

PRIME MINISTER'S TASK FORCE ON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

CREATIVE WOMEN WORKSHOPS ASSOCIATION

September 12, 2003

SUBMISSION

1. What challenges are faced by women when starting a business? What public or private sector opportunities are available to help overcome those challenges? What challenges are faced when expanding a business and how can they be overcome?

The world of television, new media and film knows entrepreneurs as filmmakers, writer/director/producers, showrunners and auteurs¹. At the beginning of the 21st Century, representing over half the planet's population, women are still grossly under-represented as filmmakers. Why is this so?

"Women filmmakers lack experience." ... "They don't have the "right" connections to the right people." ... "They haven't got enough confidence and cannot handle the pressures of leadership." ... these are the most common reasons given for why opportunities are still out of reach for many women filmmakers. These challenges can be overcome by providing women filmmakers with opportunities to gain hands-on experience, build networks and receive ongoing mentorship throughout their careers.

Filmmakers embody the entrepreneurial spirit. They start a new business with every new film, television or new media project. They expand their businesses every time they form another business contact or reach a wider audience for their stories. Filmmakers have perhaps the highest potential per capita of any entrepreneur in western society for making a cultural impact. Through their stories told for screen, these artists hold a golden key to unlocking how Canadians ultimately define themselves. Though Canada is considered relatively progressive in its treatment of women, women's stories as told on screen continue to be distorted, misunderstood, misrepresented and often defamed. The role models we most frequently see on television programs and films are made, directed, written by men. The stories are told from a decidedly male perspective and do not inspire and guide women into becoming successful entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs are held back by the images reflected to them in the media and particularly on screen. In order to break through the barrier artificially imposed by the electronic media, women need to see and experience new, more empowering images of women shown to them by other women.

To gain professional standing, meet and gain the respect of the right people along with other benefits, the creative entrepreneurs in the film, television and new media world seek to belong to a variety of industry related guilds, unions and associations that help, to varying degrees, to promote their members and protect minimum rights, fees and working conditions. Such organizations include the Directors Guild of Canada, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema Radio and Television Artists, the Writers Guild of Canada, the Canadian Film and Television Production Association and the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television, to name only a few. These organizations require a certain level of professional status in order to qualify for membership; they charge an annual fee in order to maintain membership in good standing.

¹ For the purposes of this submission the term "filmmaker" shall be interpreted to be inclusive of the entrepreneur AKA list above.

Only 10% of the members listed in the director category of the Directors Guild of Canada 2000 Directory are women. Far fewer than 10% are practicing their craft on large-budget film projects. Statistics released last year in the United States showed an even lower rate: women directed just 6% of U.S. films produced in 2001². With the demise of affirmative action in California, the statistics continue to get worse not better. Facing a proverbial chicken and egg situation, many women filmmakers lack the experience to qualify for membership and once they do finally qualify they cannot maintain their membership because they have difficulty getting financing to get subsequent project ventures off the ground.

- What steps must the federal government take to promote initiatives that would assist women entrepreneurs? Are there areas with significant potential for women entrepreneurs that have been overlooked or underdeveloped? Are there any existing international practices that should be adopted in Canada?

Aside from the regionally focused efforts of Women In Film chapters in Canada, Creative Women Workshops Association is the only organization in Canada and indeed around the world, that offers women filmmakers the opportunity to stretch and advance in the highly specialized and critically acclaimed national program. *The Women In the Director's Chair Workshop* (WIDC) is a one-of-a-kind offering unique to Canada. The federal government should take steps to ensure that this program continues and is sufficiently promoted within Canada and abroad by granting targeted funds through programs administered by the HRDC and/or Canadian Heritage.

For Creative Women Workshops Association and its partners, The Banff Centre and ACTRA, it is vitally important to support women filmmakers from all regions of Canada. Women from different regions and different cultures have their own unique passions, stories and vision. With more women at the helm of dramatic media productions, the public will begin to see a more balanced vision of women, their roles and their potential for positive impact as role models in all other areas of society. Think of the untold stories portraying the woman that runs the bakery, owns the accounting firm, starts the cottage industry in her basement, heroines whose stories need to be told in order to help inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs. In order for this to happen, women need more experience and this means more opportunities to learn about and practice their craft, and more opportunities to be leaders.

Since it takes place at the internationally renown Banff Centre, the caliber and breadth of learning experience offered at *The Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop* is not available in all regions, but women from all regions are eligible, encouraged to and do attend *The Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop*. Of the 64 women filmmakers who have graduated from a WIDC program in the last seven years, half are from the eastern regions (including NFDL and Maritimes) and half from the west (including the Yukon). Nearly 25% have been women of colour and Aboriginal women. *The Women In the Director's Chair Workshop* (WIDC) mandate is to develop Canadian talent in the Canadian film and television community. This is coupled with a practice of promoting diversity in

² <http://www.moviesbywomen.com/stats2002.html>

Canadian culture and gender equality in all positions of the company. The WIDC Program is highly subsidized by industry sponsors in order to make it as accessible as possible to its participants but there are still gaps in the funding structure and the program still costs the participant approximately \$6,000 out of their pockets to attend. The federal government should help to ensure that programs of this nature are accessible to women filmmakers by targeting \$48,000 per year in scholarship funds administered by the Canada Council for the Arts for eight women filmmakers to attend the WIDC program.

Women entrepreneurs do not invest sufficiently in developing and promoting themselves as their company's key resource. From discussing the situation with delegates at film festivals and corresponding with WIDC alumnae, it is evident that services to and support of professional filmmakers are not readily available to women in remote regions, nor are these services economically within their reach. From evaluations conducted over the course of the last seven years we have determined that *The Women In the Director's Chair Workshop* (WIDC) has significantly increased the depth of learning and experience for its participants, their ability to communicate their vision clearly and effectively to personnel and they have developed a greater confidence and ability to follow through on plans for future entrepreneurial endeavours.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The federal government must ensure the follow-through on whatever initiatives this Task Force chooses to support.
- In order for the federal government to advance the contribution of women entrepreneurs to the Canadian economy sufficient monies need to be directed towards programs and initiatives that provide practical solutions for women entrepreneurs. For the women entrepreneurs in the film, television and new media industry those solutions include hands-on experience, mentorship and network building opportunities. These elements are all integrated into *The Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop* Program. (See APPENDICES A and B)

3. Businesses are constantly looking to expand their markets. However, achieving global business success remains one of the key challenges business owners face. What unique challenges are faced by women entrepreneurs in exporting their products or services?

Creative Women Workshops is investigating a variety of means of assisting WIDC Alumnae and other women filmmakers in expanding their businesses such that they would have full creative and editorial control and retain copyright over their work. WIDC participants benefit from Creative Women Workshops' ongoing Alumnae Network that keeps WIDC program graduates from across the country connected with one another via regular electronic updates, and sharing of creative and economic opportunities. These activities are supported through ongoing fundraising and membership dues, which are currently insufficient to sustain the activities.

Women filmmakers do not often have the economic resources to attend foreign markets to promote and screen their work or partake in professional development and

network-building opportunities. Creative Women Workshops has recently been invited to participate in an international event where we would deliver a segment of the WIDC program to an international audience of women independent filmmakers and production companies. The Women In Film and Television International (WIFT-I) Summit will take place April 2004 in New Zealand. By attending Creative Women Workshops representatives will develop contacts that can be passed on to WIDC Alumnae for developing international co-productions and partnerships. On a select basis foreign filmmakers and companies representatives will be invited to participate in the 10th Anniversary "International Session of WIDC" in 2006. The 10th Anniversary session of WIDC would bring Canadian women filmmakers together with their foreign counterparts for a rare opportunity to share best practices and develop a larger network for future business opportunities. The federal government needs to devote financial support through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, towards this kind of practical endeavour designed specifically for advancing women that will assist these entrepreneurs in the film, television and new media world in expanding their businesses into foreign markets.

4. Innovation and learning have been identified as priorities for the federal government. How can the federal government ensure that women entrepreneurs are full participants in Canada's innovation policy, research and development, and technology agenda?

Women filmmakers are capable and often gifted pioneers and problem-solvers. They have the ability to be both creative and practical. In order to more fully participate and play a leading role in Canada's innovation policy, research and development, and technology agenda, women filmmakers need the opportunity to explore and learn in same-gender environments. Some British Columbia middle schools are testing a return to same-gender classes for Math and English and finding the increase in grades encouraging enough to begin offering optional same-gender classes in Science and Social Studies as well. The world of technological advancement is often out of reach for women filmmakers because they lack the necessary economic resources. Programs like WIDC need support in order to help bridge that financial gap.

Creative Women Workshops continues to make a significant contribution towards achieving a more even playing field for Canadian women filmmakers by providing opportunities for training and work experience, and nurturing the entrepreneur's leadership abilities in the spirit of cooperation and team-building. We support the professional practice of artists, advocate for a fair representation of the Canadian voice in the media, and work to educate on the values of equity, respectful communication practices and team-building in safe, creative environments. Women entrepreneurs need the opportunities to gain experience, develop confidence and receive ongoing mentorship.

"Human diversity is a resource, not a handicap, that all human beings have the capacity to learn from and teach each other." ~ Margaret Mead³

³ <http://www.mead2001.org/Biography.htm>

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APPENDIX A

THE MISSION

The mandate of *The Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop* is to:

1. Advance Canadian women into leadership positions where they will have more creative and editorial control over film, television, video and new media productions,
2. Increase the number and quality of women filmmakers in film, television, video and new media productions, and
3. Increase the number and quality of women's stories told for screen by women from diverse regions of Canada, for regional, national and international audiences, by offering opportunities for the women director participants to experience:
 1. More options for problem-solving
 2. More effectiveness using applicable skill sets,
 3. Increased confidence in their leadership abilities, overall
 4. More constructive communication with personnel, to ultimately bring more creativity to the screen.

The program further aims to:

1. Increase the number and quality of roles for women in film, television, video and new media productions,
2. Increase the number and quality of women in crew positions in film, television, video and new media productions, by encouraging and promoting:
 1. The telling of diverse stories with dynamic and non-stereotypic characters, particularly the female characters, and
 2. The skills development of women crew members at the workshop with a goal of a minimum of 50% female crewmembers.

THE PROGRAM

The Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop is a specially designed intensive program for mid-career Canadian women directors of film, television and video drama. This critically acclaimed program hones the director participants' skills by taking them through all the components of a professional dramatic media production with professional actors (ACTRA) and crews (DGC, IATSE), from story development through pre production, production and postproduction. Led by an award-winning and seasoned woman director who is assisted by a faculty of senior professionals (director of photography, editor, story editor, acting coach, production designer), participants can take risks, develop their own unique style, and test original material in a safe, educational environment. A high percentage of WIDC alumnae have gone on to complete new original projects, and expand their careers by collaborating on fellow graduates' projects and being hired to direct series television. Graduates credit the increased skills, greater confidence, and action plan developed at the workshop as a major force behind subsequent success.

Overall, the program takes a holistic, team spirit approach to entrepreneurialism. Focusing primarily on the learning needs of the filmmakers and combining that mindset with the

communal desire to tell stories for screen in the most creative way possible. This approach consistently and literally transforms the skills, abilities and vision of all the members of the production team, including actors and crew. Nowhere else in the world is there a program exactly like WIDC.

The Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop presented annually in partnership with the Alliance of Cinema Radio and Television Artists (ACTRA) and The Banff Centre, offers Canadian women filmmakers a practical, hands-on, intensive and long-lasting mentoring experience. Program participants include women from diverse artistic and cultural backgrounds from a variety of regions across Canada.

The outcomes of the WIDC program are individually tailored to the participant's needs and goals, however major objectives for each participant include:

- Exploring styles of communication and leadership
- Experiencing sharing one's vision and leading a team towards the fulfillment of that vision
- Gaining an understanding of personality styles and temperaments and how they can motivate personnel.
- Gaining an understanding of personality styles and temperaments and how they can motivate character/story
- Gaining a clearer understanding of the story and its structure,
- Exploring her own story-telling style
- Discovering some innovative and fresh ways to approach fictional storytelling.
- Gaining greater confidence
- Developing short and long-term action plans
- Building a network of ongoing support and mentorship from seniors and peers

At the urging of *The Women In the Director's Chair Workshop* (WIDC) alumnae, other sponsors and film production community members across the country, *The Women In the Director's Chair Workshop* (WIDC) program and its curriculum continue to evolve and expand. The pilot (1997) *Women In the Director's Chair Workshop* (WIDC) was led by one single mentor director, Anne Wheeler O.C. (see support letter attached) who herself is the epitome of a successful Canadian woman entrepreneur. The 2004 session will be led by a leading Canadian woman writer/director/producer, Kari Scogland, along with a host of faculty and the support of professional ACTRA actors, Directors Guild of Canada and IATSE members. We have developed a growing reputation for excellence. Over the last seven years this program has grown exponentially. WIDC is the main activity undertaken by Creative Women Workshops whose 2004 annual budget is \$630,000.

APPENDIX B

BIO LIST OF KEY PERSONNEL * FOR WIDC 2004

PROGRAM PRODUCER / FACILITATOR

Carol Whiteman (confirmed) is an actor, writer, and has produced over sixty short films with WIDC. She is a long time advocate for women's issues, particularly through her political involvement with ACTRA, Women In Film, and other arts and labour organizations. A co-creator of The Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop and co-founder of the Creative Women Workshops Association, Whiteman actively supports and promotes the unique visions and voices of Canadians in her roles as The WIDC Workshop Producer and President and CEO of Creative Women Workshops Association. Whiteman is a two-time Governor General's Award nominee for promoting women's equality in Canada and a nominee for Avon's Women of Inspiration Award 2002. Ms. Whiteman facilitates the WIDC Program and oversees the Alumnae Follow-up Program.

MENTOR DIRECTOR

Kari Scogland (confirmed) is an award-winning Canadian filmmaker named as one of Hollywood Reporter's 10 Directors to Watch in 2001. Starting with edgy drama for MTV (CATWALK) her television projects include the pilot for TRADERS, a hit television drama series nominated for 9 Gemini Awards including Best Director and winner Best Series 1998, the successful Showtime series QUEER AS FOLK where she directed two of the first episodes along with television movie WHITE LIES, starring *Sarah Polley* and *Lynn Redgrave* nominated for 6 Gemini's and the coveted International Emmy and received an Honourable Mention at the Cinema Tout Ecran in Geneva. Her latest work is as writer/director on her theatrical feature, a contemporary dramatic thriller LIBERTY STANDS STILL starring *Wesley Snipes*, *Linda Fiorentino* and *Oliver Platt* (for Lions Gate) which premiered at the Palm Springs Film Festival 2002 and won best screenplay/best actor/best actress/best action film in the New York International Film & Video Festival. Ms. Scogland will provide an overview for all the components of the course curriculum - a virtual bridge between the curriculum and the practical application of the filmmaker's skills.

MENTOR STORY EDITOR / INSTRUCTOR

Peg Campbell (confirmed) is an award-winning documentary and narrative film director and producer. Her films have received international acclaim, winning awards at the Genie's, Melbourne Film Festival, Yorkton, Northwest Film and Video Festival. A teacher of advanced film production and script writing at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design for 14 years, Campbell has taught numerous film workshops across Canada. She is founding member of the Cineworks Independent Filmmakers Society, the Independent Film and Video Alliance, Women in Film and Video Vancouver and Creative Women Workshops, and has also served on the board of the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund and the Canadian Independent Film Caucus. In development with AT BAY, a feature written by John Lazarus, Campbell was recently accepted into the UBC MFA film program. Ms. Campbell is a co-creator of the WIDC program and will lead the WIDC SIM, provide additional follow up at the WIDC Workshop.

GUEST INSTRUCTOR

Carolyn Mamchur (confirmed) is a favoured keynote speaker and presenter at many other organizations in British Columbia, including PRAXIS, a professor at Simon Fraser University and an award-winning author of several psychology texts and children's books. She has written several feature films including AROUSAL (based on a Barbara Gowdy story), THE WHOLE BRASS BAND (an adaptation from a novel) and WOLF AT THE DOOR. Ms. Mamchur has an extensive background in education and learning styles and would present a unique approach to character development using the Myers-Briggs Personality Typing technique.

MENTOR DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Peter Wunstorf (confirmed) has carved a distinguished career in cinematography in Canada with numerous projects to his credit including television series (SMALLVILLE) and feature films (THE VIRGINIAN), nominated for Best Cinematography Award for his work, Mr. Wunstorf will lead technical sessions on camera, lenses, blocking and camera choreography at the WIDC Workshop.

MENTOR PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Louise Middleton (to be confirmed), Directors Guild member with over ten years of art direction and production design experience based in Calgary, Alberta, will be on hand as an advisor at the WIDC SIM, will work with the participants to develop the production designs for the WIDC MAIN Scenes and will lead specific sessions on Production Design at the WIDC Workshop.

MENTOR EDITOR

Lara Mazur (confirmed) is a multiple Genie-nominated picture editor whose credits include Anne Wheeler's SUDDENLY NAKED (Genie Award, Best Editing), THE LAST WINTER and KOOTENAI BROWN. Ms. Mazur will contribute her extensive experience working with auteurs to discussions about the theories and traditions of picture editing and how to knowledgably subvert them. She will provide mentoring to the editors that come on board for the WIDC workshop.

MENTOR ACTOR

Rosemary Dunsmore (confirmed) one of Canada's foremost actresses starring in stage, film and television productions including ANNE OF GREEN GABLES – THE SEQUEL, the title role in MOM P.I., and most recently PROFOUNDLY NORMAL, THE INTERROGATION OF MICHAEL CROWE and DREAM CATCHER, is a highly respected acting instructor having taught professional scene study classes in Toronto, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax. She is the Actor in Residence at the Canadian Film Centre and a director alumna (1999) of WIDC. She leads sessions on working with actors and how to coach dynamic and credible performances.

THE BANFF CENTRE

Sara Diamond (confirmed) Artistic Director, Media and Visual Arts, Executive Producer TV, New Media and New Media Research, and Bell Canada Award-winner, leads a session on New Media Content Creation and Delivery, and the impact of the convergence of new media

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with traditional filmmaking practices. Ms. Diamond provides personal coaching for director participants in developing their career plans for after the workshop. She is one of the co-creators of The Women In the Director's Chair Workshop and has personally supported and overseen the development of the program on behalf of The Banff Centre.

Debra Prince (confirmed) has an extensive background in artistic production primarily within an Aboriginal context. She is a co-founder of Urban Shaman Inc.—Manitoba's only Aboriginal artist-run centre and she has also served as curator of the organization. In 2000, Debra produced a unique landmark media arts festival in Winnipeg, *The Iskwew Festival: The Feminine in Indigenous Film and Video*. Debra also co-curated the programming with Debby Keeper, in an event, which celebrated the talent and excellence of Aboriginal women in film and video and featured 45 media arts works including works by Alanis Obomsawin, Shirley Cheechoo, Annie Frazier-Henry, Dana Claxton and Thirza Cuthand. Debra currently coordinates the Women in the Directors' Chair Workshop as well as the Interactive Project Lab for the Banff New Media Institute at The Banff Centre. In her spare time, she freelances as a curator and writer specializing in Aboriginal artistic production.

*Personnel may be subject to change without notice.