

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30167

Name: Name with Secretariat

Theme 1: Gender norms and stereotypes

Gender norms and stereotypes as barriers to gender equality

Fixed ideas about what women and men should do in the home or at work are learned by girls and boys in early childhood and throughout their lives. These ideas or gender stereotypes affect their choices in school and as they enter careers and contribute to a lack of progress toward equality between women and men. This limits not only the jobs that women and men consider or are available to them, but also can exclude women and men from social roles and tasks.

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

The assumption that certain behaviour or interests are more likely to be associated with girls or boys is very harmful. Girls who express and behave in what is perceived as 'boyish' ways are often not encouraged in this and learn quickly to conform or risk disapproval. I am extremely concerned at the current trend to see girls who exhibit what we perceive as 'masculine' traits, as not really girls at all. To see them instead as transgendered and to encourage them to see themselves this way. I believe the uncritical role-out of transgender policy in schools and public services is a hindrance to the development of our children and that it will impact negatively on their education not least because it reinforces the very gender stereotypes we should be eliminating. I would like to see much more open discussion allowed on this topic. At the moment it is very difficult to speak out against any transgender policy without being labelled a bigot. I am not a bigot. In 2015 I [REDACTED] [REDACTED] campaigned openly in rural Ireland with my lesbian and gay sisters and brothers and supporters for marriage equality. The Gender Recognition Act of 2015 states that 'a person's preferred gender becomes their sex'. By adopting a policy of self-identification on gender, the Irish State has effectively jettisoned the scientific standard of biology and reproductive role to describe the physical differences between men and women in favour of recognising a mindset or notion as the only determining factor. This was done without any public consultation and no public debate or discussion. If we can no longer refer to a girl's or woman's physiology as the determining factor in the life of discrimination she faces, how can we fight that discrimination? If we no longer consider a woman to be an adult human female then the state needs to provide an alternative definition. Though this act does not presently include children, it's implementation is being used to change school policy. We are witnessing a rise in gender-neutral toilet facilities, in boys on girl's sports teams and the general erosion of safe and separate spaces for girls. For instance, it is the policy of the Irish Girl Guides to facilitate any claims of being female from a male-bodied person. This includes allowing male-bodied teenagers to sleep in dormitories

with teenage girls without informing the parents of the girls. Many leading shops now allow anyone to access the women's changing rooms rather than challenge an individual for fear of 'doing the wrong thing'. What these policy changes amount to is a de facto recognition of a claim by some fully male-bodied people to be female, a claim that has somehow found recognition in Irish law a claim that should surely be scrutinised and discussed by our society before it's implications impact any further on our girls and boys. I urge you to recommend extensive discussion and consultation on the impact of the GRA 2015.

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

The state needs to address the issues I have raised above.

Theme 2: Work: Occupational segregation by gender, gender discrimination and the gender pay gap

Women and men are often concentrated into different kinds of jobs and within the same occupations, women are often in work that is less well paid and has less opportunities for career advancement. Women often work in areas where they can work part-time so as to fit in with their caring responsibilities. While many men work in low paid jobs, many professions dominated by women are also low paid, and professions that have become female-dominated have become lower paid. This worsens the gender pay gap (the average difference between the wages of women and men who are working).

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

Theme 3. Care, paid and unpaid, as a social and family responsibility

Care -- the social responsibility of care and women and men's co responsibility for care, especially within the family

Women remain disproportionately responsible for unpaid care and often work in poorly paid care work. For working parents or lone parents, balancing paid work with parenting and or caring for older and dependent adults presents significant challenges. Women are most disadvantaged by these challenges, yet men also suffer from lack of opportunities to share parenting and caring roles. Despite recent legislation and policy

initiatives to support early years parental care, inequalities in the distribution of unpaid care continue between women and men. The cost of childcare has been identified as a particular barrier to work for women alongside responsibilities of caring for older relatives and dependent adults.

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Theme 4: Women's access to, and representation in, public life and decision making

Ensure women's participation and representation in decision-making and leadership in the workplace, political and public life

Women are systematically underrepresented in leadership in economic and political decision-making. Despite the introduction of a candidate gender quota (through the system of party funding) for national political office, and initiatives to support women's access to corporate decision-making roles, men continue to dominate leadership positions. There are also issues to be considered around how media represents women and men.

- Please outline what you see as the key barriers/ obstacles and challenges to gender equality under this theme in law, policy and practice.

- Please identify the steps to be taken to address the issues raised and who should address them (e.g. the state, private sector, education system etc.)

5. Where does gender inequality impact most?

To conclude we would be interested in your response to the following question: In which area do you think gender inequality matters most?

Please rank the following in order of importance, 1 being the most important:

- Paid work

- Home & family life 4
- Education 5
- Politics and public life 3
- Media 6
- Caring for others 1
- Other – please elaborate 7

Everything

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

The ranking makes me put numbers on the subjects but really the impact is everything, all at once, all the time.

- Please include any further comments or observations you may have here.