

PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30147

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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 flexibility in the workforce for both genders to participate in workforce and family life equally e.g. working from home initiatives, opportunities for women come with a hidden bias (will this employee have children) affecting promotion and pay. Glass ceiling in organisations culturally, still preference for male leaders in top management and board level.

- 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.)

Promote flexibility in the workforce without gender bias. Design performance measures that allows an equal balance. Board and senior managers need to lead this initiative as without buy in at this level it will not succeed. Board and senior management need to action this at their own level so that corporate will trust them to drive it and that it is not a tick box exercise to pacify a minority power group. Educate from a young age, but keep it consistent from there i.e. through to working life.

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.

Lack of clarity around role definitions leading to bias on pay. Same qualifications, same levels of experience, different pay. Pay should attach to the role not the post-holder and this should continue in all progressions from this point.

- 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.)

Clear Benchmarking of roles given expertise and experience - surely there is enough pay data to provide Human Resource functions this information as a measure when measuring performance on a local and national basis

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.

Lack of reasonable childcare costs, lack of flexibility in the workforce without bias, lack of opportunities on offer to women who have family. New family man gets a pay-rise and opportunities, new family woman often demoted and no pay-rise - old-fashioned work practices. Barriers to change this from Board/Senior level - is there a real appetite for change? Not in my experience.

- 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.)

Promote the change at Board/Senior Management level. Create a non biased national role benchmarked pay averages. Create non biased performance measures. Allow individuals to challenge fairly.

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.

Lack of flexibility, incentives and promotion of these roles to women - seen as a closed shop from a female perspective. Men need to lead this change from the educational system to the workforce and the community.

- 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.)

All leaders in education, state, working sector need to drive initiatives to promote openness to all genders in all roles/walks of life. It is a mindset change that is required.

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 1
- Home & family life 4

- Education 5
- Politics and public life 2
- Media 6
- Caring for others 3
- Other – please elaborate 7

Choices and Opportunities

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

Personal experience

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

I welcome this change initiative but am mindful that this is more about equality for both genders as am sure there are plenty males who would have the same issues.