



Slow Food USA®

Good, Clean and Fair: The Slow Food USA Manifesto for Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

[Historical Overview](#)

[The Rationale for an Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Manifesto](#)

[People](#)

[Planet](#)

[Commitment of Slow Food USA](#)

[Moving forward](#)

[General Feedback](#)

Historical Overview

In 2012, Slow Food USA received a \$1.2 million capacity building grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation to address inequities in the food system. This was to be accomplished by raising awareness internally and externally, building relationships with diverse communities, establishing partnerships with organizations in this area of work and funding the development of a public initiative to embrace local food cultures.

Katherine Deumling, Board Chair at the time said of the grant, "There is great inequity in our food system, and we must all work to make it easier for everyone to access good, healthy food – through preserving our diverse foods and food traditions and through building bridges with communities negatively impacted by the industrial food

system. We're grateful for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's support and confidence in Slow Food as a key force for change."

Foundational work was created internally by Angelines Moncha Alba Lamb, Hnin Hnin, and Sung E Bai; this work focused on increasing the anti-oppression competency (skills, knowledge, and action) among staff, board, and leaders to build authentic and generative relationships across race and class differences.

The understanding was that the core of Slow Food USA's work happens through our network of local chapters and the hope was to inspire our network through work that models this awareness, while simultaneously building meaningful partnerships. We would go on to build on that work with the network through

- facilitating national leadership calls and meetings (Kentucky in 2012, New Orleans in 2013)
- Leveraging natural opportunities and convenings to reflect our goals, i.e. Slow Meat, School Gardens, Ark of Taste and Terra Madre
- building alliances with organizations doing the work around equity and inclusion
- expanding our definitions of our network to embrace food communities
- work with beta chapters that embraced equity, inclusion

Throughout the Slow Food USA organization and larger leadership network, this work proved to be difficult, controversial for some and welcome for others. Combined with leadership transitions, shrinking membership, and organizational challenges this work often stayed in the background and not the forefront of Slow Food USA. This Manifesto aims to intentionally and forthrightly bring equity, inclusion and justice to the forefront of Slow Food USA.

The Rationale for an Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Manifesto

People

Race, class, gender and sexual orientation continue to play a defining role in one's life trajectory and outcomes. A complex system of racial bias` and inequities is at play, deeply rooted in our country's history, culture and institutions. This system of racialization — which routinely confers advantage and disadvantage based on skin color and other characteristics — must be clearly understood, directly challenged and fundamentally transformed. In the USA, people of color are present throughout the food industry and are predominant in some sectors such as farming, harvesting,

slaughtering, fishing, and restaurant service workers. If our nation is to live up to its democratic ideals — that all people are created equal and treated fairly — then racial equity and inclusion must be at the forefront of how we shape our institutions, standards, policies, culture, and our Slow Food organization.

Planet

The modern, industrialized agri- and aqua-food model that has asserted itself over the last 50 years or so may have brought benefits in terms of increased productivity, but its impact on the environment has been devastating: pollution, soil erosion, scarred landscapes, acidified and warming oceans, depleted freshwater systems, reduced energy resources and an overall loss of diversity, both biological and cultural. Climate change is now at the center of global political debate. Furthermore the ecological collapse has already shown that its most direct impact disproportionately affects communities of color, Indigenous peoples and low-income countries and communities. We recognize the relationship between food and climate have pointed out that food production represents one of the main causes—and victims—of climate change, but it could also become one of the solutions. Needless to say, the global food system as it stands needs a radical overhaul if its impact on the environment is to be reduced. This climate situation requires new conversations and relationships. We believe that working toward a just, equitable, and transparent society is not only morally necessary but also exactly what we need to confront the unprecedented environmental challenges we face.

Commitment of Slow Food USA

At Slow Food USA we are dedicated to the development of an equitable, just, and healthy local food system-- one that truly works for all of us. We are aware that many injustices still exist within our food system. Our local and national work is to dismantle these structures. We know that these injustices-- which include such things as theft of land, farmworker, fisher-harvester and other food and seafood chain worker exploitation, lack of access to land, oceans, freshwaters, and healthy foods, food apartheid neighborhoods, and diet related health problems-- are rooted in race, class and gender disparities. As these injustices continue, all too often the voices of people of color, poor or low-income people and women are excluded from the mainstream food movement.

Slow Food USA is committed to listening to those most impacted by food injustice; to being honest about how white supremacy, economic exploitation, and cultural

domination have fundamentally shaped the agricultural history of the U.S.; to furthering our own education on how to build a just and equitable food system and supporting our local chapters to do the same, to honoring local knowledge; and, to taking appropriate action to support, deepen or create local food justice and food sovereignty efforts.

Equity, Inclusion and Justice (EIJ) must be within the DNA of the values espoused by Slow Food. Good, Clean, and Fair must go forward through an EIJ lens that includes:

- Good-quality, flavorsome and healthy food with cultural relevance, available and accessible to all. This incorporates supporting efforts that cultivate food justice; equitable access; and collaborations that encourage food sovereignty.
- Clean-production that does not harm the environment or people. Insure that environmental justice principles are applied in the fields as farmworkers plant, pick, and harvest, and on the boats as fishers harvest and process.
- Fair-accessible prices for consumers (co-producers) and fair conditions and pay for producers and all workers. Fight for dignity and economic justice of labor from field to fork. There should be geographical and equitable access for all communities.

Slow Food USA is committed to incorporating the experiences, assets and insights of people and communities of color, and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds into our national and local programming, organizational culture and policies. We believe that it is essential to encourage a diverse range of perspectives and experiences within our board of directors, national staff and within our local organizations so that we are making decisions that best reflect the varied needs of our entire community that are especially inclusive of the traditionally marginalized voices of people of color. Slow Food USA envisions a future where our organization is more just, more equitable and more inclusive. To become a more just, equitable and inclusive organization we will advance the following long-term organizational goals:

Create a welcoming and inclusive organizational culture for all people. Slow Food USA seeks to manifest an inclusive and diverse organizational and workplace culture that values people just as much as processes and outcomes. By centering justice for people in all our efforts, we will create a culture that is inclusive of people from all walks of life. As a result we will benefit from the wealth of creativity, wisdom, and insight that is lost when only certain perspectives are at the table.

Provide continued education and support to help our staff, board and volunteers build goals and partnerships that value and embrace people from all walks of life.

Create goals, partnerships and mutual accountability at every level of our organization that reflect our commitment to justice and equity. Leadership development and strategic partnerships are core strategies for long-term, sustained success in building Slow Food and the food movement, as well as building a Slow Food USA that welcomes, attracts and values people from diverse ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds.

To move toward the goals outlined above Slow Food USA will strive to:

1. Create an environment where all staff, board members and volunteers are seen, respected, and supported to participate fully.
2. Share a commitment to honoring diverse worldviews, life experiences, cultures, ages and lifestyles.
3. Provide staff education sessions on the topics of racial justice and equity, food justice, building equitable organizations, and engage Slow Food USA governors to share these resources with their respective state chapters.
4. Orient all Slow Food staff, board members and local volunteers to our justice and equity mission and goals, and support them in incorporating these themes into their work.
5. Support food justice education and racial justice awareness not only within Slow Food USA, but within our wider community as well.
6. Develop collaborative and supportive relationships with people of color and organizations led by people of color. Extend and deepen support for local farmers, gardeners and growers of color and immigrant and refugee farmers and community-based fisher-harvesters.
7. Act to challenge racism in the food and farming and fisher communities and beyond.
8. Acknowledge the huge agricultural contributions made by Black, Latino, Indigenous and Asian growers, farmers, and fishers throughout history and reject the whitewashing of this history.
9. Find creative and meaningful ways to invoke the Indigenous ancestral homelands and waters where we hold events and conferences.
10. Continuously review our website, promotional materials and course descriptions for language and images that highlight racial/social justice and inclusive, appropriate language.

11. Work with staff and board members to ensure our meetings and events are accessible, including but not limited to providing childcare and transportation as needed.
12. Commit ourselves to this ongoing work by regularly evaluating the composition and organizational culture of our staff, board and board committees. Build in accountability measures and expectations of success.
13. Move from being a majority white organization to a wonderfully diverse and multicultural organization, with people of color well represented at the national and local levels.
14. Provide content and resources on our national website that chronicle our efforts around food justice but also provide resource links to other work going on in the food and agriculture movement.
15. Continue to build a fully realized multicultural national and local organization which actively includes a diversity of people representing different groups' styles and perspectives. A multicultural organization continuously learns and acts to make the systemic changes required to welcome, respect, support, and value any individual or group to fully participate.
16. Make leadership development and strategic partnerships core strategies for long-term sustained success in this work.
17. Continue to recognize the value of age diversity in the food movement and commit ourselves to supporting its young leaders. Encourage their participation by having Slow Food events, conferences, and chapters financially and culturally accessible to youth leaders of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds.
18. Learn about and connect, on a chapter level, to Indigenous organizations in their communities that are protecting their traditional food culture, food heritage, and subsistence systems, while addressing food justice issues.
19. Work to meet, converse with, and invite leaders of Indigenous communities to exercise traditional protocol of welcome, as well as facilitate inclusion in design and presentation of major events.
20. Ask Indigenous participants how they wish to be identified and how they wish to participate and honor those wishes.
21. Research the history of foods involved in Ark of Taste, but not nominate Indigenous foods without consulting the Slow Food Turtle Island Association (SFTIA).
22. Strive to be educated, through greater involvement and familiarity with Indigenous communities, and Tribal Nations and their neighbors, about food sovereignty, cultural values and norms, and cultural appropriation and

- to guard against (and attempt to rectify) activities that might be interpreted as impinging on food sovereignty or appropriating Indigenous cultures.
23. Consult with the Slow Food Turtle Island Association (and their recommendations of appointments) before advocating any such positions for state and national policies affecting Native American Tribes with respect to food, farming, ranching, fishing, and the like.
 24. Inform chapters who are working with Indigenous People in their communities about Slow Food Turtle Island Association and invite them to both connect and participate in the SFTIA.

Moving Forward

We work to dismantle racism, classism, and gender and sexual orientation bias in the food system by integrating topics of equity and justice in all of our programming and prioritizing support for underrepresented producers including people of color, refugees, women and individuals with limited resources. Our work is to seek an historical understanding of racism in the food system and be bold in our steps to address how it continues to play out today, whether that's right here in our own organization or in the food system at large.

An Equity Manifesto is a starting point to keep us on track in this work and accountable to our mission. As people who love food, farming, land, fishing, oceans, freshwaters, and healthy communities, we believe deeply that a fundamental shift needs to happen in order for all of us to take part equitably in the joy and well-being that healthy communities can bring. And we believe that we need powerful, diverse local chapters, national staff and board members that center the voices of those most impacted to help move this shift forward. Our collaborative and inclusive approach is about changing hearts, minds and cultures to set an agenda for membership solidarity, community organizing, and to create a powerful movement that effectively builds and leverages influence as a national organization. Our evolving work for equity is one small part of that process, and we're excited to share this path within our organization and externally.