

DISRUPT TO TRANSFORM: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO MOVEMENT BUILDING

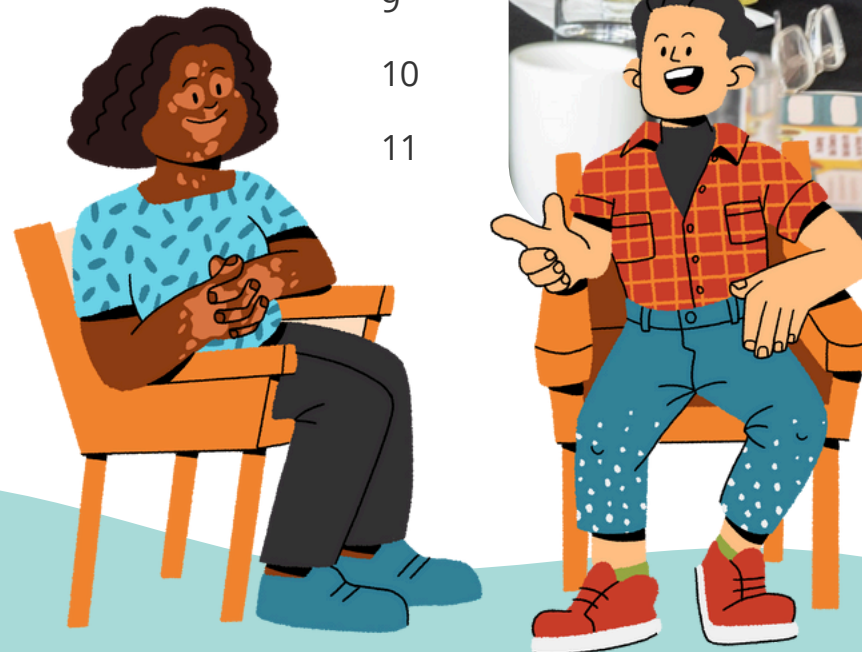


sustain

 **Eating Better**

Contents

Purpose - Who we are - Context	3
Why relationships are important in movement building and food system change	4
Decoloniality 101	5
Decoloniality in the food system	6
Embracing diverse stories and embodied wisdom	7
Rooted in care: wellbeing and collective resilience	7
Addressing the elephant in the room	8
Case study: The Gathering Table	9
Worksheet - reflective questions for space holding	10
Acknowledgements	11



Purpose

This resource is for the 'doing' part of movement building. It is an introduction to alternative movement building approaches that centres justice, equity and includes links to more information and prompts for planning events.

This resource is designed to be brief and easy to understand. To encourage organisers to think differently about how to hold space.

Who we are

Sustain and Eating Better are alliances working towards a fairer, just and sustainable food system. Since 2024, Eating Better and Sustain have been collaborating on furthering equity and racial justice across the sector.

Context

The sustainable food, farming and land sector is working towards equity but is shaped by inequitable systems. As a broad movement, we share goals yet differ in priorities and approaches to change. Sustain and Eating Better have a responsibility to help the movement progress together. The resource introduces aspects of decoloniality. It offers suggestions on how you can apply this practice to events and activities for movement building.

Links:

- Blog, [Building a movement ecosystem capable of transforming the food system](#) - Farming the future
- [The Sankofa Report](#): British colonialism and the UK food system

Why relationships are important in movement building and food system change

This document lays the groundwork for future collaboration. It outlines what inclusive movement building can look like and showcases inspiring projects and actions from across the sector. The focus is on external efforts to promote social justice in food systems, rather than on internal Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) or anti-racism work. It aims to inspire organisations to take meaningful steps towards system change.

“ **At the heart of every successful movement lies the strength of human connections.** ”

Zero Waste Europe Alliance

Urgency in food systems campaigns can prioritise scale and efficiency over connection. This can neglect relationships which are the core of movement building. When movements prioritise people and relationships over structures or outcomes, they make space for diverse voices, experiences, and leadership. The inclusivity strengthens understanding of the shared goal. This ensures that strategies are shaped by those who are most affected.

Links:

- Article, [Organising food systems through ecologies of care: a relational approach](#)
- Book, [Feeding each other: Shaping change in food systems through relationship](#)
- Resource, [Blueprint for movement building](#)



Decoloniality 101

Decolonality is a process and a method. It is often misinterpreted as the rejection of science and technology. What decoloniality does is question the uplifting of some voices and the erasure of others. Decoloniality is an important framework that challenges and disrupts white supremacy culture. It restores and repairs what has been lost through the process of colonisation and the creation of white supremacy. It de-centres western knowledge and celebrates the knowledge of indigenous, racialised and marginalised communities.

Links:

- Blog, [Decolonization 101](#)
- [What is white supremacy culture?](#)



Decoloniality in the food system

To decolonise food is to rethink our relationship with it and take a fairer, more connected, holistic approach. This is seen in global food/land sovereignty and agroecology movements. They question what has been lost and imagine new systems. Civil society can help by centring marginalised communities, building solidarity across cultures and embedding intersectionality. This would challenge colonial power and legacies in the food system.

Links:

- Article, [Decolonial food sovereignty](#)
- Blog, [Food and decoloniality](#)
- Book, [Decolonisation & effective decision making: A guide book](#)
- Resource, [Unpacking colonial assumptions](#)
- Article, [Introduction to decolonising monitoring & evaluation](#)



Embracing diverse stories and embodied wisdom

Decolonality diverges from western ways of thinking and knowledge sharing. This can look like storytelling, using art in problem solving and nature connection. It values indigenous knowledge systems and generates spaces for collective decision-making.

Embodiment means noticing how our body and energy affect how people feel, learn, and participate. It calms the mind, sparks creativity, and deepens connection to support holistic learning and collaboration. It can help regulate the nervous system before engaging in challenging conversations.

Links

- Resource, [Embodied design and facilitation](#)
- Toolkit, [Embodied skills training](#): collection of exercises
- [The Interspecies Council Framework](#)

Rooted in care: wellbeing and collective resilience

“**The Times are Urgent: Let's Slow Down.**”
Bayo Akomolafe, philosopher and activist

Prioritising wellbeing in movement building resists systems that exhaust and isolate activists. Caring for mental health, rest and collective joy sustain resilience and counter fatigue. Wellbeing becomes a political act, shifting activism from sacrifice to regenerative practice, embedding care as strategy. Collective care strengthens communities and builds empathy towards one another. This helps avoid burnout and supports the longevity of the work.

Links:

- Book, [Rest as resistance](#)
- Article, [Putting wellbeing at heart of movement building](#)

Addressing the elephant in the room

Navigating difficult conversations with courage, care and openness is essential to building just, sustainable food movements. We must confront racism and oppression within our spaces and practise solidarity through honesty, accountability and offering support. Accountable spaces help everyone feel valued.

This looks like co-creating a code of conduct, welcoming feedback and centring marginalised voices. This ongoing practice, rooted in humility, dialogue and reflection, can transform conflict into growth rather than division.

Links:

- The gathering table blog on [solidarity and allyship](#)
- [Navigating conflict](#) playlist
- Toolkit, [Belonging design principles](#): Guide for building belonging



Case Study: The Gathering Table

In June 2025, Sustain, Eating Better and AFN Network+ hosted The Gathering Table, the first ever summit on racial justice in food and farming. It was co-designed with our Food and Racial Justice Working Group to create a unique space where food systems and anti-racism efforts meet. The event avoided strict conference rules and used creative, decolonial approaches to help people connect and reflect together.

Our goals were to:

- support real change in food justice and racial equity
- build a shared language for working together
- encourage follow-up actions
- focus on genuine connection between participants

Instead of giving a fixed to-do list, the summit aimed to give people a clearer sense of what change is needed, ideas for working together, and motivation to keep going.

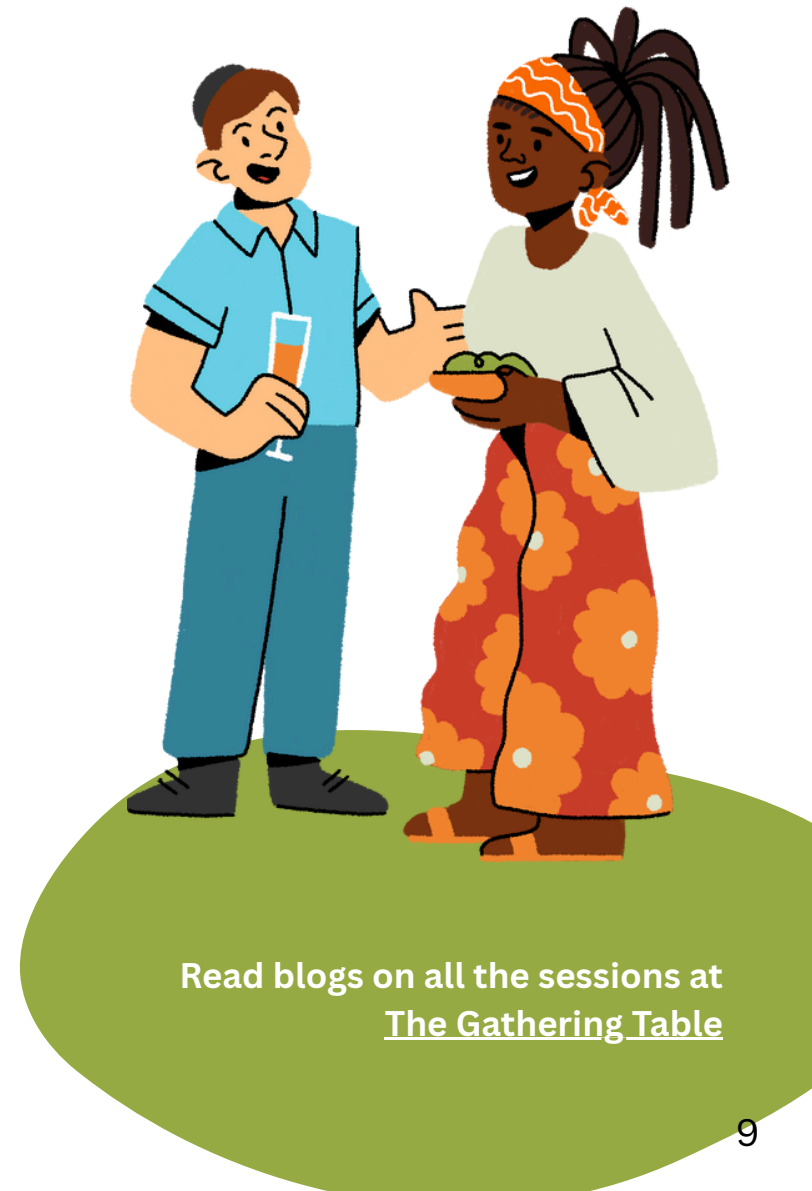
The summit included:

- storytelling
- a panel discussion on decolonising the food system
- interactive workshops on solidarity and allyship, decolonial decision-making, and exploring food identities

The space was warm, open, joyful, and bold. This encouraged participants to:

- connect deeply
- set intentions
- think about how we hold each other accountable
- reflect on the power we hold

The collaborative approach helped generate lasting momentum and community-led change in the food sector.



Read blogs on all the sessions at
[The Gathering Table](#)

Worksheet - reflective questions for space holding

The Intention

- ✓ What is the purpose of this space?
- ✓ What do we hope to achieve together?
- ✓ How can this space nurture collective wellbeing and empowerment rather than individual agendas?
- ✓ What values or principles should guide how we work and relate to one another?

The Content

- ✓ How will we approach challenging or sensitive topics with openness, respect, and care?
- ✓ What facilitation practices can create balance; encouraging participation, honouring differences, and sharing power?
- ✓ How can different forms of knowledge exchange be recognised and valued alongside academic or technical expertise? This includes storytelling, embodied practice, cultural traditions, creative expression.
- ✓ How do we centre joy?
- ✓ How will we allow space for genuine connections to develop?

The People Involved

- ✓ Who is being invited to speak, and whose voices are we centring?
- ✓ Who is being asked to facilitate, and how will they reflect the diversity and values of the movement?
- ✓ How will outreach ensure that the most marginalised groups are welcomed into the space?
- ✓ What accountability structures can ensure ongoing connection and follow-up after the event?
- ✓ How do we plan co-production: where participants shape outcomes, decisions, and processes?

The Environment

- ✓ Where will this event take place?
- ✓ How does the location support accessibility, safety, and belonging?
- ✓ How will the food reflect inclusivity, and sustainability?
- ✓ How is the schedule designed for accessibility? For example, breaks, quiet/prayer spaces, childcare, or varying energy levels during the day?
- ✓ What needs to be in place for deeper movement building?

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all that contributed to this resource:

Idman Abdurahaman - Eating Better (co-author)

Roshni Shah - Sustain (co-author)

Charlotte Jones - Eating Better (graphic designer)

Sareta Puri - Sustain

Huge thank you to Elliott Bulpett for their beautiful illustration work. Elliott is an illustrator from the south of England with a love of colour and creating fun and joyful artworks.

