

# Refire

A SIX WEEK SERIES



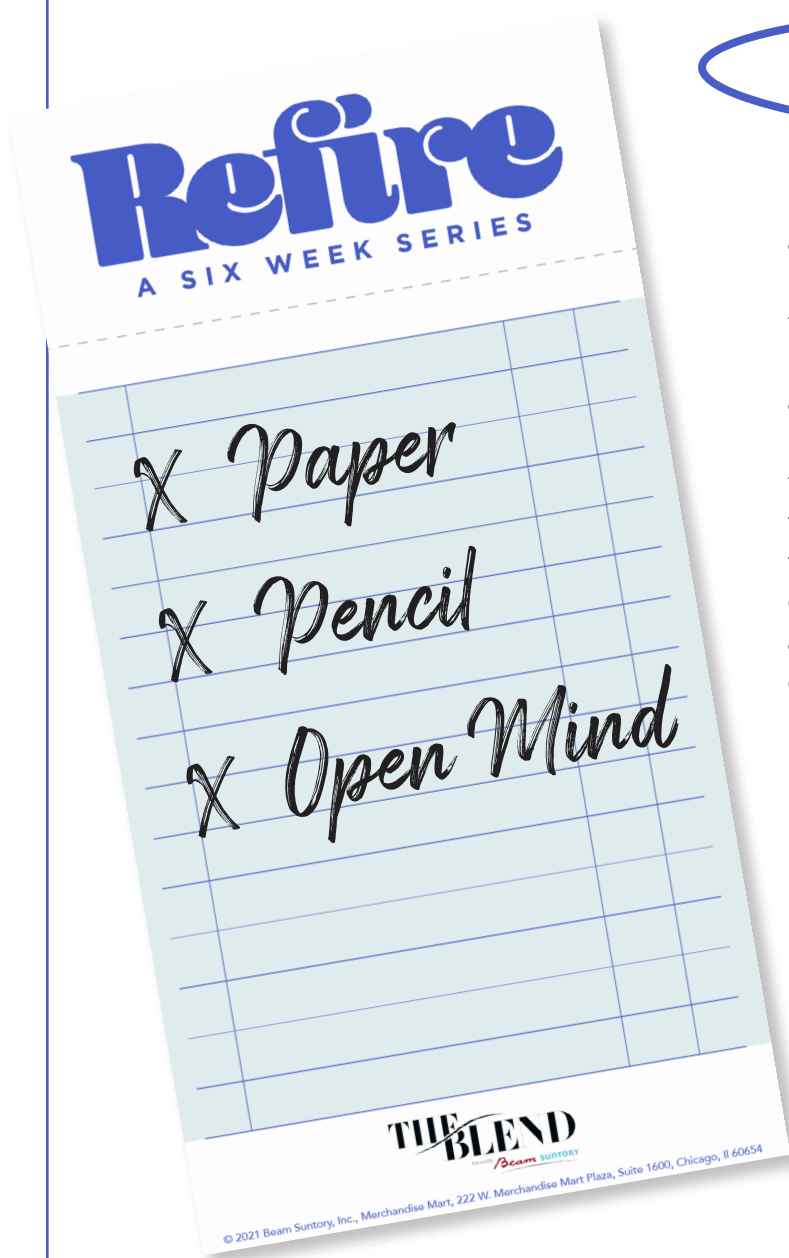
Refire, a six-week speaker series in the spring of 2021, gathered six experts in their chosen fields to talk about making meaningful changes to the systemic issues that plague hospitality. Each speaker brought their unique experiences from outside of our industry and applied them to problems we encounter at our workplaces everyday. We asked them all to supply actionable steps we might take as individuals and as a community to make a kinder, more equitable future. This workbook is a collection of resources in one centralized location for you to make notes, add your thoughts, and refer back to whenever you might need a refresher. We also will be sifting out important concepts and defining and delving into the words that are the foundation to transformation. We encourage you to flesh out your own reflections, and challenge you to use these conversations as the jumping off point for creating change within your own sphere.

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## WORKBOOK CHECKLIST

Now it's up to all of us! Our Refire speakers asked us a lot of questions and called out some important actions we can take to build a better future in our workplaces and communities. So let's strategize! This workbook was created as a space for reflection. The last page is great to print out and write on, or you can grab your favorite pen and notebook to journal your thoughts. Our hope was that bringing all of the information together might help build a guide to plan out the meaningful changes we all want to make. We can't wait to see what this community can do.



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# Protecting Local Economies

WITH DEVITA DAVISON

Devita Davison, in conversation with Zahra Bates, talked about food: our access to it, what it means to communities, and what policy changes need to be made in relation to it. Using her work with FoodLab Detroit as a template, she explained how food apartheid can be overcome by expanding the tools, the resources, and the mindsets of people building businesses in our neighborhoods, and how supporting local economies benefits a more equitable way of life.



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*Food was a gateway for me to practice other forms of solidarity.*

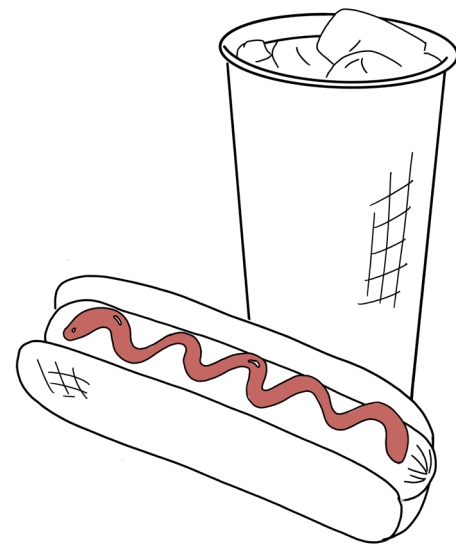
DEVITA DAVISON

## RACISM IN OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

The statutes known as “**Jim Crow laws**” originated in the southern United States after the Civil War, and lasted through the 1960’s. They were a set of laws designed to maintain the racial segregation and inequality enforced in libraries, restaurants, drinking fountains, bathrooms, busses, trains, schools and parks. Because of the severe racial discrimination and segregation of these laws, Black Americans began to move from rural areas in southern states to more urban areas in the northern and western states, a shift known as the **Great Migration**.

It was during this time that redlining and disinvestment policies and practices began to surface. **Redlining** is defined by Davison as “a practice where the financial institutions literally outlined communities that had a majority of black and brown bodies, [by drawing] red lines around these communities.” Companies, primarily financial and banking institutions, used these outlined “maps” to know which communities to divest from.

**Disinvestment** of a community occurs in both the public and private sectors, when organizations withdraw support from a community by limiting or restricting access to loans, home ownership, and small business opportunities .



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*We know people who live under food apartheid in zip codes [without] access to healthy, fresh food die earlier than those individuals who don’t.*

DEVITA DAVISON

From the segregatory practices of redlining and disinvestment came a multitude of systemic inequities. One of those was the lack of community access to fresh, healthy food, which Davison refers to as **food apartheid**. Over time, communities’ inadequate access to fresh and healthy food led to glaring health disparities, which are preventable health differences experienced by socially disadvantaged populations as a result of environmental and financial factors such as poverty, and community disinvestment. These factors and resulting disparities gave rise to the concept of **social determinants of health**, which are the aspects of the environment in which people live that directly and indirectly affect their ability to live a healthy life.

**1865**  
The American Civil War ends, collapsing the Confederacy and abolishing slavery

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**1877**  
Jim Crow laws begin, with the Supreme Court ruling that states can enforce segregation on common modes of transportation such as trains, streetcars, and riverboats.

**1916-1970**  
**The Great Migration**  
6 million Black Americans relocate from the rural southern United States to major American metropolitan areas in the North, Midwest, and West.

**1964**  
The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is passed, abolishing the Jim Crow laws.

**1960’s**  
The term “**Redlining**” is coined as financial institutions begin the practice of outlining geographic areas with large minority populations for the purpose of identifying where to avoid community investment.

**2011**  
**FoodLab Detroit** is founded with the intention of building a more equitable, nourishing, and sustainable food system in Detroit.

## Hack the System

We know that we’re not going to solve the entirety of the complex, systemic problems facing the global food system; we’re talking about a food system that’s been built on centuries of community exploitation. But what we can do is find **backdoor hacks**. How do we hack into that system on a local level, where we can start doing what we call “immediate problem solving?”

## THE ABC’S OF TRANSFORMATION

### ADVOCATE

**Catalyze change** by championing a cause, policy, or belief, oftentimes on the behalf of others.

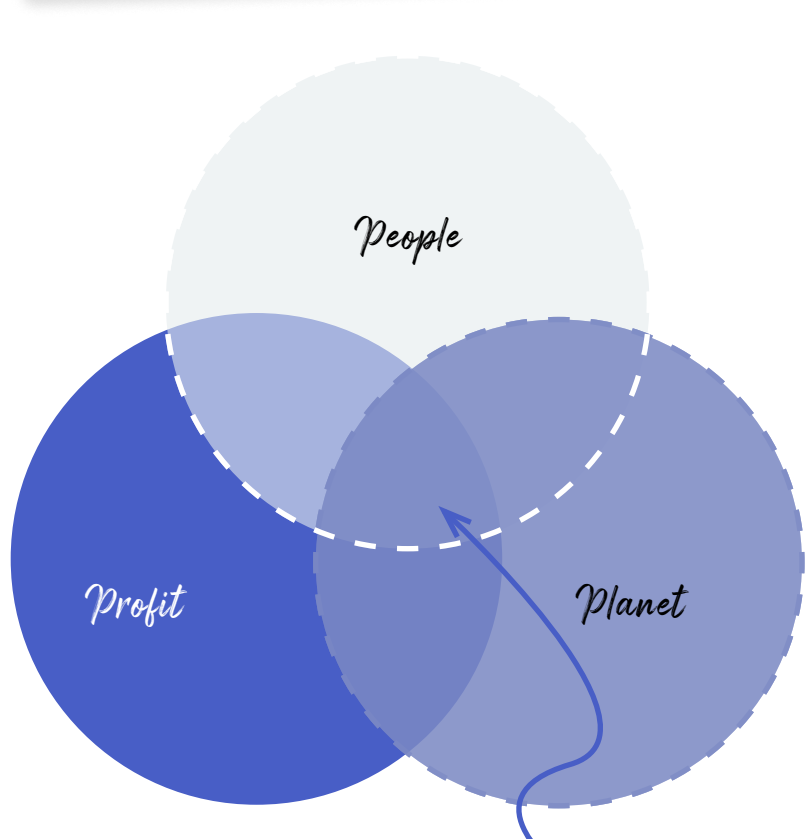
### BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

**Cultivate a system of sustainability** starting with the framework of your business. A sustainable business not only values their profit bottom line, but the bottom line of the people and the planet. **Certified B-Corps** are an example of companies setting a high standard for ethical and sustainably minded business practices.

### COMMUNITY

**Connect your community** by building locally-based food systems and consortiums that support and supply each other.

## B-Corps Framework



## ACTION PLAN

- Create and provide a path of upward professional and personal mobility for workers
- Create a waste mitigation plan
- Track and measure the locally sourced produce at your business or program
- Utilize packaging that is biodegradable, compostable, and/or recyclable

## THE BIRTH OF FOODLAB

In 2011 Davison founded FoodLab Detroit with the intention to “help start, scale, [and] grow sustainable good-food businesses that are offering accessible, healthy, culturally appropriate food in their communities.” For Davison, **culturally appropriate food** is rooted in honoring the people and their heritage. “It’s about respecting” traditional values of food preparation.

The ingredients and preparation of food that reflect the experiences, traditions, and preferences of a group of people is their food culture. Providing culturally appropriate food for our communities starts with understanding the demographics and history of our city or neighborhood. What one group may consider nutritious may be culturally inappropriate or taboo in another group’s culture. A few examples of this include vegetarian food culture and Kosher food culture. The foods served in the grocery stores, bodegas, restaurants, and bars in our communities place unspoken values on which foods are considered ‘normal’ or ‘healthy’ and devalues foods that do not fit in. Welcoming input from community members on the development of what products or dishes are available is one way to work towards creating a sense of belonging for people from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.

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*[With Foodlab Detroit] I might be able to help start, scale, grow sustainable good food businesses that are offering accessible, healthy, culturally appropriate food in their communities.*

DEVITA DAVISON



EPISODE TWO

# Protecting Local Economies

WORKSHEET

Are you able to walk or take public transportation to get fresh and healthy food?

Do you have access to a farmers market for local produce and products?

What policies have affected your community's food security?

Is there a history of Redlining in your community?

Can you identify the local resources for small business ownership and development in your city? Do you know who your local officials are and how to contact them?

Are there culturally appropriate restaurants and food businesses in your area? Are they owned and operated by people of that culture?

