



EXECUTIVE REPORT 2019

# The State of Play in African Coaching

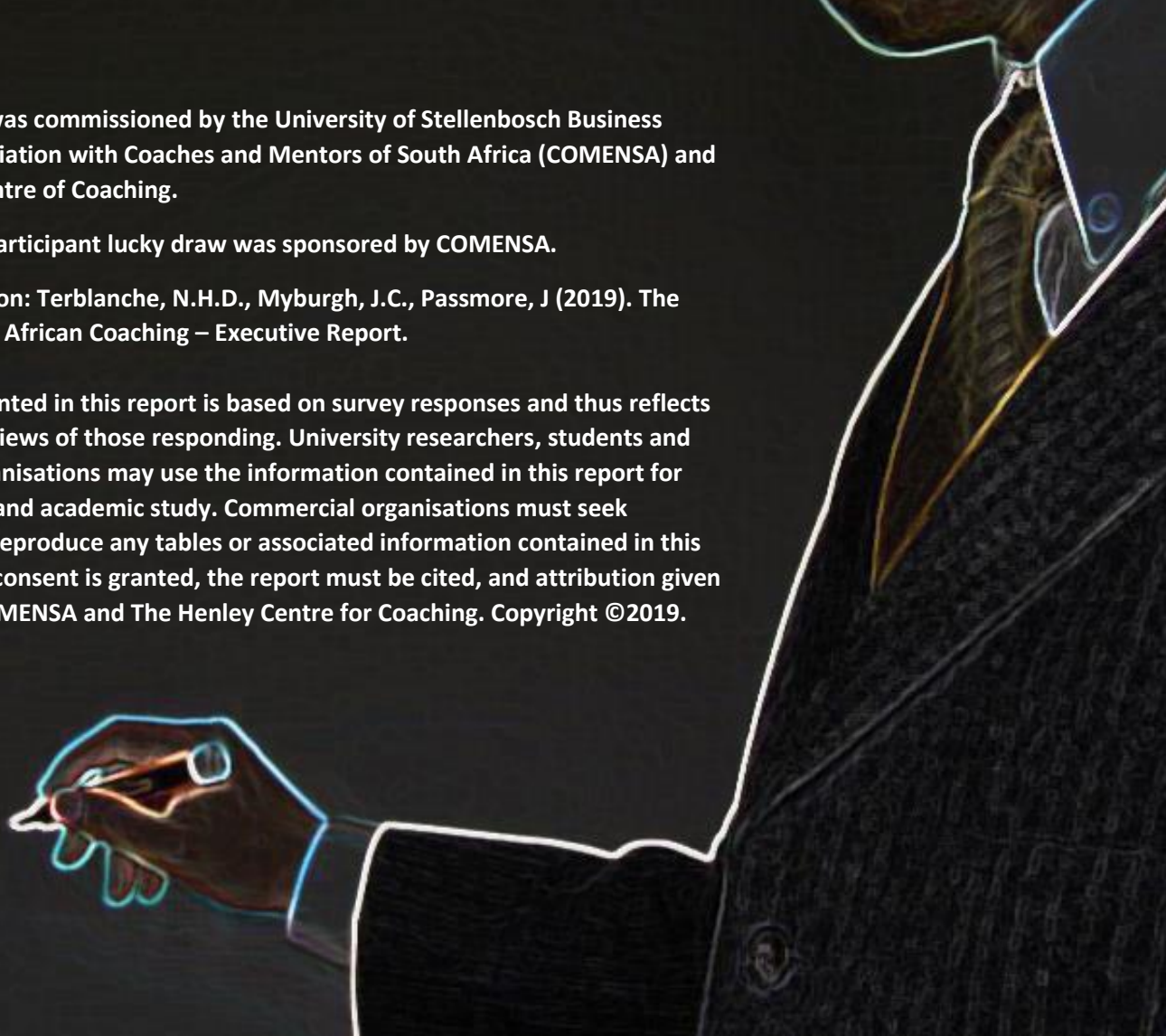
Nicky Terblanche, Jacques Myburgh, Jonathan Passmore

This research was commissioned by the University of Stellenbosch Business School in association with Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) and The Henley Centre of Coaching.

The research participant lucky draw was sponsored by COMENSA.

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# Lead research partners

## The University of Stellenbosch Business School



Triple-accredited African business school focused on responsible leadership development. It has been over 50 years since USB opened its doors to 14 MBA students in 1964. Today, USB has grown to offer world-class education to over 28 000 students from all over the globe. USB forms part of Stellenbosch University – the strongest research university in Africa. In 2018, Stellenbosch University will be celebrating its 100-year anniversary.

USB has always believed in excellence, a philosophy that resulted in it becoming the first school from an

African university to receive the Triple Crown of international accreditations – AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA.

Within USB, the MPhil in Management Coaching programme has been running since 2010. It is rated number 1 in Africa for Human Resource Development by Eduniversal. With an equal focus on practice and research, this programme allows participants to discover and establish their authentic coaching style, equipping them to coach in the demanding world of business in South Africa and further afield.

<https://www.usb.ac.za/course/management-coaching/>

## Coaches and Mentors of South Africa



Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) was launched in April 2006 as an

inclusive, umbrella professional association for individual and corporate providers, buyers and trainers of coaching and mentoring services.

COMENSA'S core purpose is to empower coaches and mentors to make a positive contribution to the people of South Africa.

Our mission is to support professional practice and a learning culture in coaching and mentoring through standards and ethics.

Our vision is to empower people to achieve their full potential in a consciousness of sustainable well-being.

As a professional association we expect and require all our members to operate with the following values: Accountability; Inclusivity, Integrity and Professional Competence.

COMENSA is recognised as a self-regulated professional body in South Africa by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

To find out more: <https://www.comensa.org.za/>

## The Henley Business School



The Henley Centre for Coaching is a research and coach training centre at Henley Business School.

The Centre is recognised as a world leader for coach training and

research, having trained over 2,500 coaches over the past decade. The Centre provides professional coach and supervision training with a triple accredited Professional Certificate in Executive Coaching (PCiC), accredited by the ICF, EMCC and AC, an MSc in Coaching, Prof Cert in Supervision and PhD programmes. The PCiC is delivered across the world including in South Africa and Nigeria. Henley's team is actively engaged in

research, contributing to journals, books and best practice publications. Current research projects include neuroscience and coaching, coach identity and coach development, coaching competences, supervision and coaching ethics. The Centre also provides continuous professional development and supervision for coaches across the world. You can join the Henley Centre for Coaching and access our research, resources, supervision and bi-monthly webinars.

To find out more about Henley's coaching activities in the UK and Europe visit: [henley.ac.uk/coachingcentre](http://henley.ac.uk/coachingcentre)

## Researchers

The research was undertaken by

 <p><b>Dr Nicky Terblanche</b> Senior Lecturer and Head of Coaching at University of Stellenbosch Business School</p>	 <p><b>Jacques Myburgh</b> Head of Research at COMENSA (Coaches and Mentors of South Africa)</p>	 <p><b>Professor Jonathan Passmore</b> Professor of Coaching &amp; Behavioural Change and Director of the Henley Centre for Coaching</p>
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# Introduction

**World-wide, coaching has grown significantly in the last 20 years, warranting research into all aspect of coaching. In 2016, the European Coaching and Mentoring Project was undertaken to research coaching practices across Europe<sup>1</sup>. In a follow-up study, conducted by Nicky Terblanche, Jacques Myburgh and Jonathan Passmore, the same research was repeated in Africa. This report provides an overview of the results, as well a comparison to the European results.**

The research was conducted between February and April 2019 with the aim of gaining deeper insight into how coaches and coach providers practice coaching, as well as to situate coaching in Africa within a wider context. The results indicate a significant similarity to the European study, although in a minority of instances there are telling differences. The conclusion we draw from this is that coaching practice in Africa has its origins in Europe through training and adoption of standards via coaching bodies such as ICF and COMENSA. The relative similarity of coaching practice in Africa and Europe bodes well for an emerging discipline striving for professionalization.

It is also clear however that Africa has unique needs and challenges, prompting coaching to deviate from European coaching norms where necessary. We trust the insights offered by this report will promote the drive towards ethically sound, professional coaching practice across Africa and the world.

## Research methodology

Coaching practice data was gathered via an online survey based on the original European Coaching and Mentoring Project, excluding the mentoring dimensions. In certain cases, the questions were tailored for the African context e.g. rates charged for coaching and issues addressed in coaching.

The survey was launched on 15 February 2019 and closed on 15 April 2019. Invitations to participate were sent via coaching bodies such as COMENSA, ICF and Africa Board for Coaching, Consulting and Coaching Psychology, as well as via social media and coaching interest groups in Africa.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.henley.ac.uk/articles/european-coaching-mentoring-research-project>



# Biographical information

In total 349 valid responses were received from 19 countries. The majority of responses were from South Africa (76%) followed by Kenya (7%) and Nigeria (6%).

Most respondents were female and aged between 30 and 49 (Diagrams 1 and 2). This is strikingly similar to the European results. Diagram 3 indicates that in Africa most coaches belong to COMENSA or ICF and only 17.2% of respondents are not part of a professional coaching body. This is much lower than

Europe where more than 33% of coaches do not belong to a professional coaching body.

In terms of coaching experience (Diagram 4), in Africa the majority of coaches are relatively new to the profession with less than 7 years' experience. This points to the growing nature of the relatively young coaching industry. The results are similar in Europe, except that Africa has relatively more newcomers (less than 12 months experience) than Europe, perhaps suggesting a perceived higher demand for coaching in Africa.

Diagram 1: Gender

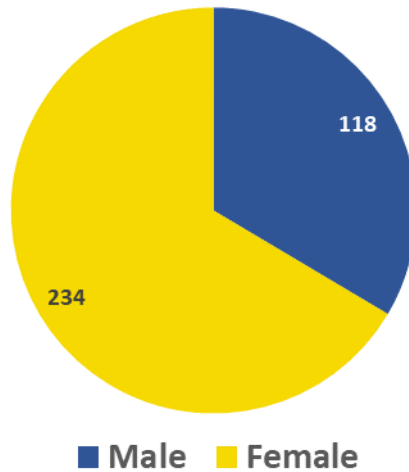
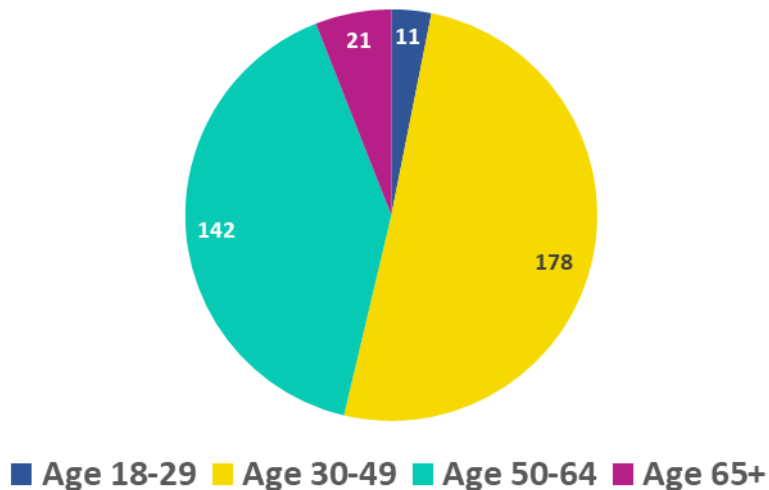
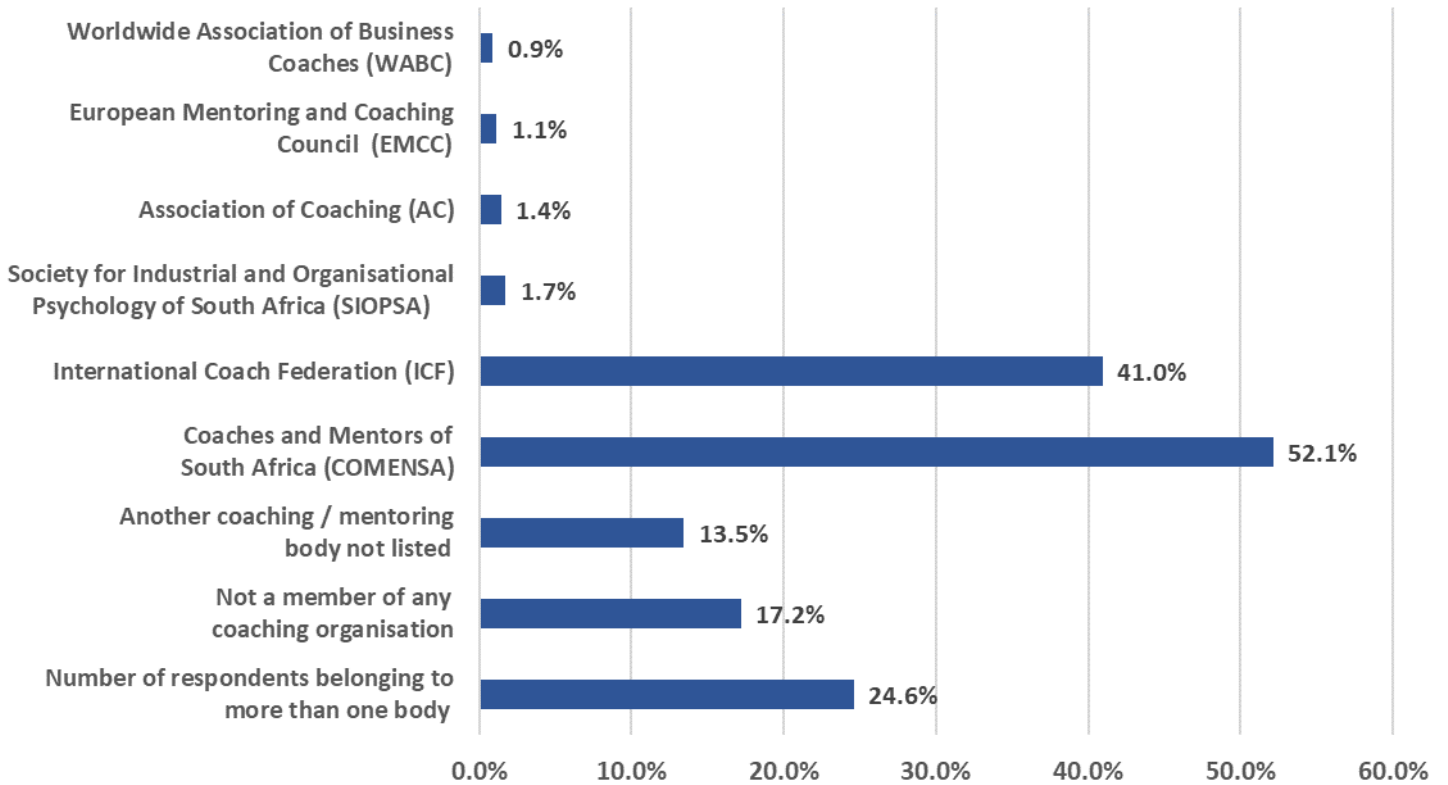


Diagram 2: Age

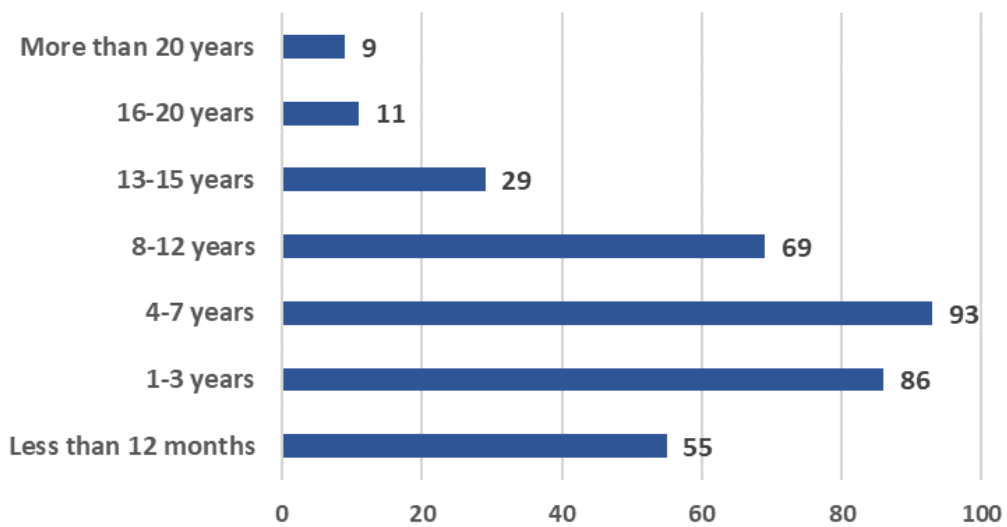




**Diagram 3: Membership of professional coaching organisation**



**Diagram 4: Years of coaching experience**



# Coaching practice

## What is coaching?

This research adopted the same definition of coaching as the European study:

*'A Socratic-based future-focused dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (coachee/client), where the facilitator uses open questions, active listening, summaries and reflections which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant'.<sup>2</sup>*

Coaching in Africa is most likely highly influenced by both European and American traditions as a result of training approaches from the latter and standards set by international professional bodies such as ICF. COMENSA is also largely based on European coaching principles.

## Responses

**Coaches in Africa indicated that they spend less than half their time (about 40%) conducting coaching (Diagram 5). This is more than their**

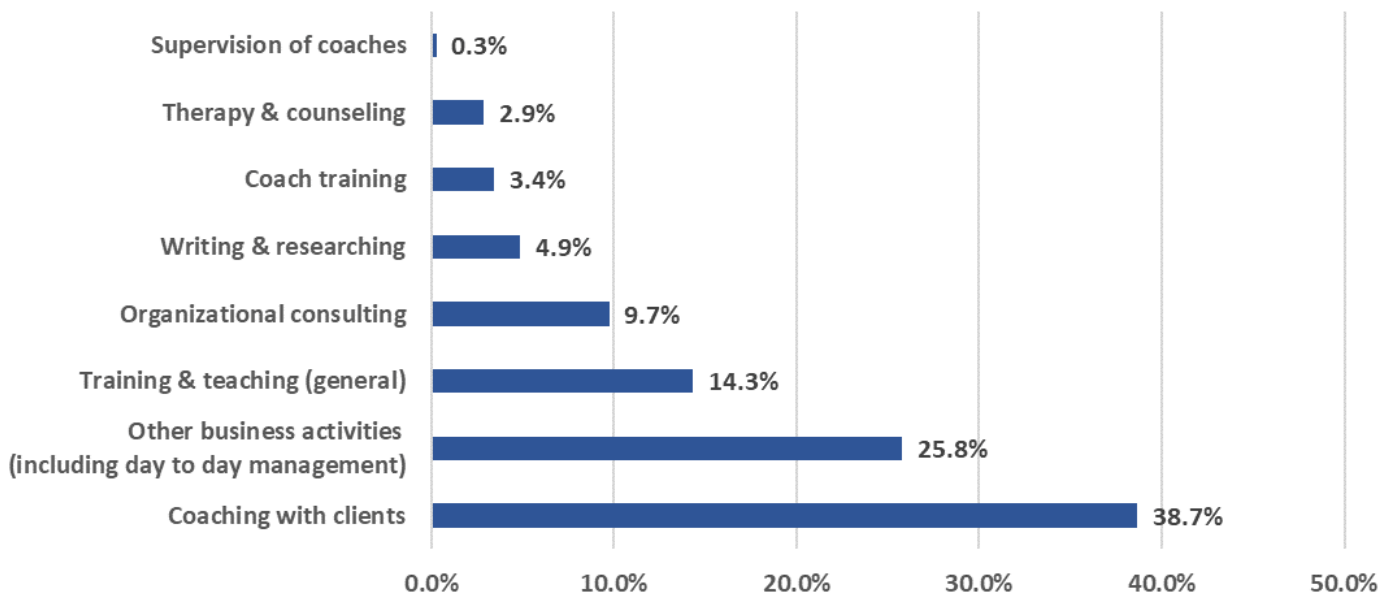
**European counterparts (10-30%). In both cases it seems that coaches rely on sources of income other than coaching.**

**Most coaches (Diagram 6) focus on the organisational context, similar to the European results. In terms of rates charged, the range between R500<sup>3</sup> and R2999 (\$USD35 - \$USD219) represents what most coaches charge per hour. This distribution is similar to the European results although the numeric ranges differ. For individual coaching (Diagram 8) the average rates are significantly lower, in line with the European findings.**

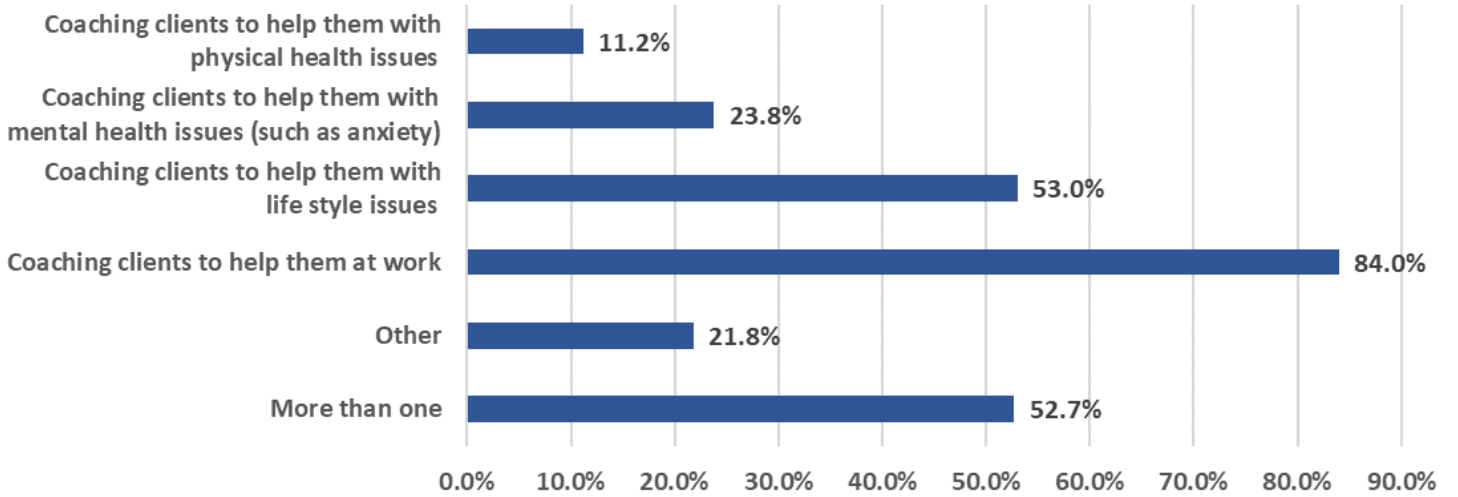
<sup>2</sup>Passmore, J & Fillery-Travis, A (2011) A critical review of executive coaching research: A decade of progress and what's to come. Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Practice & Research, 4 (2), 70-88

<sup>3</sup>South African Rand (ZAR)

Diagram 5: Working time



**Diagram 6: Focus of coaching work**



**Diagram 7: Fee rates, Corporate funded coaching (per hour)**

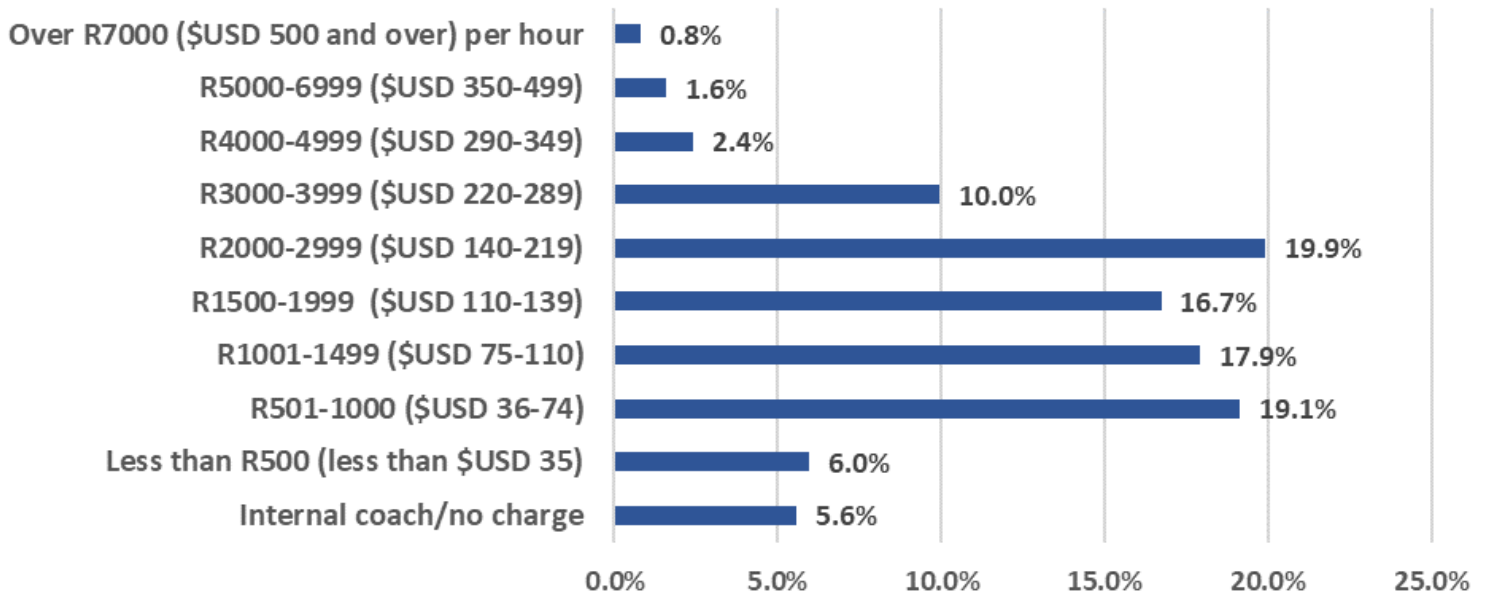
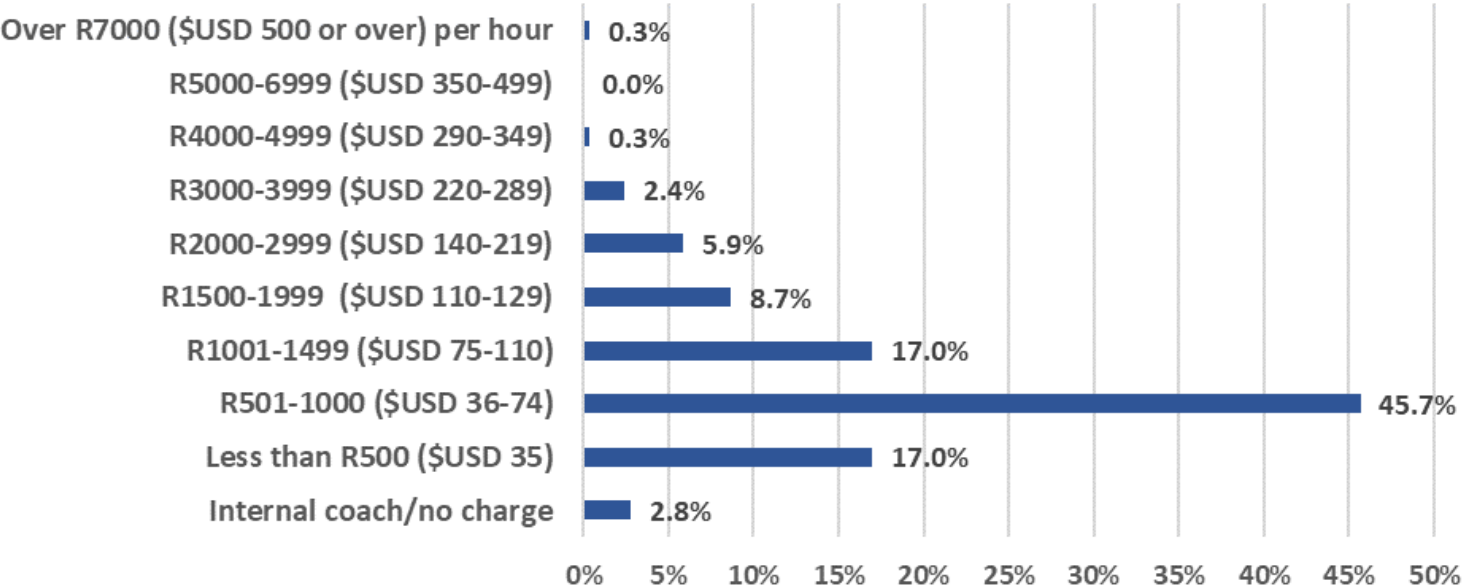




Diagram 8: Fee rates, Individual funded coaching (per hour)



# Reflective practice and supervision

## What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is an established form of learning and involves examining one's actions, beliefs and assumptions in order to learn and change.

Coaching training typically instils in coaches the need to reflect on their practice on an on-going basis.

## What is supervision?

We adopt the same definition of supervision as the European study:

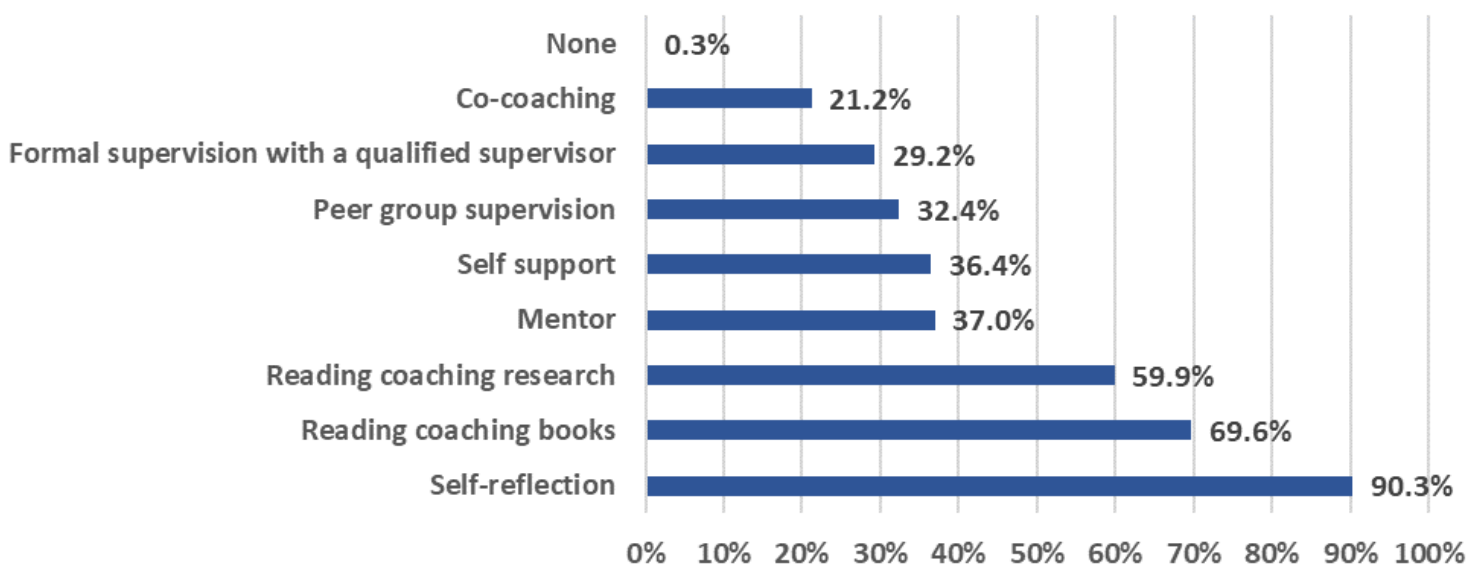
*The process that occurs when a mentor or coach brings their work to a supervisor in order to be supported, reflective and engage in collaborative learning for their personal development for the benefit of them self, their clients and their organisational clients.*

Supervision is an important element in the professionalization of coaching, if coaching is to follow in the footsteps of other helping professions such as counselling and therapy.

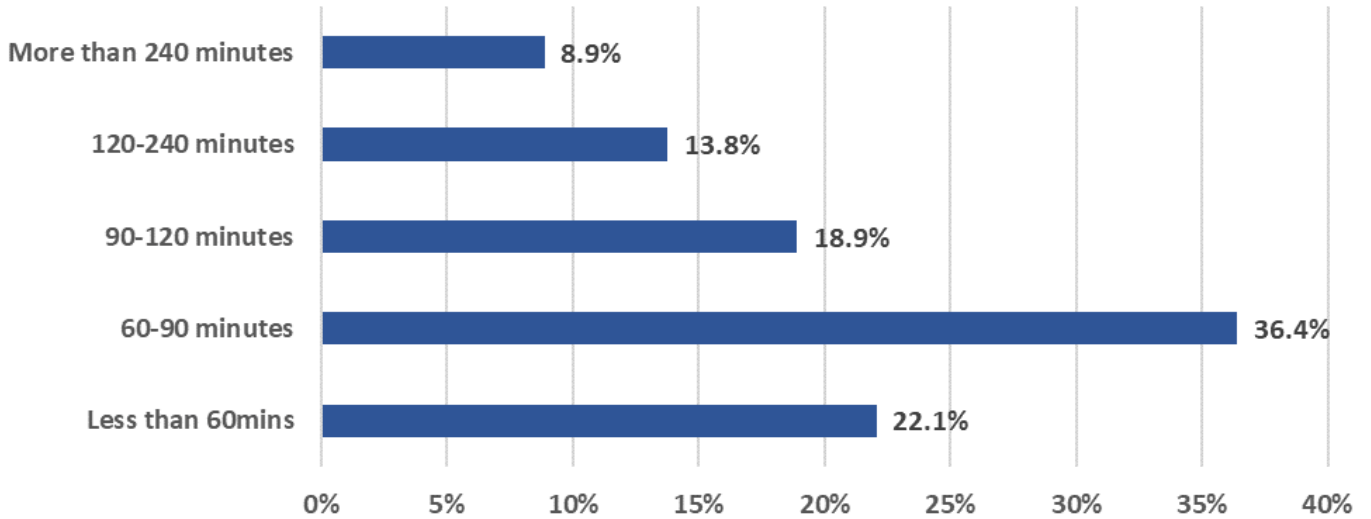
## Responses

Coaches in Africa rely mostly on themselves for reflection through self-reflection and reading books and research (Diagram 9). This is similar to the European results with the exception that African coaches makes less use of a formal supervisor, perhaps suggesting that supervision as a practice is less mature in Africa. Coaches are willing to pay for supervision (Diagram 11), but substantially less than what they charge their clients, similar to the European results.

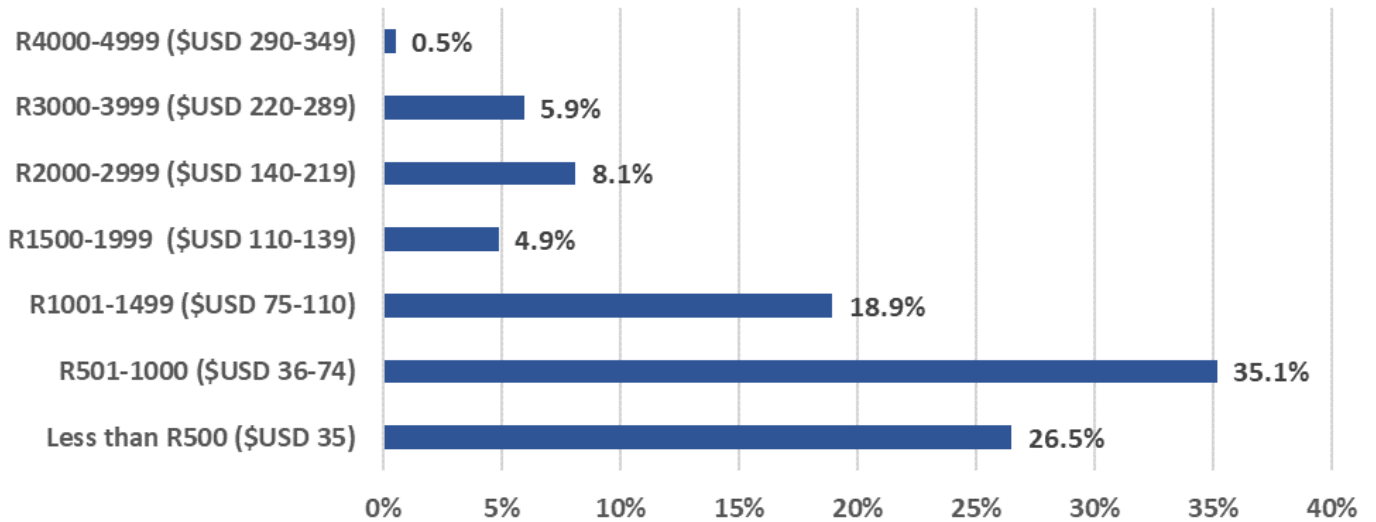
Diagram 9: Methods of Reflection



**Diagram 10: Personal reflection time (per week)**



**Diagram 11: Fees paid for reflective practice (per hour)**



# Continuous professional development

## What is continuous professional development?

To remain up to date with latest practice, research and legislation, coaches engage in continuous professional development (CPD). CPD is defined as:

*A learning process employed by professionals to ensure that their standards and competencies are maintained and enhanced over time.*

The nature of CPD activities range from informal (reading books) to more structured approaches such as attending training courses. CPD is considered an

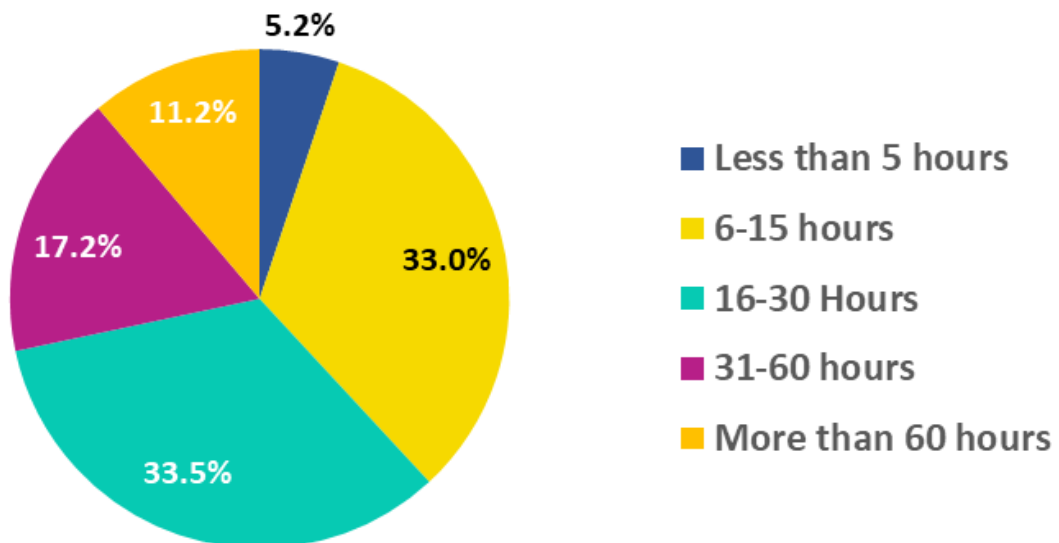
important element in the professionalization of coaching.

## Responses

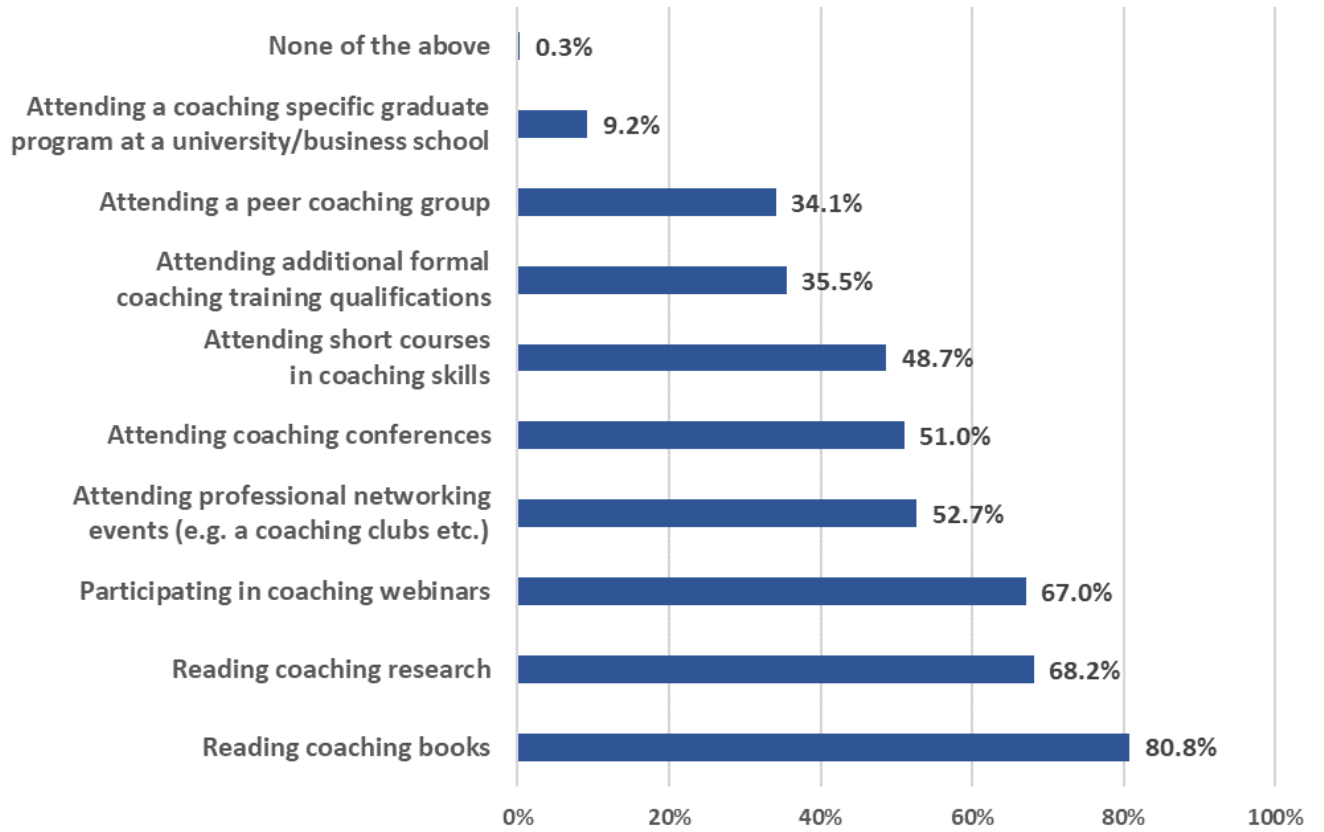
The majority of coaches (66.5%) spend between 6 and 30 hours per year on CPD (Diagram 12), similar to their European counterparts.

The most popular CPD activities (Diagram 13) involve self-study (reading books and research), also in line with the European findings. African coaches attend fewer conferences than the European coaches and instead favour webinars.

Diagram 12: Investment of time in CDP (per annum)



**Diagram 13: Keeping up to date**





# Conceptual models and approaches

Coaching as a discipline borrows from numerous other fields such as psychology and adult learning<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly, coaches are trained in a number of models. We asked coaches how their training matches their selection of models in practice.

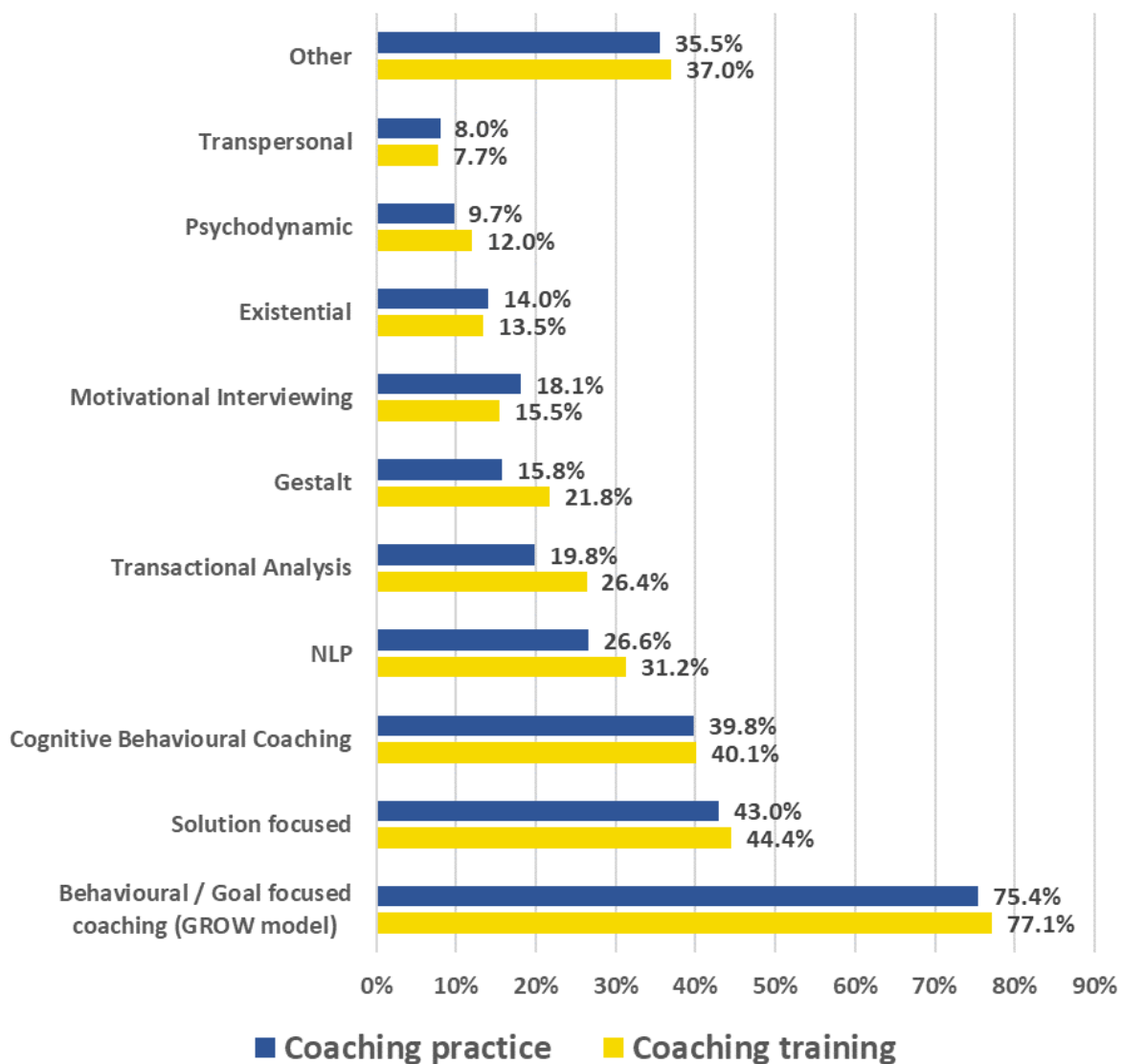
## Responses

The results (Diagram 14) are remarkably similar to the European findings with the slight exception that Cognitive Behavioural Coaching is more popular in

Africa than NLP. As in the European case, there is a close alignment between training and practice with some exceptions (Gestalt and Transactional analysis).

<sup>4</sup>Bachkirova, T, Spence, G, Drake, D (2016) Introduction. In T. Bachkirova, G. Spence, & D. Drake, The SAGE Handbook of Coaching (pp. 41-71). London: Sage publications.

**Diagram 14: Coaching practice vs Coaching training**





# Diversity of approaches

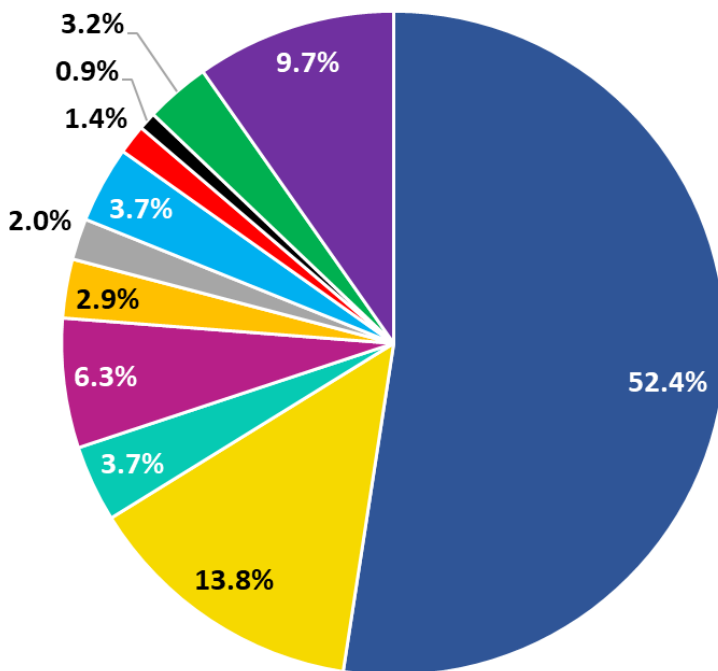
With so many coaching approaches and models in existence, which models are best suited for which situation? Not much research is available on this topic and the European study was among the first to investigate the matter. We asked African coaches which coaching model they would use in a number of scenarios.

## Responses

For Career coaching (Diagram 15), African coaches predominantly (52%) use Behavioural/ Goal focussed coaching. This differs from the European results where only 37% use this approach, favouring Solution focussed (21%) more.

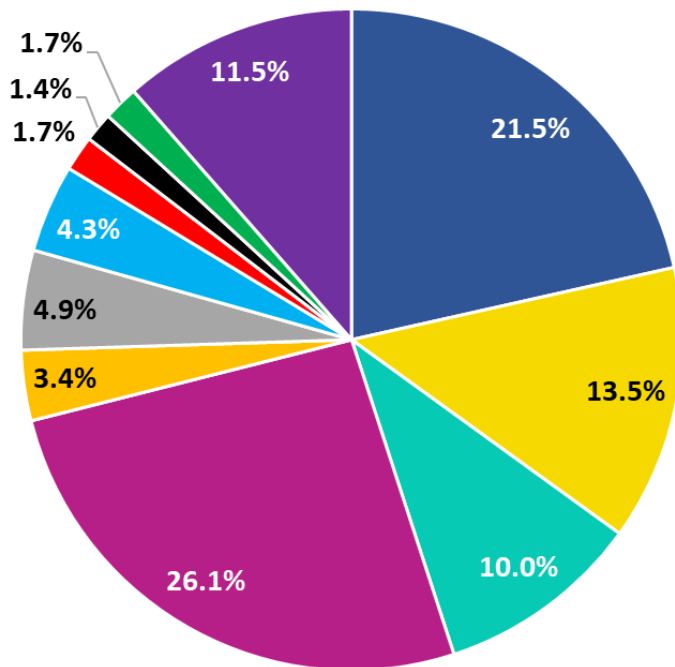
A similar trend emerged in Habitual checking of email/Social media (Diagram 20). In general, it appears that the more complex the presenting issues (e.g. Diversity issues – Diagram 18), the more varied and complex the approaches chosen by African coaches.

Diagram 15: Presenting issue 1 - Career coaching



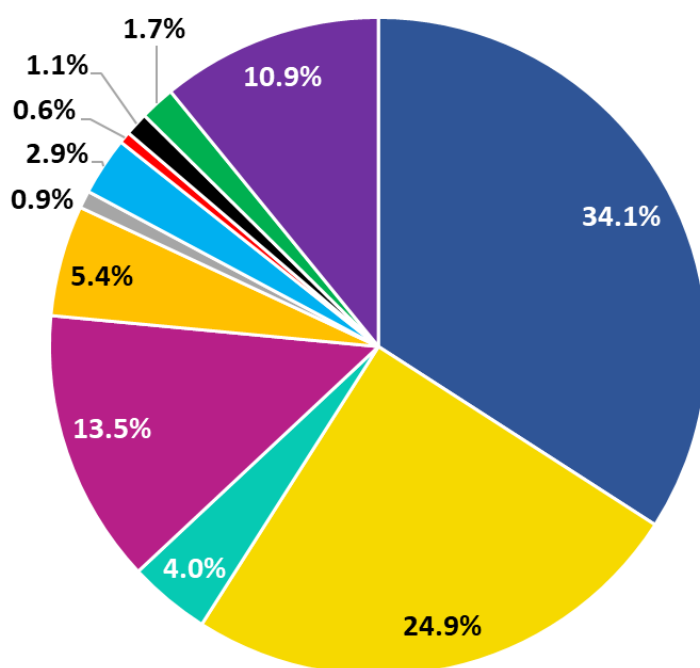
- Behavioural / GROW
- Solution focused
- NLP
- Cognitive Behavioural
- Transactional Analysis
- Gestalt
- Motivational Interviewing
- Psychodynamic
- Transpersonal
- Existential
- Other

Diagram 16: Presenting issue 2 - Procrastination



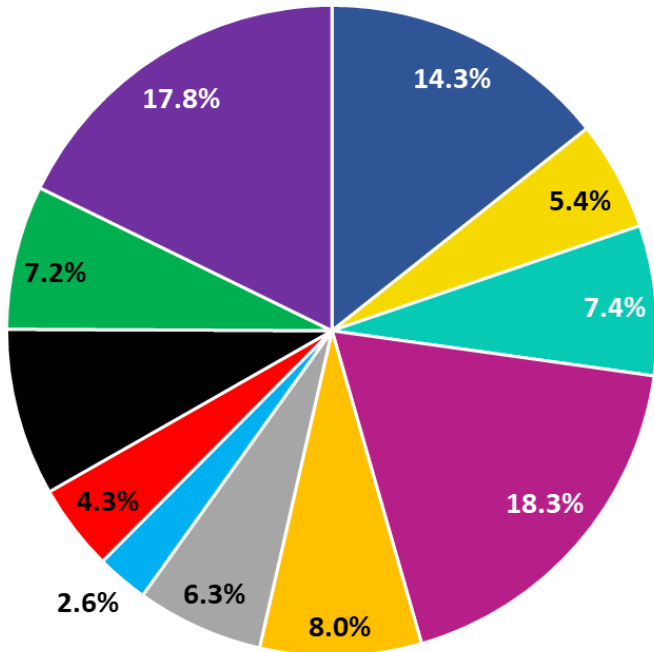
- Behavioural / GROW
- Solution focused
- NLP
- Cognitive Behavioural
- Transactional Analysis
- Gestalt
- Motivational Interviewing
- Psychodynamic
- Transpersonal
- Existential
- Other

Diagram 17: Presenting issue 3 - Time management



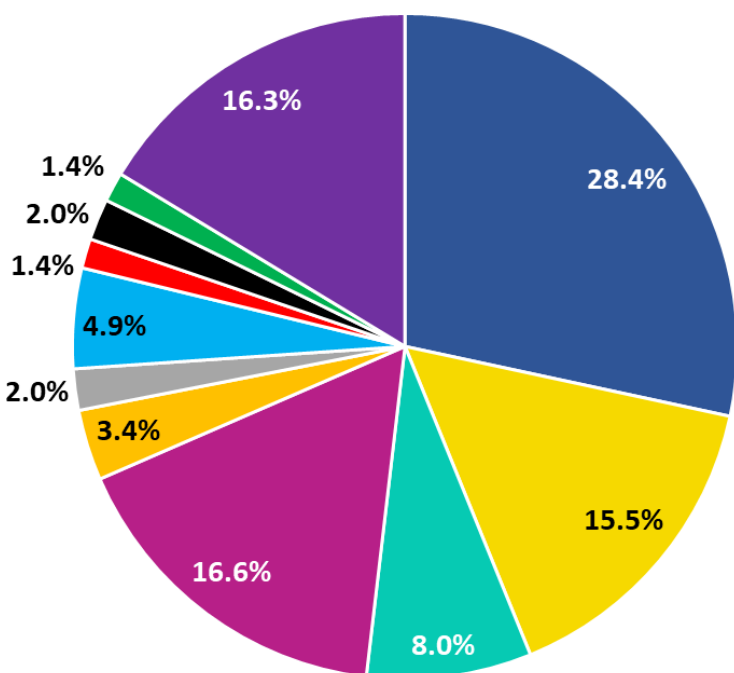
- Behavioural / GROW
- Solution focused
- NLP
- Cognitive Behavioural
- Transactional Analysis
- Gestalt
- Motivational Interviewing
- Psychodynamic
- Transpersonal
- Existential
- Other

Diagram 18: Presenting issue 4 - Diversity issues



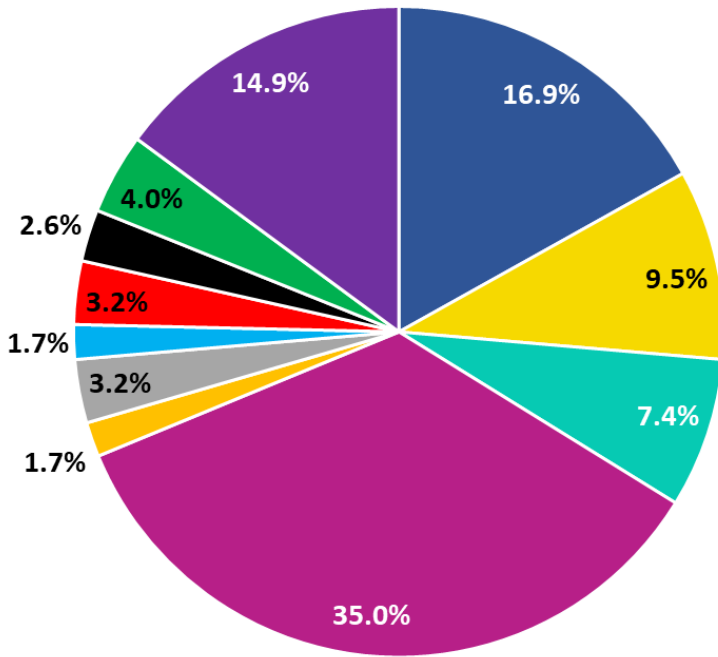
- Behavioural / GROW
- Solution focused
- NLP
- Cognitive Behavioural
- Transactional Analysis
- Gestalt
- Motivational Interviewing
- Psychodynamic
- Transpersonal
- Existential
- Other

Diagram 19: Presenting issue 5 - Improving presentation skills



- Behavioural / GROW
- Solution focused
- NLP
- Cognitive Behavioural
- Transactional Analysis
- Gestalt
- Motivational Interviewing
- Psychodynamic
- Transpersonal
- Existential
- Other

Diagram 20: Presenting issue 6 - Habitual checking of e-mail



- Behavioural / GROW
- Solution focused
- NLP
- Cognitive Behavioural
- Transactional Analysis
- Gestalt
- Motivational Interviewing
- Psychodynamic
- Transpersonal
- Existential
- Other



# Evaluation

Coaching is an estimated \$2 billion-dollar industry worldwide<sup>6</sup>. Evaluating the outcome of coaching is important if coaching is to maintain its growth trajectory. Both procurers of coaching services and the individuals being coached have a need to evaluate the time and money they invest in coaching interventions.

## Does coaching work?

Research has shown that coaching does indeed ‘work’<sup>7</sup>, so much so that the focus of coaching research has shifted in recent years away from whether coaching works to ‘how’ it works<sup>8</sup>. Nonetheless, the importance of evaluating coaching remains, so we so asked coaches when and how they obtain feedback on the outcomes of coaching.

## Responses

**It is encouraging to note that the vast majority of coaches do provide some form of feedback either**

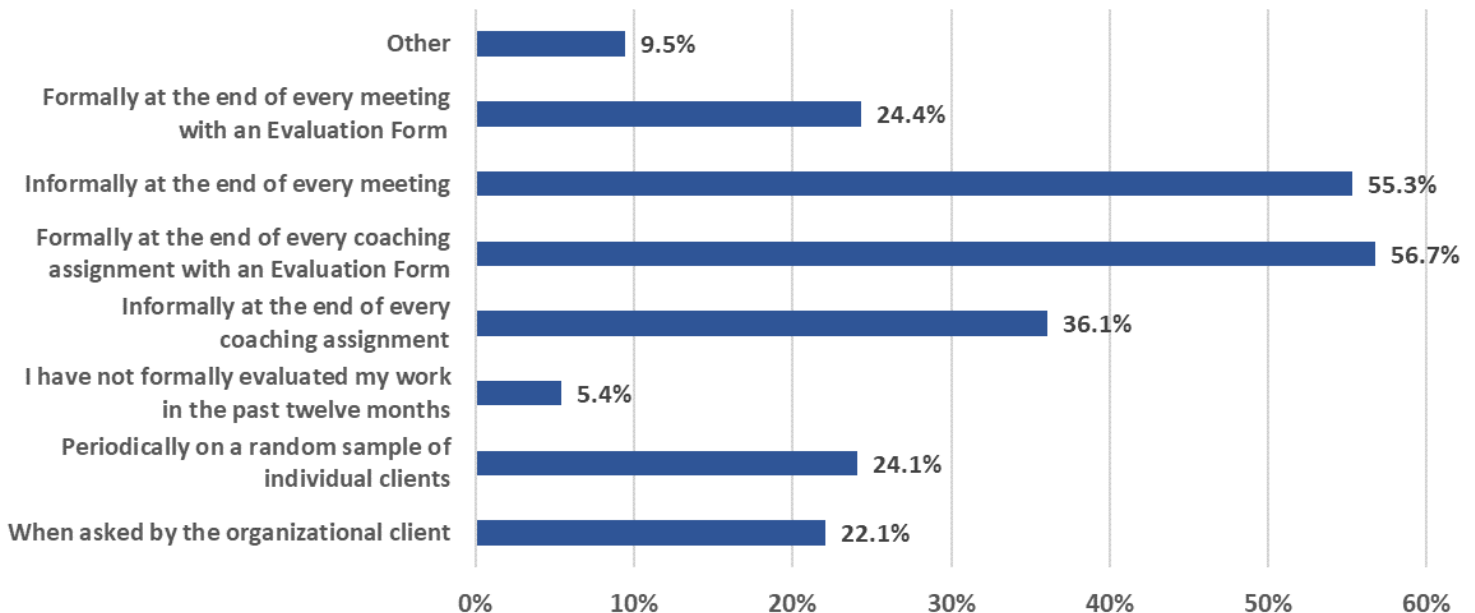
**formally or informally (Diagram 21). While most of the feedback is sourced from the client, the sponsors of the coaching (line manager and commissioning manager) are also included in the evaluation (Diagram 22). This is similar to the European finding.**

<sup>6</sup>Forbes.com., 2017, *The success and failure of the coaching industry*, viewed 28 June 2018, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/10/05/the-success-and-failure-of-the-coaching-industry/#3239dbdb6765>

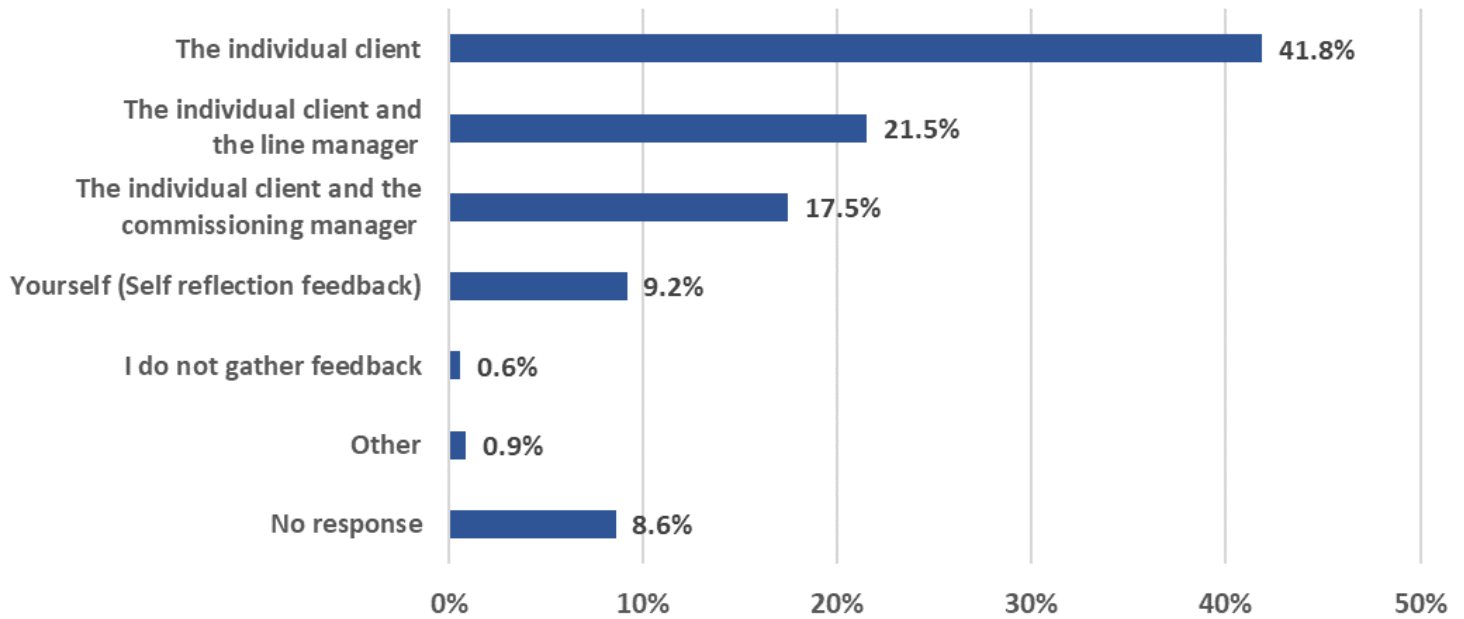
<sup>7</sup>Theeboom, T, Beersma, B & van Vianen, A E (2014) Does coaching work? A meta-analysis on the effects of coaching on individual level outcomes in an organizational context. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 9 (1), 1–18; Jones, R J, Woods, S A & Guillaume, Y R F (2016) The effectiveness of workplace coaching: A meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89 (2), 249–77

<sup>8</sup>De Haan, E, Bertie, C, Day, A, Sills, C (2010) Clients' Critical Moments of Coaching: Toward a “Client Model” of Executive Coaching. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(4): 607-621.

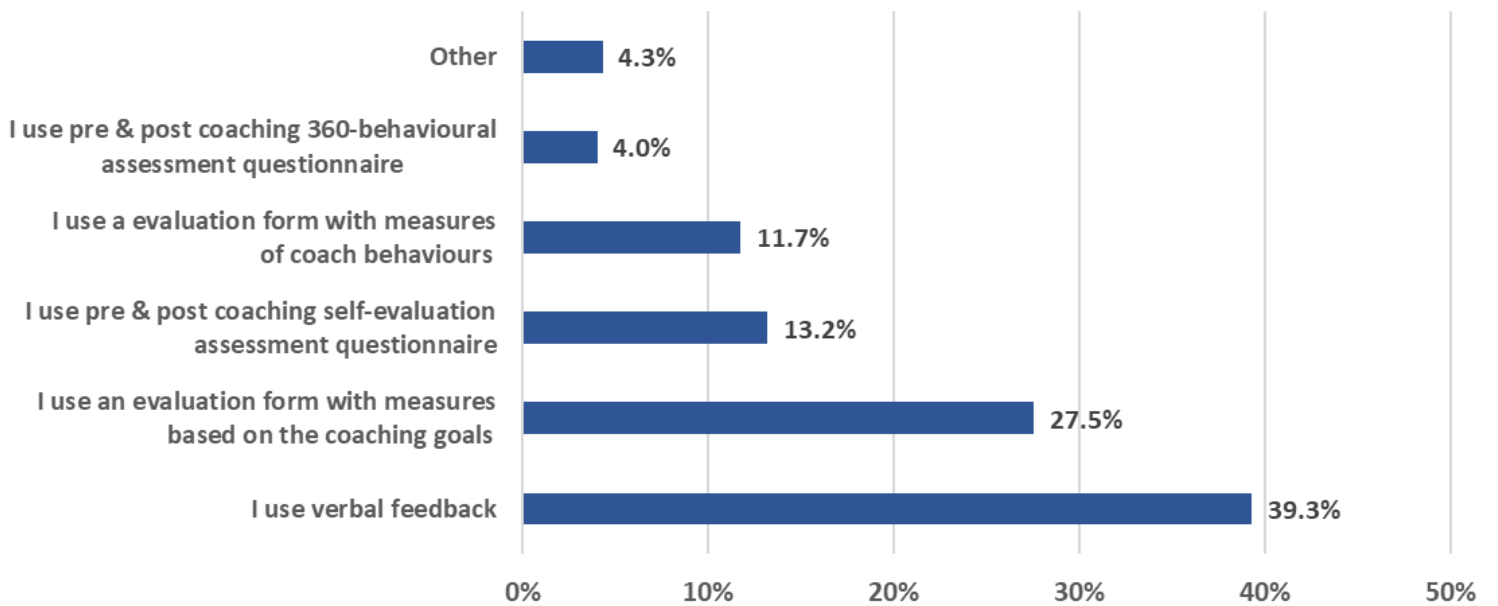
Diagram 21: Evaluating impact



**Diagram 22: Sources of feedback**



**Diagram 23: Measure to evaluate coaching**





# Contracting for corporate coaching assignments

## Coaching contracting

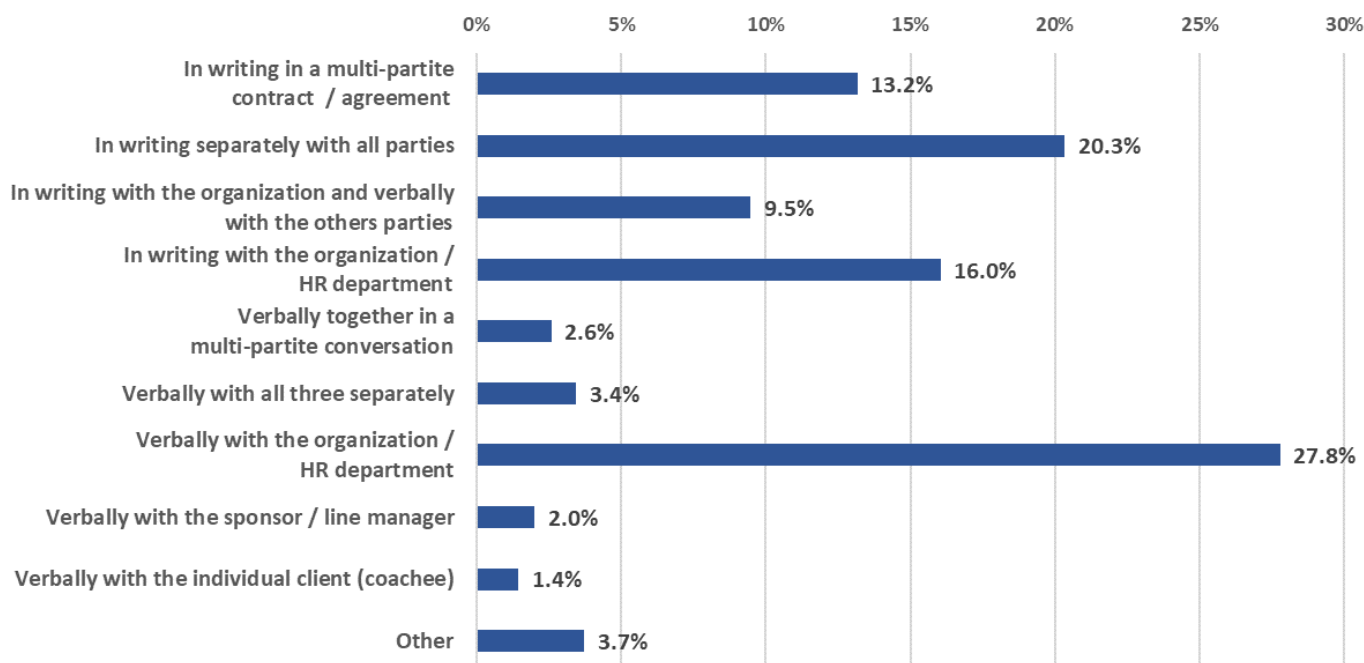
Contracting is an important part of a coaching intervention as it sets out the rules of engagement and helps to manage expectations. In organisational coaching the contract extends beyond the coach-client dyad and includes the sponsor. Contracting in this tri-partite setup is of particular importance to provide clarity on the level of confidentiality and the aim of the coaching. There are differing opinions as to who the actual client is in case an organisation pays for individual coaching. Is it the individual being coached, the organisation or both?

## Responses

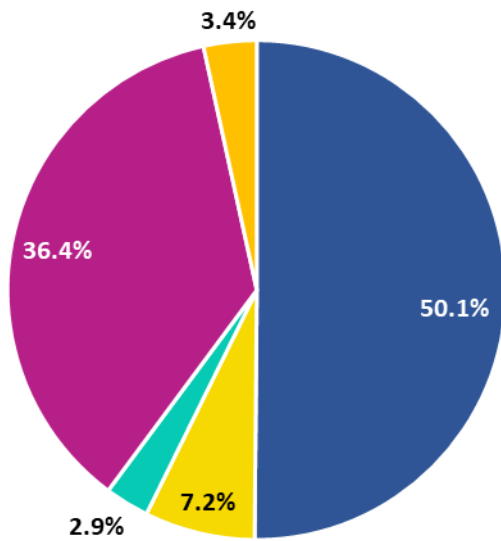
**African coaches have far more verbal agreements with HR (Diagram 24) than their European counterparts who prefer their agreements with HR in writing. Conversely, African coaches have more written agreements with individual clients compared to European coaching who prefer verbal client agreements.**

**The majority of African coaches (just over 50%) consider the individual to be the primary client (Diagram 25) compared to 58% of European coaches. African coaches are more inclined to consider both individual and organisation as equally important (36%) than European coaches (30%)**

Diagram 24: Agreeing the contract

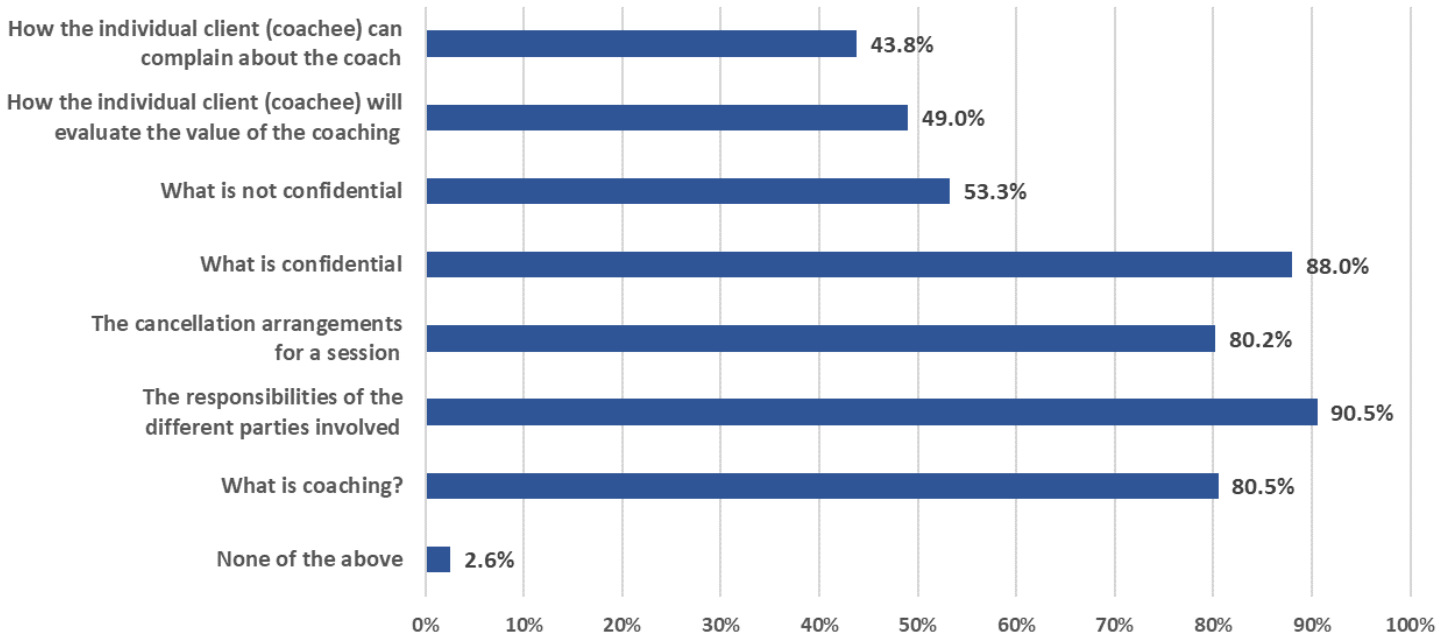


**Diagram 25: The primary client**



- Individual client (coachee)
- Organization / HR department
- Sponsor / client's line manager
- All are of equal importance
- Whoever is paying

**Diagram 26: Contract clauses - Individual client agreements**



# Ethics

## What are ethics?

Ethics can be defined as a set of moral principles that govern a person or group's behaviour<sup>9</sup>. Ethics form an important part of most professions and is especially important where people are directly involved.

## Why is ethics important in coaching?

Coaches deal with potentially conflicting situations given the often confidential, personal and intimate nature of coaching engagements. This combination of factors can lead to grey areas in terms of what is acceptable or not. A number of coaching bodies have prescribed ethical codes of conduct, but coaches' personal and cultural backgrounds as well as the presenting situation could influence the actual ethical behaviour of the coach. We presented coaches with a number of potentially problematic ethical situations and asked them what the most appropriate consequence for the coach should be.

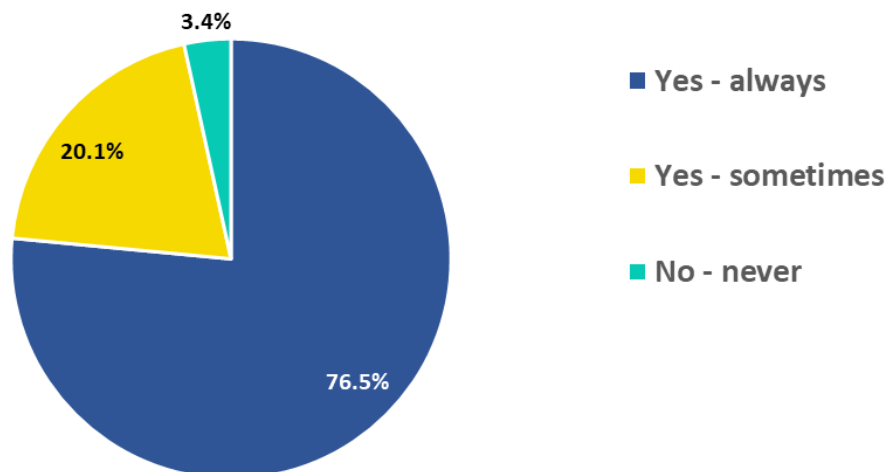
## Responses

As a start (Diagram 27), most coaches (76.5%) do at least share their ethical code with clients. This is slightly more than in Europe (72%). African coaches are also less inclined not to share their ethical codes at all (3.4%) compared to European coaches (6%). Ethical codes are shared mostly verbally (52,7% - Diagram 28) at the start of the coaching session. This could be interpreted as an attempt to build rapport with the client.

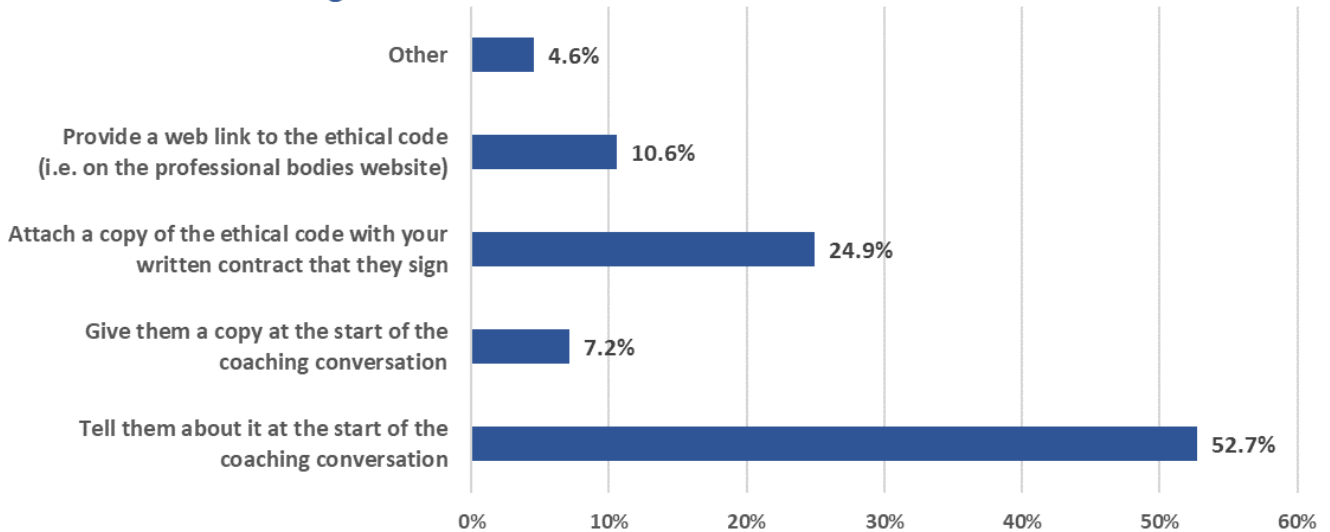
Diagrams 29 to 33 represent side-by-side comparisons between African and European views on specific ethical dilemmas and coaches' views on the consequences.

<sup>9</sup>Comensa.org.za., n.d., The Ethics Toolkit for Coaches and Mentors, viewed 28 June 2018, from [https://www.comensa.org.za/Content/Images/The\\_Ethics\\_Toolkit\\_for\\_Coaches\\_and\\_Mentors.pdf](https://www.comensa.org.za/Content/Images/The_Ethics_Toolkit_for_Coaches_and_Mentors.pdf)

Diagram 27: Are ethical codes shared with the client?



**Diagram 28: How are ethical codes shared with clients?**



### When asked what should happen to a coach

What should happen to a coach if they are found paying a fee to secure a coaching contract? African coaches appear to be stricter than European coaches as only 2.6% of African coaches think nothing should

happen, compared to 12% of European coaches. African coaches also opt for harsher punishment than European coaches in that nearly 70% feel a coach should be removed from their professional body for one year or permanently or reported to the police. This is in comparison to 54% of European coaches.

**Diagram 29: Ethical dilemma 1 - Coach pays a fee to secure the contract**



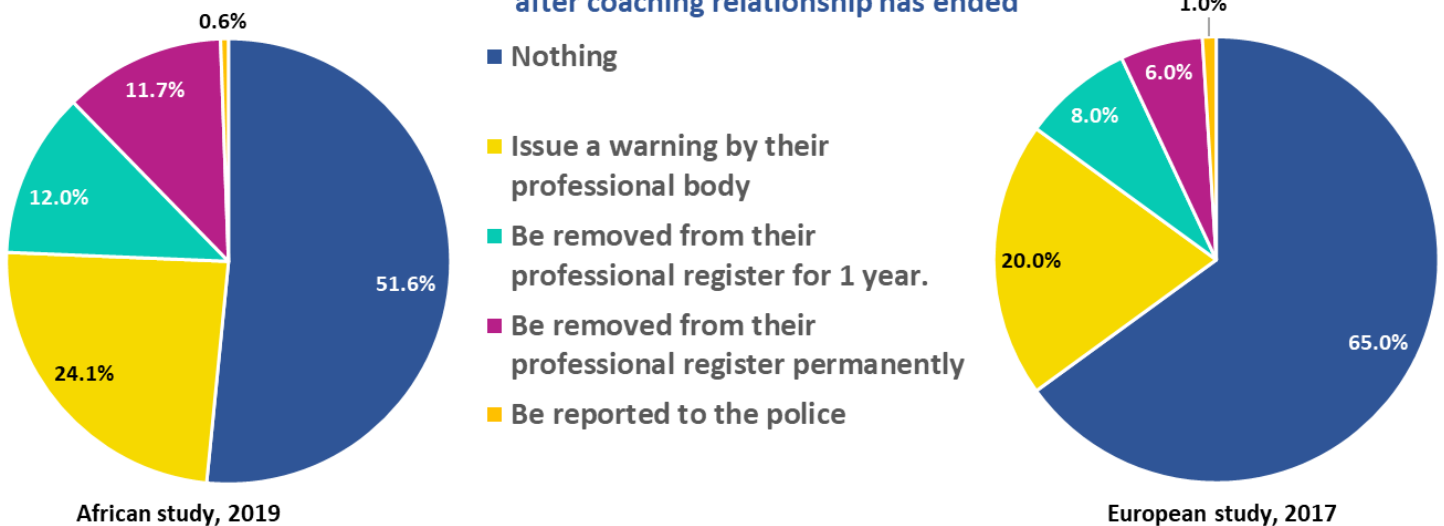
**Diagram 30: Ethical dilemma 2 - Coach enters a sexual relationship with client**



When it comes to sexual relationships with clients, African coaches are also stricter with themselves than European coaches. Only about 22% of African coaches think coaches should come off lightly through either no consequences or a warning from their professional body, versus 35% of European coaches. More than 50% of African coaches think an

offending coach should be permanently removed from their professional body compared to 36% of European coaches. Perhaps the fact that COMENSA provides explicit guidelines about sexual relationships with clients play a role in the African result.

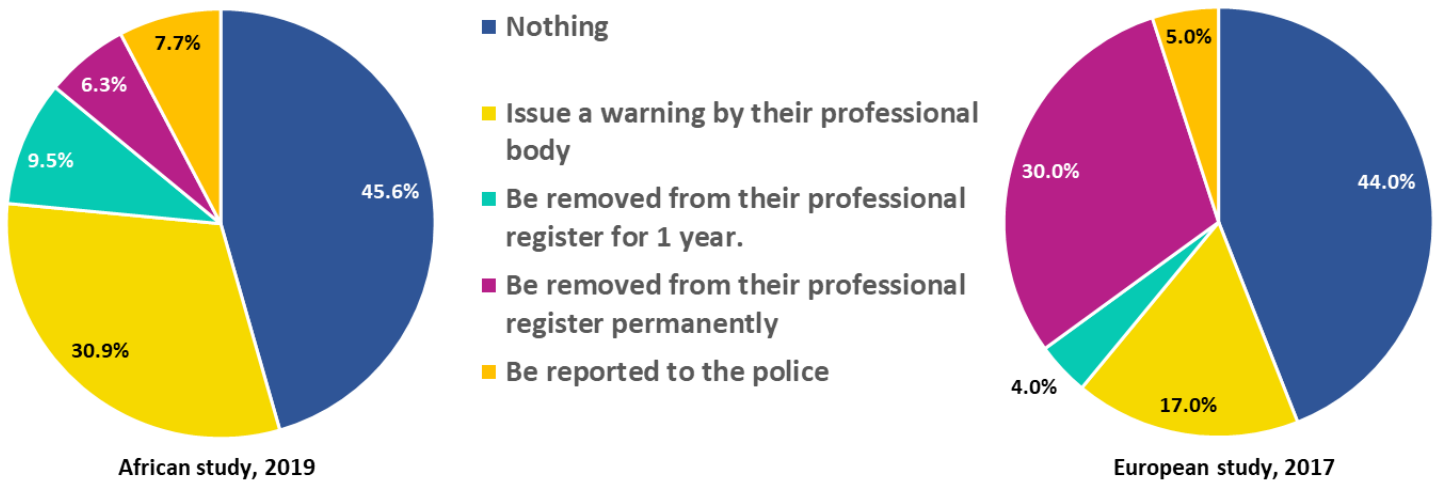
**Diagram 31: Ethical dilemma 3 - Coach enters a sexual relationship with a client after one month after coaching relationship has ended**



One month after coaching has ended most coaches (51.6%) think it is acceptable to enter into a sexual relationship with a client (the European study asked, 'once coaching has ended' and the result was that

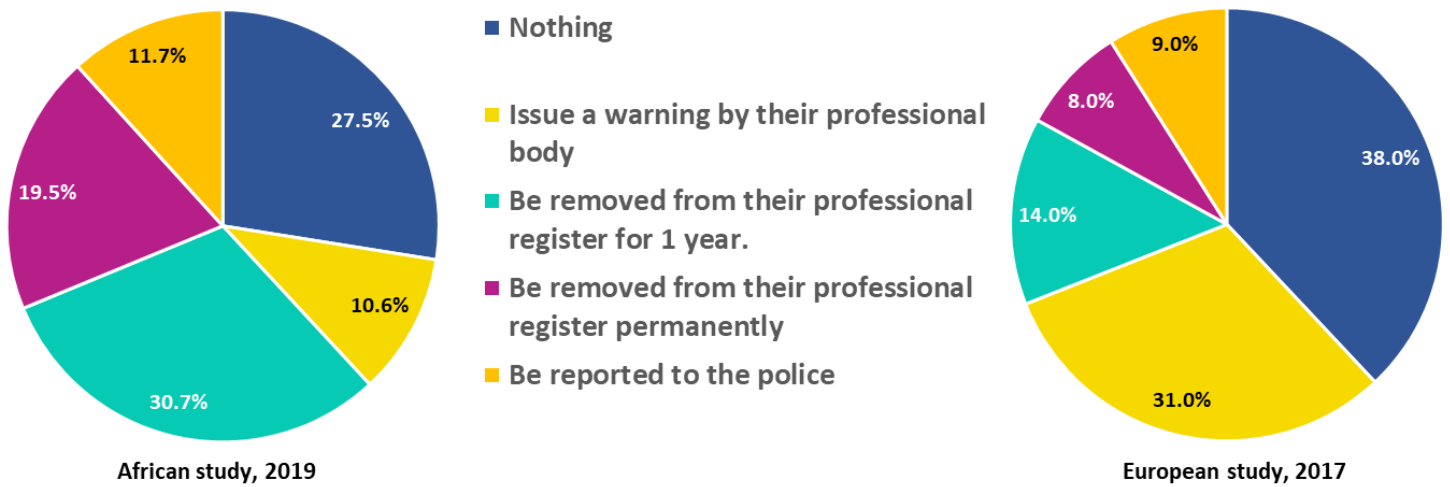
65% stating 'noting should happen'). If coaching is to become a true profession, is this type of behaviour acceptable?

**Diagram 32: Ethical dilemma 4 - Coach fails to report 'low-level' drug taking by the client**



In terms of drug taking by a client, European coaches are stricter than African coaches with 61% of European coaches suggesting no action of a warning compared to 77% of African coaches.

**Diagram 33: Ethical dilemma 5 - Coach fails to report theft of commercially sensitive information**



Commercial theft on the other hand is considered more serious by African than European coaches. Only about 39% of African coaches feel no action or a warning is sufficient, compared to 69% of European coaches.

It is clear from these comparisons on ethics that interpretations and sentiments vary considerably, and we repeat the recommendation from the European report that professional coaching bodies

(and coach training providers) have a leading role to play in the education and enforcement of ethical codes of conduct.



# Commissioning coaching

## Coach commissioners

Coach commissioners are the people responsible to procure coaching services for their organisations. Within larger organisations the commissioning of coaching services is typically managed by human resource professionals.

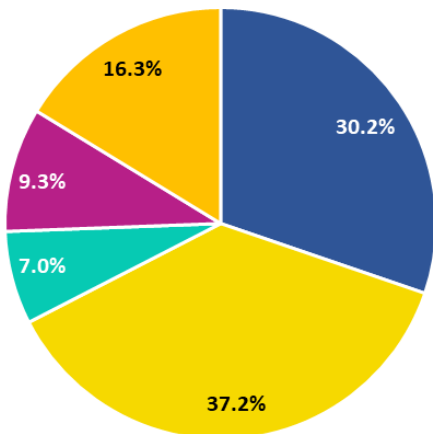
Line managers and consultants are also known to commission coaching for their team members or for specific projects. Commissioners' criteria and considerations for coach selection provide insight into how coaches could prepare and position themselves.

## Responses

For commissioners of coaching in Africa (Diagram 34), the professional qualification of the coach is the most important consideration (37%) followed by the experience of the coach (30%). This is in contrast to European commissioners who look at the experience of the coach (50%) more than their qualifications (23%). Interestingly, price in both Africa and Europe is not the most important criterion.

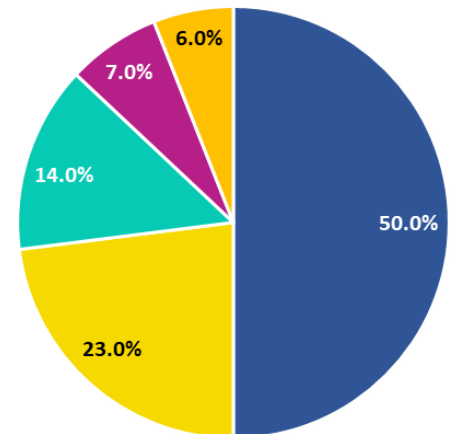
Commissioners of coaching consider all parties in the coaching process to be of equal importance (Diagram 35). This is the case in both Africa and Europe. It is interesting to note how this differs from the coaches' view (Diagram 24) that it is the client who is most important. The results for Europe are similar.

Diagram 34: Criteria used most in coach selection



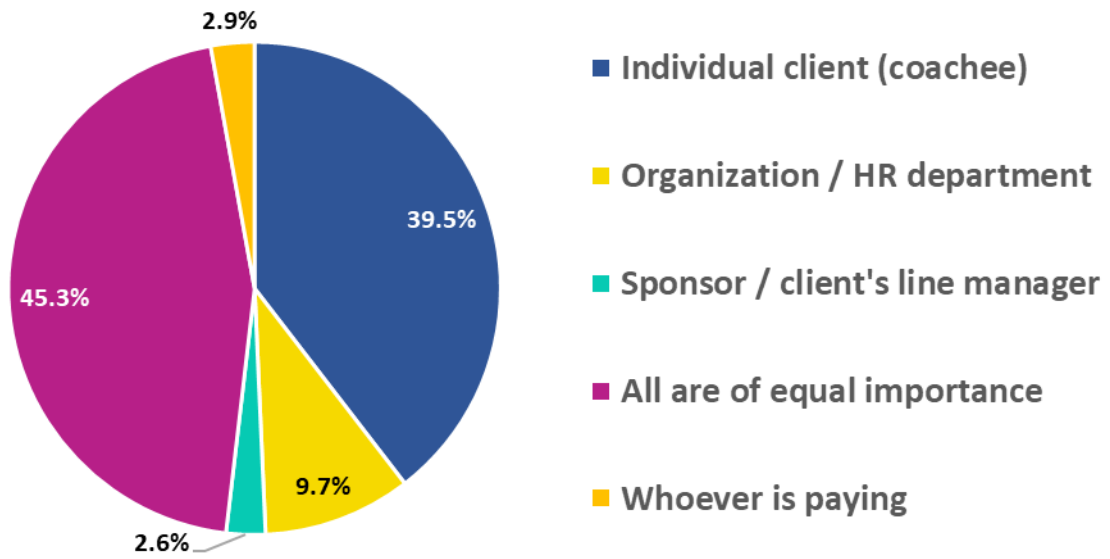
African study, 2019

- Experience of individual coach
- Professional qualification of the individual coach
- Experience of the provider organization
- Price

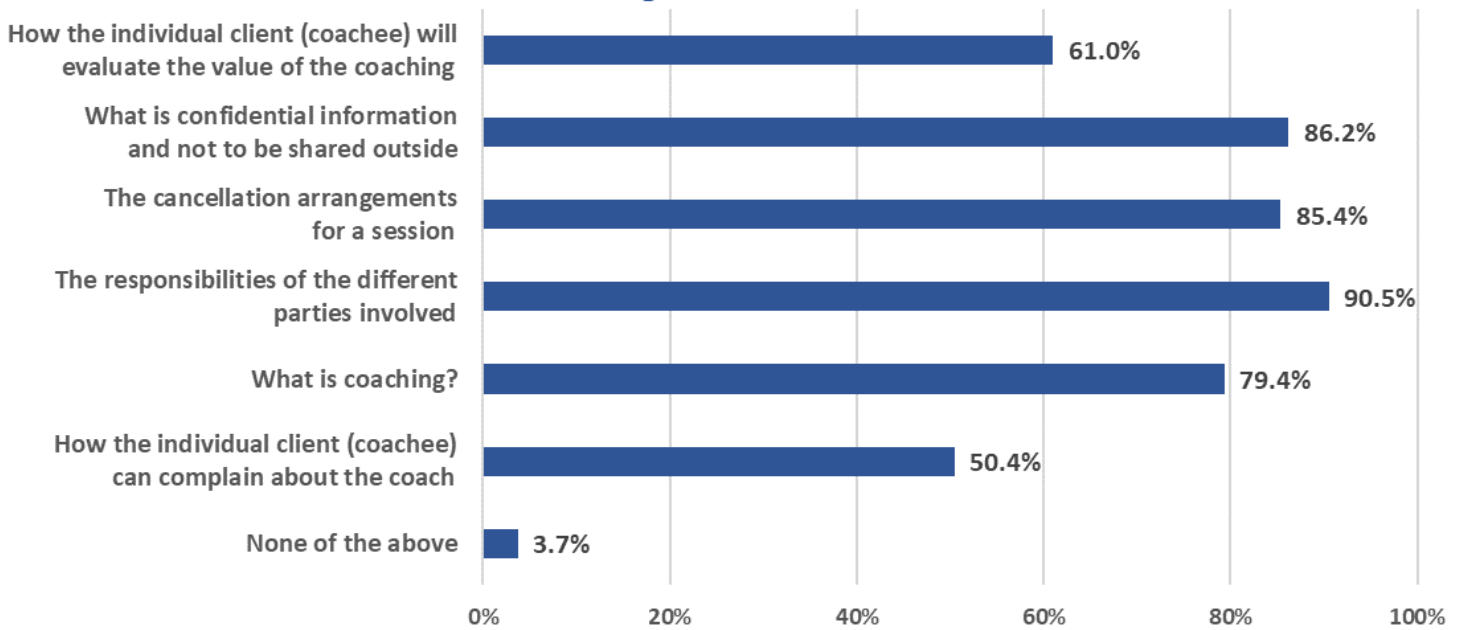


European study, 2017

**Diagram 35: Primary client of corporate / organisational coaching**



**Diagram 36: What aspects are explicitly included in your contract with the organisation?**



With special appreciation to

## AFRICA EXECUTIVE COACHING COUNCIL (AECC)

The Africa Executive Coaching Council (AECC) is a multi-industry aggregator and advocate for executive coaching across Africa that was incorporated in Zambia in 2018. The Council seeks to create an executive coaching eco-system in Africa that promotes best practice and relevant support to stakeholders for positive transformation.



Africa Executive  
Coaching Council

The Council's work is around advocacy and awareness raising on executive coaching in Africa, promoting best practice, publishing evidence-based studies, increasing access to accredited training, advisory, and connecting stakeholders.

We see executive coaching providers, organisations, academia and associations as a highly networked sector with strong interdependent connections. We aim to bring them together. We connect open-minded people from across the continent.

AECC works through regional hubs: East Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa.

For more information, visit: [www.aeccouncil.com](http://www.aeccouncil.com)



**University of Stellenbosch Business School  
MPhil in Management Coaching**

Carl Cronjé Drive, Bellville 7530, Cape Town, South Africa

T: +27 (0)21 918 4246 | E: [coaching@usb.ac.za](mailto:coaching@usb.ac.za) | W: [www.usb.ac.za/coaching](http://www.usb.ac.za/coaching)



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**Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA)**

**SAQA Recognised Professional Body**

35 Glenoak Road, Welcome Glen, Simon's Town, 7975, South Africa

T: +27 21 781 0812 | E: [research@comensa.org.za](mailto:research@comensa.org.za) | W: [www.comensa.org.za](http://www.comensa.org.za)



**Henley Business School**

**Professional Certificate in Executive Coaching**

Henley Business School, Greenlands, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 3AU, UK

T: +44 (0) 1491 418 767 E: [exec@henley.ac.uk](mailto:exec@henley.ac.uk)

or

Henley Business School Africa, Corner of Milcliff & Witkoppen Roads, Paulsoff 2191, South Africa

T: +27 011 808 0860 E: [info@henleysa.ac.za](mailto:info@henleysa.ac.za)



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