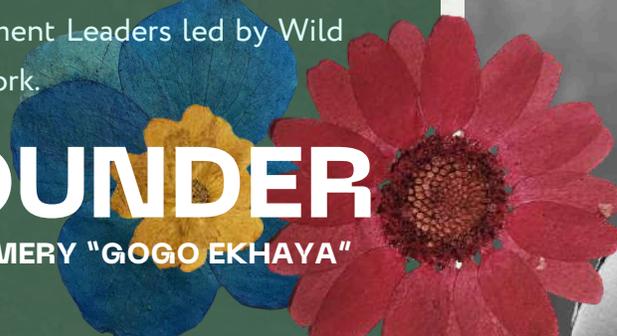


ancestral medicine healer
public speaker
published author
apothecary creator



CO-FOUNDER

CHIQUITA MONTGOMERY "GOGO EKHAYA"



THE HEART OF OUR WORK

ANCIENT MEDICINAL SONGS



“I wasn't raised on this music
but it gives me so much joy.
I feel like we sang this in the beginning
and we're going to sing
this in the end together.”

- song circle participant

WE ARE THE CARRIERS OF SONGS & TONES THAT
TRANSMIT SONIC FREQUENCIES, ARTISTICALLY
CONVEY PROVERBS, & CREATIVELY UPLIFT
EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING THROUGH THE
CEREMONIAL WAYS OF OUR ANCESTORS.

THE HEART OF OUR WORK

ENERGETIC PLANT STUDIES



A PLANT STUDY IS AN
INNER QUEST, FAST, OR
DEDICATED TIME WITHIN
THE SACRED CAVE TO
ILLUMINATE AWARENESS
AND SELF-REVELATION

THE HEART OF OUR WORK

MOTHERLAND JOURNEYS

WE GUIDE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH A MEDITATIVE AND
ENERGETIC ACTIVATION BY IMMERSING OURSELVES IN NATURE BY
BEING ON THE LAND, CULTIVATING A RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE SACRED SITES AS OUR REVERED ELDERS.



A ROOTED
& MINDFUL JOURNEY
THROUGH SOUTHERN AFRICA



CULTURAL VALUES

UBUNTU. UBUNGOMA.

Our organization's cultural background stems from Ubuntu & Ubungoma. Ubuntu ("I am because you are") speaks to the universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity and its environment. Ubungoma is a diverse web of ancient cultural practices traditionally used by Southern African people.

These teachings are passed down from generation to generation, through experiential learning, art, song, dance, oral stories, cosmology, rites of passage, and a sustainable relationship with plants and nature. We consider all of these activities as Cultural Rituals because "the culture is the healer." This interconnectedness, or web of practices, helps individuals achieve a heightened state of well-being, grounded in responsibility and integrity.

OUR IMPACT

- Public speaking through teaching workshops with CIIS University, ISPS-US, UCLA
- Public engagement with song ceremonies, EP collaboration with music industry leaders
- Re-indigenizing our land with native plants
- Facilitated immersions that supported 40+ people with a cultural and communal retreat experience
- 274 participants in our online programs
- Partnership with “Glorka” a handmade ethical clothing brand featuring handwoven West African wearable textile clothing
- Students received hands-on education by operating an herbal apothecary, making wellness products for our community
- Nature excursions to Big Sur, Sedona, South Africa, and Colombia
- 75+ free and donation-based community events online + in person
- Staff and a student were gifted training from the Psychedelic Therapy Institute
- 50+ people completed our ceremonial Rites of Passage Program



5,000+
audience &
participants



CO-CREATION
& COLLABS

FALL '23 IMMERSION

HIGHLIGHTED
PROGRAM

Our cultural retreats, drawing inspiration from an ashram-style coexistence, have brought six life-affirming, immersive experiences to fruition. Two of these extraordinary events spanned a month, while the others ranged from 10 days to two weeks. Our retreats warmly invite those new to the cultural traditions of ubungoma and ancestral ritual practices, providing a welcoming environment for mindful exploration. Participants in our ongoing rites programs, as well as alumni, have the opportunity to engage in their studies in person, fostering Ubuntu interconnectedness through shared experiences and holistic approaches to ancestral reclamation and self-awareness.

Engaging activities, thought-provoking conversations, and attentive facilitation by program leaders and alumni guide participants through an immersive journey. We learned through oral storytelling, received elder-inspired guidance, and participated in deep reflection through prayerful immersions in nature. Purification rituals involving earth, air, fire, and water (river and ocean) elements further enriched the experience. Sharing ancient medicinal songs, embodying the principles of Ubuntu, and delving into the psycho-spiritual art of interpreting dreams from a cultural perspective provided participants with a transformative retreat from their daily lives. This village-like context disrupted their familiar familial, corporate, and social routines to illuminate a wider, cultural view of self and community.

6
immersion
gatherings

**RITUAL
YOGA
SONG
DREAM**
circles

**A COMMUNAL
EXPLORATION**



FALL '23 IMMERSION

HIGHLIGHTED
PROGRAM

Our Fall 2023 immersion featured a pioneering work-exchange chef position, presenting nourishing Afro-Asiatic culinary creations. This farm-to-table approach gently encouraged our community to appreciate food as medicine. One of our rites of passage Alumni offered a Kemetic Yoga session to the community and another facilitated a breathwork ceremony to bring movement and release. Every participant contributed to the principle of reciprocity by tending to the facility's house in signing up for duties (sweeping, cooking, tending the garden) to support the ceremonial and live-in aspects of the retreat, similar to an ashram but with spaces for fluidity, rest, and hiking in our surrounding five-acre natural setting.

Although our itinerary was filled with enriching activities, we cultivated a sense of deep listening and adaptability. This approach enabled us to shift the program according to our participants' needs, allowing for emotional release and spontaneous moments of connection. The result was an unforgettable journey of cultural exploration and personal growth, rooted in the wisdom of ancestral traditions.



“Nature is a school,
a hospital,
& a playground.”
- Gogo Thule





MEDIA

5/25/23

Episode 73: The Mothermind: Connecting with Ancestors, Dream realms, Rites of Passage and Motherhood with Makhosi Himi Gogo Thule

ANCESTRAL DREAMS, OMENS & PROPHECIES PODCAST

S2 Ep. 4 :: Dreaming as Rites of Passage with Natalie Wang
Ancestral Dreams, Omens, & Prophecies Podcast
makhosistarmother.com

 May 2023 · 1 hr 35 min



Sick or Gifted? Bridging the Connection Between Mental Health Issues and...

ANCESTRAL VOICES Home Education Articles Interviews



MENTAL ILLNESS OR SPIRITUAL GIFT?
Gogo Ekhaya Esima

[WATCH REPLAY](#)

2023

FINANCIALS

TOTAL REVENUE

\$127,928.36

MAIN SOURCES OF REVENUE

\$83,100.98

PROGRAM REVENUE

\$25,200.00

EVENT ACCOMODATIONS

\$19,627.38

DONATIONS

TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENSES

\$125,078.51

EXPENSES

\$26,889.83

PROGRAM EXPENSES

\$52,757.60

PROPERTY EXPENSE

\$37,097.08

PROGRAM CONTRACTORS

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