

6th March 2020

SUBMISSION from the Clare Public Participation Network (PPN)

Citizen's Assembly on Gender Equality

Clare PPN is a network of 296 community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups from Clare. Each PPN has three 'Colleges' which organise the member groups in terms of their interests and activities – these are environmental college, social inclusion college and community and voluntary college. Clare PPN exists to facilitate the formal participation by the community sector in Clare County Council's decision making structures and to serve as a support and information sharing network for the Community and Voluntary Sector in Clare. It is funded jointly by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Clare County Council but is autonomous and its activities are directed by its members through an elected secretariat.

Clare PPN wishes to primarily address the issue of ensuring women's full and equal participation in public life.

We call for all state funded organisation, boards and voluntary positions (such as those of Public Participation Network Representative's roles on Local Authority Committees) to budget for and offer easily-accessed expense payments to reimburse childcare costs incurred by women and men who are engaging voluntarily with their structures.

We call for an increase in the salary of County and City Councillors to the average industrial FTE salary and a discontinuation of separate payments for committee chairperson positions. This measure seeks to ensure that those including women who chose to enter public life and stand for election will have access to a living wage.

We further call for the immediate access to paid maternity leave for elected City and County Councillors, TDs, and Senators and if it proves necessary a system of nominating a 'second' or pairing system should be instituted. We understand that this might entail constitutional change and the eradication of by-elections, however given the continuing lack of women's voices at all levels of government except voluntary community activity Clare PPN considers this step necessary. Clare PPN further considers that parental leave including for those in same sex relationships whatever their gender should be available and resourced/legislated for in a similar fashion.

Clare Public Participation Network (PPN)
Clonroad Business Park
Ennis, Co. Clare V95 N62T
087 1617375 admin@clareppn.ie



Clare PPN calls for measures to be introduced to remove barriers to participation for women who face marginalisation including the Traveller and Roma Communities, migrant women, refugees and asylum seeking women, women with disabilities, sex workers, LGBTQI communities and those excluded through poverty and enduring class discrimination. In this respect Clare PPN would like to see a long term fund established which aims at supporting emerging community leaders from any of the above categories. This fund could support education, internships, travel bursaries and mentorships as well as providing for the continuing engagement with the grass roots communities from which these women emerge. Clare PPN considers that such a scheme should be administered and managed by women from the above mentioned backgrounds rather than housed within existing NGO or departmental structures and that its funding should be guaranteed from the outset for a minimum period of ten years to allow for the long term support and development of these women.

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and wish the Citizen's Assembly well with this body of work.

Yours Sincerely,
Sarah Clancy
Clare Public Participation Network Coordinator.