

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

### QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30087

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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.

I am not sure if such fixed ideas are learned socially or are innate. This is at least contestable. Well-defined sex-based social roles and norms are found in many other species.

- 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.)

It should be determined first using rigorous research to what extent the fixed ideas about sex/gender roles are innate. If they are innate (even to a certain extent), then policy interventions may be ineffective at best, or authoritarian and intrusive at worst.

#### **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.

I think the caring professions should be valued more. Teachers and nurses deserve better pay to match their level of professionalism and training. At the same time, the severe imbalance in the male/female ration in primary school education should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

- 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.)

Better pay for teachers and nurses can be addressed by the State. Given the severe shortage of teachers (especially highly-qualified ones), I think teachers should maybe be first in line in the next public-sector pay review (I am not a teacher).

### **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.

There is a severe barrier in the tax system to families where one parent wants to stay at home to mind children. The default in the tax system is to funnel children into industrialized childcare where most of the workers are underpaid, underqualified women. So-called childcare in this country is only ever viewed through the lens of labor-market activation. It is not child-centred.

- 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.)

Pay childcare workers more, make sure they have good qualifications (e.g. level 7 NFQ), encourage a diverse range of different child-centred childcare models. Do not discriminate against stay-at-home parents in the tax system.

#### **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.

The electorate expects TDs to work very hard. Ministers to work even harder. They are paid very handsomely for this work. If the taxpayer is to have value for money, and if the elected officials are to do right by the country, more than 9-5 (or 9:30-4:00 "core hours") must be expected. This may well be offputting to people (men and women) who want to balance work and family life. Gender quotas may help at the margins to give one or two individuals a deserved career boost but they do not get around the fact that holding roles of great responsibility is not compatible with having a sane family life.

- 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.)

Society needs to be more honest about the fact that there is no easy route to the top. Gender quotas may help at the margins. Such quotas may produce some short-term gains but if they become entrenched then they may in turn become a new form of systematic discrimination - against men.

#### **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
- Education

- Politics and public life
- Media
- Caring for others
- Other – please elaborate

1

Too often the most dirty and dangerous jobs in society are done by men. There is many reasons for this. Men have a higher appetite for risk (sometimes foolish risk). Men are now less well-educated than women, with higher school and college drop-out rates among men. There is also greater male variability - more geniuses but also more idiots among men than among women. Therefore, society has created an equilibrium or a trade-off whereby men do a disproportionate amount of dirty, dangerous work, and a disproportionate amount of high-status work. If society decides to break this trade-off, gender equality surely calls for more women to do dirty, dangerous work - on fishing trawlers, natural-gas rigs, waste disposal, and so on. It is a case of being careful what you wish for.

- Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

As above.

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

None