

Researcher Led Initiative Funding: NGender Evaluation

Project: NGender 2016

Project members: [REDACTED] (lead co-ordinators), [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Contact: Email: ngender@sussex.ac.uk, Twitter: @NgenderSussex, Webpage: <https://ngender.wordpress.com/> Facebook: NGender community page.

Funding amount received: £1,000

Expenditure breakdown:

	Film eve Feb	Film eve March	Film eve April	Film eve May	Conference	
Printing	17	17	0	0	0	
Tea/coffee	34	30	34	30	170	
food	25	40	25	40	389.5	
film rental	0	0	0	0	0	
travel reimbursment	0	22.6	0	0	0	
IDS drinks					102.4	
Total	76	109.6	59	70	661.9	976.5

Amount left over: £23.50

Outline of Project:

NGender is a gender and sexuality research related initiative organised at the University of Sussex.

The aim is to bring together postgraduate and early careers scholars across the disciplines with gender or sexuality as a theme or focus of their research.

Although in its six year, a new cohort of organisers for 2015-2016 has necessitated that NGender develop a new, creative and diverse series of events, building upon, but independent from previous years of NGender collaboration. This took the form of a monthly lunchtime feminist reading group (non-funded), a monthly evening film/talk series with guest speakers, and an end of year conference with the aim of bringing together interdisciplinary researchers and activists working within the theme of 'Liberation, Struggle and Resistance' in gender and sexuality studies.

Evaluation of Activities:

Film/Talk Series (~25 attendees on average for each event)

- The Film/Talk series was generally well attended with an average of 25 participants (combination of undergraduate, postgraduate and non-Sussex students as well as faculty members) at each event, the majority of which stayed after the film for the subsequent group discussion. The one month where this wasn't the case and attendance was significantly lower was April. We speculated that reasons for this may be that the choice of film did not appeal to as many students as it was a relatively unknown title. Furthermore good weather and a number of other university events going on that evening on campus may have contributed to diminished numbers.
- Our first film evening in February unfortunately suffered from technical difficulties when it arose that the cable adapter we had borrowed from ITS was actually faulty. We successfully rescheduled the event two weeks later and luckily our guest speaker was able to rearrange and attend the later date.
- All faculty members (at Sussex and beyond) we approached to lead our post-film discussions were really enthusiastic about taking part and led very engaging and thought-provoking discussions. Our approach in selecting films and lead discussants with wide-ranging themes including media, history, education and postcolonial literary studies supported the development of Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities (Domain A in RDF planner) particularly thinking about creativity (A3) and innovative argument construction.
- After the second film event we took the decision to stop printing paper posters to advertise our film evenings. Firstly because our social media and online platforms were producing enough interest and secondly because using the university print unit meant we had to print a minimum of 50 flyers which we didn't need and ate into a large part of our budget.

'Liberation, Struggle and Resistance' NGender Third Annual Conference (~35 participants)

- The aim of our conference was to foster a collaborative and non-hierarchical working and learning atmosphere to effectively bring together three parts of the RDF development model – knowledge base (A1) working with others (D1) and communication and dissemination (D2). This was encouraged throughout the day with traditional conference-type panel sessions combined with more innovative events such as an 'Academic Speed Dating' networking activity, a group workshop on street harassment, and the use of QR codes in our programmes to participant's webpages to encourage easy post-conference communication.
- We ended the day with a closing remarks by Professor [REDACTED], who noted that the team work exhibited by the NGender panel was commendable, and that collaborative events and knowledge-building such as this conference needed to be encouraged. We then

had the pleasure of hearing the Rise Up Singing, a choir raising money and awareness of domestic abuse, which rounded off our theme of resistance and liberation brilliantly.

- The 50 spaces we had allocated were filled one month in advance of the conference, and we also had a waiting list for those interested in coming if anyone dropped out. However, attendance on the day was unfortunately diminished due to a re-scheduled railway network strike and possibly by the fact that the conference date fell at a busy time of deadlines and revision for undergraduates. Having said that, the smaller audience allowed for more detailed discussion and a more intimate intellectual environment.
- Verbal feedback was very positive: participants commented on the lively discussion which the space enabled, the collegiality of the interdisciplinary researchers, and the quality of research presented. We also received very positive written feedback via email after the event, for example:

Hi [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Thank you so much for organising such a brilliant conference. All the panels were really engaging and very well chaired. Having the workshop in the post-lunch slump was good timing and kept us all going. The choir was brilliant and made for a really moving finale. Good food too. I can't think of any ways in which it could have been improved.

- One of the greatest successes of the conference was expanding the NGender network, with participants and speakers/workshop leaders from a variety of institutions, both academic and independent including Universities of Vienna, SOAS, Birkbeck, Roehampton, Manchester and of all stages of research, learning and activism.