



UK Television – Adjusting The Colour Balance BAME Directors Working in UK Television Production

Press Release

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Directors UK research reveals only 1.5% of UK Television is made by a BAME director

A Directors UK report published today has highlighted the significant under-employment and under-representation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) directors in UK television production.

The report, '**UK Television - Adjusting The Colour Balance. BAME Directors Working in UK Television Production**' is the result of research into the current employment rate of BAME directors across all programme genres in UK television. The research found that only 1.5% of programmes were made by a BAME director, while BAME directors make up just 3.5% of the directing community.

The research also found that BAME directors are being given a far smaller proportion of directing opportunities in many key programme genres than their white counterparts. Some of the most popular drama, comedy and entertainment shows in our sample had never been made by a director who is Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, including all programmes within Period Drama, Chat shows, Game shows, Performance, Reality, Panel shows, Sketch shows, Children's Comedy and Children's Entertainment.

The data, collated from a large sample of programmes broadcast up to the end of 2013, also showed that the proportion of television being made by BAME television directors in the UK had got worse over time, decreasing by over 20% between pre-2011 and 2013.

The report includes findings from in-depth qualitative interviews with BAME directing talent giving first-hand experience of what it is like to try to forge a career as a BAME director. These personal insights highlight that some of the industry's working practices and behaviours are effectively slowing or stunting the careers of BAME directors. There is a perception that a career in television is inaccessible and unsustainable to potential directors from BAME backgrounds.

The data findings show the true scale and depth of BAME under-representation within TV production. Coupled with the in-depth interviews the report has identified a clear and distinct need within the directing profession to support and develop BAME talent now and in the future.

The research identified one area where an emerging talent initiative has had a significant positive impact on visibility and opportunity for BAME directors. In Single Dramas over 12% of programme episodes were made by BAME directors – however further analysis showed that all 12% were within one programme strand: Channel 4's emerging talent vehicle '*Coming Up*'. A powerful illustration of the positive impact these types of programme making opportunities can have.

Directors UK has set out a number of recommendations to help increase the employment opportunities for BAME directors in UK television production including: setting clear diversity targets; improving transparency of recruitment and monitoring of freelancers; ensuring opportunities for entry, training and career progression; creating more visibility for BAME directors and creating role models for aspiring directing talent.

With many industry organisations taking action to address the under-representation of BAME talent both on and off-screen, Directors UK's ambition is to work with broadcasters, production companies, agents and training providers to bring about a significant increase in the number of television programmes being made by BAME directors.

Menhaj Huda, Diversity Chair at Directors UK, said: "Our report findings are both shocking and concerning. It reveals what many of us in the industry have been aware of for some time, but now we have hard evidence to show just how serious the lack of diversity in television really is for directors. Sustaining a career for any director is difficult enough as it is, but when the perception of BAME directors is that they are less able, less experienced and less competent then it becomes virtually impossible, regardless of talent. Our report shows that getting work in television is inaccessible for far too many and there is a failure to provide any kind of support for BAME talent."

Huda, who has directed feature film (*Kidulthood*) as well as a range of popular British television programmes, such as *Queer As Folk*, *By Any Means*, *EastEnders*, *The Bill*, *Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street*, continued, "We are talking about British directors from BAME backgrounds whose experiences growing up in this country offer a different take on story-telling, a different perspective, but a voice that is valid which is effectively being shut out. It's great that the industry is talking about the issue of diversity but discussion does not equal action. Until the process of selecting and hiring directors becomes more transparent and accountable, we will not achieve the improvements we all want to see."

Andrew Chowns, CEO of Directors UK, said: "Our report provides the clearest evidence of the career challenges facing BAME directors. We have set out a number of practical steps that can be taken to make a real difference, including better recruitment practices, creation of programme strands for new talent, and more on-the-job training and mentoring opportunities. Directors UK is already involved in career development projects and other initiatives with broadcasters, producers and Creative Skillset, but it is clear that we all need to do a great deal more to ensure that all directors have equal opportunities and we can get the best out of all the talent we have in the UK"

The research and recommendations are detailed in a report published today by Directors UK www.directors.uk.com/news/uk-television-adjusting-the-colour-balance .

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Notes to Editors:

DIRECTORS UK is the single voice of British screen directors representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 6,000 members – the overwhelming majority of working film and television directors in the UK. **DIRECTORS UK** campaigns for the rights, working conditions and status of directors in the industry and works closely with fellow organisations in the UK, Europe and around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns. It also promotes excellence in the craft of direction both nationally and internationally.

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