



UK Television - Adjusting the Colour Balance

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Directors working in UK Television Production

A report by Directors UK

Press Pack

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM, THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2015

Contents

- **Press Release**
- **Key facts to be found in the report**
- **Recommendations**
- **Quotes from Directors**
- **Director Biographies**

#DUKDiversity

www.directors.uk.com/news/uk-television-adjusting-the-colour-balance

For enquiries contact:

Victoria Morris,

Head of Communications and Public Affairs

Directors UK

Tel: 020 7240 0009 ext. 6

Direct line: 020 7845 9707

E-mail: commsandpublic@directors.uk.com

Tolu Akisanya,

Communications Project Manager

Directors UK

Tel: 020 7240 0009 ext. 6

Direct line: 020 7845 9707

E-mail: takisanya@directors.uk.com



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

Press Release

Embargoed until 10am, 12th November 2015

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 .

-Ends-

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.

For enquiries contact:

Victoria Morris,
Head of Communications and Public Affairs
Directors UK
Tel: 020 7240 0009 ext. 6
Direct line: 020 7845 9707
E-mail: commsandpublic@directors.uk.com

Tolu Akisanya,
Communications Project Manager
Directors UK
Tel: 020 7240 0009 ext. 6
Direct line: 020 7845 9707
E-mail: takisanya@directors.uk.com

Key Facts to be found in this report

1. Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) directors in UK television are both under-employed and under-represented.
2. BAME directors make up 3.5% of the Directors UK membership (only 214 out of 6,032 directors), but are not represented to the same degree across TV production, as only 1.5% of TV programmes in our sample are made by BAME directors.
3. The number of television episodes in our sample made by a BAME director has fallen by 20% from pre-2011 to 2013.
4. Figures from our sample revealed that 0% of Period Dramas, Chat shows, Game shows, Performance, Reality, Sketch shows, Children's Comedy and Children's Entertainment programmes had been directed by a director who is Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic.
5. The (already low) number of BAME directors currently working in the industry are increasingly less likely to be working on entertainment or comedy shows. Both genres had little or no Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) directors across entire production runs.
6. Structured Reality shows, "Shiny Floor" shows and Daytime shows in our sample all had less than 1% of programmes made by a BAME director.
7. Just one episode of a sitcom or scripted comedy, out of 550 episodes in the sample, was made by a BAME director.
8. Continuing Dramas also scored relatively low, with only 2.09% of all programmes in the sample being made by a BAME director.
9. Single dramas appeared to perform better with 12.78% of programmes being made by a BAME director. However, on further analysis all 12.78% were accounted for by a single programme strand, Channel 4's *'Coming Up'*.
10. The results found in Children's programmes is a reflection of the picture across all genres.
11. 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, fair selection and monitoring of freelancers; ensuring opportunities for entry, training and career progression; creating more visibility for BAME directors and creating role models for young talent.
12. Directors UK research is based on an analysis sample of 55,675 individual episodes extending across 546 programme titles broadcast on UK TV up to the end of 2013.
13. Directors UK worked with Richard Webber and Trevor Phillips' 'Origins' software to identify and cross-reference the ethno-cultural background of directors found within our data sample. See Research Methodology in the report for more information.

Key statistics to be found in the report

The Workforce

- Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) directors make up only 3.5% of the Directors UK membership, while 14% of the UK population are from BAME backgrounds.
- Just 1.5% of all the programmes in our sample were made by BAME directors.
- The proportion of television programmes made by BAME directors in our sample dropped by 20% - a decrease from 1.67% pre-2011 to 1.29% in 2013.

Drama

- 2.42% of all Drama programmes in the sample had been made by BAME directors, compared to 97.58% by white directors.
- 0% of Period Drama episodes in the sample were made by BAME directors.
- 2.09% of all the episodes of Continuing Dramas, or 'Soaps,' in the sample had been made by BAME directors. This equates to 322 episodes out of 15,435. A surprisingly low result given the high volume.
- Within Continuing Drama, BBC's *Casualty* had the highest proportion of episodes made by a BAME director (6.72%), followed by *Doctors* (5.08%) and *Holby City* (4.09%).
- ITV's *Coronation Street* (0.03%) had the lowest proportion of episodes made by a BAME directors closely followed by *Emmerdale* (0.54%) and Channel 4's *Hollyoaks* (1.02%).
- Single Drama appeared to perform better with 12.78% of episodes in the sample being made by a BAME director. On further analysis all 12.78% were accounted for by a single programme strand, Channel 4's *Coming Up*.

Factual

- 2.46% of all Factual programmes in the sample had been made by a BAME director.
- 0% of Rig Show programmes in the sample were made by a BAME director.
- Factual sub-genres such as Structured Reality, Single Documentaries and Specialist Factual programmes all had less than 1% of episodes made by BAME directors.
- Only 1.88% of Daytime programme episodes were made by BAME directors.
- Other areas of Factual had a higher proportion of programmes directed by BAME directors: Current Affairs (3.26%), Factual Entertainment (3.41%), Observational Documentary (3.96%) and Popular documentary (4.69%).

Comedy

- 0.18% of Comedy programmes in the sample were made by BAME directors.
- 0% of Sketch Show episodes in the sample were made by BAME directors.
- Just one episode of a Sitcom/Scripted Comedy was made by a BAME director, out of 550 episodes.

Multi-camera & Entertainment

- 0.06% of Multi-camera & Entertainment programmes had been directed by a BAME director, making it the lowest scoring genre we analysed, although the largest genre in our sample.

- ‘Shiny Floor’ shows had 0.15% of programme episodes in the sample made by BAME directors and Studio/Magazine shows had 0.52%.
- Sub-genres such as Structured Reality shows (0.50%), Single Documentaries (0.97%), and Specialist Factual shows (0.99%) also rated poorly in the report.
- 0% of Talk/Chat shows, Game shows, Panel shows, Performance, and Reality shows, in the sample had a BAME director.

Children’s

- 1.77% of all Children’s programmes in the sample were directed by BAME directors.
- BAME directors worked on just two Children’s Factual titles, and two Children’s Drama titles.
- 0% of all Children’s Game shows, Children’s Comedy & Children’s Entertainment shows in our sample were directed by BAME directors.
- The genre findings in Children’s programmes are a reflection of the picture across all genres.

Recommendations

Summary of Recommendations

- Set specific diversity targets to secure a commission as part of broadcaster and commissioner commitments to tackling under-employment.
- Support transparency with monitoring and reporting of BAME representation across all commissions.
- Broadcasters and commissioners to provide clear guidance on what is expected of productions in terms of diversifying directing talent.
- Broadcasters, production companies and training providers to work with Directors UK to provide dedicated, funded BAME career development initiatives and programme platforms at all career levels.
- Production companies to provide unconscious bias training as standard for members of staff involved in hiring freelance creative talent such as directors.
- Work with Directors UK to open up the access to employment opportunities across all genres and specifically address areas where there are no BAME directors working.
- Apply permanent staff recruitment and hiring practices to freelance BAME directors, to support fairer entry and career progression through equal access to employment.
- Directors UK to work with commissioners, production companies, agents and talent managers to increase BAME directors' visibility and access to work opportunities through:
 - Information sharing, including talent databases.
 - Focused networking tied to work in specific genre areas and/or projects.
 - Creation of more BAME role models to challenge the norm and inspire others.
- Directors UK to map out the current careers of existing BAME directors to identify entry points, key barriers to progression and career development activity
- Directors UK to work with industry partners as well as education and training providers, schools and communities to foster the perception that a career as a television director can be sustainable if you are from a BAME background.

Directors UK calls on all parts of the industry to reflect our recommendations within their own strategic commitments to improving diversity in television production.

Additional Quotes from Directors UK members

Menhaj Huda, Diversity Chair at Directors UK

“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.

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.”

Menhaj Huda, Director, *Kidulthood, Comedown, Everywhere and Nowhere, West 10 LDN, Queer As Folk, By Any Means, EastEnders, The Bill, Murphy’s Law, Emmerdale, Coronation Street, Holby Blue, Young Dracula, Tube Tales.*

Baff Akoto

“Wow! The report sample shows a decline since 2011 - the same year I directed my first TV drama (for Channel 4). That gave me pause for thought. Having spent the last few months on the new BBC1 Peter Moffat drama *UNDERCOVER* directing 2nd Unit and shadowing the lead block director, I'd hate to think further opportunities at this level are statistically slim instead of dependent on my storytelling chops and growing TV drama experience.

Drama directing is about leadership and narrative vision. The more inclusive we can be as an industry, as a society, in harnessing the vision, energy and ideas of all our under-represented directing talent, the better equipped we are to make distinctive and resonant drama that reflects true British culture and speaks to this nation and beyond.

Looking forward to seeing a trend reversal in future stats - and directing something with corsets and/or time travel for a streaming giant or a major broadcaster near you soon!”

Baff Akoto, Director, *Coming Up, Eastenders, Doctors.*

Toral Dixit

“I am really surprised at the findings of the Directors UK research; I had an inclination that the representation of black or ethnic minority talent was pretty low, but I wasn’t prepared for just how bad. An ‘average’ of just 1.5% of (programmes made by) BAME directors is appalling!

The industry has become risk averse; unfortunately it’s a highly competitive arena with shrinking budgets, where jobs are harder to get, more so for BAME directors than their white counterparts, possibly due to an unconscious bias and out-dated recruitment process. Often just hearing about a vacancy depends on your social network or being part of the ‘inner circle’, BAME directors aren't always part of this group. I joined the industry at a time when it was possible to be given a chance to learn the trade and climb a career ladder; I have worked in the TV industry for approximately 20 years now, on some of the UK’s most popular programs – from *Dispatches* to *Don’t Tell the Bride* – I’d consider myself fortunate to be working in this field. You shouldn’t have to be “lucky” to work in your chosen field, people regardless of ethnic background, should be selected for roles for their vision, talent and experience, and not just because they fit a quota or is someone that is ‘perceived’ to have more cultural understanding.

The industry has always been a highly competitive, and increasingly directors are becoming specialised, but because many BAME directors are not given the opportunity for regular work within a given field, to gain that specialist CV, their experience is often more eclectic and sporadic - having to take almost any job that comes along - ultimately making them disadvantaged in the selection process, if they manage to get there in the first place. There are no BAME directors employed on chat shows, game shows, children’s comedy, performance and sketch shows, not because they have a lesser understanding of these genres but because they are not given the opportunity - a situation that is simply unacceptable.

It’s almost 15 years since Greg Dyke’s comments about the BBC being hideously white; sadly it was a reflection of the industry as a whole not just the BBC, and unfortunately, is still an unchanged landscape.”

Toral Dixit, Director, *Dispatches*, *Tribal Wives*, *Mammoth Back from the Dead*, *The Return of the Clouded Leopards*, *Don’t Tell the Bride*, *BBC Inside Out*, *Too Fat for Fifteen*.

Christiana Ebohon

“We work in a creative industry, so you would expect it to be broad minded and forward thinking. These shocking figures suggest otherwise. If you are anything other than a white, male director your career opportunities are at best limited and at worst squashed. Those selecting directors have to realise that their choices narrow the onscreen portrayal of our rich multicultural world. BAME directors are from diverse backgrounds that often enrich the programmes that we work on. We are not a risk. The results that Directors UK has uncovered shame us all. We need to act now to prevent these figures sliding even further. Perhaps it is time for us to introduce unofficial quotas, until BAME employment at least reflects the 3.5% figure within Directors UK membership.”

Christiana Ebohon, Director, *Hollyoaks*, *Eastenders*, *Emmerdale*, *Doctors*, *Lloyds Bank Channel 4 Film Challenge*, *Ali Meek Gets a Result*, *Single Voices*.

Onyinye Egenti

“I am unsurprised by the research findings. As a BAME director it is a struggle to get an interview much less a job anywhere in London directing anything. A colleague of mine who is a twice Oscar-nominated director (in the short film category) has also found it a challenge. Mine and my colleague's experiences reflect everything that is wrong with the industry's lack of promotion and employment of BAME directors. It feels as though the industry doors are closed to minority ethnic directors, starting from as early as the film school stage and spreading into professional careers.

We (BAME directors) can bring an authenticity and visual perspectives that veer away from overused and often non-representative BAME character stereotypes, often occurring when white writers/directors try to write a non-white-story about non-white characters. This view point is always challenged by industry people claiming "a dearth of qualified BAME directors with the requisite experience in the industry". However this will continue to be a 'fait-accompli' in an industry where the majority of BAME directors are rejected when they apply to development schemes in an effort to build fledgling careers. There will not be an increase in the number of qualified BAME directors without more training-scheme selections being made available to us. Until this changes, things will not move forward progressively in any recognisable fashion in the interest of BAME directors.

The industry needs to open its doors to BAME directors and to accept more BAME directors/BAME projects onto development schemes like Film London, Creative England, Micro-wave, Creative Skillset, BBC/ITV/Channel 4 initiatives, etc. these are the only serious and sincere ways to assist BAME directors towards a chance at a future at this profession within the industry. Other than a few exceptions, only directors who have been successfully through these schemes are taken seriously and given any shot at developing a directing career in the UK.”

Onyinye Egenti, Director, *Remember Me*, *Bird of Truth*, *Waking at Dawn*.

Waris Islam

“The figures in this report don't surprise me. I was fortunate enough to be part of the Directors UK's mentoring scheme, which allowed me to shadow an incredible director on a high-end drama. It was a great opportunity and I learned so much, but remember thinking how disconnected the set seemed from reality; the set was based in the middle of a very eclectic multicultural part of London and the cast on this particular storyline was also very diverse, however behind the camera was a very different story; barely a single BAME face working.

I think sometimes the industry has almost become a pseudo reality that is completely unrepresentative of multicultural Britain and though, good natured, completely oblivious to the lack of diversity in their production until it's mentioned. I don't think anyone is intentionally being biased towards a certain group or background, I think the industry have just developed their favourite directors, through personal relationships and past experiences, and continue to use them; anyone else is considered a "risk". It means that it ultimately becomes the same people working when there are hundreds of qualified directors willing and available. Fresh talent revitalises productions on long running shows and increases the workforce in the entire industry. It is how we remain competitive with our peers and relevant to our audiences.”

Waris Islam, Director, *Short*, *The Family Portrait*, *Hollyoaks*, *Bishaash*.

Jo Johnson

“The results from the report were really sad to see – sad that we’re still talking about this issue in 2015. I’ve been working in TV drama for a long time so it is weird to think that people would classify me as ‘unusual’, seeing me doing my job as rare. The figures sadly speak for themselves. I worked my way up, as many have - I’m not where I want to be yet, but so long as I can stay visual in the industry I believe I’ll get there, eventually. This isn’t an exclusive problem. Bigger and more important organisations, armed forces, police, legal profession, have had to look at their make up and say “are we missing something”. They came to the conclusion that they were. The TV industry must do the same.

Why should there be more directors from a diverse background working on programmes watched in homes across the UK? Because the country is diverse and we can’t be talking about this for another 30 years. Its 2015.”

Jo Johnson, Director, *Casualty*, *Eastenders*, *Coronation Street*, *Holby City*, *The Bill*, *Bad Girls*, *Mersey Beat*, *Trial & Retribution*, *Dangerfield*, *Accused*, *The Real McCoy*, *Brookside*.

Suri Krishnamma

"The report findings are shocking if not surprising. The 20% fall between 2011 and 2013 is alarming and makes you wonder just what TV productions are doing to address this. There are some schemes and programmes that have been introduced by broadcasters, but is this really enough to help change the current landscape? It would be interesting to know how these statistics compare with other roles, such as producers. If there are very few producers from BAME backgrounds with director-employing responsibilities this could be having a knock-on effect to the recruitment of other BAME talent such as directors. I’m concerned that if the industry does not accurately reflect the 'look' of the wider society then there may be some kind of unconscious exclusion happening. We, as a society, should be concerned about this, and the implications if the industry does not take action to change its approach to hiring and championing directors of various backgrounds to better reflect their audiences and society. Hopefully the report will open a few eyes and help more directors from all different backgrounds to get into and progress in the industry."

Suri Krishnamma, Director, *Bad Karma*, *Macbeth No More*, *Locked In*, *Dark Tourist*, *Being Othello*, *Casualty*, *Echo Beach*, *Cold Blood*, *Blue Murder*, *Waking The Dead*, *Wuthering Heights*, *New Year’s Day*, *Dalziel and Pascoe*, *Mohammed’s Daughter*, *A Respectable Trade*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Soldier Soldier*, *Slender & The Bill*.

Arun Kumar

“This comes as absolutely no surprise to me at all. A lot of people have said this over the years, as it has been a real issue, however years later; here we are discussing the same thing. In a sense, it’s good to open up the discussion again as it means many people are now faced with the reality of what the situation is. Schemes and incentives are great, if they work, but unfortunately they never lead to anything. At the end of the day it’s ultimately the same few who are financed and get repetitive work.

What is needed is a complete overhaul of attitudes and equal opportunities. Everyone, regardless of background or gender should be treated equally, as an individual. People should not be hired because of social groups or anything besides their experience and ability. Until attitudes change and nepotism is eliminated then nothing will change. It’s not brain surgery, it’s really quite simple!”

Arun Kumar, Director, *The Bielski Brothers, Executions, Bengali Backlash, Looters, Eating Out, The Icemen: Angadias of India & Red Throne.*

Bharat Nalluri

“I’m not that surprised to hear, but stunned at just how low figures and percentages of BAME directors in the workforce are at the moment. I guess that means I have a unique story; I started out in the 90’s in an area that didn’t have access to anything – I was part of a small few. We didn’t have training, everything we did; we did it for ourselves, through self-funding or subsidies. I was incredibly lucky because my first experience in TV was very positive; I was met with very supportive and nurturing people, and was able to progress; I’m aware of how very lucky I am.

As a director, we’re key in the art of story-telling; when you hire a director for a project you’re incorporating their views and visions, so to have just one type of vision from the same angle, we’re in danger of not hearing other voices; some parts of the story is not being told. It then becomes stagnant, very one-sided and ultimately becomes unreflective of our society. If this happens, we’re in danger of losing our audience, and we become redundant and irrelevant. Our audience will find their news and entertainment elsewhere (online or social media, etc.). So it’s almost an economic imperative that we utilise and share all voices available.”

Bharat Nalluri, Director, *MI-5, The 100, Spooks, Life on Mars, Hustle, Emily Owens M.D., Torchwood, Outcasts, Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day, Tsunami: The Aftermath.*

Jenn Nkiru

“The results of the report show quite clearly that our industry still has a long way to go.

Unfortunately our decision-makers still only realise the value of BAME directors and image makers to the extent that they are tackling BAME subjects and even then, these subjects and images are never given enough space to be as developed or nuanced as they should, often resulting in caricature-like framings of their true image. To be restricted to only creating in this narrow space is both suffocating and stifling and goes against everything our industry is about – storytelling and creativity.

Given the opportunity and resources and these truly are the two main tools that are needed - opportunity and resources, BAME directors and image makers would thrive and be able to compete. However, we cannot compete if we’re not given equal merit and placed on equal footing with our counterparts.

Until we move away from a culture of nepotism behind the scenes and a culture of only celebrating familiarity in front of the camera, we are building ourselves to fail.

More than ever, there is a need for our industry and the content we create to be one that is reflective and inclusive of society. That means content that stretches across class, gender, sexuality and colour. If you cannot see yourself you do not exist. I hope I get to see myself more and more.”

Jenn Nkiru, Director, *En Vogue, Seed, Jump*.

Imran Naqvi

“As a kid growing up in the 80's the idea that diversity would be an issue in the media in the future seemed to be ridiculous. The BBC and Channel 4 were at the vanguard of programming for and featuring people from all backgrounds in the UK. I entered the industry as a cameraman in 1996 and whilst I wasn't expecting to see huge representation from BAME people it has noticeably become worse since then. The vast majority of people coming into the industry come from an increasingly narrow background. Despite the increasing number of people of different heritages in our country, fewer and fewer of them are entering or staying in our industry. As that audience grows it seems particularly short-sighted to make it harder and harder for them to make an impact, which may well lead to a growing irrelevance of our media to the population it's supposed to serve.”

Imran Naqvi, Director, *Knock Knock, Superheroes Anonymous, Sound & Last Seven*

Alex Pillai

“A director’s role is to connect characters and story to the audience and it seems self-evident that those who are in the privileged position of making drama films for television should be able to speak directly to the public through their work. Being from an Indian background always informs what I do, whether through choice of casting, or in the way that I interpret the scripts that I am to film. Starting from an outsider’s perspective, I am aware of how important it is to address the dreams and ideas of those who are rarely represented in this most expensive of art forms.

I was shocked to discover the small proportion of BAME directors working in British television, as revealed by the Director UK survey. The statistics tell all - ‘1.29%’ is the average participation of BAME directors in UK broadcasting. ‘1.29%’ proves that BAME directors are not flourishing within either the independent sector, or the BBC.

The British television industry is correctly lauded for its originality and talent, and yet within its ranks the broader British public is not represented. This lamentable statistic highlights how singular my career has been, how others like myself must have fallen by the wayside, and how opportunities must have been denied by an unconscious racial bias.

Without the participation of BAME directors, all we will see on television is the same old story, told the same old way. By not encouraging a variety of voices within broadcasting, the industry is excluding much of the population, and is stifling originality. The choice not to employ BAME directors, however unintended, does not make financial sense - often the most startling ideas come from the outside.

Let us not forget that Waris Hussein, born in India and raised in Britain, directed the first episode of the BBC’s long-running export - *Dr. Who*.”

Alex Pillai, Director, *Being Human, Da Vinci’s Demons, Merlin, Robin Hood, Touching Evil, Trial and Retribution, Wire in the Blood, The Wyvern Mystery, Flight & Victim*.

Biographies Directors UK members Quoted

Menhaj Huda

Menhaj Huda's television directing career kicked off in 1993 when he created *Hypnosis*, an innovative dance music series for Channel 4, which later went on to win an RTS Award.

He continued to work in music and youth TV, as well as music videos and commercials, before he went on to direct the award winning short film *Jump Boy* (1998). He went on to direct the ground breaking TV drama *Queer As Folk 2*, *Is Harry On The Boat?*, *Murphy's Law* and other prime time TV dramas.

In 2005 he directed and produced, his first feature length film, the critically-acclaimed UK film, *Kidulthood*, for which he won the Douglas Hickox Award at British Independent Film Awards (2006) for best debut feature, which has sold over a million DVD copies in UK alone and gained a worldwide release. His second film *Everywhere & Nowhere* (2011) was selected for the Dinard and Mumbai International Film Festival. His third film *Comedown* (2013) was later released by StudioCanal. While developing his next feature film projects, he continues to direct prime time UK TV dramas, including *Young Dracula*, *By Any Means* and *Coronation Street*.

Menhaj is an elected Board Member of Directors UK and chairs the campaign and working group for BAME directors.

Baff Akoto

Hailing from West London, Baff began his career in documentary before directing the single drama *Home*, for Channel 4's *Coming Up* series, which starred Johnny Harris (*From Darkness*, *Snow White & The Huntsman*) and Lorraine Stanley (*Suffragette*, *Made In Dagenham*).

Baff has since directed continuing drama and is currently working on the upcoming 2016 BBC1 six-part legal thriller *Undercover* - written by Peter Moffat and Executive Produced by Hilary Salmon - directing Second Unit and shadowing the lead block director as part of Directors UK's High End Drama Mentoring initiative.

Toral Dixit

Toral Dixit is an experienced self-shooting producer, director, and a former journalist and photographer.

With over 20 years' experience in the industry, working in Observational Documentary, Current Affairs and Factual Programming for UK, USA and international broadcasters, including C4 (*Dispatches*, *The Year Britain Flooded & Wife Swap*), BBC (*Last Man Standing*, *Tribal Wives*, *Don't Tell the Bride*, *Skin Deep - the Business of Beauty and Tsunami Children*), C5 (*Go Hard or Go Home*, & *Britain's Craziest Commutes*), ITV (*The Making of Royal Wedding*); Nat Geo (*Mammoth - Back from the Dead* and *The Return of the Clouded Leopards*), Discovery (*UK's Toughest Jobs*), and much more. Her work has taken her around the globe and into some very remote or challenging environments, such as the Arctic circle, the Jungle in Assam, filming with gangs in Brazil and working in war-torn Baghdad.

Christiana Ebohon

Christiana is an award-winning drama director and writer, and until recently, a mentee with Women in Film & Television's 2015 mentoring scheme. Working as a freelance television director over the last fifteen years Christiana has worked on many drama series' including *EastEnders*, *Doctors*, *Emmerdale* and *Hollyoaks*, and one-off dramas, including *Single Voices* for Carlton Television (which won Best Actor at the EMMAS 2001) and *Dogma TV: Alistair Meek Gets a Result* for Channel 4. She also made a number of award-winning short films, both of which she wrote and directed; *In Your Eye* (1998) and *St Claire* (1997).

Having built up such a strong body of experience, Christiana is now focused on progressing into more challenging drama, as well as feature films. Christiana was recently selected for a place on Directors UK's High End Mentoring Scheme, where she is currently shadowing a director on a Kudos/Sky production, *The Tunnel 2: Debris*, directing some of their second unit sequences.

Onyinye Egenti

Onyinye studied at the London Film School, and whilst there her work was selected for a range of festivals, including the British Film Institute (BFI) Foreign Shorts Festival, the 39th Annual Student Academy Awards foreign film, Grand OFF Independent World film festival and several international Academy Award-qualifying film festivals. In 2012, Onyinye was commissioned to write and to direct the screenplay *Café Afrik* for producers, Ike Bakers of EnyPictures Media and Nicholas Beveney of AR Film Studios.

Onyinye is currently developing a third feature length Welsh screenplay, *Bird of Truth*, directed by Onyinye herself and produced by Linda Biney (shorts producer, Creative England alumni). The screenplay has so far enjoyed some positive reactions at the BFI Network Talent and the Edinburgh International Film Festival Talent Lab.

Onyinye will be working with Academy Award shortlisted director, Rahul Gandotra to write and develop two UK television dramas with BAME story backgrounds.

Waris Islam

Waris is an award-winning writer and director with experience in film, television and radio.

He has written for BBC Radio drama, directed award winning short films *Short* and *The Family Portrait* and written a *Coming Up* for Channel 4. Waris has also directed episodes of *Hollyoaks*, one of which went on to win a British Soap Award (2008) for the 'Best Exit Scene'. Most recently, Waris has been working as the co-creator, series script editor, series consultant, writer and director on the high-profile BBC Action co-production *Bishaash*, which received over 50 million viewers.

Waris is currently preparing for his first feature film, *The Line*.

Jo Johnson

Jo Johnson is an experienced drama director, having started her career on *Brookside* (1982), she moved on to *The Real McCoy* (1991), *Dangerfield* (1997) and *Trial and Retribution* (1999) and on to *Eastenders* (1994 – 2008). Jo returned to *Eastenders* to produce 'Dirty Den's exit, for the second and final time.

The last few years has seen her split her time between *Coronation Street* and *Casualty*. Jo is also a writer; her screenplay *It Must Be Love* had a well-received play reading at BAFTA. Jo is working towards writing and directing her own material.

Suri Krishnamma

Suri studied at the Arts University Bournemouth where he achieved early recognition with a BAFTA nomination for his student film, *Mohammed's Daughter*. More awards followed for his professional work in both television and feature films, including a BAFTA nomination for *A Respectable Trade*, Best UK Feature at the Raindance Film Festival for *New Year's Day*, the Grand Prix at Yubari in Japan, and the Gold Mikeldi at Bilbao and Silver Hugo at Chicago.

In his latest theatrical film, *Bad Karma*, Suri again works with a fine international cast including Ray Liotta, Dominic Purcell and Vanessa Grey in a gripping psychological thriller set on the Gold Coast, Australia.

He is currently a Professor in Film Production at Norwich University of the Arts, an Honorary Fellow of the Arts University Bournemouth and a co-opted member of the board of Directors UK.

Arun Kumar

Award-winning Director Arun Kumar began his career directing a documentary *The Bielski Brothers*, and the critically acclaimed and controversial *Executions* (1995). This success led to him being commissioned by Channel 4 to direct *Bengali Backlash* (1996). He then went on to win an Arts Council Award to make a pilot for a comedy drama series *Fly on the Wall* (1997) which kicked off his career in drama. He also several awards for his shorts films *Looters* (2002) and *Eating Out* (2004). His first feature film *The Truck of Dreams* for Sahara Motion Pictures (2005), won the World Cinema Best Feature Film Award in the 2006 Washington International Film Festival.

Arun is currently in pre-production on the feature film *Far Out Far In* scheduled to shoot February 2016, Arun is also scheduled to shoot *Mafeking* in January 2017, as well as being attached to direct the feature films *8 Beats*, *Red Throne*, *Dr Swapher*, *Ming – Love Survival* and *The Marrying Man*.

Bharat Nalluri

Bharat Nalluri most recently directed *Spooks: The Greater Good* (with Kit Harington), ten years after directing the original series of *Spooks* for BBC. He was also the original director for UK hit shows *Life On Mars* (which earned him a BAFTA TV Award nomination for Best Director in 2007), *Hustle* (which also earned him a Directors Guild of Great Britain Award nomination for Outstanding Directorial Achievement) and *The 100*.

Bharat earned his first Primetime Emmy Award nomination for his work on HBO's miniseries *Tsunami: The Aftermath*. The show also earned Golden Globe Award nominations for actors Toni Collette, Chiwetel Ejiofor, and Sophie Okonedo; and three Emmy Award nominations.

His previous film *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* (2008), starring Amy Adams, Frances McDormand and Ciarán Hinds, was nominated for a People's Choice Awards in USA.

Jenn Nkiru

Jenn Nkiru is a critically-acclaimed British Director; her most prolific credit includes *EN VOGUE*, a short film commissioned by Channel 4's Random Acts series, for which she earned her first directorial broadcast credit and is currently generating a buzz within the global film festival circuit, including Sheffield Film Festival, SXSW, The Toronto film Festival and Sundance Film Festival.

Over the years, Jenn has worked alongside commercial directors on a range of projects both the UK & USA, including content for Saatchi & Saatchi, ITN, Channel 4, The BBC, MTV News, HSI Productions, Pulse Films, Focus Features, The Grammys, Pulse Films and Red Bull Music. Most recently Jenn was nominated for the 2015 1.4 Brilliant Filmmaking / New Director Award alongside some of the world's brightest and emerging young directors.

Imran Naqvi

After studying Human Biology at Kings College London, Imran made the life-changing career move into television, working relentlessly for the next two years getting involved in everything he could until 1996 when he was employed at BSkyB as a trainee cameraman.

Imran worked as a freelance cameraman since 2000 and worked his way up the career ladder. In 2009 Imran was chosen to direct thriller *The Last Seven* (2009), which features Tamer Hassan, Ronan Vibert and Daisy Head, was released theatrically through Metrodome. In 2011 Imran completed production on short films *Knock Knock*, *Sound* and *Superheroes Anonymous* - which are now on the festival. 2012 saw Imran progressing to the finals of B3s TalentLab, selected for his script *Coconut* which he is developing into a feature.

Alex Pillai

Alex Pillai has been directing television drama for over 20 years. Amongst his work is the BAFTA-nominated first series of *Being Human* (2009), big-budget fantasy shows *Da Vincis Demons* (2015), *Merlin* (2011) and *Robin Hood* (2009), and crime series including Paul Abbotts' *Touching Evil*(1999), Lynda La Plante's *Trial and Retribution* (2006-7) and Val McDermid's *Wire in the Blood* (2005). His single dramas include *The Wyvern Mystery* (2000) starring Naomi Watts, and *Harry Price: Ghost Hunter* (2016) starring Rafe Spall. Features include the multi-award winning *Flight* (1995), written by Tanika Gupta, and *Victim* (2012) starring David Harewood.