

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30117

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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.

The wording of the constitution is discriminatory against women. Government policy re work, pensions, social welfare, parental leave and many others assume women as carees, dependents and this creates and sustains cultural norms that discriminate against women and girls. Th educations system perpetuates these 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 should lead a discussion about sexism and gender care inequalities that is backed up by national re-education, supportive policy and an insistence on change throughout all sectors.

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.

Education is a sexist experience for many. Good gender role models are not always available and some sectors are institutionally antagonistic to women... engineering, politics, construction and business. Parental leave policy and practice in all areas of employment perpetuate gender care stereotypes. Care inequalities are core and influence all other inequalities.

- 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.)

Men need to be allowed to care equally with women and encouraged to do so through education and all other cultural means... media, church, family but especially through all education from preschool onwards. Companies and educational bodies that do not promote gender equality should be sanctioned in meaningful ways like funding reduction, fines, public naming and shaming

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.

Poor central care infrastructure and cultural gender stereotyping leaves women as default carers in Irish society. This makes the gendered care structures self perpetuating. Lack of affordable, accessible care options are the biggest barriers alongside women's moral imperative to fill the care gaps. This is also discriminatory against men who are barred from much caring activity this stunting their development as full human beings.

- 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 should invest in comprehensive care structures across the life span and educate all citizens to be able to be caring to each other when need arises.

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.

Care pressures are the common barrier to all forms of women's equality. Women are enculturated into care roles and a passivity and self effacement that makes being a leader or decision maker more difficult. Men are encouraged to be socially dominant and outspoken which perpetuates women's sense of exclusion from public, power roles.

- 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.)

Until women and men genuinely share care demands and responsibilities all other inequalities will endure... economic, political, cultural and affective. Changing this imbalance is a major national challenge that requires state commitment, solid educational intervention and adequate state care provision that allows women and men to be relieved of unwanted care demands and to be equally able to respond to care demands that they welcome.

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

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

Care is the underwriting gender inequality that enables men to be more powerful and opinionated than women, more culturally dominant, less bound by care demands, more able to earn, advance their careers and feel engaged in society.

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

A national discussion on gender and care is a brave endeavour and if the outcome is genuinely embraced by government will allow Ireland to be a much better place to live for both women and men.