

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30066

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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.

Lack of affordable childcare often results in one parent reducing their time in the workforce or leaving it. More often than not this is the mother (this decision aided by the gender pay-gap). A similar issue arises in relation to elder care. By the woman leaving paid work to take on caring, it reinforces gender stereotypes.

- 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 - it is unfair and impractical to leave key care provision to the private sector.

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.

Male dominated professions need to become more family friendly. Female dominated professions need to have their worth recognised more.

- 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 legislate for better family friendly workplaces. Larger businesses must be made publish gender pay information. There is a huge role for the education system in breaking stereotypes about various jobs - starting at primary level in terms of the resources used (including the lack of male teachers at primary level).

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.

The cost of childcare. Lack of services for the disabled/elderly. The gender paygap.

- 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.)

The state needs to provide childcare and appropriate home-based care for the elderly and disabled. The "in loco parentis" rule that makes respite hours for parents who are carers needs to go immediately. The care system (for all ages) has to stop working on the presumption that there is a woman who is expendible from the workforce who can take on most of the work.

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.

In-built gendered perceptions of what leaders look like need to be addressed. Leadership systems (be it in politics, business or other areas) will just keep replicating themselves unless forced to change. Some areas (particularly politics) need to be made more family friendly.

- 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.)

Introduce quotas and link state funds - be it for political or board positions to it. Quotas need to be linked to successful candidates for election not just numbers run.

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 2
- Education 6
- Politics and public life 3
- Media 55
- Caring for others 1
- Other – please elaborate 7

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

If caring duties were reduced through state support and men were as likely to take on caring roles as women, a lot (though not all) of the biases in other areas such as the workplace would be dealt with.

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

A concerted effort is also needed to address the media messages on gender roles. I feel that my children (aged 10 & 11) have been exposed to much stronger messages about certain colours/clothes/toys being "for boys" or "for girls", much more than I ever was.