

Gender Equality Policy

Context

The Corn Exchange's Gender Equality policy has been developed after a period of significant examination within the sector since the Waking The Feminists movement began in November 2015. It has been written in the context of a Gender Policy Working Group where a number of leading arts organisations came together to develop policies unique to their organisations, share information and provide support. It is intended that all policies developed through this working group will be shared and circulated as potential templates for other organisations also seeking to improve gender equality.

Corn Exchange is an equal opportunities employer. As such we are committed to equality of opportunity for existing and potential collaborators be they employees, staff members, volunteers or freelance contractors. The Company also has a clear policy towards bullying and harassment including sexual harassment. These policies are part of the Employee Handbook and are applicable to anyone who works with the company.

What this policy aims to do is find a balance so that female artists and female voices have equal representation within our productions.

In preparation towards writing this policy the company embarked on an assessment of gender equality over past productions in line with the recent research project *Gender Counts*. The results of that assessment can be found in Appendix 1.

Overall Gender Equality Policy Focus – Key Tenets:

Corn Exchange understands that its key priorities in achieving gender equality and promoting equal representation across its artistic activities centre on three key tenets.

- Monitoring and Reporting
- Active Talent Development

- Management and Leadership Focus

These key tenets form the basis of the company's policy focus and are articulated through the policy's aims, delineated below.

Aims

1. The company will aim to have gender parity (50/50% representation) in cast and author for the period 2016 – 2021, and will work towards this objective with flexibility over annual programmes but with an overarching focus on reaching parity across the five-year period. Corn Exchange will do this by:

- Actively seeking more projects written by women;
- Aiming to have gender parity within authors on our development slate.
- Considering creative ways of casting roles so that gender parity can be achieved e.g. gender blind casting or re-writing roles to be female (cf; The Seagull 2016) or favouring female cast for gender-neutral roles.

2. The company will continue to aim for gender parity in costume, set and lighting design for the period 2016 – 2021, by:

- Continuing to monitor the figures and reporting transparently;
- Deepening current relationships with designers while also continuing to seek alternatives.

3. The company will aim for gender parity in sound design for the period 2016-2021, by:

- Pursuing creative relationships with female sound designers;
- Appointing the sound designer as early as possible in the creative process to ensure availability of existing female sound designers;
- Being creative in finding other potential female sound designers through other artistic disciplines.

4. The company will continue to maintain gender parity at Board level on an ongoing basis, by:

- Ensuring gender parity remains a priority with the board development sub-committee.

5. The company will be transparent on gender representation statistics and commit to maintaining standards, by:

- Reporting annually;
- Scheduling annual policy review at board level;
- Publishing our figures and policy on the company website;
- Sharing our data and research with other similar organisations.

6. The company will aim to apply the same rigour towards technical and stage management roles as to the cast & creatives.

Appendix 1

In preparation for this policy the company examined the recent research project *Gender Counts* commissioned by Waking the Feminists, which examined gender equality in the Irish theatre sector.

The research examined the organisations across a range of roles – Director, Author, Cast, Set Designer, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer and Costume Designer over a 10-year period (2006 – 15) and generated a percentage to see how women are represented in these roles and then gave a general overall measure of female representation for each organisation.

The research concluded that, across their sample (which included larger organisations like The Abbey and the Gate but also similar sized organisations like Pan Pan Theatre company):

1. Women are underrepresented in every role studied except Costume Design;
2. 37% of Directors were women;
3. 28% of Authors were women;
4. The lowest levels of female representation were found in Sound Design (9%)
5. Women achieve the highest level of representation in the categories of Costume Design and Cast;
6. To achieve parity in all roles women face a gap of between 8 and 41 percentage points.

It's important to note that the research did not include technical roles into its research only artistic/creative roles.

For the purpose of this policy Corn Exchange has run a similar exercise for the years 2006 – 2015 using identical parameters as the research.

	Director	Writer	Cast	Designer	Costume	Lighting	Music/Sound
Female	9	2	18	7	6	7	0
Male	0	8	28	2	3	2	9
Total	9	10	46	9	9	9	9
% Female	100%	20%	39%	78%	67%	78%	0%
Other orgs	37%	28%	42%	40%	79%	34%	9%

The Corn Exchange has an overall female representation of 49%

The Abbey Theatre	33%
The Gate Theatre	32%
Dublin Theatre Festival	37%
Druid	37%
Project Arts Centre	42%
The Ark	47%
Dublin Fringe Festival	47%
Barnstorm Theatre Co	40%
Pan Pan Theatre Co	43%

The Corn Exchange can conclude the following:

- The company is 1% point away to achieving gender parity;
- In terms of all designers (excluding sound) the company is incredibly strong on female representation;
- The company is lower than the sectoral average in terms of female roles on stage;
- The company is lower than the sectoral average in terms of female authors which is not surprising given the company's long association with Michael West.

These findings were critical in developing the key tenets that inform Corn Exchange's Gender Equality Policy.