

# PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

## QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30107

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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.

Article 42.1 of Bunreacht na hEireann refers to women's sole role in Irish society as mothers and homemakers. This is a particularly damaging legislative wording as it limits perception of women as being able to have ambitions beyond this role, moreover it suggests men must become breadwinners which inflicts similar limitations on gender roles for all.

- 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.)

Legislative re-wording. Breaking down the normalised binary of women as homemakers and men as breadwinners so ensure there is more space of negotiating one's own abilities and ambitions in Irish society. This means one who does not fulfil these expectations is less likely to feel undermined or failing in certain regards.

### **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.

Women are paid on average less money for similar jobs to men. Moreover, there is a widespread belief among men that this is not an issue and therefore it is not addressed. Men are more likely to be in positions of power and then abuse that power.

- 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.)

there needs to be a systematic restructuring of how businesses work, especially there is a need for educating staff on basic social responsibilities and practises such as consent, gender studies. These will allow for more nuanced understandings and discussions and hopefully limit binary opposition between men and women in the workplace.

### **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.

There is a fundamental issue with the value placed on different types of work. While this extends to a variety of sectors, many vestiges of Twentieth Century Ireland and Article 42 remain active in these outlooks. In that, there is possibly a belief that this kind of wrok at home is expected and not therefore to be renumerated.

- 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.)

A similar to re-evaluation of values and expectations from individuals in Irish society should mean that all kinds of work should be valued and paid/

#### **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.

There are still prevalent narratives categorising men as rational and women as emotional. These nonsensical outlooks do contribute to public perception of women's role in Irish society.

- 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.)

An important aspect of education in Ireland should focus on a better-equipped sex education and gender awareness to contribute to a fairer society.

#### **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 3
- Home & family life 2
- Education 5

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

N/A

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

There needs to be a fair representation of women atop high positions of power in public life and politics. This should contribute to a more normalised perception of women in powerful positions. This will also lead into a more equal distribution of duties domestic, emotional, financial in home lives to avoid positioning men and women in historically expected roles

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