



SUMMARY OF EVENT

The People's Think Tank Hosts Standing Room-Only Town Hall at AERA, Connecting Scholars and Community Organizers in Pursuit of Educational Justice

Philadelphia, PA - On April 12, 2024, The People's Think Tank convened a standing-room-only session at the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. The event, designated as a Presidential Session by the AERA program committee, was titled "Intersectional Organizing, Solidarity Building, and Educational Justice: A Town Hall Conversation with Scholars and Community Organizers." It brought together over 400 attendees to engage in a vibrant discussion on the intersection of research and grassroots movement-building.

The distinguished panel featured four steering committee members from The People's Think Tank (Vajra Watson, LuzMarina Serrano, Jonathan Stith, and Letha Muhammad) and renowned scholars Bettina Love and Megan Bang. Moderated by think tank cofounder Mark Warren, the conversation centered on insights from research and on-the-ground organizing efforts that aim to foster solidarity across communities and issue-based campaigns in the fight for educational justice. Questions included the following:

- What does intersectional organizing mean to you and what does it have to do with fighting for educational justice?
- What are the key foundations for intersectional organizing and the processes and strategies that help connect communities and issue-based movements?
- How can scholars and organizers center anti-Black racism and recognize the oppression faced by Indigenous and other peoples as they seek to build an intersectional movement in ways that avoid an "oppression Olympics?"
- In what ways can scholars and organizers collaborate to deeply interrogate educational injustice and dream a vision for liberation across communities and perspectives?

The session, co-sponsored by the Grassroots Community and Youth Organizing SIG, ended with a discussion by scholar Shawn Ginwright. Afterwards, many attendees spoke to panelists or followed The People's Think Tank over various social media channels. Some attendees indicated their desire to work on future projects for the organization. As a next step, the transcript generated from a recording of the session will be analyzed for insights relevant to understanding and enacting solidarity-building.

The People's Think Tank remains committed to facilitating these critical conversations and to supporting the work of scholars and organizers who are leading the charge for educational

justice. The organization plans to build upon the momentum generated at AERA to deepen partnerships and drive forward research and action toward justice.

For more information about The People's Think Tank and its ongoing work, please follow us on Instagram at [@peopletthinktank](#).

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The People's Think Tank supports, strengthens, and expands the movement for educational justice by creating a space led by community organizers and the parents, young people and communities with whom they work, lifting up stories and strategies, building new knowledge and organizing models to create solidarity, dismantle anti-Black racism and systemic oppression in all its intersectional forms, developing visions for equitable, humane and liberatory education connected to healthy and vibrant communities, and fostering collective love, sovereignty, healing and well-being.

In the People's Think Tank, movement organizers and leaders build authentic relationships, share lived experience and organizing lessons, hold deep and sometimes difficult conversations, conduct participatory action-oriented research, and rejuvenate mind, body, and soul for the struggles ahead towards educational justice and community liberation.

Selected Photos of the event (More available at @peoplesthankevent on Instagram)



Selected Video Excerpts of the event



Opening Spoken Word Performance by Steering Committee Members Patrice Hill and Denisha “Coco” Bland (of Sacramento Area Youth Speaks)

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/AfqxiQBPypMDKQPH6>



Bettina Love talks about the self-work that needs to happen before you organize others: “Have you done the work *here*?”

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/dGjGKAjBXkMrqV4i8>



LuzMarina Serrano relates what real organizing strategies look like for her: “Have you sat on a couch with plastic on it?”

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/KDzA8tv6nCytnNbN9>



Megan Bang answers a participant question regarding justice work with detractors: “I come from a family that are both the colonizers and the colonized...”

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/fch92jLVmyzTDhtD9>