

Session IV: July 14

“Give people light and they will find a way.”--- Ella Baker

Popular Education and Black Feminist Theory & Practice as Tools for Justice

This session will look at the significance of both theory and popular education in organizing for social justice. During Part I of this session, we will explore what is at the crux of the fight for public education, access to higher education, and curriculum and canon within universities. We will examine both historical and contemporary organizing strategies such as Freedom Schools and *Democratizing Knowledge*, which seeks to transform higher education from within. We will also consider the impact and influence of teachers' unions and parent struggles to regulate education. Part two of this session will embrace the intellectual and political legacy of Black Feminist thinkers and organizers such as Alice Walker, Angela Davis, and bell hooks. We will explore the ways Black feminist theory and practice have been and can continue to be utilized as foundations for organizing.

Special Guest Facilitator: the second part of this session will be led by Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Black feminist scholar-activist.

Session V: July 15

Transnational Solidarity: Connecting the Dots of Injustice & Crossing Borders for Collective Liberation

Ella Baker's vision of justice did not stop at political or imaginary borders. Not only was she a freedom fighter for oppressed people in the United States, she also stood in solidarity with causes around the globe including the Puerto Rican fight for independence and decolonization movements on the continent of Africa. This session will examine the importance of envisioning struggle as a transnational effort. How are freedom struggles inevitably global? How do we engage in cross-border solidarity in a meaningful way? How do we as outsiders make judgments about international struggles in order to stand in solidarity with others fighting for justice?

Special Guest Facilitators: This session will be led by transnational feminist scholar activists Chandra Mohanty and Linda Carty.

Session VI: July 16

Transnational Solidarity (Part Two) and Debriefing, Next Steps

In this final session we will continue to explore the importance of transnational solidarity work. The second part of this session will focus on ways in which we can envision collective liberation in the future; how we can practically implement the theoretical perspectives explored throughout our time together; and what direction our own grassroots work, individually and collectively, can move in the future.

ELLA BAKER INSTITUTE

“Strong people don't need strong leaders.” – Ella Baker

July 11-16, 2014

Ella Baker Institute for Organizers

UIC Campus, Chicago, IL

Join Chandra Mohanty, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Ella's Daughters and others for a 5-day institute to explore the organizing tradition of Ella Baker, women of color feminist histories and theories, and workshops with Climbing Poetree, and more. Visits to local Chicago activist communities will be included in the institute.

Hosted by UIC Social Justice Initiative and Ella's Daughters

Space is very limited (50 maximum). Contact us to reserve space: sjuic@gmail.com

The Ella Baker Institute

July 11-16, 2014

UIC Social Justice Initiative

Sessions Will Convene Daily 9:00a.m.-1:00p.m.

Limited Space for Participation:

50 People Max.

**For Application Info Contact UIC SJI:
sjiuic@gmail.com**

The Ella Baker Institute will convene July 11-16 at the University of Illinois at Chicago and will include discussion, mini-lectures, guest facilitators, and interactive popular education exercises. The purpose is NOT to teach organizing skills and techniques, but to explore organizing history, concepts, and praxis based on the lived example of the legendary freedom organizer, Ella Baker (1903-1986). Often organizers feel forced into defensive mode, focused narrowly on a single-issue, or treading water to stay afloat. The vision for this institute is to invite participants to pull back and interact with other organizers, scholars, writers, and artists; to ask substantial, over-arching questions about the social justice landscape today; to explore lessons from the past; and to ask ourselves how we can imagine the future. Daily sessions will be organized thematically around the words and wisdom of Ella Baker. Guest speakers will be invited to present in person or via Skype. Chandra Mohanty, Linda Carty, and Beverly Guy-Sheftall are special facilitators we plan to have with us. The dynamic, creative team Climbing Poetree from NYC will also join us.

Short Readings Will Be Required.

Session I: July 11

“Now, who are your people?”--- Ella Baker

Introductions and Overview of Ella Baker’s Life, Tradition & Legacy

How do we define “identity” and “community” as categories in flux, but also as part of what anchors, shapes and makes us who we are? What is the appeal and what are the limits of ‘identity politics’? How do we live, define, and embrace ‘community membership’? How does community as a category get distorted, and how can we reimagine community? **Interactive Popular Education Exercise:** Part I With Climbing Poetree

Session II: July 12

“In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become a part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed. This means that we are going to have to learn to think in radical terms. I use the term radical in its original meaning- getting down to and understanding the root cause. It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system.”--- Ella Baker.

Breaking Down Injustice and Inequality: Finding the Roots

This session will focus on economic, structural, and theoretical analyses of the underpinnings of injustice and inequality from different perspectives, but through Ella Baker’s lens. How do we understand the long reach and continued effects of slavery and white supremacy, nativism, settler colonialism, and hetero-patriarchy? How are these injustices interconnected? How has inequality evolved (or not) over time and space? **Interactive Popular Education Exercise:** Part II With Climbing Poetree

Session III: July 13

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Grassroots Leadership in Theory and Practice

Ella Baker believed in the potential and power of grassroots organizing and young people as organizers for justice. She also embodied a concept of progressive leadership that was not grounded in narrow notions of hierarchy, but rather helped people help themselves and determine their own futures. This session will explore examples, challenges, and the importance of grassroots organizing as a means to tackle oppression.

Special Guest Facilitators: social justice youth activists will be invited to facilitate part of this session, sharing and teaching contemporary organizing experiences and challenges.