

Gender Concerns in the Irish Film and Television Industry:

Report on Events Organised by
the EAC, the WGI & the SDGI



November 2016

In recent years, the Writers' Guild has tackled the issue of gender imbalance in the Irish film industry in order to improve on the very low number of films written by women writers being produced. To focus attention on the issue, members from the Writers' Guild of Ireland and the Screen Directors' Guild of Ireland formed the EAC (Equality Action Committee). In December 2015, the Irish Film Board introduced a new and very welcome policy to tackle the under-representation of women writers, directors and producers working in feature film in Ireland. The policy intends to arrive at parity of funding for writers, directors and producers within three years.



Consultation Meeting with Members in Dublin

24th February 2016, The Central Hotel, Dublin



The EAC, the WGI and the SDGI organised a consultation meeting of their members to hear directly from the writers and directors themselves, about their specific concerns and to find ways to address them. The meeting was attended by 47 female (and a few male) writers and directors and the panel consisted of: David Kavanagh, (CEO WGI); Dr. Susan Liddy (writer and academic); Lauren Mackenzie (writer) and Neasa Hardiman (writer and director).

Information Meeting for Members in Galway

2nd June 2016, Taibhdhearc Theatre, Galway



An information meeting for our writers and directors based in the West was held in the rehearsal space of the Taibhdhearc Theatre in Galway.

Open Meeting at Galway Film Fleadh

5th July & 30th August, Radisson Blu Hotel, Dublin



The Guilds organised an open discussion meeting, for all to attend, at Galway Film Fleadh 2016. The meeting was attended by approximately 140 people including representatives from the Film Board, the Guilds, the BAI and others. Chaired by Irish Times film critic Tara Brady, the panel were: Marian Quinn (writer and director); Dr Susan Liddy (writer); Dr. Annie Doona (IFB); Kirsten Sheridan (writer and director); Oonagh Kearney (writer and director); Liz Gill (writer and director); Christine Molloy (writer and director) and Lauren Mackenzie (writer).

Pitching Events for Writers and Directors

5th July & 30th August, Radisson Blu Hotel, Dublin



In conjunction with Screen Producers Ireland, the WGI and SDGI organised an event which would give female writers and directors the opportunity to pitch their projects to producers. At the first event, 13 writers and 7 producers pitched their projects to 10 of the country's biggest producers of film and television. Due to the success of the first pitching event and in response to requests from members, the Guilds organised a second pitching event, for a larger group.

Between the two events, some 55 writers and directors got a chance to pitch their projects to producers. The WGI subsequently compiled a document containing brief pitches submitted by female members of both Guilds, which the Guilds forwarded on to the producers.

2nd Consultation Meeting with Members

9th November, Exchequer Hotel, Dublin



The EAC and the Guilds held a second meeting to consult with members of both Guilds with the objective of assessing the impact of the Film Board's policy in relation to gender since its announcement in December 2015. The meeting also examined the statistical breakdown for funding for both development and production during the year, for women writing film and animation. Members' views on the next steps that should be taken by the Guilds and the EAC were discussed and agreed.

Redressing Gender Equality in Writing for Film

22nd November, Irish Writers' Centre, Dublin



The Writers' Guild, in conjunction with the Irish Writers' Centre, held an event entitled 'Redressing Gender Inequality in Writing for Film'. This day-long event was designed to provide information and practical advice to female novelists and playwrights or other female writers who may not have experience in scriptwriting. An overview on scriptwriting and gender in Ireland was provided by the Writers' Guild.

Our panel which included EAC members, Lauren Mackenzie and Marian Quinn, spoke about the current difficulties for female writers and directors in Ireland, along with a discussion of the Film Board's new policy concerning gender, which was presented by Dr. Susan Liddy.



Other panellists included writer/director Juanita Wilson, who discussed the challenges of adaptation with Lauren Mackenzie; and London-based agent Julian Friedmann, who spoke about the business aspects involved in scriptwriting and adaptation of existing work.

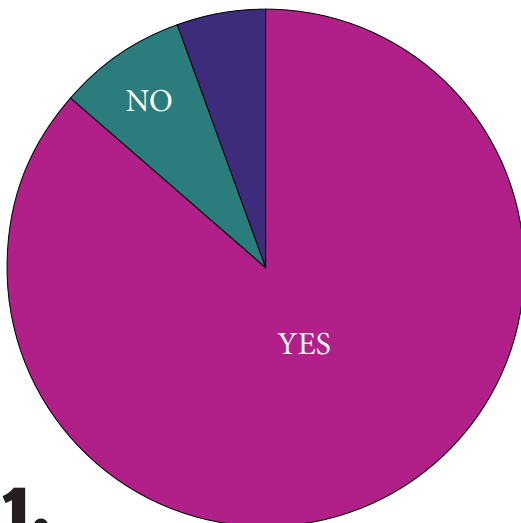
Feedback

from Female Respondents Who Pitched Projects to Producers in July and August 2016

1.

Overall, did you find the experience of pitching your project(s) to producers to be useful or not?

Yes: 86.5% **No:** 8.1% **Don't Know:** 5.4%

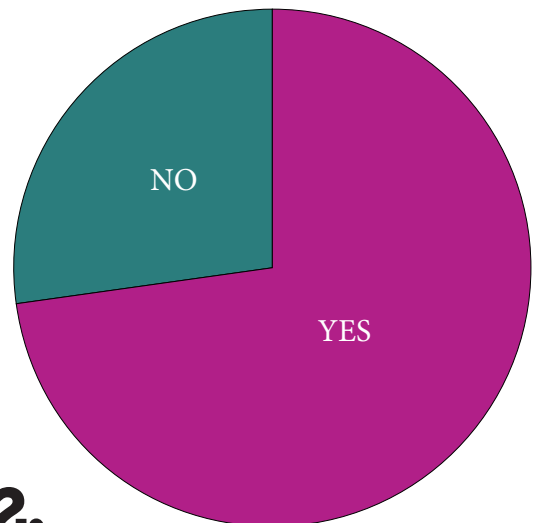


1.

2.

Since your pitching session, have you had any contact with the producer(s)?

Yes: 73% **No:** 27%



2.

YES

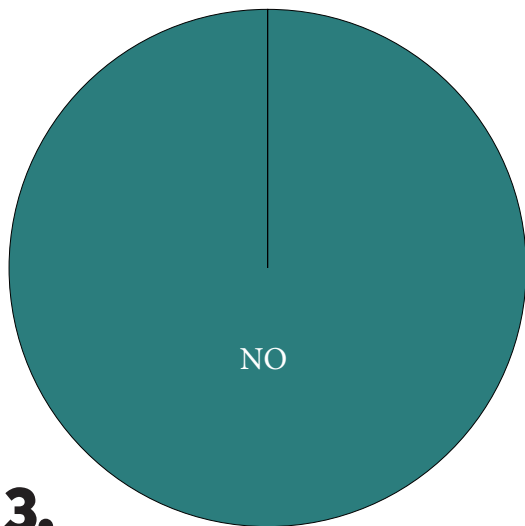
NO

Don't
know

3.

If so, has this contact resulted in paid work for you?

Yes: 0% No: 100%

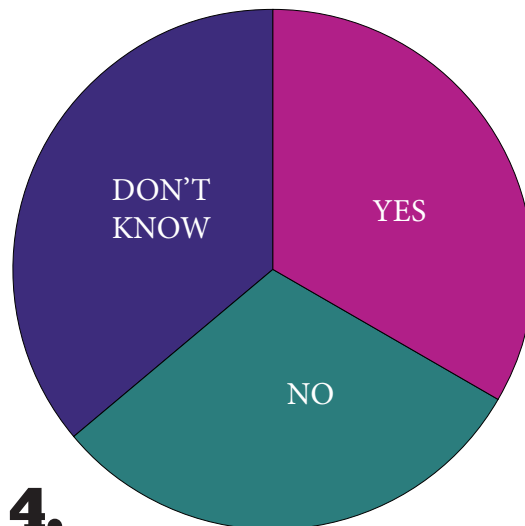


3.

4.

If the contact has not yet resulted in paid work for you, do you think this will happen, given some time?

Yes: 32.5% No: 29.7% Don't know: 35.1%

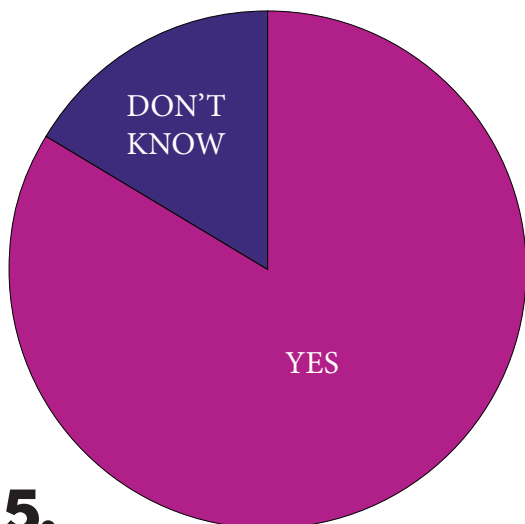


4.

5.

Would you like to participate in another similar event?

Yes: 83.8% No: 0% Don't know/maybe: 16.2%



5.

6.

What could we have done to improve this experience for you?

Overall summary of all comments;
Very useful event.

Most common complaints:

Producers weren't really interested. (Majority of) producers didn't respond to my follow-up emails, even the ones who promised they'd read my work.

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