

# DIRECTORS UK

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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## **BAME DIRECTORS STILL POORLY REPRESENTED IN UK TV**

- **BAME directors made just 2.22% of UK TV programmes between 2013-2016**
- **TV episodes made by BAME directors increased by just 0.11 percentage points**
- **Targeted career development initiatives boost numbers of BAME directed drama episodes**

Directors UK calls for more career development initiatives for under-represented directors as their latest report reveals the negligible progress made in the employment and representation of black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) directors in UK television.

The report, *Adjusting the Colour Balance: Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation among screen directors working in UK Television*, analyses the proportion of TV programmes made by BAME directors across the UK's four main television channels (BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) between 2013 and 2016. It highlighted that:

- Just 2.22% of UK television programmes were made by BAME directors between 2013-2016.
- Television episodes directed by BAME directors increased by just 0.11 percentage points - from 2.2% to 2.31%.
- Only 3.6% of directors featured in our dataset come from BAME backgrounds.
- No broadcaster made a significant improvement on diversity in the four-year period. The BBC, ITV and Channel 5 saw marginal increases, whilst Channel 4 saw a slight decline.
- Genres which had workplace interventions showed the biggest improvement: Continuing Drama rose by 3 percentage points, while Single Dramas rose by 3.6 percentage points.

The report also reveals year on year fluctuations across genres, suggesting an inconsistent approach to achieving change. The findings highlight the lack of progress made in the employment and representation of BAME directors, despite the diversity and inclusion strategies introduced by broadcasters and producers over the years.

The figures also indicate that positive interventions, initiatives and schemes do positively boost diversity, but, these need to be made available across all genres in order to generate systematic change across programme making.

In response, Directors UK has set out a number of recommendations to close the diversity gap. These include:

- broadcasters be set targets to ensure their workforce mirrors the UK population by 2020
- fairer recruitment practices and unconscious bias training for those in hiring positions
- Ofcom to make it mandatory for all UK broadcasters to monitor and report on diversity of all staff both freelance and permanent
- broadcasters to commit 0.25% of their commissioning spend to fund career development and industry access schemes.

Directors UK Board member Ashok Prasad said: "I am disappointed at these new results and at the lack of progress since the last report three years ago. I am concerned that there is a very low proportion of BAME directors employed by broadcasters and production companies, indicating a separation between the people who make our TV programmes and the audiences who watch them. Broadcasters and production companies need to dedicate more time, money and effort to ensure that a significant shift is made to diversify the pool of directors working in the UK to properly reflect the makeup of our society."

Directors UK CEO Andrew Chowns added: "Although disappointing overall we are glad to see signs of improvement for BAME directors in some genres. What this shows is that deliberate and collaborative interventions in partnership with broadcasters and production companies make a difference to diversity and must become more widely available. The industry can no longer pay lip-service to diversity initiatives. More needs to be done across all genres to ensure that directors from under-represented groups have access to opportunities and career development."

Directors UK will continue to work with industry organisations as they take action to address the diversity gap.

The full report is available to read [here](#).

The research and recommendations are detailed in a report published today by Directors UK <https://directors.uk.com/campaigns/bame-directors>

Additional information can be found at <https://directors.uk.com/news/adjusting-the-colour-balance>

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### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

Adjusting the Colour Balance: Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation among screen directors working in UK Television.

### **KEY FINDINGS:**

- The 2013-2016 period saw the percentage of television episodes directed by BAME directors increase slightly (by 0.11 percentage points) from 2.2% in 2013 to 2.31% in 2016.
- The report highlights the acute levels of under-representation and under-employment of BAME directors and the lack of progress being made by broadcasters and producers.
- Despite 14% of the population being from BAME backgrounds, just 2.22% of programmes are made by BAME directors, resulting in a cultural separation between the people who make our television programmes and the audiences who watch them.
- Just 3.6% of the UK television directors featured in our dataset come from BAME backgrounds. In raw numbers: only 158 of the 4,388 directors who appear in this data are of BAME origin.
- No broadcaster made a significant improvement on diversity from 2013 to 2016. The BBC saw a 0.18 percentage point increase, while ITV and Channel 5 experienced a 0.21 and 0.39 percentage-point rise respectively. In the same period, Channel 4 saw a 0.15 percentage-point decline.
- When examining specific genres, the figures are more varied. The report found little or no improvement in the percentage of episodes made by BAME directors in Factual (a 0.3 percentage-point decrease) or Multi-Camera & Entertainment and Children's (both increased by 0.1 percentage points). However, there was a noteworthy rise in Drama & Comedy which increased by 1.5 percentage points, from 2.6% in 2013 to 4.1% in 2016.
- The rise in the number of Drama & Comedy episodes made by BAME directors during 2013-16 is due in part to a series of workplace interventions providing career development opportunities for under-represented groups in Continuing Drama (soaps) and Single Drama. These resulted in a 3 percentage-point increase in the number of Continuing Drama episodes directed by BAME directors, from 2.7% to 5.7%, and a rise of 3.6 percentage points in Single Drama, from 2.3% to 5.9%. *Doctors* (BBC) showed a significant increase in the percentage of episodes that were made by BAME directors – jumping from 6.7% to 21.8% in four years.
- Career development initiatives do appear to boost the numbers within targeted genres but these interventions need to be made available across the board in order to deliver systematic change in overall programme making.

## **DIRECTORS UK RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- We call on Ofcom to make it mandatory for all UK broadcasters to monitor and publicly report on the diversity characteristics of all those making programmes for them, both permanent staff and freelancers.
- We propose that broadcasters be set targets to ensure their workforce mirrors the gender, ethnic and disability makeup of the UK population by 2020.
- We call on broadcasters to use fairer recruitment practices for freelancers in line with other industries and provide those in hiring positions with unconscious bias training.
- We ask all broadcasters to commit 0.25% of their commissioning spend across all programme-making as a levy to fund industry access and career development schemes for under-represented groups.

## **DATASET:**

The dataset covers 47,444 episodes directed by 4,388 directors which were broadcast by the four main UK terrestrial broadcasters – BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 – between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016. An episode represents a single programme, for instance a documentary, or a single episode within a television series or serial. The dataset is divided into five genres:

Factual - 46.9% of total dataset (22,280 episodes)

Multi-camera & Entertainment - 26.1% of the total dataset (12,423 episodes)

Drama & Comedy - 18.2% of the total dataset (8,667 episodes)

Children's - 8.2% of the total dataset (3,906 episodes)

Animation - 0.3% of the total dataset (168 episodes)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**A PDF copy of *Adjusting The Colour Balance: Black, Asian And Minority Ethnic Representation Among Screen Directors Working In UK Television* report and further information can be found at <https://d29dqxe14uxvcr.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1537376389641-48nno7a8g5d-a2f386db65fdcecec7ac1fb44dac221b%2F2018-Adjusting-the-Colour-Balance.pdf>**

**More information about *Adjusting The Colour Balance: Black, Asian And Minority Ethnic Representation Among Screen Directors Working In UK Television* is available here <https://directors.uk.com/campaigns/bame-directors>**

## **ABOUT DIRECTORS UK**

- The research and recommendations are detailed in a report published today by Directors UK. Additional information can be found at <https://directors.uk.com/news/adjusting-the-colour-balance>
- **Directors UK** is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 7,000 members - the majority of working TV and film directors in the UK. Directors UK collects and distributes royalty payments and provides a range of services to members including campaigning, commercial negotiations, legal advice, events, training and career development. Directors UK works closely with fellow organisations around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns, promotes excellence in the craft of direction and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.
- Further information can be found at [www.directors.uk.com](http://www.directors.uk.com)
- To become a member of Directors UK for access to training, benefits and discounts, please visit [www.directors.uk.com/join](http://www.directors.uk.com/join) or contact us directly at [membership@directors.uk.com](mailto:membership@directors.uk.com)
- Directors UK Social Media handle: **@Directors\_UK**      **#DUKequality**

**FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES:**

**Tolu Akisanya**

Communications & Campaigns Officer, Directors UK

Tel: 020 7240 0009 ext. 6

Direct line: 020 7845 9707

E-mail: [takisanya@directors.uk.com](mailto:takisanya@directors.uk.com)

**Victoria Morris**

Head of Communications & Public Affairs, Directors UK

Tel: 020 7240 0009 ext. 6

Direct line: 020 7845 9707

E-mail: [vmorris@directors.uk.com](mailto:vmorris@directors.uk.com)