

Makani N. Themba

Makani Themba is Chief Strategist at Higher Ground Change Strategies based in Jackson, MS. A social justice innovator and pioneer in the field of change communications and narrative strategy, she has spent more than 20 years supporting organizations, coalitions and philanthropic institutions in developing high impact change initiatives.

Higher Ground Change Strategies is her newest project, which she describes as “a place where change makers can get the support they need to take their work to the next level.” Higher Ground helps partners integrate authentic engagement, systems analysis, change communications and more for powerful, vision-based change.

Previously, Makani served as the founder and executive director of The Praxis Project, a nonprofit organization helping communities use media and policy advocacy to advance health justice. Under her leadership, The Praxis Project raised more than \$20 million for advocacy organizations working in communities of color and provided training and technical assistance to hundreds of organization and public agencies nationwide.

These initiatives include Communities Creating Healthy Environments (C-CHE), an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support policy advocacy to advance healthy food outlets and safe places to play in communities of color and Building Capacity Building Power, a partnership with Ford Foundation to support grassroots civic engagement and Policy Advocacy on Tobacco and Health (PATH)

Makani has published numerous articles and case studies on race, class, media, policy advocacy and public health. She is co-author of Media Advocacy and Public Health: Power for Prevention, a contributor to the volumes We the Media, State of the Race: Creating Our 21st Century, along with many other edited book projects. Makani was chosen as one of “Ten Black Thinkers” asked to comment on Black conditions as part of the NAACP Crisis magazine’s 60th anniversary commemoration of the landmark article What the Negro Wants.

She is author of Making Policy, Making Change, and she has also co-authored with Hunter Cutting Talking the Walk: Communications Guide for Racial Justice. Her latest book, a collaboration under The Praxis Project is Fair Game: A Strategy Guide for Racial Justice Communications in the Obama Era.