

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30039

Name: Patrick Kelly

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.

I am a GP and a number of my Male patients are disenfranchised because they have children with women with whom they are not married and did not cohabit prior to their children being born. Irish legislation presently is biased towards the mothers of these children as the women are automatically given guardianship of the child but the unmarried biological fathers of the children are not. I have witnessed my male patients suffering from the 'weaponisation' of this preference in law to women. The women use it as a means to punish the fathers for a myriad of reasons.

- 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.)

If the state is truly interested in gender equality then the state should enact / amend legislation to ensure that biological fathers are bestowed with the same rights to guardianship to their children as automatically bestowed on mothers.

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 government preferentially discriminates women in terms of maternity leave versus children's fathers. Society has become conditioned to expect women to remain in the home. Because women adopt this caring role, they are not in the workplace for the same period of time as their male counterparts. As a result of this they receive lower pay.

- 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.)

Males and female parents should be entitled to equal durations of maternity/ paternity 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 theme in law, policy and practice.

No contribution.

- 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.)

No opinion.

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.

No contribution.

- 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.)

No contribution.

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

- Other – please elaborate

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Home and Family Life - The role of the father is society. Lack of guardianship/ access to children as a bias in legislation to the mother of a child.

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

1. Home and Family Life - The role of the father is society. Lack of guardianship/ access to children as a bias in legislation to the mother of a child. 2. Gender stereotypes may prevent males from pursuing nursing and females from pursuing construction/ engineering roles. 3. Caring for others: law is inherently biased to the mothers of children to the detriment to the unmarried fathers of children. The state is therefore reinforcing the idea that women are the primary care givers to children over and above fathers and is therefore reinforcing a stereotype.

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