AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY ON BEHALF OF ICSID AND ICOCRADA

WOMEN IN DESIGN

An exploratory survey on behalf of ICSID and Icograda
Acknowledgements

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The full report is available at:
www.icsid.org or www.icograda.org
One quarter to a third of businesses worldwide are owned by women today. Increasingly, women also serve as presidents, CEOs and chief designers in leading corporations. Recognising this global trend, Icsid launched the Women in Design Initiative in 2004 to help member societies and stakeholders meet the challenges of the new global economy. The project was immediately adopted by the Icograda board as well.

There are vast differences in the environments of women designers in different geographic and cultural regions. For this initiative to be of any real value and to avoid acting on assumptions, a clearer picture of the profile of members was necessary. It was decided that the point of departure should be a survey undertaken jointly by Icsid and Icograda, spanning their member societies.

This study should be seen as a basic fact-finding survey and a tool to sensitise members to this project. It forms the basis of identifying needs, opportunities, possible future projects and further research topics.

Amongst other things, the study was intended to establish the current facts on:

- Numbers of women in their membership.
- Differentiation between professional, educational, promotional, managerial/executive roles.
- Special needs of women designers.
- Special services/programmes they would appreciate from the international bodies.
- Reasons why they are not represented on the international boards, and more.

During the course of the survey, a number of facts emerged which limited the final outcomes of the study. Future projects could benefit from taking cognisance of these. One of the most important facts was that language remains a significant barrier. Although a good international spread of responses was received, very few responses came from the Asian members. This might be ascribed to the fact that the languages used for the survey were limited to English and Spanish.

A number of popular myths have also been proven false. This report is a summary of the most interesting findings of the study and serves to highlight those findings that may prove to have the greatest impact. The complete report, with the collation of all the qualitative comments can be accessed on the Icsid and Icograda web sites. It makes for interesting reading.

We would like to thank everybody who took the time to participate in this fact-finding project. We hope that the results will aid your future endeavours. A big thank goes to Brenda Sanderson, director of Icograda for her enthusiasm and capable driving of the distribution and collation of the responses. Thanks to Melanie Prinsloo, CEO of Gluemetric, who was in charge of the questionnaire architecture and processing the results.

Adrienne Viljoen
ICSID Board member 2003-05
Initiator: Women in Design
This report is a summary of the main findings of the Women in Design fact-finding document. The complete document is available on both the ICSID and Icograda web sites.

The study was led by Adrienne Viljoen of the SABS Design Institute. It was initiated to assist ICSID and Icograda to look at ways to retain and increase their relevance and impact on an ever-changing world and how to better address niche segments in their market. This exploratory survey forms the basis to enable the ‘Women in Design’ initiative to more accurately focus relevant projects to women in design and to add value to the general member base.

The study explores, amongst others, whether a disparity exists between the roles of women and that of men within the design realm. A number of studies have concluded that women and men do tend to react differently to certain aspects/situations and are also treated differently, partly due to their gender.

**Gender as a Differentiator**

The following variables are key when studying gender as a concept and differentiator:

- **Use of influence characteristics**
  Influence variables include assertiveness, bargaining skills, forming coalitions, friendliness, higher authority and reasoning. Previous studies, using these variables, concluded that gender and personality combine to affect power and influence. Various studies show that influence characteristics are perceived to be used differently amongst genders. These characteristics can to some degree be learned. These might be valuable topics to be included in future forums.

- **Work/lifestyle balance**
  The issue of gender comes up frequently in the arguments around work/life balance. It is generally assumed that women’s domestic commitments will take precedence over career commitments. This assumption is part of a legacy that leads to prejudice. It detracts from the notion that women can be committed professionals and it also damages opportunities for promotion. The concept of work/life balance is mentioned several times by the respondents in the survey.

- **Networking opportunities**
  Another set of factors that seem to be associated with greater career success and upward mobility is the availability of formal/informal mentorship programmes, social contact with superiors and networking potential. Networking opportunities, together with mentorship programmes were identified in this study as some of the greatest needs of women in design.

- **Equal career opportunities/levels of work**
  Career advancement is an aspect that has also proven significant in studies focusing on gender roles. These studies conclude that men and women are viewed differently in the workplace when it comes to positional power. Looking at men and women’s employment generally, there seems to be a significant difference in the types of work which women and men do, the pay they receive, the hours they work, the skills they acquire and their patterns of employment.

- **Willingness to participate in a leadership role**
  It could well be that women choose not to take on leadership roles in order not to be discriminated against in any way. There is a perceived lack of willingness in women to assume leadership roles. This assumption might well be a self-perception that prevents women from doing so. The potential costs associated with upward mobility may be a deterrent and have to be taken into account.
Although the Women in Design initiative has been enthusiastically supported by various women in leading positions, the actual extent of the challenge of promoting women in design is still unclear. There is a lack of information on the profile of women in design, their specific needs, possible projects and opportunities in the marketplace that may not be fully exploited. This survey attempts to overcome these information gaps.

Some of the questions at stake are:

- Who are these women?
- What would women expect and appreciate from the Women in Design forum?
- What will add real value to these female designers?
- What opportunities already exist that can be used by the forum?

The fact that the report provides an all-round gender perspective on design matters increases the usability of the findings. Various other initiatives can possibly also result from this project. The findings can contribute substantially to the upliftment of all international design bodies’ knowledge concerning gender-based differences within their membership bases. These findings will also provide insight and add value to organisers of conferences, events and forums, enabling them to develop broad-based/balanced strategies and interventions.

The report provides information on the interests, characteristics, behavioural patterns and primary communication channels that can be used to create platforms for promoting designers and design ideas. This enables organisations such as ICSID and Icograda to provide a more focused service and marketing strategy to achieve their business objectives.

The results will help the Women in Design initiative to optimise opportunities and look into significant areas of concern that may exist.

**Research Process**

**PHASE 1:** Secondary data

**PHASE 2:** Committee selection

**PHASE 3:** Questionnaire design phase

**PHASE 4:** Fieldwork

**PHASE 5:** Quality control, data collation, database and reporting

**PHASE 6:** Portfolio of initiatives on the way forward

**PHASE 7:** Workshop

**Research Sample**

The survey was distributed to the entire member database of both ICSID and Icograda. Both these member organisations were requested to distribute a different questionnaire (aimed at individuals in design) to their members.

The sample obtained was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICSID</th>
<th>Icograda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 organisational/member respondents (this amounts to a 6.04% sample)</td>
<td>23 organisational/member respondents (this amounts to a 32.86% sample)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 individual members of the above organisations</td>
<td>53 individual members of the above organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Instrument**

The design of the research instrument went through various iterations, based on input from an expert committee. Not all members from the committee were able to provide input during the various phases. The members of this expert committee were:
In close consultation with the president of ICSID, Luigi Ferarra, the questionnaire was simplified to remain a basic fact-finding exercise to provide findings and on which to base future projects. The sensitivity of the gender topic was a major consideration.

Limitations of the Study

All projects can be improved upon. It is important to record the learning that has taken place in any specific study. The following have been challenges experienced by and that have become known to the research team. Undoubtedly, the list can later be expanded.

- The research topic: Gender a sensitive and complex topic. It is easy to unknowingly upset members of the target audience.
- Differences in the member organisations in the handling of the topic. People from the advisory committee differed vastly in their input to the survey and a decision had to be taken to rather simplify the study to better address the first stated limitation.
- Time limitations: The secretariats of ICSID and Icograda took on the role of distributing and prompting members to complete surveys. The diaries of the secretariats do not necessarily allow for such additional pressure and in future one should consider an alternative route or else the quality of the interpretations could suffer because of limited feedback.
- The sample obtained from ICSID limits the ability to generalise the findings. Icograda will derive greater value from the results, as they were able to obtain a 33% sample.
- Language: The survey was conducted in English with Spanish translations. The qualitative responses of the individuals suffered where the respondents did not know one of these languages. To be inclusive and service all members’ needs, translation in more languages, in particular Asian languages, needs to be considered.
- Incompatibility of computer programmes and systems hampered the effective processing of the findings.

Results

The following is a summary of the main findings of the organisational survey, which is mainly quantitative. It was followed by different questionnaires to individual members of the member societies and provides opinions of members and qualitative information.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS’ SURVEY RESULTS

ICSID obtained a sample of 6% of the population and Icograda 33%, making all the results more applicable to Icograda rather than to ICSID. To make the information usable to both entities, the entire study was segmented according to organisation.

Organisational Profile

This section describes the profiles of the participating respondents. This is important when generalisations need to be justified.

Gender distribution

On average the organisations reported equal numbers of male and female members.
Age distribution
More than 50% of the female members were reported to be younger than 25 years, whereas 40% of the male members were reported to be older than 50. This discrepancy can be seen in the following graphs.

Female Age Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>ICSID</th>
<th>Icograda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50+ yrs</td>
<td>12.41</td>
<td>10.22</td>
<td>10.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-50 yrs</td>
<td>20.39</td>
<td>18.13</td>
<td>18.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 yrs</td>
<td>12.36</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>12.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25 yrs</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>51.85</td>
<td>33.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male Age Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>ICSID</th>
<th>Icograda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50+ yrs</td>
<td>22.23</td>
<td>18.07</td>
<td>18.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-50 yrs</td>
<td>26.84</td>
<td>22.57</td>
<td>23.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 yrs</td>
<td>18.11</td>
<td>18.11</td>
<td>18.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25 yrs</td>
<td>37.24</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This may indicate an influx of females and highlight a situation where the equality in the numbers (as seen in the previous question) is a more recent phenomenon. This also supports the current movement towards initiatives such as Women in Design and show that this programme can do groundbreaking work for similar programmes to follow. If the female component of this market is indeed this young, it can partly explain a gender-driven arena as females may have been in short supply until recently and have been unable to have the same impact as a much larger and older male component in the design marketplace.

Qualification distribution
There are not many discrepancies between females and males based on the criteria of qualification. More members have a formal than informal qualification and there is not much of a difference between the numbers of people with degree versus diplomas.

Level of work distribution
More females operate on staff level than is the case for males. Males do seem to enjoy more placements on higher levels of an organisation. Keep in mind that these females are reported to be much younger than their male counterparts, which may partly be the reason behind this discrepancy. It is also interesting to note that fewer females than males are self-employed.
Distribution over the design professions

OVERALL the distribution across the included design professions (designer, educator, promoter, management, project management, journalism and other) does not pick up any significant differences between the different genders other than a higher concentration of males in project management. This may be one of the reasons why men tend to be, and are perceived to be, design award recipients. Project managers usually receive rewards on behalf of a team.

General Questions Posed to the Organisations

Acknowledgements/Awards aimed specifically at women

Only one award aimed specifically at female members was mentioned. There are two interpretations: First that it is overdue that such acknowledgements are put in place OR it may be that the industry regards it as inappropriate. Care should be taken in the positioning of such initiatives.

Another argument that cannot be cast aside is the reported number of females, less than 25 years of age that seem to be entering the industry.

Fields of design in which females and males excel

The reason for this question about design excellence is two-fold: Firstly to establish whether different fields are listed by the different genders and secondly to evaluate respondents’ sensitivity towards possible differences based on gender. Since only four (4) respondents gave a strong "ALL!!!" answer it can be assumed that the remainder of the respondents do perceive a difference based on gender and area of excellence. Tables in the main report indicate that a significant overlap exists between the fields in which women excel and those in which men excel. In general Industrial Design and related fields were more mentioned in the case of men and Graphic Design, Fashion and Interior in the case of females.

Mentorship programs

Mentorship to Members

Mentorship to Female Members

The general trend of mentorship and coaching programmes found commonly in the market today is also prevalent in the design world. A large number of member organisations do offer mentorship programmes to members (± 42%). These programmes are however not aimed specifically at female members, but rather at the entire membership base.

Tracking performance of female members

Females’ performance is tracked together with the normal performance tracking systems used by organisations.

Different services requested by females

The general trend of mentorship and coaching programmes found commonly in the market today is also prevalent in the design world. A large number of member organisations do offer mentorship programmes to members (± 42%). These programmes are however not aimed specifically at female members, but rather at the entire membership base.
Generally speaking, the women do not seem to request additional services. The special requests that were received confirm some of the theory and previous research findings around gender studies. Courses in communication to improve assertiveness and issues around work/lifestyle balance are reported as two uniquely female requests that have been received by the organisations.

Specific Women in Design initiatives that will be beneficial to female members
Only one respondent spoke out AGAINST differentiating between male and female members. The remainder gave their ideas of possible suitable platforms. Most of the recommended platforms centre on:
• PR and visibility – really showcasing achievements;
• mentorship programmes/role models;
• conferences; and
• some very straightforward ideas such as salary comparisons.

Willingness to share female database
There are two sensitivities with regard to sharing databases. The first is the objection to singling out females and the second is privacy of information. Should ICSID and Icograda proceed with a project to establish a database, the questions will have to be asked with care and various solutions should be presented. It could for example be recommended to member organisations that the concept of ‘permission marketing’ be used where members can opt in or out of the Women in Design database.

Unique challenges for designers in their home country
Most of the challenges seem to centre on:
• A quest to educate a market about the value of design;
• Ethics in design;
• Business acumen that seems to be lacking; and
• Work/lifestyle balance, especially for women with children.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS’ SURVEY RESULTS

Personal information
This section describes the profile of the participating respondents. This is important when generalised results need to be justified.

Gender distribution
The survey attracted far more female (81%) than male respondents. It is however important to consider opinions of males in such a study as it is easy to mistake something as unique to females, when it actually is a market challenge and not a gender challenge.

Qualification distribution
The ICSID respondents mostly have a formal education and degrees. Icograda have a larger number of informally trained respondents. The female members indicate proportionally more degrees as a qualification than do their male counterparts.
Level of work distribution

Once again, as in the organisational survey, more females operate on the lower levels of the organisation than do males. An interesting note is that more females in this survey reported to be self-employed than males. It may be the age category and field of work of the males influencing this tendency.

Design profession distribution

The majority of the respondents are in Design Education and Design Management.

Preferences and views

Favourite publications

The target audience’s choice of media always offers insights, as many marketing efforts are ineffective due to incorrect choices of media. The main report provides a listing of female and male choices when it comes to favourite publications. Favourites identified include Communication Arts, Print magazine, Metropolis, Creative Review, Design Week and Eye. The study did not find a significant difference between the favourite publications of women versus men and one may argue that, if any difference exists, it is not visible or addressed on this level.

Favourite conferences

Various conferences were identified as favourites. Insight into these conferences can provide input for future ventures. These can either be used as benchmarks to measure events or it can be used as successful platforms from which to run initiatives for Women in Design. The association with currently successful initiatives can be very powerful in the positioning of a new project.

Most attractive conference topics

No specific differences were found between the topics identified by males and those by females. The most popular topics included:

- Sustainability;
- Design research;
- Great and well-known speakers;
- Design trends;
- Creativity and innovation; and
- Strategy.

Events aiming at women

In general the respondents were not aware of events, functions, forums and publications that specifically focussed on women in design. The best-known ones are listed in the main report. The forum most often mentioned is Designerinnen Forum Germany.
Experience of the world of design

Areas of design in which females and males excel
Some respondents took offence and some just disagreed with the notion that gender may be an influencing factor of performance in certain fields. However, the number of actual responses stating particular fields again supports the belief that most of the respondents do acknowledge gender differences and have thought about it before.

There is a clear overlap between the list of design areas allocated to female excellence combined with the information obtained as to favourite conferences and publications.

It is significant to note the number of times female excellence is connected – by females – to ‘smallness’, for example small studios, smaller projects, comfort, etc. This reflects a self-perception that can also lie at the heart of the shortage of women putting themselves up for positions in management. One also notes how females tend to picture themselves as more responsible and more in-tune with communication issues than their male counterparts.

In the case of male excellence, females move away from the ‘smallness’ detected in their own responses on female excellence. They refer to high pay, big projects, etc. There is also more mention of industrial design and related areas in the section focussing on male excellence than in the section on female excellence.

Problems/barriers experienced
This is the qualitative response category where the differences between females and males are glaringly visible. The biggest barriers identified by the women include:
- Being underpaid
- Getting people to value design in the appropriate way
- Inability to secure top jobs
- Self-perception
- Family issues and therefore work/life balance
- Discrimination – this is mentioned often

The biggest barriers identified by the men include:
- Job opportunities and experience
- People’s inability to understand the value of design
- Management views and practices (age/experience discrimination)

It is clear that the men do not suffer from the same barriers as do the women as the overlap is insignificant. However, discrimination is also mentioned in the male response with the bases being age.

Opportunities desired but never received
The opportunities most sought by women are:
- Mentorship programmes and role models
- Education-related opportunities
- Business skills
- PR – exposure
- Not having to fight the gender battle

The opportunities most sought by men are:
- PR – exposure
- A fast tracking programme
- Business skills

Types of commissions received, satisfaction with commissions and commissions that are attractive
The commissions received by men and women are varied and cannot be categorised in a dominant area.

Satisfaction with Commissions Received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91.22</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Overall | ICSD | ICagra | Men | Women

90.45 | 81.34 | 77.8 | 70.48
The respondents were satisfied with the commissions they received – men more so than women.

Men seemed more satisfied and felt more secure in the design world than their female counterparts. They did not show the same levels of doubt or pressure.

With reference to commissions that they would like to receive the females focussed more on challenging commissions than what they have had up till now while the males emphasised international exposure.

**Are genders treated as equals in the design world?**
This is the most significant question of the survey.

The survey results have shown that women and men do not have strong differences when it comes to publications, conferences and topics for conferences, fields of excellence or commissions received. The largest differences become clear when identifying barriers in the industry. The results of the straight question on gender equality indicate that gender is being perceived as a differentiator in the design world. 63% of females do not believe that people are treated as equals in the design world and 17% of men agree with them. ICSID respondents reported more inequality than Icograda respondents.

Various respondents mentioned that differences in numbers – plainly far more males in the industry than females – lead to some of the discrepancies seen. A contributing factor might be the large number of females under the age of 25 years, as reported by the organisations, who have not had the time to prove themselves in the industry. Assisting them with mentorship and exposure may address some of the inequality.

**Unique challenge to female designers in the respondent’s country**

Once again gender inequality is frequently mentioned as the unique challenge of women in the respondent’s country. The Women in Design initiative can play an important role in designing a future that reflects ideologies of equality.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion we wish to thank all the respondents to this study as the information obtained can lead strategy, as well as implementation and create not only strong positions for ICSID and Icograda but can assist with well targeted marketing planning and the design of various initiatives that can benefit the most important platform – DESIGN.
FINDING FACTS ON... ‘WOMAN IN DESIGN’ from the ICSID/Icograda

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT
At an ICSID Board Meeting in 2004, board member Adrienne Viljoen from South Africa proposed the creation of a unique global program to support Women in Design. The ICSID Board was unanimous in approving her proposal. ICSID President Luigi Ferrara wanted this project to also encourage more women to start thinking about joining the ICSID Board of Directors. Subsequently the Icograda board decided to participate in the project and the following fact-finding was commissioned to be spearheaded by the Design Institute in South Africa.

The success of this program depends on the feedback obtained from yourself and similar design organisations. Up to this point in time we are thankful for the support and reaction we have enjoyed during the design stages of this survey. Thank you for making your time or the time of a delegated person available for purposes of this survey!

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
ICSID and Icograda are constantly searching for ways in which they can retain and increase their relevance and impact in an ever-changing world. To address this challenge and explore potential value-adding opportunities this joint project was launched based on the criteria for the award/acknowledgements that are specifically aimed at WOMEN members.

SECTION A: MEMBER DEMOGRAPHICS

We acknowledged that you may not have all the facts at hand. We appreciate answers approximately 80% in accuracy.

If you would like to receive the results from this survey, please provide us with your e-mail address

What is the name of your organisation?

How many members in your organisation?

You belong to...

ICSID  Icograda  Both

How many Male and Female members do you have?

Male  Female

How many FEMALE members in each age category?

Less than 25yrs  25 - 35yrs  36 - 50yrs  50+yrs

How many MALE members in each age category?

Less than 25yrs  25 - 35yrs  36 - 50yrs  50+yrs

How many FEMALE members in each qualification category?

Formal  Informal  Degree  Diploma

How many MALE members in each qualification category?

Formal  Informal  Degree  Diploma

How many FEMALE members operate on each one of the following levels of work?

Staff member  Supervisor  Middle management  Senior management  Self Employed  Student Internship

How many MALE members operate on each one of the following levels of work?

Staff member  Supervisor  Middle management  Senior management  Self Employed  Student Internship

SECTION B: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Does your association offer awards/acknowledgements that are specifically aimed at WOMEN members?  YES  NO

   If YES, please state the award as well as the criteria for the award/acknowledgement.

2. Does your association offer mentorship programs for it members?  YES  NO

   Does your association offer mentorship programs that are specifically aimed at its FEMALE members?  YES  NO

   If YES, how do these programs work?
3. In what areas of design do your FEMALE members tend to excel?

4. In what areas of design do your MALE members tend to excel?

5. Do your organisations track the performance of their FEMALE members? YES NO

   If YES, provide us with some detail as to these programs?

6. Do your FEMALE members ever request additional or different services to that offered by your association? YES NO

   If your answer is YES, what additional/different services are requested?

7. If ICSID or Icograda would launch a platform for promoting women in design, what type of or specific initiatives would be most beneficial for your female members?

8. Will you be willing to share your female member database with us? YES NO

   This implies that you are willing to send all the information of your female member application forms to us.

   Please provide reasons for your answer.

9. What do you believe are the unique challenges for designers specific to your country?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT. IT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.