

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

### QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30003

Name: Michelle Haward

#### **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 portrayal of different genders in all roles. It is far better than it used to be, but all genders need to see that any gender can fit in any role. Fear of reaching across, e.g. male mentors not giving the same support to female staff, female mentors not taking male staff as mentees. It creates bubbles that perpetuate.

- 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.)

While the private sector has a huge role to play, I think it is important that the education system challenges these ideologies from a young age - making a point of including figures into children's education of women in science and politics, and men in carer-based roles. I am not sure how to encourage the private sector to facilitate more mentorships, etc.

#### **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.

Having pay be private. Women cannot know that they are underpaid if their employment contract says that staff cannot discuss their pay with each other, though often unenforceable those with low paid jobs are often at fear of losing their income stream and won't challenge the rule for fear of losing their job altogether. More transparency over pay allows folk to see who is underpaid in an organisation.

- 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.)

Institute more pay transparency

### **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.

In most cases, males earn more and there are more facilities in place for women to take time to look after care (e.g. more likely to be approved for work share, up until recently there was no mandatory paternal leave). As well as these there are the cultural beliefs that women are better at care and children socialised from a young age to expect women to do the care work in the home.

- 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.)

Make maternal and paternal benefits as equal as possible. In the education system make sure that men are portrayed in carer roles and that boys are not discouraged from playing "daddy" in play times (e.g. letting them be daddy to a baby doll without teasing or mocking being tolerated).

#### **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.

Women's careers often flounder if they decide to have a family. There is a belief that they no longer prioritise their work. This links in with section 3 on care as women are often expected to shoulder more of the care burden at home. But when they return to work they are often treated as less dedicated than they were before.

- 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.)

Encourage back-to-work programs that involve discussion with women regarding their work goals, their work-life balance and how to develop a plan to get them to where they want to be. It should not just be assumed that they want to focus on their family, though for some this will be the case. Open and honest discussion and planning needs to be encouraged.

#### **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

- Home & family life 1
- Education 6
- Politics and public life 3
- Media 5
- Caring for others 2
- Other – please elaborate 7

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

Those higher up in my rankings also tend to influence the factors that are lower down. So while Caring for Others impacts Paid Work, Paid work does not influence Caring For Others as much,

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