



2022 WHITEPAPER

STATE OF DIVERSITY

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International Coaching Federation

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WORDS FROM OUR GLOBAL DIRECTOR, DEIJB

Over the past 2.5 years, ICF has committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging (DEIJB) throughout our ecosystem. Part of the commitment was introducing my role as the Global Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice and the inception of our diversity statement. I am excited to be on this journey with ICF. One of my first tasks was identifying our DEIJB strengths and pain points. The comprehensive audit provided great insight into this. Additionally, through our research efforts, we were better able to define diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging.

Diversity

The composition of differences and similarities amongst individuals, communities, and groups.

Equity

Providing resources and allocations to ensure everyone has access to the same resources and opportunities.

Inclusion

Inclusion: An environment where acts are intentional and deliberate to embrace diversity.

Justice

Eliminating or alleviating barriers to resources and opportunities that hinder individuals from an equitable society.

Belonging

A feeling of being valued, being oneself without judgment. The state of being one's authentic self.



Thank you to the entire ICF family and our stakeholders for your support, efforts, and contributions to DEIJB.

A large, elegant handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "LaKisha C. Brooks".

-LaKisha C. Brooks
Global Director, DEIJB

WHO ARE WE?



The ICF is an expansive, global association. Our international reach reflects both the vitality and applicability of coaching as a profession and discipline. As a global leader, we strive constantly to strengthen and foster growth among our members and credential-holders as well as build awareness and expand access to coaching in new communities and cultures.



As of March 2022, ICF was comprised of 54,177 members in over 140 nations and territories. While the largest segments of our membership reside in North America and Western Europe, we have members in all seven regions of the world.



As the coaching profession has gained visibility and garnered wider interest, more coaches have entered the profession and joined the ICF. Subsequently, our membership has grown and with it, local ICF chapters. At the time of printing, approximately 140 local chapters across all seven regions of the globe were registered with ICF Global. This level of local activity also demonstrates how engaged ICF members are in the organization and profession.



We include among our members young professionals of the Millennial and Centennial generations as well as members from the Greatest Generation. These coaches represent a range of coaching specialties, and many are credentialed at the ACC, PCC or MCC level. Insights into the coach specialties of our membership, their years of experience and other professional details are highlighted below.

APPROACH

We undertook three major data collection efforts to elicit input and feedback on DEIJB strengths, opportunities, challenges and needs. These included (1) a comprehensive review of membership records, (2) focus groups involving members from four of our six ICF family organizations, and (3) surveys of members and chapter leaders on issues of diversity and belonging.

Member Records Assessment

A descriptive analysis was conducted using current member records. This effort involved sorting and analyzing member records for background characteristics, credentialing level, coaching type, and years of experience. While this exercise provided an elevated perspective for assessing our current state of diversity as an association with global membership, it bears noting that ICF members are currently not asked to self-identify race/ethnicity or disclose disability status. Consequently, our current ability to analyze, draw insights or identify diversification needs and opportunities related to our membership is severely limited.

Because this effort relied on members to self-report and share, not all records offered an equal degree of detail. There were gaps in our data. However, this remained an important first step in assessing the degree of diversity within our association's membership.



Focus Groups

Four focus groups were conducted, one for each of the following ICF family organizations: Coaching Education, Coaching in Organizations, Credentials and Standards and Thought Leadership. We recruited between 5-10 participants for each focus group. Participants represented ICF staff and volunteer leadership. The discussion for each group was facilitated by ICF's Director of DEIJB.

Groups met for approximately 45 minutes and discussed the impact of ICF's Statement of Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging and Justice and new efforts on their family organization's partners and stakeholders and internal leadership.

APPROACH

Focus Groups cont.

Each group was asked to share how the diversity statement was being incorporated and embedded into their family organization's overall strategy. We also explored the key challenges facing each family organization in their effort to strengthen DEIJB and the forms of support and resources that would aid their efforts.

All members of the focus group were given time to contribute. Each discussion was recorded, transcribed, and coded for key themes.

Surveys

Two instruments were developed to collect data from individual ICF members and chapter members on DEIJB experiences and new activities. The Member Diversity and Belonging survey collected confidential data from ICF members about their personal experiences, perceptions, and insights related to diversity, equity, inclusivity, justice, and belonging. By contrast, the Chapter Diversity Questionnaire elicited input from local ICF chapter leaders on their chapter's efforts to practice DEIJB. This was a significant undertaking and key step for ICF in deciphering DEIJB challenges and opportunities. It was also an effort of considerable scope given the global membership and reach of our association.

The Member Diversity and Belonging survey contained 31 questions about ICF Global and chapter recruitment and retention practices and commitment to DEIJB. Members were also asked to share demographics and their personal experiences with DEIJB when engaging with ICF and other members. Survey participants were selected at random. invited to participate.

~50%

of the ICF members were invited to participate.

They were contacted by email and received a digital version of the survey and were given approximately two weeks to complete and return it. We felt two weeks was an appropriate window of time that allowed members some flexibility while being a narrow enough turnaround to promote survey completion.

The Chapter Diversity Questionnaire was a shorter instrument (9 questions) that elicited input from chapter presidents about their local chapter's efforts and programs to strengthen diversity. Approximately 140 chapter presidents were contacted. The questionnaire was shared with each president, and they were given approximately two weeks to complete and return it.



KEY FINDINGS

Although all ICF members are asked to share key background information, not all members comply. Their reasoning for doing so is not clear. However, incomplete records made some analyses less informative and hindered our ability to rigorously report full member demographics and characteristics. What follows is a select description of member data for characteristics we felt confident in reporting.

The ICF membership is diverse in age, encompassing professionals who are just beginning their professional careers as well as members who are retirement age or older. Approximately 15% of our members are under 40 years of age, while 9% report being 60 years or older. Overwhelmingly, our community is comprised of coaching professionals in middle age who fall between 40-59 years of age (58%).

About 60% of our members are newer coaches with 5 or fewer years of experience in the profession and a sizable proportion of this member group consists of coaches with 3 or fewer years in the field (46%). By contrast, around 18% have between 6-10 years of experience and 22% have been practicing for over a decade. Given these distinctions in years of experience, it's not surprising that over half of ICF member coaches are credentialed at the Associate Certified Coach (28%) and Professional Certified Coach (25%) levels. Just under 3% have achieved the master certification level.

The ICF membership also comprises a great variety of coaching types. While some coaches identify as generalists or non-specialists, the majority do align with a specific field or specialty. Among our members, the largest number of reporting members identify as corporate coaches or life coaches. Executive coaches are also heavily represented among members who disclosed their specialty area.

Many ICF members are also aligned with coaching chapters in their community. Over 29,000 ICF members reported involvement in a local ICF chapter, which shows the level of member engagement at the community level. While ICF local chapters are present in every region of the world, regions with the highest number of chapters (chartered and unchartered) were North America (57), Western Europe (17) and the Middle East and Africa (17).

Focus Groups

Four focus groups were convened, and participants were recruited from ICF leadership and staff from four of the ICF family organizations. Board members from each family organization were invited to attend. Although most participants were based in North America, every ICF region had representation.

KEY FINDINGS

Focus Groups cont.

To begin, participants were asked to share how ICF's statement on diversity had impacted their family organization's stakeholders and board. Participants across the four groups widely reported that DEIJB had little impact on their board as they were already diverse in composition, strategic direction, and activities. A few participants affirmed that the ICF statement was changing board diversity for the better in their family organization and others expressed the intention to apply the ICF statement moving forward.

Several saw the ICF statement as beneficial to stakeholders and appreciated how their family organization was responding with resources to guide DEIJB. Others felt the statement was still relatively new and therefore it was too early to determine whether it was improving stakeholder perceptions of being heard and seen. Others intended to use the new diversity statement as a tool to better measure key performance indicators (KPIs) within their family organization. All participants expected that the statement would have a positive impact over the long-term.

Next, focus group participants were asked to reflect on their family organization's board and identify the greatest need or pain point they faced related to diversity. Responses were varied, but several key themes emerged from the discussion. Participants described a need to strengthen each board's working knowledge of DEIJB, which would in turn aid them in better identifying diversity shortfalls. This included a need to better support and promote the coaching profession in regions with limited representation, such as in Africa and the Middle East. Additionally, they identified the need for more logistics support for outreach and engagement across different time zones and more support for U.S.-based coaches who were working across countries. There was also a need to closely examine existing systems and processes as potential barriers to DEIJB. Coaching curricula, training and credentialing costs, job opportunities and placements were among the systems participants highlighted. Expanding access to the demographics of current coaches and coach candidates was also identified as a need to better determine diversification priorities and where underrepresentation was of greatest concern.

Participants were asked to describe how their board was implementing DEIJB into the family organization's strategy. According to focus group members, implementation was occurring at the board level and with stakeholders. Specifically, family organization boards had already sought opportunities to strengthen diversity by adding new board members of differing ethnicities, gender identities, backgrounds, experiences, and differing residential locations. Some were fostering greater belonging for new board members through training offerings and by allowing new members to contribute more immediately to board activities and direction. In several cases, participants shared that their boards were openly discussing difficult topics and encouraging honest conversations. They indicated that board members were facilitating more open exchanges through the practice of close listening, respectful discussion, and by generating solutions informed by more than one perspective.

KEY FINDINGS

Focus Groups cont.

Focus group members indicated that in several instances, family organization boards had developed goals related to DEIJB and acknowledged the impact goals would have on their stakeholders. To aid stakeholders in achieving set goals, some boards were developing and providing new resources or expanding upon existing resources.

Participants were next asked to reflect and describe the support their board most needed to implement DEIJB into their strategy. Training on all aspects of DEIJB was the most critical need focus group participants identified. They indicated that training was most needed to clarify the ICF DEIJB framework and to introduce global initiatives that would focus on specific facets of DEIJB. Additionally, participants requested guidance on how stakeholders may be part of the data collection process, support the recruitment of more diverse coaches, and aid coaches in incorporating DEIJB into their practices. A few raised the need for data on current coaches, as well.

Focus group participants were offered an opportunity to share last thoughts. Several noted that ICF's effort to diversify and foster greater inclusion was not a new one. Rather, they stated that the organization had long been committed to welcoming diverse members and nurturing an inclusive community. However, they felt DEIJB should become an integral part of ICF and not held as a distinct and separate initiative.

According to participants, better and more intentional implementation of DEIJB would help offset potential legal challenges as well as internal resistance to expanding DEIJB programs and resources that may occur when working toward that goal. Some called for a shared definition of DEIJB that included multiple perspectives such as extending the definition of diversity to include diversity of thought and skills, among others.

Surveys: Member Diversity & Belonging

To elicit input and feedback from the current membership, a survey on DEIJB was distributed to over 23,700 ICF members. Members were selected at random, and more than 1,800 responses were received (7.5% response rate). Surveyed members were asked to report several demographics. These included ethnicity/race, gender identity, generation, disability status, and several membership-related details.

Among respondents, well over half (63%) self-reported as white; more modest proportions reported as African American/Black (10%), Asian (8%) and Hispanic/non-white (2%). Almost 13% opted not to answer.

Survey respondents skewed heavily female (assigned at birth) in gender identity, representing 66% of the sample. About 23% identified as male (assigned at birth). Less than 1% of the sample identified as non-binary, gender neutral or gender fluid. Almost 10% declined to answer.

KEY FINDINGS

Surveys: Member Diversity & Belonging cont.

In terms of age, respondents were disproportionately members of Generation X (45%) or were Baby Boomers (35%). Far fewer identified as Millennials (6.4%) or the Greatest Generation (1.3%). The vast majority of respondents reported living in North America (59%), followed by Western Europe (21%) and Asia (6%). Smaller proportions of respondents reside in Latin America or the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, or Oceania.

Almost 9% of respondents reported living with a disability. A considerable proportion of surveyed members reported no disability (81%) and 10% preferred not to answer.

Surveyed members were asked to share the duration of their membership with ICF. Interestingly, the largest segment of members had been with ICF for 2 years or less (38%). Almost 17% had been members between 3-4 years and 14% for 5-7 years. Some 18% had been with ICF for a decade or more. Of these responding members, the majority (32%) had achieved credentialing at the PCC level. Just under 30% were accredited at the ACC level and 5% had an MCC credential. Almost 8% were not pursuing a credential at the time of survey.

We were also interested learning member perceptions of ICF Global and local chapter affiliates. For most respondents (61%), a coach training program provided their first introduction to ICF Global. Others learned of ICF Global through another coach professional (15%) or a local ICF chapter (10%). A sizable number learning about the association through online research into coaching, while others couldn't recall.

Among respondents, more than three-fourths of members (78%) reported affiliating with a local ICF chapter. Just 16% were unaffiliated. Approximately 5% didn't know their affiliation status and 1% didn't respond. Within the group of affiliated coaches, most learned about their local chapter through ICF Global (32%), a coach training program (22%), or another coach professional (14%).

Respondents were asked to share their perceptions of access to leadership roles within ICF Global and whether the opportunities for leadership were fair and equitable. Just under 35% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "I have had a fair and equitable opportunity to serve in a leadership role." Almost 30% were neutral (neither agreed or disagreed). About 29% reported they were uninterested in leadership. Less than 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Perceptions of equitable access to leadership roles at the chapter level were also explored. Among respondents just under 50% agreed or strongly agreed that "I have had a fair and equitable opportunity to serve in a leadership role within my ICF Chapter." A little over 20% were neutral (neither agreed or disagreed) and less than 25% were disinterested in leadership. Less than 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

KEY FINDINGS

Surveys: Member Diversity & Belonging cont.

We also inquired about perceptions of communication and collaboration at ICF Global and within chapters. Just under 40% of respondents described communication and collaboration as mostly or completely open within ICF Global. About 15% considered it moderately open, approximately 10% felt it was somewhat open or not at all. Less than 40% reported not knowing.

At the chapter level, a striking 50% of respondents considered communication and collaboration mostly open or completely open. Roughly 15% considered chapter-level communication and collaboration moderately open, approximately 12% stated it was somewhat open or not at all; about 25% indicated they didn't know.

To gain insight into member knowledge of ICF Global's stance on DEIJB, respondents were asked to indicate if they were familiar with the association's statement. Some 62% of surveyed members were aware of the statement. Far fewer were knowledgeable about the ICF's new DEIJB Education Resource Guide for coach trainers and educators. Only 32% of survey respondents were familiar with the guide.

Members were also asked to share their perceptions of how closely ICF Global's actions and operations adhered to the association's DEIJB statement. Over 60% agreed or agreed strongly that ICF's core values (integrity, excellence, respect, collaboration) are founded on DEIJB principles; 30% neither agreed or disagreed and less than 5% disagreed.

Since the ICF's DEIJB Statement in July 2020, we explored if respondents felt the ICF's core values (integrity, collaboration, excellent and respect) were founded on a shared commitment to DEIJB. Among respondents, 43% agreed and 24% strongly agreed that core values were founded on a shared commitment, 27% neither agreed nor disagreed. Smaller percentages of respondents disagreed (4%) or strongly disagreed (2%).

About 55% of members agreed or strongly agreed that ICF has recognized it cannot ignore or overlook the systemic problems facing many coaches and their clients at the community level; approximately 35% neither agreed or disagreed and under 5% disagreed. Almost 50% agreed or strongly agreed that ICF had reflected on organizational blind spots and increased internal awareness of opportunities for improvement around DEIJB. About 45% neither agreed nor disagreed on whether this action adhered to the ICF's DEIJB statement. About 5% disagreed. Finally, about 35% agreed or strongly agreed that ICF places DEIJB at the forefront of all decision-making. Roughly 50% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed and just under 10% disagreed.

KEY FINDINGS

Surveys: Member Diversity & Belonging cont.

Local chapters are a key form of engagement and member involvement within ICF. To better determine the climate, collaboration, and communication level within chapters, a few survey questions prompted members to weigh-in. About half of respondents were evenly split in assessing their chapter's leadership as being mostly, moderately, or somewhat diverse while 17% were evenly split between completely and not at all and the remaining third did not know. About 65% of surveyed members who held chapter affiliations indicated they felt psychologically safe within their local chapter. Less than 5% reported not feeling safe and about 25% were neutral. About a quarter of respondents described their chapter as mostly or completely communicative and collaborative. Roughly 15% described their chapter as moderately so and just under 20% reported it as only somewhat communicative and collaborative.

The direct experience of members is another important source of insight into DEIJB at ICF. We asked members to share back if they had ever witnessed actions or heard comments that were biased or discriminatory when in conversation with other members or while attending ICF events or meetings. Just under 13% reported having observed or heard biased or discriminatory comments or behavior; 87% had not.

Regarding individual member encounters within ICF, 75% reported feeling valued and welcomed; 60% agreed that differing ideas, concepts, and opinions were welcomed and 65% agreed that ICF members appreciate diversity and value others whose backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences are different from their own.

One initiative the ICF has considered for advancing DEIJB was the creation of member resource groups. These groups would include members with similar backgrounds or identities, supporters, advocates, and champions who believe in the importance of DEIJB and will work collaboratively to recruit, support, and develop members who are currently less represented in the association. Approximately 39% of surveyed members indicated support for this new structure to further diversify ICF and would willingly serve in such a group; 60% were uninterested. Members were asked to identify who member resource groups might prioritize. They included Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+ individuals and those with disabilities. Member resource groups were also proposed to increase recruitment of Latin, Hispanic, or Spanish origin members.

KEY FINDINGS

Surveys: Member Diversity & Belonging cont.

Member involvement in ICF-sponsored events and activities is another avenue through which DEIJB may be measured and advanced. Members shared their current level of involvement in the association and any obstacles to deeper engagement. The largest group of respondents indicated they were currently active at the local level in ICF. A smaller number described wanting to be more active in the future. For most responding members, personal factors and circumstances were the biggest hurdle to greater involvement in ICF. They simply lacked time. Others shared separate professional priorities hindered their engagement. A lack of knowledge or awareness of how members could be involved was also raised as an obstacle to participation. Other top obstacles to involvement in ICF were member perceptions that activities were less accessible or valuable in terms of financial costs or they were relatively new to ICF and still learning about available activities.

At the end of the survey, members were given space to openly share comments. Overwhelmingly respondents were supportive of ICF's new DEIJB efforts. Many expressed interest in DEIJB and were eager to understand more about DEIJB initiatives at ICF; several had a question about DEIJB efforts. A smaller but noted group of respondents were concerned that DEIJB efforts appeared to be tied to political motivations. Other members disclosed individual characteristics of relevance to DEIJB. Lastly, a number of members offered services to assist with DEIJB.

In seeking to advance DEIJB, we also solicited input from members on the best methods or strategies for increasing DEIJB. The most popular methods selected by members included advancing education on DEIJB through workshops, training, and courses and secondly, establishing more diverse leadership at the board and chapter levels. Facilitating open discussions with members on DEIJB was also heavily favored as a strategy.



KEY FINDINGS

Surveys: Member Diversity & Belonging cont.

Additionally, members recommended including DEIJB in ICF accreditation and training efforts, conducting a review of the certification process, and offering scholarships or lower rates for credentialing opportunities to expand the diversity of credentialed coaches. Other members requested that ICF more actively involve members in decision-making and listen to member input.

Chapter Diversity Questionnaire

To understand the status of DEIJB and actions taken by local ICF chapters, a 9-item survey was distributed to chapter members and leaders. Of the 140 chapters invited to participate, 90 submitted a questionnaire (65% response rate); responding chapters represented approximately 29,481 ICF members. The questionnaire was completed by members of the chapter board or executive leadership, often the chapter president (80). For other chapters, the DEI Chair or Director completed the questionnaire (4) or an individual board member. Among the chapters that completed a questionnaire, 19 have a board member dedicated to DEIJB. While these board members held a range of titles, the most common was Director of DE&I (3 chapters). This provided us with a high-level view of individual chapter progress in addressing the ICF's diversity initiative and DEIJB issues, more generally.



Within the questionnaire, chapter members were asked to reflect on the chapter's development and focus of DEIJB goals, DEIJB initiatives, and evaluation efforts. The great majority of responding chapters fell on two ends of the DEIJB spectrum of either having already generated specific DEIJB goals, initiatives, and evaluation methods or having no specific DEIJB goals, initiatives, or evaluation methods yet defined.

Among chapters with well-defined DEIJB goals, many also reported having launched diversity initiatives and generated measures for evaluating these efforts. Some in this group were exploring additional measures of evaluation, which may indicate that their DEIJB assessment efforts were still evolving.

Chapters that had yet to define DEIJB goals included groups lacking both DEIJB initiatives and evaluation methods. However, we also heard from chapters that were slow to define DEIJB goals but had nonetheless moved ahead to launch DEIJB improvement initiatives and in some cases, even evaluation efforts.

KEY FINDINGS

Chapter Diversity Questionnaire cont.

A third category emerged of chapters that intended to set goals and evaluation measures in the near term. Among these chapters, all were also lacking in diversity initiatives, but reported intentions to move forward regardless. Among chapters with DEIJB goals, the majority were focused on integrating principles of DEIJB throughout their chapter. A large number reported focusing their goals on actively increasing the diversity of their chapter board and its members. A slightly smaller group of chapters were addressing DEIJB through introducing new education and diversity activities.

Again, a similar number of chapters indicated they either had measures for evaluating DEIJB or were without evaluation metrics or even a process for assessing progress. Among chapters with evaluation structures in place, most reported having a survey in place or others means for collecting member demographics and member feedback on DEIJB matters. A slightly smaller group reported collecting effectiveness data, which is important for ensuring new initiatives actually spur change in DEIJB.



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SWOT ANALYSIS

During the next step of our audit, we reviewed data across member records, focus groups, surveys, and other resources. We used these data to conduct an analysis of internal and external organizational **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats** DEIJB efforts.

Strengths

Within the ICF, many internal strengths will serve to advance DEIJB in the months and years to come. These include our stature as one of the leading coach credentialing bodies in the world. This position grants us a leadership position, a powerful organizational voice and influence in determining how the coaching profession navigates and embraces greater DEIJB.

More specifically, we possess important internal assets that lend us greater credibility and momentum in responding to DEIJB matters. These include a highly diverse board and senior leadership, with members who vary widely in geographic and racial/ethnic diversity; our membership is richly diverse, having grown significantly in the past 25 years and encompassing members in 140 countries and counting. Not surprisingly, we've observed a strong commitment among our membership to nurturing diversity within individual chapters through to the international level. We are a global organization, and our members appreciate and are proud of our global diversity.

As an organization, we've convened and launched several resources and internal stakeholder groups to support DEIJB. These are important steps for ensuring the institutionalization of DEIJB within ICF. Specifically, we've assembled a diversity council and task force for advising on DEIJB matters and have invested in developing and publishing diversity guides. This ensures DEIJB initiatives are embraced across all levels of our association.

Weaknesses

In reviewing the rich data collected, several internal ICF weaknesses were also identified. To effectively nurture and expand DEIJB, the organization must be united on the definition of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice. We are still negotiating nuanced and deep meanings for each of these key concepts.

While the ICF is an international association, many of our public facing communications, coaching resources, programming, and engagement opportunities are designed with English-speaking and U.S.-based members in mind. This has made it challenging for members in more remote locations to participate, be seen and heard. Similarly, current pricing structures can be prohibitive for coaches and their clients in lower income countries.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Weaknesses cont.

Although ICF-accredited coaches span a range of coaching types, corporate coaches are disproportionately represented within the membership, and this has influenced the association's focus at the expense of other coaching types. Guidance for new coaches on how to best engage with ICF and their coaching peers has been described as lacking.

Other factors have hindered the accessibility of our credentialing and coaching resources, particularly for coaches with disabilities (including neurodisabilities), and those outside the U.S. who have cultural differences, language, or logistical barriers. To navigate these differences requires time, accommodations, or information that at present is not accounted for in credentialing non-U.S.-based coaches. The ICF website is a public-facing resource that could be strengthened for greater accessibility as well as for the delivery of customized marketing and message boards.

Similarly, the demographic diversity of our coach membership is a weakness. While global in reach, we lack racial/ethnically diversity and have few members who fall into younger age groups. Furthermore, few current members identify as LGBTQIA+ or have disclosed a disability. It has also been reported that for LGBTQIA+ members in particular, the association does not assure psychological safety or a sense of belonging.

Finally, a modest DEIJB budget and limited professional development opportunities for staff are weaknesses that could hinder internal progress on DEIJB matters. Rigid organizational siloes that discourage cross-discipline communication and collaboration can similarly hamstring efforts to foster inclusion, diversity, equity, and belonging among ICF staff and leadership. Additionally, the association's focus on personal referrals as a primary recruitment method could be interpreted as a weakness since it contributes to affinity bias or a tendency to gravitate toward and serve people who are similar to us.

Opportunities

ICF members and staff highlighted a number of internal opportunities to strengthen and expand DEIJB. Beginning with member data, participants recommended altering the information requested from new members to include expanded gender identity options (standardized by region) and disability categories (including neurodisabilities). A range of opportunities were raised for ICF's public-facing communications and outreach efforts. Participants recommended revisions to the association website to expand the diversity of coaches reflected in images and content, changes to digital content and other materials to increase accessibility and partnering with the ICF Engagement Manager to increase the visibility of new engagement opportunities to new members.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Opportunities cont.

It was also proposed that ICF introduce new membership levels to enhance equity and accessibility for coaches in lower income countries and communities. Participants saw rich opportunities for ICF to build out development resources and training for staff and stakeholders around DEIJB. One exciting possibility included creating resource groups for association members and staff to foster learning and greater community.

Other areas of opportunity noted by participants included engaging with millennial and other “minority” stakeholders, growing external partnerships with other coaching and non-profit organizations also working to improve DEIJB, expanding the association’s recruiting methods to identify qualified and diverse new talent and expanding the coaching methodologies approved by the ICF to foster greater accessibility to coach training by diverse groups.

Threats

Several threats were identified by focus group and survey participants that could potentially obstruct ICF’s progress on DEIJB efforts. First, the act of defining diversity may be a challenging step for an association that represents members with such rich and varied experience and perspectives on what diversity can and may encompass. Without a unifying understanding and shared definition, the association may face challenges from both those inside and outside ICF who differ in their interpretation or the value they place on diversity, as defined.

Secondly, our research revealed some ICF members felt the concept of “including all can exclude others.” Not only did those who fall within the traditional majority have concerns that DEIJB could cause them to be overlooked, we’ve also found that to practice greater inclusivity and ensure underrepresented groups experience greater representation, we’ve unintentionally left out others or have been unable or unprepared to address their needs. The work of DEIJB is, by its nature, a sometimes challenging and nuanced balancing act.

Additional repercussions may include the migration of members to other coaching bodies, particularly members who perceive DEIJB efforts as politically motivated. Similarly, members or stakeholders who fail to comprehend the purpose and value in DEIJB may challenge the association’s investment and new initiatives. Such threats could have an economic impact as well as influence the existing diversity of ICF.

RECOMMENDATIONS & INITIATIVES

Following review of the comprehensive DEIJB audit, the ICF leadership announced several recommendations for strengthening the association's investment in DEIJB moving forward. These included the following:

1

Update the member diversity and belonging survey to include racial or ethnicity identity, disability and gender identity items and customize based on region; redistribute member diversity and belonging survey.

2

Examine demographic data related to member retention, renewal, enrollment and other data, review member recruitment methods.

3

Conduct an equity audit in credentialing.

4

Measure the impact of DEIJB in coaching in organizations.

5

Conduct ROI studies for DEIJB initiatives and goals.

6

Determine the diversity needs of coaching schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS & INITIATIVES

Initiatives

A series of initiatives were also conceived, proposed, or have been planned for rollout between fiscal year 2023-25. They include:

- Creation of a Chapter Diversity tool for monitoring and measuring diversity at the ICF chapter level.
- Expansion of the existing Diversity Guide. Originally designed for coaches and coach trainers, this new version will be designed to support diversity more widely within ICF and the profession.
- Revision and redesign of all ICF materials to ensure equitable access for all audiences. This will include translating existing resources, expanding access to programming and events for members in time zones outside the U.S. and other recommended changes.
- New policies will be introduced to guide board diversity, board process standards and board member self-reporting of demographics; anti-discrimination policies will also be expanded to include example violations and penalties.
- Strategic recruiting, retention, engagement, and development plan to increase the representation of the following populations: 1. young professionals (under 35), 2. LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual), 3. BIPOC Black, Indigenous and People of Color), 4. individuals with disabilities, 5. Latin(a)(o)(x), Hispanic, or Spanish origin with the introduction of member resource groups.
- Introduction of a tiered membership program and scholarship program to enable more equitable access to membership and coach training. The scholarship program may include fully funded opportunities for prospective coaches.
- New and continuous diversity training programs for stakeholders. These programs will include training for volunteers, ICF leaders, faculty, staff, chapter leaders and board members. Other programming may encompass:
 - Monthly roundtables on DEIJB topics and presentations.
 - Creation of a Diversity in Coaching certificate program.
 - Formal mentoring programs for new or young professional coaches who are underrepresented in the profession to build a pipeline of future leaders.



CONCLUSION

As a global leader and pre-eminent international coaching association, the ICF holds an important and influential role in guiding and directing DEIJB within our membership, leadership, and across the profession. The DEIJB audit was an important first step. It revealed critical insights into the opportunities, needs, and challenges we face in expanding and strengthening diversity, equity, inclusivity, justice and belonging within our ranks, clients, and communities. As our leadership and membership take action to implement new recommendations and initiatives, we look forward to nurturing an association that is open, welcoming, and accessible to all. Such progress will only serve to strengthen our vibrant coaching community and the expansive global community we serve.