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A day after BSkyB pledged that by the end of next year, at least 20% of the stars and writers of its UK-originated TV shows will come from a black, Asian or other minority ethnic background; a Media Diversity Institute (MDI) representative appeared on London Live TV asking for a clearer strategy to implement these plans.

“We always hear that BBC, BSkyB and others are trying to have more diverse programmes, more representatives from Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities. But we at MDI wonder how they are actually going to do that? If it is so simple to employ more people with different backgrounds, then why haven’t they done it so far?” said Dasha Ilic from MDI. She appeared on **Headline London**, daily lunch-time programme on London Live TV discussing whether British actors and media professionals have been represented fairly across mainstream broadcasters.

Referring to some of Lenny Henry’s criticism towards the big media outlets, Michael Pearce,

Lecturer in Socially Engaged theatre, said that the British actor is really challenging broadcasters to put their money, to ring-fence their money for productions made by BAME people and starring in them. “This is a very nice way forward, because when you ring-fence money, then that money needs to be spent”, he added.

Rioch Edwards-Brown, Media Campaigner and TV Researcher, contributed to the discussion commenting that quotas and positive discrimination had poor outcomes. However, she added that it is important to strengthen the capacity and the skills of community members, in order not only to enter the media industry but also to remain in it.



Apart from the importance of diversity and representation in the media, panellists discussed the quality of the representation and the roles that people who commission media projects play.

“There is nothing worse than having someone who has absolutely no idea about your experience, writing about you. It is hard to have for example a white man writing about the experience of a black woman” said Yomi Adegoke, writer and blogger, underlining the impact the lack of BAME people in high positions has on fair representation.

Ms Ilic concluded the debate saying that the representation of minorities in the media is a matter of freedom of expression, the right for everybody to be seen and heard and it is the people’s right to be in the media as they are part of the society.

“Media needs to reflect our society. Try and take the contributors of any TV panel, the actors of any evening drama and put them on the streets of London. Then it could be seen whether they reflect the reality, if they fit in or if they just look like a bunch of aliens. White aliens. Male aliens”, said Dasha Ilic of MDI on London Live TV.