

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

### QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30080

Name: Mark Hamill

#### **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 main barrier is gender segregation in schools. Teach kids that boys and girls are inherently different, that they work irreconcilably differently and shouldn't be mixed or treated the same and you will get men and women believing that men and women are inherently different, that they work irreconcilably differently and shouldn't be mixed or treated the same.

- 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 abolish gender segregated schools. Teach people that boys and girls do mix and can work together because of course they can and of course they do.

#### **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.

The issue is that society and the parental leave system is prejudiced against women being expected to take time off for having children, whilst men are expected to continue working. The gender pay gap does not exist in terms of any specific woman/women getting paid less for doing the exact same job as any specific man/men. The gender pay gap exists in terms of all women, on average, working less than all men, on average, because women are expected to stop working for longer after having children.

- 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 abolish paid maternity and paternity leave and have only paid parental leave benefit, that both parents share as they choose (with a proportion that each must take). Better childcare supports are needed. If only one parent can afford to work due to the cost of childcare, then it is usually the father who works. Better childcare means both parents can work.

### **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.

Women can take 26 weeks paid maternity leave, men can 2 weeks paid paternity leave. Childcare costs mean many families can only afford to have 1 parent working and as the mother is already entitled to 26 weeks paid leave, they will usually continue as the career after those 26 weeks have passed.

- 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.)

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#### **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.

Not enough women want to be leadership positions, so a smaller pool of possible female candidates are presented.

- 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.)

Gender quotas do not work as they assume the supply is there but the selection process is biased. The issue is not the selection process (an anonymous democratic vote from a female majority is not going to be gender biased), the issue is the supply is lacking in desirable candidates. More should be done to encourage women into wanting leadership positions, both from a young age in schools and for adult women to be supported and encouraged. This cannot be done in terms of women-only initiatives, as this will create (at the very least the appearance of) tokenism and will alienate the women who do step up to the general population. Any initiatives must be non-gendered, but aware of any aspects that may preclude women from wanting to join. No amount of initiatives will work if women don't believe they can or should take leadership. So this will be far easier to achieve AFTER we stop schooling children to believe men and women are inherently immiscible and we start supporting women

retain their workplace presence after childbirth by supporting and encouraging mens presence in the home after it.

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

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

If you remove gender inequality in home and at school, the rest will have to follow.

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