

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30089

Name: IFUT

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.

A key challenge I see is children's access to an education that is delivered by female and male teachers from diverse backgrounds. There is traditionally a higher proportion of female to male teachers (certainly at primary level). This reinforces the kinds of social roles and norms performed by women and men which children are introduced to from a young age when they enter the education system.

- 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.)

Make teacher training more open and inclusive, i.e. revisit the requirement for honours leaving certificate Irish and provide different access routes into teacher training, which make help to make the teacher population more diverse.

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.

The current non-provision of affordable childcare. The inequitable distribution of parental leave.

- 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 provision of free childcare. Equitable employment policy which requires both parents to take equal parental leave.

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.

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

Privatisation of childcare provision in Ireland.

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

Free childcare provision provided by the State.

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.

The reproduction of social norms and values which covertly and overtly portray women as ineffective or unable leaders on social media.

- 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.)

I think our education system needs to address how social media is affecting our lives. If young people are given the opportunity to discuss issues relating to gender representation, it could help to them to challenge gender biased sentiment expressed on social media about women and men in general.

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 1
- Home & family life 2
- Education 4
- Politics and public life 6
- Media 5
- Caring for others 3

- Other – please elaborate

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

1 - Paid work is vital, because whoever holds the pursestrings generally has the power. Women need to be financially independent. 2 - Home life again needs to be equitable. Children learn from their parents and if they see equality at home, they are more likely to reproduce this in their lives. 3 - Caring for other is perhaps the most important thing we can do. More equity between women and men in caring roles is vital for an equitable society. 4 - Education, outside of the home, the formal education system plays an important role to introduce children to equitable gender norms and practices. 5- Social media now has a significant impact on how we view others, however, if children and young people have been introduced to equality at home, they will be better able to cut through gender bias portrayed on social media.

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