

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30054

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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.

Although we as a society have moved away from the idea of the wife/mother staying at home and being the sole care-giver to any children, from observation I feel that in situations where both parents are working, the mother generally is the parent who sacrifices more time in trying to take care of the family and balance their work life around that.

- 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 it is the case that both parents are working, there should be equal opportunity for both parents to work their schedules (e.g. job share, work from home etc) around their family. I think this needs to come from the state and influence public and private sector jobs.

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 fact that the mother of any family will (with the exception of adoption/fostering) have gone through childbirth and taken maternity leave, perhaps sometimes even sick leave, the onus is also on them to stay with infants for their development (e.g. breastfeeding). This hinders a return to the workplace (if desired) and means that women have to take what jobs are available to them, rather than what jobs they desire or have built a career around.

- 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.)

Many private sector companies do not have any paid maternity leave requirements to adhere to and I think this needs to change. While I understand it is the choice of the parent(s) to have children, we cannot expect people to raise children, struggling with money and look for childcare in the way that people currently are.

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.

Parenting and caring roles are vital and cannot be negotiated or changed for those carrying them out, which leaves people having to choose either having a job with better income and paying out for care services, or leaving full-time employment (either part-time or entirely), so that they can provide the care they cannot afford.

- 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.)

There are two options here, which I think should both be looked at. Firstly, more affordable or heavily subsidised care for children, the elderly and those with disabilities who require a lot of care. Secondly, more flexible work arrangements should be attainable in all work sectors for all genders - if a parent wants to work flexible working hours there should be no obstacle to that.

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 key barrier to this is that women who are mothers have to sacrifice part of their careers in order to care for their families.

- 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'm not really sure how this can be address from a leadership perspective - perhaps finding balance from the ground up in terms of which parent stays with the children, or having more accessible and affordable childcare, would be a start.

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 1
- Education 5
- Politics and public life 4
- Media 6
- Caring for others 2
- Other – please elaborate 7

N/A

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

I think Home and Family Life, Paid Work and Caring for Others are so closely linked and affect each other so deeply that it's nearly a three way tie for first place. While gender inequality is apparent in many sectors, including the Media and Politics, these only affect a certain amount of people.

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