

DAVID CURTISS

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EDUCATION

Brown University

Ph.D., Sociology

Providence, RI

Current

American University

B.A., Sociology, *Magna Cum Laude*

Minor: Justice & Law

Senior Thesis: *#YouGoodMan?: How Black Men Use Twitter To Turn Masculinity Upside Down For Their Mental Health*

Washington, DC

May 2018

University of Edinburgh

Scottish Parliament Internship

Capstone Paper: *Training Up A Child: Examining Scotland's Child Hearing System*

Edinburgh, Scotland

December 2016

Universidad La Habana

Undergraduate Exchange Program

Cuba: Serving Social Justice

Havana, Cuba

July 2015

American University of Rome

Undergraduate Exchange Program

Cultural Foundation of Italian Politics

Rome, Italy

July 2014

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Africa and the African diaspora, Blackness, development and globalization, racial capitalism, transnationalism, stratification, postcolonial theory, critical tourism studies, third-world organizing, solidarity, volunteering, ethnography, mixed methods

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Building Hope Project

Managing Founder

Kampala, Uganda

December 2022- November 2023

- Conducted ethnographic fieldwork using participation-observation closely following 5 individuals to document nearly one hundred meetings, phone calls, work visits, and recreational gatherings from the subjects in order to capture deep understandings of the social contexts unfolding in real time between local African residents and the diaspora visitors in Uganda and Kenya.

Community Coalition

Special Projects Manager

Los Angeles, CA

January 2020- August 2022

- Co-designed and participated in two large-scale surveying projects (3 months each) and conducted a combination of field work, digital surveying, and focus groups to collect data on residents' views and experiences of the built environment to share findings with elected officials.
- Developed five digital/ paper surveys and hosted seven focus groups spanning over 200 individuals and synthesized major findings into formal report and presentation.

University of Edinburgh

Edinburgh, Scotland

Scottish Parliament Research Intern, Office of Richard Lyle MSP

August-December 2016

- Conducted qualitative research on behalf of the MP's legislative office to produce a white paper which investigated policy implementation around Scotland's Children Hearing System (CHS) for the Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Women, Families and Justice.

Columbia University

New York City, NY

Leadership Alliance Summer Research Program, Sociology

June 2016-August 2016

- Trained under Dr. Carla Shedd in mixed methods and research to conduct semi-structured interviews and population data analysis to track the movement of African-American adolescents receiving mental health treatment through multiple systems of care. This research culminated in a findings report, detailing multiple visual diagrams that were constructed to map the various pathways of youth's introduction into the mental health system through referrals.

Los Angeles Mayor's Office

Los Angeles, CA

Mayor's Office of Economic Development Research Assistant

June-August 2015

- Conducted field research on BIPOC small businesses in Los Angeles using surveys and digital content analysis to support the publication of an external mayoral report on building the capacity of diverse businesses in Los Angeles office.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Building Hope Project

Los Angeles, CA

Managing Founder

August 2019- Present

- Designed and facilitate 6-month curriculum module (annually) training international tourists on East African regional studies, colonialism, cultural competency, and cross-cultural communications; 32 people have completed this curriculum.

Los Angeles Unified School District

Los Angeles, CA

Special Education Paraeducator, General Education

August 2018- March 2019

- Supported the development of four English Language Arts and Pre-Algebra course syllabi and taught and graded material to 65 students (thrice a week) with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) across 4 different schools.

American University

Washington, DC

AUx Peer Leader, American University Experience

August 2017-December 2017

- Co-designed course syllabus and taught weekly lesson plans alongside a faculty member focused on helping 18 first year students, primarily of-color, on college acclimation, success, as well as diversity, equity, & inclusion within a credited course. Included mentorship and advisement via weekly office hours and grading coursework.

American University

Washington, DC

Intergroup Dialogue Instructor, Center for Diversity & Inclusion

January 2016- May 2017

- Created interactive, multimedia syllabi and co-facilitated three dialogue courses of 38 individuals (short-term; 120 mins weekly; 10 weeks) on foundational sociological identity markers, including race, class, nationality, and ability.
- Completed a 4-week facilitative teaching certificate in the realm of dialogue and facilitation, conflict resolution, and pedagogical frameworks for identity-based teaching and theory.

American University

Washington, DC

Racial Reconciliation Instructor, American University Chi Alpha

January 2017- May 2018

- Designed syllabus and facilitated 3-month dialogue course (short-term; 120 mins twice weekly; 12 weeks; 2 sets) around racial equity and religion for American University's largest religiously-affiliated student Group and Chaplaincy, Chi Alpha, with over 40 staff and student attendees.

REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

2020 Curtiss, D. (working paper). *The People's Corridor: Great Streets Challenge 2020* (pp. 1–71). Los Angeles, CA: Community Coalition.

News Articles:

Curtiss, D. (2019, March 6). What Happens to Vulnerable Students When Teachers Strike? *Education Week*, pp. 18–19. Bethesda. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-what-happens-to-vulnerable-students-when-teachers-strike/2019/02>

Curtiss, D. (2019a, January 29). My special needs students needed their teachers in the classroom — not on the picket line. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2019/01/29/los-angeles-teachers-strike-disabled-special-needs-students-column/2699621002/>

Blog Posts:

Curtiss, D. (2023, October 18). 5 Things You Should Know Before You Leave the U.S. (If You're Black). Etho Travel Blog. <https://etho.travel.blog/2023/10/18/5-things-you-should-know-before-you-leave-the-u-s-if-youre-black/>

Curtiss, D. (2020, May 23). There's No Time to Waste. Building Hope Project Blog.
<https://buildinghopeproject.blog/2020/05/23/theres-no-time-to-waste/>

Curtiss, D. (2018, October 18). A Trick Reflection: How I Handled Being Black in Africa. True Culture University.
<https://www.tcu-portal.com/post/a-trick-reflection-how-i-handled-being-black-in-africa>

PRESENTATIONS & TALKS

(2023) "Centering Youth During World Crises: COVID & Ugandan Children", NGOs Moving The Needle, Sankara Pan-African Library

(2023) "From The Mouth of Babes: Youth-Driven Leadership models in NGOs", Youth Leadership Conference Series, Joint Clinical Research Centre

(2022) "Uganda As The Most Refugee-Friendly Country on Earth", Third World Solidarity Speaker Series, Community Coalition [panel]

(2021) "The Road To Justice: How We Use Policing Data To Make Law Enforcement Less Racist & Lethal", Center for Policing Equity's Virtual Partner Series, Black Rock Inc.,

(2020) "The People's Corridor: Challenging Urban Blight Through Community-Centered Urban ReDesign in South Los Angeles", Great Streets Challenge Finalist Symposium, Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Eric Garcetti

(2018) "Dissecting The Black Scholar Experience in PWIs", Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholars Senior Symposium, American University

(2017) "International Solidarity and Coalition Building" The Darkening Teach-In, American University [panel]

(2017) "Denying Displacement: An Alternative Model to Gentrification in DC Using Art & Public Healing Strategies", American University Honors Challenge Course Conference, American University, Symposium

(2016) "Pedagogical Strategies for Fostering Inclusivity that Radiates Beyond the Classroom", 27th Annual Ann Ferren Conference on Teaching, Research, and Learning, American University [panel]

(2016) "'The Golden Ticket': Examining the Role of Mental Health Referrals in Treatment of Youth", Leadership Alliance Summer Research Scholars Conference, Harvard University

(2016) "'The Golden Ticket': Examining the Role of Mental Health Referrals in Treatment of Youth", Leadership Alliance Summer Campus Symposium, Columbia University

(2016) “Race & Virtual Reality: Mapping New Realities Through Bias-Driven Technologies”, American University Honors Symposium, American University

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

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| Building Hope Project, Managing Founder | 2013 |
| Campaign Volunteer, Karen Bass Los Angeles Mayoral Campaign | 2022 |
| Producer & Host, The Ubuntu Podcast | 2020-2022 |
| Student President, American University Gospel Choir | 2017-2018 |
| Vice President of Outreach, American University Black Student Alliance | 2015- 2016 |
| Community Teacher & Mentor, Life Pieces to Masterpiece | 2014-2015 |
| Community Storyteller & Ambassador, Peace Over Violence | 2012-2015 |

HONORS & AWARDS

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| Fulbright U.S. Student Grant for Research Semi-Finalist (Highly Competitive) | 2024 |
| Echoing Green Fellowship Finalist (Highly Competitive) | 2021 |
| Princeton in Africa Fellowship Alternate (Highly Competitive) | 2020 |
| Forbes Under 30 Scholars Award (Competitive) | 2019 |
| American University Honors Scholar Award (Highly Competitive) | 2014-2018 |
| Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholars Award (Highly Competitive) | 2014-2018 |

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

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| Fulbright, U.S. Student Grant, Open Research (Not selected) | 2024 |
| Great Streets Challenge Opportunity Grant (\$500,000 for organization) | 2020 |
| StartingBloc Fellowship | 2019 |
| Taco Bell Live Más Scholars Award (\$10,000) | 2019 |
| Values Partnership Fellowship (\$7,000) | 2018 |
| Hatcher Group Communication Leaders Fellowship (\$10,000) | 2017 |
| Leadership Alliance Early Identification Program- Columbia University (\$5,000) | 2016 |

MEDIA

American University Magazine, July 2018, *We Are Family*

<https://www.american.edu/magazine/article/frederick-douglass-distinguished-scholars.cfm>

Los Angeles Sentinel, July 2014 , *LA Teen Starts Non-Profit to Educate Uganda Youth*

<https://lasentinel.net/la-teen-starts-non-profit-to-educate-uganda-youth.html>

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Building Hope Project
Managing Founder

Jinja, Uganda
January 2013 - Present

- Lead fundraising endeavors and brokered long-term, multi-year funding relationships with schools, foundations, and faith-based institutions to support international student sponsorship program; has grown organization budget 39% within past 5 years
- Developed and execute bicoastal individual donor infrastructure amongst 80% people of color base to support core operations
- Developed and led six culturally-tailored service trip teams to Kampala, Uganda for African-Americans to foster connection, collaboration, and partake in education & leadership programming
- Created and taught 6-month leadership curriculum in years ‘19-’24 aimed at decolonizing voluntourism work and centering local solutions, strategies, and capacity to a Ugandan team of 8

Center for Policing Equity

Los Angeles, CA

Grants & Community Engagement Coordinator

July 2020-March 2022

- Developed and operationalized a task force of 14 community-based organizations in St. Louis, MO alongside the Mayor’s office to propose public safety redesign programs, community violence intervention policies, and mutual aid neighborhood networks which culminated in a robust working plan and report
- Established and cultivated key relationships with law enforcement agencies, city managers, and mayoral teams in San Diego and Berkeley, CA to build a robust, data-driven public safety evaluation that identifies racial disparities in policing behavior through a community perspective
- Curated virtual town halls alongside community leaders in cities across the country to connect residents and law enforcement agencies in order to craft hyper-local alternatives to public safety
- Designed and implemented the Cityscape Template, a preliminary research tool that analyzes key political landscape features within select cities to monitor community stakeholders, relevant policies, and community infrastructure involved in public safety efforts

Community Coalition

Los Angeles, CA

Special Projects Manager

March 2019 - July 2024

- Sustained organizational funding through leading efforts to prepare and submit compelling grant proposal narratives, interim and final reports, and conducting site visits to support \$89 annual budget within team of 3
- Oversaw half a dozen of the organization’s public contracts regarding initiatives from Los Angeles City, LA County, and the Federal government
- Directed the organization’s “Great Streets Initiative”, a place-based urban planning City of Los Angeles partnership after successfully securing \$500,000 design build for disinvested communities

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association of Black Sociologists

2023 - Present

DC Sociological Society

2023 - Present

LANGUAGES

Spanish (Conversant)

Luganda (Conversant)