

# PUBLIC CONSULTATION - CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON GENDER EQUALITY 2020

## QUESTIONNAIRE

CA30214

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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.

The very laws and policies affecting this in Ireland are crafted to reflect pre-conceived notions of gender roles. Paid maternity and paternity, once past the medical need to be out of work for a woman who recently gave birth, should be distributed however a couple sees fit, regardless of sex or gender of either party, but this is not so. Unmarried women are automatic guardians of their children, but not the fathers. We simultaneously enforce the image of women as belonging in the home and with the children, and preclude the possibility for men to visibly counter this image or develop their own role further. Equal pay in the workplace, or lack thereof, is a serious obstacle to progress in this area also. Equalising pay is one of those things that benefits everyone (except perhaps those paying). In a home where unpaid parental leave might alleviate pressure or allow a parent to devote time to the happiness and development of their child, the frequently higher paid male parent is often unable to take this leave as the financial impact is too great. Within education, progress has been made, but it is crucial to protect the identity and self-worth of young girls by fully removing all single religion based instruction from publicly funded schools. The teaching of the Catholic Church in particular, as patron of over 90% of schools, includes damaging and outdated notions of the role of women, e.g. Mary being scared, but ignoring her feelings and saying "YES" when approached by a strange man in her bedroom. Further to this, the church's ongoing discrimination against people with differing genders and sexualities is clearly counter to what we seek to achieve.

- 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.)

Mandatory publication of gender pay gap data must be enacted as a state policy. Action to balance this gap should also be enforced, and carried out by employers. Strict rules, and associated fines, should be applied for failing to deliver on equal pay;

or for discriminatory practices or policies, official or unofficial, around paying less because "woman might get pregnant", or similar ideas. In general, removing gender applicability from services, credits, benefits, etc., that are not specific medical needs for a woman who gave birth, and allowing couples to assign them as best fits their own situation, would be a huge help and a state responsibility. Separation of church and state is another topic and long overdue, but in this specific context, it sends a clear message around equality and respect, not only to women, but to people of all sexes, genders and sexualities. The church discriminates or simply denies the existence of people outside their accepted spectrum, and should absolutely not control the educational content or facilities of our youth if we are serious about changing attitudes.

## **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.

- 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.)

## **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.

- 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.)

#### **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.

- 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.)

#### **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

➤ Please outline the reasons for your answer below:

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