



Coaching for social impact

How coaching
is enabling social
change and positively
impacting lives

Foreword



I am delighted to introduce you, through this report, to practitioners on the ground who highlight just some of what they are learning about the power of coaching for social impact. We hope that their experiences and insights will resonate with you, generate questions, and stimulate you to join our ongoing conversation about the power of coaching to effect social change.

The report has its roots in previous BACP coaching division events in London and Edinburgh, where practitioners presented their experience of coaching in communities. This was followed by a series of articles that I had the pleasure to write in *Coaching Today* based on further in-depth interviews with these and other practitioners. We now have a regular slot in *Coaching Today* and many other authors writing on this theme. This wave of connections led to the founding of a special interest group *Coaching for Social Impact* (CSI). This group have curated the report and event, building on our connections to practitioners working in the diverse fields represented here, including mental health, social work, unpaid carers, young people, marginalised communities, and international projects, all of which have in common their lived experience of the power of coaching for social impact and change. Like the underground mycorrhizal network - the tiny fungal threads that connect trees throughout the forest, transporting nutrients and forewarning of threat - we hope that we are sharing insights and experiences which, if replicated, have the potential to enable our whole social structure to become stronger and fairer for the benefit of all its members.

Coaches recognise that every individual they coach is part of a wider system which influences and supports, or restricts, their capacity to grow. This report aims to focus us on the power of coaching to face into what has hitherto often been either denied or unacknowledged, namely the resource energy and potency within people and communities often storied as either powerless or even undeserving by the mainstream structures. We see many examples in this report of clients connecting to their own values, strengths aspirations and ideas, and how the action they take to make changes in their lives can ripple out into the wider community.

Ana, who has coordinated and edited the report, is indefatigably both pragmatic and passionate and, like all the other volunteers in the CSI, has given her time freely to this work. I am delighted that, whilst the CSI arose from and is supported by BACP, we also have members from other professional bodies and sectors with different perspectives and experiences. It is essential that we cross-fertilise and learn from other professions as we seek to be a part of an ongoing potential solution to communities that have been disenfranchised in our current social structures. This report also aims beyond the practitioner and seeks to engage funders commissioners and researchers who themselves have such an important voice and part to play in this work. If this is your role, we are very keen for you to join the debate and help us plug the gaps in research and evaluation which are so essential to making the case for proper funding for what we have already seen can work so powerfully on the ground.

Carolyn Mumby

Chair of BACP Coaching Division
(2019 - February 2022)

How to get involved

The BACP Coaching for Social Change Special Interest Group would like to get more people involved in this work. We hope this report will inspire you to get active and creative in the ways you can offer coaching aimed at facilitating social change.

If you're interested in joining our group, please contact Val Watson, Coaching for Social Change group lead, at

val@valwatsonconsulting.co.uk



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British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

15 St John's Business Park
Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 4HB

bacp@bacp.co.uk
Call 01455 883300

www.bacp.co.uk

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Edited by Ana Paula Nacif

Contributors: Catherine Macadam, Carolyn
Mumby, David Britten, Hormoz Ahmadzadeh,
Jane Cordell, Jacqueline Hill, Jeremy Bacon,
Katharine Collins, Liam Russell, Suzanne Triggs

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, coaching has become widespread in schools, hospitals, community centres, nursing homes and beyond. It's no longer only for a few senior individuals in organisations. It's further evolved from its performance driven roots by working with people who wouldn't traditionally be recipients of coaching and now occupies a space to support personal and collective change. This could have an impact on wider societal concerns, for example social inequality, health and wellbeing, unemployment, equity and diversity, and many others.

When delivered within these contexts, coaching can have a 'social impact' and/or effect 'social change'; the latter having an added dimension requiring a critical approach that goes beyond the focus solely on the individual's agency, to also consider the impact of social structures (Shoukry, 2017).

Coaching for social impact or change is a flourishing field, propelled by increasing societal needs, which are challenging, complex and ever-changing. Coaching is well-placed to support individuals and organisations engaged in addressing these needs. Because of its versatile applications and approaches, coaching can be a catalyst for change at various levels, from individual through to systemic shifts.

Academic evidence on the positive impact of coaching is available in areas such as education, health, wellbeing and community development. For example, a recent review published in the *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* (Hobson & van Nieuwerburgh, 2022) explores the existing literature relating to coaching in education. In other areas, studies have considered the role of coaching in supporting dementia carers (Chenoweth et al., 2016), paramedics (Barody, 2016), young people at risk (Pritchard & van Nieuwerburgh, 2016), people living with long-term conditions (Whitley, 2013), and wellbeing in communities (Nacif, 2021), to name just a few.

Coaches, commissioners, coachees and others involved in this type of work, have seen, and experienced, the difference coaching can make to individuals and their communities first-hand. The practice of coaching for social impact or change is fragmented and tends to be delivered via statutory services and not-for-profit organisations.

There is no single depository of best practice, evaluation reports or learning for those wanting to explore this field of work more closely. Whilst it is not within the limited scope of this report to fully plug such a gap, it is an important showcase for a variety of coaching projects, including information about how they're funded and evaluated, as well as the voices of those commissioning such programmes and those benefiting from them. This report has been compiled by members of the BACP Special Interest Group in Coaching for Social Impact and isn't meant to be exhaustive in terms of the scope and impact of coaching. On the contrary, this report is an invitation to commissioners, researchers, coaching practitioners, and others working in areas such as health, social care, education, housing and international development among others, to expand the dialogue about coaching for social impact or change and share their knowledge, learning and challenges.

We're aware some of the challenges coaching practitioners and commissioners face when working in these sectors, such as funding evaluation and ensuring coaching programmes are fit for purpose, flexible and responsive to the needs of a diverse range of client groups. It's crucial that the value of coaching for social impact or change is recognised and resourced appropriately, so that coaching programmes are delivered successfully, fully evaluated and become one of the interventions of choice for commissioners and organisations working across the social spectrum. Proper funding also signals the recognition of the importance of the communities who are benefiting from these coaching programmes.

Some organisations are engaged in pro-bono initiatives, which have made a very valuable contribution to the coaching profession's engagement with social change. However, for this area of coaching to truly flourish and have optimal impact, appropriate funding and resources are needed.

Examples of pro-bono programmes include: *Coaching through Covid*, an initiative to support professionals in health and social care settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Internationally, the International Coaches Federation's *Ignite* initiative encourages ICF Chapters and members to forge partnerships with local communities to create pro-bono programmes to deliver social impact that accelerates the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) launched its Social Responsibility programme in 2018. Its latest initiative *ImpactB4Income Social Responsibility Project Africa* took coaching to socio-economically challenged young adults in Nigeria, Africa. This was a pro-bono project working with volunteers from 16 countries across five continents.

Coaching is fundamentally concerned with the enhancement of human functioning, achieved through the improvement of cognitive, emotional and/or behavioural self-regulation. "(Spence & Oades, 2011, p. 37) It's also concerned with developing people's potentials, agency, autonomy, self-efficacy and self-confidence, whilst valuing and encouraging personal choice and accountability. Therefore, apart from the practicalities of delivering coaching programmes in communities (appropriate levels of funding, evaluation and aligning coaching at a strategic level with other interventions) coaches, supervisors and educators also need to consider fundamental and philosophical challenges. This could be the role of coaching in these settings, its scope and limitations, as well as the balance between individuals' accountability and the socio, cultural, economic and political context in which they live.

There are many choices as well as answers – from embracing individualistic approaches, aligned with humanistic psychology centred on individuals' potentials, to moving towards a critical tradition focused on individuals' empowerment and emancipation (Shoukry, 2017), anything in between, or a combination of approaches.

Coaching for social impact can be done at different levels, for example working with social leaders such as social workers, teachers and healthcare professionals, or working directly with clients. In health and social care, coaching programmes have been used to support people with long-term health conditions, young people in care, HIV positive communities and cancer patients along with their family and friends. Coaching has also supported disadvantaged communities such as unemployed people, young people struggling in school or to find work, asylum seekers and people living with a disability. It's encouraging people to engage with their communities.

Coaching for social impact reach



This report shares a glimpse of what's possible and, by doing so, it seeks to raise awareness of the potential coaching offers as a valid and effective resource to help address some of the most intractable issues facing society today.



Case study

Coaching for mental health recovery

By David Britten

Recent years have seen a transformation of mental health services in the UK and elsewhere, with the adoption of practices informed by a philosophy of recovery. 'Recovery' in this context is not used in the medical sense, which refers to complete or partial remission of symptoms. Instead, it denotes the process whereby a person recovers into a fuller life, even if their mental health problems persist. The most frequently cited definition of recovery in the academic literature is:

a deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life even with limitations caused by illness. recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one's life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness. (Anthony, 1993, p.17)

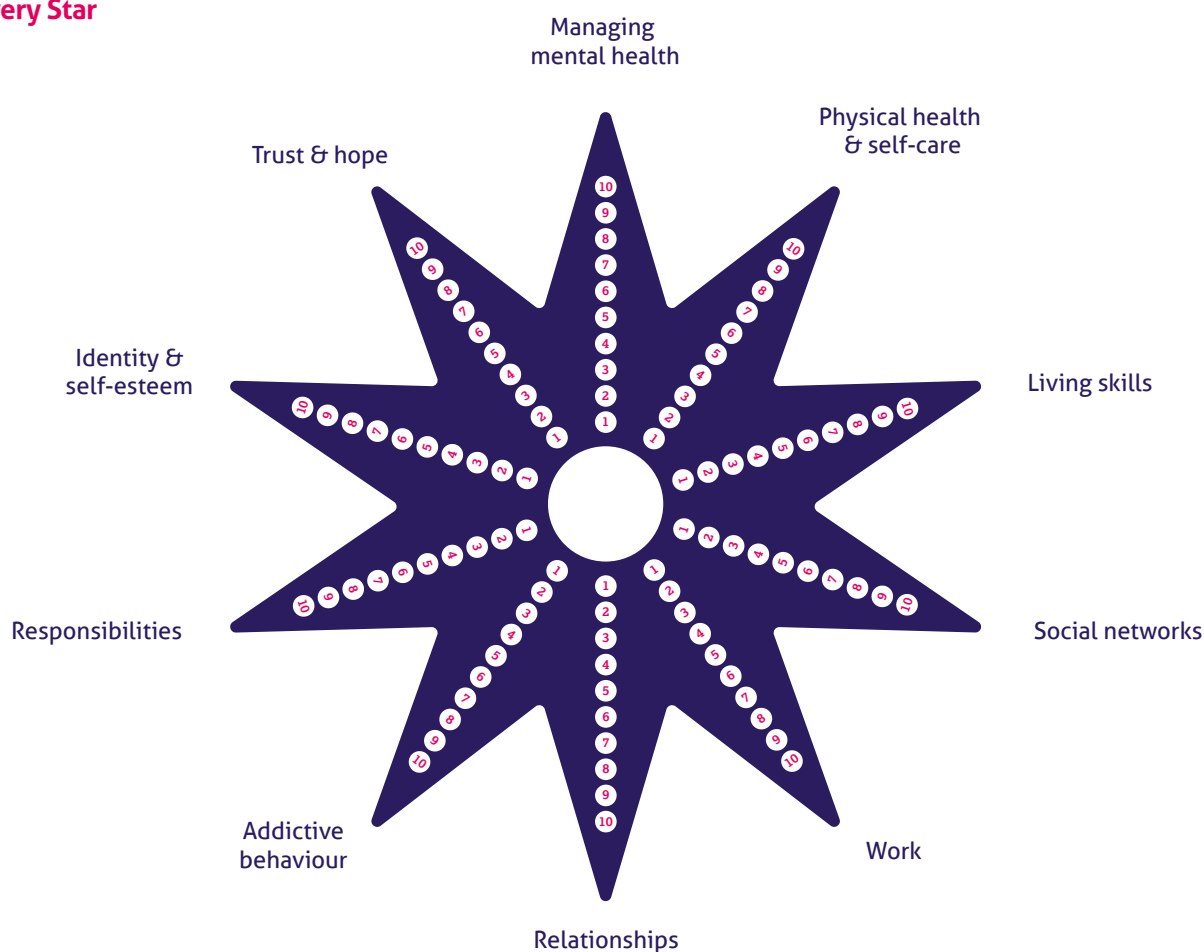
Though each person's experience is different, research suggests that recovery typically involves the following themes: feeling the (re-) emergence of hope; developing an identity that is separate from the illness; finding greater connectedness with others; (re)discovering a sense of meaning and purpose, and (re)discovering a sense of personal agency and responsibility (Leamy et al, 2011).

Researchers have also identified that fostering relationships, identifying and exploring personal values, identifying and using strengths, and engaging in goal-directed activity can facilitate recovery (Bird, 2014). The affinity of these practices with coaching is striking. Also important is the significant shift in researchers' understanding of, and attitudes towards, coaching work with people experiencing ill mental-health. The literature of the early 2000s suggested strongly that coaching was only suitable for those with generally robust mental health (Stober & Grant, 2006). However, for various reasons, this position has proved to be unnecessarily restrictive. A recent scoping review of the literature on coaching and ill mental health concluded that "coaching not only supports self-management of mental health problems, but also helps clients to improve their physical health and social functioning, and to progress in education/employment" (Bishop et al, 2018, p. 38).

To support those in recovery, York Mind, in the north of England, ran a project between 2016 and 2018, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, which provided coaching to service-users. The charity does not subscribe to a medical model of mental illness, and the referral process was therefore open, with some clients self-referring and others referred by family or friends or by other professionals, including GPs. In keeping with the non-medical model, the assessment process was dialogical rather than diagnostic.

For this project, each client received up to 12 weekly fifty-minute sessions of coaching, provided by volunteers trained in the use of listening skills and the rudiments of coaching (the client-centred, non-directive philosophy of coaching; styles of questioning; the GROW model). Volunteers were also trained in the principles of recovery, including the use of the Recovery Star (below), which was used to monitor clients' progress and to provide a focus for the coaching work. In line with the philosophies of both recovery and coaching, it was the client, rather than the practitioner, who decided which aspects of the Star to focus on.

Recovery Star



Source: Triangle Consulting Ltd

Some of the coaching clients were simultaneously accessing other services provided by the charity, such as counselling or supportive/recreational groups, or services provided elsewhere, including those from statutory mental health services. Volunteers had access to supervision support from the manager of the project and from a second employee of the charity who was a trained coach and supervisor.

Figures for the final year of the project (2018) are encouraging. Outcomes for the 80 clients who participated in coaching in that year are shown below. It should be noted that whilst these figures are impressive, they do not capture the extent of the improvements made by clients; they just record that some improvement occurred. It is also worth noting that in addition to the client outcomes, the volunteers also reported increases in confidence and self-esteem, and in transferable skills and knowledge.

Outcome	%
People reporting an improvement in their mental health recovery	80
People reporting they have achieved personal goals linked to their recovery	96
People reporting they know how to use recovery goals & tools to improve their life/manage difficult events	89
People reporting they are less isolated/lonely, and demonstrate this through engagement with a new circle of friends/more activities	91
People reporting that they have increased confidence & self-esteem and evidencing this with examples of group attendance	88
People reporting they have accessed community activities and are more able to take part in community life	96

Drop-out rate figures are not currently available, but have been perceived as low by those involved in the project. There is also a recognition that this kind of intervention is not suitable for all clients, especially those experiencing high levels of depression who are likely to find a focus on goal-setting and

action-planning unhelpful; at worst, this could be psychologically damaging if an inability to make progress in the coaching were to reinforce a client's low self-worth and sense of powerlessness. It seems that there is a need for a foundational level of hope, and for at least a degree of self-efficacy, in order for coaching to be an appropriate choice.

In addition to the quantitative data, a thematic analysis based on four interviews identified the following themes:

- Self-awareness and acceptance
- Internalisation of the coach and the coaching process
- Coaching as both a potential bridge to therapy and therapeutic intervention in its own right
- Importance of social/political context
- Benefits for volunteers

The following page shows a selection of pseudonymous quotes from three clients and one coach. Following the suggestion of qualitative researcher Laurel Richardson (2003), these are presented (without altering the wording) in the form of poetic stanzas, to better capture the participants' voices.

In the field of Recovery, practitioners should strive to enable those experiencing mental ill-health to live as full and meaningful a life as possible, whether or not they manage to overcome their illness. The quantitative and qualitative data gathered from this project suggest that for some people, and with the appropriate supporting structures in place, coaching has a contribution of real value to make. Further research is now needed to develop a fuller picture of what specifically is helpful, and which kinds of people are most likely to benefit from a coaching approach.

About the author

David Britten is an independent coach, coach-supervisor, trainer and consultant. He provided coaching training for the volunteers in this project. David is a BACP Accredited counsellor and psychotherapist, and until December 2020 was senior lecturer and subject co-director in counselling and mental health at York St John University.

Participants' voices

I felt I was only my mental illness, there was nothing else I could do beyond that – that was all I was defined by.

But part of the process that Alex and I went on was, step by step, starting to talk to my friends again, trying to get involved in an allotment

(only once a week, but it was something that I was doing), and eventually growing to be able to do things, when it felt like my mental illness was the only thing that controlled what I did.

I was actually saying, "I'm going to choose to do that, that's not my mental illness choosing that, that's me. My mental illness is a separate thing."

**Hannah,
coaching client**

I think somehow people seem to get a message that what they're doing, and what their concerns are, are valid and important. That can be so empowering for them.

One young man that I coached said that he wanted to suffer less from stress and anxiety.

By the time he left he had gone on a sponsored skydive for the Samaritans.

I said to him, "Christ, you should be coaching me!" It was just amazing.

**Margaret,
volunteer coach**

That's more or less the main thing... sort of thing. You know...

giving me self-confidence, and giving me – making me able to say "no" to people.

I've got support from the psychosis team, but they're more interested in things like my medication, my history, my symptoms...

but Christine is lovely in that for that day, and for that time, it's not about what's wrong with me,

or what I'm taking, or what my past is, or - I don't have to talk about things I find horrible.

But I get to make a - you basically just get help with how you live, and it's lovely. I wouldn't have probably had that.

**Jake,
coaching client**

So, I have time for myself, time...

so I can do things for myself. Even if it's just basically cooking a meal, for myself.

**Paul,
coaching client**

Case study

Living Well: supporting marginalised communities in London

By Ana Paula Nacif

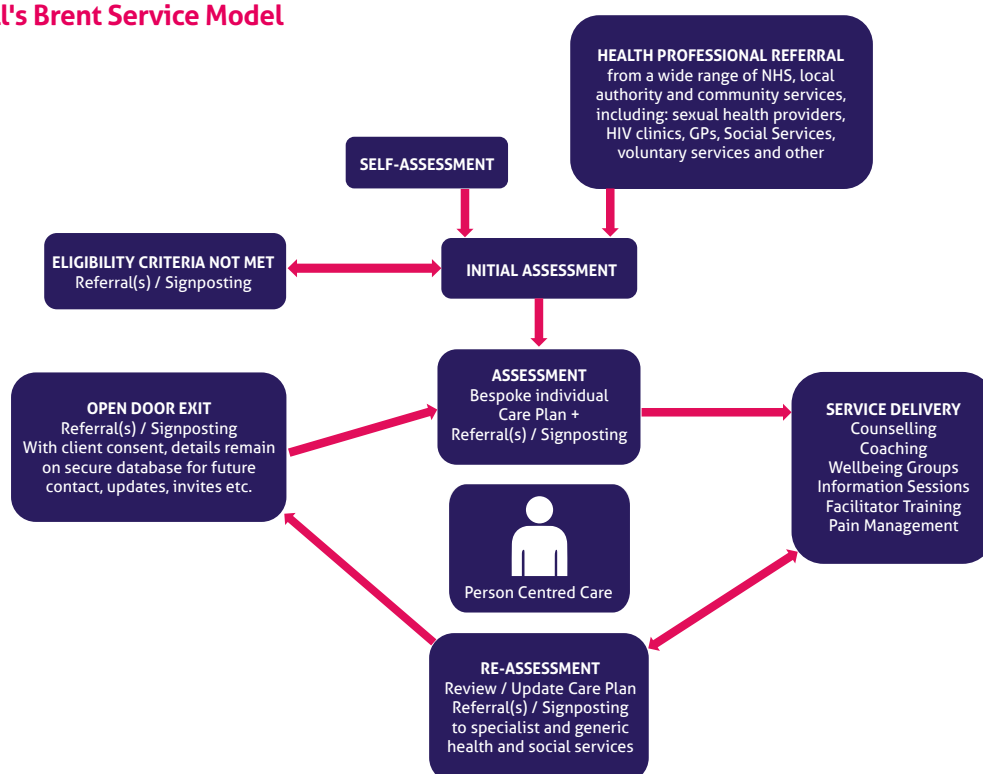
Living Well, a London-based not-for-profit health and wellbeing organisation specialising in supporting marginalised groups, such as ethnic minorities, LGBT+, women and those living with HIV, has been a trailblazer and started to provide coaching as part of their services back in 2005. Today, coaching is an integral part of the organisation's health and wellbeing offer, which also includes counselling, peer support and wellbeing groups.

The services are funded mainly through statutory bodies, such as the NHS and local authorities, and are intended to improve health and wellbeing, promote long-term life skills, encourage the development of a supportive social community, and empower participants with the ability to better self-manage their long-term condition.

Over the last two decades, Living Well's person-centred model has consistently delivered improved health outcomes for those using the services. This short case study will use the work delivered in Brent as an example. The organisation first began delivering HIV support services in Brent in 2004 and it currently has over 400 active service users on their database from communities across the patch, who can access a range of support through either referral or self-referral.



Living Well's Brent Service Model



Source: Living Well

Services address physical, emotional (psychosocial) and psychological needs; condition self-management; sex and relationships needs; and social needs – as they relate to isolation and issues affected by HIV. Following a full assessment, clients co-create a bespoke care plan for the relevant level of care, prioritising which services they access first and identifying what (if any) additional signposting, referrals and support may be required.

Coaching is part of this offer and is provided by qualified professionals who work one-to-one with a participant in up to 12 sessions to support them in setting and achieving their goals. The feedback from clients has been overwhelmingly positive. Between 2020-2021, clients accessing one-to-one coaching fed back the following:

- 88% reported improved health and wellbeing
- 7% said the service improved adherence to medication, with the remaining 93% reporting that they had no issues with adherence
- 78% reported that the service had helped reduce feelings of isolation and improved social activity
- 76% said that they felt the service had helped them improve their understanding of what it means to be 'living well with HIV'
- 93% said the service had helped them to feel more in control of their life

- 80% said that the service had helped them to feel more comfortable with talking about HIV with people close to them
- 98% of people said that they were satisfied with the service and would recommend it to others

One of the coaching clients, a Black man, HIV positive, in his 50s, equated coaching to "my daily dose of oxygen. I moved on from counselling to coaching and as always Living Well found someone who could help me address my needs and enable me some comfort to live on. I would just like to thank all the staff at Living Well, especially my present coach, for keeping me alive and certainly kicking for life. We are in unprecedented times and now more than ever we need more counselling and life coaches. Especially now, as we are asked to be housebound and if you live alone, like myself..."

About the author

Dr Ana Paula Nacif is a coach, facilitator, consultant and researcher specialising in wellbeing and leadership development. She has been an associate at Living Well for over 10 years.



Case study

Level Best: making coaching accessible to disabled and racially discriminated people

By Hormoz Ahmadzadeh and Jane Cordell

Result CIC is a social enterprise set up in 2012 to make professional coaching and personal development training accessible and available to people who are marginalised and may not otherwise be able to have it. The organisation is led by coaches with lived experience of being marginalised from various angles and its associates also have lived experience. The organisation's last social impact report, which covers activities between 2018 and 2020), shows its programmes benefited 686 people, 306 of whom had coaching.

The organisation applied for grant funding from UnLtd recovery Fund to run a programme on an intersectional basis, supporting both disabled and racially discriminated people. The programme, called Level Best, included group workshop training sessions and individual coaching and benefited 12 people. The programme was designed to increase participants' confidence, leverage their strengths, support assertive communications and help them utilise their existing networks.

Group profile

- 8 (66%) were people with experience of racial discrimination
- 9 (75%) were disabled
- 6 (50%) were not in work when they applied to the programme
- 5 (42%) had experience of being both racially discriminated and disabled

All participants said they highly benefited from the programme and would strongly recommend it to others. In addition, scores improved across all the six criteria measured before and after the programme, including self-confidence, resilience, ability to ask for help when needed, communicating with clarity and confidence, feeling at ease with myself, and making full use of skills and abilities.

Several participants reported significant professional and personal progress, particularly in personal confidence and being able to tackle new, more ambitious projects. For example, one unemployed participant found work just before the programme ended and another got a promotion in their job. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive and participants commented on the coaching being particularly useful to support clarity of thought and making decisions about the future.



One participant commented: "I have felt supported and heard in a way I have not in other workshops/ courses that I have done in the past, which has given me access to inner resources that I have been unable to access before." Another added: "I didn't feel worthy before, but now I'm going for a promotion and it's also improved my personal relationships. I'm not negative anymore. This programme has changed my life and that's not an exaggeration!"

The programme also helped participants to look at their experiences from a different perspective. "My past experiences of racism, bullying and sexism were small events that I have given a big meaning to. I have drawn a line under them and can now concentrate on now and the future as these are the only things I can change."

About the authors

Hormoz Ahmadzadeh and Jane Cordell are co-directors of Results CIC.

Case study

Improving the lives of unpaid carers

By Catherine Macadam and Katharine Collins

The estimated 11.5 million unpaid carers in the UK face huge challenges. Most report their mental, physical or financial health has suffered as a result of the stresses associated with taking on a caring role (Carers UK, 2020). Carers often have to give up something important to them to care for someone else and this has multiple detrimental effects on the individual's life, families, communities and society.

Coaching for Unpaid Carers (CfUC) was set up as a social enterprise in 2019, by two former carers, building on a volunteer-run coaching service which they had been running for eight years previously. The organisation's mission is to make coaching available to more unpaid carers so that 'they can live a life they choose'.

Since 2019, they have helped around 60 unpaid carers mainly in London boroughs, including Hackney, the City of London, and Tower Hamlets, through a combination of coaching workshops and one-to-one coaching. Activities have been funded

by small grants from trusts and foundations which usually award funding for projects with a specific focus, to cover a geographical area, over a limited period of time. Carers are referred to the projects via local Carers Centres that offer a range of support services designed to support unpaid carers registered in their locality.

Given the complex and varied nature of the caring role and the circumstances in which it is carried out, CfUC has chosen to use the Realist Evaluation model (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) which is designed to try to demonstrate what works in which circumstances and for whom?, rather than merely does it work? (Better Evaluation, 2022). This approach considers changes and outcomes in relation to coachees' reasoning, actions, behaviours and beliefs. There are three stages of the evaluation used to explore factors that contribute to sustainable positive changes as well as those that prevent coaching being successful.



CfUC piloted this approach between April and August 2020 with a group of 10 carers in Hackney, East London, who were offered coaching to help them return to, or enter into work, training or volunteering, and to support them through the additional pressure of caring during the pandemic. Common themes that emerged from the post-coaching evaluation included: changes to ways of thinking leading to lower stress levels and more productive choices; maintaining boundaries and more balanced lives; greater awareness of strengths, and possibilities leading to increased confidence. However, it was noted that carers who experienced grief and loss during the pandemic had fewer positive outcomes.

Carers who received coaching commented on the positive impact it has had, for example: "Through coaching, I have gained the courage to go out and try to resume my life. Mentally I feel stronger to face my negative thoughts, and I feel I have come away with strategies to improve my way of life."

Coaching has helped carers recognise the importance of self-care, something they often neglect: "The most important thing I am taking from coaching, is that there's nothing wrong with doing something for me, I don't need to feel guilty about it." Another carer, who has been caring for her disabled daughter for 13 years, added: "It's been valuable for me to have something for me rather than the person I care for. But she's definitely benefited by having a happier mum!"



Given the often chaotic and overwhelming nature of caring, the structured support, and discipline of working with a coach has been invaluable for some. A 43-year-old woman who has been caring for her mother who has mental health problems for 20 years, said: "Having a supportive person there, with clear expectations has the biggest impact; it pushed me to take it more seriously, it put my aims first for a bit. Having things to work on between sessions is really good. Though I struggle to find the time, it's invariably helpful and productive when I do."

Six out of 10 carers completed a follow-up evaluation interview and questionnaire 9 to 12 months after finishing the coaching programme. These are currently being analysed. However, highlights suggest that carers have managed to sustain habits, activities and beliefs that they had initiated during the coaching, despite the additional challenges imposed by the ongoing Covid pandemic.

The evaluation approach has also been applied to a year-long programme for carers in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and the City of London, which ran from November 2020 to November 2021, offering coaching workshops and individual coaching sessions to 43 carers.

Workshop participants noted that the workshop had a powerful impact on their feelings and ways of thinking about themselves and their caring role, and that they felt more supported and optimistic and less alone.

- 92% of participants said they benefited by gaining new perspectives and insights and from working on goals and plans, learning new things and trying them out
- around 80% of participants said they felt better able to start, continue (or stop) caring by developing coping strategies, learning useful skills and information, and generally feeling more positive and motivated

Feedback from individual coaching clients was equally positive, with clients identifying the importance of self-acceptance and compassion, feeling good about themselves and recognising what they are capable of achieving. This recognition helped them make changes, such as new ways of thinking, better time management and making time for themselves. They noted that, by tackling one thing, they developed the confidence to tackle other things and that being taken seriously by their coach and having someone who believed in them, gave them a sense of possibility, momentum and confidence to do something different.

Positive results have also been noted by commissioners: Carers Centre Tower Hamlets, one of the delivery partners, explained: "We have been hearing from carers who are feeling stuck and want to make changes to their lives but are unclear where to begin. Coaching provides just what is needed to support carers to make these changes and should be more widely available".

About the authors

Catherine Macadam and Katharine Collins are the co-founders of Coaching for Unpaid Carers CIC. Catherine Macadam is a coach and organisational development consultant working in the public and third sectors. Katharine Collins is a coach and psychotherapist working in the charity sector and her own private practice.



Case study

Beyond poverty: R-evolution for Good

By Jeremy Bacon

Moray School Bank was set up in 2016 in rural Moray in northeast Scotland, by Debi Weir, who had previously worked in Edinburgh as a progression coach for the homelessness charity Crisis. Since then it has helped over 1,900 school children by providing uniform, footwear and stationery. It receives referrals from schools, health visitors, social workers, and other professionals.

Through conversations with families about their practical and material needs, it became apparent that there was a deeper unmet need and despite following each of the three steps to reduce child poverty recommended by the Scottish government, (increasing earnings from paid employment, reducing household costs, and accessing eligible benefits), families still felt trapped. Apart from immediate help with material needs, an additional need for guidance and support to make lasting changes emerged.

With business planning support from Community Enterprise in 2018-2019, services were extended to include the choice of coaching and counselling to families seeking additional support to move out of poverty and *R-evolution for Good* came into being. Families requesting additional support from their contact with the school bank are referred to R-evolution for Good and they can explore whether coaching or counselling could help meet their needs. To date, the service has found that most families initially opt for coaching support, and that counselling becomes a separate option when further needs are identified by a family member during the coaching sessions. Counselling of individuals can run simultaneously alongside the family coaching work and provides opportunities to address underlying trauma that may sit alongside their experiences of poverty.



The service is funded through a combination of income generated from training and development, grant funding and individual giving. In 2020 the service raised £16,000 from 52 community shareholders investing in the business. 100% of profits from training and development is invested in to the delivery of the service to families.

R-evolution for Good recognises that poverty isn't just about the shortage of money to pay for necessities; it also means lack of opportunity, absence of hope and a reduced sense of personal value. The service works with families that have never had contact with counselling and are unlikely to seek help for emotional wellbeing or mental health concerns, even though assessment scores may indicate significant depression and anxiety. Despite the levels of depression and anxiety, many families are functioning well and their resilience and coping strategies are put to use in the coaching work. The organisation deals with clients with multiple, sometimes complex issues, and coaching supports clients moving towards improving their lives.

An example is a client who had financial problems, lived in poor conditions with no washing facilities, whose disabled son was out of education and who felt "mentally unable to create and carry out a plan to improve the situation" and who "felt unable to cope and as if the situation was largely out of my control", to use his words. In a letter to the organisation, he wrote that coaching had helped him analyse his situation, get clarity, and challenge his assumptions, and helped him realise the benefits of breaking down objectives into achievable steps.

He stated in his letter:

- "I no longer need to approach the local authority for material help (fingers crossed)
- We are still living in an unconverted building, but it now has washing facilities, and is more pleasant to live in
- My son has begun to access some education. There is still a long way to go but I am now much more positive
- I have restructured my work life so that it is more regular, sustainable and better paid. I feel more positive and in control. There are still many complex problems, but they are not overwhelming and they can at least be tackled. My mental health is better as a result
- I have short term and longer-term plans."

About the author

Jeremy Bacon is Third Sector Lead at BACP, working within the Policy team to promote the value and impact of community-based services across the UK. Jeremy is also Special Interest Lead to the Coaching Division Executive.

Case study

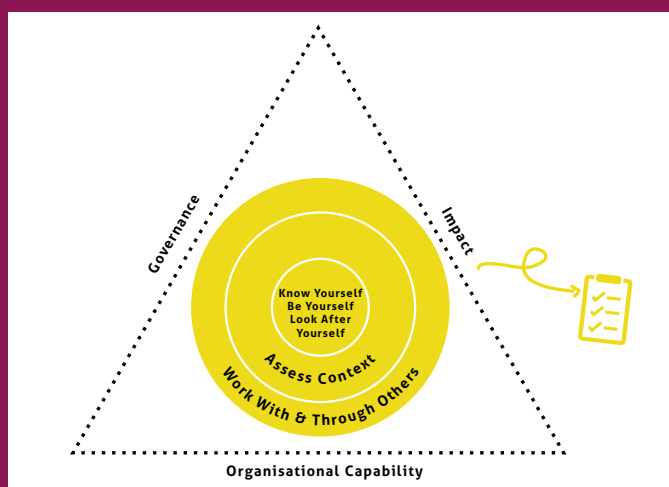
Change through social leadership

By Liam Russell

Clore Social Leadership is a non-profit organisation founded in 2010 on the belief that strong, courageous leadership was needed in the social sector. Over a decade later, the charity has touched the lives of thousands of the UK's most generous social leaders and inspired them to lead meaningful change. This was mainly executed via guided programmes. These are intensive, self-guided initiatives typically spanning six months to a year. They require around 3-4 hours a week to complete and aim to inspire leadership through fireside chats with experts, case studies and reading on the latest thoughts in the field. However, following the outbreak of COVID-19, the organisation began to run shorter, more accessible variations of their guided programmes.

In addition to leadership programmes, in September 2021, Clore Social Leadership launched Leader as Coach, a four-week, self-funded online course for those in the social sector to develop their coaching skills. The programme is based on the Clore Social Leadership Development Model (below).

Know yourself, be yourself, look after yourself



Clore Social Leadership Development Model

At the centre of this leadership development model is self-awareness. A successful leader must critically assess and understand their strengths, weaknesses, motivations and values. Leaders must also understand how they impact others. They need to be authentic in their leadership style. Leadership is tough, so it is also important for a leader to build physical and emotional resilience, and to look after their wellbeing so they can respond effectively to leadership challenges.

In addition to self-awareness, social sector 'systems' are rapidly changing and social leaders need to understand the complexities of these changes and systems.

Understanding the bigger picture, as well as the details, is necessary to achieve results. The act of setting a vision, purpose and focus that tackle wider social challenges with agility and resilience is the core of social leadership.

Another key element of the model is collaboration. No leader exists or succeeds in isolation. A successful social leader must have effective social skills and empathy. This requires the ability to inspire, motivate and empower others, whilst respecting diversity and celebrating the power that difference brings. Successful social leaders are generous and collaborate to build effective partnerships. The best leaders are strategic and influential; they look beyond themselves and their own organisations to contribute to the causes they are passionate about.

Course impact

Thus far, *Leader as Coach* has been run for two cohorts, totalling twenty people, the first of which being a test-run to collect feedback. Feedback has been positive in both cases, with participants suggesting that coaching was an overlooked aspect of leadership development. In particular, the feedback of our trial course has allowed tweaks to the structure of the courses. As a result, 85% of participants in the second edition of the course confirmed they would recommend the course in our feedback survey.

In 2022, Clore Social Leadership aims to reach more social leaders than ever before. In terms of manifesting coaching, there are three main ways to go about this: continue to run *Leader as Coach* course throughout the year; implement more coaching skills within existing guided programmes (long-term, more intensive learning development tools); or create a new guided programme specifically focussed on improving the coaching skills of social leaders. The first two are likely to be viable in the medium term. As mentioned, the *Leader as Coach* course has been a success thus far. This invites scope to continue the course in 2022 and reach a wider audience. Based on the feedback received for the *Leader as Coach* course, it can be assumed that coaching skills are an often-overlooked aspect of leadership development. This has also been communicated to the facilitators of Clore Social Leadership's guided programmes and, from the second half of 2022, coaching skills will be included in the long-form guided leadership programmes which require further reading, a greater time commitment, and utilise more resources than short courses such as *Leader as Coach*.

These programme resources include networking opportunities, fireside chats and individual coaching sessions, none of which are included in the *Leader as Coach* course but would be excellent opportunities to develop leaders on the skills needed for effective coaching.

The idea of a brand-new guided programme solely focused on coaching warrants further development. Clore Leadership programmes frequently run from four to six months and further research is needed to establish whether there is interest in the social sector for a guided coaching programme of this nature.

About the author

Liam Russell is marketing manager at Clore Social Leadership

Case study

Integrating counselling and coaching to better support young people

By Carolyn Mumby

With thanks to the researchers on this project
Alan Thomas Flynn and Nicola Sharp

This training and research project was set up as a collaboration between Youth Access and the University of East London to test the hypothesis that a coaching approach could be integrated with the work of experienced youth counsellors to provide an even more effective service to young people. The project was delivered through Youth Information Advice and Counselling Services (YIACS), in membership of the umbrella organisation Youth Access.

The training programme designer and facilitator, Carolyn Mumby, was aware that youth counsellors had developed a more proactive counselling approach (Mumby, 2014), and understood that for some young people, particularly young men, the stigma associated with counselling could be a barrier to accessing services. Carolyn had already trained more than a hundred youth counsellors in key coaching approaches and begun to introduce the concept of integration using the Personal Consultancy framework as developed by Dr Nash Popovic, lecturer at the University of East London. For this project, 11 counsellors took part in the training and 80 young people, aged between 13 and 25 years, were assigned to two groups: (i) an integrated counselling and coaching group, based on the personal consultancy approach, and (ii) a counselling group using the humanistic counselling service offered at each centre.

Participating young people were provided with information about the study during their initial assessment and those who agreed to take part completed baseline measures of distress using either the CORE-10 or YP-CORE depending on their age. They were then allocated to one of the two treatment groups: the integrated approach or counselling only. Distress levels were re-assessed at the end of treatment using the same measures. After the intervention, semi-structured interviews were carried out with five young people from the integrated approach. The full report on the research findings can be found [here](#) (Flynn et al, 2018).

Five themes were pulled out from the qualitative data: 1. the young people were able to make sense of the past and present and to see the future more positively; 2. they developed a greater sense of agency; 3. They felt more able to manage their emotions, 4. improve their personal relationships, and 5. develop themselves. One benefit of the integrated approach that stood out is that the work can move between past present and future focus in a way that feels manageable and purposeful to the young people.

"The themes extracted demonstrate the positive experience for young people in addressing intra-psychic issues and personal conflicts on the one hand (a reflective and restorative approach designed to bring about internal change), and present and future challenges of growing up on the other (a developmental and future-focused approach designed to achieve external change)" (Flynn and Sharp, 2019).

Each of these themes connect and inform each other which again is one of the benefits of using an approach that can work across the territories of both counselling and coaching. Distress levels reduced from “moderate-severe” to “mild” for those in the integrated group and from “moderate-severe” to “moderate” among those in the control group of counselling only.

The development of a sense of agency emerged powerfully with young people reporting a growing realisation of having some control over their lives. As Jade, one of the participants, highlighted: “It’s more kind of you being honest about what you want to do other than what other people expect you to do and incorporating into kind of your wider picture and what you actually choose to do”. For Seth, there was a recognition that he could make decisions on his own terms: “...it’s you that’s actually come up with the idea, it feels ten times better than if you’d been forced to do it. Because it’s your actual idea and you’ve thought of that.”

Young people also reported how the programme supported them in planning for the future, finding solutions for specific issues, and feeling more confident about themselves.

Whilst this was a relatively small study with some limitations, it nevertheless provides some evidence on which to build future research. It also bears out the anecdotal evidence that dual-trained or multi-skilled practitioners can offer young people a service that enables them to work through past issues at an appropriate level of depth, whilst enabling them to become clearer about their strengths and values, and to have a sense of aspiration and strategies for moving towards creating the lives they want for themselves.

^{*}names of participants were changed

About the author

Carolyn Mumby is a coach-therapist, supervisor, and leadership facilitator in private practice, based in London. She was Chair of BACP Coaching for three years until February 2022. She has written several articles featuring practitioners engaged in coaching for social change.



Case study

Upskilling professionals: coaching skills for communities

By Dr Suzanne Triggs

1. Helping social workers and their clients

Wakefield and Hartlepool local authorities social work departments provide a broad range of child protection and family support services to parents, young people and children in different regions of the North of England. The work these services provide is very complex and emotionally demanding and often requires social workers to create relationships with those who are reluctant to co-operate but are mandated to do so. Both organisations separately commissioned coaching training during the pandemic to 120 of their senior social work leaders, managers, advanced practitioners, frontline staff, new social workers and practice educators. The main objectives for the training were to support staff to:

- incorporate coaching approaches into work with individuals and families to help them set goals and produce behavioural and mindset change
- promote and model more empowering and enabling communication between leaders, social workers, interagency professionals and those in receipt of social work interventions
- create more autonomous social work practice which encouraged staff (and those they work with) to generate their own solutions and harness their agency – and to model this wholeheartedly in their work
- use coaching approaches in one-to-one, supervisory, appraisal and progression processes.



The project was delivered by Dr Suzanne Triggs in 2020 and 2021 (and is ongoing during 2022), who explained: "The training was designed to emphasise the commonalities between social work and coaching to innovate social work practice. It introduced coaching research, the coaching evidence base and explored a way of applying it flexibly and immediately within social work practice."

Funding and organising the logistics for the training were some of the challenges that had to be overcome. Funding was obtained from various internal budgets for continuous learning and development but needed lengthy approval from various council panels and processes due to resources being so scarce. The release of staff across the various services to attend the training course also took months of methodical organisation. But the effort paid off and the evaluation was positive.

Those who took part in the training have highlighted how their newly-found coaching skills are making a tangible difference to their colleagues' and clients' lives. Carolyn Smith, advanced practitioner at The Learning Academy, Wakefield, explained: "It sounds really dramatic, but I genuinely believe coaching staff has changed my life. Coaching can have such massive benefits. It's having the courage to try a new skill or working in a different way. The changes that this can bring about can be so positive and life-changing for families, or the person being coached."

Paula Cox, Manager, from the Children's Hub at Hartlepool, added how the training benefited her wellbeing: "I look at situations now, where it used to stress and overwhelm me - I've had a couple of burnouts in my career - and I've realised that it isn't the environment that created those burnouts, nobody purposely did that. I did that. Coaching has helped me to re-jig this. I've reached that point where you can tackle situations in two ways: you can do it positively or you can do it stressfully. It's taking that control; it's taking ownership of what you've got. We've got to be selfish sometimes because, if we're not healthy and well, we don't get the best outcomes on the job. Honestly, 12 years and now the lights come on!"

For those working with clients, using a coaching approach has also transformed how they interact with clients. Lisa Robinson, safeguarding and review officer at Hartlepool, has been using coaching skills

in child protection conferences. "For example, last week everyone had come in with a fixed idea of what was going to happen and then, because I asked certain coaching questions and gave these grandparent's time to talk, they really are contributing to a goal now, how they are going to get it and thinking about what's worked before. Rather than the usual 'do this, do that'. They don't even need a child protection plan. This experience just reinforces that you need to give people time and to actively listen. Now I try to use coaching as much as I can in conferences."

This positive impact is echoed by other professionals. Emma Bint, a senior social worker, from Wakefield, who was working with a lady who had recently left an abusive relationship, explained: "I went round to do a coaching session and, as we sat down, she said to me 'I don't know how to knit, and this is something I'd like to do'. I was a bit flabbergasted, knitting? By the end of that session, she had worked out how she was going to teach herself to knit, what timescale she was going to do it in and what her end goal was... Every day I would get pictures of another square she'd knitted. For me it was a great achievement for this young lady." Emma added how this was crucial as the client was getting bored in the evenings, was missing the abusive partner and having doubts about whether she had made the right decision. "Knitting filled a void and gave her a purpose". Emma emphasised the importance of changes facilitated through coaching that last not only "for your intervention and involvement with a family but changes that will last these parents and children a lifetime".

Wendy Cooper, safeguarding assessment and supporting manager at Hartlepool explains how using a coaching approach with a mum she has been supporting for several years has shifted the client's perception. "The coaching conversations I've had with her have been different and have not followed the usual pattern. They've helped her reflect and focus on what she can do with her life, what she can do for herself, and I think they have resulted in her thinking about what she can do differently as opposed to 'I've got no control, I've got no decision making' and I think that has helped. I'm not saying those conversations are the 'be all and end all' but she has made some quite monumental shifts for her."

2. Coaching for businesses and communities

Local Services 2 You (LS2Y) is a group of social enterprises and community businesses working together to generate opportunities for people in their neighbourhoods in an economically-disadvantaged area of Huddersfield. LS2Y run three nurseries across Huddersfield, a 'baby boutique', and several social groups for parents and older people. They employ around 50 staff across the group. They support communities through providing food and urgent support, promoting digital inclusion, creating community gardens, a library, as well as breakfast, after school and holiday clubs. They manage several community buildings and work collaboratively with local schools, social workers and early support services.

LS2Y decided to use coaching to empower staff and members of the community to live better lives. They commissioned coaching training and invited local teachers, social workers and early years staff to join free of charge. The service wanted to develop the communication skills of their staff and those professionals they worked with regularly, with a view to them using coaching with parents, carers, children and young people who use their services or whom they come into contact with in the community. In scoping the project there was anecdotal recognition that the traditional approach of 'fixing' others was commonplace amongst staff and rarely worked, and that new strategies, questions and approaches were needed to engage staff and the community members in self-determined change.

Funding was originally sought from a fund aimed at addressing health inequalities but this was unsuccessful. The project was eventually funded as part of a larger bid granted by the National Lottery Community Fund. It was delivered to 12 people in 2020 by Dr Suzanne Triggs, who designed a bespoke coaching training for the community and incorporated coaching supervision to support participants over 12 months. As a result of the project, a 'coaching room' is being trialled in the community hub once a week with hourly drop-in slots with those who have been trained. In addition, the organisation is actively promoting coaching as part of mental health first aid and incorporating coaching conversations as a structured part of the one-to-one process for staff. LS2U are now committed to taking a coaching approach within the whole organisation.

Stories of individual parents and young people being coached have emerged in training and in group supervision sessions, such as a parent who was experiencing low self-worth having coaching and deciding to become a volunteer events coordinator to create a sense of meaning and purpose outside of caring for her children. Teachers eagerly copying the coaching tools from the training in the school staff room to use with their pupils was received enthusiastically in the supervision group, as was the story of a particular young man, who after having coaching, decided to choose behaviours that would take him away from being excluded.

About the author

Dr Suzanne Triggs is an independent coach, trainer, and registered social worker. In 2021 she received international recognition and was presented with the first-ever award for 'Coaching for the Social Good' from Harvard's Institute of Coaching.



Case study

Pro-bono initiatives

By Jacqueline Hill

1. Humanitarian Coaching Network: a pro-bono international programme

The Humanitarian Coaching Network is a platform that connects humanitarian staff with a global cohort of volunteer professional coaches. It aims to provide humanitarian and development organizations with an innovative, cost-effective way of supporting the wellbeing and growth of a critical mass of their staff, particularly those serving in the most isolated and complex posts.

Since its launch in 2013, the HCN has enlisted over 500 coaches worldwide and is accessible to an increasing number of humanitarian and development agencies. Currently, HCN gives individuals of partner organisations up to four hours of coaching over a period of up to six months. Coaches and clients are paired, taking into consideration the developmental priorities, seniority, expertise, location and language preference. Once the pairing has been completed, the HCN gives full autonomy to the coach and the participant to design their coaching alliance in the way that best meets their needs, while continuing to provide support and supervision for the duration of the engagement.

The generous offering of time and energy from the HCN roster allows the HCN to provide this range of services to large numbers of humanitarian and development staff at a nominal cost to the client's organisation. The proceeds go towards site maintenance, coordination and supervision as well as sponsoring organisations that lack financial resources for staff development and wellbeing.

The HCN collects evaluation feedback from individual coachees and an overall impact study is expected to be published in 2022. The programme has benefited coaches as well as coachees. From the coaches' perspective, the experience of working with people across the globe has been enriching: "I really value the experience of coaching people with very different world views and experiences to mine and being exposed to the challenge of coaching in very unfamiliar and varied contexts. It has enabled me to develop a much 'cleaner' coaching approach as I am constantly reminded of my assumptions and what I can't possibly know," explained a British UK-based coach working in international development.

Coachees have described the coaching experience as "terrific" and "insightful". They valued the learning afforded through the coaching. "I am also thankful with my coach for sharing with me online training and reading materials that will be helpful in my current role. I have also learned to practice finding answers from staff instead of just directing them on what to do," commented a team leader, IOM, Philippines. A team leader, UNHCR, Uganda, added: "The models and guides that she [my coach] provided will be useful throughout my life. I am more confident now and I can relate to the guidance notes whenever I have some issues or frustration."

2. Impact B4 Income: helping young people in Africa

Embracing the ethos of democratising coaching, EMCC Global launched its social responsibility programme in 2018. Its latest pro-bono project, *ImpactB4Income Social Responsibility Project Africa*, offered coaching to 16 young adults in Nigeria, Africa.

The main objective of this project was to coach socio-economically challenged young adults to acquire self-confidence, entrepreneurial spirit, and desirable leadership values with the hope that they would then be able to contribute to society and emerge as role models for their community.

There were significant challenges: the coachee's context was one of political unrest, limited resources and poor internet communications; coach and coachee cultures and backgrounds were very different; and they were all experiencing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In December 2020 an armed robbery took place where three of the 16 coachees were robbed of their electrical devices. EMCC Global set up a fundraiser to help replace the stolen phones and laptops and thus enable the coachees to continue participating in the project – as all the work was done digitally.

The project kicked off in September 2020 with the onboarding session for the 30 EMCC volunteer coaches and supervisors, from 16 countries and 5 continents. It concluded in January 2021, when feedback from the project was consolidated into an evaluation and impact report.

Coachees reported that sessions encouraged them to learn and to get out of their comfort zone; improved their mindset, clarity and awareness to find solutions; provided an opportunity to share challenges with a coach to find solutions, and allowed for reflection to find answers. Below are some of the learning outcomes highlighted by coachees.

Being accountable Focus Sociability
 Self-compassion Achieving goals Trust my intuition
 Achievement Team building Communication skills Trust
 Resilience Strengths Taking responsibility
 Self-Management Overcome risk avoidance
 Decisiveness Discipline Business plan Leadership
 Self-awareness Creativity
 Confidence

One of the participants said: "This coaching is what anyone whose aspiration is to become great, who aspire to be more for himself or herself, family, country, nation, or the world at large." Another added: "It has helped me grow and it will help me contribute largely to the society."

It is too early to evaluate the long-term impact of the programme, however ImpactB4Income does illustrate how connecting virtually in our pandemic-ridden VUCA (Vulnerable, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) world has the potential for the democratisation of coaching. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how 'social responsibility' and 'solidarity' have gained a revived, well-deserved, spotlight on the global scene. There are so many people around the world who could not otherwise afford coaching services but who can truly benefit from receiving them. Coaches can contribute to sustaining this momentum to create meaningful impact by coaching around the world through social responsibility initiatives.

About the author

Jacqueline Hill is a leadership coach and change mentor for those working to make the world a better place. She was a volunteer coach for the ImpactB4Income project and she also volunteers for the Humanitarian Coaching Network.

Conclusion

The vast impact coaching can have on our communities is undeniable. Yet, there's a need for more engagement from coaches, commissioners, researchers and others interested in social change, to continue the conversation about how to ensure coaching is adopted more widely, frequently and effectively.

Unlike other interventions, that either have a directive or punitive stance, coaching seeks to encourage people to decide what is important to them and how they want to live their lives. By its very nature, coaching supports the development of an individuals' potential, autonomy and agency, using a non-directive and pragmatic approach to address internal barriers such as self-esteem, confidence and mental agility, wherever possible and appropriate. It also helps individuals to plan and take tangible steps towards external changes that are within their sphere of control. Even small steps can result in life-changing outcomes, as has been demonstrated by some of the examples in this report. In community settings, coaching can be a powerful catalyst for personal and collective transformation. When an individual is able to take steps towards a better future, it can have a ripple effect on those around them and the wider community. Equally, when coaching is deployed as a collective intervention, it can have an even more powerful impact.

Making every project count

The academic evidence that demonstrates the benefits of coaching for social impact has increased over the last decade, but, in comparison to other disciplines, more research is necessary to build on the existing knowledge. Apart from academic research, practitioners and those working in social settings need to consider evaluation processes that are fit for purpose and can demonstrate the impact of coaching and its associated cost-benefits. In coaching, clients choose their own personal goals, a feature that is essential to its success. Therefore, more consideration must be given to aligning coaching programmes with wider thematic changes in the community and exploring suitable methodologies to establish coaching impact. Designing and delivering robust evaluation methods continues to be a challenge for many coaching programmes.

Below are some of the considerations:

1. Quantitative methods & qualitative methods

The evaluation needs to be designed at the outset of the programme, aligned to the desired outcomes, with both quantitative and qualitative methods considered on their own merit. In isolation, these methods may not be sufficient to examine the impact of the project. Some funders and commissioners tend to favour quantitative methods; however, we should not ignore the qualitative richness of including personal experiences in evaluation methods. Furthermore, if the measurable impact of coaching (for example by utilising a scale before and after the coaching intervention) doesn't show a significant change, it doesn't necessarily mean that coaching hasn't added value. Small incremental changes can be significant for the coachee and would be captured by reporting on the qualitative data.

2. Evaluation costs

Evaluation can be costly, and some community coaching projects are delivered on a small budget, with funding not made available for evaluation. Commissioners need to be aware that small organisations, in particular, may not have the expertise or capacity to design and deliver a robust evaluation for their project. Additional funding and support for evaluative work should be factored into the commissioning budgets for projects.

3. Managing expectations

Outcomes for coaching programmes may be more suitably aligned to thematic changes, such as wellbeing, confidence and healthier lifestyles, than specific to individuals. Tools such as the Outcomes Star¹ or the Lottery Community Fund's evaluation tools² can support evaluation of coaching programmes.

4. Social value

It isn't always possible to quantify all the benefits of coaching. We recognise, for example, that coaching has an added social value, but more thinking and exploration is needed to articulate this value. Those delivering coaching in communities strive to foster sustainability; increase local capacity and skills; change the dynamics of power and the relationship between the recipient of the intervention and its provider (coaching is a relationship of equals that encourages individuals to take the lead in their lives); foster solutions to address local issues and encourage co-creation and participation.

As stated at the beginning of this report, the aim was to share a glimpse of what is possible and galvanise an interest in coaching for social impact. Coaching has a significant role to play in supporting and developing our communities; there are always opportunities and challenges ahead. We would like to invite you to join the conversation and help us develop the thinking in this area. To pave the way for coaching to become one of the go-to interventions for everyone working to improve the lives of individuals and their communities.

¹ <https://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/>

² <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/managing-your-grant/learn-from-your-project/data-and-evidence#item-4>

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Improving the lives of unpaid carers

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**British Association for
Counselling and Psychotherapy**

15 St John's Business Park
Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 4HB

bacp@bacp.co.uk
Call 01455 883300

www.bacp.co.uk

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