WHEN | WOMEN'S HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

Professor Lisa-Dionne Morris
First Cohort
University of Leeds

Professor Sheryl Williams
First Cohort
Loughborough University

Professor Yoselin Benitez-Alfonso
Second Cohort
University of Leeds

100 Black Women Professors NOW Impact Report

Diksha Sanyal, Temitayo Lawal, Cianne Jones,
Adèle MacKinlay, Professor Lisa-Dionne Morris

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100 BLACK WOMEN PROFESSORS NOW

Foreword

Growing up in Newham in East London, my first professional Black female role model was my mother who attended university as a mature student. She managed her degree alongside bringing up two children. My mother continues to be a role model both of resilience and hard work but indeed of the transformative power of education. However, throughout my academic career there was a noticeable absence of black female teachers, lecturers, or professors. That all changed when I joined WHEN as their COO and attended the first 100 Black Women Professors Now programme Annual Celebration and Summit in 2023. For the first time in my life, I was in the presence of Black female academics, role models for women like me who love to learn and to share our learning with others. I felt an incredible feeling of togetherness, sisterhood and belonging.

The 100 Black Women Professors Now programme is a shining example of the phrase "Representation matters." It is a transformational programme that not only touches on the lives of the Black women involved but on the institutions who have committed to ensuring that the colour of our skin does not dictate our career progression.

The programme is a sector wide example of what true allyship looks like in practice, those with privilege, acknowledging their privilege and putting resources behind challenging systems of inequity. I am incredibly proud of our CEO Alice Chilver for her allyship, our Senior Programme Manager, Temitayo for her exceptional leadership of the programme, the academic cohort who have shown such resilience in navigating the sector and every institution that has taken a stand against racial inequity in higher education. We are most certainly stronger together.

Cianne Jones, Chief Operating Officer
Women's Higher Education Network (WHEN)

The 100 Black Women Professors Now (100 BWPN) programme is sector-leading, unique, and transformational; transformational on the impact it has on the women who participate in the programme – on their careers, their confidence in advocating for themselves and others, their sense of community; transformational on the changes it is making within the institutions who take part. The amazing WHEN team and partners have developed a programme that goes well beyond traditional professional development programmes to one that looks critically at the systemic barriers that prevent Black academics from progressing. Within each participating institution, 100 BWPN brings together People & OD Directors, EDI Directors, senior stakeholders, and the Vice-Chancellor to ensure accountability for change and support for the individuals taking part.

As a White ally, I commit to do everything within my gift to advance positive change both within my organisation and across the sector as it relates to equity. I am deeply proud of the WHEN team and partners for designing and delivering such a significant and impactful programme and look forward to the future in which there is much greater representation of Black women and opportunities for everyone, irrespective of their colour, gender, or any other protected characteristic.

Adèle MacKinlay, Deputy and Interim CEO
Women's Higher Education Network (WHEN)

I've always been passionate about working towards equity of opportunity and access for Black women. This is primarily because of my own positionality as a Black woman, and secondly because of the extent to which our experiences can get overlooked and merged with others from global majority backgrounds which often masks nuances and intersectional strands of our experience.
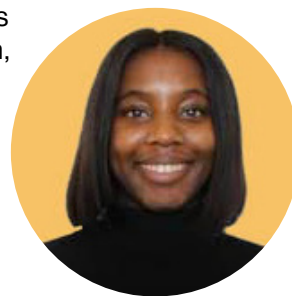
Despite Black women academic's plight across the sector, which historically, has not always been positive or adequately represented, there are also positive stories to tell. Stories that empower us, unite us, and remind us of how talented and multi-faceted we are. I recall attending the first annual summit in Leeds for the 100 Black Women Professors NOW programme in 2023 and was positively shocked at the amount of Black excellence in one room.

Leading on the strategy and design of the programme has been a great privilege and it would not be possible without our CEO Alice Chilver's vision for the programme, my amazing team at WHEN, our exceptional programme faculty and the eight institutions we have worked with in 2023. The programme has put a spotlight on some of the opportunities and challenges across the sector. As we press forward with a new cohort in 2024, I look forward to working towards creating sustainable systemic change that not only helps to increase the pipeline of Black women professors, but also helps to create an inclusive culture that supports, attracts, and retains Black women academics across the sector.

Temitayo Lawal, Senior Programme Manager
Women's Higher Education Network (WHEN)

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Introduction

As a participant in the 100 Black Women Professors Now Programme (100BWPN) within UK Higher Education Institutions, I am compelled to share the profound impact of this initiative on the experiences of 70+ Black female academics and professional services staff working within UK Higher Education Institutions. The preliminary findings reflect an overwhelmingly positive journey, with many African, African Diaspora and Dual Heritage females identifying key areas of personal development, experiencing personal growth, and noting tangible advancements in their careers. What goes beyond the statistics is the transformative power of community-building and social capital. I found a supportive network that bolstered our confidence through Black-Female-to-Black-Female coaching, research mapping, and streamlining efforts. I discovered a newfound courage to pursue new career progression opportunities, with a clearer understanding of my Black female academic authenticity and intentional engagement with prospects and networks.

The positive ripple effect extends to institutional leaders and line managers. Indeed, many of us did report an increased stakeholder understanding of Black female experiences, clearer insights into achieving systemic change for Black females, and a perceived improvement in understanding the uniqueness and strength of embracing Black female leadership skills, but there is still work to be done in more systematic ways. This speaks to the programme's impact on individual growth and its role in fostering a more inclusive and informed understanding of diverse and inclusive leadership practice. This is heartening as a Black female Professor in STEM.

Looking forward, recommendations for future programmes and provision for future cohorts resonate deeply. Clarity on the role of line managers is paramount, and sustained engagement beyond the programme's duration is crucial for lasting impact. Broadening interventions to include early-stage initiatives and fostering collaborations with other academic partners, such as UKRI, are strategic steps toward pipeline provision and a more diverse and supportive Higher Education landscape. These preliminary findings not only underscore the success of the current programme in addressing key issues but also highlight its role in advocating for systemic change within UK Higher Education Institutions. As a participant, I am optimistic about the potential for continued growth and enhanced diversity in academia.

I believe embracing the power of Black female excellence in the academic realm is a celebration of achievements, resilience, and brilliance within the research community. In a world were recognising and amplifying the contributions of Black leaders is a crucial step toward fostering a truly diverse and equitable environment, I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the programme. Striving for Black female parity, particularly in leadership roles, is essential for dismantling barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone. The rise of Black female leaders in UK academic spheres not only signifies progress but also serves as an inspiration for future generations, showcasing the impact of diverse perspectives on the trajectory of higher education.

As we champion academic leadership, it's imperative to emphasise equity and inclusion. A commitment to equity and inclusion in academia fosters an environment where every voice is heard, every perspective valued, and every individual is allowed to excel.

Recognising the power of Black female empowerment and Black females inspiring others is integral to breaking down gender-based stereotypes and creating a supportive network for Black females in higher education. The programme symbolises a collective effort to uplift, mentor, and empower Black females to excel in academic leadership roles and beyond. In the landscape of higher education leadership, the programme collectively represents a commitment to a brighter, more inclusive future. By embracing and promoting these ideals, we contribute to a transformative journey toward a more equitable and empowered academic community.

Professor Lisa-Dionne Morris
Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, University of Leeds

In 2023, there were 66 Black women professors in the UK, out of a total of 23,515 professors

Our 2023 impact report highlighted that in 2018, there were only 25 Black women professors. As of 2023, the number has increased to 66, indicating some progress. However, **WHEN** is dedicated to accelerating the pace of change for Black women academics across the sector.

Programme Aims

The programme aims to increase the number of Black women at every stage of the academic pipeline and accelerate their career progression through:
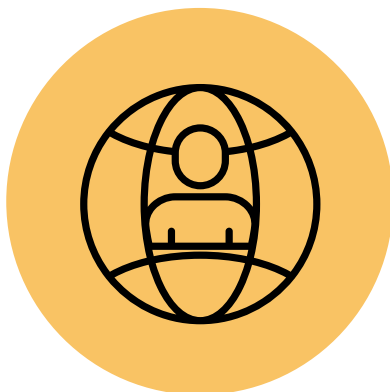
Senior Leadership Action
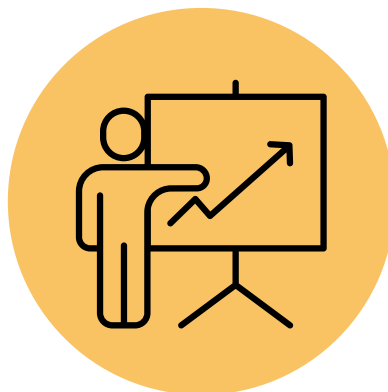
Career Coaching

Head of Department Action

Career Development

Policy and Practice Action

Mentoring

Working together to achieve systemic change

Three major stakeholder groups

Multiple stakeholders are engaged in the programme as we established that this was required to bring about systemic change. These three stakeholder groups are:

1

Institutional Leaders

(The Vice Chancellor, Senior Team, HR Director, EDI Leads, Research Director)

2

Line Managers

(Heads of Department, Team Leaders, Principal Investigators)

3

Academic Cohort

(Black women- tenured academics, fixed-term contractors and Phd students)
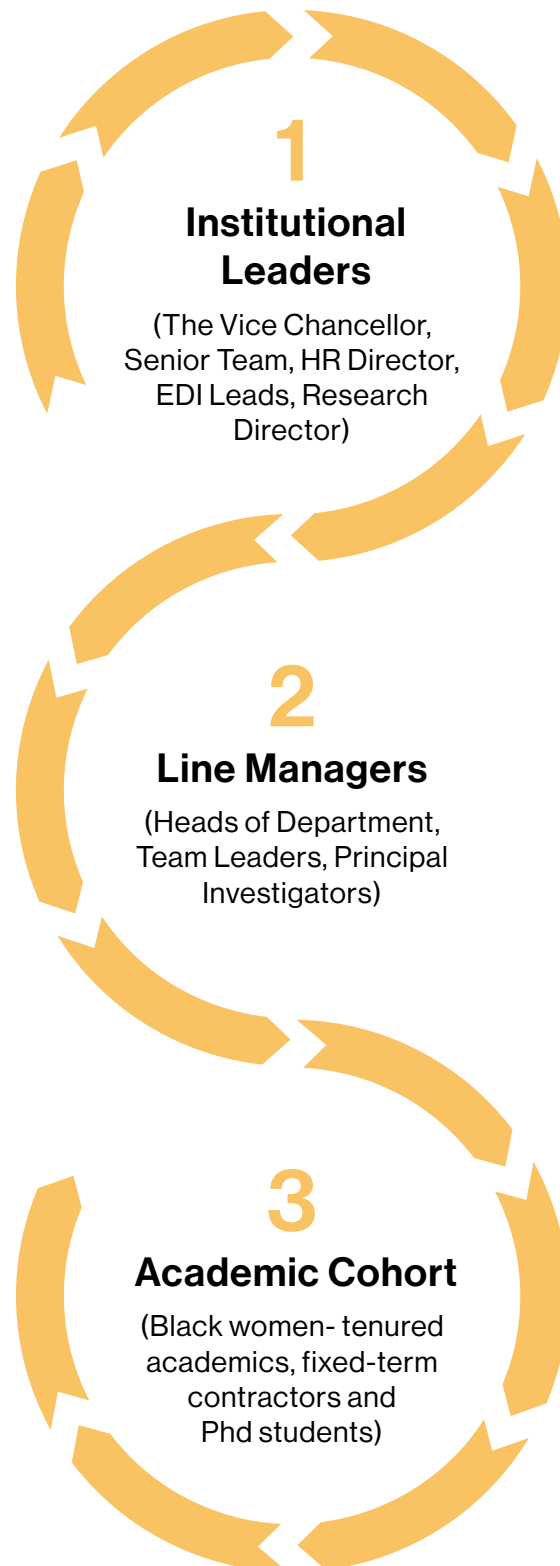
The programme comprises of two parallel strands

Senior leaders and line managers

| 1. Systemic Change | 2. Inclusive Leadership | 3. Action Learning | 4. Delivering Change |

The academic cohort

| 5. Personal Insights | 6. Career Planning | 7. Career Coaching | 8. Career Strategies |

The first strand describes the work that takes place with institutional leaders and line managers. The second strand describes the work that takes place with the academic cohort. These two parallel strands of activity comprise the key components of the programme. The activities are interconnected, and the sequencing is carefully planned for maximum impact.

1. Systemic change

The tone for change must be set from the top, with leaders taking a proactive role in facing deeply rooted barriers. In this component learning takes place amongst senior leaders within each institution as each Vice-Chancellor will bring together their nominated sponsors, EDI Leads, HR and Research Directors and each person who line-manages a member of the Academic Cohort. The session is to explore white privilege, anti-racism and racial justice as a starting point for enabling systemic change.

2. Inclusive leadership

HR and Research Directors, together with Line Managers from across all universities come together. They deepen their understanding of what it means to be an inclusive leader and create objectives for the change they will drive from their unique position. During the workshop there is mutual learning and challenge between peers. The programme understands the powerful influence of these roles and works with them to enable change within their sphere of influence for current and future generations. They explore the power they have and understand how they can take action that will change the status quo within their institution.

3. Action learning

Cross-institutional groups come together for two action learning sets in which they are able to share their experiences and be supported by their peers to overcome challenges they are facing with implementing their individual commitments.

4. Delivering change

Each Vice-Chancellor brings back together their nominated sponsors, HR and Research Directors and each person who line-manages a member of the Academic Cohort. They reflect on key lessons learned, progress made and collective priorities moving forward.

5. Personal insights

The Academic Cohort explore lived experiences as Black women academics and identify core themes between experiences. They identify systemic barriers to progression within institutions and ways of reducing them. Insight sessions enable the WHEN team to capture the lived experiences of the cohort. Themes get shared with senior leaders and line managers to support them to increase their understanding of experiences, as well as to get thinking straight away about changes that could lead to impact.

6. Career planning

This workshop focuses on career pathways to date, supporting the Academic Cohort to reflect on their key moments, key lessons, core values and aspirations for the future. The cohort will support and challenge one another to think differently and define their career vision. They will be introduced to career planning and meet their career coach for the first time. They will spend time during the session preparing for their three-way coaching session with their line manager.

7. Career coaching

Career coaches work with Academic Cohort members to support them to define their career action plans, ensuring that plans focus on the few things that will make the biggest difference to accelerate their career progression.

8. Career strategies

Focusing on career strategies, the Academic Cohort share their career plans and support one another to define strategies in order to make progress with their action plans, translating important activities into 90-day action plans for implementation. The cohort are supported to reflect on the progress they have made during the programme and hear about the changes and commitments that their universities have made. We also integrate a well-being component into our sessions facilitated by an emotional wealth strategist and counsellor. The cohort engages in a range of activities to help them develop tools to improve and prioritize their well-being. Additionally, information on accessing counselling services is made available.

Collective action

WHEN delivers additional workshops upon request from universities. During this year's programme, we conducted a collective action workshop with senior stakeholders and the Academic Cohort at one university. This session provided stakeholders with further guidance and support in aligning their efforts to bring about systemic change.

Sponsorship, mentoring, and stakeholder meetings

Before the programme starts, the Vice-Chancellor and EDI lead work together to assign sponsors and mentors to the Academic Cohort. Sponsors are briefed to actively advocate for sponsees in pursuit of their career goals.

Mentors are briefed to provide guidance to mentees as they navigate the networks and systems in their disciplines. This takes place up front to allow sufficient time for introductions to be made so that the Academic Cohort can gain maximum benefit during the programme.

Throughout the programme, key stakeholders including the Vice-Chancellor and HR Director, Research Directors and EDI leads are encouraged to meet with the Academic Cohort in order to better understand lived experiences. These relationships will drive increased understanding, influence policy change and secure accountability for action.

Three reasons why this programme is groundbreaking:

An exclusive focus on the most under-represented group **- Black women**, who represent less than 1% of the UK professoriate.

Supporting them through **coaching, mentoring, sponsorship and cross-institutional peer networks.**

Focus on **systemic change** and action requiring **institutional commitment.**

Working with three major stakeholder groups: **institutional leaders; line managers and the academic cohort.**

The first and only sector-wide solution that **addresses the issues and recommendations from the 'Staying Power' 2019 report.**

100BWPN Programme 2023

Design Process

Reflection

Reflecting on feedback and learnings from the pilot cohort.

Re-design

Redesigning the programme and delivery of activities to incorporate an in-person format post-covid.

Planning

Planning the programme activity and timelines with our programme faculty.

Collaboration

Securing 8 universities to participate in phase two of the programme.

Launch

Held the first summit to celebrate the pilot cohort and mark the launch of the new cohort.

Our Partner Universities

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
The Career University

The Open University

CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON
EST 1894

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

UEA
University of East Anglia

University of East London

Programme faculty

Temi Lawal
Senior Programme
Manager

Dr Doyin Atewologun
Programme Lead

Marshah Dixon-Terry
Programme Lead

Pamela Leonce
Career Coach

Claudine Charles
Career Coach

Alison Mackay
Career Coach

Louisa Joseph
Career Coach

Maureen Obatomi
Career Coach

Manjari Prashar
Career Coach

Banke Sotomi
Career Coach

Dr Marcia Hazzard
Career Coach

Maryane Mwaniki
Career Coach and
Counselor

Sherma Johnson-Gray
Career Coach

Nelly Elessa
Career Coach

Vanetta Morrison
Emotional Wealth
Strategist and Counsellor

Rationale

Black women's academic progression

The aim of the 100 Black Women Professors NOW (100BWPN) programme is to increase the number of Black women at every stage of the academic pipeline and accelerate their career progression.

Rollock's (2019) *Staying Power* report highlighted the critical underrepresentation of Black women professors in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Deep rooted institutional racism embedded in HEIs are a major roadblock for Black women academic's progression, particularly when pursuing senior leadership positions (Pilkington 2013). This, combined with limited access to mentorship, peer support networks (Shilliam 2015) and a lack of clarity regarding the promotional criteria (Leathwood et al 2009) have acted as barriers to Black women progressing within academia.

Attempts to address this underrepresentation have primarily focussed on individualised initiatives for Black women academics, without addressing the structural nature of racism embedded within institutional cultures. Thus, such initiatives tend to shift the onus of change on to Black women academics while doing little to dismantle the systemic barriers that exist (Bhopal & Pitkin 2020). This is why we designed the 100BWPN programme as a systemic change initiative. Using an intersectional approach to understand the multi-layered experiences of Black women in academia (Crenshaw 1989), three key stakeholders were identified, Black women academics, line managers and senior leaders.

In our design phase of the programme, we conducted desk-based research which highlighted that Black academics are more likely to be overburdened with administrative tasks allocated by their line managers, leaving limited time to work strategically on projects that will help advance their career development (Wright et al 2007). Additionally, senior leadership can sometimes fail to acknowledge the work of Black academics (Bhopal et al 2015). Hence, it was critical to include the three stakeholder groups to illuminate the experiences of Black women academics and provide them with career planning strategies, as well as provide learning and development opportunities for line managers and senior leaders on best practice measures for achieving systemic change.
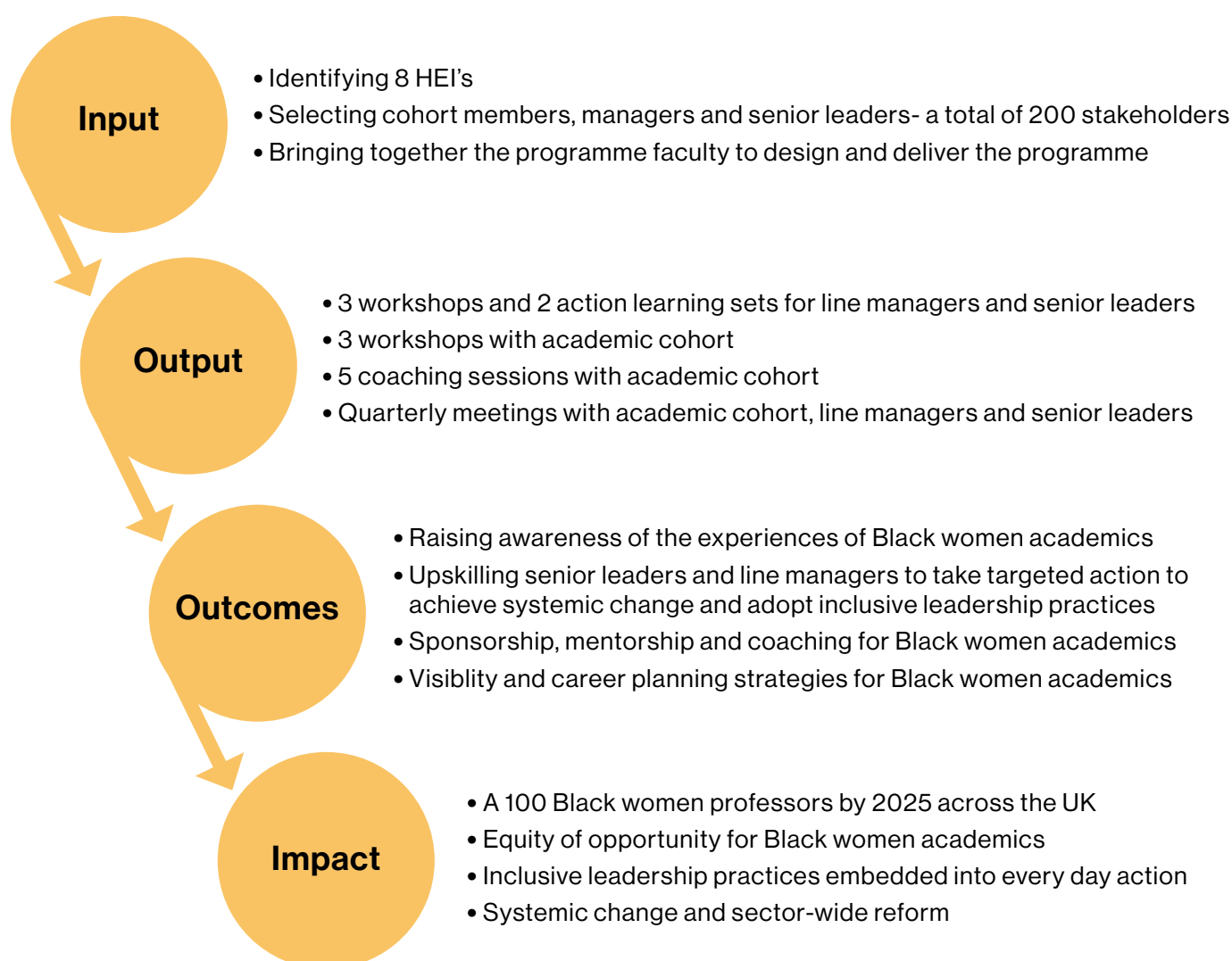
We incorporated a three-way meeting between the Academic Cohort member, line manager and career coach; as well as frequent meetings between the Academic Cohort and senior leadership as research reveals that Black academics often feel invisible and unheard within their institutions (Bhopal et al 2015). These meetings helped to increase the visibility and voices of Black women academics within their universities and encouraged collective reflection from senior leadership on the systemic changes that could be brought about at an institutional level.

To ensure we are making tangible progress towards achieving systemic change across the sector, we identified core design principles with specific inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact targets that guided the design and delivery of the programme.

Core Design Principles

- **There is a critical under-representation of Black women in every stage of the academic pipeline.**

- **We must take specific and deliberate action to speed up change.**

- **Our institutions and sector need to do more to become anti-racist.**

- **Black women do not need fixing.**

- **Deep-rooted habits, practices and systems need to change.**

- **The most senior stakeholders including the Vice-Chancellor must take personal action to lead change.**

- **Black women academics' development can be accelerated by coaching, mentorship and sponsorship, networking, and career planning.**

Inputs, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact

Input
- Identifying 8 HEI's
- Selecting cohort members, managers and senior leaders- a total of 200 stakeholders
- Bringing together the programme faculty to design and deliver the programme

Output
- 3 workshops and 2 action learning sets for line managers and senior leaders
- 3 workshops with academic cohort
- 5 coaching sessions with academic cohort
- Quarterly meetings with academic cohort, line managers and senior leaders

Outcomes
- Raising awareness of the experiences of Black women academics
- Upskilling senior leaders and line managers to take targeted action to achieve systemic change and adopt inclusive leadership practices
- Sponsorship, mentorship and coaching for Black women academics
- Visiblity and career planning strategies for Black women academics

Impact
- A 100 Black women professors by 2025 across the UK
- Equity of opportunity for Black women academics
- Inclusive leadership practices embedded into every day action
- Systemic change and sector-wide reform

Methodology

Data Collection

Monitoring and evaluation metrics were built into the programme and participants provided their consent for us to share their data within the report. A mixed-methods approach was used to gather both qualitative and quantitative feedback from the participants (Creswell & Creswell 2023) and an external researcher was commissioned to analyse the data. Data was collected in the form of anonymised surveys and a case-study. The surveys comprised of a baseline, midline and endline, with a response rate of 90 participants. The case-study investigated the University of Exeter, one of the participating universities on the programme. The methods used for the case-study involved thirty-minute semi-structured interviews with eight participants, with a sample of the different stakeholder groups. To analyse the data, a thematic analysis was undertaken, and the data was coded and categorized into themes that helped evaluate the programme's impact (Barun & Clarke 2006).

Evaluation Plan

As an external researcher, I wanted to understand whether the programme was effective in meeting its objectives. Additionally, I wanted to identify good practices while also underscoring areas for future action and improvement (HMT Magenta Book 2020). To enable me to do this, I focussed on the following questions whilst analysing the data:

• What outcomes have the participants reported?

• Are these outcomes a direct effect of the programme interventions?

• Are these outcomes scalable and replicable?

• Were all elements of the programme design working cohesively in achieving the programme aims?
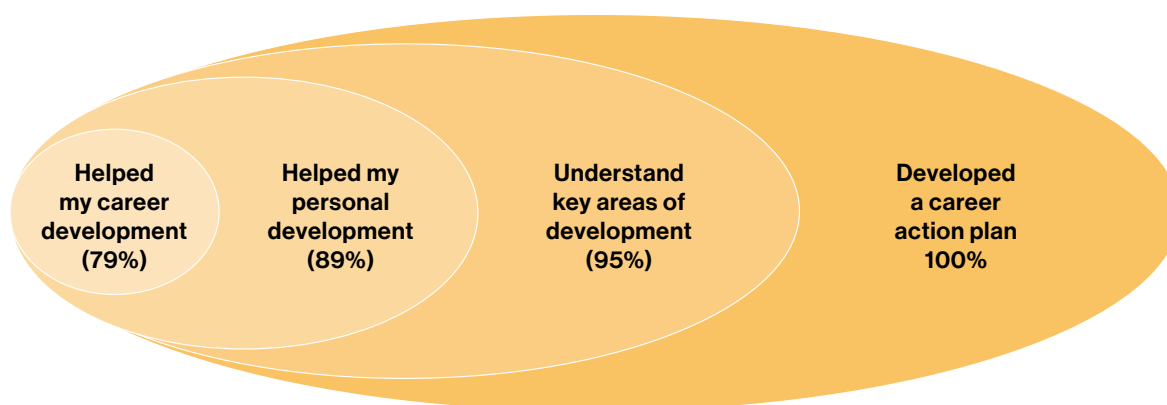
• What needs improvement?

Baseline, Midline and Endline Survey Findings:

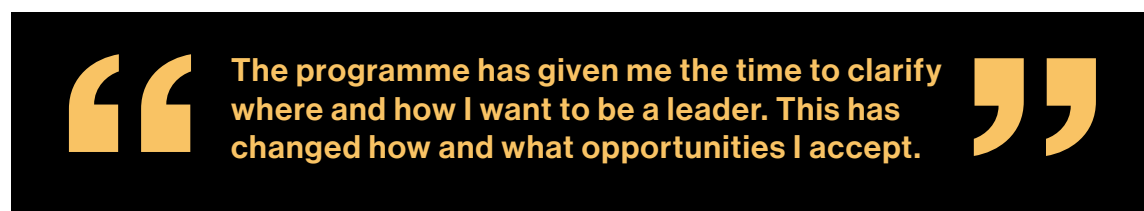## I. Overall Impact for the Academic Cohort

A. Personal and Career Development

The programme had a significant impact on the academic cohort's personal and career development as evidenced in the below diagram:

Helped my career development (79%)

Helped my personal development (89%)

Understand key areas of development (95%)

Developed a career action plan 100%

There were two identifiable reasons why the programme generated such a resounding response from the Academic Cohort.
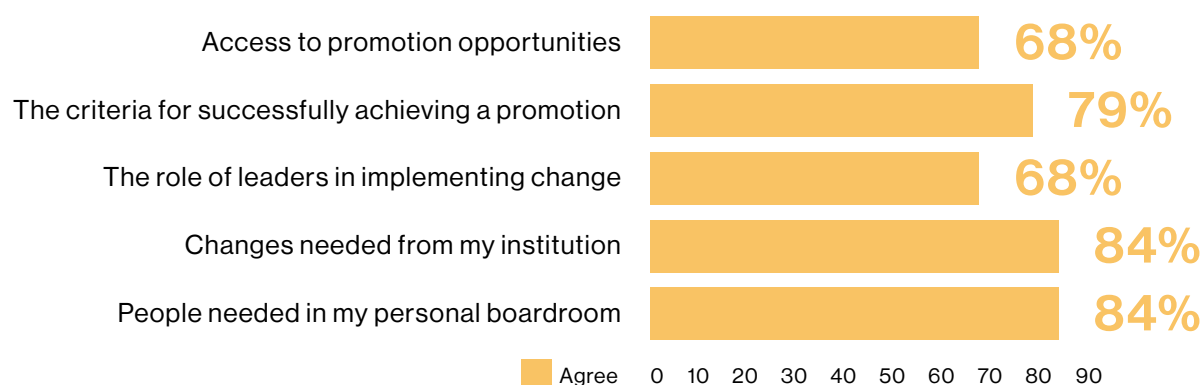
i. Clarity

The programme gave Black women academics greater clarity on how to navigate their careers. They worked closely with career coaches and line managers to strategize their career planning. As one cohort noted in her feedback form:

> " The programme has given me the time to clarify where and how I want to be a leader. This has changed how and what opportunities I accept. "

At the end of the programme, the Academic Cohort said they had greater clarity regarding:

Clarity on Action Required for Career Progression

	Agree
Access to promotion opportunities	68%
The criteria for successfully achieving a promotion	79%
The role of leaders in implementing change	68%
Changes needed from my institution	84%
People needed in my personal boardroom	84%

Agree   0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

ii. Visibility and the Power of Building Personal Networks

Another significant benefit of the programme was the opportunity it gave Black women in academia to develop networks and a sense of community with other Black women. As one participant wrote in her feedback form:

> " It has helped me visualise more clearly what and how my career can progress in academia. It has also enabled me to access an amazing community of Black women who have inspired and motivated me along this journey, and it is lovely knowing that I will continue to have this community to access beyond the end of the programme. "

There was also an increase in the visibility of Black women academics and their network building with senior leaders, as one participated noted:

> " The programme as a whole has enabled me to feel more visible in the institution and to share and to get to know others in more senior positions. I have gained in confidence to follow my career aspirations. I feel that the institution is more committed to supporting Black academics to progress and hopeful that these will be fulfilled. I feel that I have gained knowledge and skills to support colleagues further to achieve their career aspirations through my mentorship and guidance. I am determined to effect change. "

B. Improved Career Retention for Black Women in Academia

There was also a notable difference with the support the cohort received to achieve their career goals before and after the programme:

21% of participants reported at the start of the programme that they felt unsupported with their career goals.
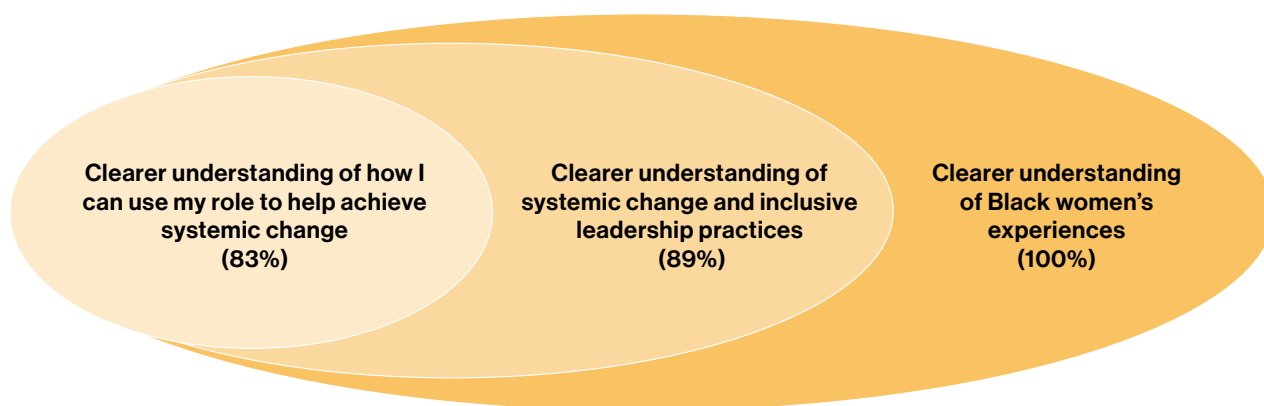
63% of these women said that as a result of programme, they now feel that they have the necessary support to achieve career goals.

II. Overall Impact on Institutional Leaders

For senior leaders and line managers, the programme achieved the following:

A. Awareness & Clarity

A critical roadblock to systemic change is the covert institutional racism embedded within everyday practices of universities (Pilkington 2013). Raising awareness on how to embed systemic change within universities and illuminating the lived experience of the Black women academics was paramount. Upon completing the programme, institutional leaders and line managers reported the following:

Clearer understanding of how I can use my role to help achieve systemic change
(83%)

Clearer understanding of systemic change and inclusive leadership practices
(89%)

Clearer understanding of Black women's experiences
(100%)

Here is what some of the leaders had to say:

> A much greater understanding of the experiences and challenges faced. I wasn't unaware to begin with but hadn't fully appreciated the extent.

> I have developed a deeper understanding of the perspective of my mentee who took part on the programme and have learned a lot from her. I have reflected more on my own privilege and the barriers to progression for Black women academics. I have felt more empowered to challenge upwards at University Executive Board level to contribute to dismantling those barriers.

B. Upskilling and Inclusive Leadership

A core objective of the programme is to provide line managers and senior leaders with learning and development opportunities to better understand how they can be an inclusive leader. This is because research shows that gender, race, and class play a significant role in shaping ideas of leadership practices (Showunmi 2020). Acknowledging differences and familiarising oneself with more collaborative models of leadership is key to becoming a more inclusive leader (Arday & Mirza 2018).

The inclusive leadership workshop helped line managers and senior leaders understand how they can develop their skills as sensitive, thoughtful leaders, who respond to and facilitate challenging conversations on race and gender inequity with tact and diplomacy.

Following the workshop, **72%** of participants reported that this had helped them become a more inclusive leader.

C. Setting Institutional Targets and Commitments

Another key objective for the programme was to support universities with an action plan on how they would implement systemic change with clear roles and responsibilities for stakeholders to maximise accountability.

At the end of the programme, **50%** of line managers and senior leaders reported that their institution had developed an action plan and identified their personal commitments towards driving this change.

While 50% is a good starting point, this component of the programme indicates the need for stronger reinforcement of action plans and commitments from institutions. Participants provided some useful insights when asked what could be done by their institutions to accelerate the pace of change:

> **Rethink our promotion criteria to surface what is most valuable, and actively support Black women colleagues to progress.**
>
> **Continue to invest in this programme. Examine carefully the progression routes to Professor level and reform them.**
>
> **Raise the profile of these issues; commitment at the most senior level of the institution; remove barriers to progression; educate and influence line managers.**

Case-Study: University of Exeter

To assess the impact of the programme at the University of Exeter, the following research questions were developed to guide the interview structure:

a) What was the most significant benefit of the programme?
b) What changes have occurred at your university as a result of the programme?
c) What recommendations do you have for improving the programme?

The following people from the University of Exeter were interviewed:

• Dr. Liliane Mukaremera, Lecturer (Early to Mid-Career Academic)

• Dr. Winifred Nyinoh, Associate Lecturer, Education & Scholarship (Early to Mid-Career Academic)

• Colleen Douglas-Temple, Lecturer and Academic Mentor & Internal Quality Assurer for Degree Apprenticeships (Phd Candidate)

• Melody Jombe, Lecturer, Education and Scholarship (Phd Candidate)

• Dr. Neil Gow, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact (Senior Leadership)

• Imelda Rogers, Executive Divisional Director for Human Resources (Senior Leadership)

• Shraddha Chaudhary, Assistant Director, Culture and Inclusion (Senior Leadership)

• Dr Louise Lawrence, Professor of New Testament Interpretation (Line Manager)

The participants were provided with information on the case-study and how their data will be used prior to the interviews taking place. All of the participants provided their written consent to partake in the case-study, allow the researcher to audio-record, transcribe the interviews and share their responses and personal images within the report.

I. Benefits of the Programme

When asked about the benefits of the programme, participants noted that the 100BWPN programme is committed to enabling change at all levels within the university. Middle management and senior leadership were involved in effecting change and supporting Black women academics. Additional benefits were categorised into a diagram below:

Bridging Information Gaps

Cross-institutional learning

Visibility for Black women academics

Career Growth and Progress

Building momentum for systemic change

**Buiilding a network of Black women academics**

II. Changes resulting from the 100BWPN Programme

Participants provided several links between the programme interventions and changes within the university. For example, majority of the interviewees discussed the opportunities that members of the Academic Cohort received. This included a high-profile press collaboration with BBC Devon to showcase the contributions of the Academic Cohort. The cohort had the opportunity to speak about their experience as a participant on the programme and share their subject area expertise.

The university also organised an event to illuminate the underrepresentation of Black women academics in the field of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS). Additionally, resources and videos that outlined how line managers, PhD supervisors and senior leaders can support the career pathways of Black women academics were designed and disseminated across the university.

Participants also shared how the programme had a direct benefit on them:

• Dr. Winifred was able to accelerate her promotion by getting the confidence to apply for it. She said, *"had it not been for the programme, I might not have applied when I did."*

• Imelda Rogers, the Executive Divisional Director for Human Resources said, *"at an institutional level, we have committed to ensuring that all of our interview panels, above and from the executive level and AP&P level, will have diverse representation."* Seconding this, Dr. Louise Lawrence also spoke about how the language in the Personal Development Review was re-worded from 'Training Needs' to 'Development, Opportunities and Experiences' which reflects the programme's terminology.

• Shraddha Chaudhary, Assistant Director of Culture and Inclusion reported that the programme was instrumental in *"changing how we involve people in decision-making. We took the cohort and involved them in strategic projects and recruitment."*
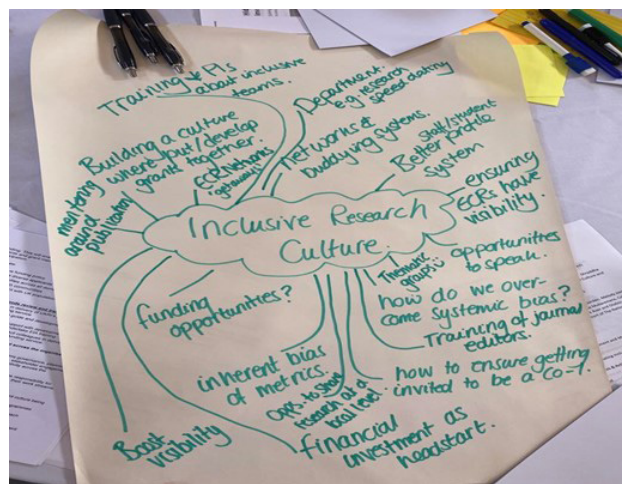
Pictures from the 'Amplifying Impact in HASS' event held at the University of Exeter

III. Future Recommendations for the 100BWPN Programme from Exeter

Interviewees shared several recommendations for improving the programme design and delivery; along with reflections on how Black women could get ahead in their careers. We have highlighted some of these recommendations, edited and condensed for clarity:

"For Black women academics, the biggest roadblock is the information asymmetry within academia. If no one tells you something, you don't know. But it also comes back to us. We have to be proactive; put ourselves out there and make ourselves visible."

Melody Kuziwa Jombe, Lecturer in Business Management

"Build partnership with other institutions in the research funding ecosystem and get them to endorse the commitments of the programme. This might be a way of connecting commitments, dividends and institutions and amplifying impact"

Dr. Neil Gow, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact

"The programme was great, and more mechanisms for accountability checks and follow-ups in between workshops would be helpful. Additionally, it's important to strengthen information feedback loops between each stakeholder and the university administration"

Shraddha Chaudhary, Assistant Director, Culture and Inclusion

"Impress upon the participants from the very beginning to treat the programme like a business project with clear outcomes, key milestones, deliverables and timeline and not just another training and development programme"

Ms. Imelda Rogers, Executive Divisional Director for Human Resources.

Discussion

The tables below demonstrated how the proposed outcomes align with reported outcomes and the specific programme activity responsible for these outcomes:

Academic Cohort

Proposed outcomes	Programme process	Reported outcomes
Visibility for Black women academics	Meetings with Academic Cohort, line managers and senior leaders A three-way coaching session with line-manager, career coach and Academic Cohort	The Academic Cohort at Exeter received visibility in the press on the radio programme, Voices of Change on BBC Devon.
Career and personal development	Career planning workshop Career coaching Career strategies workshop Mentorship and Sponsorship	89% of the Academic Cohort surveyed said the programme had helped their personal development. 79% of the Academic Cohort surveyed said that the programme had helped their career development.
Creation of community, networks, and peer support groups	Career planning workshop Career strategies workshop	Interviewees from Exeter highlighted that the creation of community networks was one of the most significant benefits of the programme.
Improving clarity on commitments, roles, and responsibilities	Career planning workshop Career strategies workshop	68% of the Academic Cohort surveyed said that the programme had helped them clarify the role of institutional leaders in working to implement change across the university.

Line Managers and Senior Leaders

Proposed outcomes	Programme process	Reported outcomes
Raising awareness on the lived experiences of Black women academics	Systemic Change Workshop	100% of line managers and senior leaders surveyed said they had a clearer understanding of Black women's experiences after the programme.
Improving clarity on commitments, roles, and responsibilities	Action Learning Sets	83% of line managers and senior leaders surveyed said they had a clearer understanding of how they can use their role to help achieve systemic change.
Developing an institution-wide action plan	Delivering Change Workshop	50% of line managers and senior leaders surveyed said that their universities had developed a collective action plan.
Upskilling and inclusive leadership learning and development	Inclusive Leadership Workshop	72% of line managers and senior leaders surveyed said that the programme had developed their leadership skills.

Next Steps

The 100BWPN programme has had two successful cohorts; three Black women academics have been promoted to professorship, and WHEN will be launching a new cohort in January 2024. Whilst this report sheds light on some of the groundbreaking opportunities and learnings that have taken place on the programme, there is still a lot of work to do to help accelerate the pace of change.

Below are a few key recommendations to help sustain the momentum of achieving systemic change.

Recommendations for Black women academics:

• **Be proactive and bold in seeking out information, mentors, sponsors, and opportunities:** Hiring and promotional criteria within universities can be opaque (Wright et al 2007). This, combined with a lack of racially sensitive mentoring (Harris & Ogbonna 2022) can negatively impact career advancement for Black women in academia. While universities themselves have an obligation to correct these gaps, Black women should be strategic in identifying sponsors and mentors within or outside their institution.

• **Be strategic about career choices:** It is imperative to think strategically about your career progression and actively find ways of aligning your work and research interests with institutional aims, goals, and values (Wright et al 2007; Rollock 2019).

• **Nurture and grow your support network:** Dealing with day-to-day microaggressions and institutional racism can result in racial battle fatigue (Smith 2004). Verdi and Ebsworth's research (2009) found that underrepresented groups had better career experiences when working collaboratively with other academics. Black women should leverage the networks developed within the programme to find opportunities for research, collaboration, and support.

Recommendations for Universities:

• **Differentiate between commitment and interest:** Identify the distinction between interest in the programme more broadly, and tangible commitment to changing the status quo. The latter is what will help ensure that universities do more to identify and prioritise clear commitments and action towards systemic change.

• **Provide Black women academics with opportunities in decision-making:** A major barrier to systemic change is the current underrepresentation of Black women academics in senior leadership roles (Rollock 2021). This can limit their influence and diversity of thought in helping to change the status quo. Universities should actively ensure that Black women academics have opportunities to contribute to strategic decision-making and ensure that any additional workload is in proportion with other responsibilities and formally recognised.

• **Increased visibility of Black women academics:** Black women academics have reported feeling overworked and devalued within their institutions (Wright et al 2007; Rollock 2019). Thus, universities need to ensure that they are promoting the work of Black women academics and providing them with opportunities to showcase their work within the university and across the sector.

• **Restructuring the promotion criteria and improving transparency:** Some Black academics have reported that their scholarly contributions are often overlooked, particularly if it does not align with White norms of knowledge production (Rollock 2019). Universities must ensure that their promotion criteria are inclusive, eliminate the hidden criteria and provide fair recruitment training for panel members to ensure there is equity of opportunity and improved transparency.

Recommendations for the Higher Education Sector:

• **Widening the academic pipeline:** Black girls face multi-dimensional challenges throughout their schooling and education (Johnson & Ginsberg 2015) and while targeted interventions to support Black women academics is imperative, earlier interventions are required. Black girls need to see a career in academia as attainable and be actively supported with resources to do so. Research indicates that Black postgraduate students are more likely to self-fund their studies due to a lack of access to research funding opportunities (Williams et al 2019). Thus, universities and research funding councils must provide targeted scholarships for Black girls to pursue postgraduate studies to widen the academic pipeline of Black women academics.

• **Inclusive research grants and funding:** Being able to attract funding for research is an important requirement for advancing one's career as an academic (Rollock 2019). However, research areas and interests pursued by Black academics can sometimes receive less funding (Wright et al 2007). Universities and research funding councils must actively ensure that research grants and funding opportunities are more inclusive and accessible for Black women academics.

• **Building a culture of accountability:** To create sustainable systemic change, a culture of accountability is required cross institutionally. This can be achieved by maintaining professional networks from the programme. For example, Vice Chancellor's, HR Directors, EDI Leads and Research Directors should work together cross-institutionally to hold each other to account on action plans, strategize ways to accelerate the pace of change across the sector and share best practice.

Thank you

2023 Programme End

We would like to thank the following universities for partnering with us on phase two of the 100BWPN in 2023:

• University of Manchester
• University of Leeds
• University of East London
• University of Exeter
• City, University of London
• University of East Anglia
• University of West London
• Open University

We would also like to thank the entire WHEN team and our programme faculty for their invaluable contribution to planning, designing, and delivering the programme.

For more information on how to get involved, please visit our website: www.whenequality.org/100.

2024 Programme Launch

We are pleased to be partnering with the following institutions for phase three of the 100BWPN programme in 2024:

• University of Bristol
• London Met University
• University of the West of England
• City, University of London
• University of Exeter
• University of Manchester
• University of East London
• Open University
• University of Leeds

2025 Programme Expressions of Interest

Early expressions of interest for the fourth phase of the programme in 2025 are now open. We encourage institutions that are committed to accelerating the pace of change to get in touch with us. If you are a Black woman academic that is interested in the programme, please share the report with your senior leaders and put them in touch with us.

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