CoachHub

Coaching's role in challenging racial inequality

A vital discourse on systemic racism was sparked by the murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020. People began a critical examination of society and its structures and how they contributed to bringing us to this collective evaluation.

In response to this, the coaching industry made statements of support for Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaigns and redoubled the push for diversity, equity and inclusion training.

This all fell short for the coaches who are Black, indigenous, and other people of colour (BIPOC). That is because as an industry, there is a blind spot with regard to race. We "treat everyone the same," and that's the problem. Our industry's "colour blindness" devalues the resources and empowerment BIPOC coaches get from their strong racial identities.

My co-author Charmaine Roche and I set out to raise awareness of race across the coaching ecosystem and draw attention to the actions that stakeholders can take to provide a culture within the coaching industry in which everyone is welcome. We learned that we have a long way to go following our interviews with BIPOC coaches, professional associations, training institutions, and coaching providers.

Coaches have an opportunity to play a pivotal role in leadership development and can help executives implement deep change by:

- Providing a space for executives to reflect
- Providing a sounding board and safe space to explore self and system
- Challenging, supporting and facilitating the change process

Our research suggests we have a long way to go in taking measurable action to create an inclusive and diverse coaching industry. That is the purpose of coaching at its core. Coaching is not neutral. It either supports the status quo or creates critical awareness to change it. Therefore it's important to apply to ourselves the core coaching competency of compassionate, critical self-examination, and self-reflection.

Please read this research report and reflect on the work that needs to be done within your organisation or the organisations of which you are a member. CoachHub is poised to assist you in thinking beyond normative assumptions and creating new practices based on the importance of not only seeing, but acknowledging the vast arrays of colours in society.

Jonathan Passmore
Senior Vice-President of Coaching at CoachHub

Racial Justice, Equity and Belonging in Coaching

Charmaine Roche and Jonathan Passmore

Henley
Business School
UNIVERSITY OF READING

Where business comes to life

Aims and purpose

This report, informed by original research by Roche and Passmore (2021) with key stakeholders across the coaching eco-system, is a call to action inspired by coaching practitioners, researchers and thought leaders seeking to deploy coaching in support of the global movement for racial justice and equity.

The research gives primacy to the marginalised voices of Black, Indigenous and other people of colour (BIPOC) who work as coaches in the industry. In addition, we interviewed senior leaders from professional bodies, university and commercial coaching training providers and coaching service providers. The research focused on four 'case study' locations: UK, USA, Africa and New Zealand.

This research was a global collaboration with academic colleagues from the USA, UK, Africa and New Zealand (Māori) who supported the study by providing inputs, guidance and access to local networks.

Our findings identify an attitude of 'colour blindness' across the coaching eco-system; we argue for a shift to a conscious stance towards race and colour, which we believe is a prerequisite to creating a coaching movement towards racial justice and equity.

Our aim through this research is to raise awareness of race across the coaching eco-system and of the actions that stakeholders can take to provide a culture within the coaching industry in which everyone is welcome. While many organisations have broad sweeping statements, our research suggests we have a long way to go in taking measurable action to create an inclusive and diverse coaching industry.

We invite you to read the research report and reflect on the work you need to be doing in yourself, in your organisation or in the organisations of which you are a member.

Authors

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Jonathan Passmore

Jonathan is Director of the Henley Centre for Coaching, Henley Business School and Senior Vice President of CoachHub. Prior to this he has worked at PwC, IBM, and with senior leaders across the public and private sectors. He is the author of 30 books and over 100 scientific papers and book chapters. His most popular titles include: *Coaches' Handbook* and *Becoming A Coach: The Essential ICF Guide*. He is a chartered psychologist, EMCC Master Coach, AC Honorary Life Member and ICF-accredited coach. He holds five degrees.

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Acknowledgements

Henley Centre for Coaching

The Henley Centre for Coaching is a global leader in coaching research and coach training. We are the only triple-accredited coaching provider in the world offering both postgraduate university qualifications in coaching and accreditation from the Association for Coaching (AC), the International Coach Federation (ICF) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC).

The Centre provides formal accredited coach training through our *Professional Certificate in Coaching* and *MSc in Coaching and Behavioural Change*, and accredited supervision training through our *Professional Certificate in Supervision.* These programmes are delivered in the UK at our Greenlands campus, and at venues across the world.

The Centre provides continuous professional development for coaching professionals through masterclasses, webinars, conferences, and via online access to journals, ebooks and coaching research. These are all delivered through our online learning platform, meaning coaches can connect from anywhere in the world to engage in professional development.

The Henley coaching team consists of leading practitioners and academics who have shaped the coaching profession since the late 1990s. They have written many of the most popular coaching books and they continue to publish in leading management journals and to contribute at conferences worldwide. Their writing, thinking and research informs our teaching and ensures our programmes are at the cutting edge of coaching practice.

The Centre offers annual membership to all professional coaches, providing a virtual-learning environment where the members shape research and practice in coaching. Check out our website for details on how we can help you and your business come to life.

Section 1: Introduction

Not being able to see race and the power dynamics associated with it reinforces the status quo.

(Bocala & Holman, 2021)

We have been noting with passionate interest how a critical discourse is developing in coaching, prompted by the coincidence of a global pandemic with the murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020. Many have been moved by these events to address the ways in which systemic racism becomes present in global, national, organisational and social relations. In 2021, we have seen a number of reports emerging from universities (Henley Business School, 2021) that review structural inequality in organisations, as well as in professional areas of practice, such as engineering (Hamilton Report, 2021).

Beyond wide-spread statements of support during the Black Lives Matter (BLM) processes in 2020 and generic equality statements, the coaching world has been silent. As researchers and practitioners, our experience is that coach, client and student are looking to make sense of who they are in the midst of this newly sharpened awareness of systemic inequalities and the need for equity. They want to make a difference. What hampers them?

There is a feeling among these practitioners that there is a gap, a silence, a blind spot in our profession when it comes to race. Throughout this report we refer to this blind spot as being rooted in 'colour-blindness'. This report, and the research upon which it is based, was called into being because of this perceived silence. To end it, we need to apply to ourselves the core coaching competency of compassionate, critical self-examination and self-reflection. We need to lean into the difficulties of looking at ourselves through the lens of what it means to take an 'anti-racist' stance; what do we need to know in order to understand the urgency for action within our profession? As long as we assume that, because we as individuals are inherently non-racist that we as a profession are non-racist too, and therefore that we need do nothing explicit, we miss the point.

The question to our minds is: if we take for granted that we are a non-racist profession, does that leave us without an ethical responsibility to become more conscious about the significance of race in relation to

identity, social relations, power and justice? Will we thereby miss the opportunity to become consciously and actively anti-racist?

Psychology, counselling and therapy already have a rich and developing research base, as well as training and practice guides based on racial identity theory for white, black and other people of colour. Trauma-informed training and professional practice includes understanding the impact of race-related trauma. Sports coaching has a well developed research base of studies into the impact of systemic racism as it impacts the coach–client relationship and the sport as a whole. To date, however, coaching has failed to engage as an industry with this topic.

The evidence drawn from the focus groups gathered for this research report emphasises the urgency of this need to catch up.

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Will we miss the opportunity to become consciously and actively anti-racist?

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We can learn a lot from the advent of the Climate Coaching Alliance. In this movement, there is the emerging view of the coach as ethically positional, allied and committed to a politicised (small 'p'), ecologically conscious worldview – a coach who is able to navigate the fine ethical line between supporting client agency and serving a bigger purpose. During the pandemic in October 2020, eleven leading coaching, coaching psychology, mentoring and supervision professional bodies signed a Joint Global Statement on Climate Change committing ourselves to a collective voice and collaborative action on the climate and ecological crisis (CCA, 2020).

It seems self-evident that to effectively champion women in the workplace or challenge violence against women in society, we have to confront patriarchy. To seriously support people within the LGBTQA+ community, we need to challenge cis/heteronormativity. This is no less true with racism: if we are committed to challenging racial inequality and racist violence, this requires naming racialisation as a historical process, understanding its current form and requiring coaches to be as race conscious as they are expected to be with gender power relations, for example. To develop this consciousness means understanding the nature of 'whiteness' as an ideology, as an identity, and as a set of practices, just as Black consciousness and Black identity need to be understood. And here lies the difficulty: this is uncomfortable territory. It involves becoming comfortable with the discussion of terms such as 'whiteness' without the sense of blaming and shaming

if you are Black or a person of colour or being blamed and shamed if you are white. Do you have the courage, compassion and integrity to join us in this work and challenge yourself and your practice?

We need the support of the whole coaching eco-system to give the confidence needed for us all to move forward on the path toward racial justice as one of the cornerstones of our commitment to social justice.

Section 2: The story of race in coaching so far

The issue of racial justice has become more and more marked since the BLM protests in 2020 re-ignited the issue of structural and systemic racism. While race has been a constant feature in the discourse of many disciplines closely allied to coaching, it has been largely missing from the coaching debate. Things are slowly beginning to change. Since 2020, the first few ripples of a discourse on race in coaching have started to emerge (Maltbia, 2021a, 2021b; Roche, 2021). These are part of a concerted effort to place the issue of race on the agenda for executive coaching. We believe this is imperative if the coaching industry is to respond to the developing global agenda for anti-racism. We believe it is time that executive coaches, whose roles encapsulate confidantes, change agents and independent sounding boards for leaders, should become active agents to challenge, support and facilitate change in C-suites across the globe. Such action will also bridge the gap between coaching as a profession and coaching as a movement for change and social progress. To build an evidence-based approach to this, we undertook a research project out of which this report has grown. Our research question was: What needs to change for the world of coaching to take an anti-racist approach?

We began with a comprehensive review of the literature and professional artefacts, which suggests that the lens of colour-blindness appears to extend throughout the profession.

The review of professional artefacts – such as professional body reports, coach competency frameworks, training syllabuses, and statements on diversity and inclusion – largely ignore race as a factor.

Having reviewed the competency frameworks of the main bodies, we find that there is no explicit discussion about race, yet these competency frameworks form the cornerstone for coaching training.

A second example may serve to reinforce this perception. While data is collected on gender, language and country of residence, no data is collected on race by any of the professional bodies. Without such data it becomes impossible to say whether, or by how much, Black, Indigenous and other people of colour (BIPOC) are underrepresented in executive coaching. As such, it is impossible to develop mechanisms to address the inequalities that may exist and to monitor progress.

The review of the literature sought to explore how coaching as a profession, as a research community and as a community of reflective practitioners, speaks about race in its written discourse prior to the start of data collection in December 2020. Our extensive review identified 30 publications, a combination of: books, empirical studies, PhD theses, theoretical papers, journal articles and reports. Nine of the thirty dealt explicitly with race. This small number of studies explores the role of coaching in creating inclusive workplace cultures and breaking patterns of exclusion, underperformance and underrepresentation (Bernstein, 2019; Bocala & Bocala, 2021; Bragg, Kandl & Lia, 2019; Khunou, 2019; le Sueur, 2018; McPherson, 2007; Pennington, 2009; Stout-Rostron, 2017; Washington, Hall Birch & Morgan, 2020; Williams, 2017), with the remaining literature exploring culture and ethnicity (Anandlal, 2017; Nieuwerburgh, 2017; O'Flaherty & Everson, 2013; Passmore, 2009).

This review identified that the coaching literature largely ignores the power dynamics inherent in racialisation and how this emerges in life and organisational contexts. In this way, we argue that the literature indirectly reinforces and reproduces the structures of systemic racism that exist rather than attempting to at least illuminate let alone challenge them (Bocala & Bocala, 2021). Where race was acknowledged, the role of the coach was often presented as being about supporting the adaptation of the BIPOC client to the dominant culture, which we argue risks compromising a sense of wholeness and integrity for the client.

Yet it is almost universally believed by coaches that

coaching has a terrific potential as a methodology for exploring a wide range of issues related to intentional change on both individual and systemic levels

(Grant, 2017: 71)

Combining this belief with the privileged access that executive coaches have to senior leaders, the confidential and personal nature of their conversations and the popularity of coaching with senior leaders, suggests that executive coaching is in a unique position to be part of the solution.

While there are a small number of studies exploring the potential for coaching to increase representation at leadership level in organisations, there is a total absence of studies when it comes to any critical analysis of the way in which systemic and structural racism plays out in the coaching world itself. It is this gap that our research set out to explore. Why is this important? Because there is ample evidence that decades of diversity and inclusion (D&I) work has not so far resulted in improved diversity and inclusion in leadership across the corporate world, and coaching has played a significant role in such initiatives. Since coaching has been deployed as part of the D&I strategy throughout this period, what have we to learn about how we could deploy coaching to better effect? What can we learn that might help us become more effective in serving this intent?

Section 3: Tuning into voices from across the coaching ecosystem – A global perspective

> *It will take [the world of coaching] to be explicit about acknowledging what [systemic] racism is, that it is a global system of hierarchy...*
> *It would take an explicit acknowledgement of both historic and contemporary resonances and legacy of the history.*
>
> (UK, Black African, male participant)

Research design

The research study aimed to explore coaching stakeholders' perspectives on race in executive coaching and to develop a programme for change that could be implemented across the coaching eco-system, from coaching education delivered by universities and private coaching schools to professional bodies, through to executive coaches. A central part of the study was to explore the views of BIPOC coaches working in the industry. Recognising the complexity of the debate, and how discrimination and disadvantage becomes apparent in different national contexts, we recruited four separate focus groups made of BIPOC coaches from the UK, USA, Africa (specifically Kenya and South Africa) and New Zealand (specifically, Māori coaches).

The four focus groups were created in order to gain a global perspective. It was hypothesised that while structural racism is a global phenomenon, it might not show up in exactly the same way in each context and might instead reflect historical factors in each location. What we found was that despite the geographical differences, common themes emerged. An important aspect of the research design was the decision to open each focus group with a recognition of identity. This served to give each participant the space to self-describe and affirm their own heritage, sense of identity and belonging so as to enter the participant–researcher relationship from a place of equality and mutual respect. Strong racial identity is positively correlated with wellbeing and resilience to race-related stress/trauma (Hurst, 2011). It was anticipated that the conversation might trigger strong emotions linked to past or ongoing challenges related to structural racism and the focus on identity was seen as a protective factor. It also turned out to open a very rich seam of evidence.

Findings

Four themes emerged as summarised in Figure 1.

Each arrow in Figure 1 represents a reciprocal interdependent relationship between the themes.

Arrow A is the tension between the impacts of systemic racism identified by the coaches and the strategies they developed to help them manage these impacts. Some are empowering and challenge systemic racism, while others promote survival but not thriving.

Arrow B represents the relationship between empowerment and the theme of identity. The tension here is that race consciousness empowers BIPOC coaches, giving them many resources as coaches. However, colour-blindness renders these resources invisible in the coaching world.

Arrow C represents the understanding of the importance of the complexity of identity and how it impacts coaching as an impetus for the evolution of coaching as it responds to social movements. This is a strength our coaches have that mainstream coach training currently ignores.

Arrow D represents the limiting factor of systemic racism in the coaching ecosystem on the role BIPOC coaches could play in the evolution of coaching, while recognising that they continue to develop their approaches outside of the mainstream.

Arrow E represents the role the reality of systemic racism plays in forming identity, while at the same time strong racial identity operates as a form of resistance to internalised racism.

Arrow F represents the empowerment of BIPOC coaches from working critically within and outside of mainstream coaching, providing the potential to contribute to the evolution of mainstream coaching, which is being challenged by social movements to change.

Figure 1 High-level thematic map showing interconnections

Theme 1:
The impact of systemic and structural racism on BIPOC coaches

Social, individual or group responses that create strategies for coping and empowerment

A

Some strategies reinforce the status quo, others challenge it

Theme 2:
The coping and empowerment strategies of BIPOC coaches

Shifts sense of identity and belonging

E

Drives change efforts

F

Voices being raised and the conversations opening up supports healing and change

D

The seeming permanence of systems and power dynamics undermines healing and change

Complexity of identity reinforces empowerment

Colour blindness undermines identity and belonging

B

Theme 4:
The place of BIPOC coaches in the evolution of coaching

Coach training is generally silent of identity and competences silent on racialised identity and racial sensitivity

C

BIPOC coaches have been working independently on approaches that can contribute to the global evolution of coaching

Theme 3:
The complexity of identity as a resource for BIPOC coaches

Defining terms

Given the multiplicity of definitions used by different writers in different cultural and national contexts, we have summarised key terms used in Table 1.

Table 1 Definitions of keys terms

Race, racism, racialisation	Wherever the terms 'race', 'racialisation' and 'racism' are used, they are understood to describe the historical processes of 'Western colonialism, enslavement, state building, racial violence and genocide' that established a worldwide hierarchy descending from whiteness to blackness, underpinning capitalist exploitation of land and bodies for labour and profit (Christian, 2019: 174).
Systemic (structural and institutional) racism	Systemic racism is characterised by every day, embedded, often 'invisible' patterns of beliefs, habits, policies, and social, economic political practices that are inherently disadvantageous to Black, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, Native American, Arab, and other racially oppressed people (Lawrence & Keleher, 2004).
Colour-blindness	Colour-blindness is a belief that race or skin colour does or should not matter. While well meaning, in practice this view can deny or ignore the lived reality for BIPOC most affected by the disparities in education, employment, health, housing and criminal justice systems that result from systemic racism (Bartoli et al, 2016).
Colour consciousness	While rejecting a scientific basis for racial categorisation of human beings, race consciousness is an acknowledgement of the lived reality that exists as a result of identifying race with skin colour and assigning a value to it that reduces that person's humanity and makes them subject to unjust practices.
Anti-racism	The active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organisational structures, policies and practices so that the disparities in education, employment, health and wellbeing, housing and criminal justice systems that are the result of systemic racism are removed.

NB: Please note that each definition is an area of study in its own right. We have simplified for the purposes of brevity.

The context of New Zealand raises the post-colonial legacy of intergenerational trauma very sharply and shapes the intent these coaches bring to their work in Māori communities to build business acumen and support the youth. For them, coaching cannot be context free and neutral in relation to the social conditions of the people.

> *If you're looking at the context of Māori or indigenous peoples, I don't know that you could have the best coaching of those peoples without being one of them.*
>
> (New Zealand, Māori , female coach)

3.1 BIPOC interviews

Race-based trauma

Given that coaching has been predominantly colour-blind in its approach to difference, it is not able to comfortably navigate the history and presence of trauma, which is a feature for many BIPOC coaches. Silence about racism is associated with both prolonging and intensifying the trauma generated by racialisation and the injustices associated with it (Castagno, 2008). The literature indicates that access to coaches of colour is very important to providing emotional support to black and other leaders of colour trying to break through the glass ceiling (Khunou, 2019). Our data supports this view that trauma awareness is a vital element of what BIPOC coaches are bringing to their work with leaders.

> *I notice there is an expressed or unexpressed type of relief when a black coachee has me for the coach. Sometimes it's expressed like, 'Oh my God, you understand!'*
>
> (South Africa, Black African, female coach)

This indicates, as later stated by this participant, that access to a BIPOC coach allows a coaching client who needs to address issues related to the legacy of colonialism, of race and racism, the psychological safety and freedom to do so. Might this be true also for leaders in organisations? Much of the literature would indicate that this is a factor in successful coaching programmes for Black leaders in Africa (Anandlal, 2017; Khunou, 2019).

Intimate knowledge of the history and lived experience of the people is a crucial criterion for a coach in their view.

Exclusion and its financial penalty

Exclusion from corporate coaching pools and coaching providers is one of the most visible aspects of structural racism in the coaching industry. Some movement has already been seen in the form of corporate gatekeepers seeking to make these pools more diverse, sharing access to lucrative and prestigious work (Roche, 2021).

This participant describes their experience of challenging this aspect of exclusion:

> *I've asked people in big organisations, how many non-white coaches have you got on your panel? There's a sort of embarrassed silence, they try and flick through the coaches they know, and they realise that they actually probably don't have any on their panel. And then I say to them, so when you use big coach providers, how many non-white coaches have they got on their panel? Again, there's a sort of embarrassed silence. And when I say, well, when you put forward three coaches for the coach to choose from, do you have a look and make sure that there's a diverse group of people? Again, it's a kind of embarrassed silence.*
>
> (UK, Indian, female coach)

Our discussions with coach service providers have identified that one of the challenges they face is that fewer BIPOC coaches apply and secondly such coaches often lack senior executive coaching experience. What is not recognised here is the link between wider social exclusion and recruitment practices that fail to adjust for social disparities arising from systemic racism. This results in fewer BIPOC being able to meet the criteria for entry into such pools. This lack of recognition of social and economic barriers is one of the ways in which the systemic causes of inequality remain unchallenged.

While more work needs to be done by coach education and coaching service providers to build the capacity of BIPOC coaches to work in these environments and encourage them to apply to create more diverse coaching pools, we could do well to explore giving more credit to the types of leadership experience BIPOC candidates might bring to such pools. Such experience might not rely on the normative views of leadership, which otherwise ignore the cultural capital that BIPOC acquire in their own right (Cornish, 2009).

In addition, attention also needs to be paid to the reasons why D&I work has not resulted in larger numbers of BIPOC leaders reaching senior executive roles. Had such initiatives worked, BIPOC might

then have developed the profile required to become eligible, under existing criteria, for such pools. One also has to consider the culture of the coaching pools and the organisations into which they will be asked to work once recruited. One of our participants makes the point that simply adding more faces of colour does not create inclusive cultures in which BIPOC people can express their authentic selves and thrive.

> *Something that I think is probably one of the most important parts of making the practice, as well as the study of coaching antiracist, is representation. I think that just has to be at the forefront of it… authentic representation, not you know, physically people of colour, black people and people of colour present in the industry but aren't bringing their true selves to the industry, but people who are showing up as they really are.*
>
> (USA, Black/African American, female coach)

If there was a higher presence of coaches of colour in the industry, this greater representation could be a lever for leaders of colour . In our view coaches of colour would be likely to be more able to recognise and acknowledge the trauma which BIPOC can experience working in organisations, including alienation or direct hostility, which are often denied or downplayed by the dominant culture. Our participants speak eloquently to this lived reality. We ask only first that you listen to their voices and then act in line with heightened awareness and ethical clarity. Coaching is seen as empowering when liberation from oppression and the impacts of inequality are part of its intent.

> *Coaching, it's almost going to be a key tool for liberation for us and also connectivity of our community. Because I think that coaching really handles your ability to create, to produce, to be your best self to show up fully.*
>
> (USA, Black/African American, female coach)

Coaching and coach training as 'white spaces'

The assumed neutrality in coaching is explicitly connected to colour-blindness by a participant from one of the focus groups describing their experience of discussing race with white colleagues who deliver coach training:

> *Well, [they said] I don't see colour. Well [I respond], you can't not see colour, it's a part of who I am. So, what you are saying [is] you don't see a part of me. People use that 'I don't see colour' because they don't want to explore their discomfort. It's really about tiptoeing around white fragility.*
>
> (South Africa, Mixed Heritage – Coloured, female coach)

Colour-blindness, for this participant, privileges whiteness while simultaneously excluding and devaluing the resources and empowerment BIPOC coaches get from their strong racial identities, from the complexities of identity and multiple levels of critical consciousness, and from the systemic awareness it provides them with as coaches.

Practices that contribute to the feelings of exclusion and disadvantage serve to maintain the emotions associated with intergenerational trauma caused by systemic racism. The following quote from a South African participant shows how dehumanising the seemingly neutral practice of introducing a Black colleague into a white organisation is experienced.

> *[If] I'm looking for a training or a coaching job in a white corporate, I need to take my white colleague, because they'll listen to me only because she's there and she's white, they can hear more a white person than they can hear a black person. [This] makes it very hard as a Black professional to get jobs in these corporates… because you must, kind of be introduced by a white person to go in.*
>
> (South Africa, Black African, female coach)

While this might be explained away by the fact that white coaches have been around in the business longer than black coaches, in the context of the continuing inequalities in post-apartheid South Africa such normative practices need to be recognised as oppressive to the indigenous Black and Brown majority and discussions opened up which aim to remove the need for such gatekeeping without alienating those white coaches who act on the behalf of their black colleagues in this way.

Alienation in coach training

Due to the differences in how BIPOC coaches approach the coaching process and the different meanings ascribed to it, coach training can be experienced as alienating:

> *[The training programme] wasn't exactly in line for me culturally... [as a result] over the summer, I... and a woman who was in the same programme that I was in [decided] to partner to create a programme specifically for coaching African Americans... We just always felt going through the programme we attended, that there was something missing for us that there were things that were sort of left unsaid and that our needs and the needs of other African Americans weren't necessarily going to be served completely based on the way that we were taught. So, if we followed the exact formula that we were taught, and the exact [International Coaching Federation] markers of coaching, staying neutral being one of them, that our clients, especially African American clients, and clients of other African descent, would not be fully served.*

(USA, Black/African American, female coach)

This creative response is in line with our analysis that the participants in our study are engaged in a process of decolonising coaching, and challenging and dismantling, through their own practice, the underlying normative whiteness of dominant coach training and coaching interventions. They develop alternatives. The data suggests that these approaches are not currently part of the mainstream but do make use of mainstream coaching approaches. For example, during the focus groups, participants shared the coaching approaches acquired at established coach training institutions – such as psychodynamic, integral, time to think – in positive terms. However, they critically evaluated them and integrated their own sensibilities into their approach, making use of black and indigenous scholarship, values and world views. Their intent has social, community and societal change purposes, thereby encouraging practices that are empowering and liberating (Phillips, Adams & Salter, 2015) for everyone who may be affected by the intersections of discrimination and injustice.

This exchange between two of the UK focus group participants reinforces this interpretation:

> [W]hat are we kind of like investing in as coaching? How much of that has been shaped by Western male paradigms?... Where does race and identity fit in all of that? We talk about self-actualization, but do we talk about other models of self-actualisation of other ways of being? It feels to me that almost everything that we've accepted (around the) norms (of) coaching comes from a Western paradigm.
>
> (UK, Black British, female coach)

In summary, this evidence suggests that coaching institutions need to be more expansive and critical in their approach to what coaching is and the purposes it serves. They need to be open to different perspectives through recruiting diverse faculty into training organisations and the same extends to corporations recruiting coaches into coaching pools. Supervision too needs to open up to greater plurality, which is one of the benefits of diversity. The data suggests that the barrier to this happening is the lack of 'critical consciousness' and acknowledgement among the current dominant, mainly 'white' leaders, the interviews with professional associations which followed much later, confirmed this suggestion.

Identity and empowerment

The evidence collected from the focus groups indicates that for the coaches in this study the practice of coaching is associated with family and traditional interactions that serve as rites of passage into a world experienced as threatening and dangerous for BIPOC. People of colour need to be race conscious in order to navigate oppressive systems. This makes it distinct in their eyes from the focus on individualism and 'self-actualisation' promoted by mainstream coaching norms. The following quotes capture the spirit of the evidence:

> I believe I am who I am because of the coaching, as I now call it, I got from my grandparents in terms of managing the difficulties that they had inherited, and so that we could probably manage them slightly differently. The constant conversations that happen in the room and around the table.
>
> (UK, Black Caribbean, female)

Coaching here is associated with 'collective empowerment' and 'identity-based meaning and action' (Phillips et al, 2015: 375). These associations, we argue, take coaching into the realm of social change. These practices are a way of coping with oppression. These coaches' understanding of race empowers them.

This is echoed and reinforced by another USA-based coach, who compares coaching in organisations to 'the talk'. Here the participant, born and brought up in Europe, refers to the difficulty experienced as a migrant going into the corporate cultures of American organisations as a coach and HR professional. What is stark here is the connection between 'the talk' – a rite of passage for every Black American teenager who is initiated into the life-and-death risk of being stopped by the police – and the risks of becoming a black casualty in white corporate spaces.

> *So, my interest in coaching was really in trying to help people of colour or minorities, to understand, to give them 'the talk', as it pertained to navigating corporate culture, because a lot of the times, they didn't get it, they just had to navigate the unwritten rules and all of the underlying land mines that they would invariably step on. [I wanted to help them] understand why they crashed and burned or washed out of the organisation, or really got stuck with no way of advancing.*
>
> (USA, Afro-Latina female coach)

It is also worth noting that the quote above draws a link between the participant's experiences as a coach and their motivation to support black and minority leaders to succeed in the system. However, 'the talk' would be described by critical social psychology as a problem-focused coping mechanism for dealing with oppression, which is of limited effectiveness (Phillips et al, 2015). While being active in the face of the problem, the effort is all focused on the individual who is subject to the oppressive practices in the culture of the organisation. While this may help promote some degree of survival, it will not in the long term promote thriving or address the systems that are the source of the problem.

Challenging normative assumptions and creating new practices – 'Doing it for themselves'

For the coaches in this study, cultural competence and cultural sensitivity, of which there is much already written about in the literature, needs to be integrated with racial literacy and racial sensitivity. An ability to see race as one part of complex identities, not fixed but mobile and emergent, and context specific, is of high importance. Intentionality, in this view, is important here. Coaching is not seen as neutral; it either supports the status quo or creates critical awareness necessary to change it.

[P]eople need to really be intentional about developing their cultural intelligence, and the cultural competence, right, which means the ability to read different people, read different cultures, get the contextual setting. But we need to be intentional, and requiring folks to do that, to be able to say I know who I am, for people to be able to see their multiple identities and other people's multiple identities, those are two different things. They need to do both, for coaches who are equipping themselves to develop that as well. We are all going to be moving to an inclusive and diverse world, it's going to be anti-racist. I am talking about coaching as a social process (researcher emphasis). It has power in it, you're making a virtue of your behaviour in the way you're engaging, you're making a choice and you're having an impact.

(USA, Black/African American, female coach)

For this Māori coach, there is a cynicism about the intentions of executive coaching within the context of social exclusion of Maori people.

I'm quite cynical about corporate coaching. I'll just put that out there. I find a lot of it is very limited and probably shouldn't use the word coaching, just in my opinion. We've sort of found with especially Maori Pacifica, or most people in general to be honest with you, that it's about coaching them for their whole self, not just what they do at work.

(New Zealand, Māori, female coach)

The normative assumption about coaching to improve performance as something separate from social context is challenged here.

3.2 Professional associations – Findings and discussion

The data in this section is drawn from four well known professional associations. Interviews were undertaken with the chief executive or president of each body. As part of the interview process, we agreed to anonymise the responses. Each professional association has been given pseudonyms – Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta – for the purposes of preserving anonymity.

The combined membership of all four bodies covers all the geographical territories from which our coach participants are drawn. As part of the briefing ahead of the interviews, the top headline findings from the coach interviews were shared with each professional association representative. Our findings from the PA interviews reveal a gap in perception between the professional bodies and the coaches who participated in the study. This perception gap may contribute towards an explanation as to why the industry has been slower to respond to the global social movement for anti-racism than other professions. Our analysis shows that this is rooted in a number of limiting beliefs on the part of the professional associations (see Box 1).

Box 1: Limiting beliefs

Who says coaching is racist?

There was a perception that research question itself was biased against coaching as it suggests that coaching and coaches are racist.

> *Because one can easily say, coaching is anti-racist anyway. So, you know, why did you come up with this question? What evidence do you have to suggest that there is any impact or any trace of anti-racism or racism in coaching?*

(Gamma)

This statement sounded during the interview and reads as a defence against an assumed accusation that coaches and coaching is racist. It demonstrates that there is a need for greater understanding about what is meant by systemic racism. The focus on systems, procedures, practices and underlying assumptions is missed. More discussion and awareness raising is required but this cannot happen where there is denial that an issue exists.

The dominance of white coaches

There is the perception that dominance of white coaches in Africa is down to internal market immaturity.

> *[I]s it a question of race or is it the question of maturity of coaching market?*

(Delta)

This is an issue that we believe requires more research. It is true that coaching as an approach was imported into Africa from the West relatively recently and that, as a result, there are more white coaches than coaches of colour. However, the evidence from the coaches in our study raises questions as to whether the power dynamics that exist because of this fact are seen and being addressed in the way in which the industry is being developed. Non-profit corporations appear to continue to prefer to use white European or American coaches even though the membership of ICF chapters in countries like Kenya are dominated by local coaches. It needs to be asked then if the issue of continuing white dominance can simply be passed off as one of supply. There are strong signs of an attempt to address this issue by the African Executive Coaching Council which is very proactive in raising the visibility of Black coaches and popularising African approaches such as Ubuntu coaching.

The literature shows that the denial of systemic racism shifts the burden onto BIPOC to challenge the structures that oppress. There is a hint of this displacement in the following quote.

> *I am very grateful to those coaches who are making trouble and making noise because sometimes we have to be kicked in the head to gain that awareness... [A]ssociations cannot be deaf to social progress, to what's surrounding them, and how we prepare our members to be successful. We call for a thriving society; society cannot thrive when people are being oppressed.*
>
> (Delta)

This quote demonstrates how the lack of a proactive anti-racist approach puts the onus on those most affected by systemic racism to do the emotional labour of 'making noise' and 'causing trouble', without any initiative, accountability or ethical awareness on the part of the PA representative. The following quote reinforces this point and further shows a common confusion between cultural differences and identities developed in direct response to racism.

> *But there was an early, early stages of coaching in China. And most of the coaches working there were Western Europe and US, you know, experts primarily, same in Japan. And then our Asian colleagues came strongly saying, this is all good and dandy, we need our own culture of coaching. That means we have to grow our own coaches, because they make difference in a different way where they work...I don't think I even understood how profound that statement was.*
>
> (Delta)

This statement is a reminder of the need for a debate within coaching about the differences between culture and race, as well as how they overlap.

Leadership within the PA is already diverse

> *I don't think it's accurate [that leadership is largely white]. Because when you look into the structure of [Delta]... then you have [a layer of committees]... then you have a layer of [area] leadership and that... is phenomenally diverse... Also, from the race perspective, again, we tend to look into diversity.*
>
> (Delta)

This description of the structure of the association, however, underlines that diversity is notable only at or up to the tertiary level. The tertiary level is traditionally where marginalised groups hit the glass ceiling.

In addition to limiting beliefs, there is some recognition of the learning that is still required in order to meet the challenges being posed by the call for racial justice.

Learning out loud

There was a concession in the conversation with one representative that neutrality in the profession may be an issue:

> *I also understand that being anti-racist does not necessarily mean that [coaching is] racist right now. It may be a little bit too neutral...*
>
> (Beta)

This representative went on to emphasise the importance of creating forums for discussion, debate and learning about systemic racism. They acknowledged that their own journey on this road had only just started. The evidence presented does not mean that the representatives were not open to change, but they did not see the need to make race an explicit focus of the drive for change. The representatives from the global North preferred a generalised focus on inequality and disadvantage; however, in so doing, they exclude race. This stance will make equity for BIPOC difficult to deliver. It needs to be understood as one distinct aspect of the intersection with class, gender, age, sex, and ability as part of a complex, interconnected matrix of oppressions.

Despite this reservation, the recommendations they went on to make as a body of four, have all been reflected in this report's call to action. This includes the understanding that context will need to determine how the actions are implemented, and further research may be needed to ensure equity is created in the process of implementation.

A link to global capitalism and coloniality

One participant was closer to the contributions made by the BIPOC coaches in this study, in seeing the potential of coaching to be used in service of addressing the legacies of systemic racism and globalised neo-imperialism.

> *Traditionally, coaching has been a white dominated profession... even today, for every 20 white coaches, there would be two coaches of colour, blacks in particular. So that domination is still there. Does that amount to systemic racism [in the African context]? I don't think so.*
>
> (Alpha)

At first sight this might appear to align with the Delta representative's assertion that the imbalance is due to market immaturity. However, what follows on directly from the Alpha representative's words quoted above is something that calls for a different reading.

> *[T]he one aspect of positive thinking comes up. And positive thinking says, I might be black, but I equally have the potential to do what a white person will do. So that is positive thinking. Again, I think we are expected as black coaches to be assertive enough in what we do. We cannot afford a situation where I feel powerless by virtue of my colour.*
>
> (Alpha)

This is a reading of race and resistance to the internalised oppression that can be understood within the context of Black consciousness and positive Black identity.

This reading is further supported when later they say:

> *I believe that African leaders need a lot of coaching. If we can get them to be coached, I think what would come out of Africa, even given the natural resources that we have... Because at the moment, let's face it, the challenges that we have in Africa is political parties becoming the government of the day [and] you find that they did not have the opportunity to be capacitated, to lead, and when in office [it] is like somebody is playing the Peter Principle on them, as in, put them there and hope that they fail. So, I'm seeing from a coaching point of view, I see Africa rising, because Africa does have the potential. Let me go on record again, as saying that the majority of the so-called first world countries, they are where they are because of the resources that came from Africa. And Africa needs to start... Because what do we do at the moment, we export a lot of raw materials and in the process, creating employment outside Africa, when we should be processing those raw materials in Africa, and creating employment in Africa. So, I say Africa shall rise. As soon as the leaders are capacitated.*
>
> (Alpha)

This Black representative's contribution needs to be analysed within the post-colonial dynamics of global capitalism. While the Alpha representative is recognising the impact of global economic inequalities that are the legacy of colonialism, one interpretation was a resistance to extending this to the coaching industry. The statement above, which talks about the need for Black people to remain positive rather than to internalise negative stereotypes, is consistent with the focus on positive Black identity advocated by the Black consciousness movement, which originated under apartheid as integral to the struggle for liberation against it. This link to empowerment and liberation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019) becomes clearer in this second quote.

Professional identity

Uprooting racism professionally and structurally requires knowledge, action, and solidarity – consciousness, agency, and an internalised sense of duty. Given the intractable nature of race and racism, such knowledge and consciousness, action and agency, and solidarity and duty – at their highest conjuncture fused in professional identity – must be sustained over generations, across the entire profession, and in alliance with broader social movements committed to ending race and racism once and for all. Antiracism must, in other words, become a core aspect of ...professional identity.

(Capulong, King-Ries & Mills, 2021: 4)

The interviews with the representatives from the Global North highlight the need, when viewed against the widely differing perceptions of the coaches we interviewed, for critical reflection on the assumptions underpinning professional identity as a coach and those who are custodians of this identity. It is interesting that, while agreeing that some change was needed, they rejected that anti-racism was a legitimate rationale for such change. They were all comfortable talking about diversity, equity and inclusion in terms of generalised disadvantage but were not comfortable when it came to talking about race.

This is in line with the research that identifies this discomfort with colour-blindness. This perspective of racial issues leaves those who adhere to it without the critical consciousness required to talk about race from the perspective of systemic racism. It acts as a barrier to the development of an awareness of what systemic racism is and how it operates. Systemic racism operates not through deliberate intention or bad character, rather it works through assumptions and practices embedded in the ways we are all socialised, in all aspects of life, including our professions. While all the PA representatives rejected the idea that coaching reflects the systemic racism that exists in wider society and on a global scale, they all agreed that change was needed in the coaching eco-system to promote greater diversity, equity and inclusion. Each PA representative on this basis was able to make a number of recommendations that would benefit all who experience exclusion.

Does it matter then that race remained side-lined as an issue? Our view is: yes, it matters. We believe that the BIPOC coaches we spoke to were not claiming special status; they recognise the overlaps and intersections between race, class, gender and other inequalities. Yet when they speak about their specific lived experiences, there is a push back and denial of a kind that appears to be reserved for issues related to race.

Without a critical consciousness of race and racialisation and the often hidden dynamics of power and privilege that come with them, the professional identity and practices of coaching remain fused with norms that are embedded in what scholars have define as 'whiteness'. This can happen whether one is light or dark skinned. Whiteness in this context is not a skin colour or a personal identity. It is a performance of privilege that comes from the embodiment of a set of beliefs and cultural norms and the practices based on them (Christian, 2019). This is what all the coaches in this study mean when they use the term 'white' in their testimonies. Unquestioningly sustaining the belief that coaching and coaches cannot be agents of the systemic dynamics of race and racialisation seems rash, given that this territory of critical awareness is a hallmark of advanced practice in coaching and supervision. In addition, the claim further marginalises those whose voices are increasingly demanding to be heard on the issue of racial justice.

3.3 Training institutions

The data in this section is drawn from eight universities who provide coach education, either academic programmes at postgraduate level or accredited coach training. As part of the interview process, we agreed to anonymise the responses. Each coaching service provider has been given a pseudonym – Eagle, Robin, Starling, Stork, Kite, Owl, Hawk or Blackbird – for the purposes of preserving anonymity.

Representation

The perception was that Black coaches were underrepresented in coach training schools. This was a widespread view across all interviews, and thus all four locations, US, UK, NZ and Africa), even though in some locations BIPOC made up a majority of the population. When levels of representation among academic or teaching staff were considered, a similar view was expressed. However as there was little or no formal monitoring, such views were evidenced from personal experience.

> *The numbers are lower in terms of engagement than I might expect... and in some ways, that's evident from events, whether I go to an ICF event or a GSEAC event, or another event. If it's a coach conference in US, I see some coaches, but in educator events I see very few, if any people of colour.*
>
> (Eagle)

> **The apparent lack of engagement might be due to the fact that BIPOC drop-out rates are higher... Perhaps the message being sent has been: 'This is not for you'.**

This underrepresentation was more significant than even in corporate environments, and is thus something distinctive about the coaching environment, which has failed to keep up with the changing corporate world.

This lack of engagement was explained through a combination of factors, the first of which is the economic factor: while price points vary, coaching requires an economic investment. Secondly, it can be explained by a similarity bias resulting from a lack of BIPOC visually represented on websites or promotional materials or in artefacts, from competencies to public statements about race and identity. Similarly there is a lack of representation among teaching staff and industry role models. Thirdly, the apparent lack of engagement might be due to the fact that, while BIPOC coaches may enter the profession, their drop-out rate is higher, perhaps because the industry has failed to communicate that they 'belong'. The view expressed by some was that the message being sent has been: 'This is not for you'.

Taking action

Coach education organisation participants identified a number of actions they were taking, or could take. The first was an awareness of the types of people the programmes were attracting and, if there was a wish for greater diversity, to start to monitor applicants and develop a plan to engage with and attract a greater diversity of students. Actions such as scholarships for BIPOC or for economically disadvantaged individuals can reduce the gap. In addition, making programmes appear more inclusive and signalling institutions as welcoming places where everyone belongs involves appointing BIPOC coaches as tutors and programme directors. The view from some involved in diversity discussion for decades has been a need to move away from grand statements about diversity and towards actional plans.

One aspect that has been a barrier to engagement of BIPOC in programmes has been what was presented as 'systemic bias' . One example is the requirement for course directors to hold a specific level of coach qualification (such as an ICF PCC), while having no requirements for qualifications in adult learning or training. This works to sustain the imbalance already present within the coaching industry, with is focus on coaches passing on their knowledge, to other coaches.

Developing the curriculum

There was a recognition that coach training had been based on traditional 'Western models' of leadership, learning and relationship, and overly focused on coaching skills. While models of African coaching have emerged, these had yet to find their way into coach training, but equally importantly issues such as 'white privilege', 'white lens', 'white spaces', 'unconscious bias', 'structural racism' and the concepts of diversity and inclusion were not actively included in most coach training. Further, without exploring values, beliefs and identity, coach training can skate over these issues, in the belief every client is the same. The result has been that many white coaches not only did not have the language, but did not understand alternative perspectives to race, or how identity and how structural barriers impacted in individual lives. In many cases, corporates grasped these issues a decade ago, but coaching has been slower to think about the positive steps it needs to take. In addition, tutor teams need to start by doing their own work on this topic.

Colour conscious or colour blind

Several participants brought up questions about identity and the roles that coaching and coach training play in facilitating an exploration of identity – not only around issues of race, but also around gender, sexual orientation and other aspects that are often ignored. The view from one participant was strongly expressed about the role of race and the ability or inability of coach education, including coaches and professional bodies, to respond to these issues.

> *We have learnt that if you say you don't see colour as a Black American, we think that's bull****. We don't say that, because we have learnt to code shift, but that's what we are thinking. We realise there is a certain level of realness or façade, as what you have told me when you say you don't see colour is you have no idea of what my experience is... in this world and so you are not really interested in what's going on with me.*
>
> (Eagle)

Mentoring with people of colour

The issue of mentoring was highlighted and views diverged. Some educators saw this as a way to equalise outcomes, by providing more input, particularly around business development and entrepreneurship skills. However, others argue that the issue is not with people of colour, who would exercise choice. If an industry is not welcoming, they would find one that is, which is exactly what they have done. Instead, the view is that it is those in positions of power who require mentoring to understand the views of BIPOC. This is where change needs to occur, and that change only occurs when people in positions of power either change or have their views about a topic changed, leading to systemic change. Without a change in people or perspectives, there will be no real change in the coaching industry.

3.4 Coach providers – Findings and discussion

The data in this section is drawn from four well known coaching service providers, who provide national or global coaching services. These organisations employ associates (coaches) to deliver coaching through contracts with medium and large enterprises. As part of the interview process, we agreed to anonymise the responses. Each coaching service provider has been given a pseudonym – Pluto, Saturn, Neptune or Mars – for the purposes of preserving anonymity.

Is it a problem?

For some of the coaching service providers, like the professional association, there was a view that this was not an issue. Clients wanted coaches, and the coaching service providers had coaches. The view expressed was that it was not for the service provider to choose men or women, black or white, or gay or straight. The selection was based solely on coach competence, as defined by the service provider. As long as the coach had the coaching skills to work with a client, these personal factors did not matter.

There may be some truth in this perspective as there is no research evidence that gender, ethnicity, race or nationality makes a difference to the coaching relationship, or to coaching outcomes. However, research from mentoring has suggested that racial and gender diversity are recognised and selected for by mentees, who believe that a shared story with their mentor may help them on their journey (Tong & Kram, 2013). We recognise that coaching, as a less directive mode of personal development, may be different. But we hypothesis that our desire as humans to form relationships with 'someone like me' may contribute to a stronger working alliance, at least in the early few sessions. Of course, one could equally argue that diverse perspectives can also stretch the coaching client by providing challenge. What may work best is likely to be dependent on the individual and their presenting issue (Passmore & Sinclair, 2021).

Further, the view expressed by BIPOC is that race (and we hypothesis this for other factors) forms part of an individual's identity. This then is represented in their selection, either seeking a coach 'just like me' for empathy or 'different to me' for challenge.

Client's calling

For the international coach service providers in this study, there was a recognition that client views varied widely. In some national contexts (like France), race was seen as something private to clients and was not spoken about. In such cases, client organisations adopted a colour-blind perspective to race: 'If we don't see it, we will treat everyone the same'. However, in other national contexts, the opposite was true and diversity was an important issue. In places like the USA, racial diversity is openly discussed and client organisations are now asking about the diversity of the pool as part of the selection process.

> *After George Floyd's death, I noticed clients started to talk about race in a different way. Suddenly it seemed to me as if this was now part of the debate in the organisation, and we needed to get our act together on this one.*
>
> (Mars)

Where are the BIPOC coaches?

There was a wide spread agreement among coaching service providers that associate coaching pools had fewer BIPOC coaches than lived in the cities where the organisations or their clients were based. There was a lack of a sophisticated analysis of coaching pool membership. Coaching service providers suggested these lower numbers were explained by fewer BIPOC coaches applying or in other cases that the quality of BIPOC coaches did not meet the criteria in terms of leadership experience or other selection criteria. However, these factors were hard to support as the organisations did not collect any data on race related to selection or hold data on the racial diversity of their pools, although most held gender and nationality. Further, none of the four organisations had set targets to create a coaching pool which reflected the diversity of their locations or reflecting the diversity of their client organisations.

In modern management the belief is 'what gets measured, gets managed'. The lack of data collection suggests that racial diversity is simply not being managed. It was either considered a private matter, one which employers felt unable to talk about, or was a low priority compared with other business priorities.

In one case, the coaching service provider expressed a strong desire to create a more inclusive and diverse community:

> *We want to create a diverse pool, and more recently we have had requests specifically for more black coaches to provide choice to leaders in black leadership programmes, but the view from our on-boarding team is that they receive very few applications from black coaches.*
>
> (Pluto)

3.5 From race blindness to racial consciousness

This condensed presentation of evidence from the research gives some indication of the depth and breadth of the need for change if coaching is to take an anti-racist approach and contribute meaningfully to the wider agenda of Diversity, Equility & Inclusion across organisations. While the coaching industry has been blind to the issue of race, the present shift in consciousness offers a 'moment' in which progress is possible. Coaches play a pivotal role in leadership development, providing a space for executives to reflect, providing a sounding board and a confidential space to explore self and system. If leaders and corporations are to implement deep change, executive coaches need to challenge, support and facilitate that process. Beyond that there is also the role of coaching as a community building process.

> Given that 'what gets measured, gets managed', the lack of data collection on race suggests that racial diversity is simply not being managed.

White coaches are stepping up as allies and partners in research, professional development and practice. More allyship is need. White coaches can support BIPOC coaches by removing the barriers that inhibit, alienate and exclude them. They can extend resources, mentoring, networking opportunities and enter into collaborations that help to build social capital. Organisations can take steps to monitor and manage more actively the diversity and inclusion of their membership, employees, students and associates.

The coaching industry has been slow to grasp the magnitude of this global movement for change. Now is the moment for coaching to play its part in the wider agenda developing an anti-racist approach. The coaches in this study see coaching as part of the solution, one that can help us get past the defensiveness and polarisation that is the result of triggering deep emotions on all sides of the debate and promote healing. The call to action in this report is a starting point as the core of commitment to change. How else do we create the conditions to move beyond the racialised economic and social relations we have all inherited from the past and which continue to entangle us today?

> This 15-point agenda calls for increased attention to racial equity and social justice to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Section 4: Recommendations for racial justice and equity in coaching

We set out on the following page a 15-point agenda to take us forward as a profession to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world, calling for increased attention to racial equity and social justice. It must begin with an acknowledgement that systemic change within the coaching industry itself is needed to advance an anti-racist agenda.

The global coaching community

1. Coaching organisations commit to developing their own action plan to implement a DE&I approach, which reflects a commitment to diversity, social justice, equity and inclusion, and publish annual progress reports to track their progress.

Education providers

2. Education providers commit to creating mentoring schemes within their programmes for all students.

3. Education providers commit to developing recruitment plans to recruit BIPOC staff and students in proportion approximately equal to the country, city or region from which they recruit.

4. Education providers commit to reviewing course materials to include greater diversity of ideas and include training on diversity, social justice, equity and inclusion.

5. Education providers commit to providing bursaries or low-cost courses for socially disadvantaged groups.

Professional bodies

6. Professional bodies commit to collecting data on the diversity of their membership, including race, and monitor this over time, taking action to create an inclusive and balanced membership reflecting the population of country, city or region that they cover.

7. Professional bodies make a commitment to working with all partners, training providers and members to commit to diversity, social justice, anti-racism and equity.

8. Professional bodies commit to adopting a leadership role in the coaching industry to champion diversity, social justice, equity and inclusion at both a global and local level, reflecting this in conferences, events programmes and all materials, from websites to accreditation and competency frameworks.

9. Professional bodies commit to collaborating toward a recognition of each other's coach and supervision training and accreditation, setting up approved prior learning schemes.

We can all commit to creating a culture of accountability for our intentions, supporting each organisation in developing its own measurable targets and plan of action to fulfil our equity and inclusion vision statements.

Coach service providers

10. Coaching services providers commit to providing training for their associates and employees on diversity and inclusion, with a specific reference to race.

11. Coaching service providers commit to seeking to employ BIPOC associates and employees in proportion approximately equal to the countries, cities or regions in which they are based.

Coaches, mentors and supervisors

12. As part of their personal development, coaches commit to seeking to broaden and deepen their understanding of diversity, social justice, equity and inclusion.

13. Coaches commit to foster sensitivity to issues of diversity, social justice, equity and inclusion and be willing and able to both support and challenge clients to support the development of spaces, at work, home and in leisure, where all are included.

Industry leaders

14. Industry leaders, from professional bodies to coach education programmes and coaching service providers, commit to seeking out BIPOC mentors as part of their commitment to the work they need to undertake at a personal level, and to enable them to do the work needed across the coaching system.

Everyone

15. We commit to creating a culture of accountability for our intentions: individuals, organisations and professional bodies will support each organisation in developing its own measurable targets and plan of action to fulfil existing or new, diversity, racial justice, equity and inclusion vision statements.

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