



Women on Air - Citizens' Assembly Animation

"News media are at their best when they call upon the wisdom of all the people whom they serve, when they reflect everyone's experience and bring in the hopes and dreams of every sort of person".

Pulitzer prize-winner Geneva Overholser

What is Women on Air ?

Women on Air is a community of women and men who want to see and hear more women contributing on the airwaves

We run seminars, events and informal training workshops to help give women the skills and confidence to go on radio and television

We have trained more than 70 women to date

Including

- Waking the Feminists
- the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA); women on both sides of the Repeal the 8th Referendum;
- and women involved in sport, science, charities, direct provision, minority groups, law, business and finance.

We are also building a database for media, populated with women who are ready, willing, and able to go on air as contributors on their subject matter of expertise

Why is general equality on our airwaves important?

Women are the majority in Irish society

Women - 50.46%

Men – 49.53%

Yet they are consistently underrepresented on our airwaves

Public policy is influenced, and indeed often changed, by views expressed on broadcast media

That is why we believe gender equality on the airwaves is essential for a fair and functioning democracy.

What does research tell us?

The lack of in-depth research is a challenge but what we do know is...

#1 The lack of gender equality on our airwaves is not a uniquely Irish problem

#2 Only 26% of experts and contributors to UK radio and TV = women

#3 In a Survey of 10 countries including the US, Australia and the UK

- news coverage heavily weighted towards male news sources
- women only interviewed or cited in 30% of TV news stories
- in all 10 countries, female sources tended to appear in softer news topics such as family and lifestyle

#4 In news and current affairs on Irish radio stations, women's voices only accounted for 28%, compared with 72% for men

#5 And this new report shines a light on the 'The Missing Perspectives of Women in COVID-19 News' on a global scale

What action has been taken?

The BAI committed to reporting on gender balance in 2017, and the NWCI asked for this to be done on a yearly basis.

And we wholeheartedly agree

Has anyone cracked it?

In 2017, BBC's 'Outside Source' programme committed to an on air gender equality in 2017 and it increased the % of women on air from 39% to 52% in 6 months

Its viewership increased by 25% and the BBC adopted it across the organisation

And in turn, some other broadcasters in Europe did the same

What should be done in Ireland?

Gender balance on our airwaves has improved but we still have a long way to go

All policy decisions relating to broadcasting and gender equality should include a commitment to achieving gender equality on our airwaves.

- Media Commission
- Broadcasting Act 2009
- TV licence
- BAI
- National Strategy for Women and Girls

Progress should be measured formally, and funding should be linked to agreed targets being reached

To the members of Citizens' Assembly, we say

The current situation is unsustainable and unjust.

Women consume media and pay for publicly funded media just as men do; they are entitled to hear their concerns, their views and most importantly their voices on the airwaves in Ireland.

Equally, seeing is believing - if women hear more of their own gender on the airwaves, it will encourage more to follow suit.

Thank you

Women on Air logo

<https://womenonair.ie/>

- Our supporters
- Logos of the following
- BAI (bigger than the others)
- The EU Commission's Brussels Binder
- NWCi
- Manel Watch
- The Ireland Funds
- The Dublin Shapers